Chapter 5 Landscape and Visual Assessment

Introduction

Purpose

5.1 The purpose of landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) is to identify and assess potential impacts from the proposed Wind Farm on the landscape resource and visual amenity.

5.2 Landscape effects can be derived from changes to the fabric and character of the physical landscape, which take place due to the form of the development and associated infrastructure, its construction, operation and decommissioning (direct effects). Changes to the character of the landscape and how it is perceived may also occur through the introduction of a wind farm into the landscape (indirect effects).

5.3 Visual effects occur as a consequence of the change to the view from the introduction of the proposed Wind Farm, and the effect this has on the overall visual amenity.

5.4 This assessment will identify and describe the significant landscape and visual effects of the proposed Wind Farm.

Contents

5.5 This assessment forms part of an iterative process in the development of the proposed Wind Farm design. The elements of the proposal as discussed in Chapter 3 (Project Description) form the basis for the impact assessment. As significant effects are identified, these are fed back into the design. Mitigation of these effects has been considered throughout the process, through site selection, consultation and design development.

5.6 The main sections, which form the basis of this assessment, are as follows:

- Introduction;
- Methodology;
- Legislative Background;
- Baseline Information;
- Effects on the Physical Landscape;
- Effects on Landscape Character;
- Effects on Landscape Designations;
- Assessment of viewpoints (35km Study Area);
- Sequential Effects;
- Cumulative Effects;
- Summary of Effects; Long Term Impacts on the Landscape;
- Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures;
- Conclusion.

Aims

5.7 The landscape resource and the visual amenity are separate but interconnected. By assembling and presenting information in a systematic and comprehensive manner, the assessment informs an understanding of the individual landscape and visual effects of the proposal, and provides an insight into the combined effects from the proposed wind Farm.

Assessment Team and Qualifications

5.8 The assessment has been carried out by a team of landscape architects employed by RPS Planning and Development (RPS).

5.9 Working graphics for the purpose of Wind Farm assessment and design evolution, together with all visualisation graphics, have been prepared by RPS.

Methodology

Guidance

5.10 The LVIA has been carried out with reference to the following guidance and best practice documents:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2nd Edition*, edited by the Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2002);
- *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*, Countryside Agency in conjunction with SNH (2002);
- *SPP6: Renewable Energy*. Scottish Executive (2007);
- *PAN45: Renewable Energy Technologies*, Scottish Executive (Revised 2002);
- *Guidance on the Cumulative Effects of Windfarms*, SNH (Version 2 revised April 2005);
- *Strategic Locational Guidance for Onshore Wind Farms in respect of the Natural Heritage*, SNH (2005);
- *Visual Analysis of Windfarms Good Practice Guidance*, Horner + Maclennan and Envision, prepared for SNH, Scottish Renewables Forum and Scottish Society of Directors of Planning, (29.03.2006) Report No: FO3 AA 308/2;
- *Guidelines on the Impacts of Windfarms and Small Scale Hydroelectric Schemes*. SNH. (2001);
- *Draft Planning Standards and Requirements for the Preparation and Submission of Photographs and Photomontages to illustrate the impacts of Wind Energy Development for inclusion in Planning Applications and Environmental Statements. Highland Council (2009).*

5.11 In accordance with current best practice, the study area for the landscape and visual effects extends to 35km from the outer turbines. To assess the likely cumulative effects of the proposed Wind Farm the study area has been extended to 70km radius. These figures are based on the recommended distance of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) as provided by Horner and Maclennan *(Visual Analysis of Windfarms Good Practice Guidance)* and John Benson (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne).

Consultations

5.12 Consultations have been undertaken with SNH and The Highland Council at key stages throughout the development process. The initial scoping consultation sought to identify the suitability of the site for this type of development in principle, and the key areas of consideration. Further consultation has taken place with the Highland Council to enable meaningful input into the scope and approach of the landscape assessment, and the evolving layout.

5.13 A key factor in the development of the proposed Wind Farm has been the consideration of the consented Lochluichart Wind Farm adjacent to the proposed site. The design process is discussed further in section 5.279 below.

5.14 Consultation has also taken place with the Highland Council and SNH to agree the viewpoint locations to be used for the visual assessment. The current SNH Wind Farm GIS mapping dataset was consulted to identify other wind farms to be included in the cumulative impact assessment. An additional cumulative wind farm was also highlighted by the Highland Council - this had been submitted for scoping during the assessment period and was therefore not included on the current SNH database.

Desk Study

5.15 A preliminary appraisal of the baseline landscape and visual characteristics of the site and study area was carried out through a desk study. The following sources were reviewed in this process:

Technical Information

5.16 Baseline technical information was supplied by E.ON and Project Team relating to the proposal. This included proposed turbine models, operations during construction and decommissioning, and the location and form of the Wind Farm control building and substation. A detailed project description is included in Chapter 3 (Project Description).

Ordnance Survey Maps

- Road Map (scale 1:250 000);
- Landranger (scale 1:50 000) 19 Gairloch and Ullapool, 20 Beinn Dearg & Loch Broom, 21Dornoch & Alness, 25 Glen Carron & Glen Affric and 26 Inverness & Loch Ness;
- Explorer (scale 1:25 000) 430 Loch Monar, Glen Cannich & Glen Strathfarrar, 431 Glen Urquhart & Strathglass, 436 Bein Dearg & Loch Fannich and 437 Ben Wyvis & Strathpeffer.

Landscape Character Assessments

- Ross and Cromarty Landscape Character Assessment, No. 119, 1999;
- Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment, No. 114, 1999;
- Inner Moray Firth Landscape Character Assessment, No. 90, 1998;
- Caithness and Sutherland Landscape Character Assessment, No. 103, 1998.

Development Plans

5.17 The relevant Development Plan for the site location has been reviewed and relevant policies relating to landscape and visual impact are discussed in Chapter 4 (Policy Context) and assessed in the Planning Statement accompanying the planning application. The Development Plan includes:

- Highland Structure Plan 2001;
- Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan 2007.

Environmental Statements

5.18 The Environmental Statement landscape chapter and the professional critique for the consented Lochluichart Wind Farm by Infinergy adjacent to the proposed site was reviewed and consulted throughout development of the proposals and the ES.

Graphics and Visualisations

5.19 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps and the Cumulative ZTV maps were produced for the layout iterations of Corriemoillie Wind Farm using OS Digital Terrain Modelling). These are described in the paragraphs 5.21 – 5.25 below.

5.20 Viewpoint visualisations, wireframes and photomontages were prepared and revised for layout iterations of the proposed Wind Farm and cumulative effect viewpoint visualisations were proposed to support and justify the analysis.

Illustrative Tools

Visibility Maps

5.21 Computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps were prepared for the layout iterations of the proposed Wind Farm, to assist the design development and assessment process. They were also used to assist in viewpoint selection and to illustrate the potential influence of the development in the wider landscape.

5.22 The visibility maps indicate areas from where it may be possible to view part of or the entire proposed Wind Farm. For this proposal, ZTVs were created from the base, hub and upper and lower extremes of the blade tip (Figures 5.7 – 5.11). However these maps are based on a bare ground model (Ordnance Survey (OS) Landform Panorama data) based on a 50m grid terrain model derived from 1:50,000 scale mapping. This information is limited by the detail of the digital terrain model data used.

5.23 Zones are shown which suggest there is theoretical visibility from these locations, but as these areas can comprise woodland, hedgerows and built urban form the likelihood of views being experienced is consequently lower. These areas are identified within the assessment.

5.24 The ZTV maps do not take account of the likely orientation of a viewer, such as the direction of travel and there is no allowance for attenuation of visibility with distance, weather or light.

5.25 These limitations mean that the ZTV maps tend to overestimate the extent of the influence on the landscape and visibility of the proposal. They should therefore be considered as a tool to assist in assessing the theoretical visibility of the proposal and not a measure of the visual impact.

Visualisations

5.26 The assessment of landscape and visual effects of the proposal has been carried out from an agreed selection of representative viewpoints. Following site visits, the completion of site photography and the production of viewpoint visualizations, some showed no apparent view of the proposed Wind Farm. In these cases the production of a photomontage was considered unnecessary. However, the inclusion of these viewpoints is an important component of the visual assessment as they show an indicative representation of the proposal within the viewpoint, whether the turbines are visible or not.

5.27 The survey of the study area also included the viewpoint photography for the visual assessment, according to *Visual Analysis of Windfarms Good Practice Guidance*. Photographs were taken with a digital SLR camera (Canon EOS 20D) using an 8 million pixel image taken at 30mm focal length. The digital focal length is equivalent to a 50mm focal length with a standard SLR

camera. All photography was taken using a tripod mounted camera at a viewing height of approximately 1.6m, and locational data recorded with a hand-held GPS.

5.28 The viewpoint analysis is illustrated with photographs and wireframes, and where the proposal is clearly visible or the view is considered important, this has been additionally supported with a photomontage. Wireframes have been produced using the GPS data and WindFarm™ computer software, based on OS Landform Panorama data. All of the photographs, wireframes and photomontages have been produced to record at least a 75 degree angle of view. This provides a visual context for the proposed Wind Farm.

5.29 For this assessment, the visualisations have been presented with a comfortable viewing distance from the page. Panoramas, Wireframe views and photomontages are presented with a 300mm viewing distance @ 395 x 130mm print dimensions. This conforms to *Visual Analysis of Windfarms Good Practice Guidance1*.

5.30 Following consultation with the Highland Council and the draft *Planning Standards and Requirements for the Preparation and Submission of Photographs and Photomontages to illustrate the impacts of Wind Energy Development for inclusion in Planning Applications and Environmental Statements (2009)* an additional Visual Impact Study has been produced to document the process and methodology in which the visualisations have been undertaken and as a visual aid to the Highland Council in making their decision on the planning application. This is not submitted as part of the planning application, but one copy has been provided to the Highland Council.

Field Survey

5.31 Field surveys have been undertaken over a number of months providing a good understanding of the site and study area.

5.32 The landscape character types for the study area, as noted in the relevant SNH Landscape Character Assessments, were reviewed and the key characteristics of the landscape were identified. This provided an overview of the character types of the study area and how these areas might be affected by the proposed Wind Farm.

5.33 The visual amenity of the study area was surveyed to note the general characteristics of both static and sequential views, from a selection of receptors likely to experience views of the proposed Wind Farm. The range of views covered a variety of viewing distances, aspects, elevations and extents and included individual residential properties, settlements, tourist and recreational destinations and routes.

5.34 The study area was traversed extensively during the field study to verify the extent of the ZTV maps. This has provided a more detailed and accurate understanding of the theoretical visibility of the proposal. The field survey allowed an appreciation of the scale, extent, prominence and distance of the receptor from the proposed Wind Farm, to be experienced.

5.35 The field survey is essential to inform the sequential impact assessment. The landscape characteristics of the route corridors and the views which can be gained throughout a journey can be understood, and how they are likely to be affected by the proposal. Similarly, the field survey is essential to the cumulative impact assessment, both in terms of assessing the combined impact of the various wind farms under consideration, and in terms of considering the overall capacity of the receiving landscape for wind farm development.

Identifying Effects

Nature of Effects

5.36 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment describe the nature of effects as follows:

> *…Effects can be negative (adverse) or positive (beneficial); direct, indirect, secondary or cumulative and be either permanent or temporary (short, medium or long term). They can also arise at different scales (local, regional or national) and have different levels of significance (local, regional or national). (p.84, para 7.6)*

5.37 In assessing the landscape and visual effects, this assessment has been carried out in a systematic and comprehensive manner according to the most recent best practice guidance.

Identifying the Type and Duration of Effects

5.38 The assessment of landscape and visual effects is based on identifying the elements of the proposal which are likely to have a significant effect.

5.39 The three main stages of the development are:

- Construction: temporary and of a short duration (approximately 12 to 15 months);
- Operational: the proposed operational phase of the proposed Wind Farm is 25 years; and
- Decommissioning: temporary and of a short duration.

Nature and Scope of Effects

5.40 The landscape and visual resource of an area can be affected both directly and indirectly. Visual impacts are always direct because when an object is not in view, by implication there can be no impact; impacts on visual amenity also depend on visibility and are therefore also direct. Landscape impacts on the other hand can be either direct or indirect.

5.41 Change which affects onsite physical features (i.e. vegetation, buildings and landform), or the character area/unit in which the site is located, is a direct landscape impact, whereas an impact arising on the character of surrounding landscape character areas/units is indirect. It is assumed that indirect impacts would be intrinsically less significant than direct ones.

5.42 In general, the scope of landscape and visual impact is either direct or indirect. Direct (primary) describes effects on the landscape fabric and character of the site, and on views and visual amenity. Indirect (secondary) describes effects on the surrounding landscape character.

5.43 Within this chapter effects are defined as 'significant' in EIA terms. Environmental effects can be beneficial (positive) or neutral as well as adverse (negative). This is known as the ‘valency’ of effect which depends on (a) the type and nature of effect and (b) the perception / opinion of the observer, with the latter being particularly pertinent to the assessment of wind farms. The term

1 *Visual Analysis of Windfarms Good Practice Guidance*, horner + maclennan and Envision, prepared for Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Renewables Forum and Scottish Society of Directors of Planning, (29.03.2006) Report No: FO3 AA 308/2.

'valency' applied to EIA originates in Durham County Council guidance[2] and is used in Inspectors' decision letters.

5.44 Wind farm developments generate a variety of responses ranging from strongly adverse to strongly positive. Experience of individual responses to proposed wind turbine development is that opinions can differ not only between close (i.e. adjacent) neighbours but also between members of the same family living in the same house.

5.45 It is important to note that judgements in this LVIA, including those on the valency of effect, are impartial and based on professional experience and opinion informed by best practice guidance. Whatever the judgement made (whether adverse or beneficial) by either of the polarised 'camps' in the wind farm debate, there will be a contrary judgement which, provided it is founded on reliable information, will be legitimate and should therefore be afforded respect.

PAN45: Renewable Energy Technologies

5.46 Planning Advice Note 45 (PAN 45): (revised 2002) contains information on siting in the landscape, and assessment of Visual Impact. As this is specifically related to considerations in landscape and visual assessment, the relevant sections are reproduced below.

46. Grouped turbines need to be positioned, for operational reasons, so that the separation distance between individual turbines is around 5-10 rotor diameters ...Land use planning, ground conditions and operational requirements will usually result in a compromise between maximising energy capture and minimising visual impact."…

<u>Siting in the Landscape</u>

71. Scotland has a variety of landscapes. Some will be able to accommodate wind farms more easily than others, on account of their landform and relief and ability to limit visibility. Some are highly valued for their quality. There are no landscapes into which a wind farm will not introduce a new and distinctive feature. Given the Scottish ministers' commitment to addressing the important issue of climate change and the contribution expected from renewable energy developments, particularly wind farms, it is important for society at large to accept them as a feature of many areas of Scotland for the foreseeable future.

72. This is not to suggest that areas valued for their international or national landscape and nature conservation interest will have to be sacrificed. ... it emphasises the need for account to be taken of regional and local landscape considerations. Development that has been carefully sited and tied into the surrounding landscape will still be visible but the impact will be less than had this effort not been made and the development left less well related to its surroundings.

73. The landscape and visual impact of wind turbines is influenced by:

- *Land form and landscape characteristics;*
- *Number, size and layout of turbines;*
- *How the turbines relate to the skyline;*
- *Design and colour;*
- *Access track; and*
- *Ancillary components like power lines and substations."*

2 Durham County Council, 'Impact Assessment Matrices' Unpublished, (1996)

74. The capacity of the landscape to accommodate wind farm development depends on two considerations:

- *The degree of the impact the development will have on the existing character of the landscape; and*
- *The extent to which this impact can be modified and reduced by design.*

The ability of the landscape to absorb development depends on careful siting, the skill of the designer, and the inherent characteristics of the landscape such as landform, ridges, hills, valleys and vegetation.

75. A cautious approach is necessary in relation to particular landscapes which are rare or valued, such as National Scenic Areas and proposed National Parks and their wider settings. ... In a regional context care should also be exercised within Areas of Great Landscape Value and Regional Parks. Other landscapes are not especially valued and a significant change in some landscapes may be considered acceptable....

<u>Visual Impact</u>

... Developers should seek *to ensure that through good siting and design, landscape and visual impacts are limited and appropriate to the location. The visual effect will be dependent on the distance over which a wind farm may be viewed, whether the turbines can be viewed adjacent to other features, different weather conditions, the character of the development and the landscape and nature of the visibility. The following is a general guide to the effect which distance has on the perception of the development in an open landscape."*

General Perception of a Wind Farm in an Open Landscape of turbines up to 100m

	Perception
Up to 2kms	*Likely to be a prominent feature*
2-5kms	*Relatively prominent*
5-15kms	*Only prominent in clear visibility – seen as part of the wider landscape*
15-30kms	*Only seen in very clear visibility – a minor element in the landscape*

79. The visual impact of wind farms will be affected by their siting and layout in relation to local land form and landscape characteristics, and the qualities of the specific site, as well as by the number of turbines. Different layouts will be appropriate in different circumstances. For example, grouped turbines can normally appear acceptable as a single, isolated feature in an open, undeveloped landscape, while rows of turbines may be more appropriate in an agricultural landscape with formal field boundaries. Although wind farms may be complex, they should not appear confusing in relation to the character of the landscape. Ideally they should appear separate from surrounding features to create a simple image. The design of each development must be appropriate to its site."

80. The style and colour of turbines may also be relevant. Experience suggests that solid towers appear less complex than lattice and tapering towers are generally regarded as being more elegant than cylindrical. In terms of colour, white or off-white is generally preferred, but other colours may be acceptable in appropriate circumstances. A semi-matt surface is required to reduce the reflection of light. However, colour choice can not be a substitute for good siting and design."

81. Ancillary elements also need to be fully addressed, as their impact can often be as significant as those of turbines. Access tracks should be routed and designed to minimise both

visual and habitat impacts. This can be minimised by careful route selection, which takes account of layout and appropriate surfacing material together with the impact of cuttings, embankments and drainage channels. Managing problems of erosion and providing for reinstatement of vegetation along the track is essential. Power lines, fencing, buildings and anemometer masts should be located and designed in a way which minimises clutter."

82. There are a number of techniques which may be used to inform visual assessment of a proposed development:

- *A zone of visual influence map will show where a wind farm may be seen from;*
- *Viewpoint analysis based on key viewpoints throughout the surrounding area;*
- *Computer generated wireline diagrams will indicate how wind turbines will appear from specific viewpoints;*
- *Photo- and video montages are images whereby an impression of a proposed development is superimposed upon an actual photograph or video of the proposed site.*

Methodology

5.47 This methodology for assessment has been followed throughout the LVIA, in conjunction with other, more recent best practice.

Landscape Effects

5.48 The physical effects on the landscape are the direct effects from the proposed Wind Farm on the site, which can alter the land cover, landscape features and the landscape character of the site. In addition, the operational activities associated with the proposal, including the movement of vehicles within the construction, operation and decommissioning phases, can extend the direct physical effects beyond the immediate site area.

5.49 There are also perceptual changes to the landscape within the study area, from the effects of the proposed Wind Farm on the landscape character. These effects are determined through an assessment of the existing character of the landscape, and how this is likely to be altered by the proposed Wind Farm.

5.50 Landscapes are the product of a combination of elements: including the underlying geology, the landform, land cover, land use and land management. They are constantly changing, although the rate of change can vary significantly, depending on the forces causing the change. For example, land use changes from the removal of grazing would have a gradual effect on the land cover, whereas the effects from the felling of commercial forestry would be immediate and direct, although the land use may remain the same with replanting or could be improved through instatement of a Habitat Management Plan.

5.51 Landscape designations are used to recognise special qualities within the landscape, and there is a hierarchy of designations ranging from international to local.

5.52 The classification of landscapes by character is not value laden. The character of the landscape and the processes taking place determines the categorisation of landscape character types. Understanding the characteristics of the landscape allows informed decisions to be made on how to manage change and development while retaining the characteristics, which define the sense of place.

SNH Landscape Character Assessments

5.53 The landscape character of the study area was assessed as part of a national programme of landscape character assessment, carried out by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in partnership with local authorities and other agencies.

5.54 The 35km study area for the development is covered by the following assessments:

- Ross and Cromarty Landscape Character Assessment, No. 119, SNH 1999;
- Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment, No. 114, SNH 1999;
- Inner Moray Firth Landscape Character Assessment, No. 90, SNH 1998; and
- Caithness and Sutherland Landscape Character Assessment, No. 103, SNH 1998

5.55 The purpose of the assessment is to improve knowledge and understanding of the landscape, by describing the different types of landscape character, identifying the pressures for change on these landscapes, and how these changes can be managed.

5.56 The character of the landscape of the site and the surrounding area has been informed by the descriptions and boundaries within the published reports. This information has been checked and supplemented with observations from the field survey.

5.57 These landscape character assessments have been at a consistent scale of 1:50,000, and based on common methodology, as defined by Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, Countryside Agency in conjunction with SNH (2002). However, the names, definitions and descriptions of the character areas vary between reports, and the level of detail also varies. For example, an area, which is considered Upland within one relatively low-lying region, would not be considered Upland in a region with more elevated topography.

5.58 The boundaries of the landscape character areas are available as GIS Datasets from SNH, based on the published landscape character assessments. Initial assembly of this data for the study area identified 33 different character areas (Figure 5.5).

Visual Effects

5.59 The overall visual amenity of the area is assessed as part of the field survey, to inform various parts of the assessment, including landscape effects, visual effects, sequential effects, and cumulative effects.

5.60 The assessment of visual effects has been made through the in-depth analysis of agreed viewpoints, selected to represent the range of views and viewer types from where the proposed Wind Farm is theoretically visible and to determine whether the effects are likely to be significant. In selecting these views wirelines have been created across the study area in order to select a broad spectrum of views.

5.61 The viewpoint locations cover individual residences and settlements, main transport routes, main visitor locations, areas of cultural significance, the range of landscape character types within the study area and the cumulative effects of the proposal in combination with other existing or proposed wind farms in the study area.

Static Effects

5.62 The assessment of static visual effects is through analysis of individual viewpoints that are considered representative of the range of views within the study area.

Sequential Effects

5.63 Individual viewpoints are selected on the basis of where the proposal is theoretically visible from and where it is likely to have a significant effect. This can create a slightly misleading impression when assessing a number of viewpoints along a route. The sections of the route from where the proposal is not visible tend not to be represented through viewpoints.

5.64 The assessment of sequential effects is therefore undertaken partly through the analysis of viewpoints along main transport routes, partly through an assessment of the existing and proposed characteristics of the route, and partly through analysis of other visualisation tools such as the Zone of Theoretical Visibility.

5.65 Throughout the study area a minor number of roads, Rights of Way and draft core paths would see changes from the presence of the operational Corriemoillie Wind Farm in the view. The assessment has focused on a study area of 15km for views of the site and the consented Lochluichart Wind Farm during their operation. Receptors assessed as part of the sequential assessment are shown in Figure 5.15. Further assessment of other Wind Farms within the 35km study area has been considered in the cumulative sequential assessment section of this chapter.

5.66 The sensitivity of roads as viewpoints varies in this assessment, according to whether they are:

- Motorways and Trunk roads or other principal local routes on which the relatively high speed and volume of traffic reduces the road's sensitivity as a viewpoint to medium - low sensitivity;
- Other 'A' and 'B' roads - medium sensitivity;
- Minor roads and lanes with generally low speeds and traffic volumes. May be used as recreational routes by walkers or riders - high-medium sensitivity.

5.67 The potential for effects to occur in views from roads and Rights of Way is restricted to views that occur when travelling towards the proposed Wind Farm. Although there is potential for views towards the proposed Wind Farm from roads in the local area, much will depend on local circumstances including the extent to which roadside vegetation or forestry filter or screen views towards the site.

5.68 The roads assessed in the sequential assessment were the A835(T), A832 and the minor Matheson Road between Garve and Little Garve. Rights of Way and other paths were also assessed (Figure 5.15).

Cumulative Effects

5.69 Cumulative effects are the effects of the proposed Wind Farm in combination with other existing and proposed wind farms in the study area.

5.70 As with the assessment of landscape effects, cumulative landscape effects can either be directly on the physical fabric of the landscape, or indirectly on the character of the landscape.

5.71 Cumulative effects on visual amenity can be experienced either from static viewpoints, where two or more developments can be seen from a single location (combined visibility); or sequentially, where in the process of moving along a route, two or more proposals are visible.

5.72 Combined visibility is experienced either in combination, where more than one wind farm is visible within the same field of view, or in succession, where only by turning to face another direction is any other wind farm visible. The proposed turbines in this instance are over 100m high to which the cumulative assessment guidance recommends a study area of 70km.

5.73 The assessment of cumulative effects uses the visualisation tools available to the assessment of landscape and visual effects. ZTVs, wireframes, and photomontages have all been used as part of this assessment. Detailed cumulative methodology for the assessment is discussed later in the Chapter from Paragraph 5.529, given the detailed and discrete nature of the assessment.

5.74 An initial list of all proposals within 70km of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm proposal was prepared based on information derived from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) and the Highland Council. These proposals were then mapped spatially and a plan and table sent to the Highland Council for confirmation.

5.75 The assessment of cumulative effects describes in detail the effects of each individual wind farm proposal within 70km of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm that interacts with the Wind Farm, including supporting graphics such as cumulative ZTVs and cumulative visualisations. The study of the detailed 35km area (Figure 5.36) includes a discussion of the overall capacity of the receiving landscape to accommodate wind farm development.

5.76 Particular attention has been given to the approved Lochluichart Wind Farm adjacent to Corriemoillie, and has been considered as future baseline (i.e. operational) throughout the assessment.

5.77 In assessing cumulative effects of wind farms between 35 and 70km of the Corriemoillie proposal (Figure 5.45), the assessment is focused on proposals relating to geographic distribution and their interaction with Corriemoillie Wind Farm particularly from popular hill top destinations in the study area. Combined and successive views and sequential views from transport routes have been assessed.

Relevant Considerations

5.78 There are a number of relevant considerations relating to the appearance of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm and its relationship with the landscape, which also inform the assessment. These include:

- **Backdrop**: turbines seen against a single backdrop, e.g. sky or moorland, will generally be more coherent than those viewed against a variety of backdrops. Where one particular backdrop predominates, the selection of an appropriate colour and texture to the turbines can help mitigate the effects by reducing their visibility against this backdrop;
- **Scale**: the scale of the receiving landscape has an effect on its ability to accommodate particular proposals. In general, the large scale of the turbines tends to be better accommodated in a large scale and relatively simple landscape. In addition, uncomfortable comparisons of scale can be created where the turbines are seen in the context of elements of a more domestic scale such as housing;
- **Focus**: specific viewpoints may focus in a particular direction. The location of the proposed development site in relation to this focus can affect the significance of the effect, particularly as individual turbines and wind farms can form vertical focal points within the landscape;
- **Unity**: the relationship of the turbines to each other affects whether the wind farm reads as a cohesive entity or as fragmented. Turbines overlapping can also produce a distracting and uncomfortable visual effect. It is virtually inevitable that from some angles this will occur, but the extent to which this happens, and the importance of the views from where this takes place has an influence on the significance of the effect. Other vertical elements, such as

pylons, can also detract from the unity of the proposal and add to a sense of visual confusion;

- **Movement:** the movement of an object in a landscape that provides distraction or interest including the rotation of a turbine. This can relate to a still or transitional landscape; and
- **Setting**: the combination of landform, foreground, background and features within a view, which provide the landscape setting, influences the nature of the effect of a wind farm. Setting also relates to the complexity or simplicity of the landscape or view and the sense of remoteness or development, which provide the context for the proposal.

Climate and Weather Conditions

5.79 In addition to the physical features of the landscape, climate and weather conditions affect perception and experience of the landscape. Changes in perception affect people's responses to the landscape and may influence the perceived effect of the proposal.

5.80 The main climatic influences are exposure, sunshine, precipitation and day length. Generally, Scotland is fairly cloudy due to the frequency of low-pressure systems from the Atlantic Ocean. In addition, day length varies with the seasons. Precipitation (rainfall and snowfall) in Scotland is very variable and is determined by topography and geographic location. The area with the highest precipitation is the Western Highlands, and the driest area is the east coast. The proposed Wind Farm site and study area has significantly more cloudy days and annual rainfall than areas at lower elevation to the east of the country.

5.81 Views from a number of Munros within the study area, in particular those to the west, are influenced by the weather conditions. These influence the number of clear days when views can be experienced.

5.82 Scotland can also have periods of excellent visibility, as the greater part of the country is remote from the more industrial and populous areas of Great Britain and mainland Europe free from air pollutants. These conditions however, are generally experienced for a limited time, due to the prevailing climatic influences across the north.

Acuity of Eye

5.83 Best practice guidance[3] discusses the limitations of the acuity of the human eye focused on an object similar to that of a turbine. The guidance states that: *"At a distance of 1 kilometre in conditions of good visibility a pole of 100mm diameter will become difficult to see, and at 2 kilometres a pole of 200mm diameter will similarly be difficult to see. In other words there will be a point where an object whilst still theoretically visible will become too small for the human eye to resolve. Mist, haze or other atmospheric conditions may significantly exacerbate that difficulty."* Consequently when visible in favourable conditions, a slim object approximately 3m in width will be at the limit of perception by the human eye at a distance of 30km.

5.84 The consultation draft of the Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)[4] advises the perception of third generation wind energy developments (featuring turbines of approximately 95 – 120 m height to blade tip) will depend on distance as follows:

- Up to 2.4 kms - Dominant focus, movement of turbines clear and may convey a distinct rhythm;
- 2.4 – 6 kms - Prominent, key element of the landscape, turbine details still evident;
- 6 – 12 kms - Conspicuous, noticeable element in the wider landscape, only prominent in clear visibility, movement of blades perceptible to casual observer;
- 12 – 18 kms - Apparent, visible element of a wide landscape, turbines begin to be perceived as a group forming a wind farm rather than individual elements, blade movement only perceptible in clear conditions; and
- 18 – 30 kms - Inconspicuous, slight element of a wide landscape composition, only seen in very clear visibility, movement of blades generally unclear.

5.85 Whilst it is evident that visibility varies according to weather conditions, season, time of day, direction of view, land form, other elements in the landscape, the number of turbines and their compositional qualities, the Cumbria SPD document does provide a useful initial guide.

5.86 The magnitude of change has been assessed according to the parameters above, which are largely quantifiable. Table 5.2 (Magnitude of Change) defines the categories, which have been used within the assessment to provide consistency and transparency to the process.

Assessment Criteria

5.87 The objective of the assessment process is to identify and evaluate the predicted significant effects arising from the proposed Wind Farm. The assessment informs the layout in an effort to prevent, reduce or offset the significant effects. This process has embedded primary mitigation measures within the design of the proposal.

5.88 The assessment then identifies and evaluates the residual effects within the finalised design. In order to provide a level of consistency and transparency to the assessment, and allow comparisons to be made between the various landscape and visual receptors, the assessment of significance is based on pre-defined methodology and criteria.

5.89 Significance is not graded in bands, and a degree of informed judgement is required. Even with the application of pre-defined criteria, interpretation may differ between individuals, but this allows the process of reaching these conclusions to be transparent.

Sensitivity of Receptor

5.90 The sensitivity of a landscape or a view to change varies according to the nature of the existing resource and the nature of the proposed change. Considerations of value, integrity and capacity are all relevant when assessing sensitivity. For this purpose, these terms are defined as follows:

- **Value**: the value or importance attached to a landscape for its scenic or aesthetic qualities, or cultural associations, can be recognised through national, regional or local designation. Views tend not to be designated, but can be recognised through a name, or shown on a map, or through the creation of a parking lay-by or location of a bench;
- **Integrity**: the degree to which the value has been retained, the condition and integrity of the landscape or the view; and
- **Capacity**: the ability of a landscape or view to accommodate the proposed change while retaining the essential characteristics that define it.

5.91 Sensitivity is not generally graded in bands. However, in order to provide both consistency and transparency to the assessment process, Table 5.1 defines the criteria, which have guided the judgement as to the sensitivity of the receptor.

[3] The Guide to Best Practice in Seascape Assessment (GSA)

[4] Coates Associates (2006) *Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document, Consultation Draft Part 3 – Guidance on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*. Appendix 1 - Guidance on the effects of distance on the perception of Wind Energy Developments.

Table 5.1 Sensitivity of Receptor

	Landscape Effects	Visual Effects
Low	Landscape value is low, with no designations; landscape integrity is low, with a landscape in poor condition and a degraded character; and the landscape has the capacity to potentially accommodate significant change.	Small number or low sensitivity of viewers assumed. Viewers' attention not focused on landscape, e.g. workers.
Medium	Landscape value is recognised locally, but is not designated; the landscape is relatively intact, with a distinctive character; and the landscape is reasonably tolerant of change.	Viewers' attention may be focused on landscape, such as road or rail users, users of secondary footpaths, and people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation. e.g. fishing, water sports, golf
High	Landscape value recognised by existing or proposed national or regional designation. Sense of tranquillity or remoteness specifically noted in Landscape Character Assessment. High sensitivity to disturbance specifically noted in Landscape Character Assessment. The qualities for which the landscape is valued are in a good condition, with a clearly apparent distinctive character. This distinctive character is susceptible to relatively small changes.	Landscape value recognised by existing or proposed designation. Large number or high sensitivity of viewers assumed. Viewers' attention very likely to be focused on landscape. e.g. Residents experiencing views from dwellings; users of strategic recreational footpaths and cycleways; people experiencing views from important landscape features of physical, cultural or historic interest, beauty spots and picnic areas.

Magnitude of Change

5.92 The magnitude of change affecting landscape or visual receptors depends on the nature, scale and duration of the particular change within the landscape, the location of it, and the overall effect on a particular view. This may be very small if the development is at some distance. In a landscape, the magnitude of change will depend on the loss or change in any important feature or characteristic or a change in backdrop to, or outlook from, a landscape that affects its character. The angle of view, duration of view, distance from the development, degree of contrast with the existing characteristics of the view, prominence of the development and the extent of visibility can all influence the magnitude of the change in view. In addition, the general visibility and combination of effects of elevation and topography on openness and degree of obstruction by trees and buildings affect the magnitude of change.

Table 5.2 Magnitude of Change

	Landscape Effects	Visual Effects
Barely perceptible	The effect of change on the perception of the landscape, the physical landscape or the landscape character is minimal or there is no change.	There is either no view or the character of the view will not be altered by the proposed Wind Farm. The proposed Wind Farm is at such a distance as to be imperceptible, and may only be discernible in clear conditions. May go unnoticed.
Small	Changes to the physical landscape, its character and the perception of the landscape are slight. Long distance to affected landscape type with views toward the character type the key characteristic. Effect reduced by presence of many built elements.	Visible but not prominent.
Medium	The proposed Wind Farm forms a visible and recognisable feature in the landscape. Proposed Wind Farm some distance from affected Landscape Type. Other built elements or human activities in views. Scale of turbines fits with existing features.	Prominent. Has an important but not defining influence on view; is a key element in the view.
Large	Where there are substantial changes affecting the character of the landscape, or the important elements. Proposed Wind Farm within or close to affected landscape type. Size of turbines out of scale with existing elements.	Dominant. Has a defining influence on view.

5.93 The following considerations are relevant when evaluating the magnitude of change:

- **Distance**: the distance between the receptor and the development. Generally, the greater the distance, the lower the magnitude;
- **Extent**: the extent of the proposal which is visible;
- **Proportion**: the arc of view occupied by the wind farm in proportion to the overall field of view. A panoramic view, where the wind farm takes up a small part of it, will generally be of lower magnitude than a narrow, focussed view, even if the arc of view occupied by the proposal is similar;
- **Duration**: the duration of the effect. An effect experienced in a single location over an extended period of time is likely to result in a higher magnitude of change than an effect which is of a short duration, such as a view from a road;
- **Orientation**: the angle of the view in relation to the main receptor orientation, where there is a dominant direction to the vista;

- **Context**: the elements, which in combination provide the setting and context to the proposal. In particular, vertical man-made structures within the context can decrease the magnitude of change; and
- **Background**: the colour of the turbines has been selected on the basis that the majority of viewers will see the turbines against the sky. Where the landform forms the background to the view, this can have an effect on the magnitude of change.

Significance of Effect

5.94 The significance of the landscape and visual effects are assessed through a combination of the sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of change. The following table defines the categories for significance of effect.

Table 5.3 Significance of Effect

Landscape And Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude Of Change			
	Large	**Medium**	**Small**	**Barely Perceptible**
High	Substantial	Substantial To Moderate	Moderate	Not Significant
Medium	Substantial To Moderate	Moderate	Slight (not significant)	Not Significant
Low	Moderate	Moderate to Slight (not significant)	Not Significant	Not Significant

5.95 The landscape and visual effects which are classified as substantial or moderate are considered by the assessor and relevant SNH Guidance to be equivalent to the likely significant effects referred to in the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999.

5.96 A conclusion that an effect is 'significant' should not be taken to imply that the proposed Wind Farm is unacceptable. Significance of effect needs to be considered with respect to the extent of a landscape or a view over which it is experienced.

Baseline

5.97 The baseline for EIA purposes is taken as being the existing situation at submission of the application. Information assessed to determine the baseline situation includes current legislation on Wind Energy and existing landscape designations, landscape character and visual amenity.

Future Baseline - Lochluichart Wind Farm

5.98 Due to the close proximity of the consented Lochluichart Wind Farm it was concluded that the Wind Farm should be considered as part of the baseline assessment. However, as the Lochluichart Wind Farm is currently at preconstruction stage this has been defined as the future baseline for the purposes of the assessment.

5.99 The Lochluichart Wind Farm comprises seventeen 125m high turbines, access tracks, substation and underground cabling, sited within Lochluichart estate.

5.100 All design processes and viewpoints for the assessment have considered the Lochluichart Wind Farm fully operational in combination with the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm. Figure 5.14 illustrates the ZTV for the Lochluichart Wind Farm.

Legislative Background

5.101 The legislative background covering the proposed Wind Farm includes National Planning Policies and renewable objectives, Regional Policies (Highland Council Structure Plan) and Local Plan Policies. These are covered within Chapter 4 (Policy Context) of this ES. These are assessed in the accompanying Planning Statement.

5.102 Both SPP6: Renewable Energy and NPPG14: Natural Heritage include policies relevant to landscape. NPPG14 refers to landscape protection and enhancement, wild land, statutory designations (including National Scenic Areas) and regional and local designations. It also indicates how Structure Plans and Local Plans fit into the requirements for landscape protection. These issues are discussed in Chapter 4.

5.103 Planning Advice Note 45 (PAN 45): Renewable Energy Technologies (revised 2002) contains information on siting in the landscape, and assessment of visual impact. Relevant sections of this are reproduced in paragraph 5.46 and have been used to guide the methodology of the assessment.

Baseline Climate Data

5.104 It should be noted that actual visibility varies considerably, from day to day and season to season, depending on weather and atmospheric conditions as shown in Table 5.4 below. Detailed weather/visibility data for the site is provided by the Meteorological Office (Met Office) from the meteorological station at Loch Glascarnoch at 265m AOD. The data is based on information gathered over a ten year period between 1999 and 2008. The Met Office weather data indicates the quality of visibility over a range of distances. During periods of restricted visibility (10km or less) slim objects are less distinct and harder to see, than in better viewing conditions. As a consequence, assuming the wind turbines are actually visible and subject to the limitation imposed by the acuity of the eye, the wind turbines would be less discernable during certain months than others. The varying visibility is set out in Table 5.4: Assessment of Visibility Data.

Table 5.4 Assessment of Visibility Data

Distance	Days visible Winter (90 days)	Days Visible Spring (92 days)	Days Visible Summer (92 days)	Days Visible Autumn (91 days)
< 5km	79	86	88	85
< 10km	69	76	81	75
< 15km	59	64	72	66
< 20km	45	51	61	53
< 25km	28	36	46	37
< 30km	16	21	29	22
< 35km	8	10	13	10

5.105 The months in which there is the lowest average visibility throughout the year are during the winter. Those months with the average highest recorded visibility are during the summer period.

5.106 The data demonstrates that on average over a ten year period only 8 days in the winter months had visibility up to 35km, and on only 13 days of a possible 92 during the summer could views to 35km be gained.

Existing Landscape Context

5.107 Existing site character is that of a commercial plantation. Corriemoillie Forest contains predominantly tree stock (Sitka spruce and Lodgepole pine) for the production of timber. The timber has been classed as poor quality and of limited commercial value as indicated in Chapter 8 (Forestry).

5.108 The site lies within an area of high ground between Loch Luichart and Loch Glascarnoch. The upland area is part of a linear range of hills becoming higher in the west towards the Fannichs. The site is generally undulating with a high point at approximately 410m AOD, within a greater basin surrounded by numerous rounded hills ranging in height from 409m to 513m AOD. Small burns, lochans and bogs lie in local depressions within the existing forestry.

5.109 The study area lies within the Northern Highlands to the north of the Great Glen Fault and demonstrates a west to east alignment of hills and glens which drain the upland streams and rivers to the sea. The landscape contains some of the highest hills in the UK with a great number of Munros in the area including Ben Wyvis (1046m AOD) on the east coast, the Fannichs Range (923m-1110m AOD) to the west, Beinn Dearg (1081m AOD) to the north and Sgurr a Choire Ghlais (1087m AOD). The high ground is bisected by a series of glens generally on the same east west orientation including Glen Strathfarrar, Strathconon, Strathvaich, Orrin, Strathbran, Strathrannoch and Strathmore.

5.110 The study area is predominantly covered by heather moorland, plantation forest and rough grassland. The straths and glens tend to be improved grassland for grazing, with historic crofting practices continuing in some areas. Large commercial coniferous forests are scattered throughout the study area flanking the lower hills, with some remnant deciduous forests located in the more inaccessible glens. Figures 5.1-5.3 illustrates the regional and local study areas and topography within

5.111 Some human influences are present across the study area with settlements, hydro-electric schemes, supporting overhead power lines, communication links and other existing wind farms evident in the landscape from vantage points across the study area.

5.112 A wind farm development anywhere within the study area will change the existing landscape character. Where the character has already been modified by existing wind farm(s), this change may just be in the extent of the area; where a new wind farm is a new element in the landscape, the change may be more fundamental. The acceptability of the change is dependent on the sensitivity of the existing landscape resource and the relation of the new patterns of development with those existing on site.

Existing Landscape Character

5.113 As mentioned in the Methodology section, from paragraph 5.47, the landscape character of the study area was assessed as part of a national programme of landscape character assessment, carried out by SNH in partnership with local authorities and other agencies.

5.114 In order that the baseline assessment of landscape character is consistent across the study area, and is considered at a level of detail appropriate to the location and scale of the proposed Wind Farm, a degree of synthesis has been necessary. This process has been informed by SNH, the local authority and other agencies as well as field study over a number of months.

Landscape Character Areas

5.115 At a more detailed scale, the differences within each of these character areas become apparent. The areas have been identified, located and described based on desk study and field observation.

5.116 The SNH Landscape Character Assessments identified 33 character areas within the study area. Following review of the descriptions within the text, it is considered that some of the character areas are equivalent. As the site lies centrally within the Ross and Cromarty District, the landscape character areas within this landscape assessment have been used as the basis for all character areas within the four districts of the study area. These were subsequently correlated using similarities within the character to correspond with a manageable assessment of 17 character types designed by RPS under the following titles:

- Smooth Moorland;
- Undulating Moorland;
- Sloping Terrace Moorland;
- Rocky Moorland;
- Rugged Massif;
- Rounded Hills;
- Narrow Farmed Strath;
- Wide Farmed Strath;
- Linear Loch;
- Fjord;
- Forest Edge Farming;
- Linear Crofting;
- Harbour Settlement;
- Farmland with Crofting;
- Strath;
- Narrow Firth Corridor; and
- Wooded Glen.

5.117 The Blade Tip ZTV (Figure 5.13) for the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm demonstrates there would be no theoretical view of the proposed turbines in or from 8 of the 17 landscape character areas within the study area.

5.118 Table 5.5 below shows the corresponding Landscape Character Types within the 35km Study Area. Character types where the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm will be visible (according to the ZTV maps produced) are shaded. These shaded types only are described in paragraph 5.119 onwards, and assessed in paragraph 5.304 onwards Figure 5.6 illustrates the combined Character areas.

Table 5.5 Landscape Character Types

RPS Landscape Character Types	SNH Landscape Character Types			
	Ross & Cromarty Landscape Character Assessment	**Caithness & Sutherland Landscape Character Assessment**	**Inner Moray Firth Landscape Character Assessment**	**Inverness Landscape Character Assessment**
Smooth Moorland	Smooth Moorland	-	-	-
Undulating Moorland	Undulating Moorland	-	-	-
Sloping Terrace Moorland	Sloping Terrace Moorland	Moorland Slopes & Hills	-	-
Rocky Moorland	Rocky Moorland	-	-	Rocky Moorland Plateau Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland
Rugged Massif	Rugged Mountain Massif	Irregular Massif	-	Rugged Massif
Rounded Hills (proposed Wind Farm Located in this character type)	Rounded Hills	-	-	-
Narrow Farmed Strath	Narrow Farmed Strath	-	-	Narrow Farmed Strath
Wide Farmed Strath	Wide Farmed Strath	-	-	-
Linear Loch	Linear Loch	-	-	-
Fjord	Fjord	-	-	-
Forest Edge Farming	Forest Edge Farming	-	Forest Edge Farming Forested Backdrop	Rolling Farmland & Woodland
Linear Crofting	Linear Crofting	-	-	-
Harbour Settlement	Harbour Settlement	-	-	-
Farmland with Crofting	-	Small Farms & Crofts	Crofting Open Farmed Slopes	Enclosed Farmland Crofting Settlement
			Enclosed Farmed Landscapes	
Strath	-	Strath	-	-
Narrow Firth Corridor	-	-	Narrow Firth Corridor Enclosed Firth	-
Wooded Glen	-	-	-	Wooded Glen Narrow wooded Glen

Landscape Character Types

Undulating Moorland

5.119 Gently undulating moorland of subtle irregular topography. Water forms a key characteristic in this landscape, both as lochans and as wet, boggy areas. There is an overriding absence of human activity and artefacts, which adds a sense of remoteness to the barren landscape. There is a lack of dominant vertical points of interest to concentrate the eye. Moorland vegetation of heather, grasses and mosses creates subtle variations of colour and a smooth texture. Small blocks of conifer plantation appear as uncharacteristically dark, geometric forms in the landscape. Rock outcrops, boulders and stones create areas of texture.

Sloping Terrace Moorland

5.120 The moorland topography is divided into a series of slopes and terraces, incised by stream gullies. Many slopes are sub-divided by smaller terraces, resulting in a stepped profile. Man-made features are infrequent, with only occasional roads, power lines and fences. Historic abandoned settlements and industrial activities have a minimal visible presence in the landscape.

Rocky Moorland

5.121 This moorland is characterised by an abundance of scattered rocks, boulders and rock outcrops, forming a textured surface. V-shaped and U-shaped valleys create a strong sense of enclosure which contrasts with the rounded ridges which separate them. Narrow, winding river gorges cut through the landscape and create shelter for scrubby trees and shrub vegetation, which survive grazing. Human activity is largely concentrated along communication lines leaving the interior of the landscape largely uninhabited. Mature coniferous plantations form dominant blocks of dark vegetation over the rocky landform. Settlements, where they occur, have developed at road junctions. Mixed broad-leaf trees grow in some areas of the favourable sheltered microclimate and soils of the river gorges where they are not constrained by grazing pressure.

Rugged Massif

5.122 This mountainous landscape is characterised by steep ridges rising up out of surrounding low-lying land to form a skyline of sharp peaks and jagged summits. Associated with this landscape is a series of corries, deep valleys, narrow mountain lochs and basin shaped lochans as a result of glaciations. Various mountain peaks form landmarks and orientation points due to their distinctive outlines. This landscape possesses a sense of remoteness which is most intense within the interior where there is no road access. Small settlements are frequently scattered throughout the landscape linked by a road network in flatter areas. Archaeological sites and abandoned medieval settlements are located on the fringes of the character type. Native broad leaved woodland exists in sheltered river gorges where sheep and deer cannot graze.

Rounded Hills - (proposed Wind Farm located in this character type)

5.123 The rounded hills comprise a topography of wide open concave and convex slopes that sweep down into broad, open straths. Mountain peaks are broad and bulky and have a vast scale. A low covering of heather accentuates this openness and provides a smooth texture. Numerous deep stream gullies cut into the slope sides, becoming meandering rivers where the land flattens out into straths. These flatter areas are highlighted by the bright green of improved grassland. A fringe of housing is often associated with the principal roads and ribbon development of shops, service stations and electricity pylons are flanked by large scale coniferous woodland. The interior of this character type possesses a sense of remoteness and is accessible only by rough tracks. Large scale coniferous plantations in geometric blocks clothe the slopes and enclose spaces. Reservoirs occupy many straths, their man-made character emphasized by dams, exposed un-vegetated shorelines and ancillary buildings. Prehistoric remains of hut circle settlements and burial cairns occur within this character type, indicating a long history of human settlement.

Narrow Farmed Strath

5.124 This character type comprises narrow sinuous channels directed by the surrounding topography of the adjacent hills. The land-locked character of these straths provides a strong sense of enclosure and isolation from the surrounding landscape. Land use is mainly agricultural comprising a managed patchwork of fields enclosed by hedgerows and mature trees. The farmed landscape is indicative of human activity, a sense of which is lacking in the surrounding moorland. Settlements tend to consist of small dwellings and buildings associated with traditional historic estates.

Forest Edge Farming

5.125 The topography of this character type is undulating lowland, which supports an agricultural landscape of semi-improved and improved pasture or cultivated arable land. The strong geometric pattern of enclosures is more prominent where stone walls, gorse hedges and hedgerow trees line this framework. The variable size of the fields adds to the diversity of the pattern and texture. The crops within the fields and the deciduous vegetation create change through the seasons. This landscape is heavily influenced by the presence of high voltage lines and pylons, the stature of which create visual foci. There is a long history of human activity with many areas containing old settlements and estate land. Typically settlements and farm buildings tend to be dispersed and are sited either in direct relation to the main road network or along small farm tracks. Woodland and trees form a key characteristic of this landscape, comprising small estate copses, shelterbelts and hedgerow trees as well as larger coniferous plantations. The geometric blocks of dark plantations with their vertical sides form imposing features on high land within the character area. Abandoned medieval and 19th and 20th century settlements and industrial sites create a sense of history within the landscape.

Farmland with Crofting

5.126 Gently undulating lowlands with strong convex slope profile. A strong geometric pattern of small to medium sized fields is enclosed by stone dykes, gorse or turf field boundaries. The delineation of farm holdings by shelter-belts creates a second, stronger pattern overlying the pattern of field boundaries. The smooth textured fields of brown, green and yellow and dispersed point settlements create a diverse, but well ordered landscape with a strong repeating geometry. Main roads within this character type tend to follow the break of slope giving extensive panoramic views over this landscape towards distant mountains and coastlines. Typical settlements within this type are farm holdings comprising tightly grouped mixes of old and newer architectural forms which create point features in the landscape. The croft buildings act as small, but frequent vertical features, forming an integral part of the diverse crofting landscape. This pattern of rural settlement is vey much dictated by the system of original land allocation in the townships.

Narrow Firth Corridor

5.127 The flat plane of the firth is contained within a glaciated U-shaped valley with a narrow intertidal zone, creating a sense of enclosure and shelter. A series of interlocking spurs give an irregular coastline and restrict forward views along the coast, providing framed glimpses of distant mountains. Dispersed settlements are unobtrusive and small farm settlements along coastal roads correlate with flat deltas suitable for pasture farming.

Urban Areas

5.128 No urban character areas would be affected by construction of the turbines.

Settlement - Lochluichart

5.129 Lochuichart is a small settlement with properties predominantly to the north of the A832 looking across to the Loch of the same given name.

Landscape Designations

5.130 A distinction has been made between designations for amenity and landscape, active conservation management designations and cultural heritage designations. Designations for species and special habitats are dealt with in Chapter 6, (Ecology). Where any of these designations also function as visitor destinations, these have been assessed additionally as landscape and visual receptors. Landscape designations are illustrated within Figures 5.4 and 5.12. Other designation types are assessed in Chapters 6 (Ecology) and 10 (Cultural Heritage).

International Designations

5.131 There are no international landscape designations (such as World Heritage Sites designated for their natural beauty) within the study area.

National Designations - National Scenic Areas (NSAs)

5.132 There are three National Scenic Areas (NSA) which lie within the study area. NSA's were identified in 1978 by the Countryside Commission for Scotland and were established by Order of the Secretary of State in 1981, and can be summarised as follows:

…areas of land and water which represent the very best of Scotland's renowned scenery. They are of such outstanding natural beauty and amenity that they should be safeguarded and enhanced as part of the national heritage.

5.133 The three NSA's within the study area are:

- Wester Ross
- Glen Strathfarrar
- Dornoch Firth

5.134 The Wester Ross NSA lies on the western edge of the study area approximately 23km west of the site. The *Wester Ross NSA Draft Management Strategy, November 2002* describes the area as follows:

The NSA embraces a diversity of landscapes from the soaring mass of the peaks which offer a sustained crescendo of mountain scenery, through the myriad lochs and burns that fleck the open moorland and hill to the intricate, indented coastline that twists and turns its way from sea lochs to headland and back to sea loch.

5.135 The Glen Strathfarrar NSA is a small area designation, wholly within the study area, approximately 23km to the south of the site. The landscape is described as follows:

Three great glens feed into Strathglass and the Beauly River. All three are in the form of long deep troughs, studded with lochs, declining eastwards from high mountaine and becoming avenues of wooded verdure while still flanked by lofty skylines.

5.136 A small section of the Dornoch Firth NSA lies on the north eastern edge of the study area approximately 32km from the site, however no part of the designated landscape coincides with the proposed Wind Farm ZTV.

Regional Designations – Proposed Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs)

5.137 Within the Highlands, Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs) were historically designated to protect small, local areas of scenic and recreational value. However, within the Highland Council Structure Plan (2001) several larger, potential AGLVs (pAGLVs) were identified. These designated landscapes lie outside of, and will complement, the NSAs and will be confirmed through the relevant Local Plan.

5.138 There are three pAGLV's within the study area as follows:

- Ben Wyvis;
- Freevattar/ Ben Dearg/ The Fannichs;
- The Central Glens.

Ben Wyvis

5.139 The Ben Wyvis pAGLV lies approximately 7km to the east of the site. This small area of designated landscape covers Ben Wyvis range of mountains between Strathgarve Forest in the south and Loch Glass in the north.

The Freevattar / Ben Dearg / The Fannichs

5.140 The Freevattar/ Ben Dearg/ The Fannichs pAGLV lies approximately 6km to the north and west of the site. This large stretch of mountainous landscape either side of the A835 covers peaks, lochs and water courses between Loch Fannich in the south and the River Carron valley in the north.

The Central Glens

5.141 The Central Glens pAGLV is an extensive landscape approximately 10km from the site boundary to the southwest at Strathconon Forest. The northern parts of this extensive landscape lie within the study area between the A890 and the A831.

5.142 Given the regional or local importance of pAGLVs, their sensitivity to change will be at least medium.

5.143 All pAGLVs have been assessed further from static viewpoints (VP09, VP14/VP15 and VP11) respectively.

Wild Land

5.144 Wild Land is described by SNH in their policy statement 'Wildness in Scotland's Countryside' 2002 as extensive areas where wildness is best expressed. NPPG 14 describes wild land as *" uninhabited and often relatively inaccessible countryside where the influence of human activity on the character and quality of the environment has been minimal"*. SNH policy states *"there are parts of Scotland where the wild character of the landscape, its related recreational value and potential for nature are such that these areas should be safeguarded against inappropriate development or land-use change"*.

5.145 The policy makes reference to a *"preliminary search map for areas of wild land"* the purpose of which is not to *"delimit wild land, but to act as a starting point for review of where the main resource of wild land is most likely to be found"*. Areas to the west of the study area are considered as wild land. However, the closest search area lies 5km to the north and 6km to the west of the proposals.

5.146 Due to the undeveloped and open nature of wild land it would usually have a high sensitivity to change through development.

5.147 Areas considered as wild land are treated in the assessment within the NSA and AGLVs that they coincide with.

Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

5.148 The Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes is a growing and evolving record of nationally important gardens and designed landscapes across Scotland maintained by SNH and Historic Scotland. These gardens and landscapes are valuable assets at national, regional and local levels. Sites listed in the inventory are not statutory designations, but are protected through policies in structure plans and would have at least medium sensitivity to change.

5.149 A garden included in the Inventory does not have legal protection, but it is nonetheless a material consideration in the planning process (as addressed in SPP23), and it is to be expected that the information included in the Inventory will inform the planning decision maker. Information regarding these listings (as in paragraph 5.153 and 5.154) is paraphrased from Historic Scotland Gardens and Designed Landscape Inventory 2007.

5.150 The 10 Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes identified within the study area are shown on Figure 5.4 and comprise:

- Scatwell House, Strathconon;
- Castle Leod, Strathpeffer;
- Fairburn House;

- Brahan Estate;
- Ardross Castle;
- Novar Estate;
- Beaufort Castle;
- Rosehaugh Estate;
- Dundonnel; and
- Leckmelm.

5.151 A number of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes currently have no formal access arrangements. However; Scotland does operate an open access policy within its landscape in agreement with the landowners.

5.152 Only two of the receptors lie within the proposed Wind Farm ZTV, at Scatwell House Strathconon and Fairburn House, Fairburn. Visibility form Scatwell House is actually non existent, and visibility from the entrance to Fairburn house is assessed as viewpoint 10.

Scatwell House, Strathconon

5.153 Historic Scotland's Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes Inventory describes Scatwell House as *'A largely 20th century designed landscape comprising parkland, woodland, gardens and architectural features of interest.'*

Fairburn House

5.154 Historic Scotland's Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes Inventory describes Fairburn Estate as *'a late 18th / early 19th century property, the designed landscape consisting of gardens, woodland and architectural features, and together makes an impressive impact on the local scenery. Fairburn is famous for its trees, especially conifers planted by John Stirling in the 1870s.*

Viewpoint Analysis - Baseline

5.155 The landscape and visual effects of the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm have been assessed in detail from a range of viewpoints. These are representative of a range of views and viewer types, including settlements, main visitor destinations, recreational routes, transport corridors, varying landscape character types and a variety of distances, aspects, elevations and sequential routes.

5.156 Eighteen viewpoints throughout the study area have been identified. Their locations are shown in Figure 5.16 and 5.17 and individual viewpoints in Figures 5.18 - 5.35. These viewpoints represent typical views potentially gained by local residents, visitors to the area, and people passing through. These viewpoints have been selected following discussions with the Highland Council and SNH. In addition, some of the viewpoints have been included to illustrate the sequential and cumulative effects of the proposed Wind Farm with other wind farms.

5.157 In some cases viewpoints are from similar locations along popular routes; this is to demonstrate how the view changes, and the sequential effect on the visual receptor. The overall effects on sequential views and cumulative effects are assessed later in the chapter.

Viewpoint 1: Peak at Meall Mhic Lomhair

5.158 This view is taken from the summit of Meall Mhic Lomhair, OS reference: 231939, 867418, at 593m AOD (Figure 5.18).

5.159 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rounded Hills);
- Hill walkers.

Existing View

5.160 This is a near open view east to the site (approximately 1.3km to nearest turbine) from an elevated location east of the peak at Meall Mhic Lomhair. The rocky moorland plateau in the foreground drops away, revealing the loosely geometric blocks of the forestry within the site in the middle distance. Small lochs, lochans, watercourses and access tracks divide the land, adding greater visual diversity. Beyond the site the landform rises in a series of ridges to a high point at Ben Wyvis. Dark geometric blocks of conifer plantation lie within valley bases, reflecting the character of the site and contrasting with the soft, muted tones of the wider landscape. To the right of the view, the low lying land of the Black Isle is visible in the distance.

Future Baseline

5.161 The Lochluichart Wind Farm scheme in the landscape would change the immediate views from this elevated location, with five of the seventeen turbines visible in the foreground approximately 850m from the viewer, when looking towards the Corriemoillie site. The remaining turbines of Lochluichart continue to the southwest (right) of the viewer.

Viewpoint 2: Aultguish Inn

5.162 This view is from the lay-by adjacent the Aultguish Inn on the A835, OS reference: 235173, 870404, at 226m AOD (Figure 5.19).

5.163 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Undulating Moorland);
- Visitors to Inn;
- Road users on the A835.

Existing View

5.164 This is a near, open view south to the site (approximately 2.3km from the nearest turbine) from the A835(T) beside the Aultguish Inn. Moorland rises gently in the foreground from the edge of the road to form a low ridge. Timber fence posts and overhead power line poles form prominent vertical elements in the moorland. Coniferous plantation on the tops of two low ridges is visible on the horizon. The brown and green of heather and grassland form a subdued colour palette.

Future Baseline

5.165 The consented scheme of Lochluichart lies approximately 4km from the viewer lying to the southwest of the proposed site. From the Inn three turbines would be visible above the hub with an additional three turbines visible breaking the skyline above the forestry with rotation of the blades. Views of these three turbines would diminish as the immature forestry around the Lochluichart Wind Farm establishes.

Viewpoint 3: A835 Black Bridge

5.166 This view is from the lay-by / entrance to Strathvaich Estate and Loch on the A835, OS reference: 237360, 870824, at 208m AOD (Figure 5.20).

5.167 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Undulating Moorland);
- Road users of A835.

Existing View

5.168 This is a near, open view southwest to the site (approximately 3.8km) from a layby on the A835(T) beside the Black Bridge. The concrete bridge structure, parapet and safety barriers dominate the foreground of the view. Low ridges of rocky moorland direct the eye along the road corridor to the right. Muted grey and brown colours occur throughout the view. Vehicles on the road form prominent transient elements in the view.

Future Baseline

5.169 Lochluichart Wind Farm lies approximately 5km from the viewpoint. The majority of the consented Wind Farm lies to the southwest beyond the rising land in the immediate foreground. One turbine would be visible in its entirety with two turbines visible above the hub breaking the skyline. An additional three turbines would be visible as blades rotate just above the ridge.

Viewpoint 4: Old Drovers Road (Proposed Core Path), Corriemoillie

5.170 This view is from the Old Drovers Road to the east of the site, OS reference: 237582, 866846, at 335m AOD (Figure 5.21).

5.171 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rocky Moorland);
- Users of the Core Path between Aultguish Inn and StrathGarve Forest (Gorstan).

Existing View

5.172 This is a near, open view west (approximately 2.4km to the site) from the proposed Core Path. Undulating moorland rises up to a ridge of higher ground immediately in front of the site. The land continues to rise as a series of ridges in the distance, to the right of the view. Timber fence posts form vertical elements crossing the landscape in the foreground. Muted brown and grey colours dominate the view.

Future Baseline

5.173 From this location along the Old Drovers Road the Lochluichart Wind Farm would not be visible.

Viewpoint 5: A835, near Tarvie

5.174 This view is from the A835, near Tarvie, OS reference: 242343, 858941 at 86m AOD (Figure 5.22).

5.175 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rocky Moorland);
- Road users on the A835.

Existing View

5.176 This is a distant, channelled view northwest (approximately 10.5km to the site) from the A835 near Garve Bridge. The typical lowland forested landscape along the road corridor opens at this point from the south on the A835 providing the first view of the landscape beyond, before meandering into the valley floor. The view continues along the river valley through Loch Garve and on to the distant hills. The near view of hills to the right contains Strathgarve forest and the summit of Meall Ruighe an Fhirich and communications towers, and to the left the summit of Sgurr Marcasaidh.

Future Baseline

5.177 Six turbines of the Lochluichart Wind Farm would be visible at distance upon reaching this section of the A835. The turbines would be to the fore of the proposed site with one turbine visible from the base, three above the hub and a further two at the extremities of the upper blade tips upon rotation.

Viewpoint 6: A832 Gorstan

5.178 This view is from the A832 Gorstan (near the junction with the A835), OS reference: 238473, 862660, at 109m AOD (Figure 5.23).

5.179 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type: (Narrow Farmed Strath);
- Road users on the A832.

Existing View

5.180 This is a mid-distance, channelled view northwest (approximately 5.1km to the site) from a layby on the A832 near Gorstan. Trees beside the road lead the eye into the distance and block views to the left. The hillside to the right of the view is covered in conifer plantation and deciduous woodland rising up to form the horizon. Roadside fencing, signage and telegraph poles form typical features of the road corridor.

Future Baseline

5.181 Looking west from the layby on the A832 Gorstan, the majority of turbines from the Lochluichart Wind Farm are located beyond the rising land in the mid ground view. Four of the turbines would be visible as blade tips rotate. However local vegetation would limit visibility to winter months only when the vegetation is not in leaf.

Viewpoint 7: A832 / entrance to Corriemoillie Farm

5.182 This view is from the A832 adjacent the entrance to Corriemoillie Farm, OS reference: 235450, 863636 at 122m AOD (Figure 5.24).

5.183 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rounded Hills);
- Road users on the A832.

Existing View

5.184 This is a near, open view north (approximately 2.5km to the site) from the side of the A832 at the entrance to Corriemoillie Farm. Grazed pasture in the foreground is visible beyond fences and gates. The land rises to an undulating ridge beyond, covered in moorland, deciduous woodland and conifer plantation. Areas of felled plantation are visible on the hillside. The whitewashed farm house and out-buildings form a prominent cluster of agricultural development to the right of the view. Fence lines and tracks create linear features in the landscape. The uniform green pasture forms a strong contrast with the textured hillside beyond.

Future Baseline

5.185 When looking towards the site from this section of the A832, two of the upper extremes of the blade tips would be visible upon rotation. Further turbines of the Lochluichart Wind Farm would be visible to the viewer when looking west along the A832.

Viewpoint 8: A832 west of Lochluichart

5.186 This view is from the A832 west of Lochluichart, OS reference: 230717, 861884 at 123m AOD (Figure 5.25).

5.187 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rocky Moorland);
- Road users of the A832.

Existing View

5.188 This is a mid-distance fragmented view north east (approximately 5.2km to the site) from the side of the A832 at a residential access road. Trees either side of the road initially channel views along the road corridor, partially screening the middle distance. An undulating ridge of linked peaks form a distant horizon, rising up above intervening tree tops. A mosaic of muted coloured moorland covers the landform. Safety barriers, road signs and grit bins combined with exotic garden vegetation detract from the overall rural view. Metal lattice towers & timber poles for overhead power lines are visible crossing the landscape in the middle distance.

Future Baseline

5.189 From this location along the A832, the Lochluichart Wind Farm would not be visible.

Viewpoint 9: Summit of Ben Wyvis

5.190 This view is from the summit of Ben Wyvis, OS reference: 246304, 868380 at 1044m AOD (Figure 5.26).

5.191 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type: (Rounded Hills);
- Hill walkers (Munro);
- Designated Landscape – pAGLV.

Existing View

5.192 This is a mid-distance open view west (approximately 11.1km to the site) from the summit of Ben Wyvis. The foreground grassland rapidly falls away revealing a mid-distance landscape of undulating moorland interspersed with relatively irregular blocks of coniferous plantation including woodland at the site. Lochluichart, Loch Fannich and Loch Glascarnoch form prominent bodies of water in the valley bases. The A835 and the A832 roads are visible winding through the landscape. The backdrop of the view is formed by a series of rocky, snow capped mountain peaks which crowd the horizon and diminish into the haze of the west coast of Scotland.

5.193 The mountain ranges have a wild character which contrasts with the middle distance landscape which is influenced by man. Muted shades of brown and green form an intricate mosaic of landcover throughout the view. The dam at Loch Glascarnoch, overhead power lines in the valleys and traffic on the roads form minor urban intrusions in the view. Novar Wind Farm to the northeast is also visible from the summit.

Future Baseline

5.194 Due to the height and position of Ben Wyvis, all turbines of the Lochluichart Wind Farm would be visible. The Wind Farm would form a cohesive group and an addition to human elements in a large landscape.

Viewpoint 10: Entrance to Fairburn House

5.195 This view is taken from the Avenue to the entrance of the Fairburn Estate, OS reference: 247778, 853026 at 93m AOD (Figure 5.27).

5.196 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Farmland with Crofting);
- Entrance to Historic Gardens and Designed Landscape.

Existing View

5.197 This is a distant framed view northwest (approximately 18.5km to the site) from the access road to Fairburn House, near the village of Marybank. The foreground comprises the relatively flat farmed landscape of the base of the River Conon valley. Pasture fields are divided by linear stone walls and timber fences. Mixed estate woodland frames views beyond of a series of steep ridges clothed with woodland and moorland. Farmsteads and outbuildings are scattered throughout the foreground of the view.

Future Baseline

5.198 Four of the Lochluichart turbines would be visible above mid tower height at distance within the landscape, with one turbine breaking the skyline. Movement of the blades of a further three turbines would be visible only in clear conditions.

Viewpoint 11: Peak of Creag Byadh near Milton

5.199 This view is taken from the Peak of Creag Byadh near Milton, OS reference: 227681, 853930 at 711 AOD (Figure 5.28).

5.200 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rounded Hills);
- Hill walking destination;
- Designated landscape – pAGLV.

Existing View

5.201 This is a mid-distance open view northeast (approximately 13.6km to the site) from the peak of Creag Byadh. Steeply sloping moorland dips down to the wide valley base of the River Meig. Forestry extends up to a defined line on the valley side with grazing land and the dispersed settlement of Milton hugging the side of the sinuous river. Moorland cover over undulating ridges extends through the middle distance, interspersed with geometric blocks of conifer plantation. A glimpse of Lochluichart would be gained to the south of the site. The smooth outline of the Ben Wyvis range forms the most prominent mountain on the horizon. The dark shapes of the forestry contrast with the intricate textures and subtle colours of the moorland and grassland.

Future Baseline

5.202 Due to the height and position of the viewer, all turbines of the Lochluichart Wind Farm would be visible in front of the Corriemoillie site, within a large scale landscape.

Viewpoint 12: Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais

5.203 This view is taken from the summit of Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais, OS reference: 225886, 843013 at 1087m AOD (Figure 5.29).

5.204 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rugged Massif);
- Hill walking destination (Munro);
- Designated landscape (pAGLV).

Existing View

5.205 This is a distant panoramic view north east (approximately 24km to the site) from the summit of Sgurr a Choire Ghlais. The destination is popular for hill walking with a series of Munros easily accessible across the ridge. The view appears isolated with little human influence aside from estate dwellings and access tracks within the glens. The skyline of sharp peaks and jagged summits create landmarks and orientation points within the landscape.

Future Baseline

5.206 All turbines from the Lochluichart Wind Farm would be visible from this vantage point sited, within a large scale landscape.

Viewpoint 13: Leathad Buide, Beinn Eighe NNR

5.207 This view is taken from the Cairn at Leathad Buide, Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve (NNR), OS reference: 199302, 863297 at 553m AOD (Figure 5.30).

5.208 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rugged Massif);
- Hill walking destination (designated viewing point);
- Designated landscape - Wester Ross NSA.

Existing View

5.209 This is a distant open view east (approximately 34.2km to the site) from the peak of Leathad Buidhe. The rocky plateau of the summit drops away to rocky grassland and then the flat base of the Kinlochewe River valley. Woodland and gorse scrub follow the winding river. The whitewashed houses of Kinlochewe are visible, contrasting sharply with the dark, fragmented blocks of the surrounding conifer plantation. The middle distance comprises rocky moorland peaks sloping steeply down to narrow valleys. The distinctive profile of the Ben Wyvis range is visible on the distant horizon beyond a glimpse of open water at Loch Fannich in the centre of the view. Conical mountain peaks define the remainder of the horizon. The textures and colours of the landscape are rugged and varied.

Future Baseline

5.210 The Lochluichart Wind Farm would be an inconspicuous element in a large scale landscape with seven of the seventeen turbines visible only in very clear visibility positioned at the end of a great glen.

Viewpoint 14: Summit of An Coileachan within the Fannichs Range

5.211 This view is taken from the summit of An Coileachan, OS: 224159, 868026 at 924m AOD (Figure 5.31).

5.212 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rugged Massif);
- Hill walking destination (Munro);
- Designated landscape (pAGLV).

Existing View

5.213 This is a mid-distance open view east (approximately 11.1km to the site) from the summit of An Coileachan. Panoramic views are achieved across the landscape with Ben Wyvis and the Black Isle forming a backdrop to distant views. The foreground drops away steeply to reveal a landscape of rounded sinuous landforms rising up from wide open valleys and the lochs of Loch Fannich and Loch Luichart. Views across the panorama are of a distinctive mountainous landscape with long views in all directions. Human influence is evident due to commercial 'block' plantation and estate access roads through the glens.

Future Baseline

5.214 The Lochluichart Wind Farm is located in front of the proposed Corriemoillie site. All turbines would be at least partly visible, with nine visible from the tower to the blade tips. The remaining turbines would be visible either from the hub or tips only.

Viewpoint 15: B741 Summit of Sgurr Mor within the Fannichs Range

5.215 This view is taken from the summit of Sgurr Mor, OS reference: 220324, 87817 at 1088m AOD (Figure 5.32).

5.216 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rugged Massif);
- Hill walking destination (Munro).

Existing View

5.217 This is a mid-distance open view southeast (approximately 13.4km to the site) from the summit of Sgurr Mor within the Fannichs range. The foreground drops away steeply to reveal a landscape of rounded sinuous landforms rising up from wide open valleys. Rock-strewn moorland forms the dominant landcover, with some blocks of forestry in the distance. Small lochans and the larger water body of Loch Glascarnoch provide contrast in the landscape. The Ben Wyvis range dominates the horizon in the centre of the view. The colours of muted grey, golden brown and green are repeated throughout the view, creating continuity.

Future Baseline

5.218 The upper elements (hubs and tips) of the Lochluichart turbines and one tower section would be apparent in the wider landscape beyond the ridge to the west of the site.

Viewpoint 16: Summit of Beinn Dearg

5.219 This view is taken from the summit of Beinn Dearg, OS reference: 224176, 868018 at 987m AOD (Figure 5.33).

5.220 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rugged Massif);
- Hill walking destination (Munro);
- Designated landscape (pAGLV).

Existing View

5.221 The summit of Beinn Dearg is one of the most prominent in the view between Ullapool and Garve. It provides panoramic views stretching from coast to coast. This is a mid distance open view (approximately 9km to site) with the eastern Munros of Ben Wyvis and the Black Isle providing a backdrop to the view. The taller peaks to the north and coastal islands to the northwest provide a spectacular view as the eye is drawn through Loch Broom to the coast. The urban conurbations of Ullapool and Inverness are also viewed on the clearest of days. The hill is a popular climb with a well marked track through the glen before ascending to the summit.

5.222 A surprising feature of the walk is the series of dry stone walls that ascends the summit from the northwest before traversing along the ridge to the southeast. Glen Glascarnoch is a distinctive feature in the view to the fore of Corriemoillie forest with its drawn down beach leading the eye south.

Future Baseline

5.223 From Beinn Dearg the upper elements of five turbines at the Lochluichart Wind Farm would be perceptible in clear conditions in the large landscape.

Viewpoint 17: Summit of Beinn a Chaisteil

5.224 This view is taken from the summit of Beinn a Chaisteil, OS reference: 236991, 880104 at 807m AOD (Figure 5.34).

5.225 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rounded Hills);
- Hill walking destination (Corbett);
- Designated landscape (pAGLV).

Existing View

5.226 Beinn a Chaisteil is a popular Corbett with the long distance walkers, with a 12km walk in via Strathvaich Estate before steeply ascending to the summit. Panoramic views are gained from the summit, which has a sense of remoteness with little evidence of civilisation. This is a mid distance restricted view to Correimoillie Forest (approximately 12.1km to the site) due to the topography of the ridge running south. Views north provide uninterrupted views to the northern coast of Scotland, with a series of ridgelines and glens providing a dramatic panorama.

5.227 The existing wind farms of Kilbraur, Beinn Tharsuinn and Novar are visible to the north east of the summit.

Future Baseline

5.228 Four of the seventeen turbines at Lochluichart Wind Farm would be apparent from mid tower through to the tips. The remaining turbines would be visible from the hubs to the extremes of the upper tips.

Viewpoint 18: Summit of Carn Ban

5.229 This view is taken from the summit of Carn Ban, OS reference: 233939, 887588 at 831m AOD approximately 18.2km from the site (Figure 5.35).

5.230 It is representative of:

- Landscape Character Type (Rugged Massif);
- Hill walking destination (Corbett);
- Designated landscape (pAGLV);
- Proposed Area of Wild Land.

Existing View

5.231 No viewpoint photography was undertaken at this site due to inaccessibility and health and safety concerns for surveying within the private estate. The baseline description has been derived from the wireline and available aerial photography and mapping information.

5.232 The view lies in a search area for wild land and the Freevattar/Beinn Dearg/Fannichs pAGLV. The destination is popular with long distance walkers who tend to cycle and or camp wild overnight due to its remoteness – the viewpoint is over a day's walk from the main road. The landscape is formed by a series of glens and flat hilltops ranging in height from 700-900m AOD. Extensive 360° panoramic views are gained across the landscape with the Corriemoillie site lying approximately 18.5km to south.

Future Baseline

5.233 A wireline has been produced to assess effects from the pAGLV.

5.234 Four of the seventeen Lochluichart turbines would be inconspicuous elements from mid tower through to the tips in a large open landscape with a further four turbines viewed from the hub to upper tip. Due to the intervening long distance, these would only be evident in clear conditions.

Sequential Effects - Baseline

5.235 Although there is potential for views towards the proposed Wind Farm from roads in the local area, much will depend on local circumstances including the extent to which roadside vegetation or forestry filter or screen views towards the site.

5.236 The roads assessed in the sequential assessment were the A835(T), A832 and the minor Matheson Road between Garve and Little Garve. Rights of Way and other paths were also assessed (Figure 5.15)

A835 (T)

5.237 The A835 (T) is the main arterial road that cuts across the country southeast to northwest and is a vital link between Inverness and Ullapool. The road meanders through the lower straths and glens of the Northern Highlands with mountain peaks above at a height range of 500-1000m, creating narrow and directed views along the direction of travel. Towards either end of the journey the landscape undertakes a distinctive change in character with signs of habitation and land management. The main length of the journey is predominantly uninhabited and lends a sense of remoteness whilst travelling.

5.238 As this road is both a main transport and tourist route and passes in close proximity to the site, it is considered a key visual receptor for the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm.

A835 (T) Heading northwest: Contin - Braemore Junction

Contin to Gorstan

5.239 Upon leaving Contin there is a distinct change in character from the undulating lowland farmed edge to a landscape that rises up to form hills and mountains. The road becomes enclosed by both native and commercial forestry. The road begins to undulate as it winds through the glen beside the river. Rogie Falls, a popular tourist destination with a car park, is evident from the roadside. Between Rogie Falls and Tarvie the road is contained by native woodland and commercial forestry creating a view restricted to the road corridor, with glimpsed views of the hills beyond. Beyond Tarvie, glimpses of the Blackwater Strath are gained through the forestry before the view opens up to reveal Loch Garve. There long distance views are directed through the glen to the distant hills, including at the head of the glen, the site of Lochluichart Wind Farm, and the proposed Corriemoillie site. The view across the glen appears rugged, however human influence is evident due to recent forestry clearance, overhead lines and the railway.

5.240 Before entering Garve the road descends to the floor of the glen, where it shares its corridor with the main railway. This creates a distraction in the view, with unmanaged fencing and telecommunication masts that line the side. The settlement of Garve is clustered around the railway station and creates a focal point to the journey.

5.241 Upon leaving Garve the road winds through a narrow corridor lined with roadside trees and scattered properties before meeting the main road junction with the A832 at Gorstan. Here the view opens up to provide mid distance views of forestry and the foot slopes of Ben Wyvis.

Gorstan to Aultguish Inn

5.242 The road lies in cutting at Little Garve directing views east to the western slopes of Ben Wyvis and provides the first sense of entering a mountainous landscape along the journey. Commercial forestry with areas of clearance operations and overhead lines form detracting features within the view. Scattered farmsteads and lodges are evident along the journey - particularly the Inchbae Lodge which forms a focal point to the journey.

5.243 Beyond the Inchbae Lodge the landscape opens up intermittently, providing glimpsed views through and across the moorland, giving a sense of approach to the remote mountainous landscape. Upon the bend the landscape changes dramatically providing a sense of openness through Strathvaich and the rolling hills in which it is situated.

5.244 The open views again narrow through the Blackwater Glen to the dominating feature of Glascarnoch Dam. The landscape is simple and contains a series of human elements including the dam and the Aultguish Inn. The Inn is a well visited local landmark in the area that appears overshadowed by the dam wall. When travelling through this section, the forestry of Corriemoillie is evident on the ridge.

Aultguish Inn to Braemore Junction A832

5.245 From the Inn, the road rises to the head of Glascarnoch Loch and hydro-electric infrastructure which gives a sense of an industrial landscape. The drawdown on the loch is also a detracting feature to the glen. Views are concentrated along the loch and to the distant hills within the pAGLV, including Beinn Dearg and peaks at the head of the Glen. Once past the loch, the landform provides a sense of enclosure with the higher peaks of the pAGLV in close proximity to the road travelled. The openness of Loch Droma provides further distant views along the strath with the mountainous peak of An Teallach providing a focal point.

5.246 Beyond Loch Droma the road begins to descend before becoming enclosed by native woods lining the strath and the River Broom.

A835 (T) Heading southeast: Braemore Junction - Contin

Braemore Junction A832 to Aultguish Inn

5.247 The Braemore junction of the A832 contains a series of complex landscape elements associated with the junction and car park to the forestry and long distance walks. The road ascends out of the gorge and the pAGLV to an open strath. The hills provide a backdrop and enclosure to the strath, to the views onto Loch Droma.

5.248 Travelling past Loch Droma the hills to the periphery focus travellers views along the glen to the head of Loch Glascarnoch and the hydro-electric infrastructure. The distant peaks of Ben Wyvis form the backdrop to the view. Where the road continues along the side of the loch, a series of human elements detract from the view including the hydro-electric scheme, car parking and commercial forestry. From this direction of travel, the Aultguish Inn appears nestled in the landscape and the road provides a division between the steeply rising land to the north and the more gently undulating landform to the south where the proposed site is located.

Aultguish Inn to Gorstan

5.249 Continuing southeast, the open rounded hills give way to sections of native woods and plantation forestry on the foot slopes and a sense of departure from the mountainous landscape is experienced. The enclosed nature of the landscape through the strath and over Black Bridge becomes more open, with views south to the Strathconon range at Gorstan.

Gorstan to Contin

5.250 From Gorstan the road descends into the enclosed and isolated space of Garve before meandering through native woodland and commercial forestry to the more developed landscape of Contin.

A832

5.251 The A832 is the arterial link between the east coast and the west coast, and isles of the northern highlands. The road commences at Gorstan and passes through glens, straths and other landscapes before reaching the western coast providing access to the western isles. The road then returns along the coast and between the straths and glens before rejoining the A835 at Braemore Junction.

A832 heading west: Gorstan - Achnasheen

Gorstan to Lochluichart

5.252 Heading west from the junction with the A835 the view contains a prominent drumlin landscape with a scattering of houses with a backdrop of commercial plantation. The road continues to rise and reaches the watershed beside the railway before entering the strath that passes Corriemoillie Forest and provides the first glimpsed view of the forestry associated with the proposed Wind Farm site. The landscape across the strath is crossed by power lines, rail tracks a series of fences and outbuildings. A number of residential properties lie to the north of the road with the focal point of Corriemoillie Farm nestled in a clearing. At this point the development site is directly behind the farm, beyond the ridge. Views along the road will contain a number of turbines from the Lochluichart Wind Farm beyond the ridge of Carn Glac nam Fiadh.

5.253 Beyond Corriemoillie Farm the road is contained within forestry and native woodland associated with Lochluichart Lodge and Estate. This forestry screens views and provides a sense of enclosure to the journey, before the view opens up to provide views across the western head of Lochluichart.

Lochluichart to Achanalt

5.254 Upon entering the settlement of Lochluichart cottages, views to the north of the road become apparent beside the viewing layby at the loch. Travelling from Lochluichart the view opens to the south revealing a moorland landscape with native and commercial forests. The Grudie hydro buildings and infrastructure form a dominant element in the view within the semi-enclosed landscape to the north.

5.255 Continuing from Grudie, the road enters Strath Bran and travels along the strath floor. The strath defines the linear character of this landscape type, with the flat floor, sloping sides and linear human patterns including the road, railway and loch. The landscape also includes a number of inhabited and derelict crofters cottages on either side of the loch.

Achanalt to Achnasheen

5.256 The character of the landscape continues along the river corridor with long linear views to distant hills including Beinn Eighe within the NSA to the west and scattered crofters cottages within the strath floor. The landscape gives a sense of space and remoteness.

5.257 Approaching Achnasheen the landscape becomes imposing, particularly from the west towards the NSA. Achnasheen is considered the crossing or meeting point for access to the east, northwest and southwest of the highlands. Achnasheen village comprises the rail station, local tourist shops and a small cluster of residential properties.

A832 heading east: Achnasheen - Gorstan

Achnasheen to Achanalt

5.258 Leaving Achnasheen, the strath appears open and simple with little influence from the sloping hills to the north and west. Views across the landscape lead the viewer through the strath, with its isolated derelict crofters cottages, scatterings of commercial forestry and meandering river, to the southern peaks of the Central Glens pAGLV and the summit of Sgurr a' Mhuilinn.

Achanalt to Lochluichart

5.259 Continuing east, the imposing summit of Ben Wyvis gradually becomes a prominent feature in the landscape as the height of the surrounding moorland flattens with no distinct peaks. Upon rounding the bend east of Loch Chuilinn, the Grudie hydro scheme becomes apparent, with imposing industrial building and infrastructure. Approaching Lochluichart the heightened landform and roadside vegetation provides filtered views of Lochluichart with the profile of Ben Wyvis and Little Wyvis forming a dramatic linear backdrop to the view. Descending to Lochluichart the loch and its associated hydro-electric scheme and viewing layby dominate the view, whilst the residential properties become apparent upon rounding the bend.

Lochluichart to Gorstan

5.260 After Lochluichart, the view becomes contained by woodland and forestry before the view widens at Corriemoillie. This view along the strath contains overhead cables, out-buildings and farming equipment in a ‘jumbled’ fashion.

5.261 As the road begins to descend into Gorstan and the Junction with the A835, the peak of Ben Wyvis looms over the scattered buildings of Little Garve.

The 'B' Road Network

5.262 No 'B' Road network is located within the study area.

Minor Roads and Lanes

5.263 Within the study area only one local road leading between Garve and Little Garve Bridge is considered to form a route from which occupiers of vehicles are likely to experience effects. This road is also used as a recreational trail for local walkers.

Matheson Road between Garve and Little Garve

5.264 Matheson Road accesses Garve from Stirling Drive off the A835 before passing the village hall and the high street of Garve. The road heads northeast crossing Black Water at Garve Bridge and continues into plantation forestry before meeting a T - junction to Strathgarve and Little Garve. At this point the road heads north-northwest within the plantation, heading towards the proposed site. All views are confined to the road corridor due to the plantation until reaching Strath Garve Farm, where views open out to the west beyond the farm to the landscape and plantation in which the proposed Wind Farm would be sited. This view continues for approximately 200m, before the road enters a further section of forestry towards the Keepers House. Beyond the house the view again opens to the west and continues until travellers reach Black Water where the road is currently closed due to the weak structure of the bridge.

Rights of Way

5.265 As part of the Land Reform Act (2003) Scotland provides an Outdoor Access Code which gives access for recreational purposes across private land and water providing the code is upheld. This Act has been considered in the assessment with a number of hilltop views taken through use of this access. To coincide with the Act local authorities are drafting a series of core paths which will use existing and newly constructed paths to link local communities and provide circular walks of easy access.

5.266 A number of Rights of Way, core paths and other recreational routes were identified within the study area through the preparation of the ZTV. These 28 Rights of Way and other path networks would theoretically provide locations for at least partial views of the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm during operation (Figure 5.15).

5.267 The baseline descriptions along the Rights of Way and other paths in the area (that would have the potential to be affected by the proposed Wind Farm) are provided in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6 Rights of Way and other paths

No.	Reg. No.	Route	Distance potentially affected (km)	Description of baseline view (with Lochluichart)
1		Wider Access Network: Grudie Power Station - Beinn Laith Bheag	4.1km	Medium distance path that passes adjacent the site to the west between Lochluichart Wind Farm.
2		Wider Access Network: Garve - Acnansheen	1.3km	Long distance path that passes to the south of the site.
3	HR46	ScotWays: Loch Glascarnoch Dam - Gorstan	7.2km	Medium distance path. Part of the old drover's route between Ullapool and Inverness.
4		Wider Access Network: Gorstan - Carn Glascarnoch	1.8km	Medium distance path within forestry.
5	HR29	ScotWays: Fannich Estate Road leading to Fannichs range	0km	Path follows the Fannich Estate road through the Glen.
6		Wider Access Network:Loop path from HR29	0km	Loop path diversion from HR29 within the Fannich Estate.
7	HR49	ScotWays: Grudie Power Station-Little Scatwell	0km	Long distance path along the southern shores of Loch Luichart.
8	HR50	ScotWays/ Wider Access Network:Loch Luichart - Milton	3.2km	Medium distance path to the south of the site and Loch Luichart.
9	HR43	ScotWays: Black Bridge - Alladale Lodge	4.8km	Long distance path between Black Bridge to Alladale Lodge through Strathvaich.
10		Wider Access Network:A835-Clach Sgoilte	6km	Medium distance path through Strath Rannoch and forestry. Lochluichart Wind Farm contained within the view for some of length.
11	HR44	ScotWays: A835 - Loch Glass and beyond	2.4km	Medium to Long distance path between the A835 and Loch Glass between Ben Wyvis and Carn Mor.
12		Wider Access Network:A835 Garbat Forest- Strathgarve Forest and summit of Ben Wyvis	2.3km	Medium distance path through Garbut Forest to Strathgarve Forest North of Strathpeffer and access to Ben Wyvis. Lochluichart Wind Farm would be contained within the view.
13		Wider Access Network:A835 Strathgarve Forest - Little Wyvis	3.7km	Short path from the A835 to the summit of Little Wyvis. The path would have long views containing Lochluichart Wind Farm upon the descent of Little Wyvis back to the A835.
14	620.02	Candidate Core Path	0.5km	Short Loop path within Strathgarve Forestry.
15	HR47/ 620.05/ 620.07	ScotWays/ Candidate Core Path	2.8km	Main link path between Garve and Strathpeffer via Matheson Road and access to Strathgarve Lodge. Majority of path would be within forestry. Small section of path towards Garve across Garve Bridge would contain views of Lochluichart Wind Farm.
16	HR48	ScotWays/ Wider Access Network: between Little Scatwell and Garve	1.5km	Short distance path between the two settlements within the overhead line corridor. Medium distance views towards Lochluichart Wind Farm.
17	HR89	ScotWays/ Wider Access Network: between footpaths HR51(18) and HR 50 (8)	0km	Short connecting path.
18	HR51	ScotWays/ Wider Access Network:Milton to Achnasheen	1.3 km	Long distance path between Milton and Achnansheen via the southern shores of Loch Fannich. Two Short sections of the path between Milton and the A832 and the A832 and Achnansheen would contain views of Lochluichart Wind Farm

No.	Reg. No.	Route	Distance potentially affected (km)	Description of baseline view (with Lochluichart)
19		Wider Access Network: between Kinlochluichart Forest and Strathvaich Forest	0.7km	Medium to long distance path with access to both ranges via the A835 by Loch Glascarnoch. Short section of path with oblique views of Lochluichart Wind Farm.
20		Wider Access Network: loop path / ridge walk between Sgurr Mhuilinn and Greag Byadh	3.7km	Medium to long distance ridge walk. Two sections would have medium distance views of Lochluichart.
21	HR52	ScotWays: A832 and HR51 (18)	0km	Short section of path linking the A832 with footpath long distance path HR 51.
22		Wider Access Network:Loop path for Fannichs Ridge	0.3km	Medium distance loop path for access to Fannichs Range from Fannich Lodge. Short section of path would contain views of Lochluichart Wind Farm.
23		Wider Access Network:Ridge walk between Lochdrum and Braemore	3.4km	Ridge walk between Lochdrum and Braemore with medium to long distance views.
24		Wider Access Network: Ben Wyvis Range	5.2km	Long distance ridge walk across Ben Wyvis to Wyvis Forest connecting to ScotWays HR44 (11). Long sections of path contain views Lochluichart Wind Farm.
25	645.05/ 645.01/ HR97/ 610.02/ 610.03/ 610.05	Core Paths and Wider Access Network:within Strathgrave Forest and Strathconon	0km	Series of core and wider access paths within forestry.
26		Wider Access Network: Strathconon Cabaan Forest	4.8km	Loop path between Scatwell House and Loch Achonach.
27		Wider Access Network: Milton to Orrin Reservoir	1km	Medium to long distance path adjacent Carn na Connich. Long distance view for short section of path heading north of Lochluichart Wind Farm.
28	644.03	Candidate Core Path	0km	Short path within forestry east of Milton.

Development Proposals

5.268 A full project description of the development proposals and proposed infrastructure/ ancillary development for the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm is provided in Chapter 3 (Project Description).

5.269 The proposed Wind Farm design development has been an iterative process with the objective of optimising the turbine and infrastructure configuration in respect of landscape and visual effects and a range of other environmental and technical factors, each described within the relevant chapters of this Environmental Statement.

5.270 The proposed Wind Farm would comprise three distinct phases: a temporary construction phase, an operational phase, and a short term decommissioning phase.

5.271 In addition to the proposed 19 turbines the development will include the following ancillary development :

- 3 borrow pits;
- One permanent anemometer mast;
- Wind Farm control building and substation;
- Transformers and cables from the wind turbines to the Wind Farm control building and substation;
- Upgrade of existing access tracks;
- Construction of new access tracks providing access to all turbine locations;
- Crane hardstanding areas adjacent to each wind turbine;
- Temporary construction compound; and
- Temporary laydown area.

Construction Phase

5.272 As discussed in chapter 3 (Project Description) the construction phase is predicted to last approximately 12 to 15 months. The temporary components and site activity with potential to create landscape and visual effects include the following. Dimensions and locations of these aspects are given in Chapter 3:

- Clearance of forestry;
- Laying of turbine foundations and associated hardstanding;
- Extraction of rock from 3 borrow pits;
- Construction of access tracks;
- Construction of a temporary construction compound and laydown area;
- Erection of one anemometer mast;
- Laying of underground cables between turbines;
- Construction of a wind farm control building and substation;
- Erection of site entrance signage and snow marker posts along track edges; and
- Post-construction restoration and reinstatement works.

5.273 The location and operation of these components has been considered with regard to limiting the temporary landscape and visual effects of the construction phase.

Operational Phase

5.274 The elements with the potential to affect the landscape and visual amenity of the study area are:

- Wind turbines;
- Anemometer mast;
- Wind farm control building / substation;
- Access tracks; and
- Routine maintenance and servicing and blade inspections carried out periodically.

5.275 The predicted effects on the landscape and visual resource are reported in detail within the main body of this assessment.

Decommissioning

5.276 The anticipated operational duration of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm is 25 years from the date of commissioning. The planning consent would likely require a decommissioning plan. Decommissioning will involve:

- Dismantling and removal of the wind turbines and above ground electrical equipment;
- Reinstatement of ground above the wind turbine foundations;
- Demolition and removal of the wind farm control building and compound;
- Cutting off and de-energising electrical cables below ground level; and
- Retention of access tracks.

5.277 The decommissioning process is described in Chapter 3 (Project Description). During decommissioning all the turbine components and the wind farm control building and substation will be removed. There will be a short-term temporary effect from the removal of the structures, the cranes and vehicle movements. This will have a minimal landscape and visual effect on the study area and has been considered as part of this assessment.

5.278 As the alterations to the landscape and visual character of the area, as a result of this proposal are easily and readily reversible, this should be a relevant consideration when determining the significance of effects. There will be minimal residual effects.

Design Strategy

5.279 The final layout proposed within this ES has undergone a series of design scenarios to take into consideration the site constraints and the adjacent Lochluichart Wind Farm.

5.280 One of the key requirements of the Highland Council during the scoping process was the consideration of the adjacent Wind Farm particularly the turbine layout to ensure that the two Wind Farms would work in harmony.

5.281 The design of the site has been an iterative process, involving the production of a series of layouts (as shown in Figure 2.1 and discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.39) that have been tested against landscape and visual effects as well as technical requirements.

5.282 Wirelines were produced to 'test' the various layouts in views from a selection of sensitive locations where the ZTV indicated that significant effects might be anticipated. These 'Priority' locations included popular walking destinations Ben Wyvis, the closest and one of the most visited Munros in the area, Sgurr Mor within the Fannichs Range and the two closest residential properties with the study area with potential significant effect (Corriemoillie Farm and Aultguish Inn). The appearance of the proposed Wind Farm from these locations was a key aspect of the design process

5.283 A favoured layout in Landscape and Visual terms (the “Scoping layout” in Figure 2.1) was presented during Public Exhibitions in Garve and Achnansheen.

5.284 During these exhibitions local residents were positive regarding the consultation process in general and specifically how the Wind Farm design had been demonstrated graphically through photomontages. Particular concerns were raised regarding the effect on visual amenity at Corriemoillie Farm when viewed from the A832.

5.285 Discussions were undertaken with the residents of the property. Their concerns related to the likely visibility of 'major elements' of the turbines in the backdrop of the property.

5.286 The resulting layout as presented in this application removed the 'major elements' of the turbines from the view from the A832 and also took into consideration the ecological constraints on site and the juxtaposition of the Lochluichart Wind Farm.

5.287 The final detailed design has sought to achieve a compact and visually cohesive group of turbines, with a reasonably regular rhythm within the group, and visual continuity with the Lochluichart Wind Farm.

Potential Sources of Impact

5.288 During construction, there would be short term landscape and visual effects from plant and activities on the site, as indicated in Chapter 3 (Project Description), including:

- Clearance of forestry;
- Road works;
- Site Compounds, offices and temporary fencing;
- Machinery and material storage;
- Plant and vehicle movements;
- Borrow pits (x3);
- In-situ concrete works;
- Excavations for foundations and cable trenches;
- Tall cranes;
- Construction site lighting in winter months; and
- Lighting if night working is required.

5.289 During the operational period of the proposed Wind Farm the following long term actions would contribute to the landscape and visual effects.

- The introduction of 19 turbines (overall height of 125m) and one 80m anemometer mast. These would increase the change in perception of the landscape and views, from the future baseline of the Lochluichart Wind Farm, in the wider area;
- Creation of a network of tracks through the site;
- Establishment of a wind farm control building/substation as an operations and control centre occupying a single storey building in the south of the site;
- Potential lighting of turbines designed to match Lochluichart’s lighting requirements and to ensure aircraft safety.

Assessment of Effects

Effects on Landscape Character

5.290 Effects on the perception of the landscape can extend beyond the site itself. These are assessed within the following sections under effects on landscape character and effects on landscape designations, as appropriate. Character Areas are illustrated on Figure 5.13.

5.291 In order to provide an example of how a change in landscape character may arise, it is necessary to assume a landscape setting for a proposal. The setting in Illustration 5.1 is upland moorland with two sub-types (open moorland and moorland/forest mosaic), with a wind farm placed within it. The wind farm would exert a locally characterising effect.

5.292 A wind farm landscape would form the character area here as the turbines would be the strongest and most dominant characteristic. In this area, the wind farm would be the principal element/feature which determines landscape character whilst the surrounding landscape elements would be sub-dominant in comparison. Moving outwards and away from the site, the wind farm would exert a reduced effect upon landscape character and surrounding moorland would increase in characterising influence, becoming co-dominant (in the mixed landscape sub-type) and then reasserting its overall dominance further afield.

5.293 It may be asked 'Why is it possible to experience a significant visual effect looking at a wind farm but not be located in an area subject to a significant landscape effect?'

5.294 Illustration 5.1 demonstrates some of the possibilities that can be considered. At location A, the observer is positioned within a part of the landscape that is subject to significant landscape effects deriving from the wind farm. At the same time, the wind farm gives rise to a significant visual effect.

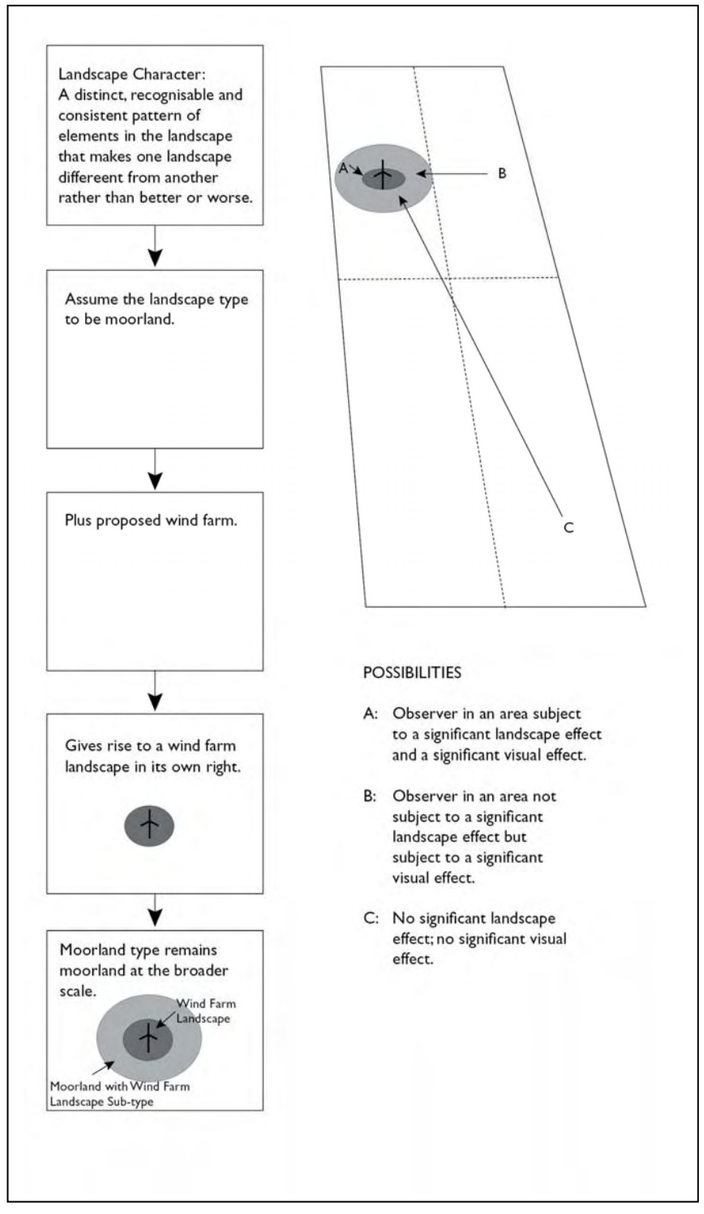
5.295 At location B, a significant visual effect may still occur when looking in the direction of that part of the landscape which accommodates the wind farm but the observer is beyond the range of significant landscape effects may occur.

5.296 At location C, the observer may be sufficiently distant from the wind farm that they are not only outwith the range of significant landscape effects, but also beyond the range of significant visual effects.

5.297 Observers at B & C would see a wind farm landscape and a Type 1 plus wind farm sub-type, but are not located in either.

5.298 When an assessor is carrying out landscape character identification and assessment, she/he executes the work from a series of locations within the environment. In identifying the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, she/he does this by having regard to the environment 'in the round' i.e. in a 360 degree context and not solely viewing in a single direction. Thus it is possible to be in a position whereby, in the 360 degree scheme of things, a wind farm may be a visible but not be a determinative or even substantive element within the pattern of elements that gives rise to the character of the area in which the viewpoint is located.

5.299 Notwithstanding this, the observer, by limiting her/his gaze to the direction of the wind farm, might consider that it may be visually significant in that limited sector of the view – see Observer B above. In other words, the wind farm is not significant with respect to landscape character at the observation point albeit it may be visually significant when looking in one particular direction.[5]



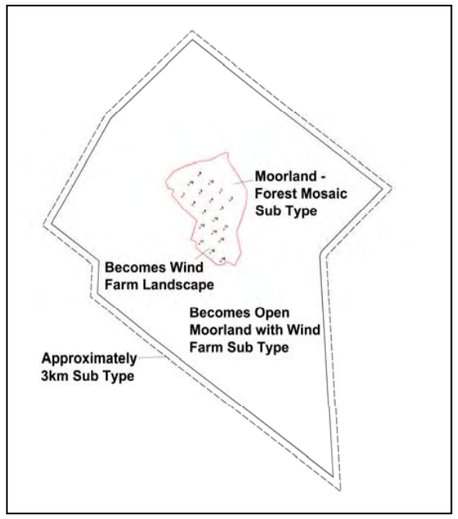


Illustration 5.1 Indication of Interaction between potential Landscape Character Impacts and Visual Impacts

5 Adapted from Jeffery Stephenson associates Landscape Character Guidance

Potential Effects on the Proposed Wind Farm Site

Clearance of Forestry

5.300 The proposed site is situated within an area of forestry considered poor for commercial purposes. As part of the proposals all forestry, with the exception of vegetation around Lochan Dubh Mor, would be removed. This is discussed in Chapter 8: Forestry.

5.301 Direct long term changes in the landscape include forestry loss of approximately 391ha (98.7%) of conifer plantation and 3.4ha (2.3%) of other vegetation types, arising from the construction of the proposed Wind Farm and from operational requirements for clear space around the turbine rotors.

5.302 Planning and management guidelines encourage the management of existing coniferous plantations with the aim of developing more natural shapes and achieving more varied age and species composition. Once the forestry has reached viable timber grade and felled, guidance recommends the reestablishment of heathland or desirable mixed timber species. Overall the forestry plantation is considered to be of limited value in landscape terms.

5.303 The loss of approximately 391ha. of conifer plantation as a result of the proposal, given relevant guidance and its low sensitivity, would result in a beneficial effect of moderate significance on the landscape and views in the long term.

Potential Effects on Character Areas in the Study Area

Rounded Hills

5.304 A character description is given in paragraph 5.123. This is the character type in which the proposed Wind Farm is located.

Sensitivity

5.305 The Ross and Cromarty Rounded Hills form the largest character area, extending through the central regions of the study area, which coincides with the majority of the Ben Wyvis pAGLV and large sections of the Freevattar/Ben Dearg/The Fannichs pAGLV and Central Glens pAGLV. The edges of the National Scenic Areas at Wester Ross and Dornoch Firth also lie within this character area. Throughout the study area large parts of the Rounded Hills character area lie within the SNH Search Area for Wild Land.

5.306 The proposed site lies within the centre of this character area, which extends to the west, north and south. The majority of the proposed ZTV coincides with land within this character area, which would allow views in close proximity to the proposed Wind Farm. As mentioned in paragraph 5.25 although ZTVs are a useful tool in assessing visibility over a large area (such as a whole character area) actual visibility can only be confirmed on the ground. There is a large stretch of the A835 Inverness to Ullapool road which crosses the centre of the character area, however there are no large settlements within the area.

5.307 Key Forces for Change include the sensitive siting of development which may form a prominent visual focus when contrasting with the smooth curves of the landform. The consented Lochluichart Wind Farm once constructed will create a 'wind farm sub type' to the character area of about 2km.

5.308 This character area is considered to be of **High** sensitivity to the proposed development.

Magnitude of Change

5.309 The Rounded Hills character area covers large tracts of landscape within the Ross and Cromarty district. The site lies within the character area and would have a direct impact on the features, elements and characteristics of the area, and create a landscape sub-type to the character area, however the site forms a very small proportion of the overall character area and would be adjacent to an existing wind farm within a landscape sub-type.

5.310 The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be **Medium**.

Significance of Effect

5.311 The significance of effect on this landscape character area is **Substantial to Moderate**.

Undulating Moorland

5.312 A character description is given in paragraph 5.119.

Sensitivity

5.313 Small individual sections of this character area lie wholly within the western edge of the Wester Ross NSA. Further small sections of the character area lie within the edges of the Freevattar/Ben Dearg/The Fannichs pAGLV and the Central Glens pAGLV. Several of these isolated sections of the Ross and Cromarty Undulating Moorland character area also lie within the SNH Search Area for Wild Land. These national, regional and local designations lie predominantly outside of the ZTV of the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm.

5.314 The A835 Inverness to Ullapool road passes through this character area within 2km of the site. There are no major settlements within the landscape character area.

5.315 Key Forces for Change and design guidance include the sensitive siting of development which may form a visual focus in this large-scale, open landscape of simple composition. Isolated forms may disrupt the sparse nature of the landscape.

5.316 This character area is considered to be of **Medium** sensitivity to the proposed Wind Farm.

Magnitude of Change

5.317 The Undulating Moorland character area is divided into small tracts of landscape scattered throughout the Ross and Cromarty district. A section of this character area lies adjacent to the northeastern site boundary. A larger section follows the valley sides of the River Bran between 4km and 27km to the southwest. Both of these landscapes coincide with areas of the ZTV. The construction of the proposed Wind Farm would be visible in relatively close proximity from small sections of this character area. The installation of the Wind Farm would extend the 'wind farm sub-type' into this landscape area.

5.318 The magnitude of change during construction and operation is considered to be **Large** within the sub-type area and diminishing over distance.

Significance of Effect

5.319 The significance of effect on this landscape character area during construction is considered to be **Substantial to Moderate** within the sub-type area and diminishing over distance.

5.320 The significance of effect on this landscape character area with the adjacent completed Lochluichart Wind Farm during operation is considered to be **Substantial to Moderate**.

Sloping Terrace Moorland

5.321 A character description is given in paragraph 5.120.

Sensitivity

5.322 Large sections of individual small fragments of this character area lie within either the Wester Ross NSA or the Freevattar/Ben Dearg/The Fannichs pAGLV, which also coincide with the SNH Search Area for Wild Land in the northern part of the study area. These national, regional and local designations lie predominantly outside of the proposed ZTV.

5.323 There are no main roads or settlements within this character area.

5.324 Key Forces for Change and design guidance refer to the preferred location of development on the horizontal terraces to reinforce the repeated character of the landform and to minimise the effect on openness and strong direction of views.

5.325 This character area is considered to be of **Low** sensitivity to the proposed Wind Farm.

Magnitude of Change

5.326 The Sloping Terrace Moorland character area is divided into small sections of landscape approximately 15km to 25km from the site to the south, west and north within Ross and Cromarty district. More extensive tracts of this character area lie within the Caithness and Sutherland district over 20km to the north of the site. The proposed ZTV extends over very limited parts of this character area.

5.327 The magnitude of landscape change is therefore **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.328 The significance of effect on this landscape character area during construction and operation is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Rocky Moorland

5.329 A character description is given in paragraph 5.121.

Sensitivity

5.330 Small sections of this extensive character area lie within either the Wester Ross NSA, the Central Glens pAGLV or the Ben Wyvis pAGLV. The Ross and Cromarty Rocky Moorland character area also extends into several small areas of the SNH Search Area for Wild Land.

5.331 The A835 Inverness to Ullapool road and A852 lie predominantly within the character area, however the majority of these transport corridors do not coincide with the ZTV. Ullapool lies within this character area and several smaller settlements are associated with the main roads. Again, these lie mainly outside of the ZTV.

5.332 Key Forces for Change and design guidance specifically identifies the need for development to replicate the highly irregular form of the landscape pattern.

5.333 This character area is considered to be of **Medium** sensitivity to the proposed Wind Farm.

Magnitude of Change

5.334 The Rocky Moorland character area within Ross and Cromarty district lies immediately adjacent to the southeastern site boundary and extends to over 20km from the site to the south. A second large area lies over 13km to the northwest. The Rocky Moorland character area also lies within Inverness district approximately 27km to the southeast of the site. The proposed ZTV extends over relatively large sections of the character area in close proximity to the site. The erection of the Wind Farm would extend the 'wind farm sub-type' into this landscape area.

5.335 The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be **Large**.

Significance of Effect

5.336 The significance of effect on this landscape character area during construction and operation is considered to be **Substantial to Moderate**.

Rugged Massif

5.337 A character description is given in paragraph 5.122 .

Sensitivity

5.338 Large areas of the extensive Ross and Cromarty Rugged Massif character area lie within the mountain ranges of the Wester Ross NSA or the Freevattar/Ben Dearg/The Fannichs pAGLV. These areas are also designated by the SNH as Search Area for Wild Land. Large areas of the Caithness and Sutherland Rugged Massif character area lie within the northern part of the Freevattar/Ben Dearg/The Fannichs pAGLV. Large sections of the Inverness Rugged Massif character area are designated as the Central Glens pAGLV and small sections of the character area lie within the Glen Strathfarrar NSA. Throughout the study area large parts of the Rugged Massif character area lie within the SNH Search Area for Wild Land. The proposed ZTV extends as a fragmented area over national and regional designations within this character area.

5.339 There are no main roads or settlements within the character area.

5.340 Key Forces for Change recognises the prominence of this landform and the visual influence any development within the character area would have on surrounding landscapes.

5.341 This character area is considered to be of **Medium** sensitivity to the proposed Wind Farm.

Magnitude of Change

5.342 The Rugged Massif character area covers large tracts of landscape within Ross and Cromarty, Inverness and Caithness and Sutherland districts. The closest area is approximately 7km to the west of the site. Although the character area extends over a large proportion of the study area, very little of this coincides with the proposed ZTV.

5.343 The magnitude of landscape change is therefore considered to be **Medium**.

Significance of Effect

5.344 The significance of effect on this landscape character area during construction and operation is **Moderate**.

Narrow Farmed Strath

5.345 A character description is given in paragraph 5.124.

Sensitivity

5.346 The western end of the character area at Strathconon Forest lies within the Central Glens pAGLV and SNH Search Area for Wild Land. The character area coincides with either the A835 Inverness to Ullapool road corridor or the minor road to Strathconon. Both of these roads are associated with dispersed settlements. None of the parts of the character area which are covered by regional landscape designations lie within the proposed ZTV.

5.347 Key Forces for Change relate to the narrow restricted nature of the linear landform and how development may disrupt this.

5.348 This character area is considered to be of **Medium** sensitivity to the proposed Wind Farm.

Magnitude of Change

5.349 The character area is divided up into small narrow strips of land scattered through the Ross and Cromarty district and Inverness district. The closest area lies approximately 4km to the southeast of the site and falls within the ZTV.

5.350 The magnitude of landscape change is therefore considered to be **Small**.

Significance of Effect

5.351 The significance of effect on this landscape character area is **Moderate to Slight**.

Forest Edge Farming

5.352 A character description is given in paragraph 5.125.

Sensitivity

5.353 There are no national or regional landscape designations which lie within this character area. The area is associated with numerous roads and settlements within the agricultural lowlands of the study area.

5.354 Key Forces for Change and design guidance refer to the balance between land uses and their potential disruption through the introduction of prominent foci conflicting with existing land marks. The Fairburn Wind Farm currently under construction partially lies within this character area.

5.355 This character area is considered to be of **Medium** sensitivity to the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm.

Magnitude of Change

5.356 The character area covers small dispersed tracts of land to the east of the Ross and Cromarty district. The closest area lies approximately 13km to the southeast of the proposed site. The proposed ZTV extends over relatively little of the character area.

5.357 The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be **Small**.

Significance of Effect

5.358 The significance of effect on this landscape character area during construction and operation is **Slight**.

Farmland with Crofting

5.359 A character description is given in paragraph 5.126.

Sensitivity

5.360 There are no national or regional landscape designations which lie within this character area. The area is associated with roads and settlements within the agricultural lowlands of the Inverness district.

5.361 This character area is considered to be of **Low** sensitivity to the proposed Wind Farm.

Magnitude of Change

5.362 The character area comprises two small fragments of landscape over 25km to the southeast of the site, although a large proportion of this area is covered by the ZTV of the proposed Wind Farm.

5.363 The magnitude of landscape change is therefore considered to be **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.364 The significance of effect on this landscape character area during construction and operation is **Not Significant**.

Narrow Firth Corridor

5.365 A character description is given in paragraph 5.127.

Sensitivity

5.366 There are no national or regional landscape designations which lie within this character area. The Narrow Firth Corridor character area contains coastal roads and settlements around their edges.

5.367 This character area is considered to be of **Medium** sensitivity to the proposed Wind Farm.

Magnitude of Change

5.368 The character area is formed by several broad strips of seascape associated with the open expanses of water to the east of the study area. The closest point of the character area to the site is at the Cromarty Firth, approximately 21km to the southeast, however the ZTV does not coincide with this area. A smaller section of the character area at Beauly Firth, to the south, is covered by the ZTV

5.369 The magnitude of landscape change is therefore considered to be **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.370 The significance of effect on this landscape character area is **Not Significant**.

Urban Areas

5.371 No urban character areas would be affected by construction of the turbines.

Settlement - Lochluichart

5.372 Lochuichart is a small settlement with properties predominantly to the north of the A832 looking across to the Loch of the same given name.

Sensitivity

5.373 There are no designating features within the settlement and its orientation is away from the proposals. The perception of the proposed Wind Farm would be in combination with the Lochluichart Wind Farm to the fore of the Corriemoillie proposal.

5.374 The settlement is considered to be of **Low** sensitivity to the proposed Wind Farm.

Magnitude of Change

5.375 Very little evidence of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm would be present from within the settlement. The magnitude of change is considered to be **Small**.

Significance of Effect

5.376 The significance of effect on the settlement is considered to be **Not Significant.**

Potential Effects on Landscape Designations in the Study Area

National Designations - National Scenic Areas

5.377 The three NSAs within the study area are:

- Wester Ross – Character description in paragraph 5.134;
- Glen Strathfarrar Character description in paragraph 5.135;
- Dornoch Firth - Character description in paragraph 5.136.

Wester Ross NSA

Sensitivity

5.378 The Wester Ross NSA lies on the western edge of the study area within approximately 23km of the site. The NSA is considered one of the best examples for the purposes of designation. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Magnitude of Change

5.379 The perception of the proposed Wind Farm from this NSA which lies 23km from the site at its closest point would be minimal. The ZTV indicates that 752ha of a total 33,429ha of the NSA would be affected. This would be restricted to the higher ground including the Munro of An Teallach 1062m AOD, and areas to the south west of the NSA including Beinn Eighe NNR 34km from the site. Viewpoint 13 illustrates the proposals. The Magnitude of Change is considered to be **Barely Perceptible.**

Significance of Effect

5.380 The significance of effect is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Glen Strathfarrar NSA

5.381 The ZTV indicates that the Glen Strathfarrar NSA would experience no effects as a result of the proposals.

Dornoch Firth NSA

5.382 No part of the designated landscape coincides with the proposed Wind Farm ZTV.

Regional Designations- Proposed Areas of Great Landscape Value (pAGLVs)

5.383 There are three pAGLVs within the study area as follows:

- Ben Wyvis - Character description in paragraph 5.139;
- Freevattar/ Ben Dearg/ The Fannichs - Character description in paragraph 5.140;
- The Central Glens - Character description in paragraph 5.141.

Ben Wyvis pAGLV

Sensitivity

5.384 The Ben Wyvis pAGLV range is one of most accessible to visitors of the Highlands with its close proximity to communication networks. The Munro of Ben Wyvis is a relatively easy climb with a distinct track to the ridge. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Magnitude of Change

5.385 The perception of the Lochluichart Wind Farm from the western slopes and ridge along the range would increase following the addition of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm which would lie in front of the Lochluichart Wind Farm. The ZTV indicates that 1711ha of 7640ha of the pAGLV would be affected. This would be restricted to the western slopes and the higher ground including the Munro of Ben Wyvis. The Magnitude of Change to the pAGLV is considered to be **Medium**.

Significance of Effect

5.386 The significance of effect on the areas within the pAGLV is considered to be **Substantial to Moderate**.

The Freevattar/Ben Dearg/ The Fannichs pAGLV

Sensitivity

5.387 The pAGLV's southern edge lies 6-8km from the site boundary. The pAGLV contains a number of challenging Munros popular with local and visiting hill walkers. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Magnitude of Change

5.388 The perception of a wind farm from the pAGLV would be restricted to higher ground. Of the 50,000ha within this proposed designated landscape the ZTV indicates that only 5039ha would be affected by the proposals. The magnitude of change is considered to be **Small**.

Significance of Effect

5.389 The significance of effect is considered to be **Moderate**.

Central Glens pAGLV

Sensitivity

5.390 The Central Glens pAGLV is a large landscape 10-35km to the south of the site. The pAGLV covers 47,827ha of which 4828ha lies within the study area. The sensitivity is considered to be **Medium.**

Magnitude of Change

5.391 The Magnitude of Change is considered to be **Small** to **Barely Perceptible.**

Significance of Effect

5.392 The significance of effect is considered to be **Moderate** to **Not Significant**.

5.393 All pAGLVs have been assessed further from static viewpoints (VP09, VP14/VP15 and VP11) respectively.

Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

5.394 There are 2 HGDLs in the ZTV of the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm, within the study area. These are:

- Scatwell House, Strathconon – description in paragraph 5.153;
- Fairburn House - description in paragraph 5.154.

Scatwell House, Strathconon

Sensitivity

5.395 Scatwell House and gardens is predominantly a 20th century designed landscape. The house has been extensively refurbished and is currently a holiday let property with little historic interest aside from the exterior. The orientation of the house is away from the proposed Wind Farm through the glen to the east. The property's sensitivity to the proposed Wind Farm is considered to be **Medium**.

Magnitude of Change

5.396 The ZTV indicates that only the southern edge of the designation would be influenced by the proposals. The ZTV however does not take into consideration the forestry that lines the Glen.

5.397 The magnitude of change is considered to be **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.398 The significance of effect is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Fairburn House

Sensitivity

5.399 The 19th century Fairburn House and grounds is currently occupied by a nursing care home. The grounds contain the ruins of the 16th century Fairburn Tower. Fairburn Wind Farm currently under construction will lie between the house and the proposed Wind Farm. The sensitivity to the proposals is considered to be **Medium**.

Magnitude of Change

5.400 The ZTV indicates that only a small section through the centre of the designation would be influenced by the proposed Wind Farm. The ZTV however does not take into consideration the forestry that lies to the north of the house between the receptor and the proposed Wind Farm. The magnitude of change is considered to be **Barely Perceptible.**

Significance of Effect

5.401 The significance of effect during construction and operation is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Potential Effects on Static Viewpoints

5.402 This section assesses the impact of the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm on the static viewpoints pictured in Figures 5.18 -5.35a. The baselines of these viewpoints were described earlier in this chapter, from paragraph 5.158 onwards.

5.403 In some cases viewpoints are from similar locations along popular routes; this is to demonstrate how the view changes, and the sequential effect on the visual receptor. The overall effects on sequential views and cumulative effects are assessed later in the chapter.

Viewpoint 1: Peak at Meall Mhic Lomhair

5.404 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.158-5.161. and shown in Figure 5.18a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.405 This view would be gained by a limited number of hill walkers making use of the Wider Access Network. There is restricted access into the area with negotiation of a locked deer fence required. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.406 All forms of construction activities would be visible from this viewpoint including the felling of forestry, establishment of access tracks and the installation of the turbines.

Predicted View during Operation

5.407 The proposed Wind Farm would dominate the immediate view of the landscape with Ben Wyvis forming a backdrop. The wind farm would form a coherent feature with turbines offset to reduce linear features in the landscape. All turbines would be clearly visible across the gently undulating landscape (Turbine 19 outside the 75° Field of View). Associated infrastructure including the met mast, control building and access tracks would also be visible across the site. Remnants of forestry and native species surrounding a number of waterbodies would be retained and would provide visual diversity following the felling operations, which are considered to have a beneficial effect.

Magnitude of Change

5.408 With the existing Lochluichart Wind Farm present, the Magnitude of Change is considered to be **Large** during the construction phase and **Medium** during operation.

Significance of Effect

5.409 The significance of effect is considered to be **Substantial** during construction and **Substantial to Moderate** during operation.

Viewpoint 2: Aultguish Inn

5.410 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.162-5.165. and shown in Figure 5.19a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.411 The view would be gained by visitors to and residents of Aultguish Inn and users of the A835. The visual sensitivity is considered to be **High** to **Medium**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.412 Tower and high level crane activity would be a prominent feature across the skyline and would be a key element in the view with the installed Lochluichart Wind Farm in the background. Changes in character would be evident with the loss of some forestry from the view.

Predicted View during Operation

5.413 All nineteen turbines would be prominent features breaking the skyline, with eight of these visible from mid tower. The formation of a corridor through the proposed Wind Farm is evident in the view which forms two clusters of turbines with a continuation in front of the northern Lochluichart turbines. The proposed Wind Farm would create further visual complexity through the addition of vertical elements in the view.

Magnitude of Change

5.414 The Magnitude of Change is considered to be **Large** during construction and **Medium** during operation.

Significance of Effect

5.415 The significance of effect is considered to be **Substantial to Moderate** during construction and operation.

Viewpoint 3: A835 Black Bridge

5.416 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.166-5.169. and shown in Figure 5.20a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.417 Receptors from this viewpoint would include properties at the entrance to Strathvaich Estate visitors to the layby beside Glascarnoch River, hill walkers entering Straithvaich estate and road users of the A835. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.418 Minimal construction activity would be evident with ground works and tower construction restricted to the north of the site, appearing as a continuation of the Lochluichart Wind Farm. High level crane activity would also be likely during the construction phase of the eastern turbines.

Predicted View during Operation

5.419 Three of the nineteen turbines would form dominant features visible across the site, to the right of the outer Lochluichart turbines. Three further turbines would be visible above the hubs with turbine no. 7 slightly breaking the ridge. The access track to turbine 19 would also be evident and would relate to the existing landform.

Magnitude of Change

5.420 Due to the limited period for which construction activities would be undertaken in the area, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to be **Small**. The magnitude of change during operation is considered to be **Small.**

Significance of Effect

5.421 The significance of effect during construction and operation is considered to be **Moderate.**

Viewpoint 4: Old Drovers Road (Proposed Core Path), Corriemoillie

5.422 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.170-5.173. and shown in Figure 5.21 and 5.21a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.423 Receptors would be local and destination walkers along the proposed Core Path of the Old Drover's Road between Aultguish Inn and Garve. The sensitivity of the viewer is considered to be **High**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.424 Activity would be restricted to high level cranes constructing the northern turbines on the site. No traffic movement would be evident across the site.

Predicted View during Operation

5.425 Nine of the nineteen turbines would form prominent elements in the view, three of which (Turbines 11, 10 and 4) would be visible from the mid tower to hub, breaking the ridge. The remaining six turbines (2, 6, 1, 19, 12 and 7) would only be visible as blade tips. The wind farm would create greater visual complexity in an otherwise simple landscape. No associated infrastructure would be seen from this viewpoint.

Magnitude of Change

5.426 The construction activities evident on the site would be limited to high level cranes on the northern section of the site. The magnitude of change during construction is considered to be **Small**. The magnitude of change during operation is considered to be **Small**.

Significance of Effect

5.427 The significance of effect during construction and operation is considered to be **Moderate**.

Viewpoint 5: A835, near Tarvie

5.428 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.174-5.177. and shown in Figure 5.22a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.429 Receptors would include local and tourist route drivers between Inverness, Ullapool and the west coast of Scotland. Their sensitivity is considered to be **Medium** due the transient nature of the views.

Predicted View during Construction

5.430 Only high level crane activity would be evident during clear conditions due to distance. The construction activities on site would appear as a continuation of the adjacent completed Lochluichart Wind Farm. A change in the colour of the landscape would also be noticeable due to the loss of forestry, during clear conditions.

Predicted View during Operation

5.431 Twelve turbines (left to right 18, 17, 14, 8, 13, 16, 9, 15, 19, 11, 10, 4) would collectively form a conspicuous element in the landscape from this viewpoint. The proposed wind farm, although at distance, is at the head of the glen and would tend to form a prominent element in the landscape.

Magnitude of Change

5.432 With visible construction on site limited to high level crane activity, at a distance of 10km the magnitude of change is considered to be **Small**. The magnitude of change during operation is considered to be **Medium** to **Small**.

Significance of Effect

5.433 The significance of effect during construction is considered to be **Slight** with the significance of effect during operation considered to be **Moderate** to **Slight**.

Viewpoint 6: A832 Gorstan

5.434 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.178-5.181. and shown in Figure 5.23a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.435 Receptors of this view would be local and tourist route drivers between Inverness and the west coast of Scotland. Their sensitivity is considered to be **Medium** due to the transient nature of the views.

Predicted View during Construction

5.436 Little activity would be evident on site due to the intervening ridge of high land within the landscape. High level crane activity would be visually prominent at two of the nineteen turbines.

Predicted View during Operation

5.437 Turbines 11 and 10 would be noticeable elements within the view where the upper blade tips break the skyline. No other elements of the proposals would be evident.

Magnitude of Change

5.438 The magnitude of change during construction is considered to be **Small** and during operation is considered to be **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.439 The significance of effect for the construction period is considered to be **Slight** and during operation is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Viewpoint 7: A832 / entrance to Corriemoillie Farm

5.440 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.182-5.185. and shown in Figure 5.24a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.441 Receptors would include the residents of Corriemoillie Farm and occupiers of vehicles on the tourist route between Inverness and the west coast of Scotland. The sensitivity to change is considered to be **High** for the residents and **Medium** for the road users.

Predicted View during Construction

5.442 Following discussions with the residents of Corriemoillie Farm the layout of the turbines was designed to alleviate any visual effects that may be felt through the location of the proposal. Evidence of construction on site would be restricted to high level crane activity at turbine 11 and the met mast. There may also be the possibility of high level crane activity at turbines 14 and 18, due to their proximity to the viewpoint.

Predicted View during Operation

5.443 Little evidence of the proposed Wind Farm would be apparent during operation due to the final design layout. The extreme upper tip of turbine 11 and the tip of the met mast would form inconspicuous elements in the landscape. The focal point within the view would be west towards the southern turbines of Lochluichart, in the direction of travel along the A832.

Magnitude of Change

5.444 The magnitude of change for construction is considered to be **Small** with changes for operation considered to be **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.445 The significance of effect is considered to be **Slight** during construction and **Not Significant** during operation.

Viewpoint 8: A832 west of Lochluichart

5.446 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.186-5.189. and shown in Figure 5.25a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.447 Receptors would include local and tourist route drivers between the west coast of Scotland and Inverness. Their sensitivity is considered to be **Medium**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.448 Evidence of construction on site would be restricted to high level crane activity at turbine 14 only. There may also be the possibility of high level crane activity at turbines 17 and 18 due to their proximity to the viewpoint.

Predicted View during Operation

5.449 There would be little evidence of the proposed Wind Farm during operation due to the final designed layout. The extreme upper tip of turbine 14 would be the only visible element in the landscape. No turbines at the Lochluichart Wind Farm would be evident in the direction of travel along the A832.

Magnitude of Change

5.450 The magnitude of change for construction is considered to be **Small** with changes for operation considered to be **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.451 The significance of effect is considered to be **Slight** during construction and **Not Significant** during operation.

Viewpoint 9: Summit of Ben Wyvis

5.452 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.190-5.194. and shown in Figure 5.26a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.453 This view would be gained by a large numbers of hill walkers visiting an easily accessible Munro. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.454 All forms of construction activities would be clearly visible from this viewpoint including the felling of forestry, laying of access tracks and the installation of the turbines.

Predicted View during Operation

5.455 The proposed Wind Farm would be a conspicuous feature in a large scale landscape. This viewpoint was fundamental to the design process and the proposed Wind Farm's successful integration with the consented Lochluichart Wind Farm. All turbines would be visible across the gently undulating landscape, mimicking the offset lines of Lochluichart and allowing a visual balance between the two schemes. The installation of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm would increase the extent of turbines to the north of the view. Associated infrastructure including the met mast, control building and access tracks would also be visible throughout the site. Remnants of forestry and native species surrounding the waterbodies would be retained and provide visual interest and diversity following felling operations to create a beneficial effect. The proposed Wind Farm would occupy approximately 11.2° of a 360º view from the summit.

Magnitude of Change

5.456 With the existing Lochluichart Wind Farm present in the view, the Magnitude of Change is considered to be **Medium** during the construction phase and **Small** during operation.

Significance of Effect

5.457 The significance of effect is considered to be **Substantial to Moderate** during construction and **Moderate** during operation

Viewpoint 10: Entrance to Fairburn House

5.458 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.195-5.198. and shown in Figure 5.27a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.459 The view would be gained by residents and visitors to the Fairburn House Care Home, the designed landscape and properties within the estate. The sensitivity is considered to be **Medium**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.460 Evidence of construction on site would be restricted to high level crane activity and at a distance of approximately 18.5km, would be evident only in clear conditions.

Predicted View during Operation

5.461 Turbines to the southwest of the site would form a grouping adjacent to the Lochluichart Wind Farm, with movement of the turbines visible only in clear conditions. The proposed Wind Farm sits within a landscape of rolling hills where the transition from the farmed landscape is clearly evident.

Magnitude of Change

5.462 Construction activities on site would be inconspicuous, with high level crane activity only visible in clear conditions. The Magnitude of Change during these activities is considered to be **Barely Perceptible**. The Magnitude of Change during operation, with the adjacent Lochluichart Wind Farm, is considered to be **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.463 The significance of effect is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Viewpoint 11: Peak of Creag Byadh near Milton

5.464 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.199-5.202. and shown in Figure 5.28a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.465 Views from this viewpoint would be gained by a minor number of hill walkers climbing to the summit of the Corbett. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.466 Some construction work, including movement of vehicles and installation of turbines, would be evident at distance, appearing as a continuation of the Lochluichart Wind Farm. These activities would be viewed against a backdrop of the landscape and would not break the skyline. The felling of the forestry is considered a beneficial effect to the view.

Predicted View during Operation

5.467 All turbines would be visible across the gently undulating topography, extending the signs of human influence on the landscape. The offset staggered layout would permit a visual balance between the two Wind Farms. Remnants of forestry and native species around the waterbodies that would be retained would provide visual interest and diversity following felling operations to

create a beneficial effect. The Wind Farm would occupy approximately 8.3° of a 360º view from the summit.

Magnitude of Change

5.468 The evidence of ground and high level construction activities on site would be apparent in clear conditions. The Magnitude of Change during these activities is considered to be **Medium**. The Magnitude of Change during operation with the adjacent Lochluichart Wind Farm is considered to be **Small.**

Significance of Effect

5.469 The significance of effect during construction is considered to be **Substantial to Moderate** with operations considered to be **Moderate**.

Viewpoint 12: Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais

5.470 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.203-5.206. and shown in Figure 5.29a. Due to climatic conditions upon the summit a wireline was used for the assessment.

Visual Sensitivity

5.471 Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais is a popular hill destination where four Munros can be achieved in one day. The view would be gained by large volumes of walkers in clear conditions. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.472 At a distance of 24km construction activities on site would be an inconspicuous element in the wider landscape. Views of heavy vehicle movements and construction of the turbines would be gained in very clear conditions.

Predicted View during Operation

5.473 All turbines would only be evident in very clear conditions. The turbines would form an inconspicuous element occupying approximately 4.7° of a 360º view from the summit.

Magnitude of Change

5.474 The magnitude of change during construction and operation is considered **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.475 The significance of effect is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Viewpoint 13: Leathad Buide, Beinn Eighe NNR

5.476 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.207-5.210. and shown in Figure 5.30a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.477 Views would be gained by large number of hill walkers from the designated viewpoint within the Wester Ross NSA. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.478 Evidence of construction on site would be restricted to high level crane activity appearing amongst the Lochluichart turbines and visible only in very clear conditions.

Predicted View during Operation

5.479 Only the upper elements of two of the turbines would be visible on the boundaries of the study area, set amongst the Lochluichart Wind Farm.

Magnitude of Change

5.480 The appearance of high level construction activities would be inconspicuous, and only become visible under very clear conditions. The Magnitude of Change during construction activities is considered to be **Barely Perceptible**. The Magnitude of Change during operation with the adjacent Lochluichart Wind Farm is considered to be **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.481 The significance of effect during construction and operation is considered to be **Not Significant.**

Viewpoint 14: Summit of An Coileachan within the Fannichs Range

5.482 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.211-5.214. and shown in Figure 5.31a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.483 This view would be gained by a large numbers of hill walkers visiting the popular Munro and continuing along the range. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.484 Some evidence of construction activities would be visible from this viewpoint including the felling of forestry and the installation of the turbines. The activities would appear as a continuation to the north of the Lochluichart Wind Farm.

Predicted View during Operation

5.485 15 turbines would be visible across the gently undulating landscape with the rising land to the west of the site screening large proportions of the proposed Wind Farm. The installation of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm would increase the extent of turbines to the north of the view, integrating with the Lochluichart Wind Farm. Associated infrastructure, including the met mast would be barely perceptible in the view. Remnants of forestry and the landscape would break the initial installation of the turbines. The proposed Wind Farm would occupy approximately 13.7° of a 360º view from the summit.

Magnitude of Change

5.486 With the consented Lochluichart Wind Farm contained in the view, the Magnitude of Change is considered to be **Small** during the construction phase and operational phase.

Significance of Effect

5.487 The significance of effect is considered to be **Moderate** during construction and operation.

Viewpoint 15: B741 Summit of Sgurr Mor within the Fannichs Range

5.488 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.215-5.218. and shown in Figure 5.32a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.489 This view would be gained by a large numbers of hill walkers visiting the popular Munro and continuing along the range. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.490 Some evidence of construction activities would be visible from this viewpoint including the felling of forestry and the high level activities associated with the turbines. The activities would appear as a continuation to the north of the Lochluichart Wind Farm.

Predicted View during Operation

5.491 Twelve of the nineteen turbines would be visible across the gently undulating landscape with the rising land to the west of the site screening the remaining development. The installation of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm would increase the extent of turbines to the north of the view and appear as two distinct clusters of turbines. The proposed Wind Farm would occupy 9.1° of a 360º view from the summit.

Magnitude of Change

5.492 With the existing Lochluichart Wind Farm contained in the view the Magnitude of Change is considered to be **Small** during the construction phase and operation.

Significance of Effect

5.493 The significance of effect is considered to be **Moderate** during construction and operation

Viewpoint 16: Summit of Beinn Dearg

5.494 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.219-5.223. and shown in Figure 5.33a. Due to climatic conditions upon the summit a wireline was used for the assessment.

Visual Sensitivity

5.495 The summit of Beinn Dearg is visited by a moderate number of hill walkers and is considered to be of a **High** sensitivity.

Predicted View during Construction

5.496 Forest clearance and movement of vehicles including high level crane activities would be apparent across the site with little evidence of the adjacent Lochluichart Wind Farm.

Predicted View during Operation

5.497 Fifteen of the northern turbines would be apparent with blade movement visible in very clear conditions. The proposed Wind Farm would introduce a new element to the view with the majority of the Lochluichart turbines screened by existing landform. The proposed Wind Farm would occupy 6.6° of a 360º view from the summit.

Magnitude of Change

5.498 As the majority of the Lochluichart Wind Farm is screened from the summit the magnitude of change caused by the introduction of the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm is considered to be **Small** during construction and operation.

Significance of Effect

5.499 The significance of effect is considered to be **Moderate.**

Viewpoint 17: Summit of Beinn a Chaisteil

5.500 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.224-5.228. and shown in Figure 5.34a.

Visual Sensitivity

5.501 Generally only dedicated Corbett hill walkers would take in the view from this location. The sensitivity is considered to be **High**.

Predicted View during Construction

5.502 Only high level crane activity in the landscape would be evident at a small number of turbines to the north and in front of the Lochluichart Wind Farm.

Predicted view during Operation

5.503 There would be little evidence of the proposed Wind Farm as an addition to the landscape, with only two of the upper extremes of turbines visible amidst the Lochluichart Wind Farm. The proposed Wind Farm would occupy 9.5° of a 360º view from the summit.

Magnitude of Change

5.504 The Magnitude of Change with the Lochluichart Wind Farm in the landscape during construction and operation is considered **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.505 The significance of effect is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Viewpoint 18: Summit of Carn Ban

5.506 The viewpoint description and existing/ baseline view is given in paragraph 5.229-5.234. and shown in Figure 5.35a. As access was restricted to the estate wirelines were used for the assessment.

Visual Sensitivity

5.507 The view would be experienced by long distance walkers and is considered to be of **High** sensitivity due to its remoteness.

Predicted View during Construction

5.508 Distant construction activities on site would be evident including the felling of trees, traffic movement along access tracks and the installation of the turbines. The activities would appear as an extension to the Lochluichart Wind Farm.

Predicted View during Operation

5.509 The corridor provided within the proposed Wind Farm is clearly evident from this viewpoint which gives the perception of two clusters of turbines. Those to the west adjacent to the Lochluichart Wind Farm appear as an extension to or continuation of the Lochluichart Wind Farm, whilst those to the east form a simple coherent group. At this distance the meteorological mast on the site would be barely perceptible. The proposed Wind Farm would encompass approximately 6º of a 360º view from the summit.

Magnitude of Change

5.510 Construction activities and the operation of the proposed Wind Farm on the site, adjacent the Lochluichart Wind Farm, are considered to b**e Small**.

Significance of Effect

5.511 The significance of effects during construction and operation are considered to be **Moderate**.

Sequential Effects - Assessment

5.512 As indicated in the baseline section, the roads assessed in the sequential assessment were the A835(T), A832 and the minor Matheson Road between Garve and Little Garve. Rights of Way and other paths were also assessed.

A835 (T) Heading Northwest

Magnitude of Change

5.513 Heading northwest the ZTV indicates that the Corriemoillie Wind Farm would first be viewed in combination with Lochluichart Wind Farm when rounding the bend north of Tarvie (viewpoint 5) before descending into Garve where roadside vegetation screens views. Beyond this section of road the proposed Wind Farm would not be visible again until reaching the entrance to Strathvaich Estate. Here seven of the turbines would come into view before disappearing behind the landform close to the road. All turbines would reappear in an oblique view when passing the Aultguish Inn, after which the proposed Wind Farm leaves the field of view. The magnitude of change is considered to be **Small**.

Significance of Effect

5.514 The significance of effect is considered to be **Slight**.

A835 (T) Heading Southeast

Magnitude of Change

5.515 Heading southeast views of the proposed Wind Farm would be apparent when passing the Loch Glascarnoch Dam and the Aultguish Inn where the proposed Wind Farm leaves the field of view. The magnitude of change is considered to be **Small**.

Significance of Effect

5.516 The significance of effect is considered to be **Slight**.

A832 Heading West

Magnitude of Change

5.517 Due to the design of the proposed Wind Farm to avoid significant effects on residential properties along the A832, views of the turbines would be limited. A glimpsed view of upper tips of two turbines would be gained from the rise at Gorstan, with the upper extremes of a further four turbines visible of Lochluichart Wind Farm. The upper tips of one turbine and the met mast would be visible adjacent to the entrance to Corriemoillie Farm. Although the ZTV illustrates that further views would be gained, however roadside vegetation and the proximity of forestry would prevent actual visibility. Viewpoints 6, 7 and 8 show the views along this route. The magnitude of change is considered to be **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.518 Due to the limited visibility of the proposed Wind Farm along this route, the significance of effect is considered to be **Not Significant**.

A832 Heading East

Magnitude of Change

5.519 Heading east, only the upper extremes of one turbine would be visible to the traveller approaching the descent into Lochluichart. Although the ZTV illustrates that further views would be gained, roadside vegetation and forestry would prevent actual visibility. The magnitude of change is considered to be **Barely Perceptible**.

Significance of Effect

5.520 Due to the limited visibility of the proposed Wind Farm, the significance of effect is considered to be **Not Significant**.

Matheson Road between Garve and Little Garve

Magnitude of Change

5.521 Oblique views would be gained from a short section of Matheson Road heading east/west across Garve Bridge, west of Garve. Upon rounding the bend at Starthgarve Lodge, heading north, the proposed Wind Farm would be screened by dense forestry until reaching the clearing to Home Farm. At this point, close to mid distance views would be gained of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm in the direction of travel for approximately 400m, in combination with the consented Lochluichart Wind Farm. The magnitude of change is considered to be **Medium**.

Significance of Effect

5.522 The Significance of Effect is considered to be **Moderate**.

Rights of Way

5.523 The sensitivity is considered to be **High** for all Rights of Way and other recreational routes.

5.524 The magnitude of change will vary depending on distance, type of view and length of path to which the turbines are viewed. The majority of paths in the area are designed as short loops through forestry and would contain no views. The elevation, landform, orientation and the transitional nature of the viewer will also determine the significance of effect from the proposals.

5.525 Only those sections of the path affected have been considered within the assessment of significance.

5.526 The paths in Table 5.7 are numbered as in Table 5.6.

Table 5.7 Effects on Rights of Way and other paths

No.	Route	Distance potentially affected (km)	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect	Description of Effect
1	Wider Access Network: Grudie Power Station - Beinn Laith Bheag	4.1km	Medium	Substantial to Moderate	Long section of path would be affected facing towards the turbines.
2	Wider Access Network: Garve - Acnansheen	1.3km	Small	Moderate	Short sections of the path would contain filtered and oblique views.
3	ScotWays: Loch Glascarnoch Dam - Gorstan	7.2km	Medium	Substantial to Moderate	Initially majority of turbines would be visible from the north, however this view would diminish once adjacent to the site with only tips of minor number of turbines visible
4	Wider Access Network: Gorstan - Carn Glascarnoch	1.8km	No Change	Not Significant	ZTV indicates intervisibility. However the path passes through forestry, constraining views.
5	ScotWays: Fannich Estate Road leading to Fannichs range	0km	No Change	Not Significant	No views are indicated on ZTV.
6	Wider Access Network: Loop path from HR29	0km	No Change	Not Significant	No views indicated on ZTV.
7	ScotWays: Grudie Power Station-Little Scatwell	0km	Barely Perceptible	Not Significant	ZTV indicates small section of visibility with the Junction of Footpath HR50 (8).
8	ScotWays/ Wider Access Network: Loch Luichart - Milton	3.2km	Small (Northerly direction of travel only)	Moderate	Views would only be apparent when heading north towards the site.
9	ScotWays: Black Bridge - Alladale Lodge	4.8km	Small (at Black Bridge)	Moderate	Small section of path affected when heading south at Black Bridge.
10	Wider Access Network: A835-Clach Sgoilte	6km	Small	Moderate (in a southerly direction only)	ZTV indicates visibility at A835. However forestry would obscure views. Heading south from Clach Sgoilte, views would be gained approximately 12km from the site for approximately 6km, with Lochluichart Wind Farm contained within the view.
11	ScotWays: A835 - Loch Glass and beyond	2.4km	No Change	Not Significant	ZTV indicates no available views
12	Wider Access Network:A835 Garbat Forest-Strathgarve Forest and summit of Ben Wyvis	2.3km	Small (on the approach to forest)	Moderate (In direction of travel)	Short section of path would be affected through Bealach Mor heading north west before entering the forestry. Lochluichart Wind Farm would be contained within the view.
13	Wider Access Network:A835 Strathgarve Forest - Little Wyvis	3.7km	Small (upon descent of the summit)	Moderate	The path would have long views upon the descent of Little Wyvis back to the A835 and would contain Lochluichart Wind Farm.
14	Candidate Core Path	0.5km	No Change	Not Significant	Although the ZTV indicates a view, this does not take into consideration existing forestry.
15	ScotWays/ Candidate Core Path	2.8km	Small (on Approach to Garve)	Moderate	Majority of path would be within forestry. Small section of path towards Garve across Garve Bridge would contain views of a minor number of turbines and Lochluichart Wind Farm.

No.	Route	Distance potentially affected (km)	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effect	Description of Effect
16	ScotWays/ Wider Access Network: between Little Scatwell and Garve	1.5km	Small	Moderate	Medium distance views towards the site when heading north. Views would contain majority of elements from both Wind Farms.
17	ScotWays/ Wider Access Network: between footpathsHR51(18) and HR 50 (8)	0km	No Change	Not Significant	No visibility in the ZTV.
18	ScotWays/ Wider Access Network: Milton to Achnasheen	1.3km	Small to Barely Perceptible	Moderate to Not Significant	Two Short sections of the path between Milton and the A832 and the A832 and Achnansheen would contain views of Corriemoillie Wind Farm to the rear of Lochluichart Wind Farm.
19	Wider Access Network:between Kinlochluichart Forest and Strathvaich Forest	0.7km	Small	Moderate	Short section of path with oblique views heading southwest. Lochluichart and Corriemoillie would be seen as one scheme.
20	Wider Access Network: loop path / ridge walk between Sgurr Mhuilinn and Greag Byadh	3.7km	Barely Perceptible	Not Significant	Two sections would have medium distance views of the proposal behind and adjacent to Lochluichart.
21	ScotWays: A832 and HR51 (18)	0km	No Change	Not Significant	Footpath is within forestry and the ZTV demonstrates no view.
22	Wider Access Network: Loop path for Fannichs Ridge	0.3km	Small	Moderate	Short section of path would contain views of Corriemoillie Wind Farm behind and adjacent to Lochluichart Wind Farm.
23	Wider Access Network:Ridge walk between Lochdrum and Braemore	3.4km	Small	Moderate	Medium to long distance views in a south easterly direction for majority of the path along the ridge.
24	Wider Access Network:Ben Wyvis Range	5.2km	Small	Moderate	Long sections of path would contain views of Corriemoillie to the fore of Lochluichart Wind Farm.
25	Core Paths and Wider Access Network:within Strathgrave Forest and Strathconon	0km	No Change	Not Significant	Some paths are indicated by the ZTV has having views, yet these are within the forestry and so therefore views would be prevented.
26	Wider Access Network: Strathconon Cabaan Forest	4.8km	Barely Perceptible	Not Significant	Long distance views
27	Wider Access Network: Milton to Orrin Reservoir	1km	Barely Perceptible	Not Significant	Long distance view for short section of path heading north. Would be viewed in combination with Lochluichart Wind Farm.
28	Candidate Core Path	0km	No Change	Not Significant	Path would contain no views.

Embedded Mitigation Measures

5.527 The proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm has undergone several iterative design processes, as described in Chapter 2 (Approach to EIA) and Figure 2.1. Therefore mitigation measures to reduce visual and landscape impact have been embedded into the design. These include turbine locations, location of ancillary equipment and turbine colouring. It is considered that this final layout comprises an effective layout from a landscape and visual perspective, while taking into account other ecological and technical constraints, in order to minimise adverse effects on all receptors. No further mitigation is therefore considered necessary.

Restoration and Management Plans

5.528 It is anticipated that the proposed Wind Farm will operate for 25 years, after which it will undergo decommissioning, as in paragraph 3.71. Restoration and management plans will be submitted.

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

Introduction

5.529 The preceding sections have addressed the impacts of the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm in isolation and with Lochluichart Wind Farm operational in the landscape. Legislation requires EIA also to address the cumulative impacts of a proposal together with other developments under development or planned in the area. The Scottish Executive's statement Securing a Renewable Future – Scotland's Renewable Energy (2003) highlights the likelihood that cumulative impacts may result in an eventual limit to the extent of onshore wind development, and the need for *'increased significance to be attached to the consideration of cumulative impact in specific areas'*. Similarly PAN 45 [(6)] states that '*the nature and character of the location and the landscape in which a development is located will in part determine the acceptability or otherwise of siting proposals in proximity to one another*.'

5.530 Cumulative effects of wind farms are considered where the presence of other wind farms in a given area may have an effect on the perception of the landscape character of that area, or on views from sensitive receptors. Due to the height of the turbines proposed of up to 125m a cumulative study area of 70km from the proposed Wind Farm has been established.

5.531 The list of wind farm sites to be included in the assessment has been compiled from known wind farm planning applications and formal requests for scoping opinions held by SNH and The Highland Council. A series of potential cumulative ZTVs are illustrated in Figures 5.38 – 5.41 for within 35km and Figures 5.45 - 5.68 for wind farms with 35km to 70km of the proposal site based on best practice guidance.

5.532 Each ZTV has been calculated to blade tip based on the turbine dimensions and available layouts at the time of this assessment. The cumulative ZTVs help build up a picture of the potential or theoretical extent of visibility, but do not take into account vegetation and built form that would otherwise screen the development from view.

5.533 Two or more wind farms are required for the occurrence of a cumulative visual effect. This assessment has therefore considered the development of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm in addition to other wind farm sites in the landscape in order to test the landscape capacity of the area and provide conclusions for the cumulative LVIA relevant to this proposal.

5.534 At the time of this assessment there were 30 wind farms or individual wind turbines currently built, under construction, approved, applied for, or at an earlier stage of planning, that may contribute to cumulative effects with the Corriemoillie Wind Farm. The locations of wind farms within 70km of Corriemoillie are shown on Figure 5.36 together with an indication of their status and size in Tables 5.8 (a) below. Some schemes include more than one phase of development and this is noted in the table.

5.535 Following the ZTV analysis of interaction between Corriemoillie and other Wind Farms within 70kms, 15 Wind Farms were excluded from the assessment as no combined visibility would be occur due to the nature of the upland landscape.

5.536 The reasons for exclusion of any Wind Farms are noted in Table 5.8(a). The result produced a total of 25 schemes for consideration. These are listed in Table 5.8(b) in order of their proximity to Corriemoillie. Their locations and layouts are shown in Figure 5.36 and 5.44.

Table 5.8(a) Planned and Existing Wind Farms within 70km of Corriemoillie Wind Farm

Wind Farm	Status	No. Turbines	Distance (km)	Reason for Exclusion
Lochluichart Wind Farm	Approved	17	2km	
Fairburn Wind Farm	Approved	20	14km	
Novar (Meall an Tuirc)	Installed	34	19km	
Novar (Meall an Tuirc) Extension	Approved	16	18km	
Auchmore	Scoping	5-7	21km	
Beinn Tharsuinn	Installed	20	29km	
Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm extension	Application	17	29km	
Braemore	Application	25	37km	
Abriachan	Application	1	37km	
Rosehall	Approved	19	38km	
Achany	Approved	23	39km	
Corrimony also known as Glenurquhart and Strathglass Wind Energy Project	Installed	5	40km	
Cambusmore (Meall na Tulchainn)	Scoping	33	42km	
Lairg Estate	Scoping	3	44km	
Hill of Nigg Wind Farm	Installed	10	48km	
Craggie	Installed	3	48km	
Farr	Installed	40	51km	
Dunmaglass Estate	Approved	36	53km	
Corrigarth	Scoping	24	56km	
Corriegarth Wind Farm	Application	20	57km	
Kilbraur	Approved	19	57km	
Kilbraur extension	Scoping	8	59km	
Glen Moriston/ Millennium	Approved	10	58km	No interaction between ZTVs
Glen Moriston/ Millennium extension	Application	6	59km	No interaction between ZTVs
Glenkirk Windfarm	Application	31	60km	
Tom nan Clach	Application	17	60km	
Achagour	Application	5	61km	
Cairn Duhie	Scoping	24	66km	No interaction between ZTVs
Gordonbush (Meallan Liath Beag)	Approved	35	68km	No interaction between ZTVs
Findhorn extension	Approved	2	70km	No interaction between ZTVs

(6) The Scottish Executive Development Department Planning Advice Note 45 (Revised 2002) Renewable Energy Technologies The Scottish Executive

Table 5.8(b) Wind Farms included in the Cumulative Assessment

Wind Farm	Status	No. Turbines	Blade Tip Heights (m)	Distance (km)	Direction from Site
Lochluichart Wind Farm	Approved	17	125m	2km	W
Fairburn Wind Farm	Approved	20	100m	14km	SE
Novar (Meall an Tuirc)	Installed	34	53.5m	19km	E
Novar (Meall an Tuirc) Extension	Approved	16	106m	18km	E
Auchmore	Scoping	5-7	125m	21km	SE
Beinn Tharsuinn	Installed	20	80m	29km	NE
Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm extension	Application	17	100m	29km	NE
Braemore	Application	25	126m	37km	NE
Abriachan	Application	1	125m*	37km	SE
Rosehall	Approved	19	106m	38km	NE
Achany	Approved	23	105m	39km	NE
Corrimony also known as Glenurquhart and Strathglass Wind Energy Project	Installed	5	100m	40km	S
Cambusmore (Meall na Tulchainn)	Scoping	33	91m	42km	NE
Lairg Estate	Scoping	3	102m	44km	NE
Hill of Nigg Wind Farm	Installed	10	125m	48km	E
Craggie	Installed	3	125m*	48km	SE
Farr	Installed	40	101m	51km	SE
Dunmaglass Estate	Approved	36	110m	53km	SE
Corrigarth	Scoping	24	120m	56km	SE
Corriegarth Wind Farm	Application	20	120m	57km	SE
Kilbraur	Approved	19	115m	57km	NE
Kilbraur extension	Scoping	8	125m	59km	NE
Glenkirk Windfarm	Application	31	110m	60km	SE
Tom nan Clach	Application	17	110m	60km	SE
Achagour	Application	5	125m*	61km	SE

Schemes newly in scoping with no defined heights proposed (*highlighted) have been assumed at 125m for assessment.

5.537 The cumulative assessment assumes that all the wind farms listed in Table 5.5(b) will be present in the landscape alongside Corriemoillie, although not all have been approved or commenced construction at the time of writing. Equally other wind farms which are not yet formally within the planning system may come forward in advance of the decision for Corriemoillie.

5.538 If Corriemoillie Wind Farm, on its own is considered to have a significant effect, it does not follow that the cumulative effect is also significant. If the landscape already features wind farms the addition of another such feature may not in itself be significant.

Cumulative Effects on the Landscape

5.539 Four of the Character Areas described in Section 5.115 lie within the cumulative zone of theoretical visibility.

5.540 Six of the wind farms located in the 35km study area for the LVIA are positioned within the Rounded Hills character area. Auchmore Wind farm is in Sloping Terrace Moorland. Three further character areas would be or are directly or indirectly affected by the operational or proposed wind farms within the study area. Table 5.9 below illustrates those character areas affected.

5.541 Much of the area where cumulative impact is predicted to be greatest is at higher altitude, with some landscapes frequented by hill walkers. These are not generally areas that have already experienced considerable historical change as a result of human activity, and when development does occur, it tends therefore to be prominent. This landscape change has commenced, with two wind farms installed, one under construction and two further schemes approved.

Table 5.9 SNH / RPS Combined Character Areas directly affected by built and proposed Wind Farms within 35km

Character Type / Area Directly affected within 35km	Wind Farm with direct effect on Character Area
RPS Combined Character Area	
Smooth Moorland	None
Undulating Mooreland	Corriemoillie Lochluichart
Sloping Terrace Moorland	Fairburn Auchmore
Rocky Moorland	Corriemoillie Lochluichart Fairburn Novar and Extension
Rugged Massif	None
Rounded Hills	Corriemoillie Lochluichart Novar and Extension Beinn Tharsuinn and Extension
Narrow Farmed Strath	None
Wide Farmed Strath	None
Linear Loch	None
Fjord	None
Forest Edge Farming	None
Linear Crofting	None
Harbour Settlement	None
Farmland with Crofting	None
Strath	None
Narrow Firth Corridor	None
Wooded Glen	None

5.542 The direct effect on character would be felt up to 2km from the proposal and would decrease with distance. The addition of Corriemoillie Wind Farm to this network of existing and proposed wind farms would cause additional impact as described above, but its overall contribution to regional landscape impact is judged to be **Slight**.

Cumulative Effects on Views and Visual Amenity

5.543 The assessment considers the potential for cumulative impacts within a 70 km radius from the outer turbines of the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm. The cumulative ZTV comprises those parts of the 35 km ZTVs for the other wind farms which overlap with the 35 km ZTV for Corriemoillie.

5.544 The combined visibility of all wind farms within 35km (Figure 5.44) indicates that there are a series of hilltop locations from which one or more wind farms could be visible in addition to the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm. It is relevant to note that areas within plantation forest are unlikely to have significant views and these plantations may have screening properties. It should also be noted that plantations are continuously being felled and replanted in the highland landscape which in turn opens views. Correspondingly, there are areas where views of wind farms may be insignificant due to the distance involved, as stated in PAN 45 that wind farms between *'15-30km away will only be seen in very clear visibility as a minor element within the landscape.'*

5.545 Three types of cumulative visual impact are considered in the assessment: combined, successive and sequential [(7)]. Combined and successive impacts are from static viewpoints, whereas sequential impacts relate to viewers who are moving.

- **Combined effects** occur where a static observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint within the observer's arc of vision at the same time;
- **Successive effects** occur where two or more wind farms may be seen from a static viewpoint but the observer has to turn to see them;
- **Sequential effects** occur when the observer has to move to another viewpoint, for example when travelling along a road or footpath, to see the different developments. Sequential effects may range from frequent (the features appear regularly and with short time lapses between, depending on speed and distance) to occasional (long time lapses between appearances due to a lower speed of travel and/or longer distances between the viewpoints.

Assessment of Residual Combined and Successive Visual Impacts

5.546 The assessment of combined impacts was assisted by the preparation of cumulative photomontages and wirelines from three selected viewpoints:

- Viewpoint 09 - Ben Wyvis;
- Viewpoint 12 - Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais;
- Viewpoint 17 - Summit of Beinn a' Chaisteil.

5.547 These viewpoints were selected as representative of cumulative views likely to be experienced by significant numbers of people, at different distances and with different directions of view towards Corriemoillie Wind Farm. The visualisations are presented in Figures 5.70 - 5.81.

5.548 The number of wind farms presented in cumulative views and their distance is used as an indicator of the magnitude of the overall cumulative visual effect. The significance of the overall combined and successive cumulative impacts is evaluated by reference to the following framework in Table 5.10. If there are three or more wind farms visible at any one time, including Corriemoillie, significance is increased by one grade. The influence of the topography and landscape elements is also considered to lessen the effect.

Table 5.10 Significance of Cumulative schemes in combination and succession

Effect on Viewpoint	Significance of Impact of Combined View (90 degree arc)	Significance of Impact of Successive View (90 - 360 degree arc)
Additional wind farm visible at < 7.5 km	Substantial to Moderate	Moderate
Additional wind farm visible at 7.5-15 km	Moderate	Slight
Additional wind farm visible at > 15 km	Slight	Not Significant

Combined and Successive Effects on Views within 35km

Corriemoillie and Lochluichart Wind Farms (Figure 5.38)

5.549 All design processes and viewpoints for the assessment have considered the Lochluichart Wind Farm fully operational and the two Wind Farms in combination with one another. Figure 5.14 illustrates the ZTV for the Lochluichart Wind Farm and Figure 5.38 illustrates the combined ZTV with the Corriemoillie Wind Farm.

5.550 The Lochluichart Wind Farm comprises seventeen 125m high turbines, access tracks, substation and underground cabling sited within Lochluichart estate.

5.551 The effects of Corriemoillie Wind Farm on the landscape and visual amenity have been considered in combination and sequentially with Lochluichart Wind Farm throughout the assessment.

Corriemoillie and Fairburn Wind Farm (Figure 5.39)

5.552 Fairburn Wind Farm currently under construction comprises twenty 125m high turbines approximately 14.3km to the southeast of Corriemoillie.

5.553 The combined ZTV indicates that there would be limited visibility of the two Wind Farms in combination. Combined and successive views would be restricted to limited high ridges to the north of Corriemoillie Wind Farm within Strathvaich Forest, and to the south of Fairburn Wind Farm on the southern ridges of Strathconon, Glen Orrin and Erchless Forest. To the east views would be restricted to the southern edge of the Ben Wyvis ridge and Little Wyvis and in the west Kinlochluichart Forest, Fannich Ranges and Fionn Bheinn north of Achnansheen.

5.554 The addition of Corriemoillie Wind Farm to Fairburn Wind Farm would have a **Slight to Not Significant** effect.

(7) Guidance taken from Cumulative Effect of Wind Farms, Scottish Natural Heritage, issued 13/04/05.

Corriemoillie and Novar Wind Farm (Figure 5.40)

5.555 The existing Novar Wind Farm consists of thirty four 53.5m high turbines approximately 18.9km to the west of Corriemoillie.

5.556 Limited combined visibility is restricted to the summits of Inchbae forest to the east of Strath Vaich and to the north of the two wind farms at Diebidale and Kildermorie Forests. Successive visibility would also be gained from the summit of Ben Wyvis.

5.557 The addition of Corriemoillie Wind Farm to Novar Wind Farm is considered to be **Slight** to **Not Significant**.

Corriemoillie and Novar Wind Farm Extension (Figure 5.41)

5.558 The approved extension to Novar Wind Farm comprises sixteen 106m high turbines to the east of Corriemoillie Wind Farm

5.559 Due to the proposed height of the Novar Wind Farm extension the combined and successive viewshed increases. The combined visibility would include those areas mentioned above with the addition of peaks to the west of Strath Vaich and Beinn Dearg, the north at Carn Ban in Freevater Forest (comprising part of the Freevattar pAGLV) and the high ground to the south of Glen Orrin. The ZTV also indicates that long distance views would be theoretically gained from The Aird south of the Beauly Firth, however due to the distance both Wind Farms would be barely perceptible.

5.560 The addition of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm on views with the Novar Wind Farm extension is considered to be **Slight** to **Not Significant**.

Corriemoillie and Auchmore Wind Farm (Figure 5.42)

5.561 Auchmore Wind Farm recently entered the planning system (scoping report submitted July 2009) and comprises five to seven 125m turbines approximately 21.2km to the southeast of Corriemoillie.

5.562 The combined ZTV indicates that there would be similar limited views of the two Wind Farms in combination as those of Fairburn Wind Farm. Combined and successive views would be restricted to limited high ridges to the north of Corriemoillie Wind Farm within Strathvaich Forest, and to the south of Auchmore Wind Farm on the southern ridges of Strathconon, Glen Orrin and Erchless Forest. To the east views would be restricted to the southern edge of the Ben Wyvis ridge and Little Wyvis and through the lowland to Beauly Firth.

5.563 The addition of Corriemoillie Wind Farm to Auchmore Wind Farm would have a **Slight to Not Significant** effect.

Corriemoillie and Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm (Figure 5.43)

5.564 The Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm consists of twenty 80m high turbines north east of Corriemoillie Wind Farm.

5.565 Combined views would be restricted to the northwest of the wind farms on the highest hill tops including Beinn Dearg, Carn Ban within Freevater Forest and the high ground to the west of Strath Vaich. Successive views would be gained from Beinn a' Chaisteil, Beinn Thursuinn and Carn Chuinneag within Diebidale Forest. The majority of views would be gained from areas between 15-35km away and only visible in very clear conditions. The ZTV also indicates that views would be possible from a small area of high ground to the south, however this is within Gallowhill Wood to the south of Tore and no views would be gained in reality, due to intervening forestry.

5.566 The combined and successive effects with the addition of Corriemoillie Wind Farm is considered to be **Slight** to **Not Significant**.

Corriemoillie and Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm Extension (Figure 5.44)

5.567 The Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm extension comprises seventeen 100m high turbines intermingled with the operational Wind Farm.

5.568 The ZTV indicates that combined visibility would be less than the operational Wind Farm, with three peaks within Strathvaich Forest and four ridges within Freevater Forest gaining views. Successive views would be gained from Beinn a Chaisteil and Meall a' Ghrianain accessed from within Strath Vaich, Beinn Tharsuinn with Diebidale Forest.

5.569 The combined and successive effects with the addition of Corriemoillie Wind Farm is considered to be **Slight** to **Not Significant**.

Combined Cumulative Effects within 35km (Figure 5.45)

5.570 The influence of the six wind farms in combination with the Corriemoillie Wind Farm would result in an overall significance of **Slight** to **Not Significant**. The combined ZTV indicates that there would be limited influence over the 35km study area from the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm in combination with at least one other operational or proposed Wind Farm.

Cumulative Sequential Effects within 35km

5.571 Table 5.11 below sets out the sequential cumulative visual assessment of views of wind farms potentially obtainable from selected roads within 35km of the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm. The selected roads are:

- A835 between Tore and Contin (Contin to Aultguish Inn discussed within section 5.511);
- A832 between Milton and Marybank and;
- A862 between Beauly and Conon Bridge;
- A862 between Bunchew House and Drumchardine.

5.572 The cumulative sequential assessment is based on an analysis of Figure 5.15 and Figure 5.46. The assessment describes the baseline conditions that currently apply to views from the selected routes, taking account of the effects of operational and consented wind farms, and wind farms within planning. The additional effects that could potentially arise as a result of the Corriemoillie Wind Farm proposal are also described. In assessing potential visibility, views from a route have been assessed as those available in the direction of travel and up to 90° to either side. Theoretical visibility is described, although in reality roadside vegetation and built development may interrupt many views towards the wind farms.

Table 5.11 Sequential Cumulative Visual Impacts along Roads

Baseline conditions	Additional Effects of Corriemoillie Wind Farm
A835 Tore to Ullapool	
Heading North: from north of Tore, Novar + extension Fairburn and Auchmore Wind Farms would be visible both in the direction of travel and to the left of the traveller for approximately 5km before reaching the Conon Bridge. Upon heading west from Maryburgh the Novar Wind Farm is to the rear of viewer with Fairburn and Auchmore Wind farms clearly visible in the view until reaching Contin. (Travel Beyond Contin is described in section 5.239)	Travelling along the A835 views of Corriemoillie Wind Farm would not be gained until reaching Tarvie where views of Lochluichart Wind Farm would also been gained. The assessment of this section of the journey has been undertaken in Section 5.513. The addition of Corriemoillie Wind Farm on the A835 would lead to **Slight** sequential cumulative effects on the long distance journey between Inverness and Ullapool.
Heading South: The journey from Ullapool would contain no views of wind farms until approaching Loch Glascarnoch. The potential sequential effect of this journey is discussed in Section 5.247. On the approach to Contin, Fairburn and Auchmore Wind Farms would come into view in the direction of travel and continue to be visible with oblique views until becoming adjacent to the wind farm north of the Marybank Junction.	Corriemoillie Wind Farm would be to the rear of the traveller after leaving Strath Vaich and would not come into view again. The cumulative sequential effect on the long journey from Ullapool to Tore is considered to be **Slight** to **Not Significant.**
A832 Tore and Junction with A835 (Marybank)	
Heading North/North west: from south of Tore, Fairburn and Auchmore Wind Farms would be visible in the direction of travel for approximately 15km before reaching the Marybank Bridge and the A835. Novar Wind Farm would be viewed to the right of the traveller upon exiting the Muir of Ord until reaching the distillery.	Travelling along the A832 views of Corriemoillie Wind Farm would not be gained until reaching the junction with the B9169 west of Muir of Ord, where views continue until reaching Marybank. The addition of Corriemoillie Wind Farm on this section of the A832 would be **barely perceptible**. The landscape is a well vegetated farmed landscape and contains a number of urban intrusions. No further cumulative effects are considered.
Heading South east: The journey would only contain a short section with views of Fairburn Wind Farm on the initial approach over the Marybank Bridge to Marybank before the road turns away from the wind farm and continues south east. Auchmore Wind Farm would be visible in combination with Fairburn Wind Farm initially and would continue to contain views until reaching the Muir of Ord.	Corriemoillie Wind Farm would be to the rear of the traveller throughout this journey. No further cumulative effects are considered.
A862 Beauly to Conon Bridge	
Heading North: Upon leaving Beauly, Novar Wind Farm would be visible for approximately 10km until completion of the journey at Conon Bridge. Between The Muir of Ord and Conon Bridge the Novar Wind Farm extension would be visible until reaching Conon Bridge. Fairburn Wind Farm would be theoretically visible approaching the Muir of Ord. On entering and exiting the town Fairburn Wind Farm would be beyond the field of view.	Long distance oblique views of Corriemoillie Wind Farm would be theoretically gained to the south and north of the Muir of Ord. In reality the landscape is well vegetated and populated with urban intrusion. The addition of Corriemoillie Wind Farm into views from this section of the A862 would be **Barely Perceptible**. No further significant cumulative effects are considered.
Heading South: The journey from Conon bridge to south of Muir of Ord would contain views of Fairburn Wind Farm and Auchmore.	Again Corriemoillie Wind Farm would theoretically provide long distance oblique views to the north and south of the Muir of Ord. The addition of Corriemoillie Wind Farm into views from this section of the A862 would be **barely perceptible**. No further significant cumulative effects are considered.
A862 Bunchrew House and Drumchardine	
Heading West: from Bunchrew House, Novar +extension, Fairburn and Auchmore Wind Farms would be visible in the direction of travel and to the right of the viewer for approximately 8km before reaching Drumchardine.	Corriemoillie Wind Farm would theoretically be similarly visible in views from this length of road. However this section of road is on the edge of the study area and views would therefore be **Barely Perceptible**. No further significant cumulative effects are considered.
Heading East: From Drumchardine Novar Wind farm and the extension would be visible in oblique views for the majority of the journey. Fairburn and Auchmore Wind Farms would be out of the field of view.	Corriemoillie Wind Farm would be out of the field of view throughout this journey.

Cumulative Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment

5.573 Photomontages and 'wireline' visualisations of both the Corriemoillie proposals and the cumulative assessment schemes present within the 70km study have been included for each of the cumulative viewpoints (Figure 5.69). A series of 90º fields of view have been illustrated to visualise Wind Farms visible in combined and successive views. These 'wirelines' have been used to assess the likely cumulative visual effects occurring at each viewpoint which in turn have informed the assessment of wider cumulative effects across the study area.

5.574 The contribution of Corriemoillie to the cumulative impact is judged using the visualisations and taking into account the status of other wind farms present in the view. Wind farms which are either approved, under construction or installed are highlighted in bold in Table 5.12. Where a wind farm would be potentially visible from a particular viewpoint, the cell in Table 5.12 is shaded.

Table 5.12 Effects on views from selected Cumulative Viewpoints within 35km study area

Wind Farm	No of Turbines	Blade Tip Heights	Distance of Visible Wind Farms from Viewpoint (km) (excl those >35 km study area)		
			CVP 09: Ben Wyvis	CVP12: Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais	CVP17: Beinn a' Chaisteil
Lochluichart Wind Farm	17	125m	13.2km	23.1km	13.7km
Fairburn Wind Farm	20	100m	16.2km	17.7km	27.3km
Novar (Meall an Tuirc)	34	53.5m	No View (below ridgeline in static view)	40.5km	17.7km
Novar (Meall an Tuirc) Extension	16	106m	No View (below ridgeline in static view)	39.9km	No View
Auchmore	5-7	125m	19.3km	22.2km	32.6km
Beinn Tharsuinn	20	80m	19.5km	No View	24.1km
Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm extension	17	100m	19.5km	No View	No View

Cumulative Viewpoint 09 - Ben Wyvis - Figure 5.70 - 5.73

Views West

5.575 From Ben Wyvis looking west, both Lochluichart and Corriemoillie Wind Farms would be viewed in combination. No other wind farm would be contained in this view.

5.576 This view has been discussed and assessed further in section 5.452 Viewpoint 9.

View North

5.577 Looking north along the ridge Braemore, Cambusmore Achany, Rosehall and Lairg Estate Wind Farms are theoretically visible at a distance of 31-38km from the viewpoint. Due to the distances involved only on the clearest of days would these wind farms be visible, and they would be inconspicuous elements of the view.

View East

5.578 Looking east, Beinn Tharsuinn and extension (19.5km) and Kilbraur and extension (50km) are illustrated to the left of the view. Hill of Nigg (37km) lies directly to the east with Achagour Wind Farm lying 50km to the southeast. Due to the distances involved, it is anticipated that no visibility of these wind farms would be gained. Novar Wind Farm and its extension, although lying only 8km from Ben Wyvis, is not viewed from this location. However the proposed Wind Farm would be evident when traversing across the ridge.

View South

5.579 Due to the accommodating landscape to wind farms located to the south of this viewpoint, there is a large congregation of existing and proposed wind farms sited. However as these are located at distances of 36 - 63km from the viewpoint, and the direction of view south is restricted, these would be typically difficult to view in the landscape.

5.580 Fairburn and Auchmore Wind Farms (approximately 16km and 19km from the receptor) would be viewed from this point, in succession with Corriemoillie and Lochluichart Wind Farms.

Cumulative Viewpoint 12 - Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais - Figure 5.74 - 5.77

View North

5.581 Looking north from Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais two wind farms would be apparent in the landscape; Lochluichart (23km) and the proposed Corriemoillie Wind Farm (24km). From this distance, the two Wind Farms of Lochluichart and Corriemoillie would appear as one sited within the landscape. Further afield the schemes of Novar + extension Wind Farms are illustrated. However actual visibility would be highly limited and possibly nonexistent due to the distances involved.

View East

5.582 A number of Wind Farms are located south of Inverness and to the east of Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais. The Wireline illustrates that 11 of the 30 wind farms in the study area would be viewed when looking east at distances of between 17km and 67km. However in reality when looking in this direction and due to the distances, views would be limited. Fairburn and Auchmore Wind Farms would be an apparent to inconspicuous element in the view.

View South

5.583 To the south, Corrimony Wind Farm (20km) would be apparent in the landscape with Glen Moriston Wind Farm and its extension illustrated, although at 35km, this would be barely perceptible particularly due to the angle of view.

View West

5.584 No wind farms are contained in views to the west.

Cumulative Viewpoint 17 - Beinn a' Chaisteil - Figure 5.78 - 5.81

View South

5.585 Views south from this viewpoint would contain Lochluichart Wind Farm (approximately 12km) and elements of Corriemoillie (13km) directly to the south. Fairburn and Auchmore Wind Farms would also be viewed in combination from this location and is considered further within the combined assessment of wind farms within 35km.

5.586 A further four wind farms are illustrated between 49 and 65km away from the viewpoint. At these distances, combined with the angle of view, actual visibility of these wind farms would be limited to nonexistent.

View West

5.587 No wind farms are contained in views to the west.

View North

5.588 Wireline views to the north contain four wind farms between 26 and 33km away. Those wind farms, including Rosehall and Braemore 26km away, would be inconspicuous elements in the landscape seen only under conditions of very clear visibility. Achany Wind Farm lies directly behind Rosehall from this vantage point and the two would appear as one Wind Farm. Lairg Estate at 33km would be barely perceptible, even in very clear conditions.

View East

5.589 Looking east from Beinn a' Chaisteil, Novar (17km) and Beinn Tharsuinn (24km) Wind Farms would be apparent as inconspicuous elements in the landscape, breaking the skyline. Other wind farms including Cambusmore (33km), Kilbraur (48km) and the Hill of Nigg Wind Farms are illustrated but would not be discernable at these distances.

Combined and Successive Effects on Views between 35km and 70km

5.590 The assessment table (5.13 below considers cumulative effects of wind farms between 35 and 70km from the centre of Corriemoillie Wind Farm. The Cumulative ZTV comprises those parts of the 30 or 35km ZTVs of other wind farms which overlap with the 35km ZTV for Corriemoillie. The status, number of turbines, blade height and distance from Corriemoillie Wind Farm are shown in Tables 5.8a and 5.8b.

Table 5.13 Cumulative Assessment of Wind Farms between 35 - 70km (Figures 5.47 - 5.68)

Cumulative Assessment Scheme	Description of Cumulative Effects in relation to Corriemoillie Wind Farm from named Viewpoints (Approximate Distances to cumulative scheme)	Magnitude of Change	Significance (N=not significant)
Braemore	Braemore wind farm lies to the north east of Corriemoillie Wind Farm with the ZTV indicating views would be restricted to long distance inconspicuous successive views from the upper summits of the north eastern Highlands. Summits of Carn Ban (25km), Beinn Dearg (34km) and Ben Wyvis (31km) would have barely perceptible views even on exceptionally clear days.	Barely Perceptible	N
Abriachan	A single turbine is proposed at Abrichan which has been assumed at 125m as no other information was available at time of assessment. The ZTV indicates limited successive views to the south of the study area located near the Muir of Ord (17km), on the upper southern slopes of Sgurr a'Choire Ghlais (28.2km), Ben Wyvis and Little Wyvis (36km). Due to the acuity of the eye and the location, a single turbine in this landscape would tend to be overlooked.	Barely Perceptible	N
Rosehall	Visibility is restricted to a limited number of summits of the north eastern Highlands. The ZTV indicates successive views would be gained from Carn Ban (22km), Beinn Thursuinn within Diebidale Forest (23km) and Ben Wyvis (35km).	Barely Perceptible	N
Achany	Due to the location of Achany Wind Farm adjacent to Rosehall, the ZTVs are similar and would contain similar views. The Wind Farm would appear as one Wind Farm when viewed at distance.	Barely Perceptible	N
Corrimony also known as Glenurquhart and Strathglass Wind Energy Project	There are very limited successive views to the south of the study area. The range of hills north of Glen Strathfarrar provides the only opportunity at altitude to view successive views from Sgurr a' Ghlais (20km) in clear conditions. Views would tend to be in the direction of the sun, and hence with restricted actual visibility	Barely Perceptible	N
Cambusmore (Meall na Tulchainn)	There is very limited ZTV interaction between the Wind Farms. Long distance successive views from Freevater Forest (31km) and Beinn Tharsuinn within Diebidale Forest (30km) and Ben Wyvis on the limits of the study area (35.5km) would be gained only under very clear conditions.	Barely Perceptible	N
Lairg Estate	There will be long distance successive views from limited summits to the north east of the study area including Freevater Forest (29km) Beinn Tharsuinn within Diebidale Forest (29km) and Glas Leathad Beag (34km).	Barely Perceptible	N
Hill of Nigg Wind Farm	There will be very limited visibility between the two Wind Farms. Only long distance successive views would be gained from Meall Mor to the north of Novar Wind Farm. The ZTV also indicates views within Gallowhill Wood to the north of Beauly Firth although in reality these would be screened.	Barely Perceptible	N
Craggie	Due to the topography, limited successive visibility of the two Wind Farms will be gained. The ZTV indicates that the summit of An Leacainn(16km) on The Aird situated on the 35km boundary of the study area would contain views of Craggie Wind Farm and barely perceptible views of Corriemoillie Wind Farm. Successive views may however be gained along the A832 between Marybank and Muir of Ord. However due to distances, the Wind Farms would be barely perceptible.	Barely Perceptible	N
Farr	There will be very limited theoretical successive visibility of the two Wind Farms to the south on the summit of Meall nan Caorach north of Loch Ness and rising ground between Muir of Ord and	Barely Perceptible	N

Cumulative Assessment Scheme	Description of Cumulative Effects in relation to Corriemoillie Wind Farm from named Viewpoints (Approximate Distances to cumulative scheme)	Magnitude of Change	Significance (N=not significant)
	Conon Bridge. The ZTV also indicates potential successive views between Marybank and Urray on the A832. However due to the low levels and landscape elements the Wind Farms would be barely perceptible from these locations		
Dunmaglass Estate	Long distance successive views could be gained from high peaks on Erchless Forest north of Glen Strathfarrar including Beinn a' Bha'ach Ard. Views would be limited to very clear days and the two Wind Farms would be inconspicuous in the landscape.	Barely Perceptible	N
Corrigarth	The ZTV indicates that only a few of the highest peaks to the south of the study area including Erchless Forest and those to the south of Strathglass would contain successive views.	Barely Perceptible	N
Corriegarth Wind Farm	The ZTV indicates that only a few of the highest peaks to the south of Strathglass would contain successive views.	Barely Perceptible	N
Kilbraur	The ZTV indicates only the peaks around Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm would contain successive views.	Barely Perceptible	N
Kilbraur extension	As with the approved Kilbraur Wind Farm the extension would only be viewed successively on the peaks around Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm.	Barely Perceptible	N
Glenkirk Windfarm	There will be very limited successive visibility on the boundaries of the study area on higher ground around The Aird north of Loch Ness. The ZTV indicates that limited visibility would be gained on high ground surrounding Kilcoy Castle east of the Muir of Ord. Due to the distance and urban intrusion these elements would be inconspicuous.	Barely Perceptible	N
Tom nan Clach	Due to its close proximity to Glenkirk Wind Farm, the ZTV indicates that similar views would be gained of Tom nan Clach	Barely Perceptible	N
Achagour	The ZTV indicates that only one peak within The Aird on An Leacainn (35km) would gain long distance successive views of the two Wind Farms. In reality due to the distance and topography views would not be gained.	Barely Perceptible	N

Combined Cumulative Effects between 35-70km - Figure 5.68 Cumulative Wind Farm Study – 35-70km

5.591 The influence of the remaining 18 wind farms in combination with the Corriemoillie Wind Farm would result in an overall significance that is considered **Not Significant**. The combined ZTV indicates that there would be an influence across the fringes of the 35km study area from the Corriemoillie Wind Farm in combination with other operational or proposed wind farms, however these would be at great distance with a dramatic and complex intervening landform and landscape elements. Climatic conditions would also be a significant factor due to the distances involved between the interacting wind farms.

Summary of Effects and Conclusions

5.592 The purpose of the landscape and visual assessment is to identify the effects that the proposed Wind Farm may have on the landscape and visual resource of the study area, and assess which of these are likely to be significant. The assessment covers four categories of potential effects;

- **physical** effects, which covers landscape elements on the site;
- **effects on** landscape **character**, which includes landscape character types and designated areas, all of which are termed landscape character receptors;
- **effects on** views, which includes 18 representative viewpoints around the study area; and
- **cumulative** effects, which covers the potential cumulative effects on landscape character receptors and views.

5.593 The assessment has found that the proposed Wind Farm will have localised significant effects on landscape character and views in the vicinity of the site. The following significant effects have been identified as a result of Corriemoillie Wind Farm itself.

5.594 The proposed development would be visible in the landscape. However, due to the scale of the wider landscape, its uniformity and strong character and its capacity to accommodate a wind farm, the only significant effects on landscape resources and visual receptors would be experienced by those landscape and visual receptors within a close range of the proposed Wind Farm. The significance of these effects would be reduced by improvements to the design which have been carried out as part of the mitigation incorporated into the final site design.

5.595 The proposed Wind Farm does not lie within a designated area. However, the Ben Wyvis pAGLV is approximately 7km to the east of the site. This part of the pAGLV would be affected by the presence of the proposed Wind Farm. However the wider area of the pAGLV would experience less change (if any). The national and regional (non-designated) landscape character areas will similarly experience local effects, decreasing with distance and visibility.

5.596 Limited parts of Rounded Hills and Undulating Moorland landscape character type will be affected, up to around 3km from the site, where there is visibility of Corriemoillie. Viewpoints experiencing the largest effects are listed below;

- The Munro of Ben Wyvis (as seen in viewpoint 9);
- Aultguish Inn (as seen in viewpoint 2);
- And views from local paths including Grudie Power Station – Beinn Laith Bheag and ScotsWays Loch Glascarnoch Dam - Gorstan (as seen in viewpoint 1).

5.597 Mitigation has been incorporated into the site design to minimise landscape and visual effects at these receptors. However, the nature of the proposals and the high sensitivity of these receptors have resulted in a remaining residual effect.

5.598 There are a variety of views available from close to long-range receptors. The views available vary according to elevation, intervening topography and existing vegetation. The character of the views also varies depending on the context of the viewpoint and the type of activity evident in the field of view. The viewpoints assessed are all centred on the proposed Wind Farm itself. The actual available views are often wider than this and in many elevated views they are panoramic i.e. 360º and the view towards the proposed Wind Farm is often not the principal view from that location.

5.599 In addition to the effects that Corriemoillie Wind Farm itself will have, the assessment has also identified the following significant cumulative effects that are likely to arise as a result of the addition of Corriemoillie to various cumulative situations:

- Limited parts of Rounded Hills, Undulating Moorland, and Rocky Moorland landscape character types, up to around 6km from Corriemoillie, where there is clear visibility of Corriemoillie Wind Farm and one other site;
- Views of Fairburn, Novar and Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farms in combination with Corriemoillie Wind Farm.