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| Agenda Item | 6.1 |
| Report No | PLN/057/26 |

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**Committee:** North Planning Applications Committee

**Date:** 25 November 2026

**Report Title:** 23/03945/S36: Muirhall Energy Limited

Land 3070M North of Amer Farm 5 Totarder Struan

**Report By:** Area Planning Manager - North

## Purpose/Executive Summary

**Description:** Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm - Construction and operation of a wind farm for a 40 year operational period, comprising 47 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 200m, access tracks, borrow pits, battery storage, up to 2 anemometer masts, substations and ancillary infrastructure

**Ward:** 10 – Eilean a Cheo

**Development category:** National Development (Application under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989)

**Reason referred to Committee:** National Development

All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal does not accord with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is unacceptable in terms of applicable material considerations.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to agree the recommendation to maintain the Council's **OBJECTION** to the application as set out in section 11 of the report.

## 1. 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 Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm. The proposed scheme has an indicative generating capacity of 217.8MW, and a battery energy storage system (BESS) facility with an indicative capacity of up to 120MW.

1.2 The proposed development, as amended, comprises:

- 33 wind turbines at up to 200m blade height with:
  - 25 turbines falling largely or wholly within forestry with some key-holing of turbines within the commercial forestry (Turbines: T5, T6, T8-T13, T16, and T18-T33);
  - Visible spectrum aviation lighting fitted to the hubs of 11 turbines (T1, T2, T4, T9, T11, T17, T21, T28, T30, T32, and T33);
  - turbine transformers, located either internally within the turbine towers or within external 3m x 3m x 5.5m transformer houses;
  - turbine hardstanding areas measuring 2,315m$^2$, turbine construction areas comprising main crane hardstanding, two auxiliary crane hardstandings, and adjacent component laydown areas for each turbine;
- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) compound, measuring 15,748m$^2$;
- Onsite 132kV substation compound, measuring 8,400m$^2$ with control building and staff welfare facilities;
- An additional substation for use by the Transmission Network Operator ('TNO') measuring 4,572m$^2$;
- Access junction with the A836 along with 29km of new access track, 6.5km of which would be floating, and 1.8km of altered track along with 10 new and 1 upgraded water crossings;
- Up to 2 permanent steel lattice anemometer masts of up to 125m in height, together with associated construction area;
- 6 search areas for borrow pits;
- Underground electrical cabling and cable trenches running alongside the access track where possible; and
- Temporary construction compound, auxiliary construction compound with concrete batching facility (at the location of the proposed BESS facility).
- 249ha of commercial conifer and mixed broadleaf woodland felling.

1.3 The anticipated land take for the construction of the proposal is 76ha reducing to around 50ha once operational and reinstatement is completed. 249ha of commercial

conifer and mixed broadleaf woodland felling is also proposed to accommodate the proposed development.

1.4 The current project is separate to Glen Ullinish Wind Farm, which was approved for 11 turbines of 149.9m (planning permission 20/01129/S42), having been previously approved for 14 turbines of 119m tip height. The submission included with the current application advises that the consented scheme will not be built out if the current application is approved. That permission expires 21 December 2026 with the applicant currently undergoing the satisfaction of conditions process with the intent of locking the planning permission on to cover the eventuality of the current application not being consented. If the current application is consented, the Council would have the option to revoke the previous permission under Section 65 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) provided this is done before the development is completed.

1.5 The proposed development has been allocated Gate 2 grid connection status by the National Energy Systems Operator (NESO), with a connection date of November 2031. High-level details of an indicative 3.1km grid connection via 132kV underground cable (UGC) between the onsite TNO substation and Edinbane Substation are included with the application documents. The submission advises that the siting and design of the grid connection is informed by that submitted by SSEN Transmission for a Screening Opinion Request in 2024 (24/03694/SCRE) advising at that time the intended grid connection comprising the following infrastructure did not constitute EIA Development:

- A working corridor of 25m to accommodate machinery, excavation and storage of excavated materials;
- five connecting joint bays sited 500m apart;
- a temporary haul road along the western extent of the UGC route; connecting to,
- a permanent track along the eastern extent of the UGC route, which would be retained for maintenance of the UGC.

1.6 The applicant held project introductory public consultation drop-in sessions on 11th October 2021 at Portree High School (10.30am – 2pm) and 13th, 14th and 15th October 2021 at Somerled Square Portree (10am – 3pm) to seek the views of the local community. They also held six public consultation events at various locations on the 25th and 26th April 2022, and seven events from the 26th to the 30th September 2022. Event notifications were placed in the West Highland Free Press. A Pre-application Consultation Report accompanied the application that set out how public consultation has informed the submitted proposal.

1.7 The applicant made use of the Council's Major Development Pre-Application Advice Service in February 2022 for a scheme comprising 59 turbines with a 200m blade tip height (THC reference 21/05455/PREMAJ). The Council's response advised that the

proposed siting, layout, scale, and number of turbines would be challenging for the Council to support in terms of the scheme's landscape and visual impact, including effects on landscape character, visual amenity, how it would relate to operational and consented schemes, and in particular its likely undoing of mitigation secured for other schemes. The proposal's impacts on peat and the historic environment were also of concern.

1.8 The application is supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), dated July 2023, the contents of which has been informed through EIA Scoping (22/01468/SCOP). The EIAR contains the following technical environmental chapters:

- Chapter 6 – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Chapter 7 – Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat Ornithology;
- Chapter 8 – Ecology;
- Chapter 9 – Ornithology
- Chapter 10 – Cultural Heritage;
- Chapter 11 – Noise and Vibration;
- Chapter 12 – Access, Traffic and Transport;
- Chapter 13 – Socio-economics, Tourism and Recreation; and,
- Chapter 14 – Other Issues (including shadow flicker, aviation, climate change and sustainability, telecoms and radio links).

1.9 The application is also accompanied by figures and visualisations, technical appendices, and a Non-Technical Summary (NTS), Design and Access Statement, an Economic and Community Impact Report, a Planning Statement, and a Pre-application Consultation Report.

1.10 Since the application's submission, Additional Environmental Information (AEI-1) was submitted to the ECU in April 2025 in response to Council Officers concerns regarding landscape and visual impacts, as well as impacts on ornithology, peatland, and cultural heritage. Further information was provided in relation to a revised layout of the proposals, amending the proposals as follows:

- removal of 14 turbines (the southern cluster) reducing the scheme from 47 to 33 turbines as well as the re-siting of the majority of remaining turbines;
- removal of a section of the site area southeast of the B885 reducing the total site area from 5,180ha to 4,900ha;
- the removal of an onsite 33kV substation and amendments to the hardstanding areas of substation and BESS compounds;
- the relocation of Meteorological Mast A close to the main substation;
- the reduction of onsite access track length and the number of watercourse crossings;
- the removal of one borrow pit search area and relocation of others; and,
- amendments to the proposed forestry felling areas.

1.11 The AEI-1 is supported by a report covering: landscape and visual impact assessment; geology, hydrology, hydrogeology, and peat; ecology; ornithology; cultural heritage; noise; access traffic and transport; socio-economics; as well as issues including shadow flicker, aviation, climate change and sustainability. Relevant supporting statements, figures and visualisations have also been updated.

1.12 In addition, and in order to comply with the Raeshaw Farms Ltd. Vs Scottish Ministers [2026] CSIH 10 Judicial Review decision, the applicant has provided a second suite of Additional Environmental Information (AEI-2), dated July 2026. This has been provided to identify any significant effects associated with the intended wind farm's grid connection and also advises where significant effects are not identifiable at this stage.

1.13 The suite of Environment Impact Assessment information submitted to date does not consider the development's other offsite impacts, such as transport network improvements to facilitate the delivery of Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AIL) including turbine components.

**Determination Procedure**

1.14 Members are reminded that the Council submitted a timeous objection to the application on 14 August 2024 pending design amendments submitted with AEI-1 and Officers' detailed assessment. In light of this objection and Officers' dissatisfaction with the design amendments presented in the AEI-1, the applicant has requested that the application is progressed for determination, with the ECU having passed it to the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) in October 2026.

1.15 Notwithstanding the above, the ECU and the DPEA will be informed of the Committee's decision in any case. It will then be for a Reporter appointed by Scottish Ministers to confirm the need for any further procedure, which may include a Public Local Inquiry (PLI) to be held, amongst other options in the event the Committee determines to uphold the Officer recommendation. As Members will be aware, the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 replaced the automatic triggering of a PLI with a new Reporter-led examination process. Therefore, the programme for the examination process and associated deadlines will be set by the Reporter and provide only limited opportunity for any new material matters that may arise to be referred to Committee.

1.16 The concern here is the limited opportunity for the Council to consider any further environmental information submitted by the applicant and, where necessary, report that information through the Council's committee process before relevant inquiry / further procedure deadlines are reached. Delaying the Council's response pending further Committee consideration could therefore result in the inquiry proceeding, or determination of the application, without the Council's position being fully presented. This is further complicated by the number of related electricity transmission and

generation proposals progressing through separate consenting and inquiry processes, the Committee's finite capacity to consider this caseload, as well as the potential for further information arising through those processes to have implications for the cumulative assessment, and the presentation of the Council's case.

1.17 In recognition of these constraints, a wider suite of delegated powers is sought to enable Officers to manage the Council's effective participation in the examination process, which may include PLI and further procedures, including responding to further information and evidence, making necessary procedural submissions, refining or supplementing the Council's case and taking such other steps as may reasonably be required to protect the Council's interests. Any exercise of these delegated powers would remain consistent with the substantive position and grounds established by Committee and would be informed, where appropriate, by specialist legal advice provided by our Legal Counsel. Following the examination process, the application will be determined by Scottish Ministers.

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The amended 4,900ha application site is located on rough agricultural grazing land 3.5km northeast of Struan, 6.6km east of Portree, and 9.1km west of Dunvegan in northwest Skye extending from the low summit of Beinn Sgùmain at its northern extent to the A836 and B885, which define its southwest and southeast boundaries. The site primarily covers undifferentiated grass and heather upland moorland, blanket bog, and commercial forestry.

2.2 There is a general rise in site ground levels from around 30m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at the site's southwestern extent near the coast at Bracadale, eastward away from the coast. However, there are several steep and stepped low summits rising above broad troughs and low saddles across the site including Am Maol (214m AOD), Ben Scudaig (220m AOD), Beinn Uilleim (225m AOD), Beinn Cloiche (232m AOD), and the site's highest summit Beinn Uigshader at 246m AOD in the site's north. The proposed turbines would be sited south of this summit and north of Am Maol between the 140m AOD and 220m AOD contours, and mostly, although not wholly, within commercial forestry.

2.3 Loch Connan is the largest waterbody within the site followed by Loch Ravag, both are located to the site's east and associated with the large tract of commercial forestry where the turbines are sited, with the site covering several river catchments including the River Ose, Allt Garbh, River Treslane, River Snizort, Voaker / Balgown Burn and Amar River. These main watercourses drain to surrounding sea lochs; Loch Harport and Loch Bracadale to the southwest, Loch Caroy to the west, Loch Greshornish to the north and Loch Snizort Beag to the northeast.

2.4 The site is relatively remote with the nearest properties being isolated crofter's cottages at Glenvicaskill and Balmeanach to the west of the turbines, as well as

properties at Blackhill south of Edinbane and north of the turbines, and Riverside and Peiness Carbost south of Skeabost. There are smaller settlements along and beyond the coastal side of the A863 to the west, and at Dunvegan, Edinbane, Skeabost, and Portree on the A850 to the northwest, north, northeast and east of the turbines.

2.5 The site would be accessed via a new junction and track from the southbound carriageway of the A863 opposite Ben Toirlean near Eabost. The B885 forms part of the site's southern boundary and links Bracadale southwest of the site to Portree in the northeast of Skye. The U4751 (from A863 to Balmeanach) is adopted up to the site boundary but continues through a wooded section of the site as a track and Core Path (SL28.01 - Loch Caroy to Glenvicaskill) to Glenvicaskill passing a track through Edinbane Wind Farm and passing Edinbane Substation.

2.6 There are no other Core Paths through the site but several in the wider area fall within visibility of the proposal, including Orbost to Idrigill (SL28.04), Ullinish to Ullinish Point (SL26.01), Fiskavaig to Talisker (SL20.03) to the site's west and southwest, and several more at Dunvegan, Greshornish, Skeabost and Portree. There is a Public Right of Way (HSL114) and three known wider access path routes as well as forestry tracks through the site, with the site being on land that the public can reasonably access via the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (as amended).

2.7 Other local tourist and recreational attractions in the vicinity include: various landscape viewpoints, Oronsay Island, the Fairy Bridge, Dunvegan Castle, Raasay House, star gazing at the Waternish Peninsula, the Uig to Lochmaddy Ferry, and Glen Brittle Forest at Moineach. Along with walking and cycling, other key recreational and tourist activities in the wider area include, but are not limited to, bird watching / birding / twitching, stalking / hunting / fishing, sea kayaking, and horse riding.

**Landscape Designations, Wild Land, and Landscape Character**

2.8 The proposed turbines would be sited within Landscape Character Type (LCT) LCT359 – Upland Sloping Moorland and LCT360 – Stepped Moorland as mapped by NatureScot with the indicative grid connection also passing through these LCTs. The western site boundary takes in some LCT357 – Farmed and Settled Lowlands at the River Ose. Surrounding LCTs with views of the turbines include:

- LCT358 – Low Smooth Moorland;
- LCT361 – Stepped Hills;
- LCT366 – Landslide Edge and Undulating Ridge; and,
- LCT368 – Angular Mountain Range – Skye and Lochalsh.

2.9 The application site does not form part of any landscape designation. Landscape designations assessed within the applicant's 45km study area comprise:

| Designated Landscape | Distance and direction from the Proposed Turbines |
|---|---|

| National Scenic Area (NSA) | |
|---|---|
| The Cuillin Hills | 16km southeast |
| Trotternish | 17km northwest |
| Wester Ross | 36.5km east |
| The Small Isles | 37.5km south |
| South Lewis Harris and North Uist | 43km northwest |
| **Special Landscape Area (SLA)** | |
| North West Skye | On the site boundary to the south and west |
| Greshornish | 6km north |
| Trotternish and Tianavaig | 7.5km east |
| Raasay and Rona | 17km east |
| South West Applecross and Crowlin Islands | 28km east |
| Kyle Plockton | 37km east |

2.10 The applicant's assessment identifies the following Wild Land Areas (WLA) in proximity:

| Wild Land Areas (WLA) | |
|---|---|
| WLA 23 Cuillin | 13.5km southeast |
| WLA 22 Duirinish | 14km west |
| WLA 25 Applecross | 30km east |
| WLA 17 Rum | 39km south |
| WLA 27 Flowerdale Shieldalg Torridon | 40.5km northeast |

**Environmental Designations and Habitats**

2.11 The site does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory designated site for nature conservation. Sites designated for natural heritage within 10km are tabled below.

| Designation | Distance to Site Boundary | Qualifying Interests |
|---|---|---|
| **Statutory Sites (within 10km)** | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| An Cleireach Site of Scientific Special Interest (SSSI) | Adjoins the site boundary | Geological |
| Inner Hebrides and the Minches Special Area of Conservation (SAC) | 0.8km south | Harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena |
| Roineval SSSI | 5km south | Geological |
| Cuillins Special Protection Area (SPA) | 6.5km | Breeding golden eagle |
| Talisker SSSI | 7.5km south | Burnet moth, calcareous scree, rocky slopes, tall herb ledge |
| Allt Grillan Gorge SSSI | 7.6km southeast | Upland mixed ash woodland |
| Sligachan Peatlands SAC and SSSI | 9.5km southeast | Blanket bogs, natural dystrophic lakes and ponds, wet heaths, clear-water lakes or lochs, transition mires and quaking bogs |
| Rigg – Bile SAC and SSSI | 11.5km east | Forests with slopes, screes and ravines, vegetated sea cliffs |
| **Non-Statutory Sites (within 5km)** | | |
| Numerous areas of unnamed woodland - Ancient Woodland | Widespread within the 5km | Woodland |

2.12 The majority of the site comprises upland habitats including blanket bog, wet modified bog, wet dwarf shrub heath, wet heath/acid grassland, and marshy grassland. Coniferous commercial forestry plantation also covers much of the site, with smaller pockets of Native Woodland along the River Ose near Glenvicaskill within the indicative grid connection route. The habitats surveyed on site are summarised in AEI-1 Table 6.1.2: Summary of Habitat and Vegetation Types and their Conservation Interest (AEI Technical Appendix, 6.1: Habitat and Vegetation Survey Report, pages 4-6).

2.13 Much of these habitats, particularly on open moorland areas to the south of the site, are categorised as Class 1 on the Carbon and Peatland Soil on the National Soil Map of Scotland 2026, which is defined as nationally important carbon rich soils, deep peat, and priority peatland habitat of high conservation value. Class 5 non-priority peatland is also well represented and covers much, although not all, of the wooded section of the site at its north. Peat depths of between 0m – 6.7m were recorded across the site, with peat depths below 1m being recorded in 50% of the site. The indicative grid connection route would pass through some Class 1 priority peatland as well as Classes 3 and 5 non-priority soils, while the section of the indicative route within the site, which has been surveyed, would not disturb peat depths greater than 1m.

2.14 The site was surveyed as having suitable habitat for, bats, otter, and pine marten, as well as limited habitat for Badger, red squirrel, and water vole. Bat surveys recording activity of common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, an unknown species of pipistrelle, and brown long-eared bat. In terms of ornithological interests, baseline surveys recorded golden eagle, hen harrier, merlin, peregrine falcon, short-eared owl, white-tailed eagle, curlew, golden plover, greenshank, greylag goose, lapwing, pink footed goose, red-throated diver, and whooper swan. No fish habitat survey is included with the EIA as the turbines would be located within the upper catchments of watercourses unlikely to be used by sensitive fish species however these surveys would be undertaken post-consent. The grid connection route is anticipated to affect a similar assemblage of non-avian and bird species.

**Built and Cultural Heritage**

2.15 There are four ancient monuments within the site boundary:

- Dun Arkaig Broch (SM13662) is located south of the River Ose in Glen Colbost;
- Dun Beag Broch and surrounding structures (SM90325); and
- Dun Beag cairn (SM7930) and Dun Mor fort (SM918) are located in a grouping on the southern site boundary near Struan.

Dun Garsin, broch, Bracadale (SM912) is south of the B885 and outwith the site boundary. There is one Category B listed Struan Free Church (LB1784), and two Category C listed buildings, The Haven (LB1785) and Struan Free Church Manse (LB1786), all located in Struan to the south. The table below sets out the designated heritage assets in the surrounding area.

| Site Name | Scheduled Number and location |
|---|---|
| **Heritage Assets within 2km** | |
| Ullinish Lodge, chambered cairn | SM903 southwest |

| | |
|---|---|
| Dun Garsin Broch | SM912 south |
| Dun Suladale Broch | SM921 north |
| Struanmore chambered cairn | SM7929 south |
| Abhainn Bhaile Mheadhonaich, broch and standing stone | SM13664 west |
| Gesto House (Category B) | LB1793 south |
| Struan Inn (Category C) | LB6365 south |
| Struan Inn Out Building (Category B) | LB6366 south |
| **Within 5km of Site boundary** | |
| Barpannan, two chambered cairns, Vatten Duirinish | SM893 east |
| Dun Cruinn fort Kensaleyre | SM910 northeast |
| Dun Flashader Broch | SM911 north |
| Ullinish fort Bracadale | SM930 southwest |
| Clach Ard, symbol stone, Tote, Carbost | SM935 northeast |
| Skeabost Island, St Columba's Church & other ecclesiastical remains | SM947 northeast |
| Kensaleyre Church, cairns and standing stones | SM3417 northeast |
| Sornaichean Coir Fhinn, standing stones, Eyre | SM3485 northeast |
| Dun Feorlig, Broch | SM3494 west |
| Eyre Manse, two cairns | SM3507 northeast |
| Kensaleyre Church, two cairns | SM3511 northeast |
| Romesdal Bridge, cairn | SM3512 northeast |
| Ardmore, chapel & burial ground 2 | SM3884 west |
| Dun Neill, dun | SM3885 west |
| Dun Ardtreck, galleried dun, | SM7120 south |

| | |
|---|---|
| Kensaleyre Church, Kensaleyre, | LB13965 northeast |
| Lyndale House | LB13968 north |
| Lodge And Gatepiers, Lyndale House | LB13969 north |
| The Kennels, Post Office, The Poste House | LB18979 north |
| Skeabost Bridge | LB13970 northeast |
| Skerinish House, Cottages Farmsteading, Skerinish House | LB13975 north |
| Greshornish, the Orde of Greshornish | LB6376 north |

2.16 The are also two Inventory Gardens and Designated Landscapes, Dunvegan Castle (GDL00164) within 5-10km, and Raasay House (GDL00321) within 10-20km of the wind farm site. The Category B listed 2 Luib (LB13996) is off the A87 at Luib and the Category C Listed Corran Lodge at Strollamus are located along the AIL route.

2.17 Additionally, there are 425 non-designated assets across the site with particular densities in the surrounds of Struan and the River Ose / Glen Colbost where the remains of the townships and farmsteads of Glen Ose, Glen Colbost, Glen Ullinish, and Glenvicaskill are located. There are 46 prehistoric features (including the four scheduled monuments), 354 post-medieval features and four features of modern date including the war memorial at Struan.

**Cumulative Development**

2.18 Appendix 2 of this report provides details of operational, consented and under construction, and in planning wind farm projects that the applicant took into consideration in their cumulative assessment as updated in the AEI-1 submitted in May 2025. In that time the cumulative picture has not changed with no new consents having been granted for wind farm proposals on Skye or new proposals submitted. The Repowered and Extended Ben Aketil and Balmeanach Wind Farms are currently at appeal.

## 3. PLANNING HISTORY

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|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | 12 Sept 2024 | 24/03411/PNO: Prior Notification to facilitate forest management and timber harvesting | Prior Approval Not Required |
| 3.2 | 09 Jun 2025 | 22/04580/S37: Skye Reinforcement Project - | Approved by Scottish Ministers |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Construct and operate approximately 110 kilometres (km) of new double circuit steel structure 132 kV overhead transmission line and associated infrastructure | |
| 3.3 | 09 May 2022 | 22/01468/SCOP: Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm - Erection and Operation of a Wind Farm, comprising of up to 59 Wind Turbines with a maximum blade tip height of up to 200m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building, and ancillary infrastructure | EIA Scoping Opinion Issued |
| 3.4 | 12 Nov 2021 | 21/02507/S75M: Modification of Section 75 Agreement for Glen Ullinish Wind Farm - associated with planning permission 14/03964/FUL. | Planning Permission Granted |
| 3.5 | 03 Jun 2021 | 21/01124/FUL: Installation of temporary met mast, up to 100m to tip, on land at Glen Ullinish Wind Farm. | Planning Permission Granted |
| 3.6 | 21 Dec 2021 | 20/01129/S42: Section 42 application for non-compliance with condition 1 of Glen Ullinish Wind Farm as consented (14/03964/FUL) | Planning Permission Granted |
| 3.7 | 25 Aug 2015 | 14/03964/FUL: Erection of 14 wind turbines (height to hub 78m, height to tip 119m, rotor diameter 82m) and sub-station building, formation of access tracks, crane hardstandings, borrow pits, concrete batching plant and water crossings | Planning Permission Granted |

## 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: EIA Development

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report advertisements:

- The Herald on 18 August 2023;
- The Edinburgh Gazette on 18 August 2023; and,
- The West Highland Free Press on 17 and 24 August 2023.

Representation deadline: 23 September 2023.

4.2 Additional Information -1 advertisements:

- The Edinburgh Gazette on 20 June 2025; and,
- The West Highland Free Press on 19 June 2025.

Representation deadline: 20 July 2025.

4.3 Additional Information -2 advertisements:

- The Edinburgh Gazette on 18 August 2026; and,
- The West Highland Free Press on 19 September 2026.

Representation deadline: 20 October 2026.

4.4 Representations received by THC:

- 270 objections;
- 3 support; and,
- 1 general comment.

4.5 Representations received by ECU:

- 412 objections; and,
- 12 support.

4.6 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

a) Conformity with national energy and planning policy and legislation including procedurally with the Electricity Act (1989), and the Development Plan.
b) Contribution to national and international renewable energy targets including reducing reliance / relying on fossil fuels and the release of carbon during construction.
c) Whether the EIA has assessed the project as a whole or if it has been split ('salami sliced') between the wind farm and the grid connection.
d) Concern with the EIA submission and assessment process and the subsequent adequacy / sufficiency of the AEI including the robustness of the data such as socio-economic figures, carbon saving calculations, visualisations not showing all elements, collecting background data on noise levels, the lack of an outline

traffic management plan and abnormal indivisible load assessment as well as the omission of environmental assessments for the indicative grid connection (AEI) and assessment of offsite works to accommodate abnormal indivisible load deliveries.

e) Concern that cumulative effects have not been fully considered.
f) Socio-economic impacts including investment, infrastructure impacts, employment opportunities, and effects on businesses, tourism, and recreational interests.
g) Residential and community amenity along with health, and safety impacts during the construction and operational phases including from noise, shadow flicker, accessing services, and pollution events.
h) Siting, layout, and design considerations including scale and number of turbines, proximity of the development to houses and communities, land take (in particular in relation to the BESS facility and access).
i) Impacts on agriculture.
j) Landscape and visual impacts inclusive of the extent of turbine visibility, including cumulative impacts and effects on landscape character, landscape designations, WLAs, and the character and amenity of views, effects from specific viewpoints, and concerns with red aviation safety lighting extending effects into the hours of darkness.
k) Impacts on the historic and cultural environment such as on the settings of nearby scheduled monuments, listed buildings and garden and designed landscapes including Dunvegan Castle, as well as impacts on unknown archaeology.
l) Ecological effects, including cumulative effects on protected species and ornithological interests, biodiversity, habitats including native woodland and peat and peatland habitats, habitat restoration, compensation and enhancement, habitat management, and effects from pollution including from the BESS facility.
m) Impact on trees and woodland.
n) Impact on the water environment and use of water resources.
o) Traffic, transport, and access impacts including: disruption and severance, impacts on road and pedestrian safety, the capacity and condition as well as structural integrity of the public road network, and cumulative impacts.
p) Concern that the proposal will have permanent effects after the decommissioning stage due to infrastructure being left in situ.
q) Concern with the reuse of materials and components used in the development once the site is decommissioned.
r) Concern with post-construction monitoring.

4.7 All letters of representation made to the Council are available for inspection via the Council's eplanning portal which can be accessed through the internet at the following link:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/planning/view-comment-planning-applications.

4.8 All letters of representation made directly to the ECU are available for inspection on the ECU's website at the following link:

https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00004597andT=4
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## 5. CONSULTATIONS

### Community Councils

5.1 **Struan Community Council (host)** neither supports nor objects to the application but advises that Struan is a small fragile community with a lack of services and notes several matters that will affect the local community including roads, traffic and transport, and access with the Community council seeking a consolidated traffic management plan for all energy developments on Skye, along with the protection of drinking water resources.

5.2 **Dunvegan Community Council** does not object subject to satisfactory community benefits, which are not material to the assessment of the application.

5.3 **Portree and Braes Community Council** did not respond to the consultation request.

5.4 **Skeabost and District Community Council objects** on the grounds of landscape and visual impact, impacts on roads, traffic and transport, and access considerations as well as impact on habitats, drinking water resources, and cumulative impact with other energy developments. Its response highlights health and safety concerns as a result of fire risks from the BESS facility, and inadequate socio-economic benefits including job creation.

### Highland Council Consultees

5.5 **Access Officer** does not object subject to a condition to secure prior approval of an Outdoor Access Management Plan to ensure that public access is managed favourably across the site during the construction and operational phases of the development, in particular with regards to HSL114 – waymarked route held in the Scotways Catalogue of Right of Way, SL28.01 – part of The Highland Council's core path network, and a number of other wider path network routes including the Balmeanach to Edinbane tracks.

5.6 **Archaeology Officer (Historic Environment Team)** does not object subject to a condition to secure its approval of a Written Scheme of Investigation for implementation during construction works to include a programme of archaeological works to cover any requirement for a post-excavation research design. The Archaeology Officer also requests that the Construction Environmental Management

Plan includes measures to mitigate construction impacts on known and unknown archaeological interests.

5.7 **Conservation Officer (Historic Environment Team)** does not object and advises that the turbines would not have any direct or setting impacts upon listed buildings or conservation areas.

5.8 **Development Plans Team** provides advice regarding the policy context of the proposal and its indicative grid connection along with the potential for developer contributions.

5.9 **Ecology Officer objects** on the grounds that the proposal does not meet the requirements for offsetting loss of peatland (1:10 ratio) or provide any enhancement (e.g. 10% of the baseline). The Ecology Officer also requests that conditions are applied to any consent to mitigate impacts on bats and other protected species along with biodiversity enhancements measures, and to ensure that construction activities are controlled through a Construction Environmental Management Plan under the supervision of an Environmental Clerk of Works. The Ecology Officer has provided comments on the ecological information that should be provided with any future application for the grid connection.

5.10 **Environmental Health Officer (EHO)** does not object subject to conditions to secure that the Construction Environmental Management Plan includes measures to control construction noise and dust and to secure operational noise limits experienced at sensitive properties nearby. Following confirmation from the applicant that 1 Glenvicaskill would be used as a site office for the wind farm, the EHO also requires conditions to exclude the property's use for residential purposes and for the Council's prior approval of details of the private water supply for the site office.

5.11 **Flood Risk Management Team** does not object and has no specific comments.

5.12 **Forestry Officer (FO) objects** to the proposal on the grounds that there is insufficient information to demonstrate that the full 128.2ha proposed for forest-to-bog restoration is suitable for restoration, which will inform the final area required for compensatory planting. However, the FO advises of conditions that should be applied to any consent to secure the same, along with a condition to secure the Council's prior approval of details of forestry management, in the event the Scottish Ministers are minded to approve the development.

5.13 **Landscape Officer objects** to the proposal on the grounds of unacceptable landscape and visual, including cumulative effects as a result of the horizontal spread and vertical scale of the proposal. The Landscape Officer's appraisal is provided in detail in the report.

5.14 **Transport Planning** does not object subject to conditions to secure its prior approval of a Road Mitigation Schedule of Works and a finalised Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to include consideration of cumulative effects in the event that construction of other large scale energy projects are undertaken simultaneously, pre-construction mitigation on Council maintained roads and in particular the A863, a finalised AIL strategy, the completion of a S96 Wear and Tear Agreement, along with final details of site access.

**Consultation Undertaken by the ECU**

5.15 **British Horse Society** does not object but notes that equestrian interests should be included in the CTMP.

5.16 **British Telecom** does not object and advises that the proposal is not anticipated to interfere with its current or proposed radio network. However, it noted in its response in July 2025 that T4 is 26m from its fixed links, which is just 1m over its absolute 25m minimum clearance distance, with its normal clearance requirement being 100m. In its further response of October 2025 BT advised that it would accept turbine micrositing to the same or a greater distance from BT Links as proposed in the revised scheme, including for T4. BT has not responded on the AEI-2 in respect of the indicative grid connection.

5.17 **Crown Estate Scotland** does not object and confirms that no Crown Estate Scotland assets would be affected by the proposal.

5.18 **Defence Infrastructure Organisation** does not object subject to conditions for Aviation Safety Lighting and Aviation Charting and Safety Management as the turbines and meteorological masts would be located within its Low Flying Area 14 (LFA 14). It advises that the indicative grid connection would not pass through a statutory safeguarded zone.

5.19 **Highlands and Islands Airports** does not object as the wind farm and indicative grid connection would not infringe on its safeguarding criteria for Benbecula Airport.

5.20 **Historic Environment Scotland** has withdrawn its initial objection to the application following the removal of 14 turbines from the scheme. It has considered the proposal's direct and setting impacts on Dun Arkaig, broch (SM13662), Dun Beag, broch and surrounding structures, Struan, Skye (SM90325 and a Property in the Care of Scottish Ministers), Dun Mor, fort, Struanmore (SM918), and Dun Beag, cairn 100m SSW of, Struan (SM7930). The proposal was initially considered to have significantly adverse impacts on the integrity of the settings of Dun Arkaig, broch (SM13662), and, Dun Beag, broch and surrounding structures, Struan, Skye (SM90325). It advises that these impacts are now mitigated to an acceptable level by the revised 33 turbine scheme and has no specific comments with respect the indicative grid connection.

5.21 **Ironside Farrar (Pear Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment Consultee)** does not object and advises that the applicant's finalised Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment, which should be secured by condition and approved prior to commencement of development on site, must include further ground investigations and analysis of slope stability to understand the specific risks in order to propose appropriate mitigation.

5.22 **John Muir Trust objects** to the proposal on the grounds of significant adverse impacts on areas with wild land qualities (based on its own commissioned research) surrounding the site and nationally important peatland. It has also considered the proposal's impacts on carbon savings and national energy targets.

5.23 **Joint Radio Company** does not object subject to a condition to impose a micrositing limit of 30m on T9 and 50m for all other turbines in order to protect the radio link infrastructure operated by local energy networks.

5.24 **Marine Directorate** does not object subject to a condition to secure baseline pre-construction fish population and habitat surveys, and further surveys during- and post-construction.

5.25 **National Air Traffic Services (NATS)** does not object subject to a condition to secure mitigation in respect of effects on the Tiree radar used by Prestwick Airport.

5.26 **NatureScot** does not object. It has considered the proposal in respect of landscape, ornithological interests including white-tailed eagle, and priority peatland impacts. It advises that there would be no significantly adverse impacts on the integrity of the Trotternish NSA or The Cuillin Hills NSA, or the objectives of either designation. It advises that the vertical scale of the 200m turbines of the revised scheme would distract from and dominate the scenic intricate low-lying, small scale coastal landscape of the regionally important Loch Bracadale, which could be mitigated if the turbines were reduced to less than 150m in height with no visible aviation lighting.

5.27 NatureScot also advises that the predicted collision risk for white-tailed eagle remains one of the highest of any wind farm in Scotland despite the reduction in turbine numbers, which would contribute significantly to a growing cumulative collision risk at a national level, with the resultant mortality slowing the rate of expansion of the species to its former range. Resultantly, NatureScot advises that additional mitigation is required beyond the removal of carcasses within range of the turbines, which is considered in the report.

5.28 For priority peatland, it advises that the revised scheme largely avoids the most sensitive habitats, but that it has not been demonstrated that sufficient priority peatland habitat will be restored to offset the development's impacts.

5.29 **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) objects** to the revised wind farm on the grounds of the very high predicted collision rates for white-tailed eagles along with disturbance and displacement for white-tailed and golden eagle. The RSPB has no comments to make on the indicative grid connection.

5.30 **Scottish Forestry** does not object subject to a condition to ensure that mitigations proposals for restocking and compensatory planting is agreed prior to development commencing or the felling of any trees.

5.31 **Scottish Water** does not object and advises that the revised scheme falls outside of any Scottish Water drinking water catchments or water abstraction sources (Drinking Water Protected Areas).

5.32 **ScotWays** does not object and advises that Other Route HSL114 crosses the application site, which is signposted and way marked by ScotWays, along with several other routes and paths, and requests that the final position of Ts 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are at a distance in excess of the turbine tip height. For the Other Route HSL114, that Ts 23, 24, 27 and 28 are sited the same distance away from the nearby, defined access track, and that micrositing limits maintain the same distance from any other ScotWays recorded routes, Core Paths and other defined access routes within the site. It recommends that an Outdoor Access Management Plan is implemented throughout the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of development and recommends other conditions to maintain favourable public access through the wind farm's lifetime and beyond.

5.33 **Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)** has withdrawn its objection following the submission of Additional Environmental Information that demonstrates that the proposal is designed in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy to avoid carbon rich soils in the first instance and minimise impacts where unavoidable. It has considered the impacts on groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTES), watercourses, and private water supplies and requests that relevant conditions contain clauses to protect peat resources and the water environment, along with the correct management of forestry waste (felled trees) where applicable. It advises on the detail that would be required to be included in any future application for the grid connection in respect of peat, hydrology, hydrogeology, flood risk, watercourse crossings and private water supplies.

5.34 **Skye and Lochalsh Rivers Trust** does not object and advises on the need to protect important spawning and juvenile salmonid habitats and European eel habitats within the freshwater catchments (including the Rivers Ose and Snizort) that fall within the site boundary. It advises on the detail that would be required to be included in any future application for the grid connection in respect of surveys, horizontal directional drilling, mitigation, and monitoring of watercourses, habitats and catchments.

5.35 **SSEN Transmission** has withdrawn its objection following the relocation of turbines to ensure that the proposal would not result in any 'wake effects' on SSEN Transmission's proposed replacement Ardmore (Isle of Skye) to Fort Augustus 132kV transmission line.

5.36 **Transport Scotland** does not object subject to conditions to secure its prior approval of the scheme for delivery of abnormal indivisible loads including the route and, along with any accommodation measures, additional signage, and temporary traffic control measures required on the trunk road network for AIL delivery and general construction traffic.

## 6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

6.1 Appendix 3 of this report provides details of the documents which comprise the adopted Development Plan, including details of pertinent planning policies as well as adopted supplementary guidance, and other material policy considerations that are relevant to the assessment of the application.

## 7. PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.1 This application has been submitted to the Scottish Government under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended). 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 that Scottish Ministers, and by extension the developer, are required 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 submitted under the Electricity Act 1989 that the Development Plan is just one of several 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 proposal, 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 and Other Government Policy
b) Energy and Economic Benefits
c) Construction Impacts
d) Siting, Layout, and Design
e) Landscape and Visual Impacts
f) Natural Heritage (including ornithology)
g) Built and Cultural Heritage
h) Roads, Transport and Access
i) Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Peat
j) Noise and Shadow Flicker
k) Aviation and Radar
l) Decommissioning and Aftercare
m) Planning Compliance and Monitoring, and,
n) Other Material Considerations.

**Compliance with the Development Plan and Other Government Policy**

7.5 Appendix 4 of this report provides an assessment of compliance with the Development Plan and Other Government Policy. In summary, the Development Plan comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), the adopted Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan), and all statutorily adopted supplementary guidance, including the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG). There is no Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal for Skye adopted through the OWESG. There is also no community led Local Place Plan (LPP) covering the application site with the only LPPs on Skye being Broadford and Strath LPP and Sleat LPP.

7.6 The principle of renewable energy development is established in national policy, with the proposed development being 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.

7.7 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 requires a balancing exercise to be undertaken, which is reflected throughout NPF4.

7.8 The above is also reflected within other material policy considerations, with Government policy giving significant weight to the importance of achieving net zero through the deployment of onshore wind at pace. Government legislation and policy maintain the commitment to attaining net zero by 2045, with the Onshore Wind Policy Statement requirement for 20GW of onshore wind to be deployed by 2030, and the Climate Change Committee Report to UK Parliament (July 2024) explaining that onshore wind installations will need to double by 2030. The UK Government Clean Power Action Plan has also recently set a more ambitious target of 27-29 GW of onshore wind by 2030. When determining renewable energy proposals, the ability to meet these targets therefore demands substantial weight when undertaking the planning balance exercise.

7.9 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 OWESG provides a methodology for a judgement to be made on the likely impact of a development on assessed "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. Appendix 7 provides an assessment against the ten Landscape and Visual Assessment Criteria contained within Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance.

**Energy and Economic Benefits**

7.10 THC continues to respond positively to the Government's renewable energy agenda showing support for multiple largescale onshore energy projects where appropriately sited and designed, with a substantial number of onshore wind farm applications pending consideration at present.

7.11 Notwithstanding any impacts that this proposal may have upon the landscape resource, amenity and heritage of the area, the development is compatible with Scottish Government policy and guidance for net zero and renewable energy generation in terms of its contribution to the Scottish and UK Governments' and European renewable energy targets. The proposed development would provide 217.8MW of installed capacity from turbines and 120MW of storage capacity through the proposed battery energy storage system (BESS) facility.

7.12 Wind turbines provide an important mechanism for the reduction of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions into the atmosphere by reducing the consumption of fossil fuel generated mains electricity. However, during their manufacture, construction and decommissioning, wind farms can result in the emissions of GHGs, particularly where natural carbon stores, such as forestry or peat, are present and potentially impacted by the development, often termed "carbon balance."

7.13 The applicant's assessment of the carbon losses and gains is provided in AEI-1 Appendix 12.2: Carbon Balance Assessment, which estimates a total loss of between 201,806 and 346,890 tonnes of $CO^2e$ during the construction and operational phases of the development (AEI-1 Tables 12.2.6: Estimated Carbon Emissions during the Construction Phase, and 12.2.7: Estimated Carbon Emissions during the Operational Phase). These losses are due to embodied losses from the manufacture of components and provision of backup power during construction, lifecycle emissions of turbines and batteries, and ecological losses due to peat excavation and tree felling during construction and the loss of carbon sequestration capacity of developed land.

7.14 The anticipated annual carbon savings from the scheme are nearly 730,00 tonnes of CO2e per year when compared to a grid wholly supplied from coal fired generation stations, or 327,023 tonnes of CO2e per year when compared to a grid supplied from mixed fossil fuel generation stations, and 159,655 tonnes of CO2e per year compared to a grid supplied from mixed fossil fuel and renewable generating stations (AEI-1 Table 12.2.10: Estimated Annual and Lifetime Carbon Savings from the Operation of the Revised Development from the Displacement of Grid Electricity). The estimated payback time of the proposed development is less than 9 months, based on a grid mix of sources including fossil fuels, renewable energy and nuclear

7.15 The construction period is anticipated to last between 18 -24 months (EIAR Chapter 4: Scheme Description at Paragraph 4.105 and not revised through AEI-1) with an operational lifetime of 40 years. There are likely to be some adverse effects caused by construction traffic and disruption, particularly when abnormal loads are being delivered to site. However, such projects can offer investment/opportunities to the local, Highland, and Scottish economy, including businesses ranging across the construction, haulage, electrical and service sectors.

7.16 AEI-1 Chapter 11, Socio-Economics as supplemented by the applicant's Socio-Economic Statement estimates that the total construction cost of the scheme will reach £325.5 million, £36 million, 11% of the total expenditure, of which will be spent on the BESS facility. The AEI-1 does not break down these figures into contract categories, however EIAR Chapter 13: Socio-economics, Tourism, and Recreation (at Table 13.16: Development and Construction by Contract Type) anticipated that 6% of the expenditure on the initially proposed 47 turbine scheme would be spent on planning and development, 18% on the balance of plant, 14% on turbines, 6% on the

grid connection, and 29% on the BESS facility however these percentages do not automatically apply to the amended scheme.

7.17 AEI-1 Table 4.1: Construction Phase – Estimated CAPEX, anticipates that £38.8 million of the total construction expenditure would be spent in Highland, £116.5 million in Scotland, and £171.5 million outside the UK. AEI-1 Table 4.3: Operational Phase – Estimated OPEX, anticipates that around £5.5 million will be spent on operations and maintenance for the 40 years the turbines are in situ within Highland, a further £7.5 million within Scotland, and £1.7 million outside the UK.

7.18 The statement calculates that the development's capital and operational expenditure will result in the following socio-economic benefits:

- Construction Phase (Table 4.2: Construction Phase Job and GVA Estimates):
  - £16.8 million GVA and up to 281 job years Highland; and,
  - £50.3 million GVA and up to 844 job years in Scotland.
- Operational Phase (Table 4.4: Operational Phase Job and GVA Estimates):
  - £2.3 million GVA and up to 45 job years in the Highlands; and
  - £3.2 million GVA and up to 62 job years in Scotland.

7.19 As with most onshore renewable energy developments, the economic benefits, while not significant, are positive and beneficial noting that Reporters on appeal decisions have clarified that there are considerable supply chain benefits associated with the development type.

7.20 The Council published the Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment in June 2024, which has been brought to the applicant's attention. The Council's Community Wealth Building Team has been notified of the proposal who will liaise with the applicant directly to maximise community wealth building opportunities as established under NPF4 Policy 25, as well as the community benefits as per the applicant's stated commitment within the submission (see Paragraph 11.19 of AEI-1 Chapter 11: Socio-Economics). However, as Members are aware, community benefits are not material to this assessment.

**Construction Impacts**

7.21 There are likely to be some adverse impacts during the 18–24-month wind farm construction period as well as works to install the grid connection, and, potentially, any offsite works required for the delivery of AIL. The AEI-2 advises that, typically, 160m – 320m of UGC can be laid a week depending on conditions, which would be laid in progressive sections. On that basis it is reasonable to assume a construction period of around 6 months for the UGC installation, with SSEN and not the applicant expected to lead on the final siting, design, application, and construction phases of the grid connection. The AEI-2 assumes that the UGC would be installed via open cut trenching, which would be reinstated once the installation is complete and advises

that watercourses may be crossed underneath via directional drilling. No details are provided for watercourse crossings required for the associated track access.

7.22 Disruption would largely be caused by construction traffic; specifically, increases in HGV movements along with any required alteration works on roads and structures, pruning and/or removal of vegetation, and, in particular, when abnormal loads are being delivered to site, all of which would require traffic management measures. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMPs) can be secured by condition to manage the impacts on the local and trunk road network throughout the construction period.

7.23 Standard mitigation measures that would be included within the finalised CTMP as well as the finalised Abnormal Load Transport Management Plan, Path Management Plan, and Staff Travel Plan, are set out in EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 12: Access, Traffic and Transport, its associated Technical Appendix 12.1: Transport Assessment / Route Survey Report (EIAR Volume 2), and is considered valid for the revised wind farm scheme (AEI-1 Chapter 10: Access, Traffic and Transport) and the indicative grid connection (AEI-2 Chapter 8: Traffic and Transport).

7.24 The finalised plans should be secured by conditions and agreed prior to construction works commencing on site, as well as reviewed throughout the construction programme. Pre-construction road and structure upgrades for Council maintained roads would also be required to be completed to the satisfaction of the Council prior to construction starting on site. The CTMP and other traffic and transport related plans will be working documents and informed by knowledge of large-scale construction projects in the wider area using the same road network, including knowledge of any works to install the grid connection.

7.25 The applicant would also be obliged to take onboard any feedback from ongoing engagement with the community through a Community Liaison Group (CLG), which should also be secured by condition to ensure that Community Councils and other stakeholders are kept up to date and consulted before and during the construction period. Impacts from construction traffic including HGV and AIL deliveries and the requirement for pre-construction road and structure upgrades for Council maintained roads are considered in more detail in the Roads, Traffic and Access section of this report.

7.26 A finalised Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) would be in place during the construction phase; an outline CEMP has been provided for construction of the Wind farm (EIAR Volume 2, Technical Appendix 4.1), as has a Schedule of Mitigation, Good Practice, Enhancement and Monitoring Measures (EIAR Volume 2 Technical Appendix 15.1). Additionally, SSEN Transmission would be expected to prepare a CEMP for the installation of the grid connection. Both documents should be updated following more detailed ground investigations as undertaken post-consent, with finalised versions requiring to be secured by condition

with the prior approval of the Council and relevant consultees. The approved CEMP and mitigation measures would then be implemented by contractors under the supervision of an Ecological Clerk of Works, with oversight from an Environmental Clerk of Works, to control potentially polluting activities and prevent adverse impacts on river catchments and the environment during construction.

7.27 The proposed hours of construction and delivery of materials to site are 07:00 - 19:00 Monday to Saturday, with no working proposed on Sundays and public holidays. Works that would not result in noise at sensitive properties may be undertaken at any time. Delivery of AIL may require flexibility due to logistical factors outwith the applicant's control (scheduling controls imposed by Police Scotland and weather constraints for example). The Council also acknowledges that foundation pours and turbine erection, where both activities need to be continuous, may also be required to be undertaken outwith normal construction hours.

7.28 An assessment of construction noise on noise sensitive receptors (NSRs) has been scoped out of the EIA due to the distance between NSRs and the locations of the main works to install the turbines. However, works to install access tracks will be in closer proximity to NSRs, including tracks for the indicative grid connection, which would impact 1 Glenvicaskill. The Council's EHO has not objected to this approach following confirmation from the applicant that 1 Glenvicaskill will be used as a site office for the wind farm, and on the basis that the finalised CEMP for the wind farm demonstrates that the best practicable measures will be implemented to reduce construction noise impacts at other NSRs. Both of these matters should be secured by condition.

7.29 Generally, the Council does not seek to control working hours in order to control the impact of construction noise as other powers are available to the Council under Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 for Statutory Nuisance, which obliges developers to comply with reasonable practices regarding construction noise and is enforceable by Environmental Health and not Planning. However, there will also likely be noise disturbance at NSRs from HGV movements at locations on the road network, which the EHO has no powers to control.

7.30 The outline CEMP also identifies measures to supress dust during construction works, with these measure required to be included in the finalised CEMP and implemented by the contractor.

7.31 Ten new watercourse crossings will be required for tracks within the site for the wind farm, and more for the indicative grid connection although these are not specified in the AEI-2, with the submission specifying box crossing and bottomless arches, which SEPA has accepted. With the exception of watercourse crossings, the tracks leading to them, and the temporary and permanent infrastructure listed as exceptions in AEI-1, no part of the development will be within 50m of any watercourse. These exceptions are areas of temporary earthworks for T5 and T33 (including track), a temporary

hardstanding area for T28, and a small portion of the permanent crane pad of T13 and permanent hardstanding of T24 (see Paragraph 5.46 of Chapter 5: Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat).

7.32 Activities impacting the water environment are regulated by SEPA under the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (EASR). SEPA has not objected to the proposal or its grid connection on the grounds of fluvial flood risk, nor has it commented on the location of infrastructure within watercourse buffers.

7.33 The applicant has requested a micrositing allowance of 100m for turbines and infrastructure but has accepted that for turbines at least, this should be reduced to 50m. Micrositing is acceptable within reason to address unforeseen onsite constraints with the 50m limit for turbines considered to ensure that the final installation does not deviate substantially to what has been assessed, in particular with regard to landscape and visual impacts. On that point, turbines should also not be micro-sited onto noticeably higher elevations of ground (no more than 5m AOD).

7.34 However, there may be more flexibility for ground-based infrastructure provided it avoids moving infrastructure into watercourse buffers, Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE), and does not disturb additional peat resources to that shown in the AEI-1, or increase impacts on natural or cultural heritage assets including unknown archaeology. All of these limits should be controlled through condition along with a requirement to ensure that any movement from the consented locations are subject to approval by the Ecological / Environmental Clerk of Works (E/EnvCoW).

7.35 Once the wind farm has been installed, the access tracks, substation and hardstanding areas around the turbines would remain in place for the operational lifetime of the development. Restoration of the temporary construction compound areas, verges, turbine base edges and the site borrow pit areas should also be secured through the CEMP.

**Siting, Layout and Design**

7.36 The reasons for the site's selection are reported in Chapter 3, Volume 1 of the EIAR paragraph 3/12) which states that "following an initial review of the Site, it was established that:

- The Site had an exceptional wind resource;
- It was possible to secure enough land to develop a wind farm site of scale that in turn would contribute to the needs case for the required grid upgrade;
- The large scale of the Site in combination with the wind resource presents the opportunity to develop without the need for government support or subsidy whilst providing a significant contribution towards climate change and renewable energy targets;

- The size of the Site allows for opportunities for co-located technology, i.e. battery energy storage system ('BESS'), which increases the overall capacity factor for the proposed development, allow for enhanced provision of grid balancing services, which will in turn contribute further to climate change and renewable energy targets;
- The size of the Site allows for opportunities to explore and provide extensive habitat management and enhancement. Particularly for degraded peatland habitats, thus also providing caron sequestration benefits;
- There are no international or national statutory designations for landscape or nature conservation within the Site that would indicate particularly high environmental sensitivity; and
- There are no key environmental constraints which, given the information available at the time, would preclude development."

7.37 It is also noted that a portion of the Site is subject to an existing planning consent for the Glen Ullinish Wind Farm (11 turbines at 145 / 149.9 m to blade tip). If the proposed development is consented, it will replace the consented scheme, and only the proposed development will be built out. As mentioned, the consented scheme was granted planning permission under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland Act 1997 (as amended) and as such, it would be for the Council to revoke that permission prior to the completion of that development in the event that it is lawfully implemented and the current application proposal is consented.

7.38 The design of the wind farm has followed a constraints-led approach in order that mitigation on environmental effects is embedded within the design, with key areas of survey and assessment including wind and yield analysis, radio communication links and utilities, proximity to residential properties, watercourses and private water supplies, environmental designations, protected habitats and species, cultural heritage and archaeological features, landscape and visual, topography and ground conditions, transport engineering and aviation and radar constraints.

7.39 The overarching objectives of the design strategy from the outset of the design process is noted in Chapter 3, Volume 1 of the EIAR. The applicant states:

- "To maximise the projected energy yield from the Site by careful location of turbines. Through the design process overcrowding of turbines has been avoided, which can lead to excessive wake effects that reduce energy yield and can result in additional stress and maintenance of turbines.
- To use the latest wind turbine technology, consisting of more efficient and larger turbines where these can be reasonably accommodated within the landscape, as supported by the Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022.
- To develop a well composed layout that minimises horizontal spread in views from key cultural heritage assets.
- To minimise the footprint of new infrastructure.
- To minimise water crossings and interactions with hydrological features.

- To explore opportunities within the Site to restore and enhance the landscape and biodiversity, along with providing greater access and recreational opportunities.
- To protect the amenity of residents of the closest residential properties in relation to operational noise, shadow flicker, and visual amenity.
- To minimise the risk of any contamination of the drinking water supply fed from the Drinking Water Protected Area ('DWPA'), as shown in Figure 3.2: Site Constraints Overview, which provides water to houses in the Struan settlement area, noting that the turbines of the revised scheme no longer impact on the DWPA.
- To limit the risk to ornithological considerations, in particular the white tailed eagle ('WTE') and golden eagle ('GE') population, taking into consideration the GE Terrain ('GET') Model and recorded flight activity.
- To identify a suitable level area for the main substation ('WF Substation 2') and BESS Compound, with minimal deep peat disturbance which is largely screened from views by topography and forestry, with special consideration of views from SM13662 Dun Arkaig, broch.
- To maintain a three-rotor diameter offset, or as close to three rotor diameters as possible, from the proposed Skye Reinforcement route.
- To develop a layout that fulfils the above objectives whilst respecting other environmental and technical constraints."

7.40 The proposed development has undergone several iterations with each layout involving a review of wireline visualisations from key landscape and visual receptors, consideration of setting impacts on cultural heritage assets, impacts to peat depth and ornithological consideration. Turbine tip heights explored during the design process ranged from 190m to 200m, including the use of varied tip heights across the site, however the majority of turbine heights was kept at 200m. The applicant consulted with THC at pre-application stage and a design workshop was also undertaken separately for the EIAR. Further consultation was undertaken with THC and other consultees during the design process for the AEIR. Based on the consultation feedback, the applicant notes that the revised design strategy for the proposed development include the following key objectives in order to address the concerns of consultees:

- "Landscape and visual considerations including setting the turbines further back from the west coast to reduce effects on the coastal landscape of Loch Bracadale;
- Cultural heritage considerations including reducing the proximity and prominence of turbines to the setting of the key cultural heritage features of Dun Beag Broch, Dun Arkaig, broch and Dun Mor;
- Ornithology considerations including reducing the collision risk to White-tailed Eagle; and

- Peat depth considerations - to further demonstrate the peatland mitigation hierarchy that adverse impacts are first avoided and then minimised through best practice."

7.41 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design Evolution, describes the revisions leading up to the submission of the 47 turbine scheme (see EIAR Figures 3.1a: Turbine Layout Modifications 1-4 and, 3.1b: Turbine Layout Modifications 5-6):

- Layout 1 – 59 turbines at 200m to blade tip;
- Layout 2 – 63 turbines at 200m to blade tip;
- Layout 3 – 59 turbines at 200m to blade tip;
- Layout 4 – 2 turbines at 190m to blade tip and 51 turbines at 200m to blade tip;
- Layout 5 – 45 turbines at 200m to blade tip; and
- Layout 6, the EIA submission – 47 turbines at 200m to blade tip.

7.42 All of the EIAR design evolution layouts were for two clusters of turbines with the northern cluster largely within commercial forestry plantation and a southern cluster within sloping open moorland.

7.43 AEI-1 Chapter 3: Background and Design Strategy, describes the changes made associated with the proposed development and its design evolution through four design iterations:

- Layout A - 47 turbines at 200m to blade tip (the EIAR layout);
- Layout B - 41 turbines, reducing the numbers in the northern cluster and removal of the southern cluster;
- Layout C - exploration of adding more turbines to the northern cluster; and
- Layout D - 33 turbines with further amendments and further refinement following discussion with consultees and public consultation resulting in a finalised revised layout of 33 turbines at 200m to blade tip.

7.44 In relation to landscape and visual matters, the LVIA in Chapter 6, Volume 1 of the AEIR notes that the turbines have been set further back from the more sensitive visual receptors on the coastal margins and Loch Bracadale coastline resulting key differences in comparison to the EIAR layout. The applicant states:

- "A greater sense of separation from the settled coastline.
- A greater reduction in the relative height and scale of the rotor sweep in views from the Loch Bracadale coastline further reducing turbine prominence.
- A greater reduction in horizontal extent in most views, but in particular within the context of Loch Bracadale viewpoints.
- The proposed development would be located further back from upland fringes and would occupy less area within the core of the central Skye upland landscape.

- The proposed development would be located within the larger plateau parts of the Site and would avoid the majority of higher points on the plateau to help to create a balanced impression from the majority of views.
- Whilst a small part of the proposed development would be located within the Stepped Moorland Landscape Character Type (LCT) 360, the majority lies within the Upland Sloping Moorland LCT 359, an area of the Site which is largely in plantation forestry cover.
- The proposed development has a simpler form that is no longer separated into two turbine groupings across different parts of the plateau landscape and between LCTs 359 and 360.
- The turbine layout has been rationalised in each design iteration to reduce clustering / overlapping of turbines and creates a balanced and cohesive arrangement from surrounding views.
- A revised reduced lighting scheme is proposed, with 11 perimeter turbines proposed to be lit at the nacelle and no mid tower lighting."

7.45 The AEI Design Statement provides a response to various landscape and visual considerations including setting back from the west, visibility extents, scale, appropriate landscape context and cumulative landscape context. These matters are considered by Officers in the subsequent sections of this report.

7.46 Officers acknowledge that the proposed development has increased separation from the settled coastline in the west reducing its original horizontal extent however the revised horizontal extent still remains large and there is no demonstration of a reduction in vertical scale which remains the same with turbines remaining at 200m to blade tip.

7.47 The views from western settlements such as Ose and Ullinish (VPs 1 and 18 respectively) illustrate the set back from this sensitive coastline. However, the view from Ose illustrates that the revised development would still be a distracting largescale manmade feature due to its horizontal extent, despite the removal of the southern turbine cluster, and its vertical scale. The proposal would substantially increase wind farm development in the view from Ullinish, while contrasting with the smaller scale of the operational Edinbane turbines.

7.48 In relation to other views from the west, there is increased separation between the sensitive distinctive coastline of Loch Bracadale and the proposed development as seen in VP2: Idrigill Point where the turbines would be located on the upland moorlands set back from intricate coastline. However, even with its, reduced horizontal extent the turbines would significantly increase the presence of wind farm development in views eastward across the 'dynamic coastline' of Loch Bracadale while overlapping with the southern Trotternish Hills beyond. In that way, the scheme would disrupt views to eastern landmarks from locations on the west.

7.49 The turbines would also interrupt the simplicity of the skyline in this view. NatureScot's Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape Version 3a states (at paragraph 3.27) that "The skyline may be especially valued if it conveys a sense of wildness; forms the backdrop to a settlement; is a particularly distinctive landform, or where notable landmarks and/or cultural features appear on it". In this instance, Officers consider that the proposed development would disrupt eastward views towards the skyline formed by the Trotternish Hills due the overlapping of turbines and blades breaking the skyline which is evident in the visualisation for VP2: Idrigill Point.

7.50 In other views from the west such as VP3: Macleod's Table and VP15: Roag, the horizontal extent and vertical scale of the proposed development would significantly increase wind farm development in the views contrasting with the operational turbines where it would diminish the appreciation of the panoramic views over the sea- and land- scape. In all the aforementioned views, this largely relates to the southern turbines of the proposed development which contribute to the large horizontal extent.

7.51 VP14: The Storr provides a further example of the development disrupting west facing views from the east as illustrated in. In these views, the proposal would significantly increase the presence of wind farm development by increasing the horizontal extent of turbines with turbines of a large vertical scale in views west from the highest point of the 'great ridge', where the development would overlap with and somewhat obscure Loch Bracadale and the landscapes of the North West Skye SLA. From this location, the turbines would detract from the prominence of the MacLeod's Tables, shifting the receptor's focus from the landmark hills and intricate coastline to the turbines and their hosting moorland setting. The resultant effect would be to reduce the sense of scale and distance as experienced from this elevated viewpoint.

7.52 The scheme would also contrast in scale and relationship to operational wind farms, creating a confusing image of multiple overlapping turbines. Officers also agree with NatureScot that all of the proposed turbines would be largely seen against a darker backdrop increasing intrusion particularly in bright conditions. NatureScot's Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape Version 3a states that "the relationship between a wind farm and more distant skylines should be considered particularly in open landscapes where long distance views are important."

7.53 In terms of the extent of turbine visibility, it is acknowledged that the revised scheme's set back from the coast has reduced the numbers of hubs and towers visible along the coastal settled edges of Loch Bracadale, whereby it would be mostly turbine that would be visible from these locations. This effect is evident in the comparative ZTVs (AEI-1 AEI Figures 4.13a and b: CZTV: Revised Development + Operational Wind Farms) and in VP13: B8009 Portnalong for example.

7.54 In considering scale, whilst there is a reduction in the original horizontal extent of the proposed development, the revised horizontal extent, combined with its vertical scale

and contrast with other baseline wind farms, still remains of concern from several surrounding locations. Specifically, from viewpoints west and east of the turbines including VP 2: Idrigill Point, VP3: Macleod's Table, VP15: Roag, in the west, and VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction, VP9: Minor road near Glenmore, VP10: Beinn na Greine, VP11: A87 near Romesdal and VP14: The Storr. However, the horizontal spread of the scheme is also apparent in views from the south as illustrated by VP7: Bruach na Frithe, for example.

7.55 Whilst an upland moorland and forested site may be suitable for wind farm development, in this location, the sheer number of turbines, their horizontal extent and vertical scale would appear overscaled for the receiving landscape, with the effect being that the wind farm would appear imposed on its setting rather than responding to it. This effect would be amplified in the cumulative scenario given the scale difference with between the proposed and existing turbines, with the proposal extending the influence of turbines well beyond the pattern of wind farm development in this area.

7.56 Given the above, it is not agreed that the effects on highly sensitive views and locations have been sufficiently mitigated despite changes to the proposed development. As described, the amenity of the views listed above would be significantly affected by the proposed development with the proposal not considered to have sufficiently achieved all of the design objectives set out in the applicant's Design Statement.

7.57 Furthermore, the proposed development has sought to minimise effects during the hours of darkness in the LVIA (AEI-1 Chapter 4) through a reduced lighting scheme, whereby it has been agreed with the Civil Aviation Authority that 11 of the 33 turbines would be lit on the hub, as well as avoiding the need for the use of intermediate lighting on the turbine towers. Nevertheless, there would be a number of significant effects experienced during the hours of darkness from several locations which are considered in the respective Hours of Darkness – Effects of Aviation Lighting section below.

7.58 In addition to considering the design of the proposal as a standalone development, it is equally 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. Individual wind farm design should therefore take into account the baseline and potential future baseline of wind energy in its wider context. While consideration of how the siting, layout, and design of developments relate to each other and the cohesiveness of their relationship to their surroundings from fixed viewpoints is important, it is also important to assess how wind farms relate to each other in terms of their frequency when moving through the landscape.

7.59 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 LCTs; 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 on receptors such as the enjoyment of view qualities, amongst others, are key in the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

7.60 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 Versions 3a (2017) notes that it can be particularly challenging to accommodate multiple wind farms in an area and so advances wind farm design objectives of limiting visual confusion and reinforcing the appropriateness of each development for its location.

7.61 These considerations are of particular salience because Skye is experiencing high energy related development pressures and specifically wind farm development pressure in the central portion of northwest Skye. While there are small scale individual turbines installed across the Isle of Skye, there are only two wind farms currently operational (Ben Aketil and Edinbane). The current application is one of the first of a new generation of 200m turbine proposals for Skye, and along with the removal of the very distinctive original Ben Aketil Wind Farm, a scheme that has helped inform other wind farm designs on Skye, there is potential for very significant cumulative effects on the character of wind farm development, as well as on landscape character, and views in the wider area.

7.62 It is noted here that the consented wind farm schemes at Ben Sca and Beinn Mheadhonach (the latter located further south of the Central Skye cluster), and the proposed Ben Aketil Repower and Extension are all currently under consideration for taller turbines, with the current application proposing 33 turbines at 200m. In addition, the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm for turbines up to 149.9m within the Central Skye cluster is also under consideration and is at appeal following elected Members refusing planning permission at the 21 January 2026 North Planning Applications Committee, contrary to the Officer recommendation. The scoping stage Edinbane Repower and Extension proposal has been formally withdrawn. Given this complex and shifting cumulative scenario, the future cumulative baseline is highly uncertain.

7.63 The applicant's assertion that the proposed development would not in itself alter the current perception of a 'landscape with wind farms' characteristic (AEI-1 Design Statement) is disputed. Rather, the addition of the proposed development in whatever future baseline scenario, with its large horizontal extent and vertical scale, would result

in the effect of turbines being the dominant characteristic of the area and thereby creating a ‘wind farm landscape’.

7.64 Even with the consented and application wind farms, the proposed development would be the single largest contributor to a significant combined cumulative effect. NatureScot’s position that the removal of the scoping Edinbane Repowering and Extension scheme would particularly highlight the vertical scale of the proposed turbines and their incongruous relationship to the surrounding generally lower LCTs including the intricate low-lying, small scale coastal landscape of the Loch Bracadale area, and other surrounding receptors is agreed.

7.65 Indeed, NatureScot’s Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape Guidance Versions 3a (2017) (page 28) states “where cumulative effects are likely to occur, this should result in similarity of design and wind farm image within an area that limits visual confusion and reinforces the appropriateness of each development for its location”. In this instance, the proposed development would contrast in pattern, scale, and relationship to key characteristics, creating a confusing image that would undermine the relationship of existing and approved energy developments to the sensitive landscape context.

7.66 The implications of the proposed development on the physical and perceptual experience of the landscape, as well as the visual amenity of receptors experiencing the development are considered in the respective Landscape Impact and Visual Impact sections below. As with all wind farm development, there remains potential for significant residual landscape and visual effects that require further consideration even though mitigation is, or should be, embedded into the design. Any assessment must pay particular attention to the specific hosting and neighbouring LCTs of the receiving landscape along with the landscape composition they engender, as well as any landscape designations in the wider area, susceptible receptors, as well as public views and the amenity of residents, recreational, and road user receptors.

7.67 The assessments that follow generally set out that due to the large horizontal extent of turbine layout and vertical scale of the proposed development, the proposal has resulted in a scheme with an unsympathetic relationship with the receiving and surrounding moorland and forested landscapes. The proposed development appears over prominent in complex views and notably contrasts with the scale and pattern of the baseline wind farms with significantly detrimental effects on both landscape character and the sense of place it imbues, as well as on views as experienced by local residents, users of the local roads network, and recreational users. The design of the proposed development does not follow all the principles sets out in the NatureScot Guidance ‘Siting and Designing Wind farms in the Landscape’ Version 3a (2017) and does not meet several of the Council’s OWESG (2016) Criterion, the latter which is set out in Appendix 6 of this Report.

**Ancillary Infrastructure and Design Elements**

7.68 In terms of design of the infrastructure on the site including the BESS facility, substation, access tracks, borrow pits and temporary compounds, these appear to have been located to reduce landscape, visual, and other environmental effects, particularly from low-lying receptors. However, some sections of access track would be visible from more elevated receptors. Forestry felling would also be visible from some receptors.

7.69 The principle of BESS facilities included with wind farm developments are generally supported where these are appropriately sited and designed. It is noted that battery technology is evolving with the storage capacity of individual batteries improving all the time. The choice of battery technology will influence the BESS compound's final layout, meaning that the details of the layout and design of the BESS compound included in the submission are indicative at this stage.

7.70 The final layouts, component designs and external material finishes, together with the compounds and perimeter fencing can be secured by condition. For the BESS facility a condition may be imposed to secure the proposal is reasonably sited to demonstrate compliance with Health and Safety Guidance for Grid Scale Electrical Energy Storage Systems, National Fire Chiefs Council's Guidance - Guidance on Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage System Planning, and Draft Guidance National Fire Chiefs Council on Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage Systems and/or any or any superseding guidance prevailing at the time.

7.71 It should be noted however that fire safety and fire risk management are covered by other legislation and therefore are not matters for the Planning Authority. That said, site layout, access, water supply, drainage including segregation, containment, and safe disposal of expended fire suppression agent and / or water from the water environment are relevant to the consideration of the BESS facilities and as such, details of these matters should also be secured by condition.

7.72 The final design of ancillary components requires to be conditioned as details of final design are not all shown within the EIAR. The applicant is aware of the Council's requirement for associated buildings to be designed in a manner appropriate to the wind farm's Highland context. The applicant has stated in Chapter 4, Volume 1 of the EIAR that it may house transformers externally situated adjacent to each of the turbine towers. Housing them internally is the Council's preferred option in order to reduce the visual clutter of additional infrastructure and could be secured by condition.

7.73 A micrositing allowance of 100m is requested for turbines, BESS, and ancillary infrastructure, which would be used to avoid or minimise environmental, or engineering constraints identified during pre-construction ground investigation or construction phase excavation works. The Council would seek to limit the micrositing of turbines to 50m to ensure that the final visual impacts do not significantly deviate

from that appraised through the material submitted with the landscape and visual impact assessment. The applicant has indicated that the micrositing limit of 50m for turbines is accepted.

7.74 The applicant anticipates that the colour finish of the turbines would be semi-matte, off-white / pale grey colour to reduce visibility of turbines, particularly in low visibility conditions. The final colour and finish of the turbines, along with ancillary electrical equipment, landscaping and fencing would also be agreed with the Planning Authority at the time of project procurement, which can be secured by condition. While indicative drawings for these elements are set out in the application, turbine manufacturers regularly update the designs that are available, thereby necessitating the need for some flexibility in the approved design details.

7.75 Given the means, siting, and layout of the indicative UGC grid connection between the onsite substation and Edinbane Substation, no operational landscape or visual effects are predicted once post-construction reinstatement is complete. As such, the indicative grid connection is not considered within the landscape or visual appraisals presented below.

**Landscape Effects**

7.76 There are several aspects to consider in determining whether the proposed development represents an acceptable degree of effect on landscape character, including:

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

**Landscape Character Effects**

7.77 The proposed development's specific effects on landscape character will result from the introduction of 33 large man-made rotating features into the landscape. The extent to which the turbines and, to a lesser degree, the associated tracks and other infrastructure changes the existing colour and texture of the host upland sloping moorland and stepped moorland and its interaction with the colour and texture of the wider landscapes that the development is experienced within. The proposed development's lower lying infrastructure components will have greater influence where they are more visible, which varies due to the topography and forestry.

7.78 In general terms, wind farm developments are experienced as locally dominant features within their host landscapes while the perception of their size and scale will generally decrease relative to the host landscape as one moves away from the

turbines and crosses different landscape features against which the turbines are experienced as ever diminishing objects. However, in relatively small and contained landscapes such as islands like Skye, the coastline provides a natural barrier that limits the distance the majority of receptors can separate themselves from the development. Moreover, there is less likelihood of there being sufficient incidences of landscape features that would diminish the dominance and prominence of turbines, such as expansive landscapes; sweeping moorland or mountain massifs for example. Indeed, even when experienced from the seascape, the fact that onshore energy developments are landscape features may be even more pronounced depending on how the relationship of the turbines is perceived relative to intricate coastal seascapes and landscapes.

7.79 The proposed development would be located within the Upland Sloping Moorland (LCT 359 (i) – Central Skye unit) (23 turbines) and Stepped Moorland (LCT 360 (i) – Central Skye unit) (10 turbines). Both LCTs, along with other surrounding LCTs are considered in the applicant's assessment, including:

- LCT 357(iv) Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Loch Snizort Beag Edge;
- LCT 357(x) Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Portnalong – Carbost – Drynoch;
- LCT 357(xi) Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Struan – Coillore – Gesto;
- LCT 357(xii) Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Ullinish – Eabost – Ose;
- LCT 357(xiii) Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Balmeanach – Harlosh – Roag;
- LCT 357(xv) Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Glenmore;
- LCT 358(i) Low Smooth Moorland – Glen Osedale;
- LCT 358(iii) Low Smooth Moorland – Snizort;
- LCT 360(vii) Stepped Moorland – Minginish;
- LCT 360(viii) Stepped Moorland - Loch Bracadale Edge and Islands;
- LCT 361. Stepped Hills; and
- LCT 366. Landslide Edge and Undulating Ridge.

7.80 The remaining LCTs within the study area not included in the assessment have been scoped out due to relative visibility, distance, and other mitigating factors such as existing development including wind farms meaning the proposed development would have limited to no additional effect on these landscape resources.

7.81 The applicant's assessment concludes significant effects on the landscape character of the site and some parts of its surroundings up to approximately 9 km overall, on the following LCTs:

- LCT 359(i) Upland Sloping Moorland (Central Skye) within 3.5km north and west / 2km east and south (Moderate-Major) and beyond 2km south (Moderate);
- LCT 360(i) Stepped Moorland (Central Skye) within 3.5km (Moderate-Major);
- LCT 357(iv) Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Loch Snizort Beag Edge beyond 2 km to the south (Moderate); and

- LCT 358(iii) Low Smooth Moorland – Snizort beyond 2km to the south (Moderate).

7.82 The applicant's identified significant effects on these LCTs are broadly agreed, however, significant effects would also be experienced on LCT 360(viii) Stepped Moorland - Loch Bracadale Edge and Islands and LCT 361 Stepped Hills which is noted further below.

7.83 The scale geographical extent of the proposed development would be likely to fundamentally alter the perception and character of LCT 359(i) Upland Sloping Moorland, such that wind energy development would become a dominant defining characteristic of the LCT. The proposal would represent a material change from an upland landscape characterised in part by the presence of wind farms, to one in which wind farm development would be the prevailing landscape characteristic, resulting in the perception of a 'wind farm landscape'.

7.84 The proposal would extend across, not only LCT 359(i) Upland Sloping Moorland, but also LCT 360(i) Stepped Moorland, with the two LCTs being closely interrelated and experienced as a broadly unified landscape. The hosting landscape (i.e. Upland Sloping Moorland and Stepped Moorland) is generally open and exposed, affording extensive views towards surrounding landscape features. The simplicity of the landform and ground cover contribute to an expansive undulating landscape where the perception of distance and scale can be difficult, except where man-made features are introduced.

7.85 LCT 359(i) Upland Sloping Moorland has demonstrated a degree of capacity to accommodate wind energy development by hosting the operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms, alongside the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and its Extension. However, these developments are much smaller than the proposal in terms of their geographical extent and scale, and establish a wind farm development pattern that is wholly associated with this single LCT.

7.86 The applicant's assessment identifies that the proposed development would interrupt the existing simple landscape pattern of open moorland and forestry with turbines of a contrasting scale to those of the nearby operational wind farms while extending the geographical spread of wind energy development further south. Together with the proposal's geographical extent, these factors would depart from the established pattern of wind energy development within its two hosting LCTs, giving rise to a greater degree of landscape change than what is associated with the existing pattern of wind farm development. In that way, the proposal would result in significant adverse landscape effects including intensifying cumulative landscape effects.

7.87 The revised scheme has reduced the effects on some LCTs to the west and southwest including LCTs 357(xii), 357(xiii) and 357(xv) to not significant however, its effects on

LCT 360(viii) Stepped Moorland - Loch Bracadale Edge and Islands as well as LCT 361 Stepped Hills remain significant and adverse.

7.88 Whilst the proposal has been pulled back from distinctive Loch Bracadale's sensitive coastal edge with fewer turbines now sited more centrally within its hosting LCTs, the spread of the turbines vastly increases the influence of wind farm infrastructure over Loch Bracadale's settled coastal fringes. The development would form a new focal point in views from the small coastal islands, with the turbines being skylined against the Trotternish Hills beyond while detracting from the open views across the bays and islands, and diminishing the distinctive stepped landform that rises from the coast up to a modest elevation. The effect is to create a new industrial contrasting backdrop to the upland moorland and forested stepped hills, while the unaltered scale of the turbines would overwhelm the small-scale manmade features and intricate coastline of this diverse land- and sea- scape. These effects are well illustrated in VP2: Idrigill Point.

7.89 On the above basis, the proposal would result in a Medium magnitude of change to LCT 360(viii), which when combined with the Medium-High sensitivity results in a Moderate and Significant effect. In relation to LCT 361, the applicant's assessment of Moderate effects is agreed, however, the effect would be Significant for the reasons set out above. As a result, the geographic extent of significant effects on landscape character would extend further to around 12-13km, in contrast with the applicant's assessment of 9km.

7.90 Cumulatively, it is agreed that there would be significant adverse cumulative effects on LCT 359(i), LCT 360(i), LCT 357(iv), LCT 357(xiii), LCT 360(vii), and LCT 366. However, additional significant cumulative adverse effects are identified on LCT 358(iii), LCT 360(viii), and LCT 361. As the single largest contributor to these significantly adverse combined landscape effects, the proposal's additional cumulative landscape effects would also be significantly adverse in both the consented and application (future baseline) scenarios. In that way, the proposed development would have a Significant and unacceptable effect on the landscape composition of the wider area. Some of these effects link directly to the effect on the SLQs of the North West Skye SLA and Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA which is discussed below.

**Designated Landscapes – National Scenic Areas**

7.91 There are two National Scenic Areas (NSAs) within 25 km of the proposed development Trotternish (17 km to the northeast) and The Cuillin Hills (16 km to the southeast). The applicant's findings in the EIAR are that the proposal will not result in significant effects on any of the SLQs of both NSAs. NatureScot agreed with this assessment.

7.92 NatureScot however note that in relation to the Trotternish NSA, while there would be some adverse effects on views from parts of the Trotternish Ridge, there would not be significant adverse effects on the special qualities of this NSA as these relate to the special topography and geology within the designated area and views from it to the east and not to the southwest towards the proposed development.

7.93 In relation to the Cuillin Hills NSA, NatureScot noted that the proposed development would be visible from high ridges and summits but would be seen at distances of over 16 km. The special qualities of the NSA relate to the character of the hills themselves and while areas lying outside the designated area are mentioned in terms of the special qualities, these do not include the uplands where the proposed development would be sited.

7.94 The applicant therefore did not re-assess the NSAs in the AEI-1 following this response. NatureScot has again confirmed in its consultation response to the AEI-1 that the proposed development would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Trotternish NSA or The Cuillin Hills NSA, or the objectives of these designations. NatureScot conclusions on the two NSAs are not disputed by Officers.

**Designated Landscapes – Special Landscape Areas**

7.95 The applicant has assessed the proposal's likely effects on the Special Qualities of the two Skye regionally designated Special Landscape Areas (SLAs); North West Skye SLA, and Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA. This assessment focusses on both SLAs by virtue of the SLAs having Special Qualities that are most likely to be significantly impacted by the proposed development. It is noted here that impacts on the Special Qualities of Greshornish SLA are scoped out of the appraisal. This is due to the presence of existing turbines and the siting of the consented Ben Sca turbines in the future baseline between the SLA and the proposed development. Resultantly, it is not likely to contribute significantly to the further deterioration of the SLA's Contrasting Geology, Enclosure and Exposure, or, Historic Landscape Special Qualities despite being only 5km to the north of the proposal.

**North West Skye SLA**

7.96 The North West Skye SLA abuts the southwestern boundary of the site with the nearest turbine located around 6km northeast of the SLA boundary. The SLA covers much of Skye's northwestern peninsulas of Waternish, Duirinish and Minginish extending from Waternish Point in the north to Loch Brittle in the south and including Lochs Dunvegan and Loch Bracadale (including maritime areas). The SLA is represented by several viewpoints including VP1: Ose, VP2: Idrigill Point, VP3: MacLeod's Table, VP8: A863 Sumardale, VP13: B8009 Portnalong, VP15: Roag, VP16: Colbost, VP18: Ullinish and VP19: Struan, which are located within or at the

edge of this SLA from a range of low level, coastal and elevated positions. VP6: A863 near Drynoch is also located near the southeastern boundary of the SLA.

7.97 The ZTV (AEI-1 Figures 4.7 - 4.8) illustrates visibility of the proposed development across large parts of the SLA including all of Loch Bracadale, coastal islands, and parts of Duirinish and Minginish. It is noted that whilst AEI-1 Figure 4.9 also illustrates the ZTV with designated landscapes and landscape character, the applicant has set its software to exclude the visibility and designation boundaries from the maritime areas of the sea lochs, which is not a true representation of visibility from the North West SLA; in particular where the sea is an integral part of the Special Qualities (SQ) of the SLA.

7.98 The designation covers varied and dynamic coastal scenes that contrast with the stepped moorland and distinctive hills of the interior. The SLA's description describes how the designation's complex interplay of land and sea provides an ever-changing sequence of views that includes several sea lochs such as Lochs Dunvegan and Bracadale and their offshore islands, high dramatic sea cliffs such as those of Moonen Bay and Biod an Athair, and the prominent flat-topped hills of Macleod's Tables. The description underpins the designation's Special Qualities (SQs), which describe its Dynamic Coastline, Distinctive Terrain, and Crofting Landscapes.

7.99 Reinforcing these SLA qualities are the Physical Characteristics and Perceptual Qualities of Loch Bracadale, as set out in NatureScot's response which considers effects on the regionally important character of the sea loch between Gesto Bay, southwest of Struan, and Idrigill Point, all of which are within the SLA. NatureScot contends that this area of the SLA makes a major contribution to the diverse coastal scenery of Skye by virtue of its distinctiveness complex pattern of intricate and settled coastal fringes, small scale bays, inlets, islands and coast. These coastal features markedly contrast with the larger scale open moorland of the island's interior, which provides visual containment and a simple unobtrusive backdrop to the more visually complex coast and fragmented island seascape.

7.100 These SQs are sensitive to changes brought about by increased incidences of large-scale structures intruding on coastal and mountain views, as well as additional prominent visual features within the moorland landscape that would compromise the simplicity of that landscape and reduce the sense of wildness and remoteness along less accessible coastlines, amongst other sensitivities.

7.101 The applicant's assessment acknowledges that the proposed development would result in adverse Significant (Moderate) effects on the Dynamic Coastline SQ of the SLA (Medium-High sensitivity and Medium magnitude). Whilst the applicant contends that these effects would be moderated by setting the proposed development further back from the coastal edge, reducing the extent of turbines extending across the upland backdrop, and limiting the overall depth, density and apparent scale of the

turbines. However, these measures do not adequately mitigate the effects on the Special Qualities that arise from the proposed development.

7.102 The scale, extent and prominence of the proposed development would result in Significant adverse effects on the Dynamic Coastline SQ, altering and disrupting the defining character and experience of the Loch Bracadale area. The large horizontal extent and vertical scale of the turbines, together with their collective influence within key views, would introduce an extensive man-made feature into a highly distinctive and sensitive coastal landscape. The setback of the proposed development from the coastline does not sufficiently reduce the visual influence of the development across the wider seascape and upland backdrop. In particular, the proposed development would diminish the appreciation of the varied, dynamic coastal scenery and the expansive panoramic views across the seascape, experienced for example from VP2: Idrigill Point. The proposed turbines would impose an incongruous and visually prominent element upon these views, detracting from the openness, diversity and scenic composition that underpin the SQ of the SLA.

7.103 Within Loch Bracadale, the proposed development would erode the distinctive relationship between the fragmented island seascape, the intricate and intimate scale of the settled coastline, and the expansive moorland hinterland. The introduction of large-scale turbines would disrupt the balance and visual hierarchy of these landscape components, undermining the area's distinctive sense of place and its dynamic coastal character.

7.104 The host Upland Sloping Moorland and Stepped Moorland LCTs are not within the SLA's boundary, however, they do form an important backdrop to the SLA, one that is at times wilder and simpler to the intricate coastal patterns below. These LCTs cannot be so readily disassociated with the SLA, particularly as experienced from the west and from more accessible locations on lower ground.

7.105 NatureScot has stated in its original consultation response:

"Whilst the operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane wind farms are already visible, these developments though noticeable are generally not prominent features, occupying a small extent of often panoramic views from the loch and being associated with a relatively simple and low upland skyline. These wind farms do not dominate or overly distract from the intricate coast or views over the seascape of Loch Bracadale. This is largely due to the combination of siting, further north, back from the coastal edge and the limited horizontal and vertical extent of these developments in relation to the surrounding wider area of Loch Bracadale."

7.106 In its response to the AEI-2, NatureScot further notes:

"The revised proposals demonstrate further design mitigation which has taken into consideration our previous comments regarding desirable layout amendments. This has resulted in the proposal being pulled back from the sensitive coastal edge of the

distinctive Loch Bracadale, and a reduction in the overall horizontal extent of the turbines. Turbine height has however remained consistent at 200m with no demonstration of a reduction in the vertical scale of the proposal. Therefore, many of our previous comments relating to vertical scale still apply."

7.107 The scale and extent of the proposed development do not sit well in its receiving landscape as it would detract from the low-lying coastal scenes, including the moorland backdrop, with the turbines appearing out of scale with these features and appearing to reduce the sense of scale and distance in the landscape. As NatureScot highlights, the proposal turbines would result in significant effects on the experience and enjoyment of this richly scenic and well visited coastal landscape, distracting from and dominating the scenic intricate low-lying, small scale coastal landscape and dynamic seascape of Loch Bracadale.

7.108 Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a reduction in the horizontal extent from the original proposed development, these effects would still be widespread. The scale of the wind farm has a consequent high degree of influence exerted over Loch Bracadale, with such effects also being experienced cumulatively with other wind farm projects. The proposed turbines would intensify the experience of wind energy development as experienced within the SLA by contributing to the formation of a new industrial backdrop of contrasting scale, colour, and texture to the existing moorland and forested ground cover. The proposed development would shift focus away from natural and small-scale traditional man-made features that contribute to the sense of place imbued by the SLA and therefore significantly diminish the experience of the Dynamic Coastline SQ of the SLA. These effects would also extend into the hours of darkness by virtue of visible aviation lighting.

**Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA**

7.109 The Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA is located approximately 8 km to the northeast of the proposed development and covers most of the Trotternish peninsula and lies outwith the Trotternish NSA at the northeastern end. The SLA takes in the coast of northwest and southeast Trotternish and includes the small offshore isles of Fladda-chuain off the northern tip of Skye. At the southern end of the Sound of Raasay, the SLA includes the bays at Tianavaig and Balmeanach. The SLA is represented by VP14: The Storr (and VPA: Ben Edra located on the edge of the boundary of the SLA and NSA). The ZTV (AEI Figures 4.7 - 4.8) illustrates visibility of the proposed development across western and southwestern slopes as well as more elevated parts including much of the ridgeline spine.

7.110 The SLA description noted that this area comprises an extensive and important part of one of the most spectacular landscapes in Britain, valued for its stunning scenery, fascinating geology and impressive, dynamic landforms that reveal a range of distinctive examples of landslip topography. More specifically, the citation notes that the elevated spine of the Trotternish Ridge dramatically defines contrasting

landscapes to its east and west, creating narrow coastal fringes to the peninsula which are equally varied and distinctive. The area includes two of Skye's most distinctive and iconic landscape features; the pinnacle of the Old Man of Storr, and Beinn Tianavaig, the stepped profile of which is particularly striking when viewed from the southern end of the Sound of Raasay. On review of the ZTVs, there is some theoretical visibility of the proposed development from a short stretch of the southern part of the Sound of Raasay (in and out of the SLA) and from the summit of Beinn Tianavaig, however no viewpoint or wireline has been provided to illustrate the effect from this area.

7.111 The applicant's assessment focusses on two aspects of the 'Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe' SQs of the SLA:

- "The Trotternish Ridge, the longest continuous ridge in Skye, forms the backbone of the island's northern peninsula, and dramatically defines and separates the landscape characters to its west and east. Variations in views from the coastal fringe assist in defining the differing characters of the eastern and western sides of the peninsula.
- Walking this great ridge in either a northerly or a southerly direction is an exhilarating experience which gives contrasting views – Raasay, Rona and the high peaks of the mainland on one side; broad Loch Snizort and the long profile of the Western Isles on the other. The ridge is somewhat lower than that of the Cuillins but is still grand in scale and accessible in a wider range of weather conditions."

7.112 The applicant's assessment concludes a Moderate and not significant effect on the 'Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe' SQ (Medium-High sensitivity and Medium-Low magnitude). The applicant notes that the proposed development reduces the depth and density of the southern part of the layout with an increased distance apparent between the proposed development and Loch Bracadale beyond and further notes that the reduction in turbines slightly reduces the influence the proposed development would have on the 'Ridgeline Spine' special quality of the SLA, albeit that it would still result in a similar horizontal extent of upland occupied at similar distance. The applicant's assessment is disputed. The Moderate effects on the 'Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe' SQ of the SLA would be adverse and Significant.

7.113 The above is because the proposal would affect the western views when experienced from a long section of the ridgeline including the top of The Storr (VP14) where the large horizontal extent, combined with its vertical scale, would overlap with the sensitive Loch Bracadale distinctive coastal landscape of the North West Skye SLA. The turbines would detract from the prominence of the MacLeod's Tables and shift the receptor's focus with the effect of reducing the sense of scale and distance as experienced from elevated parts of the SLA including the 'Ridgeline Spine.' The proposal would increase the extent of wind farm development further to the south resulting in individual and cumulative effects when viewed from within the SLA. The

operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane wind farms are visible from the SLA, however, given their smaller scale, are not prominent features, occupying a small extent of often panoramic views from this area and being backclothed by moorland, avoiding the overlap with the sensitive Loch Bracadale and the North West Skye SLA.

7.114 Comparably, the proposed development would contrast in scale and relationship to these operational wind farms, creating a confusing image with multiple overlapping turbines. The effect would also apply under the "application" scenario. The intervisibility between the landscape features of the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA and North West SLA would be disrupted with the proposal drawing the eye in views to the west from this ridgeline spine, with the 'exhilarating' walker experience along the 'great ridge' being significantly affected in westward views. These effects would also extend into the hours of darkness by virtue of visible aviation lighting.

7.115 It is agreed with the applicant that views in other directions from the Ridgeline Spine, in particular to the east, would evidently remain unaffected.

7.116 Officers remain unclear of the level of visual effect of the proposed turbines from the summit of Beinn Tianavaig and the Sound of Raasay, which could also affect the southern parts of the SLA. Given the distance of Beinn Tianavaig, there is a strong likelihood of significant effects as a result of the proposed development however this would require to be assessed.

**Visual Effects**

7.117 Table 4.5 of the AEIR LVIA (and pages 6-34 to 6-45 of the EIAR LVIA) provides the applicant's visual assessment from each of the 20 viewpoints, including an assessment of what the applicant considers the significance of the visual effects would be for receptors at each viewpoint. This informs the applicant's assessment of visual effects on what are considered the principal visual receptors scoped into the EIAR; namely, residential receptors, various recreational receptors including users of outdoor paths and trails, and road and transport receptors on routes in the wider surrounding area.

7.118 There are differences between the applicant's assessment and the appraisal undertaken by Council's Officers, which is to be expected when such assessments are dependent on the application of professional judgement. Differences in judgement on the specific viewpoints are set out in Appendix 6 of this report and in the main text below.

7.119 The applicant assesses significant visual effects out to an approximate 14km distance, including at 10 out of 20 viewpoints namely:

- VP1: Ose (residents only);
- VP2: Idrigill Point;
- VP3: Macleod's Table;

- VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction (residents only);
- VP5: Minor road – Struan to Leachd;
- VP9: Minor Road near Glenmore (residents only);
- VP10: Beinn ne Greine;
- VP11: A87 near Romesdal;
- VP14: The Storr; and
- VP15: Roag.

7.120 However, the applicant has under-assessed the sensitivity of receptors at:

- VP2: Idrigill Point;
- VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction;
- VP9: Minor Road near Glenmore;
- VP10: Beinn ne Greine;
- VP11: A87 near Romesdal;
- VP12: A850 near Fairy Bridge;
- VP13: B8009 Portnalong;
- VP14: The Storr;
- VP16: Colbost, Duirinish Peninsula;
- VP17: Isle of Raasay; and
- VP18: Ullinish.

7.121 In addition to under-assessing the magnitude of change at:

- VP7: Bruach na Frithe;
- VP9: Minor Road near Glenmore; and
- VP12: A850 near Fairy Bridge.

7.122 Resultantly, there is a higher level of effect arising at five locations: VPs 2, 4, 9, 10 and 14 than set out in the AEIR-1. The difference in judgement is due to the difference in professional judgment in assessing sensitivity and / or magnitude of change, which results in a different level of effect.

7.123 There is disagreement with the applicant on the significance of road users at VP1: Ose, VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction and VP9: Minor Road near Glenmore. For road users, the effect will be Significant adverse.

7.124 In addition to the effects of the proposal as an in solus development, which includes operational wind farms as part of the baseline, the applicant's LVIA has considered the cumulative effects that may arise when the proposed development is added to two different scenarios of "consented" and "application"-stage wind farms. Scoping stage wind farms are also included in the applicant's LVIA however these have been excluded from this report as the only wind farm at scoping, Edinbane Repower and Extension, has been withdrawn.

7.125 The applicant's cumulative assessment concludes that significant cumulative effects would arise for visual receptors due to the addition of the proposed development in views under the application scenario at seven VPs; specifically:

- VP1: Ose (residents only);
- VP3: Macleod's Table;
- VP9: Minor Road near Glenmore (residents only);
- VP10: Beinn ne Greine;
- VP11: A87 near Romesdal;
- VP14: The Storr; and
- VP15: Roag.

7.126 All effects are agreed to be Significant, however, as set out in the appraisal provided at Appendix 6 of this report, the applicant has underassessed the level of cumulative effect at VPs: 9, 10, 14 and 15.

7.127 Additionally, there would be further Significant cumulative effects as a result of the addition of the proposed development at several other VPs, namely:

- VP1: Ose (road users);
- VP2: Idrigill Point;
- VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction; and
- VP5: Minor road – Struan to Leachd.

7.128 Of the 20 assessed representative viewpoints provided, there would be Significant adverse cumulative effects at ten. Furthermore, not only would residents experience Significant cumulative effects at VP1: Ose, VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction, and VP9: Minor Road near Glenmore, but also road user receptors, which is assessed as not Significant within the AEI-1.

7.129 The applicant has not reassessed Scenario 1 (the consented scenario) as part of the AEI-1 as there was no cumulative update in this scenario since the EIAR. However, there should have been a reassessment given the change to some of the effects as a result of the proposed development. Officers have assessed this scenario in Appendix 6 and consider that there would be additional significant cumulative effects as reported above

7.130 Given the cumulative context on wind energy development in northwest Skye and given that the proposal would be the largest wind farm in this area, Officers have also assessed the 'combined' cumulative effect of the proposal, which the applicant has not considered in the LVIA. This appraisal is also set out at Appendix 6 of this report.

7.131 In general terms, the significant visual effects are a result of the proposed development introducing, or increasing the prominence of, large scale turbines of contrasting scale, colour, texture, movement and character to its receiving transitional

and scenic landscape. Cumulatively, the ‘combined’ and ‘additional’ cumulative effect would be far greater than the existing baseline, the existing baseline with consented wind farms, and the existing baseline plus consented and all other application wind farms.

7.132 The above is because the proposal would be the largest wind farm in this landscape; significantly extending wind farm development to the south, moving away from the rounded consolidated cluster of wind farm development in the north. The proposed development would become the dominant characteristic of the area, creating a ‘wind farm landscape.’ The addition of this development would amplify adverse cumulative visual effects.

7.133 Significant adverse visual effects would occur from views from the coastal fringes, islands and waters of Loch Bracadale, from the western shores of Loch Dunvegan, from parts of the Trotternish Ridge (the Skye Trail), from sections of the A850 / A863 / A87 / B885 and from the Macleod’s Tables as seen in VP1: Ose, VP2: Idrigill Point, VP3: Macleod’s Table, VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction, VP5: Minor road – Struan to Leachd, VP9: Minor Road near Glenmore, VP10: Beinn ne Greine, VP11: A87 near Romesdal, VP14: The Storr and VP15: Roag. For the current scheme, these significant visual effects are increased and / or exacerbated in views by the large horizontal extent and vertical scale of the proposed development contrasting in scale with other wind farms and extending beyond the more consolidated, rounded clustering of these wind farms, resulting in a more dispersed and expansive pattern of wind energy development.

7.134 The result is a distracting and visually prominent large development whose scale and appearance are disproportionate to its landscape context, drawing the eye and reducing the sense of scale and distance in the landscape. The proposed development would have the greater effect in the overall cumulative picture at many locations, while increasing the prominence and presence of turbines to receptors.

7.135 Receptors include large numbers of scattered communities, road users, tourists and those engaged in outdoor recreational activities. Due to the extent of significant visual effects on such a wide range of visual receptors, the effects are not in any way well contained or localised. Nor do officers consider that the proposed development’s significant effects have been appropriately mitigated despite the amendments made since the application was made, which do not go far enough to contain or mitigate the visual effects for various receptor groups as described below.

**Residential Receptors**

7.136 AEI-1 Chapter 4 has assessed the proposed development’s likely effect on the Residential Visual Amenity of one property within a study area of 2km – 1 Glenvicaskill, which is located approximately 1km west of the nearest proposed turbine. The number of properties included within the Residential Visual Amenity

Assessment has reduced from seven properties as assessed in the EIAR due to the design changes resulting in the other properties being located beyond 2km. None of these six properties would now experience visibility of the revised proposal due to intervening landform.

7.137 The assessment indicates that residents at 1 Glenvicaskill would experience a Major and Significant visual effect which has a medium-high magnitude of change and goes on to conclude that this property would not reach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold (i.e. the proposal affecting the outlook of residents to such an extent that the property would become an unattractive place to live). These findings are agreed. Whilst the sense of encirclement at the property would be reduced and views from its principal elevation south would not view the proposed development, there would, however, be significant cumulative effects as a result of the proposed development and the operational Edinbane Wind Farm, and their notably contrasting scales.

7.138 In terms of settlements, the applicant's assessment has excluded all of the main settlements and many local context settlement clusters due to limited or no visibility. The applicant has however assessed a number of local context settlement clusters through their viewpoint assessment, as follows:

- Local context settlement clusters on the eastern slopes of Loch Snizort Beag – assessed at VP11: A87 near Romesdal (Moderate-Major adverse, Significant);
- Local context settlement clusters on the A87 corridor north of Portree – assessed at VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction (Moderate-Major adverse, Significant);
- Local context settlement cluster of Glenmore – assessed at VP9 (Moderate adverse, Significant); and
- Local context settlement clusters around Loch Bracadale – represented at VP1: Ose (Moderate-Major adverse, Significant), VP8: A863 Sumardale (no effect), VP13: B8009 Portnalong (Moderate adverse, not significant), VP15: Roag (Moderate adverse, Significant) and VP18: Ullinish (Moderate adverse, not significant).

7.139 These visual effects are broadly agreed, however, residents of Glenmore would experience a greater level of effect (Moderate-Major and adverse, Significant) as outlined in Appendix 6 of this report. Residents at VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction would also experience Significant cumulative effects as a result of the proposed development.

**Recreational Receptors**

7.140 The applicant has assessed the following recreational routes:

- Core Path SL28.01 - Loch Bracadale: Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill (Moderate-Major adverse, Significant);
- Core Path SL20.01 - Minginish: Rubha Ban to Ardtreck (Moderate adverse, not significant);
- Core Path SL28.05 - Loch Bracadale: Vatten to Feorlig (Moderate adverse, Significant);
- Core Path SL28.04 - Loch Bracadale: Orbost to Idrigill, assessed at VP2: Idrigill Point (Moderate adverse, Significant);
- Core Path SL28.03 - Loch Bracadale: Roag Link Path, assessed at VP15: Roag (Moderate adverse, Significant);
- Core Path SL26.01 - Loch Bracadale: Ullinish to Ullinish Point (Moderate adverse, not significant);
- Core Path SL23.03 / SL23.04 - Borve: Carbost to Borve Old Road / Borve Circular Route (Moderate adverse, Significant);
- Right of Way - HSL114 (section that crosses the site connecting Glen Vic Askil with the Struan to Leachd road) (Major adverse, Significant); and
- Skye Trail (Moderate adverse, Significant).

7.141 Several of the aforementioned impacts are agreed, with the exception of:

- Core Path SL28.01 - Loch Bracadale: Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill –The magnitude of change would be High and the level of effect Major adverse and Significant; given the proximity and extent of visibility of the proposed development;
- Core Path SL28.05 - Loch Bracadale: Vatten to Feorlig – The sensitivity of receptor is High given its setting and location within the North West SLA, and the level of effect would be Moderate-Major adverse and Significant;
- Core Path SL28.04 - Loch Bracadale: Orbost to Idrigill, assessed at VP2: Idrigill Point – The level of effect would be Moderate-Major adverse and Significant, as noted in Appendix 6 of this report;
- Core Path SL23.03 / SL23.04 - Borve: Carbost to Borve Old Road / Borve Circular Route – The magnitude of change would be Medium-High, resulting in a Moderate-Major adverse and Significant level of effect, given the wide horizontal extent of the proposed development affecting the skyline of the view; and
- Skye Trail – The applicant's reported Moderate adverse and Significant level of effect between Hartaval – Creag a' Lain are not disputed, however, these Significant effects would extend further north along the Trail on the Trotternish Ridge to Flasvein and Beinn Edra up to around 17.8 km. Along this section, the large horizontal extent, combined with the vertical scale of the proposed development would still be noticeable and draw the eye as one walks south along the ridge. The turbines would partially overlap with Loch Bracadale and

detract in views towards the Cuillins and MacLeod's Table given the proposal sits between the two features and would be seen for a considerable length of the route by walkers when experienced in this direction. Significant effects would also extend slightly further to the south beyond Hartaval from around the upper slopes to the east of Bealach a'Chuirn to the climb towards Hartaval up to around 14.5 km.

**Transport Receptors**

7.142 The applicant has assessed the following routes as follows:

- A87, assessed at VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction (Moderate adverse, not significant) and VP11: A87 Romesdal (Moderate adverse, Significant);
- A863, represented at VP1: Ose (Moderate adverse, not significant), VP6: A863 near Drynoch and VP8: A863 Sumardale (both no effect);
- B885 assessed at VP5: Minor road – Struan to Leachd (Moderate-Major adverse, Significant); and
- B8009 assessed at VP13: B8009 Portnalong (Minor adverse, not significant).

7.143 These visual effects are broadly agreed, with the exception of road users at VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction where users would experience Significant effects, including cumulative effects, extending the duration and extent of the route affected by an additional 1-2km. Significant effects, including cumulative effects, would also be experienced at VP1 on the A863 through Ose. These effects are outlined at Appendix 6 of this report.

7.144 Significant effects would also occur along parts of the A850 to the northeast between the A87 junction and Carbost, and intermittently between Bernisdale and east of Suladale, which the applicant has scoped out of their preliminary assessment.

**Hours of Darkness – Effects of Aviation Lighting**

7.145 The AEI-1 LVIA updates the hours of darkness assessment presented in Appendix EIAR Volume 2, Technical Appendix 6.4. The applicant's assessment focuses only on visual effects and excludes an assessment during the hours of darkness on landscape receptors. The lighting strategy for the AEI-1 has been agreed with the CAA which proposes medium intensity 'steady' red aviation lights (2000cd) at 11 of the 33 turbines (Ts 1, 2, 4, 9, 11, 17, 21, 28, 30, 32 and 33) with no tower lights. The lighting strategy also includes implementation of intensity reduction mitigation and vertical directional intensity mitigation.

7.146 The applicant assesses significant effects in the 200cd scenario only at VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction for residents (and not significant for road users).

7.147 Whilst the above judgement is agreed, there would be more widespread Significant effects on several other receptors. The landscape of Skye is characterised by

relatively low levels of baseline lighting, reflecting dispersed settlements, extensive areas of coastline, moorland (with some forestry), remoteness, and mountainous terrain. Scattered settlement patterns, limited development across extensive areas and open, often uninterrupted horizons contribute to the perception of a largely unlit landscape after dark.

7.148 The introduction of 11 aviation warning lights into this landscape would result in Significant adverse effects, and cumulative effects with the lights of the application Ben Aketil Repower and Extension. These adversely impact Skye's characteristic dark skies at times of dawn / dusk, low light and darkness. Receptors likely to be most affected would be those around Loch Bracadale, including the North West SLA, parts of the Trotternish Ridge (the Skye Trail) including the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA, sections of some roads and from the Macleod's Tables. There is also potential for some receptors to be adversely affected in the south such as near Glenmore, and parts of the Black Cuillins which are particularly popular as an overnight camp for walkers along the Cuillin Ridge traverse.

**Landscape and Visual Appraisal Summary**

7.149 It is clear from the assessment of the proposed development's design, its effects on landscape character and composition, designated landscapes and its visual effects, that the proposed development will result in widespread Significant adverse Landscape and Visual effects, including cumulative effects. This appraisal leads to the conclusion that overall, all of the proposed development's design objectives are not met. The scale and extent of the proposed development has the potential for the proliferation of wind energy development to create a distinct 'wind farm landscape'. As the largest wind farm proposed on the Isle of Skye, it would represent a notable departure from the existing pattern of wind farm development.

7.150 In particular, the scheme would extend beyond the more consolidated, rounded clustering of existing and proposed wind energy development, resulting in a more dispersed and expansive pattern of development that would adversely affect many landscape and visual receptors. Moreover, the proposed development's resultant Significantly detrimental effects will be mostly experienced by residential, recreational, and road user receptors from parts of the western coastal fringes and peninsulas, and eastern / northeastern areas of the Isle of Skye.

7.151 The areas described above are largely covered by the regionally significant North West of Skye SLA in the west / southwest and Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA in the northeast. Landscape and Visual Effects, including Effects on the Dynamic Coast SQ of the North West SLA, and Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe SQ of the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA, are not acceptable. The sheer range and breadth of the significant adverse landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed development cannot reasonably be considered as localised, intermittent, or appropriately mitigated. The policy implications of this judgement are provided in the Conclusion and Appendix

4 of this report. As such, the unacceptable residual landscape and visual effects are determinative and form recommended Reasons 1 and 2 for refusal, as provided at Section 11 of this report.

**Natural Heritage (including ornithology)**

7.152 The applicant's assessment in relation to ecology and ornithology are set out in EIAR Volume 1 Chapters 8 and 9 respectively and are updated through AEI-1 Chapters 6 and 7. EIAR Volume 1, Chapter 9: Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat, as updated through AEI-1 Chapter 5 of the same name, set out the applicant's assessment of peat impacts when considered as a material that requires to be avoided and managed appropriately if extracted rather than as a habitat.

7.153 The Ecology and Ornithology chapters are supported by several technical appendices, including surveys for habitat and vegetation, protected species, bats, and birds. Effects on freshwater pearl mussels and fisheries have been scoped out of the assessment with the agreement of NatureScot as embedded mitigation is considered to protect the habitats for these species.

7.154 An Outline Restoration and Enhancement Management Plan (OREP) is also submitted (EIR Volume 2 Technical Appendix 8.5, updated through AEI-1 6.2: Outline Restoration and Enhancement Plan (OREP): Peat, Biodiversity, and Forestry) along with a Schedule of Mitigation, Good Practice, Enhancement and Monitoring Measures (EIAR Volume 2 Technical Appendix 15.1). AEI-2 has considered the effects of the anticipated UGC grid connection on both ecological and ornithology interests (AEI-2 Chater 5).

7.155 Overall, the EIAR, AEI-1, and AEI-2 conclude that subject to the recommended mitigation measures the wind farm will result in no residual significant effects on ecological or ornithology interests during the construction, operation, or decommissioning phases of development. The applicant has committed to ensuring that construction practices will be in line with best practise guidance. Site specific environmental protection measures will also be fully detailed in the final CEMP, Peat Management Plan (PMP), with pre-construction surveys expected to contain mitigation measures for species protection, while biodiversity and habitat enhancement measures to be detailed through the finalised OREP.

7.156 Conditions should be applied to ensure that all environmental management measures are implemented through an Ecological Clerk of Works and overseen by an Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW). In addition, the Council's Ecology Officer has provided comments on the ecological information that should be provided with any future application for the grid connection. Namely, that Supporting Information should provide a full ecological baseline of the proposed development site and clearly demonstrate that the application has followed the mitigation hierarchy principles and

demonstrates how high value/sensitive receptors have been avoided, along with consideration of the Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats.

**Designated Sites**

7.157 As detailed in Section 2 of this report, the proposal site is not covered by any international or national statutory designation for natural heritage, although there are several within 10km, the nearest being the Inner Hebrides and The Minches Special Area of Conservation (SAC). However, with the agreement of NatureScot, impacts on designated sites have been scoped out the EIA due to distance from the developable area and lack of functional connectivity

**Protected Species**

7.158 Targeted protected species surveys recorded common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, an unidentifiable pipistrelle species, and brown long-eared bat, along with evidence of pine marten and otter. Other notable species recorded were red deer and toad. Bats, otter, and pine marten are considered vulnerable to habitat loss and habitat fragmentation as well as through collision for bats, and direct contact with construction works.

7.159 The applicant's assessments conclude that impacts on these species will not be significant. However, both NatureScot and the Council's Ecology Officer have advised that impacts on bats would likely be significant without appropriate mitigation given that any losses would have an amplified effect on small bat populations on Skye. As such, additional mitigation measures such as feathering turbines and regular carcass searches in turbines in 'key-holed' areas of forestry should be secured by condition. These measures go beyond the embedded mitigation of micrositing turbine blade tips a minimum of 50m away and woodland including for turbines key-holed within forestry, and watercourses and lochs, and should be secured by condition.

7.160 Subject to the above, along with pre-construction surveys to inform Species Protection Plans being conditioned for species protection during the construction and post-construction reinstatement phases of the development, neither NatureScot nor THC's Ecologist have objected to the proposal on the grounds of impacts on protected species.

**Ornithology**

7.161 Baseline surveys were undertaken between March 2021 and February 2023 for flight activity, moorland birds including for breeding, breeding raptors and raptor roosts, and for wintering bird species. Flight activity surveys recorded golden eagle, hen harrier, merlin, peregrine falcon, short-eared owl, white-tailed eagle, curlew, golden plover, greenshank, greylag goose, lapwing, pink-footed goose, red-throated diver, and whooper swan. Development is anticipated to result in displacement for several

species from foraging and breeding sites due to the loss of around 144ha of habitat as well as disturbance from construction activities, with these effects reduced overall in the revised scheme. Consequently, NatureScot is content that impacts on golden eagle would be within acceptable limits but for red-throated diver however, NatureScot recommends further mitigation to avoid human disturbance as some turbines are within the minimum 750m recommended separation distance of breeding sites.

7.162 For white-tailed eagle, NatureScot advises that there is potential for disturbance at a nesting site as a result of construction activities, as well as use of tracks and downwind turbulence from turbines during the operational stage of development. These effects may result in the loss of an important communal roost used by the species. NatureScot however advises that the loss of this roost, although an important one, would not result in an adverse significant impact on the regional or national population.

7.163 Predicted collision risk for white-tailed eagle remains higher than most other wind energy proposals, which would add significantly to a growing national cumulative collision risk. The high collision risk is not however predicted to cause a decline in white-tailed eagle numbers, but is likely to result in significant impacts on the growth rate of the national population of this re-introduced protected species. The development will therefore slow the rate of range expansion and hinder progress towards restoring white-tailed eagle's former range across Scotland. This effect is exacerbated by the species suffering losses through avian influenza in recent years.

7.164 As such, NatureScot recommends that a package of monitoring, research and mitigation be agreed as part of any consent. These measures include standard monitoring for collision detection and bird carcass searches, as well as collating accurate information on where and when collisions occur, and contributing to a nationwide satellite tagging project as part of a collaborative white-tailed eagle research project.

7.165 Standard mitigation includes proposals to carry out regular searches and removal of carrion and fallen stock within the non-forested wind farm area while additional measures such as automated or observer led shut down of turbines on demand, scheduled curtailment during periods of increased collision risk, as well as blade painting (potentially single blades painted black) and patterning to increase visibility to the species are also recommended. These measures can be secured by condition, however, any resultant landscape and visual effects through blade painting has not been assessed in the applicant's LVIA.

**Habitat Loss and Biodiversity Enhancement**

7.166 As set out in Section 2, there is extensive peatland habitat across the site with 30% being blanket bog, most of which has been modified through burning, grazing, draining and peat cutting although there are areas of near-natural peatland condition. The north and eastern extents of the site are covered by commercial plantation forestry.

With the exception of Ts 14, 15, 17, and in part T16, the majority of turbines and their associated infrastructure would be sited within the plantation, although the access track, a temporary construction compound, as well as the substations and BESS would be within the open moorland peatland habitats. The AEI-1 advises that the revised proposal is designed so that this infrastructure avoids near-natural peatland habitats and minimises impacts on priority peatland habitats. The resultant calculated direct and indirect loss of peatland habitat is 33.95ha (Paragraph 6.2.35 of AEI-1 Appendix 6.2: Outline Restoration and Enhancement Plan (OREP): Peat, Biodiversity and Forestry), which is accepted by NatureScot.

7.167 The OREP submitted with the AEI-1 identifies a total of 304.21ha of peatland restoration, the majority of which would be through forest to bog restoration along with reprofiling eroded and hagged peat and blocking drains, in compliance with the Peatland Technical Compendium Guidance. However, NatureScot has questioned the proposal to restore peatland in bat exclusion areas as this would, presumably, result in higher bat mortality. Additionally, NatureScot does not support the proposal to use excavated peat from construction activities to infill cuttings is this not a tried and tested technique and may not restore active blanket bog habitats. As such, NatureScot does not consider these areas can be included in the overall restoration area and therefore, the calculation to mitigate the development's impact on peatland through restoration is around 1:7, falling short of the 1:10 loss to restoration ratio required for offsetting impacts on priority peatland habitat.

7.168 Members are aware that in addition to offsetting impacts, NPF4 Policy 3b) also requires major and EIA developments to significantly enhance biodiversity, which, as NatureScot advises in its response, and as set out in THC's Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance, is expected to be in the region of an additional 10% of the baseline extent of priority peatland habitat. The applicant's submission advises that there is potential for more areas of peatland restoration that could be included in the OREP and NatureScot is satisfied that this can be secured through condition. However, the Council's Ecology Officer has objected to the proposal on the grounds that application does not meet the requirements for offsetting loss of peatland or provide any enhancement therefore does not comply with the national policy, which forms the basis of Reason 3 for objection contained in Section 11 of this report. Further forestry related implications with the proposed restoration area are also set out below.

**Forestry**

7.169 The aforementioned commercial forestry within the site is arranged in several separate plantation blocks comprising mainly of Sitka, some lodgepole pine, and smaller areas of broadleaved woodland. There are areas of open ground along with watercourses and lochs between the forestry blocks. The submission advises that the condition and productivity of the plantation varies across the site whereby some areas are reasonably stocked, while others contain poor or failed crops, in particular where

planted on wet peatland. Consequently, large areas of the commercial forestry are not considered to be suited for productive conifer management. The proposed turbines, tracks, and associated infrastructure would require felling within several parts of the plantation, which would also change the longer-term pattern of woodland and open ground through a combination of infrastructure clearance, management felling, restocking, peatland-edge woodland, and conversion to open peatland.

7.170 249ha of forestry is proposed to be felled. Of which, 128.2ha is proposed to be for forest-to-bog restoration, plus 12.4ha is proposed to create a peatland-edge, or fringe, woodland. The Council's Forestry Officer advises that the forestry-to-bog proposal, while supported in principle, has not been fully justified for 56.3ha of the proposed 128.2ha area. As such, the Forestry Officer requests that a mapped site-specific assessment of the local site conditions of the forest-to-bog area not surveyed is submitted to determine the suitability of this part of the proposal. The survey should include information on peat, crop-performance, and carbon data. In addition to showing the suitability of woodland for forest-to-bog, the applicant must also demonstrate that the woodland removal would deliver significant and clearly defined additional public benefits in order to comply with the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal (CoWR) Policy as reinforced in NPF4 Policy 6c).

7.171 Areas of productive forestry proposed for forest-to-bog clearance would be required to be compensated for in order to ensure no net loss of woodland resource. Such areas should, therefore, be included in the Compensatory Planting Plan rather than shown as areas for biodiversity enhancement or habitat management, or, in this instance, included in the applicant's OREP. As such, the applicant's proposal for 91ha of compensatory planting, based on the total area to be felled minus the assumed area proposed for forest-to-bog conversion, is not supported at this stage pending a full mapped site-specific assessment. This assessment is required to establish the final area qualifying for woodland removal without compensatory planting and the resulting compensatory planting requirement. The lack of sufficient environmental information to evidence the suitability of the applicant's proposals therefore forms part of Reason 3 for objection contained in Section 11 of this report.

**Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems**

7.172 Five of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) communities surveyed on site were identified as having high potential for groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems, which are protected under the Water Framework Directive with small communities of mire (M4, M6 acid flush, M10, M32, and M37) close to the access track and turbines T15, and T17. However, due to various factors related to topography, bedrock, and soils found on site, the conclusion is that the vegetation communities listed above either not hydrologically connected to the infrastructure or are more reliant on surface water, surface runoff, and shallow groundwater that would not support large areas of GWDTE. SEPA has therefore not raised any concern

regarding the proposal's impact on GWDTE, while it is expected that environmental management plans including measures to protect the water environment would be secured through the CEMP.

7.173 Full habitat surveys of the anticipated grid connection route have not been undertaken at this stage and therefore likely impacts on GWDTEs have not been assessed within the AEI-2. Habitat surveys are therefore expected to be undertaken once the route of the UGC has been finalised to inform its application.

**Built and Cultural Heritage**

7.174 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage as updated through AEI-1 Chapter 8 and respective supporting appendices, sets out the applicant's assessment of impacts on the historic environment including archaeological resources. As set out in Section 2 of this report, there are four ancient monuments and multiple non-designated assets within the site boundary along with the three Category B and C Listed buildings near the site entrance at Struan. Given the distance and intervening screening topography, the proposal's impacts on the setting of Dunvegan Castle and its associated Garden and Designed Landscape have been scoped out of assessment with the agreement of Officers and Historic Environment Scotland (HES).

7.175 HES has assessed impacts on the settings of Dun Arkaig Broch (SM13662) located south of the River Ose in Glen Colbost, along with the grouping of Dun Beag Broch and surrounding structures (SM90325), Dun Beag cairn (SM7930) and Dun Mor fort (SM918) on the southern site boundary near Struan, as well as Dun Garsin, broch, Bracadale (SM912) south of the B885 outwith the site boundary. In its initial response, HES remarked that any direct physical impacts on these scheduled monuments would be unlikely to receive Scheduled Monument Consent if required. HES also advised of concerns of setting impacts, in particular significantly adverse impacts on the integrity of the settings of Dun Arkaig Broch (SM13662) and Dun Beag Broch and surrounding structures (SM90325) leading to its initial objection in respect of Dun Arkaig. However, HES is satisfied that the removal of the southern array of turbines has brought all setting impacts to within acceptable limits and has subsequently withdrawn its objection.

7.176 The Council's Conservation Officer has advised that the turbines would not have any significantly adverse setting impacts upon the Category B listed Struan Free Church (LB1784), or Category C listed The Haven (LB1785) and Struan Free Church Manse (LB1786). Similarly, the Council's Archaeologist is satisfied that mitigation measures set out in the submission are sufficient to ensure that construction activities for the wind farm would not result in significantly adverse impacts on known and unknown archaeological resources, which should be secured through the CEMP. A further condition to secure THC's prior approval of a Written Scheme of Investigation to be implemented by an archaeologist during construction works should also be included with any consent. The Written Scheme of Investigation would be required to include

a programme of archaeological works to cover any requirement for a post-excavation research design.

7.177 The indicative grid connection route would also cross an area of historic shielings, which would be required to be considered in the mitigation process with, ideally, all upstanding remains being avoided by the final alignment through micrositing. A similar archaeology condition as that stated would therefore be required to be included with any future application for the grid connection.

**Roads, Transport and Access**

7.178 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 12: Access, Traffic and Transport as updated through AEI-1 Chapter 10 for the revised schemes assesses the anticipated traffic impacts of the development, most pertinently during the 18–24-month construction period. The assessment is supported by a Transport Assessment that includes a route Survey report for the delivery of abnormal indivisible loads (AIL) (EIAR Volume 2 Technical Appendix 12.1).

7.179 The construction traffic forecast assumes that 25% of aggregate would be sourced offsite although the applicant expects that the onsite borrow pits should supply most or all required material. An onsite concrete batching plant is also included with the proposals however an allowance for the import of concrete is also included within the assessment. All components for turbines, the BESS facility, and temporary construction compounds would be transported to site using the public road network, while the main HGV traffic generation resulting from works to install the grid connection would likely be for upgrading and installing new access tracks as well as cable delivery.

7.180 Access for the wind farm and grid connection construction materials would predominantly be from the south via the A87(T) and the A863 Council maintained road, through to the site access junction opposite Ben Toirlean near Eabost. Consequently, the study area for the assessment is identified as the A87(T) between Kyle of Lochalsh and Portree, and the A863 between Sligachan and Dunvegan.

7.181 The largest increase in wind farm HGV traffic is at A863 east of Drynoch where it is predicted that HGV traffic will increase by 270% (AEI Table 10.5: 2027 Future Baseline + Construction Traffic (Month 14)), equating to an additional 80 two-way movements per day attributed to construction of the wind farm. Peak HGV traffic on the A87(T) is anticipated by 8.7% and by 28% along the A87 west of Broadford. HGV increases along the A87(T) at Portree and South of Portree, as well as along the A863 at Ose and at Kilmuir are all predicted to be less than 2%.

7.182 No predicted traffic generation figures are provided for the grid connection however the increase is not considered to be significant, albeit these additional movements, may contribute to a significant cumulative scenario should construction be concurrent

with other wind farm developments and the Skye Reinforcement and related electricity grid upgrades are constructed concurrently. These effects would require to be managed through a project-specific CTMP that includes provision to stagger HGV trips on the public road network through developer collaboration in order to avoid combined peak trips. Nevertheless, while the A863 is considered one of the better constructed rural roads, the predicted increase in HGV traffic for the wind farm are above the Council's Guideline threshold of 10%. As such, Transport Planning consider that further detailed assessment of the A863 road carriageway, verges and associated structures is required, which should be secured by condition.

7.183 A condition is therefore required to secure the Council's prior approval of a Roads Mitigation Schedule of Works, prior to works commencing on site, with the schedule to include several measures, as informed by survey work, necessary to mitigate construction traffic impacts and maintain the integrity and safety of the network. The applicant will also be required to finalise a legal Section 96 Agreement under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (as amended) to adequately compensate the public purse in the event of addition damage to Council maintained roads that can be attributable to the associated construction traffic.

7.184 A condition for the upgrading of the junction between the site access and the A837 at Rosehall is also required. The design of the access must be as per the Council guidance document 'Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments' and include suitable drainage measures, geometry and construction, and the provision and maintenance of appropriate visibility splays.

7.185 Transport Scotland is satisfied that its trunk road network can accommodate the construction traffic generated by the proposal subject to conditions to secure its prior approval of the scheme for any accommodation measures, additional signage, and temporary traffic control measures required on the trunk road network for construction traffic. This information can be secured through a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) condition, which will be required to cover all relevant sections of the public road network as a whole (trunk and Council maintained Road).

7.186 The EIAR advises that the transport of turbine components by AIL delivery would be via the same roads, which are the A87(T) and the A863 from the port at Kyle of Lochalsh to the site. Access to the trunk road from the port of Kyle of Lochalsh is highly constrained so a blade lifting trailer would be required to exit the port, which would be used up to the airfield at Broadford where the components would be transferred on to a superwing carrier for the remainder of the route. The applicant's route assessment has identified that additional assessment reviews, road modifications, structural reviews, vegetation trimming and clearing, as well as potential rock face regrading and other interventions are required along various points to successfully access the site. The use of third party land will also be required.

7.187 The environmental effects of offsite works required for HGV or AIL traffic have not been assessed within the EIA submissions. Should assessments show that substantial works to and alongside roads (such as vegetation clearance, particularly where impacting trees and woodland, as well as rock face regrading) and / or for the strengthening or replacement of any offsite bridge and structure are required for the purposes of HGV movements and/or AIL deliveries, the applicant would be obliged to ensure that the correct permissions are in place prior to commencing any such works. Given that the extent of works required offsite and the extent of potential significant effects resulting from these works, as required for the construction of the wind farm, are not identified at this time, it is considered that these matters can be secured through a multi-stage condition to ensure that environmental effects are appropriately considered prior to works commencing on site.

7.188 The above is a precautionary stance given the lack of definitive detail regarding such works, however it should be noted that the indicative grid connection has already been subject to EIA Screening whereby Officers considered the proposal as a standalone development unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore EIA was not considered to be required. In the event that Scottish Ministers do not consider a multi-stage condition necessary for the grid connection, the proposal should be rescreened in light of any potential likely significant environmental effects in combination with the wind farm.

**Wider Access**

7.189 Core Path SL28.01 Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill is to the site's west and would be used for access for construction of the grid connection. The ScotWays waymarked route HSL114 and other known public rights of way and known access paths as well as the Edinbane Wind Farm Loop mountain bike trail are also within the application boundary. The site is also subject to public access rights via the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (as amended). The applicant has undertaken a further review of public recreational access for the AEI-1 following comments from ScotWays that recorded additional paths in the wider study area.

7.190 Generally, public access routes will require to remain accessible for the duration of construction works as well as the operational and decommissioning phases of development or temporary alternative provision provided if this is not possible. The Council's Access Officer has also identified that there are opportunities to improve access to and through the site including links to the wider public network, noting that the existing consent for Glen Ullinish Wind Farm includes a condition to link access tracks to the Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill Core Path. Such links may be constrained by sensitive peatland habitats but in any case, an Access Management Plan should be secured by condition to favourably manage public access to and through the site for all stages of the development.

**Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Peat**

7.191 EIAR Chapter 7: Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology, and Peat, as updated through AIE-1 Chapter 5, sets out the applicant's assessments of the proposal's impacts on the water environment including flood risk and drainage, with peat excavation, reuse, and peat landslide hazard risk.

7.192 Scottish Water has confirmed that the revised scheme falls outside of any Scottish Water drinking water catchments or water abstraction sources (Drinking Water Protected Areas). With the exception of one residential property, Glenvicaskill, the hydrological report confirms that no private water supplies would likely be impacted. The Council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO) has advised that the applicant has confirmed that it will temporarily use Glenvicaskill as a site office and thereafter it will remain vacant for the duration of the wind farm's operational lifetime. As such no private residents' private water supplies will be impacted by the proposal however the site office will still require a potable water supply. To that end, the EHO requires that a condition is applied to any permission to provide details of a sufficient water supply that meets the demands of the office while meeting the water quality standard requirements set out in The Private Water Supplies (Scotland) Regulations 2006 or The Water Intended for Human Consumption (Private Supplies) (Scotland) (Regulations 2017). The proposed use of Glenvicaskill as a site office, and residential / accommodation occupancy restriction is a matter which is expected to be secured in the determination of the wind farm, through a combination of planning condition and or legal agreement.

7.193 The application site is within the catchments of the River Ose, Allt Garbh, River Treslane, River Snizort, Voaker/Balgown Burn and Amar River. These watercourses drain to the sea lochs Loch Harport and Loch Bracadale to the south-west, Loch Caroy to the west, Loch Greshornish to the north and Loch Snizort Beag to the north-east. There are areas of known fluvial flooding in the flood plains of the River Ose, west of the turbine area but crossing the access track and indicative grid connection route, and Allt an Loin Duibh at the northern most turbines. As mentioned, all watercourse crossings will require to be bridged or use bottomless culverts designed to accommodate a 1 in 200-year flow event plus climate change allowance and freeboard, in line with SEPA guidance. These structures would also be required to enable species migration, including otter passage, where appropriate and will be subject to SEPA licensing. Embedded mitigation to is expected to reduce flood risks in relation to the indicative grid connection. Additionally, Paragraph 7.31 has considered infrastructure within 50m development free buffer zones. Neither SEPA, nor the Council's Flood Risk Management Team have raised any concerns regarding flooding at the site.

7.194 As mentioned, a CEMP would be implemented by the contractor during the construction phase to control potentially polluting activities and prevent adverse

impacts on river catchments, properties, and the environment from construction activities. Specifically, the CEMP would include site specific drainage and pollution prevention plans as also required by for the construction licence required through the EASR process.

7.195 In terms of peat disturbance, the revised Outline Peat Management Plan (AEI-1 Appendix 5.2) advises that the revised layout significantly reduces the proposal's impact on peat by avoiding areas of deep peat and minimising impacts where disturbance is unavoidable. In addition, the applicant has committed to floating blade finger laydown area for T3 to avoid the excavation of peat 2m or more in depth, or micrositing to a more suitable location if floating is not possible, along with avoidance of excavation of peat 2m in depth or greater at Borrow Pit 3, Such measures have overcome SEPA's initial objection.

7.196 AEI-1 (Table 5.2.4: Summary of Excavated Peat Volumes Based on Revised Development Actual Footprint) sets out that a total of 321,225$m^3$ of peat is anticipated to be excavated overall. AEI-1 (Table 5.2.6: Estimated Potential Reuse Volumes) states that there is potential to reuse 616,210$m^3$, indicating that none of the excavated soils on the wind farm site will become waste. The potential reuse figure would likely reduce as a consequence of NatureScot's concerns regarding the use of excavated peat from construction activities to infill cuttings.

7.197 EIAR Volume 2: Outline Peat Management Plan sets out the best practice measures for excavation, re-use, storage, transport and handling of excavated peat onsite to reduce the likelihood of it releasing embodied carbon and becoming waste. SEPA has withdrawn its objection on the grounds of peat disturbance in terms of compliance with the mitigation hierarchy subject to securing a finalised peat management plan by condition, with its response providing advice directly to the applicant regarding its regulatory control of waste.

7.198 The applicant has also undertaken a Peat Slide Risk Assessment for the wind farm site, which concludes that the majority of the site has a very low or low risk of natural or induced peat landslide, albeit that 30 proposed infrastructure locations are identified as having a moderate risk of peat instability. No areas were identified as having a high risk. Following revisions to the applicant's Peat Slide Risk Assessment to include further post-consent ground investigations to identify specific mitigation measures, Ironside Farrar (the Scottish Ministers' advisor on peat landslide hazard risk) is satisfied with the adequacy of the assessment and that peat landslide can be mitigated during construction and operation of the wind farm. Specific good practice mitigation measures are identified in Sections 6.3 and 6.4 of the assessment for the revised scheme (AEI-1 Appendix 5.3), which should be secured through the CEMP.

**Noise and Shadow Flicker**

7.199 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration, as updated through AEI-1 Chapter 9, outlines the applicant's assessment of the effects of potential construction and operational noise on nearby residential receptors. The operational noise assessment demonstrates that noise from the revised development will meet the lower noise standards at all properties except 1 Glenvicaskill, which as discussed will be used by the wind farm (which should be secured by condition), both as a standalone development and cumulatively. The Council's EHO is, therefore, satisfied that noise limit standards are met at all noise sensitive properties subject to a standard condition to restrict noise limits at 35dB LA90 for all properties except 1 Glenvicaskill where a 45dB LA90 noise limit will apply. Operational noise is not anticipated to be a significant issue for the indicative grid connection due to it being undergrounded.

7.200 AEI-1 Chapter 12: Other Issues considers the potential likely effects of shadow flicker on 1 Glenvicaskill, the only identified property within 11 rotor diameters (equivalent to just less than 1.8km) and within the 130° of north of turbines threshold for shadow flicker to occur. The property could potentially experience up to 74.4 hours of shadow flicker a year based on worst case scenario modelling, that is always sunny and no intervening screening. Due to factors such as average local sunshine hours, local vegetation, and dwelling orientation, shadow flicker is likely to be experienced at the property far less than modelled. In any case, the previously mentioned condition, which ensures that the property is not used for residential purposes during the lifetime of the development, means that the resultant shadow flicker from the development would not be a significant issue for residential amenity.

**Aviation and Radar**

7.201 There are no unresolved objections from aviation interests, with no outstanding concerns raised. The amended development would have no effects on the MoD's North Uist air defence radar while NATS has identified mitigation in respect of effects on the Tiree radar used by Prestwick Airport which should be secured by condition. The MOD requests a condition which secures submission of an aviation safety lighting scheme detailing how the development would be lit throughout its operational life to maintain civil and military aviation safety; and aviation charting and safety management measures which request specified information is submitted to the MOD 14 days prior to commencement of works.

7.202 It is also noted that the revised Edition 7 of the CAA Policy and Guidelines on Wind Turbines, CAP 764, was published by the CAA in December 2025. The revised guidelines formally introduce Aviation Detection Lighting Systems (ADLS), which would only activate red aviation safety lighting at turbines when aircraft are detected within a defined volume of airspace subject to location-specific constraints and appropriate system design. As such, ADLS may not work in every location, particularly

in proximity to a licensed aerodrome. The introduction of ADLS is part of a more general move away from the need to light every turbine as a means of reducing the visual impact of night-time aviation obstacle lighting at the same time as making sure everyone is kept safe.

7.203 Given that ADLS as a technology now derives policy support and is a credible mitigation option for projects where night-time visual effects are of concern, it is appropriate to request a condition to oblige the developer to update its aviation safety lighting scheme once the technology becomes readily available.

**Decommissioning and Aftercare**

7.204 The applicant has sought permission to operate the windfarm for 40 years. 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 require to be removed from the site. The Planning Authority also requires that any foundations remain on site; the exposed concrete plinths would also be removed to a depth of 0.75m 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 pre-development condition, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.

7.205 The requirements to decommission at its end of life is relatively standard and straight forward, with any request for re-powering to be considered through the submission of a 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.

7.206 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 detailed DRP would then be implemented within 18 months of the final decommissioning of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

**Planning Compliance and Monitoring**

7.207 As with any large-scale renewable energy development, the Planning Authority would request that any forthcoming permission includes a clear description of development 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. THC requests this detail in the description so that it conveys the scope and substance of the development and so that such matters are not left to planning conditions, which could lead to scope for further redesign or re-powering without

requiring a full fresh consent. That outcome would go beyond the temporary nature of the development applied for and require substantial additional Council resource to reassess without this being reflected in the application fee. In this regard the description of development requires to be reflect the maximum turbine heights, including the specific amendments to Turbines T8 and T9 (180m blade tip and 167.5m blade tip respectively), as well as the number of turbines (nine), should the scheme be consented.

7.208 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, would 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.

7.209 Given proposed associated BESS on site, a fire safety management plan, along with finalised design, materials, access along with details of water supply and contaminated water storage could be secured by condition should the application be granted consent.

7.210 **Other Material Considerations**

7.211 The extent of offsite works associated with HGV movements and AIL delivery to structures on Council maintained roads, along with the extent of likely significant environmental effects, are also not yet known. These works are not within the description of development and are not within the site boundary. Moreover, the Council has no plans to undertake such works and so they would not be undertaken but for the wind farm. Consequently, it is considered that additional multi-stage conditions to ensure that all appropriate permissions are in place prior to construction commencing on site can reasonably be applied. Suggested wording of the condition is given below. There are no outstanding matters in relation to telecommunications.

7.212 **Multi-stage Consent**

(1) No development shall commence until:

a. Details of any offsite works required to structures on Council maintained roads, together with any environmental information assessing whether the works are likely to give rise to any significant environmental effects, along with details of any mitigation proposed, have been submitted to, and approved by, the Highland Council, including, but not be limited to, the following environmental matters:

i. landscape and visual impacts;

ii. impacts on built, cultural, and heritage assets including archaeology;

iii. impacts on natural heritage designations including the River Cassley Special Area of Conservation;
iv. impacts on habitats, protected species, and ornithology;
v. impacts on trees and woodland;
vi. impacts on the water environment;
vii. road, transport, traffic, and access including public access impacts;
viii. impacts on noise sensitive receptors; and,
ix. impacts on any other sensitive receptor as identified during the course of design and survey works.

b. the necessary planning permissions and consents including Roads Authority consents have been granted under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, and / or Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

(2) Thereafter, all works shall be carried out in accordance with the necessary permissions, consents, and approved details unless otherwise approved in writing by the Council.

**Reason**: to ensure that the environmental effects of offsite works to structures on Council maintained roads, as necessary for the construction of the project, are identified, appropriately assessed, and approved with the appropriate mitigation secured prior to works commencing on site.

7.213 Furthermore, the applicant has submitted additional environmental information (referred to as AEI-2 in this report) to supplement the original EIA by capturing the environmental effects of the Glen Ullinish Wind Farm II as a whole project. As stated, the AI appraises an assumed grid connection, and although it is stated that the proposed grid connection is based on a design previously agreed by the grid operator, the final siting and design is not confirmed. The assumption is that the final design, the application process, and construction of the grid connection would be undertaken by the grid operator.

7.214 It is considered that there is sufficient information within the AEI-2 to determine the range of sensitive receptors that could potentially be impacted by likely significant effects as a result of the grid connection forwarded by the AEI-2. However, there is insufficient information to conclude on the extent of likely significant effects. This is because the AI is generally limited to desktop studies in lieu of appropriate survey work, which would be undertaken in the event that the application is consented by Scottish Ministers, and the project offered a Gate 2 connection by NESO.

7.215 On the above basis, it is considered that a multi-stage condition may reasonably be applied to a consent for the Wind Farm pursuant to Regulation 4 at Paragraph 6 of the EIA Regulations. This condition would allow Scottish Ministers to consent the Wind Farm if so minded, but prevent construction works commencing on the project until

such a time as the grid connection is consented following a full appraisal of its environmental effects.

7.216 The suggested wording for the condition is provided below with the wording considered to ensure that environmental effects are appropriately assessed no matter the consenting route (i.e., whether through the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), or the Electricity Act 1989), and, in the event that all or part of the eventual grid connection is progressed through permitted development. This is important as the condition requires to cover any eventuality including that the siting, design, and means of connection change during the next design stage.

**Non-Material Considerations**

7.217 The following matters that have been raised by third parties are not material to the assessment:

a) The need for the development including the predicted supply of energy generated from renewable sources outstripping electricity demand in Scotland and the UK.
b) Capacity of the national grid.
c) Where the energy generated by the proposal will be consumed.
d) The profile of the applicant/developer.
e) The profile of the contributor including private health matters.
f) Procedural matters such as public consultation where this has met minimum statutory requirements.
g) Disagreement with national planning and energy policy including the lack of a strategy for renewable generating stations on Skye.
h) Dissatisfaction with the development management process including that Skye wind farm applications are being considered on a case by case basis and calls for a ‘Planning Inquiry Commission’ to consider all applications strategically.
i) Community benefit funding.
j) Community disputes.
k) Curtailment payments.
l) Preference for other sites to be developed.
m) Preference for other types of energy generation.
n) Objections to other energy developments including the Skye Upgrades Project.
o) Preference for community led renewable energy when that is not being proposed.
p) Developer profits.
q) Energy bills
r) Impacts on private views where this is not a residential visual amenity affect.
s) Impacts on property values.
t) Speculation that large scale renewable energy developments lead to depopulation of rural areas.

u) Fire safety management where this does not affect the layout and design and drainage arrangements of the proposal.
v) Speculation regarding the capacity and capability of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
w) Turbine manufacture quality management and certification.
x) Claims that the development will negatively impact individuals' mental health through 'wind farm syndrome' and unproven health impacts such as from infrasound.

## 8. Matters to be secured by Legal Agreement / Upfront Payment

8.1 A decommissioning and restoration financial guarantee and a Section 96 Roads Agreement can be secured by condition. No legal agreement is required should consent be granted.

8.2 It is also noted that a portion of the Site is subject to an existing planning consent for the Glen Ullinish Wind Farm (11 turbines at 145 / 149.9 m to blade tip). If the proposed development is consented, it will replace the consented scheme, and only the proposed development will be built out. Given this stated commitment in the EIA, Officers suggest that the existing permission (THC reference 20/01129/S42) should be the subject of a Revocation Order, or through Section 75 legal agreement, given that the EIA technical chapters do not assess the cumulative effect of developing both Glen Ullinish and the current proposed development. In this respect, the applicant is currently in the process of submitting pre-commencement condition information for Glen Ullinish Wind Farm, with a meaningful start to its access being targeted before the permission lapses on 21 December 2026. The purpose of implementing this planning permission is to safeguard the applicant's fallback position should Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm be refused.

8.3 Additionally, the proposed use of 1 Glenvicaskill as a site office with restrictions on its use for residential / accommodation occupancy is a matter that is expected to be secured in the determination of the wind farm through a combination of planning condition and / or legal agreement.

## 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 be situated in appropriate locations to operate successfully. The project has the potential to contribute up to 217.8MW of renewable energy capacity, and 120MW of battery storage, towards Scottish Government targets and play a role in the route to a net zero Scotland. In addition, the development has potential to bring economic benefits to the area and to create new jobs.

9.2 However, as with all such proposals, the benefits of the scheme must be weighed against potential drawbacks and then considered in the round, taking account of the relevant policies of the Development Plan. As an application submitted under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989, it will be for the Scottish Ministers to decide whether the applicant has had sufficient regard to the preservation of amenity and the desirability of preserving the natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geographic or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting site, buildings, and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest, to the extent that any such impacts are reasonably mitigated as required under Schedule 9 of the Act.

9.3 The report has set out that the impacts and effects of the proposal as they relate to construction, built and cultural heritage, and access, the water environment and peat management, amenity as it relates to noise and shadow flicker, telecommunications, aviation and radar, as well as decommissioning and aftercare, would be within acceptable limits subject to the developer's compliance with conditions requested by consultees and legal agreement to ensure that 1 Glenvicaskill is not used for residential or accommodation purposes.

9.4 The assessment has however also considered the proposal against the criteria cited in the OSWESG, which provides guidance to developers to ensure their developments are suitably located and sensitively sited and designed to avoid unacceptable impacts on the development's wider context. In this case the development does not achieve the threshold for several of these criteria due to the sensitivities of the site's location, its elevation, and the siting, layout, and design of turbines including their horizontal spread, vertical scale, and the subsequent exposure and prominence of its large-scale turbines.

9.5 It is clear from the assessment of the proposal's design that its effects on landscape character and composition, and its visual effects, will result in Significant landscape effects, including cumulative effects, on the hosting Landscape Character Areas LCT 359 Upland Sloping Moorland and LCT 360 Stepped Moorland, as well as the neighbouring Landscape Character Areas LCT 357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh, LCT 358 Low Smooth Moorland, and LCT 361 Stepped Hills. This appraisal has judged that the proposal will lead to Significant in solus and cumulative visual effects at Viewpoints 1 through 5, and Viewpoints 9, 10, 11, 14, and 15.

9.6 The report has set out that the proposal would disrupt and change the existing simple landscape characteristics of open moorland and forestry, diminishing the distinctive stepped landform that rises from the coast up to a modest elevation with turbines of contrasting scale, texture, and colour. The scheme would extend the geographical spread of wind energy development further south of the established pattern of wind energy development, away from the rounded consolidated cluster, with turbines of a contrasting scale to those of the nearby operational wind farms. In that way, the development would vastly increase the influence of wind farm infrastructure over Loch

Bracadale's settled coastal fringes. It would create a new industrial contrasting backdrop to the upland moorland and forested stepped hills to form a new focal point in views from the small coastal islands. Turbines would be skylined against the Trotternish Hills beyond while detracting from the open views across the bays and islands, including from locations such as The Storr in the northeast. Consequently, the proposal would be experienced as an overtly prominent feature that would overwhelm the natural and semi-natural features, buildings, and structures that contribute to Loch Bracadale's diverse land- and sea- scape in a manner that would significantly detract from the experience and enjoyment of this scenic, popular, and well visited coastal landscape.

9.7 These residual Significant effects will be experienced by receptors from the western coastal fringes and peninsulas of the Isle of Skye. This area is largely covered by the regionally significant North West of Skye Special Landscape Area designation with the report setting out that the proposal would be significantly detrimental to its Dynamic Coastline Special Quality, which makes a major contribution to the diverse coastal scenery of Skye and is distinctive at the regional scale. Additionally, the report concludes that the effects extend northeast with the proposal impacting western views experienced from a long section of the ridgeline including those along the Skye Trail and at the top of The Storr to the extent that it would be significantly detrimental to the Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe Special Quality of the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated that these effects do not extend east of the turbines to the southern portion of the SLA at Beinn Tianavaig and the Sound of Raasay.

9.8 It is noted here that SLA citations do not distinguish between landscape and visual impacts but rather implicitly lay bare how landscape and visual effects combine to produce the specific Special Qualities of the SLA. This is because scenic value arises from the combination of individual landscape characteristics including natural and semi-natural features, buildings, and structures.

9.9 The Council considers these designated areas to be at least regionally important for their scenic qualities, and that these areas are significant to Highlands and are valued beyond their locale. The policy test in NPF4 in relation to regionally important, designated landscapes is established in NPF4 Policy 4d), which seeks to protect the integrity and qualities of such designations while allowing for development with social, environmental, or economic impacts that clearly outweigh the significant effects on.

9.10 The appraisal of visual effects has found that significant adverse visual effects would be experienced by residential, recreational, and users of transport receptors for up to 14km as a result of the proposed development introducing, or increasing the prominence of, large scale turbines of contrasting scale, colour, texture, movement and character to its receiving transitional and scenic landscape. These effects would extend into the hours of darkness, and especially during dusk where the aviation

lighting, which would adversely affecting the quality and enjoyment of the dark sky qualities of the area for receptors.

9.11 In addition to the above, the report has set out that the proposal has not demonstrated appropriate compensation or enhancement measures in respect of peatland habitat losses pursuant to NPF4 Policy 3b) (Biodiversity) and HwLDP Policy 60 (Other Important Habitats). Nor has the applicant demonstrated that the full area proposed for forestry-to-bog conversion is suitable for woodland removal and that adequate compensatory planting will be provided as required under NPF Policy 6c) (Forestry, woodland and trees) and HwLDP Policy 52 (Principal of Development in Woodland).

9.12 Significant weight has been given to the global climate and nature crises in this assessment. However, the proposal fails to meet the threshold of seven of the ten criteria set out in the Council's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, which are written to make developers aware of key landscape and visual constraints and design their developments accordingly. In this instance, the geographical extent, nature, range, and breadth of significantly adverse effects on landscape character, composition, and designations as well as visual effects on receptors cannot reasonably be considered to be intermittent, localised or appropriately mitigated. Nor does the proposal's contributions to mitigate both climate and nature crises, as well as to social and economic benefits, clearly outweigh these significant effects. As such, NPF4 Policy 4a) is triggered whereby the proposal is considered to result in unacceptable impacts on the natural environment by virtue of not adequately mitigating the scale of the development type for its location through the design process.

9.13 Due consideration has been given to the requirements of Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989, and all the relevant policies of the Development Plan; principally NPF4, as well as Highland-wide Local Development Plan Policy 67 for Renewable Energy Developments with its eleven tests as expanded upon through the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. This policy also reflects policy tests of other HwLDP policies in the plan, Policies 28 (Sustainable Development), 57 (Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage), and 61 (Landscape), which draw on the range of subject specific policies as also contained within NPF4 and the HwLDP as listed in Appendix 3 of this report.

9.14 All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal does not accord with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is unacceptable in terms of applicable material considerations.

## 10. IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Resource: Not applicable

10.2 Legal: Not applicable

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

10.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: if permitted the development would produce renewable energy.

10.5 Risk: Not applicable

10.6 Gaelic: Not applicable

## 11. RECOMMENDATION

**Action required before decision issued to Scottish Ministers: No**

It is recommended to maintain the Council's **OBJECTION** to the application subject to Part A and for the reasons set out in Part B below:

**Part A – Delegated Authority**

1. Members granting delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager, in consultation with the Area Planning Committee Chairs, to respond to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit / The Planning and Environmental Appeals Division / Scottish Minsters, regarding any future procedure / Public Local Inquiry and/or Further / Supplementary Environmental Information.

**Part B - Reasons for Objection**

1. The application does not accord with the provisions of Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 by virtue of not demonstrating sufficient regard to the desirability of, and failing to reasonably mitigate effects detrimental to preserving natural beauty and conserving physiographical features of special interest because the siting of large-scale turbines over a wide geographical extent at the location, along with the proposal's ground based infrastructure, would result in significantly detrimental in-solus and additional cumulative landscape effects for up to 12-13km from the proposed turbines on Landscape Character Types:

    - LCT 359(i) Upland Sloping Moorland (Central Skye unit);
    - LCT 360(i) Stepped Moorland (Central Skye unit);
    - LCT 357(iv) Farmed and Settled Lowlands (Loch Snizort Beag Edge unit);
    - LCT 358(iii) Low Smooth Moorland (Snizort unit);
    - LCT 360(viii) Stepped Moorland (Loch Bracadale Edge and Islands unit); and
    - LCT 361 Stepped Hills.

    The proposal would be significantly detrimental to:

- the Dynamic Coastline Special Quality of the regionally significant North West Skye Special Landscape Area;
- the Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe Special Quality of the regionally significant Trotternish and Tianavaig Special Landscape Area; and
- the regionally distinctive dynamic coastline and diverse coastal scenery of Loch Bracadale.

These significant adverse effects on landscape character, the landscape composition of the proposal's wider setting and the sense of place it imbues to the northwest of Skye, as well as on landscape designations would extend into the hours of darkness due to aviation lighting. The proposal will be the single largest contributor to significant combined cumulative landscape effects. These significant adverse landscape effects are not intermittent, localised, or adequately mitigated, nor are they clearly outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits. Consequently, the proposal does not accord with NPF4 Policies 11 (Energy) at Part e), Policy 4 (Natural Places) at Part d) and engages the provisions of NPF4 Policy 4 at Part a) as well as HwLDP Policies 67 (Renewable Energy Developments) and Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, 28 (Sustainable Design), 57 (Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage), and 61 (Landscape).

2. The application does not accord with the provisions of Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 by virtue of not demonstrating sufficient regard to the desirability of, and failing to reasonably mitigate effects detrimental to preserving natural beauty of the countryside because the proposal would result in significantly detrimental visual effects on residents of:

    - the settlement clusters on the eastern slopes of Loch Snizort Beag;
    - the settlement clusters on the A87 corridor north of Portree;
    - the settlement cluster of Glenmore; and
    - the settlement clusters around Loch Bracadale.

    The proposal would result in significantly detrimental visual effects on recreational users of:

    - Core Path SL23.03 / SL23.04 - Borve: Carbost to Borve Old Road / Borve Circular Route;
    - Core Path SL28.01 - Loch Bracadale: Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill;
    - Core Path SL28.03 - Loch Bracadale: Roag Link Path;
    - Core Path SL28.04 - Loch Bracadale: Orbost to Idrigill;
    - Core Path SL28.05 - Loch Bracadale: Vatten to Feorlig;
    - Right of Way - HSL114 (section that crosses the site connecting Glen Vic Askil with the Struan to Leachd road); and
    - Skye Trail.

    As well as significant visual effects visual effects on transport receptors on:

    - A87(T);

- A863;
- A850 between the A87 junction and Carbost, and between Bernisdale and east of Suladale; and
- B885.

These effects are evidenced by significant in-solus visual effects at:

- VP1: Ose;
- VP2: Idrigill Point;
- VP3: Macleod's Table;
- VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction;
- VP5: Minor road – Struan to Leachd;
- VP9: Minor Road near Glenmore;
- VP10: Beinn ne Greine;
- VP11: A87 near Romesdal;
- VP14: The Storr; and
- VP15: Roag.

and, significant cumulative visual effects at:

- VP1: Ose residents and road users;
- VP2: Idrigill Point;
- VP3: Macleod's Table;
- VP4: A87 Drumuie Junction;
- VP5: Minor road – Struan to Leachd;
- VP9: Minor Road near Glenmore (residents only);
- VP10: Beinn ne Greine;
- VP11: A87 near Romesdal;
- VP14: The Storr; and
- VP15: Roag.

As such, the proposal will result in significantly detrimental visual effects across a broad area up to around 14km from the turbines, affecting a broad range of receptors, with effects extending into the hours of darkness due to aviation lighting. The proposal will be the single largest contributor to significant cumulative visual effects from multiple locations. These significantly detrimental visual effects cannot reasonably be considered localised or sufficiently mitigated by the siting, layout, or design of the proposal nor clearly outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits. Consequently, the proposal does not accord with NPF4 Policies 11 (Energy) at Part e) and HwLDP Policies 67 (Renewable Energy Developments) and Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, 28 (Sustainable Design), and 61 (Landscape). Subsequently NPF4 Policy 4 (Natural Places) at Part a) is engaged.

3. The application does not accord with the provisions of Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 by virtue of not demonstrating sufficient regard to the desirability of, and failing

to reasonably mitigate effects detrimental to, conserving flora, fauna, and physiographical features of special interest by virtue of the application not adequately offsetting the loss of peatland habitat or providing any habitat enhancement.

The proposed 304.21ha of peatland restoration would result in a 1:7 peatland habitat loss to restoration ratio, which falls short of the 1:10 ratio required for offsetting impacts on priority peatland habitat as set out in NatureScot Guidance Advising on Peatland Habitats and Carbon-Rich Soils in Development Management. As such, the application fails to demonstrate additional enhancement of peatland habitat, which should be an additional 10% peatland restoration to accord with the Council's Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance (total 1:11 loss to restoration ratio). Moreover, the peatland restoration figure is based on restoring bat exclusion areas, which would create favourable habitat for bats that could result in higher bat mortality. The proposal to use excavated peat from construction activities to infill cuttings is not a tried and tested technique and may not restore active blanket bog habitats and therefore is not supported. Furthermore, the proposal fails to demonstrate that 56.3ha of the proposed 128.2ha for forestry-to-bog conversion is suitable for woodland removal and that adequate compensatory planting will be provided.

Consequently, the proposal does not accord with NPF 4 Policies 3 (Biodiversity) at Part b), 4 (Natural Places) at Part f), and 6 (Forestry, woodland and trees) at Part c). Nor does the proposal comply with HwLDP Policies 67 (Renewable Energy Developments), 52 (Principal of Development in Woodland), 58 (Protected Species), 60 (Other Important Habitats), and 28 (Sustainable Design).

| | |
|---|---|
| Signature: | Bob Robertson |
| Designation: | pp Area Planning Manager - South |
| Author: | Mark Fitzpatrick - Principal Planner |
| | Rohan Sinha - Principal Landscape Officer (Coauthor - Landscape and Visual Sections) |
| Background Papers: | Documents referred to in report and in case file. |
| Relevant Plans: | Plan 1 - AEI Figure 1.1: Site Location |
| | Plan 2 - AEI Figure 3.2a: Revised Layout |
| | Plan 3 - EIA Figure 4.4 Typical Wind Turbine 200m Tip Height |
| Appendices: | Appendix 1 - Letters of Representation |
| | Appendix 2 - Cumulative Wind Farm Developments |
| | Appendix 3 - Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations |

Appendix 4 - Compliance with the Development Plan / Other Material Policy Considerations

Appendix 5 - LVIA Methodology

Appendix 6 - Viewpoint Visual Assessment Appraisal (operational only)

Appendix 7 - Assessment against Landscape and Visual Assessment Criteria contained within Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

## Appendix 2 - Cumulative Wind Farm Developments

| Name | Distance/Direction | Number of Turbines | Tip height |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Operational** | | | |
| Edinbane | 0.8 km west | 18 | 100 m |
| Ben Aketil | 3.7 km west | 12 | 100 m |
| **Consented** | | | |
| Ben Sca | 2.6 km northwest | 7 | 135 m |
| Glen Ullinish | 4.1km SE | 11 | 149.9 m |
| Ben Sca Extension | 4.4 km northwest | 2 | 149.9 m |
| Beinn Mheadhonach | 4 km south | 4 | 120 m |
| **Application / Appeal** | | | |
| Balmeanach | 1.4 km west | 10 | 149.9 m |
| Ben Sca Redesign | 2.6 km northwest | 9 | 149.9 m |
| Ben Aketil Repower and Extension | 3.5 km west | 9 | 200 m |
| Beinn Mheadhonach (Redesign) | 4 km SE | 5 | 150 m |
| **Scoping** | | | |
| Breakish | 42 km E | 20 | 200 m |

## Appendix 3 - Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations

### DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### National Planning Framework 4 (2023)

A3.1 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

18 - Infrastructure First

22 - Flood risk and water management

23 - Health and safety

25 - Community wealth benefits

33 - Minerals

### Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012

A3.2 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 Important 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

**The West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan 2019 ('WestPlan')**

A3.3 WestPlan does not contain land allocations related to the proposed development. It emphasises the role of Edinbane (to the north of the site) as the largest centre serving the Skeabost District. Dunvegan, located to the northwest of the site, is identified as a 'main settlement' by WestPlan and key service centre for northwest Skye. The Plan aims to 'safeguard, enhance and promote the natural and built heritage of the area'. The majority of the site is designated 'fragile' by WestPlan, which is defined as 'areas which are in decline or in danger of becoming so as a consequence of remoteness and socio-economic factors, such as population loss, erosion of services and facilities and lack of employment opportunities. In some areas the natural heritage is a dominant influence on appropriate land management'. The Plan focuses on increasing employment opportunities in these areas including support for tourism expansion where it would better utilise the area's outstanding natural and cultural heritage. Local area Development Plans identify Special Landscape Areas (SLA) within the plan area. As noted in section two, there are SLAs within the LVIA study area that would be impacted by the development.

**Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, Nov 2016 (OWESG)**

A3.4 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.

**Other Highland Council Supplementary Guidance**

A3.5

- Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance (May 2024)
- Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (August 2010)
- 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)
- Reducing Light Pollution: Draft Good Practice Guidance (August 2026)
- Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments (May 2013)
- Special Landscape Area Citations (Jun 2011)
- Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)
- Trees, woodland and development (Jan 2013)
- Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (2010)

**OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

**Emerging Highland Council Development Plan Documents and Planning Guidance**

A3.6 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. There is no Local Place Plan covering the application site.

A3.7 The Highland Council also has further advice on the delivery of major developments in several 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**

A3.8

- Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 – interim and annual targets replaced by Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill in November 2024
- Climate Change Committee Report to UK Parliament (July 2024)
- UK Government Clean Power Action Plan (Dec 2024)
- Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)
- Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement (2022)
- Draft Scottish Biodiversity strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency (2023)
- Scottish Energy Strategy (2017)
- 2020 Routemap 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)
- Assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of onshore wind energy developments, NatureScot (2021)
- Special Landscape Qualities - Guidance on assessing effects, NatureScot (updated 2025)
- 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 4/1998 – The use of Conditions in Planning Permissions – this states that planning conditions should only be imposed when they meet all of the following six tests: 1) Necessary, 2) Relevant to planning, 3) Relevant to the development to be permitted, 4) Enforceable, 5) Precise; and Reasonable in

all other respects

- Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2017)
- NatureScot: Guidance on Aviation Lighting Impact Assessment (2024)
- Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA), Landscape Institute (March 2019)
- Scottish Forestry Woodland Creation Application Guidance (November 2017)

## Appendix 4 - Compliance with the Development Plan / Other Material Policy Considerations

### National Policy

A4.1 NPF 4 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. This includes spatial principles, national and regional spatial priorities, and action areas;
- Part 2 – sets out policies for the development and use of land 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; and
- Part 3 – provides a series of annexes that give the rationale for the strategies and policies of NPF4, it outlines how the document should be used, and sets out how the Scottish Government will implement the strategies and policies.

A4.2 **Part 1 - Spatial Strategy** explains the unprecedented national challenges and 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 the nation's economy, identity, health and wellbeing and explains that choices need to be made on sustainable use of natural assets in a way which benefits communities. The spatial strategy reflects legislation in setting out decisions required in the long-term public interest. However, in doing so it is clear that the right choices about where development should be located need to be made to ensure clarity over the types of infrastructure 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 to reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity; liveable places for better and healthier lives; and productive places where there is a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

A4.3 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.

A4.4 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.

A4.5 **Part 2 – Policies: 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.

A4.6 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. In this instance, the report has set out that the application fails to appropriately quantify direct and indirect peatland habitat losses as a result of unsupported proposals for peatland restoration and unjustified proposals for forest-to-bog restoration. Moreover, the losses will not be sufficiently offset nor is an appropriate level of peatland habitat enhancement through peatland restoration proposed. As such, the proposal does not comply with Policy 3 b).

A4.7 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. In this instance, the proposal is not considered to accord with this clause due to the extent, nature, range and breadth of the significant landscape and visual impacts from the development. 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.

A4.8 The Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC is located 0.8km southwest but was scoped out of the assessment due to distance and lack of functional or structural connectivity. The Cullins Special Protection Area (SPA) is situated approximately

8.8km southeast of the nearest turbine (T15) and the EIAR concluded there would be no significant effect.

A4.9 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. The Council does not consider that the policy advocates a clinical weighing up of national development versus a non-national designation. The report has concluded that the significantly detrimental impacts on the Dynamic Coastline Special Quality of the regionally significant North West Skye Special Landscape Area, and the Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe Special Quality of the regionally significant Trotternish and Tianavaig Special Landscape Area are not **clearly** outweighed by any social, environmental, or economic benefits resulting from the wind farm, particularly where the local importance of the proposal's benefits are not established as is the case here.

A4.10 With regard Wild Land Areas, NPF4 Policy 4 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 out with WLAs will not be a significant consideration. There are no Wild Land Areas within the site, the nearest being WLA 22 Duirinish to the west with negligible effects on the Wild Land Qualities.

A4.11 Policy 11 intent is to 'encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore. This includes energy generation, storage, new and replacement transmission and distribution infrastructure and emerging low-carbon and zero emissions technologies including hydrogen and carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS)'.

A4.12 Specific to 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.

A4.13 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.

A4.14 However, the landscape and visual impacts of a proposal of 33 turbines at 200m in height remains challenging to be entirely contained, as reflected in the significant adverse impacts identified within the AEI-1 and through the consultation process. 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.

A4.15 The current proposal will have significant adverse landscape and visual impacts on a broad range of features/receptors across a broad area including:

- on the landscape character of:
    - LCT 359(i) Upland Sloping Moorland (Central Skye unit);
    - LCT 360(i) Stepped Moorland (Central Skye unit);
    - LCT 357(iv) Farmed and Settled Lowlands (Loch Snizort Beag Edge unit);
    - LCT 358(iii) Low Smooth Moorland (Snizort unit);
    - LCT 360(viii) Stepped Moorland (Loch Bracadale Edge and Islands unit); and
    - LCT 361 Stepped Hills;
- landscape composition by virtue of the proposal being significantly detrimental to the interactions between and across multiple Landscape Character Types in the surrounding area;
- the Dynamic Coastline Special Quality of the regionally significant North West Skye Special Landscape Area;
- the Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe Special Quality of the regionally significant Trotternish and Tianavaig Special Landscape Area; and
- the regionally distinctive dynamic coastline and diverse coastal scenery of Loch Bracadale;
- the visual amenity of multiple residential receptors including at several settlement clusters, along with recreational users of several paths, routes and summits, and users of transport routes, with receptors spread over a large geographical area extending up to 14km from the turbines.

A4.16 It is not considered that the scale, nature, range and breadth of the above landscape and visual effects can be reasonably described as intermittent and localised. Moreover, the applicant has not embedded sufficient mitigation in to the proposal's design to bring these significant landscape and visual effects to within acceptable limits. Therefore, the threshold of the 'appropriate design mitigation' policy test is not reached.

A4.17 Part 3: Annex B – National Developments Statements of Need. National developments are significant developments of national importance. Appendix B identifies eighteen types of national development which will support the delivery of the spatial strategy. The statements of need set out in the Appendix are a requirement of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997). Any project identified as national development is required to be considered at a project level to ensure all statutory tests are met.

This project is classified as National Development under Annex B Section 3 which states National Development for renewable energy includes 'Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure' including:

'b) New and/or replacement upgraded on and offshore high voltage electricity transmission lines, cables and interconnectors of 132kv or more; and

c) New and/or upgraded Infrastructure directly supporting on and offshore high voltage electricity lines, cables and interconnectors including converter stations, switching stations and substations.

A4.18 The above brings the application under the environmental considerations set out in NPF4 Policy 11e) that require to be sufficiently mitigated against, and which largely correspond to their HwLDP Policy 67 equivalents. As has already been set out, in-solus and cumulative landscape and visual effects are significant and adverse across a broad range of receptors within a broad area including on landscape character, composition, two scenic designations of regional significance, and residential, recreational, and users of transport modes receptors, and are judged to be not within acceptable limits.

**Local Development Plan 2012 (HwLDP)**

A4.19 The HwLDP identifies the site as "wider countryside" under Policy 36. It sets out a range of parameters against which development will be assessed. It states that development proposals may be supported if they are judged to be not significantly detrimental under the terms of the policy noting "Renewable energy development proposals will be assessed against Renewable Energy Policies, the non-statutory Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and where appropriate the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance".

A4.20 HwLDP Policy 67 - Renewable Energy 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.

A4.21 Policy 69 – Electricity Transmission Infrastructure states that 'proposals for overground, underground or sub-sea electricity transmission infrastructure (including lines and cables, pylons/ poles and vaults, transformers, switches and other plant) will be considered having regard to their level of strategic significance in transmitting electricity from areas of generation to areas of consumption'. Subject to balancing with this consideration, and taking into account any proposed mitigation measures, the Council will support proposals which are assessed as not having an unacceptable significant impact on the environment, including natural, built and cultural heritage features.

A4.22 Following the recent judicial review decision on Raeshaw Farms Ltd v Scottish Ministers [2026] CSIH 10, the applicant has submitted AEI-2 that provides a high-level environmental impact assessment of the grid connection based on an EIA Screening Opinion request submitted by the network operator. While the range of receptors potentially impacted by likely significant effects can be identified at this stage, the range of significant effects cannot be known pending further environmental surveys and assessment. As such, it may be appropriate to include a multi-stage condition to restrict in full or in part construction works on the wind farm until such a time as all environmental effects are known and understood, including cumulative effects in combination with the wind farm.

A4.23 Although HwLDP Policy 67 and Policy 69 are considered compatible with NPF4 Policy 11, 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. As for NPF4 Policy 11e) considerations, residual in-solus and cumulative landscape and visual effects are not within acceptable limits such that the disbenefits of the development are adjudged to outweigh the benefits overall.

**Area Local Development Plan - The West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan ('WestPlan') (adopted 2019)**

A4.24 The West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan 2019 (WestPlan) does not contain land allocations related to the proposed development. It emphasises the role of Edinbane (to the north of the site) as the largest centre serving the Skeabost District. Additionally, Dunvegan, located to the northwest of the site, is designed a 'main settlement' by WestPlan and is identified as a key service centre for northwest Skye. The Plan aims to 'safeguard, enhance and promote the natural and built heritage of the area'. The majority of the site is designated 'fragile' by WestPlan. This is defined as 'areas which are in decline or in danger of becoming so as a consequence of remoteness and socio-economic factors, such as population loss, erosion of services and facilities and lack of employment opportunities. In some areas the natural heritage is a dominant influence on appropriate land management'. The Plan focuses on increasing employment opportunities in these areas including support for tourism expansion where it would better utilise the area's outstanding natural and cultural heritage. Local area Development Plans also identify Special Landscape Areas (SLA) within the plan area. As noted in section two, there are SLAs within the LVIA study area that would be impacted by the development with the effects on Special Qualities of both SLAs judged to be significantly adverse and unacceptable.

**Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG)**

A4.25 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.

A4.26 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" 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 7 of this report.

A4.27 **Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement (2022), Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023) and Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland (2023)**

A4.28 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 20GW. This is set against a currently installed capacity of 10.9 GW (Energy Statistics for Scotland - Q2 2026). Therefore, a further 9.1 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.

A4.29 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.

A4.30 The document recognises that there may be a need to develop onshore wind energy development on peat and while the proposal's impact on peat as a material to be handled may be acceptable subject to an approved finalised peat management plan, it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the loss of valued peatland habitat will be appropriately offset and mitigated. There are no proposals to enhance peatland habitat.

A4.31 Additionally, the document acknowledges that 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.

A4.32 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.

A4.33 Finally, the document also highlights technical considerations, those relevant to this application have been considered and mitigation, where required has been secured by condition.

A4.34 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.

A4.35 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 built out. Again, the sector deal does not detail what the socio-economic commitments should be.

## Appendix 5 - LVIA Methodology

A5.1 The applicant has presented a number of figures and visualisations to illustrate the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development both singularly and cumulatively with operational, consented and other proposed wind farm developments.

A5.2 Following a review of the LVIA in Volume 1 Chapter 4 of the AEIR and Chapter 6 of the EIAR and supporting appendices, sufficient information has been provided to enable an assessment and overall, the visualisations are considered to have been produced to a good standard.

A5.3 The AEIR Design Statement includes a description of the design process and evolution and revised design strategy along with Volume 1, Chapter 3 of the AEIR which includes the background and design strategy, whilst the LVIA in Volume 1 Chapter 4 of the AEIR provides an update of the findings of significance reported in the LVIA in Volume 1, Chapter 6 of the EIAR for the proposed development. This assessment reports on the effects against several LCTs, the SLQs of the North West Skye and Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA. Assessments against all NSAs, other SLAs and WLAs have been scoped out of the AEIR, however, the EIAR included an assessment on NSAs and WLAs.

A5.4 In terms of visual amenity assessments of settlements, these were scoped out of the LVIA due to limited or no visibility, however, dispersed settlement clusters have been included as part of the viewpoint assessment including those on the eastern slopes of Loch Snizort Beag, the A87 corridor north of Portree, Glenmore, and around Loch Bracadale. Routes included are the A87, A863, B885 and B8009 as part of the viewpoint assessment, Skye Trail and Core Paths / Rights of Way.

A5.5 A total of 20 viewpoints across a study area of 45 km have also been assessed in the LVIA, however the viewpoints extend out only up to 20 km. These viewpoints are representative of a range of receptors including settlements, dispersed communities, outdoor recreational users, and road users including tourists. A bare earth visibility of the proposed development can be appreciated from the ZTV to Blade Tip with Viewpoint locations (AEI Figure 4.1) and ZTV to hub height with viewpoint locations (AEI Figure 4.3). Other ZTV figures include Landscape Designations and Visibility (AEI Figure 4.7), Landscape Character Types and Visibility (AEI Figure 4.6), Principal Visual Receptors and Visibility (AEI Figure 4.10) and Cumulative ZTVs (AEI Figures 4.13a-g). Similar detailed ZTV figures are also provided in the AEIR.

A5.6 An update to the EIAR Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (Technical Appendix 6.5) has also been undertaken by the applicant which is included in

the AEIR LVIA and now includes only one property within 2 km. The Hours of Darkness Assessment has also been updated in the AIER LVIA. The information submitted is considered sufficient to allow the Council to come to a reasoned conclusion on the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.

A5.7 The methodology for the LVIA 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 assessed significant effects following the combination of judgements based on the sensitivity of the receptor against the magnitude of change.

A5.8 The sensitivity of the receptor (landscape or visual) is defined by the receptor's susceptibility to the change brought about by the proposed development against the importance (value) of the landscape resource / view.

A5.9 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, susceptibility is judged to be high, medium, or low with some receptors falling into intermediate brackets (medium-high or medium-low) within the applicant's assessment.

A5.10 The value of a landscape receptor, given as high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, or low is based on a range of factors including a review of landscape designations, landscape quality and landscape experience. Similar criteria are applied for views such as formal or informal recognition.

A5.11 Judgement of magnitude of change is based on an assessment of factors including: size or scale of change; geographical extent of the effect, and in some situations, its duration and reversibility. The key elements of the proposed Development that will influence the level of change on views are the movement, form, material, colour and scale of the turbines, although infrastructure is also considered. Magnitude of change is described as High, medium-high, medium, medium-low, low, low-negligible or negligible.

A5.12 According to the definitions provided in the LVIA Methodology, Appendix 6.1 of the EIAR, Volume 4 Table 6.1.1, effects of major and moderate-major correspond to significant effects. where 'moderate' effects are predicted, the LVIA advises that professional judgement has been applied to ensure that the potential for significant effects arising has been appropriately considered. Those effects classified as moderate-minor, minor or negligible are considered to be not significant.

A5.13 The assessment of the proposed development has included operational wind farms as part of the baseline. Whilst the approach of including operational wind farms to the baseline is not disputed, it should be noted that these wind farms are time limited and not permanent features in the landscape, and the effect on any receptor which includes their consideration would be of a temporal nature and may not fully reflect the actual effects of the proposed development which would have a longer operational period than the operational wind farms currently present in the baseline.

A5.14 Cumulative effects of the proposed development are considered under two scenarios in the LVIA:

1) Scenario 1 – The cumulative assessment assesses the effect of the proposed development in addition to wind farms already present in the landscape (operational/under construction wind farms) and wind farms that are likely to soon be present (consented wind farms) ('the consented scenario'). This scenario assumes that all consented wind energy developments have become operational and are part of a theoretical baseline situation. The consented Ben Sca and Beinn Mheadhonach wind farms are the only two consented schemes within 10km of the proposed development – the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm is excluded from the cumulative assessment as noted by the applicant. Operational wind farms are included as part of the baseline as noted previously. The applicant has not reassessed this scenario as part of the AEIR as there was no cumulative update in this scenario since the EIAR. However, there should have been a reassessment of this scenario given the changes to the proposed development. It should be noted that should the application Ben Sca Redesign and Beinn Mheadhonach Redesign wind farms get consent, the consented schemes in this scenario will no longer be built. However, they are still relevant to this scenario.
2) Scenario 2 - Similar to the consented scenario, the 'application scenario' typically assumes that all application stage wind energy developments have become operational and are part of a theoretical baseline situation that also includes operational, under construction and consented stage wind farms, however, the applicant states in the EIAR that there are no 'application' stage developments within the study area and so this scenario is not considered further in the LVIA. The AEIR however includes this scenario given a number of application stage wind farms.

A5.15 Whilst the applicant has included a third scenario ('the scoping scenario'), Officers have not considered this scenario in the Report as the only scoping scheme – Edinbane Repower and Extension, has been withdrawn.

A5.16 In relation to the approach to the cumulative assessment, the applicant has assessed the 'additional effect' of the proposed development to the cumulative scenario. It has not assessed the 'combined' cumulative effects of the proposed development with existing, consented and other application wind farms which is relevant in this instance given the cumulative scenario. This is effectively a measure of the total change on landscape and visual receptors resulting from all similar developments when compared to the 'underlying' baseline of landform, vegetation cover, land uses, features, character etc. In a situation with many baseline developments this can result in a higher magnitude of change than the additional effect of the proposed development. It is acknowledged in the NatureScot 2021 Guidance that '*The purpose of a Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) is to describe, visually represent and assess the ways in which a proposed windfarm would have additional impacts when considered in addition to other existing, consented or proposed windfarms. It should identify the significant cumulative effects arising from the proposed windfarm.*' The same document, however, further states that '*Cumulative impacts can be defined as the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together*.' Officers take this latter statement from NatureScot as assessing both the 'additional' and the 'combined' cumulative effects, although it is acknowledged that NatureScot's main focus may be on the additional effects. Officers also acknowledge that the accepted approach to cumulative assessment is to determine the additional cumulative effects of a proposal over and above a baseline of cumulative developments, however, assessing in-combination effects can be useful in understanding strategic and long-term changes in a landscape or view which would also contribute to the overall effects of all the baseline developments.

A5.17 More significant cumulative landscape effects are considered to arise from changes to the landscape character of the study area whether through effects on key characteristics/features or whether the landscape is transformed into a different type, as set out in GLVIA3 at Paragraph 7.28. The methodology sets out that such effects occur where the proposed development extends or intensifies a landscape effect, or it fills an area such that it alters the landscape resource, or, where the interaction between the proposed development and other wind farms is such that the effect is greater than it should otherwise be.

A5.18 Similarly, more significant cumulative visual effects are considered to occur where the proposed development would extend or intensify a visual effect, where the proposed development fills an area such that it alters the character of the view/visual amenity, and / or, where the interaction between the proposed development and other wind farms is such that the effect is greater than it should otherwise be. Sequentially, more significant cumulative visual effects are

considered to occur where the proposed development lengthens the time over which an effect is experienced for receptors moving through the landscape.

A5.19 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 effects, bearing in mind that significant effects are not relative to the size and scale of the proposed development, and do not necessarily equate to unacceptable effects.

A5.20 The summary of the applicant's assessment and officer appraisal of this assessment, which highlights the differences and any concerns with regard to visual effect, can be found in Appendix6 of this report. The applicant has under-assessed the sensitivity of receptors at 11 viewpoints and under-assessed the magnitude of change at three viewpoints which would result in a higher level of effect at these locations, however, it is agreed that the effect at six of these viewpoints would be not significant. Critically, Officers assess additional significant effects for road users at three viewpoints as noted in Appendix 6 of this report.

A5.21 Officers do not agree with the applicant's assessment of susceptibility of certain visual receptors as noted in Appendix 6 of this Report, noting that the Council considers local residents and recreational users focussed on an appreciation of the landscape qualities and surroundings such as hillwalkers, visitors to heritage assets and other attractions, other formal stopping places on scenic routes for example, and recreational users moving through the landscape at slower speeds, such as cyclists, to be visual receptors of high susceptibility to wind energy development. Officers also consider that passengers of faster moving vehicles may also be susceptible to changes in the view and visual amenity.

A5.22 Officers consider that the applicant has underassessed the value of a view for several viewpoint receptors resulting in a lower sensitivity. It appears that the applicant has heavily relied on a high value relating largely to if a receptor is within a designated landscape or formally recognised. Whilst GLVIA3 (paragraph 6.37) notes that judgement about the value of a view should take account of recognition of the value attached to particular views and indicators of the value attached to views by visitors which the applicant has taken into account, officers consider that the value of a view should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

A5.23 In some instances, whilst a view may not be necessarily within a designated landscape or formally recognised on OS maps, it could still have a high scenic value and landscape interest which increases the value of the view. For example, views from outside of, but which extend to or over a designated landscape (North West Skye SLA or Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA in the case of the proposed development), as well as elevated views from trig points (which some people

may head to because of the nature of the views from these locations), and those which are of particularly high scenic quality. Further, Item 6(3) of the GLVIA 3 Notes and Clarifications (Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01) refers to value of views and notes that the scenic value can also be considered. This has been included as part of the officer's viewpoint appraisal in Appendix 6 of this report.

A5.24 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 7 to this report. Furthermore, landscape and visual effects of the proposed development may be reversible as the scheme would be capable of being decommissioned as stated within the EIAR. However, as set out in Policy 11 (f) of NPF4, wind farm 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.

## Appendix 6 - Viewpoint Visual Assessment Appraisal (operational only)

Cumulative Scenarios:

The Consented Scenario (1) = The cumulative assessment assesses the effect of the proposed development in addition to wind farms already present in the landscape (operational/under construction wind farms) and wind farms that are likely to soon be present (consented wind farms) ('the consented scenario'). This scenario assumes that all consented wind energy developments have become operational and are part of a theoretical baseline situation. The consented Ben Sca and Beinn Mheadhonach wind farms are the only two consented schemes within 10km of the proposed development – the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm is excluded from the cumulative assessment as noted by the applicant. Operational wind farms are included as part of the baseline. The applicant has not reassessed this scenario as part of the AEIR as there was no cumulative update in this scenario since the EIAR. However, there should have been a reassessment given the change to the proposed development. It should be noted that should the application Ben Sca Redesign and Beinn Mheadhonach Redesign wind farms get consent, the originally consented schemes in Scenario 1 will no longer be built.

The Application Stage Scenario (2): Similar to the consented scenario, the 'application scenario' typically assumes that all application stage wind energy developments have become operational and are part of a theoretical baseline situation that also includes existing, under construction and consented stage wind farms, however, the applicant states in the EIAR that there are no 'application' stage developments within the study area and so this scenario is not considered further in the LVIA. The AEIR however includes this scenario given a number of application stage wind farms.

Note: Officers have not considered the Scoping Scenario (3) as the scoping Edinbane Repower and Extension scheme has been withdrawn.

| | | | **Proposed Development (Revised Development)** | | | **Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2)** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| VP1<br>Settlement at Ose<br><br>Distance 6.72km<br>Looking NE | App | High (residents) – *High susceptibility and Medium-high value*<br>Medium (road users) – *Medium-low susceptibility and Medium-high value* | Medium | Moderate-Major (residents)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** (residents)<br>Not Significant (road users) | Scenario 1 not assessed in AEIR – Assessment in EIAR is not relevant to this appraisal due to the change in design of the proposed development resulting in different effects. | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate-Major (residents)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** (residents)<br>Not Significant (road users) |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | THC | High (residents) – *High susceptibility and Medium-high value*<br>Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and Medium-high value* | Medium | Moderate-Major (residents)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** (residents)<br>**Significant** (road users) | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate-Major (residents)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** (residents)<br>**Significant** (road users) |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate-Major (residents)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** (residents)<br>**Significant** (road users) |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for residents and road users as High and Medium is agreed, however, Officers note that tourists would also be travelling on this route who would be of High sensitivity. Officers also consider the susceptibility of road users (not tourists) would be Medium rather than Medium-low as these receptors would be travelling slower along this route through the settlement and more aware of their surroundings despite being focussed on the road ahead.<br>Up to 28 turbines (17 hubs and 11 blades / blade tips) would be seen on the upland skyline, affecting a wide horizontal Field of View (FoV), that forms the backdrop to the settlement. The turbines would be apparent at close range and would substantially increase wind farm development in the view contrasting with the smaller scale of the operational Edinbane turbines. There would be overlap and stacking of turbines in places where there is the greatest extent of visibility, particularly between T19 and T12. The proposed development would however appear set back beyond the ridgeline and would not encroach or located on the west facing slopes to the east of Ose. The intervening landform would partially screen views of several turbines and low-lying components of the proposed development would be fully screened. Magnitude is judged to be Medium.<br>The applicant's assessment of Medium magnitude of change is reasonable and the effect on residents (and tourists) is agreed as Major-Moderate and Significant. Whilst Officers agree that the effect on road users would be Moderate, they consider the effect to be Significant rather than Not Significant as | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | assessed by the applicant. Officers consider that the effect would be Significant despite the view being perpendicular to the direction of travel. A transient view doesn't necessarily mean not significant.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as Significant for residents and road users. There would be very limited of the consented schemes and the proposed development would be the most contributing development in this scenario. The cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is agreed as Significant for residents however Officers also assess Significant cumulative effects for road users. The proposed development would contribute to changes in the views to the north and north-east where it would be experienced in the context of the other wind turbines, together which would appear prominent on the skyline which forms a backdrop to the settlement of Ose.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate-Major and Significant for residents and Moderate and Significant for road users. The proposed development would contribute the most to this effect. | | | | | | | |
| VP2<br>Idrigill Point<br><br>Distance 13.46km<br>Looking NE | App | Medium-high (walkers) – *Medium-high susceptibility and Medium-high value* | Medium | Moderate | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-low | Moderate | Not Significant |
| | THC | High (walkers) - *High susceptibility and High value* | Medium | Moderate-Major | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate-Major | **Significant** |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate-Major | **Significant** |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for walkers as Medium-high is disputed. Officers consider the value of the view to be High. There is a car park at Orbost where there is a sign for Idrigill Estate and walking route to Idrigill Point. The Strava Global Heatmap[1] identifies this route to be reasonably well used by recreational users. The viewpoint is also located within the Duirinish WLA and within the North-West Skye SLA which illustrates the rich scenic | | | | | | | |

[1] https://www.strava.com/maps/global-heatmap

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | character of this area over Loch Bracadale thereby indicating a high value. It is not accepted that the presence and views of other wind farm development moderates the susceptibility. There is limited visibility of the operational Edinbane and Ben Aketil is visible beyond 15km to one side of the view and they are not prominent features in this landscape. Officers consider the susceptibility of walkers to be high at this location and therefore the sensitivity is considered to be High.<br><br>All 33 turbines (30 hubs and 3 blades / blade tips) would be seen on the upland skyline, affecting a wide horizontal Field of View (FoV). It would be set back from the more sensitive coastal edge of the distinctive Loch Bracadale. The turbines would significantly increase the presence of wind farm development by increasing the horizontal and vertical FoV in views east across the 'dynamic coastline' of Loch Bracadale and overlapping with the southern Trotternish Hills beyond, thereby disrupting the views in this direction. The turbines would also interrupt the simplicity of the skyline in this view. The intervening landform would partially screen views of the lower parts of a small number of turbines, however, some of the proposed access tracks would be visible. Officers also agree with NatureScot that the proposed development would reduce the expansiveness of the landscape, affecting the experience of this open, panoramic landscape, as it would form a new backcloth of a highly prominent development to Loch Bracadale. Magnitude is judged to be Medium.<br><br>The applicant's assessment of Medium magnitude of change is reasonable, however, the effect on walkers of Moderate and Significant is disputed. Officers consider that the effect would be Major-Moderate and Significant for the reasons set out above which is largely due to the applicant's under-assessment of sensitivity and large horizontal and vertical FoV affected by the proposed development.<br><br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as Significant for walkers. The proposed development would be the most contributing development in this scenario when seen with the consented schemes due to its siting and scale. The cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is disputed. The addition of the proposed development to the other application schemes would result in a Medium cumulative magnitude of change rather than Medium-low assessed by the applicant. Given the scale of the proposed development being the largest wind farm in this area and the extension of the FoV, the presence of other application schemes would not moderate the influence of the addition of the proposed development. It would rather increase the cumulative interaction and effect experienced in this scenario. The proposed development has the greatest effect given its scale, proximity and extent of visibility and the addition of this development with application schemes would remain as a medium cumulative magnitude of change resulting in a Major-moderate and Significant cumulative effect for recreational users.<br><br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would increase to Major and Significant for walkers. The proposed development would be the most contributing development in this view due to its scale and size. If all proposals were built out there is potential for the character of a section of the panoramic view to change from a landscape with occasional wind farms to one where wind farms are a key characteristic of the landscape. The size and scale of the proposed development and its horizontal extension in the view along with its turbine heights mean that it has potential to contribute significantly to this change and therefore has potential to result in significant cumulative effects in combination as well as in succession with other wind farms. | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| VP3<br>MacLeod's Table<br><br>Distance 13.96km<br>Looking E | App | High (hillwalkers) – *Medium-high susceptibility and High value* | Medium | Moderate-Major | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-low | Moderate | **Significant** |
| | THC | High (hillwalkers) – *<u>High</u> susceptibility and High value* | Medium | Moderate-Major | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | <u>Medium</u> | <u>Moderate-Major</u> | **<u>Significant</u>** |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-low | Moderate | **Significant** |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for hillwalkers as High is agreed, however, Officers consider the susceptibility of walkers would be high and do not agree with the applicant that the presence of wind farms in the views east moderates the susceptibility. This viewpoint is representative of hillwalkers at possibly North West Skye's most important natural landmarks.<br>All of the 33 proposed turbines (all 33 hubs) would be visible to the east from the summits of this distinctive hill extending the amount of upland currently occupied by operational wind farms and introduce a larger scale of development than currently experienced, contrasting with the scale of the operational turbines in the view. The proposed turbines would form prominent features and occupy a wide part of the larger upland landscape that forms the backdrop to the view of Loch Bracadale and the settled coastline, however, it is set back from this coastline. They would sit below the horizon backclothed by landform. Officers also agree with NatureScot that the proposed turbines would be backclothed by darker moorland and forestry which would increase intrusion. Magnitude of change is agreed as Medium.<br>The applicant's assessment of Medium magnitude of change for hillwalkers is reasonable and the effect of Moderate-Major and Significant is agreed.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as Significant for walkers. The consented schemes further spread or slightly intensify the visual effect, however considering the addition of the proposed development to this scenario, the level of change in this scenario is considered similar to the solus assessment given its scale and siting. The cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is agreed as Moderate and Significant. The other Ben Sca Redesign; Ben Aketil Repowering and Extension and Balmeanach would bring larger scale turbine development than currently experienced. Whilst the | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | proposed development would slightly increase the horizontal FoV, the addition of the proposed development to this Scenario would slightly reduce the magnitude and the cumulative effect given the increased context of wind farm development located closer to the viewpoint.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate and Significant for hillwalkers. If all proposals were built out there is potential for the character of a section of the panoramic view to change from a landscape with occasional wind farms to one where wind farms are a key characteristic of the landscape. The size and scale of the proposed development and its horizontal extension in the view along with its turbine heights mean that it has potential to contribute significantly to this change and therefore has potential to result in significant cumulative effects in combination as well as in succession with other wind farms although it is noted that other proposed wind farms are closer and potentially more prominent than the proposed development. | | | | | | | |
| VP4<br>A87 Drumuie junction<br><br>Distance 6.59km<br>Looking SW | App | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and Medium-low value*<br>Medium-high (residents) – *High susceptibility and Medium-low value* | Medium | Moderate-Major (residents)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** (residents)<br>Not Significant (road users) | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-low | Moderate / Moderate-minor | Not Significant |
| | THC | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and <u>Medium</u> value*<br><u>High</u> (residents) – *High susceptibility and <u>Medium</u> value* | Medium | Moderate-Major (residents)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** (residents)<br>**<u>Significant</u>** <u>(road users)</u> | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | <u>Medium</u> | <u>Moderate-Major / Moderate</u> | **<u>Significant</u>** |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | <u>Medium</u> | <u>Moderate-Major / Moderate</u> | **<u>Significant</u>** |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for road users as Medium is agreed, however, Officers consider the value of the view to be Medium rather than Medium-low assessed by the applicant. It is not accepted that just because the viewpoint is not within a designated area, the value reduces to Medium-low. The viewpoint is also at a bend in the road and not all road users will travel at 50-60mph. The sensitivity for residents is disputed. Residents in their | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | home are considered to be of high sensitivity as one of the most sensitive receptors given their appreciation of the surrounding landscape. The high susceptibility takes precedence over Medium value.<br>All 33 turbines (33 hubs) would be visible to the southwest occupying a large horizontal FoV within a forested moorland setting. It would increase the influence of wind farm development in the view contrasting with the scale of operational wind farms visible beyond, however, they would be very limited in view. The proposed turbines would extend across the ridgeline that lies immediately behind Uigshader which act as a scale indicator drawing attention to the larger scale of the turbines, however, they would be set back from the leading ridgeline. Magnitude of change is agreed as Medium.<br>The applicant's assessment of Medium magnitude of change is reasonable and the effect of Moderate-major and Significant for residents is agreed, however, the effect on road users is disputed where Officers consider the effect to be Moderate and Significant. There is very limited visibility of operational wind farms in the view, and the proposed development would occupy a large horizontal and vertical FoV and appear prominent to road users along this stretch of route despite being a background of moorland and forestry.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as Significant for residents and road users. The proposed development would be the most contributing development in this scenario when seen with the consented schemes due to its siting and scale. The cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is disputed with the applicant. The addition of the proposed development would remain a Medium cumulative magnitude of change. The proposed development would be the closest wind farm and have the greatest effect at this viewpoint. The other wind farms would be visible in the far distance with most screened by intervening landform. It is not accepted that the cumulative magnitude of change would be moderated to a lower magnitude due to the presence of other wind farms which are more distant. The proposed development has a much greater effect given its scale, proximity and extent of visibility and the addition of this development with other wind farms would remain as Medium cumulative magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate-major and Significant cumulative effect for residents and Moderate and Significant cumulative effect for road users.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate-Major / Moderate and Significant. The proposed development would contribute the most to this effect. | | | | | | | | |
| VP5<br>Minor road – Struan to Leachd | App | Medium (road users) – *Medium-High susceptibility and Medium-low value* | High | Moderate-Major | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate | Not Significant |
| | THC | | High | | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| Distance 0.82km<br>Looking SW to NE | | Medium (road users) – *Medium-High susceptibility and Medium value* | | Moderate-Major | | High | Moderate-Major | **Significant** |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | High | Moderate-Major | **Significant** |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for road users as Medium is agreed, however, Officers consider the value of the view to be Medium rather than Medium-low assessed by the applicant.<br>All 33 of the proposed turbines would be visible at close range (0.8km) occupying a 90-degree horizontal FoV. They would be visible at varying degrees due to the intervening landform with T1-T4 appearing dominant and seen almost at full height. The proposed development introduces wind farm development to a view that currently has none visible and it would overlap with the Trotternish Hills in the northeast direction. They would some visual clutter and overlap of the turbines along this road, and they would contrast with the existing overhead line in the view. Magnitude is judged to be High.<br>The applicant's assessment of High magnitude of change for road users is reasonable and the effect of Moderate-Major and Significant is agreed.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as Significant for road users. The proposed development would be the most contributing development in this scenario when seen with the only consented scheme (Beinn Mheadhonach) due to its siting and scale. The cumulative assessment in relation to the addition of the proposed development for Scenario 2 is disputed. The addition of the proposed development would remain a High cumulative magnitude of change. The proposed development would be the closest wind farm and have the greatest effect at this viewpoint. Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm Redesign is the only other proposed wind farm partially visible to the southwest. It is not accepted that the cumulative magnitude of change would be moderated to a lower magnitude due to the presence of other wind farms which are more distant and have a limited effect at this location. The proposed development has a much greater effect given its scale, proximity and extent of visibility and the addition of this development with other wind farms would remain as High cumulative magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate-Major and Significant cumulative effect for road users.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate-Major and Significant. The proposed development would contribute the most to this effect. | | | | | | | |
| VP6<br>A863 near Drynoch | App | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and Medium value* | No Effect | | | No cumulative effect | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| Distance 10.36km<br>Looking N/NW | THC | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and Medium value* | No Effect | | | | | |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for road users as Medium is agreed.<br>There would be no visibility of the proposed development from this location. | | | | | | | |
| VP7<br>Bruach na Frithe<br>Distance 19.28km<br>Looking NW | App | High (hillwalkers) – *Medium-high susceptibility and High value* | Low | Moderate-Minor | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-low | Moderate | Not Significant |
| | THC | High (hillwalkers) – *<u>High</u> susceptibility and High value* | <u>Medium-low</u> | <u>Moderate</u> | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | <u>Medium-low</u> | <u>Moderate</u> | <u>Not Significant</u> |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-low | Moderate | Not Significant |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for hillwalkers as High is agreed, however, Officers consider the susceptibility of walkers would be high and do not agree with the applicant that the presence of wind farms in the views moderates the susceptibility. This viewpoint is representative of hillwalkers at one of the most popular Munro summit walks of the Black Cuillins.<br>All of the 33 proposed turbines (all 33 hubs) would be visible to the northwest extending the amount of upland currently occupied by operational wind farms and introduce a larger scale of development than currently experienced, contrasting with the scale of the operational turbines in the view. The proposed turbines would occupy a wide part of the view bringing wind farm development closer to the summit. They would, however, sit below the horizon backclothed by landform. This is not a compact layout which would result in visual clutter and multiple overlapping of turbines when viewed from this popular Munro summit of the Black Cuillins. Magnitude of change is judged to be Medium-low which is disputed with the applicant's low magnitude. | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | The applicant's assessment of not significant is agreed, however the level of effect is disputed where Officers assess a Moderate effect rather than a Moderate-Minor effect by the applicant.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as not significant for hillwalkers. The addition of the proposed development would sit within a similar context to the existing spread of turbines as such a slight intensification of visual effect is considered to occur due to the increase in visible wind farms. However, this slight intensification would be similar to the solus assessment. The cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is agreed as Moderate and not significant. The proposed development would contribute to a greater extent of the upland in the view north / northwest occupied by wind turbines, increasing the cumulative interaction and effect experienced in this scenario.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate and not significant for hillwalkers. If all proposals were built out there is potential for the character of a section of the panoramic view to change from a landscape with occasional wind farms to one where wind farms are a key characteristic of the landscape. | | | | | | | |
| VP8<br>A863 Sumardale<br><br>Distance 7.20km<br>Looking NW | There would be no visibility of the proposed development from this location. Not assessed by applicant. | | | | | | | |
| VP9<br>Minor Road near Glenmore<br><br>Distance 3.83km<br>Looking NW | App | Medium-low (road users) – *Medium-low susceptibility and Medium-low value*<br>Medium-high (residents and recreational receptors) – *High susceptibility and Medium-low value* | Medium | Moderate (residents / recreational)<br>Moderate-Minor (road users) | **Significant** (residents / recreational)<br>Not Significant (road users) | **Scenario 1:**<br>Not reassessed in AEIR<br>**Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate (residents / recreational) | **Significant** (residents / recreational) |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | | | | | | | Moderate-Minor (road users) | Not Significant (road users) |
| | THC | Medium (road users) – *Medium-low susceptibility and Medium value*<br>High (residents and recreational receptors) – *High susceptibility and Medium value* | Medium-High | Moderate-Major (residents / recreational)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** (residents / recreational)<br>**Significant** (road users) | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-High | Moderate-Major (residents / recreational)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** (residents / recreational)<br>**Significant** (road users) |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-High | Moderate-Major (residents / recreational)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** (residents / recreational)<br>**Significant** (road users) |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity is disputed. Officers consider the value of the view to be Medium rather than Medium-low assessed by the applicant. It is not accepted that just because the viewpoint is not within a designated area, the value reduces to Medium-low. Road users are likely to be travelling at slower speeds on this narrow, minor road. In relation to residents and recreational receptors, Officers consider the susceptibility to change to be High as the most sensitive receptors whose views are focused on the surrounding landscape. There is limited visibility of operational wind farms in the view. Similarly, road users would be of Medium susceptibility given the slower speed along this road. Therefore, sensitivity for residents and recreational users is judged to be High and for road users as Medium.<br>All 33 turbines (33 hubs) would be visible on the horizon to the northwest occupying a large horizontal FoV within a forested moorland setting however they would not overlap with the Macleod's Tables within the North West Skye SLA. The proposed turbines would increase the influence of wind farm development in the view contrasting with the scale of operational wind farms visible beyond, however, they would be limited in view. The proposed turbines would bring wind farm development closer to the view and would be prominent in this direction drawing attention to the larger scale of the turbines. The | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | more clustered form of the turbines results in multiple instances of overlapping blades and stacking of towers. Magnitude of change is judged to be Medium-high which is disputed with the applicant's Medium magnitude.<br>The applicant's assessment is disputed where Officers consider the effect for residents and recreational users to be Moderate-Major and Significant. Officers also consider the effect as Moderate and Significant for road users. There is limited visibility of operational wind farms in the view, and the proposed development would occupy a large horizontal and vertical FoV and appear prominent to road users along this stretch of route despite being a background of moorland and forestry.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as Significant for residents and road users. The proposed development would be the most contributing development in this scenario when seen with other consented schemes due to its siting and scale. The cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is disputed with the applicant. The addition of the proposed development would remain a Medium-high cumulative magnitude of change. The proposed development would be the closest wind farm and have the greatest effect at this viewpoint. The other proposed wind farms would be visible in the far distance. The proposed development has a much greater effect given its scale, proximity and extent of visibility and the addition of this development with other wind farms would remain as Medium-high cumulative magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate-major and Significant cumulative effect for residents and recreational users, and Moderate and Significant cumulative effect for road users.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate-Major / Moderate and Significant. The proposed development would contribute the most to this effect. | | | | | | | |
| VP10<br>Beinn ne Greine<br><br>Distance 6km<br>Looking NW | App | Medium (hillwalkers) – *Medium-high susceptibility and Medium-low value* | Medium | Moderate | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate | **Significant** |
| | THC | <u>High</u> (hillwalkers) – ***<u>High</u>*** *susceptibility and* ***<u>Medium-high</u>*** *value* | Medium | <u>Moderate-Major</u> | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | <u>Medium</u> | <u>Moderate-Major</u> | **<u>Significant</u>** |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | <u>Moderate-Major</u> | **Significant** |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity is disputed. Despite this viewpoint not located within a designated landscape, it is still a recreational receptor where walkers would go up to enjoy the panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. Operational wind turbines in the distance would not moderate the susceptibility. Officers therefore assess the sensitivity at this location to be High as a result of the high susceptibility and medium-high value.<br>All 33 turbines (33 hubs) would be visible on the horizon to the northwest occupying a large horizontal and vertical FoV within a forested moorland setting however they would not overlap with the Macleod's Tables within the North West Skye SLA but would detract from their profiles. The proposed turbines would increase the influence of wind farm development in the view contrasting with the scale of operational wind farms visible beyond, however, they would be slightly limited in view. The proposed turbines would bring wind farm development closer to the view and would be prominent in this direction drawing attention to the larger scale of the turbines. The more clustered form of the turbines results in multiple instances of overlapping blades and stacking of towers. Magnitude of change is judged to be Medium.<br>The applicant's assessment of Medium magnitude is reasonable but the level of effect is disputed where Officers consider the effect for hillwalkers to be Moderate-Major and Significant.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as Significant for hillwalkers. The proposed development would be the most contributing development in this scenario when seen with other consented schemes due to its siting and scale. The cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is disputed with the applicant. The addition of the proposed development would remain a Medium-high cumulative magnitude of change. The proposed development would be the closest wind farm and have the greatest effect at this viewpoint. The other proposed wind farms would be visible in the far distance. The proposed development has a much greater effect given its scale, proximity and extent of visibility and the addition of this development with other wind farms would remain as Medium-high cumulative magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate-Major and Significant cumulative effect for hillwalkers.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate-Major and Significant. The proposed development would contribute the most to this effect. | | | | | | | | |
| VP11<br>A87 near Romesdal | App | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and Medium value*<br>Medium-high (residents) – *High susceptibility and Medium value* | Medium-High | Moderate-Major (residents)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-High | Moderate-Major (residents) | **Significant** |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| Distance 7.50km<br>Looking SW | | | | | | | Moderate (road users) | |
| | THC | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and <u>High</u> value*<br><u>High</u> (residents) – *High susceptibility and <u>High</u> value* | Medium-High | Moderate-Major (residents)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | <u>Medium-High</u> | <u>Moderate-Major (residents)</u><br><u>Moderate (road users)</u> | **<u>Significant</u>** |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-High | Moderate-Major (residents)<br>Moderate (road users) | **Significant** |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for residents is disputed. Officers consider the value of the view to be High rather than Medium assessed by the applicant. It is not accepted that just because the viewpoint is not within a designated area, the value reduces to Medium. Despite this viewpoint not located within a designated landscape, it offers reasonable scenic quality to views across Loch Snizort Beag. Officers therefore assess the value of the view as high, resulting in a High sensitivity for residents. The sensitivity of road users is agreed as Medium as the Medium susceptibility takes precedence.<br>All 33 turbines (31 hubs and 2 blades) would be visible on the horizon to the southwest occupying a large horizontal FoV beyond the ridgeline. The skyline of the view would be disrupted by the proposed development which would span much of the ridgeline in views across Loch Snizort Beag. The horizontal spread of the wind farm across the ridgeline would be readily apparent and the large vertical scale of the turbines would become more apparent due to the dispersed properties across the loch acting as scale indicators. The operational Edinbane Wind Farm would be barely visible in the view beyond limited to blade tips. The proposed turbines would bring wind farm development closer to the view and would be prominent drawing attention to the turbines. There are multiple instances of overlapping and stacking of towers. Magnitude of change is judged to be Medium-high.<br>The applicant's assessment of Medium-High magnitude is reasonable and the level of effect for residents as Moderate-Major and Significant and for road users as Moderate and Significant is agreed despite officers undertaking professional judgement in assessing a slightly higher sensitivity for these residents. | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as Significant for residents and road users. The proposed development would be the most contributing development in this scenario when seen with other consented schemes due to its siting and scale. The cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is agreed as Significant with the applicant. The addition of the proposed development would remain a Medium-high cumulative magnitude of change. The proposed development would be the closest wind farm and have the greatest effect at this viewpoint. The other wind farms would have a limited influence at this location. The proposed development has a much greater effect given its scale, proximity and extent of visibility and the addition of this development with other wind farms would remain as Medium-high cumulative magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate-Major and Significant cumulative effect for residents, and Moderate and Significant cumulative effect for road users.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate-Major / Moderate and Significant. The proposed development would contribute the most to this effect. | | | | | | | |
| VP12<br>A850 near Fairy Bridge<br><br>Distance 7.72km<br>Looking SE | App | Medium-Low (road users) – *Medium-Low susceptibility and Medium-Low value* | Low | Minor | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Low | Minor | Not Significant |
| | THC | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and Medium value* | Medium-Low | Moderate-Minor | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Low | Minor | Not Significant |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Negligible | Minor | Not Significant |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for road users as Medium-Low is disputed. Officers consider the value of the view to be Medium rather than Medium-low assessed by the applicant. Whilst not located within a designated landscape, the view is of reasonable scenic quality of a moorland and forested open landscape with views of the Black Cuillins visible in the distance. Susceptibility of road users is considered to be Medium rather than Medium-low. Not all road users will travel at 50-60mph. The sensitivity for road users is therefore judged to be Medium.<br>Up to 26 of the proposed turbines (9 hubs and 17 blades / blade tips) would be visible on the upland skyline in the direction of travel. The turbines would be visible in front of the Edinbane turbines which are limited in view. Intervening landform would screen the lower parts and hubs of several turbines, | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | however, where visible they would be noticeable in the direction of travel. The operational Ben Aketil Wind Farm would be visible further to the southeast to the left of the Black Cuillins. There would be some visual clutter and overlap of the turbines along this road, and they would contrast with the operational wind farms. Magnitude is judged to be Medium-Low.<br>The applicant's assessment of Low magnitude of change for road users is disputed where Officers consider the magnitude to be Medium-Low as noted above. The level of effect is therefore Moderate-Minor, however, the effect is agreed as not significant.<br>Cumulatively, the addition of the proposed development would result in a low and negligible magnitude of change once all the other wind farms are included in Scenarios 1 and 2. The level of effect is agreed as Minor and not significant. | | | | | | | |
| VP13<br>B8009 Portnalong<br><br>Distance 9.96km<br>Looking NE | App | Medium-Low (road users) – *Low susceptibility and Medium-High value*<br>Medium-high (residents) – *Medium-High susceptibility and Medium-High value* | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents)<br>Minor (road users) | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate (residents)<br>Moderate-Minor (road users) | **Significant** |
| | THC | <u>Medium</u> (road users) – *<u>Medium</u> susceptibility and Medium-High value*<br><u>High</u> (residents) – *<u>High</u> susceptibility and Medium-High value* | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents)<br>Minor (road users) | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | <u>Medium-Low</u> | <u>Moderate (residents)</u><br><u>Minor (road users)</u> | <u>Not Significant</u> |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | <u>Medium-Low</u> | Moderate (residents) | <u>Not Significant</u> |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | | | | | | | <u>Minor</u> (road users) | |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for road users and residents is disputed. Officers consider the susceptibility of receptors to be slightly higher at this viewpoint. Residents in their home are considered to be of high susceptibility as one of the most sensitive receptors given their appreciation of the surrounding landscape. Road users are considered to be of medium susceptibility at this location. as they will be travelling slower along this minor road and more aware of their surroundings. Therefore, sensitivity is assessed as Medium for road users and High for residents.<br>Up to 30 of the proposed turbines (6 hubs and 24 blades / blade tips) would be visible on the skyline with intervening landform screening much of the towers, bases and hubs of most of the turbines. The proposed development would still extend the influence of wind farm development across the skyline and bring wind farm visibility closer to the viewpoint. Magnitude is judged to be Medium-Low.<br>The applicant's assessment of Medium-Low magnitude of change for road users is reasonable and the level of effect as Moderate and not significant for residents and Minor and not significant for road users is agreed despite officers undertaking professional judgement in assessing a slightly higher sensitivity for residents and road users.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as not significant for residents and road users. The applicant has over-assessed the cumulative effect under Scenario 2 as Moderate and Significant for residents and Moderate-Minor and not significant for road users. Officers consider that whilst the proposed development occupies a wide extent in the view, the overall extent of visibility remains limited and other wind farms such as Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm Redesign, Ben Aketil Repower, Balmeanach and Ben Sca and Extension Redesign have a greater effect and thereby moderates the additional effect of the proposed development. Officers consider that the cumulative effect would remain the same as the solus assessment as not significant. | | | | | | |
| VP14<br>The Storr<br><br>Distance 13.78km<br>Looking SW | App | Medium-High (walkers) – *Medium susceptibility and High value* | Medium | Moderate | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate | **Significant** |
| | THC | <u>High</u> (walkers) – *<u>High</u> susceptibility and High value* | Medium | <u>Moderate-Major</u> | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | <u>Medium</u> | <u>Moderate-Major</u> | **<u>Significant</u>** |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate-Major | **Significant** |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for walkers as Medium-high is disputed. Officers consider the susceptibility of walkers to be High. Walkers have an appreciation of the surrounding landscape and will be focussed on views in all directions including towards the proposed development. Operational wind turbines in the view does not moderate susceptibility given their distance and smaller scale. Therefore, sensitivity is assessed as High by Officers.<br>All 33 turbines (30 hubs) would be visible in the middle distance occupying a wide horizontal and vertical FoV. The majority of the turbines would be seen at full height with other low-lying components of the proposed development also visible including forestry removal. They would be backclothed by landform and Loch Bracadale. The proposed development would significantly increase the presence of wind farm development by increasing the horizontal and vertical FoV in views west from the highest point of the 'great ridge'. The large horizontal and vertical extent would overlap with Loch Bracadale and the landscapes of the North West Skye SLA including detracting from the prominence of the MacLeod's Tables and shift the receptor's focus with the effect of reducing the sense of scale and distance as experienced from this elevated viewpoint. It would also contrast in scale and relationship to operational wind farms, creating a confusing image with multiple overlapping of turbines. Officers also agree with NatureScot that all of the proposed turbines would be largely seen against a darker backdrop increasing intrusion particularly in bright conditions. Magnitude of change is judged to be Medium.<br>The applicant's assessment of Medium magnitude of change is reasonable, however, the effect on walkers of Moderate and Significant is disputed. Officers consider that the effect would be Moderate-Major and Significant for the reasons set out above. The proposed development would significantly extend the pattern of wind farm development to the south, away from the current rounded consolidated cluster towards the north.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as Significant for walkers. The proposed development would be the most contributing development in this scenario when seen with other consented schemes due to its siting and scale. The cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is disputed. Given the scale of the proposed development being the largest wind farm in this area and the significant extension of the FoV, the presence of other application schemes would not moderate the influence of the addition of the proposed development. It would rather increase the cumulative interaction and effect experienced in this scenario. The proposed development has the greatest effect given its scale, proximity and extent of visibility and the addition of this development with application schemes would remain as a medium cumulative magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate-Major and Significant cumulative effect for walkers.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate-Major and Significant for walkers. The proposed development would be the most contributing development in this view due to its scale and size. If all proposals were built out there is potential for the character of a section of the panoramic view to change from a landscape with occasional wind farms | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | to one where wind farms are a key characteristic of the landscape. The size and scale of the proposed development and its horizontal extension in the view along with its turbine heights mean that it has potential to contribute significantly to this change and therefore has potential to result in significant cumulative effects in combination as well as in succession with other wind farms. | | | | | | | |
| VP15<br>Roag<br><br>Distance 9.86km<br>Looking E | App | High (residents) – *High susceptibility and High value* | Medium-Low | Moderate | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium | Moderate-Major | **Significant** |
| | THC | High (residents) – *High susceptibility and High value* | Medium-Low | Moderate | **Significant** | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-Low | Moderate | **Significant** |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-Low | Moderate | **Significant** |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for residents as High is agreed.<br>All of the 33 proposed turbines (22 hubs and 11 blades / blade tips) would be visible on the skyline to the east affecting a wide horizontal FoV. The lower parts of the central and northern turbines would be screened by intervening landform however the hubs and towers of the southern towers would be visible extending wind farm development across the skyline. There would be some clutter and overlap of turbines in the view. Many of the residents would experience this view from their principal elevations. This settled landscape acts as a scale indicator for the middle part of the view drawing attention to the larger scale of the turbines and providing a clear indication of the horizontal spread of the ridgeline they would occupy. Magnitude is judged to be Medium-Low.<br>The applicant's assessment of Medium-Low magnitude is reasonable and the level of effect as Moderate and Significant for residents is agreed.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as Significant for residents. The applicant has over-assessed the cumulative assessment under Scenario 2. Officers consider that whilst the proposed development extends the horizontal and vertical extent in the view, it is set further back than the other wind farms such as Ben Aketil Repower, Balmeanach and Ben Sca and Extension Redesign which have a greater effect and thereby | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | moderates the additional effect of the proposed development. Officers consider that the cumulative effect would remain the same as the solus assessment (Moderate) but agree with the applicant that the effect would be Significant.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would increase to Moderate-Major and Significant. The proposed development would contribute to an increased horizontal extent of the view east occupied by wind turbines on the upland ridgeline that forms the backdrop to the settled coastline, increasing the cumulative interaction and effect experienced in this scenario. | | | | | | | |
| VP16<br>Colbost, Duirinish Peninsula<br><br>Distance 15.51km<br>Looking SE | App | Medium (road users) – *Medium-Low susceptibility and Medium-High value*<br>Medium-high (residents) – *Medium-High susceptibility and Medium-High value* | Low-Negligible | Minor (residents, road users) | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Negligible | Minor (residents, road users) | Not Significant |
| | THC | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and Medium-High value*<br>High (residents) – *High susceptibility and Medium-High value* | Low-Negligible | Minor (residents, road users) | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Low-Negligible | Minor (residents, road users) | Not Significant |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Negligible | Minor (residents, road users) | Not Significant |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for road users as Medium is agreed however Officers assess the susceptibility of road users at this lcation as Medium rather than Medium-Low assessed by the applicant. The sensitivity of residents is disputed. Officers consider the susceptibility of receptors to be | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | high at this viewpoint. Residents in their home are considered to be of high susceptibility as one of the most sensitive receptors given their appreciation of the surrounding landscape. Therefore sensitivity is assessed as High for residents.<br>Up to 14 of the proposed turbines (3 hubs and 11 blades / blade tips) would be visible on the skyline with intervening landform screening much of the towers, bases and hubs of most of the turbines. The proposed development would be set back from the coast and more settled landscape appearing beyond the ridgeline above Dunvegan Castle. Magnitude is judged to be Low-Negligible.<br>The applicant's assessment of Low-Negligible magnitude of change is reasonable and the level of effect as Minor and not significant for residents and road users is agreed despite officers undertaking professional judgement in assessing a slightly higher sensitivity for residents.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as not significant for residents and road users. The applicant's cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is agreed as not significant. The proposed Ben Sca Redesign; Ben Aketil Repowering and Extension and Balmeanach will increase the amount of developed horizon and would have the greatest effect from this location moderating any further visibility of the proposed development. | | | | | | | |
| VP17<br>Isle of Raasay<br><br>Distance 15.88km<br>Looking W | App | Medium-Low (road users) – *Medium-Low susceptibility and Medium value*<br>Medium-High (residents) – *Medium-High susceptibility and Medium value* | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents)<br>Moderate-Minor (road users) | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents)<br>Moderate-Minor (road users) | Not Significant |
| | THC | <u>Medium</u> (road users) – *<u>Medium</u> susceptibility and Medium value*<br><u>High</u> (residents) – *<u>High</u> susceptibility and Medium value* | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents)<br>Moderate-Minor (road users) | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | <u>Medium-Low</u> | <u>Moderate (residents)</u><br><u>Moderate-Minor (road users)</u> | <u>Not Significant</u> |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | | | | | | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents)<br>Moderate-Minor (road users) | Not Significant |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for road users and residents is disputed. Officers consider the susceptibility of receptors to be slightly higher at this viewpoint. Operational wind farms are barely visible from this location and therefore do not moderate the susceptibility of receptors at this location. Residents in their home are considered to be of high susceptibility as one of the most sensitive receptors given their appreciation of the surrounding landscape. Road users are considered to be of medium susceptibility at this location. as they will be travelling slower along this minor road and more aware of their surroundings. Therefore, sensitivity is assessed as Medium for road users and High for residents.<br>All of the 33 proposed turbines (33 hubs) would be visible on the skyline above Portree affecting a wide horizontal FoV. It would extend wind farm development further to the south in the middle of the view framed by hills on either side drawing the eye towards the horizontal and vertical extent of the proposed development. The turbines would also overlap with one of Macleod's Tables visible beyond. Operational wind farms will be barely visible in the view. Magnitude is judged to be Medium-Low.<br>The applicant's assessment of Medium-Low magnitude of change is reasonable and the level of effect as Moderate and not significant for residents and Moderate-Minor and not significant for road users is agreed despite officers undertaking professional judgement in assessing a slightly higher sensitivity for residents and road users.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as not significant for residents and road users. The applicant's cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is agreed as not significant.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate / Moderate-Minor and Not Significant. The proposed development would contribute the most to this effect. | | | | | | | |
| VP18<br>Ullinish | App | Medium (road users) – *Medium-Low susceptibility and Medium-High value* | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents) | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| Distance 8.14km<br>Looking NE | | Medium-High (residents) – *Medium-High susceptibility and Medium-High value* | | Moderate-Minor (road users) | | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents)<br>Moderate-Minor (road users) | Not Significant |
| | THC | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and Medium-High value*<br>High (residents) – *High susceptibility and Medium-High value* | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents)<br>Moderate-Minor (road users) | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents)<br>Moderate-Minor (road users) | Not Significant |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Medium-Low | Moderate (residents)<br>Moderate-Minor (road users) | Not Significant |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for road users as Medium is agreed however Officers consider that road users are of medium susceptibility at this location as they will be travelling slower along this minor road and more aware of their surroundings. The sensitivity of residents is disputed. Officers consider the susceptibility of receptors to be slightly higher at this viewpoint. Residents in their home are considered to be of high susceptibility as one of the most sensitive receptors given their appreciation of the surrounding landscape. Smaller, operational wind farms visible in the distance would not moderate the susceptibility at this location. Therefore, sensitivity is assessed as High for residents.<br>Up to 21 turbines (11 hubs and 10 blades / blade tips) would be visible on the skyline affecting a wide horizontal FoV and extending wind farm development further to the south drawing the eye towards the horizontal and vertical extent of the proposed development. Intervening landform would screen the lower parts of the turbines and hubs of several turbines limiting the overall extent of visibility. The turbines would be seen beyond the ridgeline set back well from the coastline. The large scale of the turbines would contrast with the smaller scale of the operational Edinbane Wind Farm. Magnitude is judged to be Medium-Low. | | | | | | | |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | The applicant's assessment of Medium-Low magnitude of change is reasonable and the level of effect as Moderate and not significant for residents and Moderate-Minor and not significant for road users is agreed despite officers undertaking professional judgement in assessing a slightly higher sensitivity for residents and road users.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as not significant for residents and road users. The applicant's cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is agreed as not significant. The increased backdrop of turbines in the view north potentially moderates the influence of the proposed development, seen at a similar distance. However, the proposed development would contribute to multiple facets of the upland ridgeline view to the north and northeast occupied by wind turbines, increasing the cumulative interaction and effect experienced in this scenario.<br>Officers have also assessed the combined cumulative effect of all other wind farms with the proposed development at this location which would remain Moderate / Moderate-Minor and Not Significant. | | | | | | |
| VP19<br>Struan<br><br>Distance 6.86km<br>Looking NE | There would be no visibility of the proposed development from this location. Not assessed by applicant. | | | | | | | |
| VP20<br>Glen Brittle<br><br>Distance 15.78km<br>Looking NW | App | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and Medium value* | Negligible | Minor | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Not reassessed in AEIR | | |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Negligible | Minor | Not Significant |
| | THC | Medium (road users) – *Medium susceptibility and Medium value* | Negligible | Minor | Not Significant | **Scenario 1:** | | |
| | | | | | | Negligible | Minor | Not Significant |
| | | | | | | **Scenario 2:** | | |
| | | | | | | Negligible | Minor | Not Significant |

| | | | Proposed Development (Revised Development) | | | Cumulative Assessment (Scenarios 1 and 2) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint** | **App / THC** | **Sensitivity of Receptor** (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view) | **Magnitude of change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration / reversibility maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change) | **Significance** (Major & Major-Moderate are Significant). Moderate may be Significant or Not Significant. | **Magnitude of Change** (Size or Scale / geographic extent) (Duration maybe stated separately) | **Level of Effect** (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of receptor) | **Significance** |
| | The applicant's assessment is reported in AEI Table 4.5: Updated Visual Effects Assessment of the LVIA, Chapter 4 of the AEIR.<br>The applicant's assessment of sensitivity for road users as Medium is agreed.<br>Up to 9 of the proposed turbines would be visible as blades / blade tips on the skyline to the northwest which would be barely discernible. Magnitude is judged to be Negligible.<br>The applicant's assessment of Negligible magnitude is reasonable and the level of effect as Minor and not significant for road users is agreed.<br>The cumulative assessment for Scenario 1 is assessed by Officers as not significant for road users. The applicant's cumulative assessment for Scenario 2 is agreed as Minor and not significant. The proposed Ben Sca Redesign; Ben Aketil Repowering and Extension and Balmeanach will increase the amount of wind farm development to the north. The Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm Redesign application would also appear to the north in closer proximity. The presence of the other schemes stretching across the view north, and the limited visibility of the proposed development moderates the cumulative influence of the proposed development. | | | | | | | |

## Appendix 7 - 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.<br>----------<br>The scheme extends wind energy development south from the established Ben Aketil / Edinbane / consented Ben Sca cluster with much larger turbines that would represent a step change in scale for wind farm development on Skye.<br><br>Turbines would loom large over the dispersed settlements around Loch Bracadale and settlements north of Portree along the A87. The proposal will form a new backdrop of contrasting scale, colour, texture, movement and character to the more natural moorland and forested upland hills. Therefore the turbines would be a highly characterising feature from these locations with the proposal being the single largest contributor to this significantly adverse change.<br><br>This threshold is not met. |
| 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.<br>----------<br>THC has not pre-emptively identified Key Gateway Locations for Skye as the Landscape Sensitivity work for wind energy has yet to consider this area.<br><br>Turbines would be associated with the static interior, generally experienced in oblique views along transport routes, or from routes travelling in the direction of the interior such as the B884 for travellers leaving the Duirinish Peninsula, the proposal would be viewed at a distance an likely in combination with other schemes. The B885, which will experience significant visual effects, cuts through the same mix of Upland Sloping Moorland and Stepped Moorland landscapes, which generally present a unified landscape, again the development will be behind the viewer when moving east to west or west to east when settled coastlines come into view.<br><br>Threshold is generally met. |
| 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.<br>------<br>The turbines will detract from the prominence of Macleod's Tables and obscure views and interpretation of the intricate Loch Bracadale coastline from key locations, particularly from the Storr in the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA resulting in a significant effect on its Ridgeline and Coastal Fringe special quality. Turbines will also obscure views of the distant Trotternish Hills from key locations within the North West Skye SLA. As such the character and amenity of views and the intervisibility between scenic landscape designations will be disrupted.<br>As such, there are issues with the scale and footprint of the proposal drawing the receptor's eye away from dramatic landscape features to the static moorland interior of northwest Skye from several locations. |

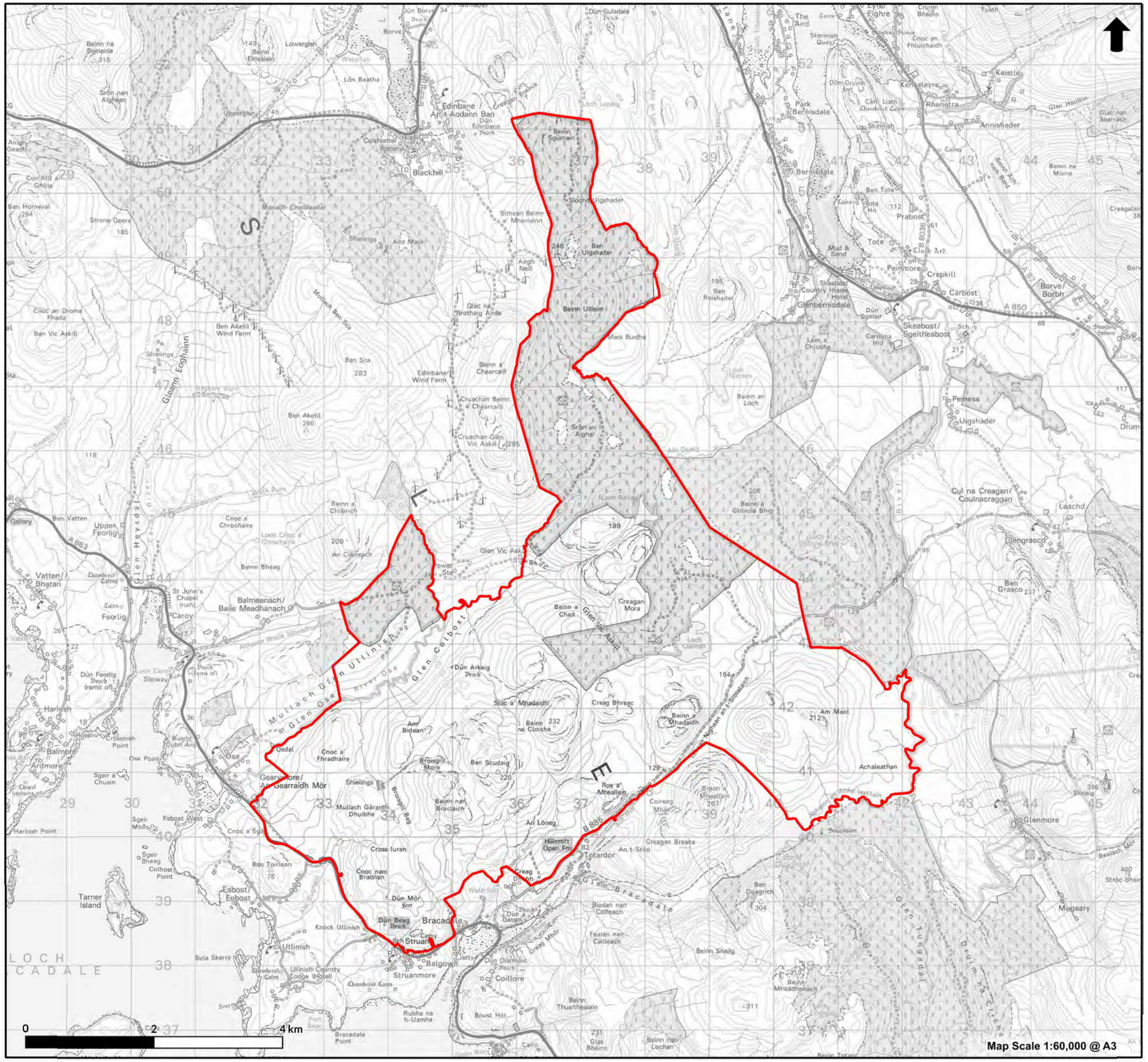
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Impacts on Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, and Gardens and Designated Landscapes are within acceptable limits.<br><br>Threshold is partially met. |
| 4 | The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected. | Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of key routes and ways.<br><br>----<br>Significant visual effects are identified from sections of:<br>• Core Path SL23.03 / SL23.04 - Borve: Carbost to Borve Old Road / Borve Circular Route;<br>• Core Path SL28.01 - Loch Bracadale: Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill;<br>• Core Path SL28.03 - Loch Bracadale: Roag Link Path;<br>• Core Path SL28.04 - Loch Bracadale: Orbost to Idrigill;<br>• Core Path SL28.05 - Loch Bracadale: Vatten to Feorlig;<br>• Right of Way - HSL114 (section that crosses the site connecting Glen Vic Askil with the Struan to Leachd road); and<br>• Skye Trail.<br><br>Turbines are likely to significantly detract from the visual appeal of routes within and adjacent to the site, significantly impacting their amenity, where the threshold is unlikely to be met.<br><br>However, the threshold is generally met on routes outside the site as significant visual effects will not translate to a loss of overall amenity of the route. |
| 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<br>--------<br>Despite significant visual impact on sections of the A850, A863, A87(T), and the B885, the threshold is likely to be met in respect of these corridors by virtue of the roads largely separating landscapes of the interior from the highly valued landscapes on their coastal sides. |
| 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:<br>• Turbine height and proportions,<br>• density and spacing of turbines within developments,<br>• density and spacing of developments,<br>• typical relationship of development to the landscape,<br>• previously instituted mitigation measures<br>• Planning Authority stated aims for development of area<br><br>----------<br><br>The scheme extends the influence of energy development south well beyond the established pattern of energy development established by the cluster of Ben Aketil, Edinbane, consented Ben Sca with much larger turbines, requiring larger separation distances, appearing overly prominent in complex views. Due to the scale, width, breadth, and numbers of turbines, the scheme does not reflect the same level of design mitigation as existing and approved schemes.<br><br>Threshold is not met. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | The need for separation between developments and/ or clusters is respected | The proposal maintains appropriate and effective separation between developments and/ or clusters<br>----------<br>As for Criterion 6, the scheme meshes with and extends away from the established cluster creating a confusing picture of multiple overlapping turbines of different scales with the proposal being the single largest contributor to combined significant landscape and visual effects at the location.<br><br>The threshold is not met. |
| 8 | The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected | The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected<br>---<br>The increased size of the proposed turbines and the extent of the proposal will reduce the perception of scale and distance in the landscape, this will be a general and widespread effect including from more distant views between and across the North West Skye and the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA, from Loch Bracadale including from views across the bay and islands, as well as where the turbines are experienced from the east and northeast behind the summits of the hosting upland and stepped moorland landscapes.<br><br>The threshold is not met overall. |
| 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.<br><br>---<br>The increased size and much larger footprint of the proposal will produce a much more sprawling and prominent development taking turbines well outside the established horizontal and vertical visual envelope from many locations. The proposal will appear less in the landscape than on the landscape. Together, these factors mean that wind farm would draw the receptor's eye from a greater distance and increase the perceived prominence of all turbines in the area.<br><br>The threshold is not met. |
| 10 | Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected | Integrity and variety of Landscape Character Areas are maintained.<br>----------<br><br>The landscape composition that contributes to the sense of place of western Skye is expressed through the Dynamic Coastline special quality of the North West Skye SLA The proposal would compromise these Special Qualities and therefore local landscape composition by virtue of their height and positioning. The proposal will obscure landscape composition and appreciation of different landscape characteristics in westward views from the Trotternish Hills interrupting the Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe special quality of the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA.<br><br>Threshold is not met |

Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm -
Additional Environmental Information

## AEI Figure 1.1: Site Location

Site Boundary


Beinn na Boineide 318
Lowergien
Beinn Eirisalain 149
Lòn Beatha
Srón nan Aighean
Upperglen
Edinbane / Àrd-t-Aodann Ban
Colshlette
Blackhill
Beinn Sgumain
Slochd Uigshader
Sithean Beinn a' Mhorrainn
Ben Uigshader 246
Airgh Neill
Beinn Ulleim
Maol Buidhe
Glac na Brothaig Airde
Ben Aketil Wind Farm
Edinbane Wind Farm
Beinn a' Chearcaill
Cruachan Beinn a' Chearcaill
Cruachan-Glen Vic Askill 295
Srón an Aighe
Ben Aketil 266
Ben Sca 283
Gleann Eòghainn
Multach Ban Sca
Cnoc an Droma Fhada
Ben Vic Askill
Shielings
Aite Maol
Monadh Choiltean
Strone Geers 185
Ben Horneval 264
Coir' Allt a' Ghille
Airigh Geadh
Dun Suladale Broch
Borve
Waterfall
Loch Lonsaig
Creagan Bràca
Dun Edinbane Broch
Cairn
Hotel
Pottery
Park Bernisdale
Bernisdale
Skinnish
Cairns
Ben Tote
Tote Ho
Prabost
Tote
Mud & Sand
Peinmore
Crepkill
Carbost
Skeabost Country House Hotel
Glenbernisdale
Dun Sgalair
Skeabost/ Sgeitheabost
Carolina Hill
Leac a' Chlobha
Loch Nursaig
Beinn an Loch
Peiness
Uigshader
Borve/ Borbh
A 850
B 8036
Keistle
Kensaleyre
Rhenetra
Annishader
Glen Haultin
Glac nan Searrach
Beinn na Moine
Creagalair
Cnoc an Fhuichaidh
Dun Cruinn Broch
Cairn Liath
Chambered Cairn
Skerinish Quay
The Aird
Eyre Eighre
Cruinn Bheinn
Tuath
Ben Roishader 195
Cnoc a' Chrochaire
Loch Cròg a' Chrochaire
Beinn Bheag
An Cleireach
Glen Vic Askill
Power Sta
Beinn a' Chaiit
Creagan Mora
Beinn a' Chlèirich
Beinn a' Ghlinne Bhig
Loch Bàvag
Ben Grasco 237
Glengrasco
Leachd
Cul na Creagan/ Coulnacraggan
Vatten/ Bhatan
Feorlig
Balmeanach/ Baile Meadhanach
St John's Chapel (ruin)
Caroy
Dun Feorlig Broch (rems of)
Slipway
Harlosh
Crosshnish Point
Ardmore
Balmore
Ose Point
Sgeir a' Chuain
Harlosh Point
Sgeir Mhòr
Eabost West
Sgeir Bheag
Colbost Point
Eabost/ Eabost
Tarner Island
Ben Toirlean 75
Cnoc nam Braonan
Cross Iuran
Cnoc a' Sgàil
Gearraidhore/ An Gearraidh Mòr
Shielings
Mullach Gàraidh Dhuibhe
Broisgill Beag
Broisgill More
Ben Scudaig 220
Beinn nan Bràclaich
Osdat
Cnoc a' Fhradhaire
Am Bidean
Sloc a' Mhadaidh
Creag Bhreac
Beinn na Cloiche 232
Beinn a' Mhadaidh
Am Maol 212
Achaleathan
Ros a' Mheallain
Coireag Mhòr
Braon a' Mhealltain 267
Sgiathaig 396
Glenmore
An Lònag
Hillcroft Open Frm
Totardor
An t-Sròn
Creagan Breaca
Creag Dubh
Glen Bracadale
Dun Mòr Fort
Dun Beag Broch
Bracadale
Cemy
Sch
Struan
Knock Ullinish
Ullinish
Sula Skerry
Ullinish Country Lodge (Hotel)
Chambered Cairn
Struanmore
Balgown
Dun Diarmaid Broch
Coillore
Boust Hill
Rubha na h-Uamha
Bracadale Point
Port Beag
Loch Caidale
Beinn Thuaitheallain
Glas Bheinn
Beinn nan Lochan
Beinn Mheadhonach
Fearan nan Caillteach
Beinn Sheilg
Biodan nan Caillteach
Ben Dubhgrich 304
Mugeary
Beinn Totaig
Dun Arkaig Broch
Glen Ose
Glen Colbost
Mullach Glen Ullinish
River Ose
Loch Caroy
Brochs (rems of)
Buaile Dubh Ard
Osdale
Broch
Cairn
Beinn Shiaba
Beinn Dubhchraig
Beinn Bhreac
Beinn Bhuidhe
Beinn Dearg
Beinn Mhòr
Beinn Bhuidhe
Beinn Dearg
Beinn Mhòr
Beinn Shiaba
Beinn Dubhchraig
Beinn Bhreac

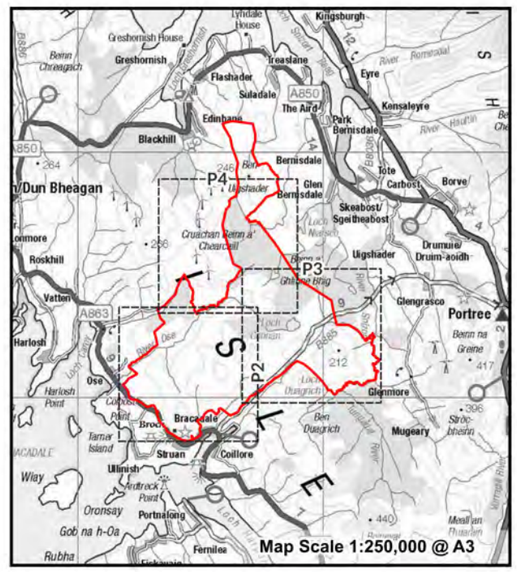
Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm -
Additional Environmental Information

## AEI Figure 3.2a: Revised Layout

- Turbine Location
- Site Boundary

**Infrastructure**

- Battery Energy Storage System Compound (Also to be utilised during construction for: Temporary Construction Compound, Batching Plant, and Emergency Helipad)
- WF Substation
- TNO Compound
- Floating Tracks
- Standard Tracks
- Existing Tracks (Upgraded)
- Clearance Area
- Temporary Hardstandings
- Permanent Hardstandings
- Proposed Borrow Pit Search Areas
- Temporary Construction Car Park
- Temporary Construction Compound 1
- Access Junction
- Infrastructure Earthworks




Map Scale 1:60,000 @ A3

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MUIRHALL ENERGY

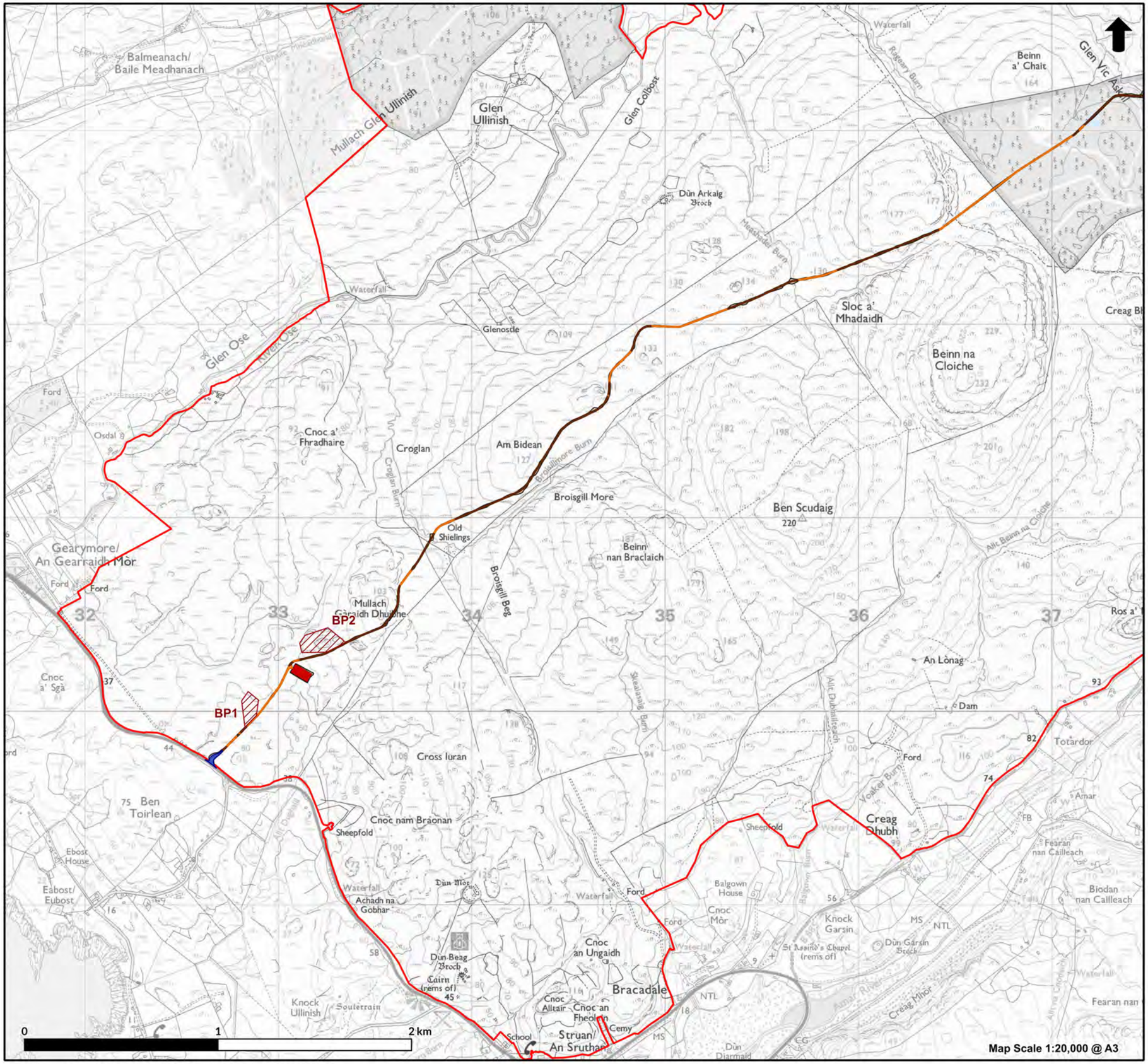
Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm -
Additional Environmental Information

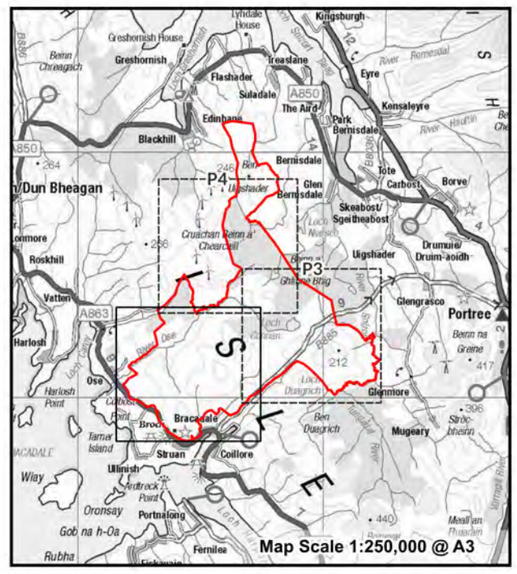
## AEI Figure 3.2b: Revised Layout

- Site Boundary

**Infrastructure**

- Floating Tracks
- Standard Tracks
- Proposed Borrow Pit Search Areas
- Temporary Construction Compound 1
- Access Junction
- Infrastructure Earthworks




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MUIRHALL ENERGY

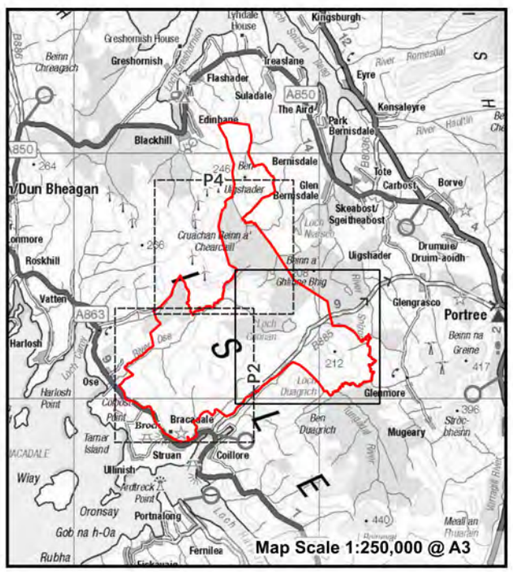
Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm -
Additional Environmental Information

## AEI Figure 3.2c: Revised Layout

- Turbine Location
- Site Boundary

**Infrastructure**

- Battery Energy Storage System Compound (Also to be utilised during construction for: Temporary Construction Compound, Batching Plant, and Emergency Helipad)
- WF Substation
- TNO Compound
- Floating Tracks
- Standard Tracks
- Existing Tracks (Upgraded)
- Clearance Area
- Temporary Hardstandings
- Permanent Hardstandings
- Proposed Borrow Pit Search Areas
- Temporary Construction Car Park
- Infrastructure Earthworks




Map Scale 1:20,000 @ A3

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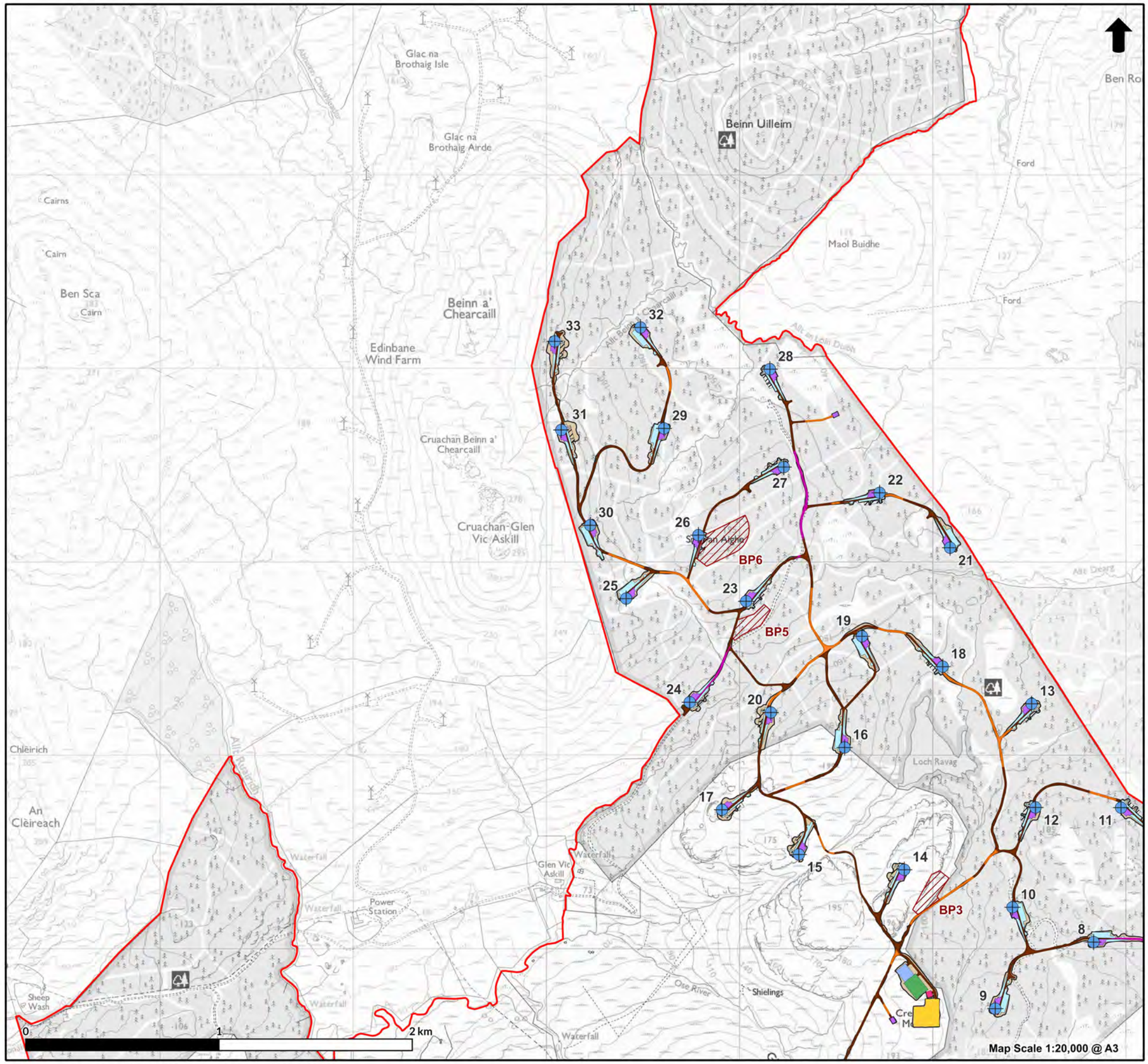
Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm -
Additional Environmental Information

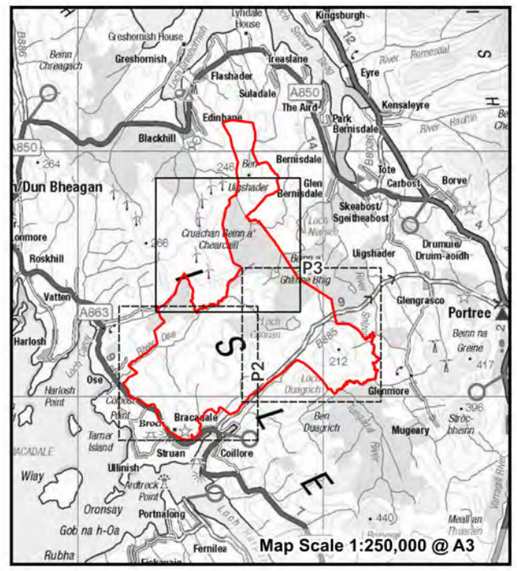
## AEI Figure 3.2d: Revised Layout

- Turbine Location
- Site Boundary

**Infrastructure**

- Battery Energy Storage System Compound (Also to be utilised during construction for: Temporary Construction Compound, Batching Plant, and Emergency Helipad)
- WF Substation
- TNO Compound
- Floating Tracks
- Standard Tracks
- Existing Tracks (Upgraded)
- Clearance Area
- Temporary Hardstandings
- Permanent Hardstandings
- Proposed Borrow Pit Search Areas
- Temporary Construction Car Park
- Infrastructure Earthworks




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**Figure 4.4: Typical Wind Turbine 200m Tip Height**

