Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual

Contents

5 Landscape and Visual

5.1 Executive Summary

Scope and purpose

5.1.1 This assessment describes the existing landscape and views, considers their sensitivity to change and identifies changes likely to arise from the Proposed Development, providing judgements of the importance of the effects arising.

5.1.2 The layout of the wind farm has been carefully considered in order to mitigate landscape and visual effects. The final design performs well against three of the four design criteria set out for the host landscape type in the Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (ABLWECS). The layout has also been designed to mitigate effects on nearby settlements to the east and residential visual amenity at nearby homes. The number of aviation lights has been minimised to three nacelle lights by agreement with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

5.1.3 Significant effects on landscape character would arise as a result of the physical presence of the turbines within the Site and close views of the turbines such that they are a key feature of the landscape within the upland area south of Glen Lean, up to 5 km from the turbines, within Dunoon and Sandbank and areas up to 4 km from the turbines across Holy Loch to the north-east, and within the firth up to 6-7 km from the turbines.

5.1.4 Significant effects on visual receptors would arise as a result of close views of the turbines within Dunoon and Sandbank and areas up to 5 km from the turbines across Holy Loch to the north-east, and within the firth up to 7-8 km from the turbines.

5.1.5 There would be no significant effects on designated landscapes, including the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park located beyond Holy Loch to the north-east of the Site.

5.1.6 The coastal settlements are well lit and there would be no significant effects at night.

5.1.7 A cumulative effects assessment has been undertaken with operational and consented wind farms and those in planning and concludes that in all potential cumulative development scenarios the effects of the Proposed Development would remain as summarised above.

5.2 Introduction

5.2.1 Abseline was commissioned to prepare a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Development at Giant's Burn behalf of Giant's Burn Wind Farm Ltd (the Applicant). This assessment: defines the landscape and visual baseline environments and any known future changes; assesses their sensitivity to change; describes the key features and design rationale of the Proposed Development in relation to the mitigation of landscape and visual effects; describes the nature of the anticipated changes to the landscape and views; and assesses the effects arising during all stages of development.

5.2.2 This chapter has been prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects at Abseline. Key individuals working on this project have over 24 years of experience as chartered landscape architects. The practice is a Landscape Institute registered practice, and all work is prepared and reviewed internally by highly experienced senior landscape planners with Public Inquiry experience.

5.2.3 Supporting appendices and figures have been prepared to provide further detail and illustrate this assessment. These are important to the assessment and should be read alongside this chapter.

5.3 Planning Policy and Guidelines

5.3.1 Planning policies of particular relevance to this assessment are briefly outlined below.

National planning policy

5.3.2 Relevant national planning policy is set out within National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). Policy 11 Energy is of specific relevance to the Proposal and indicates in relation to landscape and visual matters that project design and mitigation should demonstrate how the following impacts are addressed:

"on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact …;

significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/ or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable;"

5.3.3 Policy 11 also indicates that Policy 4 relating to Natural Places, will be taken into account in relation to effects on international or national designations but does not refer to Policy 4 in relation to local

designations. Policy 4 sets out criteria identifying that the "*objectives of designation and the overall integrity*" of a National Park or National Scenic Area should not be compromised by development. Other criteria within that policy indicate in relation to locally designated landscapes that significant effects on the qualities for which they are designated or on their integrity may be "*clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of at least local importance*" – which would include the benefits arising from the Proposal.

5.3.4 Although not planning policy, the Onshore Wind Policy Statement (OWPS) sets out the Scottish Government's policy towards onshore wind and explicitly notes that (their underlining):

"Meeting our climate targets will require a rapid transformation across all sectors of our economy and society. This means ensuring the right development happens in the right place. Meeting the ambition of a minimum installed capacity of 20 GW of onshore wind in Scotland by 2030 will require taller and more efficient turbines. This will change the landscape."

5.3.5 The OWPS also notes within the section relating to landscape and visual impacts that outside of National Parks and National Scenic areas the criteria within NPF4 *include "stronger weight being afforded to the contribution of the development to the climate emergency"* and that *"Landscape Sensitivity Studies (LSS) are strategic appraisals of the relative sensitivity of landscapes … a tool to help guide development to less sensitive locations. … LSS should not be used in isolation to determine the acceptability of a development type in landscape terms…, however they will continue to be a useful tool in assessing the specific sensitivities within an area."*

Local planning policy

5.3.6 Current local planning policy is described in the following adopted and emerging policy documents:

- Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), Adopted February 2024

LDP2

5.3.7 LDP2 includes the following policy of specific relevance to this assessment:

- Policy 30 – The Sustainable Growth of Renewables – which indicates, inter alia, that projects will be supported where *"it can be adequately demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable environmental effects, whether individual or cumulative, on local communities, …, landscape character and visual amenity"*.
- Policy 70 – Development Impact on National Scenic Areas – which aims to *"provide landscapes of national importance located within Argyll and Bute with adequate protection against damaging development that would diminish their outstanding scenic value"*. Under this policy, the council seeks to only accept proposals which do not have adverse effects on, or undermine the special qualities of, NSAs unless effects are outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits of national importance, and that the proposal is supported by an LVIA that considers any relevant Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Assessment.
- Policy 71 – Development Impact on Local Landscape Areas (LLAs) – which seeks to protect the high scenic value of LLAs. The policy sets out the criteria against which development in or affecting LLAs will be considered.

Policy Considerations

5.3.8 Effects on each of the receptors mentioned in the policies above (landscape character and locally and nationally designated landscapes) are considered in section 5.10.

Other Relevant Guidance and Documents

5.3.9 Other published documents relevant to this assessment include the following documents which have informed this assessment and/or the design of the Proposed Development in relation to the mitigation of landscape and visual effects:

- NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment, 2019;
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park character Assessment, 2010;
- NatureScot Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, 2017;
- NatureScot Pre-application Advice for Wind Farms, 2024;
- NatureScot Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on Assessing Effects, 2025.
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (ABLWECS), 2017;
- North Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study (NALWCS), 2018;
- ClydePlan Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Turbine Development in Glasgow and the Clyde Valley, 2018 (LCSGCV);

- Clyde - Landscape / Seascape Assessment (CLSA), 2010;
- The Special Landscape Qualities of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, Scottish Natural Heritage, 2010 and related description under Outcome 2 of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs 2018-2023 Partnership Plan;
- West Renfrew Hills Local Landscape Area Statement of Importance, 2019.

5.3.10 Baseline studies are further considered in section 5.6 and design advice in section 5.7.

5.4 Consultation

5.4.1 NatureScot and Argyll and Bute Council provided responses in relation to landscape and visual matters at the scoping stage. Further consultation was undertaken with NatureScot (who also coordinated input from Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA)) to agree viewpoints.

Table 5.1 – Consultation

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Response
Argyll and Bute Council	Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (2017) remains part of the development plan.	The ABLWECS is referred to in this chapter as set out at 5.3.9 above.
Argyll and Bute Council	BESS, borrow pits and access roads and aviation lighting should be part of the LVIA	All elements of the Proposed Development are considered in this chapter.
Argyll and Bute Council	Viewpoints from previous WF applications in Cowal should inform final VP selection, water-based VPs should also be assessed	Previous applications predate current guidance and relate to smaller turbines. Viewpoints are selected according to best practice and based on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility Study. Water based receptors are included in the assessment and some illustrative views are used, however technical requirements for visualisations preclude the use of water-based locations as fully-visualised representative viewpoints. There are a well distributed group of coastal views included within the assessment which provide a good indication of the views available to nearby water users.
NatureScot	Seascape/Landscape assessment of Firth of Clyde should be referenced as one of the baseline assessments	This document is referred to within this assessment.
NatureScot	NatureScot do not agree that receptors beyond 20 km should be scoped out. Receptors should be scoped in or out based upon likelihood of significant effects rather than a set distance.	The proposal of a 20 km study area was deemed to be sufficient to include all non-Negligible effects and was therefore based on the likelihood of significant effects. This assessment also considers the potential for effects beyond 20 km as set out in section 5.5.
NatureScot	NatureScot agree with other items proposed to be scoped out, they also consider Kyles of Bute National Scenic Area should be scoped out.	Kyles of Bute NSA is scoped out of this assessment.
NatureScot	Advised that we liase with Scotish Forestry and SSEN concerning the felling of large swathes of woodland planned due to diseased larch and a new OHL.	Forestry removals are a routine feature of the wider landscape and do not require detailed consideration.
NatureScot	NatureScot expect the inclusion of an assessment of Special Landscape Qualities of LLTNP. NatureScot would be happy to discuss this aspect in further detail. An initial list of SLQs NatureScot think should form part of the assessment are included in the scoping response.	Further consultation was undertaken to refine the list of SLQs to be assessed. The assessment is provided at section 5.10.
NatureScot	NatureScot generally happy with the viewpoints proposed subject to the inclusion of the viewpoints proposed by NatureScot and LLTNP	Further consultation was undertaken to refine the list of viewpoints to be included in the assessment. The final list of viewpoints is provided in Table 5.2 below and shown on Figure 5.1. In addition, some illustrative views were agreed. Viewpoint changes as a result of consultation were as follows: – Viewpoint 8 was moved north to Dornoch Point.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Response
		– Viewpoint 11 representing views from the National Park to the east was moved from A817 to the John Muir Way at Gouk Hill, however the final design had limited/no visibility from Gouk Hill and this viewpoint was moved to a nearby location on the John Muir Way at Bannachra Muir. – Viewpoints 21-24 were added. – Illustrative views (cumulative wirelines) were added at Ben Narnian, Beinn Bheula and Conic Hill (see Appendix 5.3. – Illustrative views (photowires) were added at Kilmun, and on the Gourock-Dunoon ferry (see views J and L Appendix 5.3).

5.5 Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

5.5.1 The full methodology is described in Appendix 5.1, which also references the key guidance documents which inform the approach. A summary of key points is provided below.

Study Area and Scope

5.5.2 It is accepted practice that the extent of the study area for a development proposal is broadly defined by where it will be visible. In this case the study area has been refined as follows:

- An initial 45 km study area was used for the bareground ZTV study, which identified more limited visibility beyond 20 km;
- Viewpoint analysis was undertaken for viewpoints within up to 21 km of the Proposed Development, which identified that changes to views would reduce to Negligible beyond 15 km.

5.5.3 On this basis a detailed study area of 15 km has been used for the consideration of effects on visual receptors and landscape character.

5.5.4 Allowing for the greater sensitivity of the National Park, effects on Special Qualities are considered in areas of visibility within 45 km.

5.5.5 The final list of viewpoints agreed through consultation is provided in Table 5.2.

5.5.6 The following receptors have been agreed to be scoped out of assessment:

- Consideration of effects on Wild Land Areas;
- Consideration of effects on National Scenic Areas (NSAs), as these either have no, or very limited, visibility (as shown by Figure 5.1), or are within the National Park. NatureScot guidance in relation to assessing effects on Special Qualities states that "*NSAs that lie wholly within National Parks are subsumed within them. Therefore in National Parks, SLQ assessments will only use the National Park SLQ descriptions*."
- Cumulative assessment of single turbines and clusters of turbines of 50 m tip height or lower, unless within 5 km of the proposed turbine locations.

5.5.7 Effects on residential visual amenity have been considered within 2 km of the Proposed Development as set out at the scoping stage.

Site Visits

5.5.8 To inform the assessment, site visits were made to locations including representative viewpoints, the site and wider study area by the assessment team.

Night-time Assessment

5.5.9 The development proposals include aviation lighting for which assessment of potential night-time impacts is provided in section 5.10. The methodology for that assessment is included within Appendix 5.1 and the scope of the night-time assessment was agreed with consultees is as follows:

- The same study area as the main LVIA.
- Four night-time photomontages from Dunoon, A815 at Orchard, Kilcreggan and Inverkip.

5.5.10 As set out within Appendix 5.1, effects on landscape character are not considered as notable effects on character at night are unlikely to arise, and effects on designated areas focus on those qualities that are likely to be appreciated at night. In relation to visual effects the assessment considers locations where visual receptors are most likely to be present at night. The sensitivity of both visual receptors and designated areas may not be the same during the night as it is in the day.

Assessment of Potential Effect Significance and Requirements for Mitigation

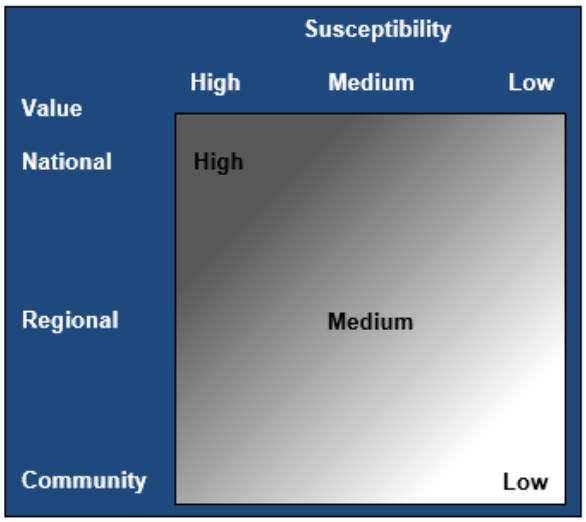
5.5.11 All required mitigation for landscape and visual effects are included in the design of the Proposed Development and as a result only the residual effects are assessed.

Assessment of Residual Effect Significance

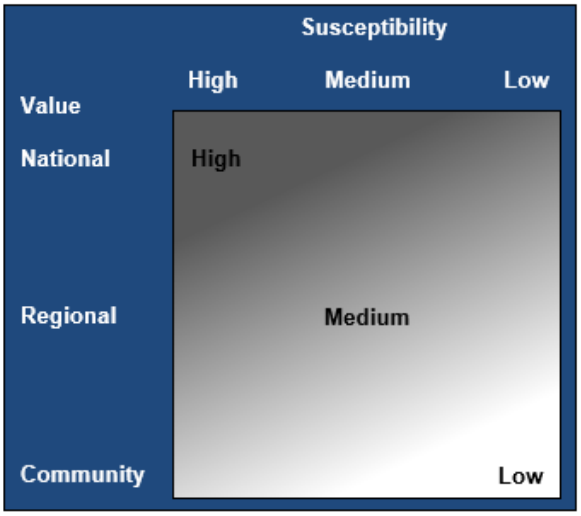
Sensitivity

5.5.12 Sensitivity judgements take account of consideration of the value and susceptibility of the receptor as illustrated by the diagrams below. Where sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted. As comparison of the two diagrams indicates, a slightly greater weight is given to susceptibility in judging sensitivity of visual receptors.

Landscape Sensitivity



Visual Sensitivity



Magnitude

5.5.13 Magnitude of change (Large, Medium, Small, Negligible) judgements take account of the degree of change arising from the Proposed Development at any particular location in terms of its size or scale; extent of the area or receptor that is influenced, and the duration and reversibility of the change.

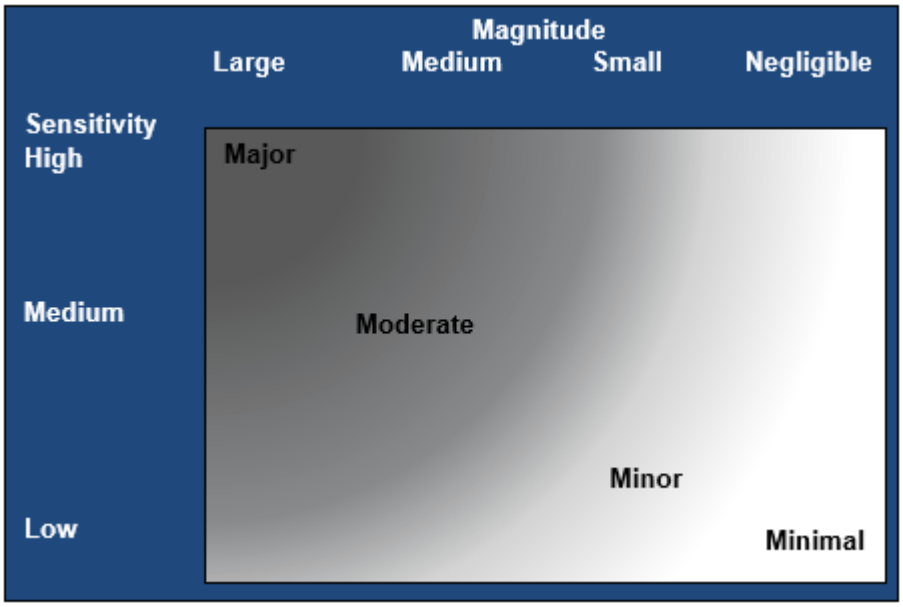
5.5.14 The maximum scale of change on the receptor is the primary factor in determining magnitude. However, for particularly widespread and/or long-lasting effects the magnitude judgement may be slightly greater than the scale of change; or for effects that are constrained in geographic extent and/or short-lived the magnitude of change may be slightly lower than the scale of change.

Level of Effect

5.5.15 The level (Major, Moderate, Minor, Minimal) of any identified landscape or visual effect reflects a professional judgement as to the relative importance of the effects identified, taking account of the sensitivity of the receptor and the predicted magnitude of change as illustrated by the diagram below. Where the effect has been classified as Major or Major/Moderate this is considered to be equivalent to likely significant effects referred to in the EIA Regulations. Where 'Moderate' or lower effects are predicted, these have been judged to be not significant.

5.5.16 The indication that some effects are 'significant' should not be taken to imply that they should warrant refusal in any decision-making process. In respect of wind energy development in Scotland, national policy (as discussed in section 5.3) explicitly notes that significant landscape and visual effects are to be expected.

Level of Effect



Positive/Adverse

5.5.17 Landscape and visual effects can be positive, adverse or neutral (different but neither better nor worse taking all factors into account). Taking a precautionary approach in making an assessment of the 'worst case scenario', the assessment considers that all effects which would result in a notable difference to the existing features, character, views or special qualities would be adverse unless indicated otherwise. It should be noted however that people's individual responses to change arising from development can vary markedly.

Cumulative Assessment

5.5.18 Cumulative assessment relates to the assessment of the effects of more than one development (as set out within Appendix 5.1). Operational developments are included in the baseline, consented development forms part of the future baseline, unless there is some uncertainty regarding the future construction of consented developments in which case they may be considered as the first scenario of the cumulative assessment.

5.5.19 The main focus of the cumulative effects assessment provided in section 5.11 is on developments in planning. For this assessment, cumulative effects with Inverchaolain wind farm (which is not yet in planning) have also been considered given its proximity to the Site. The full list of developments considered within the cumulative assessment is provided within section 5.11.

Residential Amenity

5.5.20 Effects on private views are a separate matter not considered as part of LVIA, which focusses on public views; and is also subject to different guidance. As set out within LI TGN 02/19 'Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)':

"Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that no one has 'a right to a view.' …

It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before."

5.5.21 LVIA considers impacts on communities and the way they experience views from public locations. Private views and effects on residential visual amenity are a separate matter considered by RVAA. The methodology for, and assessment of effects on residential visual amenity for the most affected properties within 2 km is included as Appendix 5.4.

Limitations to Assessment

5.5.22 No limitations have affected the LVIA. Any limitations affecting the RVAA are recorded in Appendix 5.4.

Distances

5.5.23 Where distances are given in the assessment, these are approximate distances between the nearest turbine and the nearest part of the receptor in question, unless explicitly stated otherwise. In practice these distances may vary by up to 100 m due to the micrositing allowance and this is taken account of in the assessment of effects.

Visualisations

5.5.24 Photographs of the existing views and photomontages showing the Proposed Development are shown in a separate document which accompanies the application. The method of visualisation selected has been informed by 'Visual Representation of Wind Farms', NatureScot (2017). The methodology of production for the visualisations (undertaken by GreenCat Renewables Ltd) is described Appendix 5.1.

5.6 Baseline Conditions

Introduction

5.6.1 LVIA is an iterative process; baseline studies have informed both design and early assessment before the final design and final assessment were prepared as documented in this chapter. This section provides a review of documented baseline studies (as listed at 5.3.9 above) and a baseline description of the Site and its landscape and visual context. The baseline description of the individual landscape and visual receptors is provided alongside the assessment in section 5.10 for ease of reference.

Capacity studies

5.6.2 The Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire and ClydePlan capacity studies predate a number of key policy and guidance documents, and each is identified as 'Capacity Study' which has a bearing on their applicability to the consideration of wind farm applications in the current policy environment.

5.6.3 Policy 11e (ii) of NPF4 recognises that significant landscape and visual impacts "*are to be expected"* for wind farms. Paragraph 3.6.1 of the Onshore Wind Policy Statement (OWPS) reinforces this point noting that meeting onshore wind targets "*will require taller and more efficient turbines. This will change the landscape*."

5.6.4 Advice on suitable/unsuitable locations or thresholds for development, or the 'landscape capacity' of any given area that predates this policy context may be predicated on thresholds of landscape or visual change which are lower (i.e. to avoid significant landscape and visual change). The ABLWECS indicates that it has used such by defining landscape capacity as "*the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type*" (section 2.1 and repeated in section 2.2 of the ABLWECS).

5.6.5 NatureScot: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance (2022) provides further advice in relation to this, directing that a sensitivity-based (rather than capacity-based) approach be used to "*inform plans, policies, guidance and strategies at a range of scales*" including (inter alia) "*individual proposals, where their indication of relative sensitivity can inform the site selection process, pre-application stages, and can provide information for subsequent … LVIA* ." This guidance specifically notes the following key points which have a bearing on the application of the advice provided within capacity and/or sensitivity studies:

- *"A finding of 'high' sensitivity does not necessarily mean that there is no ability to accommodate development and 'low' sensitivity does not necessarily mean that there is definitely potential for development."*
- *"Most older studies should be considered as landscape sensitivity assessments, or even susceptibility assessments if value was not included, unless relevant quantities, e.g. for housing, were set for the study area."*
- *"Existing assessments provide useful evidence and understanding to inform spatial planning. However, updating may well be beneficial, particularly for wind farm studies, as development patterns and technology change."*

5.6.6 Taking the above considerations into account, the advice within the capacity studies is used as follows within this LVIA:

- The landscape character types (LCTs) identified within the capacity studies are considered as landscape character receptors.
- The detailed assessments of sensitivity provided within the capacity studies are used to inform judgements of sensitivity for each landscape.
- ABLWECS and NALWCS:

  - The criteria of 'Scale' (or 'Scale and openness'), 'Landform', 'Landcover', 'Landscape Pattern' and 'Built environment' are used to inform the judgement of susceptibility.
  - The criterion of 'Landscape context' is considered in relation to the susceptibility of the host area only, as it indicates the potential for development within the area to have effects on surrounding LCTs.
  - The criterion of 'Visual Amenity' largely discusses potential effects on visual receptors, which are not relevant to the consideration of landscape character susceptibility or landscape value. Where the description discusses the visual characteristics of the host landscape or visual relationships with the host landscape this is taken into account in the consideration of susceptibility.
  - The criterion of 'Perceptual qualities', along with the presence or absence of designations indicating valued landscapes (which the 'Landscape Values' criterion also reflects), are used to inform the judgements of landscape value.
  - The criterion of 'Cumulative Effects' relates primarily to capacity and is not taken into account in considering sensitivity in this assessment.

- LCSGCV:
  - The criteria of 'Landform and scale', 'Landcover' and 'Settlement and man-made influence', 'Movement', 'Skylines' and 'Key views and vistas' are used to inform the judgement of susceptibility.
  - The criterion of 'Landscape context' is not considered as it indicates the potential for development within the area to have effects on surrounding LCTs, and the host landscape is not within Inverclyde.
  - The criterion of 'Receptors' relates to potential effects on visual receptors, which are not relevant to the consideration of landscape character susceptibility or landscape value.
  - The criterion of 'Natural and cultural heritage features' and 'Perceptual aspects', along with the presence or absence of designations indicating valued landscapes (which the 'Landscape Values' criterion also reflects), are used to inform the judgements of landscape value.

NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment

5.6.7 The landscape character assessment for Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park within the LVIA study area was undertaken in 2010 and identifies very small character areas which are not well suited to assessment at the scale required for wind farms, it is also not referred to from the LLTNPA website and appears to be available as data only with no description provided. The more recent national character assessment is used to identify landscape character receptors within the National Park.

5.6.8 This assessment is also used to provide the description of key characteristics within Argyll and Bute as the ABLWECS does not provide that description.

Clyde - Landscape / Seascape Assessment (2010)

5.6.9 This seascape and coastal character assessment provides very detailed characterisation of each stretch of coastline and considers their sensitivity to specific forms of development within those areas of coast or nearby areas of water. The coastal areas are considered as part of main landscape character assessment and are not used in this assessment. The seascape areas are treated as receptors, and the related descriptions, along with any references to specific coastal views within the more detailed descriptions of coastal character have been used to inform this assessment. Guidance provided in 'An approach to seascape sensitivity assessment (MMO1204)' has been used to identify sensitivity in these areas.

Documents relating to Designated Landscapes

5.6.10 The following two documents inform the consideration of effects on the designations to which they relate:

- The Special Landscape Qualities of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, Scottish Natural Heritage, 2010 and related description under Outcome 2 of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs 2018-2023 Partnership Plan;
- West Renfrew Hills Local Landscape Area Statement of Importance, 2019.

Site and context

5.6.11 As shown by Figure 5.6, the Site is located approximately 2 km to the west of Dunoon and is an open upland area with steep partially afforested sides descending towards the town. The land continues to rise to the north-west and south-west to summits of between 500 m and 600 m AOD and a mix of

forestry and steep-sided narrow glens. The upland area descends to the west towards Loch Striven. To the north of the Site, there are rural homes in Glen Kin and the B836 passes east-west through Glen Lean to the north of the Site. The Firth of Clyde lies to the east, connecting into the sea lochs to the north-east.

5.6.12 The Site lies within Argyll and Bute LCT1 Steep Ridgeland and Mountains, which extends away northwards as shown by Figure 5.4, and is also present to the north of the Gare Loch. The landscape type is described by the ABLWECS as an upland landscape with "*steep-sided craggy-topped, mountains and sharp ridges, deeply cut by the long, narrow sea lochs of Cowal*".

5.6.13 The coastline is well populated with numerous villages and towns along the shorelines of the sea lochs and the Firth of Clyde. There are also a wide range of water-based visual receptors including passengers on ferries, cruise ships and tour boats, and people taking part in water sports including sailing and kayaking.

5.6.14 The nearest nationally designated landscape is Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (LLTNP), located approximately 2.7 km to the north-east of the Site on the north-east shore of Holy Loch and continuing to the north and north-east as shown by Figure 5.2. The nearest locally designated landscape is the Bute and South Cowal Local Landscape Area (LLA), which covers an extensive area located 1.7 km to the west of the Site.

5.6.15 As shown by Figure 5.9, there is an operational wind farm at Cruach Mhor, approximately 11 km to the north-west of the Site, though this is not generally visible from lower lying areas to the east. The operational Inverclyde Wind Farm, approximately 13 km to the south-east of the Site, is more widely visible from these areas and more noticeable than the nearby cluster of turbines at High Mathernock and Priestside. Other operational and consented wind farms are located more than 20 km to the north, northwest and south.

5.7 Embedded Mitigation

Relevant Guidance

5.7.1 Design guidance (as listed at 5.3.9 above) has informed the evolving design and mitigation of landscape and visual effects as set out below.

Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (ABLWECS)

5.7.2 This document does not envisage any further development of commercial scale wind farms (beyond the operational Cruach Mhor and Clachan Flats wind farms) in the host LCT1 Steep Ridgeland and Mountains, stating that "*there is no scope to accommodate turbines > 50m high as additional new development in this landscape without significant effects occurring*". It does not therefore provide detailed design advice in relation to development of the scale proposed.

5.7.3 Advice in terms of key sensitivities includes:

- Seeking to avoid effects on views from the popular hill summits in the adjacent LCT2 High Tops and National Park. It is noted that the area around the head of Loch Fyne (which is around 30 km from the site) would be particularly sensitive in this respect.
- Seeking to avoid direct or indirect effects on Ben Lui Wild Land Area. This area is located more than 35 km to the north of the sit and would have no visibility of the Proposed Development as indicated by Figure 5.1.
- Seeking to avoid cumulative visual effects on views around the head of Loch Fyne. As shown by Figure 5.1, the Proposed Development would be approximately 30 km from this area and not visible.
- Seeking to avoid wind farm development diminishing the contrast between the lower rounded hills and more developed landscape on the south bank of the Clyde and the more rural, and steeper landscape of the Cowal Peninsula.

The siting of the Proposed Development performs well against three of the four criteria above, entirely avoiding the most sensitive areas identified. The site is not well-located in terms of the last criterion, however it is not judged that the contrast described would be notably reduced by the Proposed Development. The key differences in terrain and degree of urban development between the two landscapes would still be readily perceived.

Mitigation and enhancement measures

5.7.4 Landscape and visual matters, including residential visual amenity, have been considered throughout the design of the project. Measures included within the design to prevent or reduce landscape and/or visual effects include:

- Moving turbines away from nearby homes to the north-west to reduce effects on residential visual amenity.
- Seeking to avoid, as far as practicable, turbine bases being seen in front of the skyline in views from the east, albeit this aim had to be balanced against the need to avoid moving turbines too far to the north-west and other environmental constraints – particularly areas of deep peat.
- A reduction in the number of turbines to facilitate the aims described above.
- A reduction in tip height of the two turbines closest to Dunoon, Sandbank and other visual receptors to the east of the Site to mitigate effects on those receptors and ensure a more even composition in views across the Firth of Clyde.
- Agreement of a reduced aviation lighting scheme with the CAA to minimise the number of lights required to 3 nacelle lights and no mid-tower lights.
- Standard mitigation so that aviation lights reduce to 200 candela (from 2000 candela) in good visibility conditions (more than 5km).

5.7.5 No specific landscape enhancement measures are proposed, but changes to improve habitats will provide incidental improvements in the condition of the landscape fabric of the Site.

5.8 Potential Effects

Assessment scenarios and potential effects

5.8.1 Effects arising from the Proposed Development are considered at the following key stages. The nature of the potential effects relevant to this assessment are described for each stage:

Construction

The construction of the project would take place over 18 months. It would involve construction of the turbines and associated tracks, hardstandings, substation and a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and felling? / habitat creation?. Effects during construction on landscape fabric would arise from:

- Localised felling around turbines 1 and 2;
- Habitat creation including areas of low level deciduous plants and broadleaf trees close to the site boundary adjacent to the commercial forestry ;
- Construction of some new tracks and crane hardstandings within forested areas and across open moorland;
- Construction of the turbine foundations, substation, BESS; and
- Site reinstatement.

5.8.2 Effects during construction on landscape character would arise from:

- The changes to landscape fabric within the Site;
- The change of the site character from forestry and moorland to construction Site; and
- Views towards the construction activity, particularly the cranes and part completed turbines.

5.8.3 Effects during construction on visual receptors would arise from:

- Views towards the construction activity, particularly the cranes and part completed turbines.

5.8.4 Effects during construction on designated landscapes would arise from:

- Short-term changes to the special qualities as a result of views towards the construction activity, particularly the cranes and part completed turbines.

Operation

5.8.5 A 50-year consent is sought for the Proposed Development, and effects are assessed as though permanent for the purposes of this assessment, as the duration exceeds the 25-year 'long-term' duration as defined in Appendix 5.1. Effects during operation on landscape fabric would arise from both the presence of the Proposed Development and the continued establishment of associated habitat management/enhancement measures as described within Appendix 6.5 Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy, this includes:

- The presence of the turbines and other site infrastructure; and
- Establishment of deciduous planting.

5.8.6 Effects during operation on landscape character would arise from:

- The permanent inclusion of wind turbines and other infrastructure within the Site; and
- Changes to vegetation cover as a result of the ongoing habitat management.

5.8.7 Effects during operation on visual receptors would arise from:

- Changes to views towards the Site to include the wind turbines; and
- Smaller scale, close range changes to views into the Site where other infrastructure may be visible.

5.8.8 Effects during operation on designated landscapes would arise from:

- Changes to the special qualities arising from visibility of the turbines (and associated infrastructure where visible).

Decommissioning

5.8.9 Effects during decommissioning would be short-term (over a period of up to 1-year) and similar to those arising during construction except in reverse in terms of the Site being reinstated to moorland and forestry.

5.9 Additional Mitigation

5.9.1 There are no additional mitigation or enhancement measures relevant to this assessment, all relevant measures are embedded in the design of the Proposed Development.

5.10 Residual Effects

Introduction

5.10.1 This section sets out the effects that the Proposed Development would have on landscape and visual receptors. Some receptors are only briefly discussed and for these receptors effects "*have been judged unlikely to occur or so insignificant that it is not essential to consider them further*" (GLVIA3, para. 3.19).

5.10.2 Effects on landscape character and visual receptors are set out before those on designated areas as it is common for designations to encompass both character and visual considerations within their special qualities or purposes of designation.

5.10.3 Where effects on receptors are judged to be not significant they are described in Appendix 5.2 and summarised below.

5.10.4 The effects on landscape character, designations and visual receptors during construction and decommissioning would arise for a short-term period from a noticeable presence of vehicles and plant on site during groundworks and the use of cranes to erect/dismantle the turbines. While standing turbines are on site, the most notable effects would arise from these and effects during the construction and decommissioning stages are assessed to be the same as during operation except where otherwise specifically noted in the assessment below.

Effects on landscape fabric

5.10.5 Effects on landscape fabric would consist of the removal of small areas of forestry around the locations of turbines 1 and 2; the construction and presence of the wind turbines, tracks and other infrastructure within the open moorland of the Site; and the planting and growth of areas of new deciduous shrubs and trees along the forest margin. These changes would affect limited areas of relatively commonplace landscape elements and effects would not be significant.

Geographic distribution of effects

ZTV studies

5.10.6 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study has been prepared to indicate the potential visibility of the Proposed Development; inform viewpoint selection and site assessment work; and ensure that this assessment focusses on the most important / significant effects. Where receptors are outside of the area of visibility indicated by the ZTV study, no effects would arise and they are not considered further.

5.10.7 Figure 5.1 shows a bare ground ZTV study taking account of topography alone. It indicates that the higher ground to the west and north would restrict visibility in those directions to areas close to the Site and occasional hill summits, including within LLTNP and channelled views along Glen Lean and Loch Eck. To the east and south, visibility would be more widespread; channelled along the Firth of Clyde to and seen from facing slopes and hill tops around the coastline, the islands of Bute and Great Cumbrae and around Glasgow. Whilst there are more distant areas of visibility, the main area of visibility would arise within 20 km of the Site.

5.10.8 Figure 5.2 shows a more detailed ZTV study taking account of screening by woodland and settlement. Whilst some of the woodland is forestry, and thus its role in screening would vary with the felling cycle, it provides a more realistic model of likely visibility than bare ground alone. This shows a similar pattern of visibility to that described above, but less extensive in areas with woodland and/or forestry such as around Lock Eck and settled coastal areas including Greenock and Gourock. Within 5 km, the main areas of visibility would be the open uplands within 3 km, Dunoon, Sandbank and villages around Holy Loch, the Firth of Clyde close to Dunoon and the steep facing hillsides north of Glen Lean. Between 5-10 km visibility would arise from Loch Eck, the Firth of Clyde, from open hills above the forestry - including within the LLTNP to the north and Bute and South Cowal LLA to the south-west, and from the coast and hills above to the east and south-east. This pattern of visibility continues between 10-20 km, with views indicated from the west facing slopes and coastline near Helensburgh and extending towards Largs to the south. There would also be views of 2-4 turbines from parts of the Isle of Bute.

5.10.9 Figure 5.10 shows a ZTV Study of the Proposed Development with existing and consented wind farms. It indicates that the main areas in which the Proposed Development would be visible with other wind farms would be from within the Firth of Clyde (with Inverclyde wind farm in the Inner Firth) and Kelburn Estate (and other nearby wind farms) in the Upper Firth and in parts of the Isle of Bute and Great Cumbrae. Combined visibility to the north and west of the Site would be restricted to small areas on hill summits.

Viewpoint Analysis

5.10.10 Viewpoint analysis has been undertaken from 24 viewpoints. The final list of viewpoints was prepared following consultation as set out in section 5.4. Table 5.2 provides a summary of the scale and nature of the changes to views at each viewpoint.

5.10.11 The viewpoint locations are shown on all Figures (except Figures 5.4 and 5.9). Visualisations are provided with reference to the viewpoint numbers listed below. Additional illustrative views are provided in Appendix 5.3.

Table 5.2 – Viewpoint Analysis

Ref	Viewpoint	Distance, Direction	Scale of Effect
1	Lazaretto Point	2.7 km, E	Large, Adverse
2	Dunoon, Ardenslate Road	3.1 km, E	Large/medium, Adverse
3	Dunoon Castle	3.6 km, SE	Large/medium, Adverse
4	Strone Pier	4.4 km, E	Large/medium, Adverse
5	A815, Orchard	3.4 km, N	Large/medium, Adverse
6	Benmore Gardens (Entrance)	5.8 km, N	Medium, Adverse
7	Glen Lean	7.0 km, NW	Medium, Adverse
8	Dornoch Point	15 km, N	Small, Adverse
9	Kilcreggan	8.2 km, E	Medium/small, Adverse
10	Three Lochs Way, The Gare Lochhead	15.7 km, NE	Negligible, Neutral
11	John Muir Way, Bannachra Muir	20 km, E	Negligible, Neutral
12	Helensburgh	15.8 km, E	Negligible, Neutral
13	Lyle Hill Viewpoint	11 km, E	Small, Adverse
14	McInroy's Point, Gourock	7.4 km, E	Medium, Adverse
15	Lunderston Bay	7.1 km, SE	Medium, Adverse
16	Inverkip	8.4 km, SE	Medium/small, Adverse
17	Wemyss Bay	9.4 km, SE	Small, Adverse
18	Kelly Cut	11.7 km, SE	Small, Adverse
19	Great Cumbrae	20.9 km, S	Negligible, Neutral
20	Rothesay	14 km, SW	Small/negligible, Adverse
21	Ardmore Point	16.6 km, E	Negligible, Neutral
22	Benmore Gardens (Hilltop Viewpoint)	6.0 km, N	Medium, Adverse
23	Strone Hill	4.7 km, NE	Medium, Adverse
24	Beinn Mhor	11.7 km, N	Small, Adverse

Outcomes

5.10.12 Each of the viewpoints is a 'sample' of the potential effects, representing a range of visual receptors including people at the viewpoint and nearby, at a similar distance and/or direction. From the ZTV and viewpoint analysis it can be seen that changes to views would arise as follows:

- The extent of Large and Large/medium scale visual changes, where the Proposed Development would form a major alteration to key elements, features, qualities and characteristics of the view such that the baseline would be fundamentally changed, would generally be limited to locations within 5 km – extending the furthest in channelled views along valleys to the north and north-west and in views looking across the water where the foreshortening of views makes the turbines appear closer.
- Beyond this area, Medium and Medium/small scale changes to views would arise within up to 9 km, decreasing to Small scale as far as 15 km in channelled views along Lock Eck.

- Beyond approximately 15 km from the turbines, visual changes reduce to Negligible as the Proposed Development is less frequently wholly visible and/or would be seen in the context of other wind farms – particularly along the Clyde to the east where Inverclyde wind farm is typically visible from the north bank.

5.10.13 The ZTV and viewpoint analysis also inform the consideration of effects on character. Typically, the scale of change to character at a particular location will be slightly less than the changes to views, as character derives from a more holistic experience of the landscape, not just views. The degree to which a proposal changes character depends on a combination of:

- The degree to which it is 'in keeping' with the existing character;
- proximity and visibility; and
- the importance of views towards the site to the existing character.

5.10.14 These factors vary by character area/type and are considered below.

Effects on Landscape / Townscape Character

5.10.15 Descriptions for each of the assessed character types are provided below, based on review of the baseline documents discussed in section 5.6. LCTs are prefixed to indicate which baseline assessment they are identified and described by as follows:

- AB – Argyll and Bute (ABLWECS);
- NS – NatureScot national character assessment;
- IC – Inverclyde (LCSGCV); and
- SCA – Seascape character area as described in Clyde Landscape/Seascape assessment (CLSA)

AB LCT1 Steep Ridgeland and Mountains (includes Site)

5.10.16 As shown on Figure 5.4, this character type includes the site and extends more than 15 km to the north-west, it also occurs to the north of the Gare Loch. The landscape type is described by the ABLWECS as an upland landscape with "*steep-sided craggy-topped, mountains and sharp ridges, deeply cut by the long, narrow sea lochs of Cowal*". Key characteristics described for the equivalent LCT in the NatureScot assessment (LCT 034) include:

- *"Dramatic mountain ridges with steep, plummeting slopes and numerous rocky outcrops.*
- *Ribbon lochs and meandering rivers on narrow floodplains form dramatic contrast to surrounding slopes.*
- *Extensive conifer forests on lower slopes and open moorland, with bare rock faces on upper slopes and summits.*
- *Contrast between open land on upper slopes beyond the head dyke, and large fields enclosed by stone walls within lower glens.*
- *Scattered birch woodland alongside burns and on upper slopes and oak woodland on sheltered lower slopes.*
- *Settlement confined to narrow strip along loch edge and concentrated in small bays and at heads of lochs."*

5.10.17 The site and nearby area largely exhibit these qualities except that the town of Dunoon is included in the LCT and its largely flat, low-lying landform and urban area contrast with the characteristics described above. Viewpoints 2, 3 and 7 are within this LCT and show urban and valley views looking towards the steep landform, forested sides and open upland that characterise the area.

5.10.18 The ABLWECS provides the following assessment of factors affecting susceptibility to turbines of over 130m:

Table 5.3 – AB LCT1 Susceptibility Criteria

Criteria	Description	Susceptibility
Context	*"…Turbines sited on the 'outer' edges of this character type on steep slopes, prominent hill tops and on the narrow peninsulas extending into the Firth of Clyde, and on the mountains grouped at the head of Loch Fyne, would detract from the dramatic scenic composition of water and steep-sided mountains."*	High
Scale	*"Turbines towards 200m high would dominate smaller hills lying on the western and southern fringes of this LCT. Expansiveness is reduced within the narrow valleys which cut into these hills and where the more pronounced peaks provide enclosure, thus limiting scope to site large numbers of turbines."*	High/medium

Landform	*"Turbines would significantly detract from the distinctive craggy, irregular landform characteristic of much of these uplands. There would be physical constraints involved in locating turbines on narrow ridges, confined craggy summits and steep hill slopes and it would be difficult to attain a cohesive layout for more extensive developments…"*	High
Landcover	*"The simple land cover of this character type would be less sensitive to this typology although birch woodland and areas with a more complex pattern such as boulder fields should be avoided."*	Medium/low
Built Environment	*"Sensitivity is reduced due to the absence of settlement within the interior of this landscape. Large turbines visible on sensitive skylines above small settlements fringing coastal edges and set within glens could impact on their setting."*	Medium

5.10.19 Considering these factors together, susceptibility is judged to High/medium, noting that the siting of the turbines largely avoids the narrow valleys, craggy landform and areas of more complex landcover.

5.10.20 In relation to 'Perceptual qualities', the ABLWECS notes that "*Larger turbines could diminish the sense of naturalness and seclusion experienced in the interior of these uplands although the presence of extensive commercial forestry and wind farm development reduces the perception of wildland qualities*." The LCT is partially included, to the west of the Site, within the Bute and South Cowal LLA – encompassing the hills around Loch Striven. Taking these factors into account, the landscape value of the LCT is judged to be Regional/Community, with the Site lying in one of the lower value areas. Considering the value and sensitivity together, the sensitivity of the host LCT to the Proposed Development is judged to be High/medium.

5.10.21 As shown by Figure 5.5, visibility of the proposed turbines within the LCT would be contained by the terrain and forestry, arising in patchy areas across steep open hillsides which face towards the Site from areas to the west and north-west, in gaps where felling permits close to the north and east of the Site, and there would be more widespread visibility from within Dunoon. Within the Site and the area of visibility to the west and south between Black Craig and Leacan nan Gall there would be Large and Large/medium scale changes to character as a result of the nearby presence of the turbines. Within 5 km, the presence of the wind farm as a key feature within the upland area south of Glen Lean would give rise to Medium and Medium/small changes to character. Beyond this, Small scale changes to character as a result of views of the turbines would arise within 6-7 km, and beyond that decreasing visibility, an increasing sense of separation from the Site and the nearby presence of the turbines at Cruach Mhor would mean that effects would reduce to Negligible scale.

5.10.22 In the context of this large character type, the extent of Permanent effects would be Localised and the magnitude of impact would be Medium. Effects would be **major/moderate, adverse and significant**.

AB LCT4 Mountain Glens (1.4 km, NE)

5.10.23 As shown by Figure 5.4, this character area covers the steep slopes and shoreline around Holy Loch. The same LCT occurs elsewhere to the north within Argyll and Bute, but not within 15 km of the Site. The landscape type is described by the ABLWECS as "*enclosed and often narrow, contained by steep sides which rise to form irregular ridgelines… a contained and often small scale landscape, which is accentuated by the presence of small buildings, trees and field enclosure pattern.*" Viewpoints 1, 4, 5, 6 and 22 are located within this LCT; most show views from the floor of the glen, but viewpoint 22 provides a view from the upper valley sides looking along the glen to the south.

5.10.24 The ABLWECS does not consider this landscape type to be suitable for development of turbines over 50 m. The ABLWECS provides the following assessment of factors affecting susceptibility to turbines of 35-50 m:

Table 5.4 – AB LCT4 Susceptibility Criteria

Criteria	Description	Susceptibility
Scale	*"the massive scale of the mountains* [seen from the glens] *is emphasised by the small size of buildings and more intricate land cover pattern. This contrast would be diminished...."*	High
Landform	*"The rhythm of the undulating and irregular ridges could be easily disrupted by turbines interrupting the skyline when viewed from the valley floor."*	High
Landcover	*"The small size of individual features – from lochans, belts of trees to small woodlands and fields – could be easily dominated."*	High/medium
Built Environment	Turbines *"overwhelm small farms and individual houses, if sited close enough to dominate the setting and the scale of the existing buildings and associated features."*	High

5.10.25 Considering these factors together, susceptibility is judged to be High.

5.10.26 In relation to 'Perceptual qualities', the ABLWECS notes that "*While there can be a sense of seclusion in these glens, there is only a limited sense of remoteness, as the landscape is settled and the glen floor is relatively managed*." The LCT is partially included within the LLTNP – encompassing the north shores and valley sides of Holy Loch and the valley floor around the head of the loch as shown by Figure 5.2. Taking these factors into account, the landscape value of the LCT is judged to be National/Regional. Considering the value and sensitivity together, the sensitivity of the host LCT to the Proposed Development is judged to be High.

5.10.27 As shown by Figure 5.5, and the viewpoints within the LCT, visibility of the proposed turbines within the LCT would be relatively widespread from the valley floor and loch shores, whilst visibility from the forested valley sides would be limited to occasional more open areas. The presence of the turbines seen on the skyline would present contrasts to the small-scale character of the glen, but would also be clearly associated with the larger scale landform of the adjacent LCT and not perceived as encroaching into the valley sides of the glen. Permanent, changes to character would be Large/medium scale in the main area of visibility around the loch shores and loch head within 4 km of the turbines, reducing to Small scale beyond, affecting a Wide extent of the LCT. The magnitude of impact would be Large/medium. Effects would be **major, adverse and significant**.

SCA3 Inner Firth of Clyde (2.0 km, E)

5.10.28 As shown on Figure 5.4, this character area extends eastwards from Dunoon towards Glasgow, it includes Holy Loch, but not the larger sea lochs to the east. The CLSA describes the character as follows:

"The firth is relatively wide to the west, although it narrows considerably from Cardross and Port Glasgow eastwards…. It is enclosed to the north by relatively gently graded hill slopes, including the low-lying Rosneath peninsula. To the south, the hill slopes rise far more steeply, and development rises up the hillsides in tiers. Long stretches of this coast are very developed, with major settlements …As a result there is a great deal of inter-visibility across the firth and between settlements on opposite shores. This is an active commercial shipping centre, with container ports, shipping businesses and boatyards as well as recreational facilities located on the coast. In addition, there are frequent ferries …and naval traffic."

Table 5.5 – SCA3 Susceptibility Criteria

Criteria	Description	Susceptibility
Hinterland	The hinterland is varied – as described above. The site is in an area of higher sensitivity with steep slopes and a higher elevation than much of the surrounding hinterland.	High/medium
Coastal edge	The sea lochs and peninsulas create a complex coastal edge.	High
Movement	There is a lot of movement within the waterway from shipping, with that sense of movement increased by wind, waves and views of Inverclyde wind farm above the skyline on the southern side of the firth.	Low
Use of the coast	As noted above this is a busy coastline including development of a variety of scales and types, particularly along the south side of the firth. Development on the east and north coastline typically comprises smaller scale coastal villages and towns, although the Rosneath Mast is a widely visible landmark to the north.	Medium/low
Scale	As described above, the width of the channel varies. Generally there is a sense of space, particularly towards the western end of the channel, but not expansiveness.	Medium
Enclosure and skylines	Views are enclosed to all sides by the coast and islands, with lochs, the Clyde and the upper firth dividing the undulating and varied skyline into distinct sections.	Medium

5.10.29 Considering the above criteria together, the SCA is considered to have a High/medium susceptibility. As shown by Figure 5.2, the shorelines around the SCA are typically not included in landscape designation, but the north shore of Holy Loch forms part of the LLTNP. Taking into account this mix of designation/not, and the role of this seascape in provided the setting of the coastal villages and towns in this area, it is judged to be of Regional value and High/medium sensitivity.

5.10.30 As shown by Figure 5.5, there would be widespread visibility of the Proposed Development from within the SCA, and the turbines would be seen to the west looking along the channel as it narrows, with views being similar to those shown from viewpoints 1, 4, 9, 14 and 21 and illustrative views J and L in Appendix 5.3. The turbines would be a new characteristic feature at the western end of the channel, forming another marker, along with Dunoon, the lighthouse at Cloch Pojnt and the change of direction of the water channel, of the transition to the Upper Firth of Clyde. Changes to character would be Large/medium scale in the closest part of the SCA – in Holy Loch and close to Dunoon, reducing progressively with distance gradually to Small scale as far as the narrowing of the channel between Gourock and Kilcreggan. Further east, changes to character would be Negligible as a result of existing closer views of Inverclyde Wind Farm, and an increasing separation from the Site. These Permanent changes to character within an Intermediate extent of the character area would give rise to a Medium magnitude of impact. Effects would be **major/moderate, adverse and significant**.

Other Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Seascape Character Areas (SCAs)

5.10.31 Effects on the following character areas / types are assessed to be not significant and are described within Appendix 5.2:

- **AB LCT5 Open Ridgeland (7.7 km, NE)** – This large scale upland LCT is judged to be of Low sensitivity. Changes to character would arise as a result of views of the proposed turbines seen across the water from the area of visibility on the south-west part of the Rosneath peninsula within 10-11 km of the Proposed Development. The magnitude of impact would be Small and effects would be **minor, adverse and not significant**.
- **NS LCT250 Steep Ridges and Hills (3.9 km, NE)** – This LCT has strong similarities to AB LCT1, is located in the LLTNP and is judged to be of High sensitivity. Patchy areas of visibility of the Proposed Development from hill slopes and summits within up to 8 km would give rise to Medium/small to Small scale changes to character as a result of a sense of proximity to the turbines – particularly in the areas closest to the site where the turbines would be seen across Holy Loch. The magnitude of impact would be Small and effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.
- **NS LCT254 Straths and Glens with Lochs (6.9 km, N)** – The long narrow loch and steep-sided valley of Loch Eck has a High sensitivity. The turbines would be seen as a distant, but discordant feature in views towards the mouth of the loch from the water and from a small number of places on the loch shores where gaps in the trees and terrain open up longer views. The magnitude of impact would be Small/negligible and effects would be **minor, adverse and not significant**.
- **IC LCT1 Raised Beach (6.5 km, SE)** – This narrow coastal strip includes settlement and roads among policy woodland and backed by steep escarpments. And is considered to have Medium sensitivity. The Proposed Development would alter the characteristic skyline seen in coastal views, as illustrated by viewpoints 15, 16 and 17. The magnitude of impact would be Small and effects would be **moderate/minor, adverse and not significant**.
- **IC LCT20 Rugged Moorland Hills (6.5 km, SE)** – This upland LCT which is partly included in a local landscape designation is judged to be of Medium sensitivity. The Proposed Development would be seen on the far side of the Firth of Clyde in views from north-west facing slopes and summits in the closest area of the LCT giving rise to impacts of Small/negligible magnitude. Effects would be **minor, adverse and not significant**.
- **SCA7 Upper Firth of Clyde SCA (3.4 km, SE)** – This busy water channel between Cumbrae and Dunoon is judged to have Medium sensitivity. There would be widespread visibility of the proposed turbines as illustrated by Figure 5.5 and viewpoints 15, 16, 17 and 19. They would become an additional landmark marking the transition to the Inner Firth of Clyde giving rise to impacts of Medium/small magnitude. Effects would be **moderate/minor, adverse and not significant**.

5.10.32 Some of the character types within the study area as shown on Figure 5.4 would experience negligible effects and do not require detailed assessment, for the reasons set out below:

- AB LCT5a Bute Open Ridgeland (10.5 km, SW), AB LCT13a Bute Rolling Farmland with Estates (12 km, S) and Rothesay Sound SCA (7.0 km, SW) – As shown by Figure 5.5, there would be a Localised extent of at most Small/negligible scale changes to views of up to 4 turbines from the northern part of these LCTs near Rothesay, similar to those shown from nearby viewpoint 20. These very limited changes to views from these LCTs would not alter their character.
- AB LCT13 Rolling Farmland with Estates (9.3 km, E) – There would be a Limited extent of visibility from the coast and Gallow Hill near Kilcreggan where there would be at most Small scale changes to views, and from near Helensburgh where changes to views would be Negligible scale. There are views of Inverclyde Wind Farm, also seen across the water at a similar distance from this area, and changes to character would be Negligible in this context.
- The Gareloch SCA (8 km, E) – As shown by Figure 5.5 and viewpoint 12, there would be a Localised extent of Small/negligible to Negligible changes to views near Helensburgh. There are views of Inverclyde Wind Farm, also seen across the water at a closer distance from this area, and changes to character would be Negligible in this context.
- IC LCT0 Urban Area (6.7 km, E) – There would be some views of the turbines from the waterfront and elevated locations such as viewpoints 13 and 14. However, these changes to views would not alter the character of the urban area which derives primarily from its built form and relationship to the Clyde.
- NA LCT1a North Ayrshire Raised Beach Coast (10.8 km, S) and NA LCT19 Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys (11.2 km, SE) – As shown by Figure 5.5, there would be a Localised extent of at most Small scale changes to views from the northern ends of these two LCTs – the changes to views would be similar to those illustrated by viewpoints 17 and 18, but more distant. Both LCTs extend well beyond the study area to the south and have a closer visual relationship to the seascape to the

west than to the north-west. These changes to views to include relatively distant turbines in the views to the north-west would give rise to Negligible changes to character.

- SCA5 Loch Long (5.0 km, NE) – As shown by Figure 5.5, there would be a Limited area of visibility from Loch Long, at the mouth of the Loch between Strone Point and Cove. This is an area of transitional character between the busier, more open Firth of Clyde and the narrow, more still and enclosed character of Loch Long and visibility of the turbines in this area along with close views of the ports and coastal towns to the south would give rise to Negligible changes to the character of the loch.
- All remaining LCTs and SCAs not considered above would have limited visibility within 15 km of the turbines.

Visual Effects

5.10.33 Three types of visual receptors are considered within this assessment:

- Groups – Based around settlements or rural areas and representing effects on the community within public spaces including streets and local recreational routes in that place. Views from groups of homes may also be noted in the descriptions, but as noted at Section 5.5, effects on these are a separate matter.
- Routes – Users of longer distance transport and recreational routes through the study area.
- Specific viewpoints – Visitors to locations which are recognised and valued for the views available.

5.10.34 Unless stated otherwise, the sensitivity of visual receptors is as follows:

- Residents, recreational walkers and visitors to specific viewpoints are deemed to have a High susceptibility to changes to views, with the value of those views reflecting the scenic value of the area they are located within as indicated by designation (i.e. National Value within the National Park, Regional within locally designated landscapes and Community value elsewhere). The sensitivity of these receptors is High within the National Park, and High/medium elsewhere.
- Users of ferry routes and recreational watercraft in the study area are a mix of tourists, local residents going about everyday journeys and people enjoying activities such as sailing or kayaking. They are treated as having a High susceptibility to changes to views which are of Community value, given that all areas of seascape that would have visibility are undesignated, and the sensitivity of this group would be High/medium.
- Users of long distance cycle routes are likely to be travelling for recreation, but will have much of their focus on the road and any other traffic and are judged to be of Medium susceptibility. The value of views reflects the scenic value of the area they are located within as indicated by designation. The sensitivity of these receptors in the study area is Medium – there are no long distance cycle routes in the National Park within 15 km of the turbines.

<u>Core Paths within 2 km (0.5 km, NE)</u>

5.10.35 As shown by Figure 5.6, these Core Paths run around the forested slopes between Dunoon, Sandbank and the Site. The outlook will vary with the felling cycle, sometimes being more open and sometimes more enclosed. Users of these routes have a High/medium sensitivity to changes to views.

5.10.36 The turbines would be seen nearby, looking up over steeply rising ground and giving rise to Permanent, Large scale changes to views when and where they are visible. Assuming that at any given point in time, felling may have been recently undertaken in a large part but not all of the forested area, an Intermediate extent of the paths would be affected, giving rise to impacts of Large magnitude. Effects would be **major/moderate, Adverse and significant**.

<u>Sandbank (2.0 km, E)</u>

5.10.37 Sandbank is a coastal village located to the north of Dunoon on the west side of Holy Loch. Views in this area are mostly contained by higher ground to the west and hills on the far side of Holy Loch, but wider views to the east along the Clyde are available from the south part of the village. People living in and visiting the village have a High/medium sensitivity to changes to views.

5.10.38 Open visibility of the Proposed Development from within the village would arise in some places where streets align towards the Site, such as from viewpoint 1 at Lazaretto Point and the atypically elevated view from Cromlech Road as shown by illustrative view A in Appendix 5.3. There would be more limited visibility of turbines above rooftops from Shore Road and other streets as shown by illustrative views B, C and E in Appendix 5.3. The woodland and rising ground to the west of High Road would largely screen views from this road, except for the more open area south of Cromlech Road where the turbines would be openly seen as shown by illustrative view D in Appendix 5.3. Permanent, Large scale changes to views would affect a Wide extent of the village, giving rise to impacts of Large magnitude. Effects would be **major, adverse and significant**.

Dunoon (2.5 km, E)

5.10.39 Dunoon is a small coastal town situated at the transition where the Firth of Clyde turns from a broadly east-west to broadly north-south orientation and benefits from views along the channels in both directions. Inland the land is forested and rises sharply to the open hilltops of the site. People living in and visiting Dunoon have a High/medium sensitivity to changes to views.

5.10.40 There would be visibility of the Proposed Development within the town where streets align towards the site, and where there are longer views looking west over open spaces, or from the esplanade where it is set back from buildings such as from Wellington Street (see illustrative views F, H and I in Appendix 5.3). Viewpoint 3 illustrates an atypical elevated view, taken from Dunoon Castle. Where views arise within the town they would more typically be similar to viewpoint 2, and illustrative view G from Mary Street shown in Appendix 5.3. The scale of Permanent change to views would vary between Large/medium and Medium. Given the prevalence of east-west aligned streets in the town, such views would occur frequently, affecting a Wide extent of the town to the south of Hunters's Quay. The magnitude of impact would be Large/medium and effects would be **major/moderate, adverse and significant**.

Local roads and Core Paths between Sandbank and Loch Eck (2 km, N)

5.10.41 This receptor group is located between the northern end of Sandbank and the south end of Loch Eck, and includes the eastern end of the B836 where it joins the A815 and a number of smaller local roads which provide access to homes and are also Core Paths as shown by Figure 5.6. Residents and Core Path users in this area have a High/medium sensitivity to changes to views in the southern part of this group, increasing to High sensitivity within the National Park.

5.10.42 As illustrated by Figure 5.6, the main areas of visibility would be from the B836 and the more open sections of the Core Paths between the B836 and Invereck. Elsewhere trees and landform would largely screen views towards the Proposed Development. Where the turbines are seen from the B836, the view would be less open than from nearby viewpoint 5, with the closest two turbines seen nearby above the landform and trees, but others seen only as blades or screened. Views from the Core Path near Invereck would be similar to those shown from Viewpoint 5. Permanent changes to views would be Large/medium and Medium scale for a Localised extent of this receptor group giving rise to impacts of Medium magnitude. Effects would be **major/moderate, adverse and significant**.

Ferry users – Gourock to Dunoon (3.5 km, E)

5.10.43 There are two short ferry routes connecting Gourock and Dunoon. The ferry routes offer panoramic views of the landscape around as well as views along the sea lochs and the Firth of Clyde, including many features of interest. Ferry passengers would have a High/medium sensitivity to changes to views.

5.10.44 As shown by Figure 5.6, there would be open views of the Proposed Development throughout the ferry crossings, with views from the Gourock end of the journey being similar to those shown by viewpoint 14, and those from the midpoint being similar to and illustrative view L in Appendix 5.3.The turbines would be seen on the skyline above Dunoon at varying distances, giving rise to Permanent Large/medium to Medium scale changes to views for a Wide extent of the journey. The magnitude of impact would be Large/medium and effect would be **major/moderate, adverse and significant**.

Kilmun (3.3 km, NE)

5.10.45 Kilmun is a linear village that extends along the north-east bank of Holy Loch from the A815.The village is mostly comprised of a single street with homes on the east side of Shore Road facing out across the Loch. Woodland, including an arboretum, backs the village inland on ground which rises steeply behind the houses and gardens. People living in and visiting the village and Arboretum (which are in the National Park) have a High sensitivity to changes to views.

5.10.46 Views of the Proposed Development from the village would be similar to those shown from viewpoint 5 at the northern end near the A815, but more typically similar to those shown from illustrative view J in Appendix 5.3, with the turbines seen in open view looking across Holy Loch towards the site. Views from the arboretum are more enclosed due to the tree cover, though the turbines would be visible to one side of the open view from a bench provided on the John Jackson trail (see illustrative view K in Appendix 5.3), and seen through branches in winter. The Permanent scale of change to views would be Large/medium, affecting a Wide extent of the village and would give rise to impacts of Large/medium magnitude. Effects would be **major, adverse and significant**.

Strone (4.3 km, E)

5.10.47 Strone is a village which adjoins the south-east end of Kilmun and extends around between Holy Loch and Loch Long where it adjoins the village of Blairmore. There are three main streets in the village; Shore Road along the shoreline, and Midge Lane and High Road which have views towards the Site over houses and vegetation lower down in the village. People living in and visiting the village (which is in the National Park) have a High sensitivity to changes to views.

5.10.48 Views of the Proposed Development from Shore Road as it runs along the Holy Loch through the village would be similar to those shown from viewpoint 4 and illustrative view J in Appendix 5.3, with the turbines seen in open view looking across Holy Loch towards the site. Views from High Road and Midge Lane would be similar but with a foreground of roofs and vegetation descending towards the loch. Beyond the church at Strone Point, visibility of the Proposed Development would be screened as shown by Figure 5.6. The scale of Permanent changes to views would be Large/medium (reducing to Medium where views are more constrained by houses and trees), affecting a Wide extent of the village and would give rise to impacts of Large/medium magnitude. Effects would be **major/moderate, Adverse and significant**.

Recreational water users (2 km, E)

5.10.49 The Firth of Clyde is a busy area for both recreational watercraft and tourism, including use by cruise ships approaching and leaving Greenock, local tours around the Firth of Clyde such as by the Waverley paddle steamer, numerous sailing clubs and marinas, and promoted sea kayak trails. Recreational water users include a mix of those travelling for pleasure and enjoying the views and people engaged in water sports that require their focus. The former group have a High/medium sensitivity to changes to views, whilst those engaged in waters sports would have a Medium sensitivity.

5.10.50 As shown by Figure 5.6 and illustrated by viewpoints 4, 9, 12, 14-17 and 21, there would be open views of the Proposed Development from much of the Firth of Clyde, Holy Loch and from the mouths of Loch Long and the Gare Loch. From areas closer to Greenock and Helensburgh there are slightly closer views of Inverclyde wind farm above Greenock which would reduce the degree of changes to views. The Proposed Development would be seen on the skyline above Dunoon, as part of the wide panorama of interesting views available from the water, giving rise to Permanent changes to views which would reduce from Large/medium scale closest to Dunoon, to Medium scale around Gourock and Small scale near Greenock and Wemyss Bay, affecting a Wide extent of the Firth of Clyde. Changes to views would continue to reduce to Negligible beyond these areas. The magnitude of impact would be Medium and effects would be **major/moderate, adverse and significant**.

Other Visual Receptors

5.10.51 Effects on the following visual receptors are assessed to be not significant and are described within Appendix 5.2:

- **Gourock (6.8 km, E)** - The Proposed Development would be openly seen from the coast road, looking out over the Firth of Clyde where it will be seen standing on the skyline above Dunoon as illustrated by viewpoint 14. Elsewhere within the settlement visibility would be mostly screened by buildings and/or trees with the main exception being an aligned view along Reservoir Road and open views from the Lyle Hill viewpoint as shown by viewpoint 13. The Impact would be of Medium magnitude and effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.
- **Cove, Kilcreggan, Rosneath Core Paths and Kilcreggan-Gourock Ferry (7.7km km, E)** - The Proposed Development would be openly seen from the coast road, the Core Paths and Barbour Road around and over the west side of the peninsula, the Core Path along Fort Road around the coast near Portkil and from the ferry route as shown by Figure 5.6 and viewpoint 9. Some areas within the core of the villages would have views screened by nearby buildings and trees. The impact would be of Medium/small magnitude and effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.
- **Inverkip (8 km, SE)** - The Proposed Development would be openly seen from beaches, looking out over the Firth of Clyde where it will be seen standing on the skyline above Dunoon as illustrated by viewpoint 16. There would be limited visibility from the lower lying, older part of the village and residential streets around the marina but more frequent views from the more elevated areas of modern housing extending up the hills from the coast. The magnitude of impact would be Medium/small and effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.
- **Clyde Muirsheil Regional Park (6.7 km, SE)-** As shown by Figure 5.6, there would be an area of visibility across Burneven Hill, where views towards the Proposed Development would be similar to, but more distant and elevated than nearby viewpoints 14 and 15. Further inland and further south, visibility from Core Paths would be more limited by intervening higher ground with more open views from hill tops, and where visibility arises, views would be similar to viewpoint 18. The magnitude of impact would be Medium/small and effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.
- **Wemyss Bay and Skelmorlie (8.7 km, SE)** - There would be occasional coastal views of the Proposed Development such as that from Viewpoint 17 and nearby roads in Wemyss Bay that are parallel to the coast. There would also be some limited glimpsed views over or through gaps between buildings and trees in Upper Skelmorlie. The magnitude of impact would be Small/negligible and effects would be **minor, adverse and not significant**.
- **Ferry users – Wemyss Bay to Rothesay (10.5 km, S)** - Views from near the mainland would be similar to those shown from Viewpoint 17 and there would be a shorter section of visibility similar to

that viewpoint 20 near Rothesay. There would be no visibility for much the central section of the route. The magnitude of impact would be Small and effects would be **moderate/minor, adverse and not significant**.

- **Ayrshire Coastal Path (10.5 km,SE)** - Views of the Proposed Development would mainly affect northbound walkers as the turbines would be behind those heading south. The Proposed Development would mainly be seen when descending towards Meigle, between Meigle and Skelmorlie and from the ferry port at Wemyss Bay (as illustrated by viewpoint 15). Given the Limited extent of the long-distance route affected, the magnitude of impact would be Small/Negligible. Effects would be **minor, adverse and not significant**.
- **A815 (1.7 km, E)** – Southbound road users would see occasional glimpsed channelled views as they travel alongside Loch Eck similar to that shown from viewpoint 8, and a short stretch of more open visibility around the head of Holy Loch as illustrated by Viewpoint 5. For northbound road users, there would be a short stretch of views of the turbines above houses and the hills beyond from the open stretch of Bullwood Road and Wellington Street in Dunoon, and passing through Sandbank, a short stretch of close, open views of the turbines seen ahead of them as shown by viewpoint 1. These changes to views would arise for a very short stretches of the route. The magnitude of impact would be Medium/small and effects would be **moderate/minor, adverse and not significant**.
- **National Cycle Route 75/753 (6.4 km, SE)** - Between Gourock and Inverkip, there are open views from the route where it runs around the coast and the proposed turbines would be seen looking across the water at distances of 6.4-10 km as illustrated by viewpoints 14, 15 and 16. Cyclists heading in both directions would see the Proposed Development ahead of their direction of travel for approximately 4 km section of their journey The magnitude of impact would be Medium/small and effects would be **moderate/minor, adverse and not significant**.
- **Portavadie to Dunoon Cycle Route (2.0 km, E)** - As shown by Figure 5.6, for most of the route there would be no visibility of the Proposed Development. Cyclists heading towards Dunoon would have a brief view of the turbines near viewpoint 7 in Glen Lean, around the junction of the B836 and A815 as they turn south towards Dunoon, and occasional glimpses of turbine blades over the houses as they ride along the seafront through Sandbank and Dunoon. In the other direction, views would be similar except that there would be an open view of the turbines ahead of the direction of travel passing through Sandbank (see viewpoint 1) and turbines would be behind the direction of travel in Glen Lean. The magnitude of impact would be Medium and effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.
- **Visitors to Benmore Botanic Garden (5.0 km, N)** - Benmore Botanic Garden is a key visitor destination to the north of Dunoon. A storm in early 2025 caused notable damage to the gardens which may mean there are more open views from the higher areas of the gardens in the medium to long-term. Visitors to the gardens have a High sensitivity. Most of the gardens are enclosed with no outward views. Exceptions are represented by viewpoint 6 near the bridge near the entrance and viewpoint 22 at the highest point in the gardens. There would be a Small magnitude of impact which is expected to reduce slightly as the gardens are re-established after the storm damage. Effects would be **moderate/minor, adverse and not significant**.
- **Visitors to Lyle Hill Viewpoint (5.0 km, N) -** Viewpoint 13 is located at this viewpoint which is positioned high above the towns of Gourock and Greenock and offers elevated, panoramic views to the north and west. Visitors to the viewpoint have a High sensitivity. The turbines would be seen as an addition to nearby tall buildings, the firth and its associated ports and fishing traffic, coastal settlements on the far shores and farmland and hills beyond, giving rise to a Small magnitude of impact. Effects would be **moderate/minor, adverse and not significant**.

5.10.52 Some visual receptors within the study area as shown on Figure 5.6 would experience **negligible** impacts and do not require detailed assessment for the following reasons:

- Settlements which would have no or very limited visibility including Hunter's Quay (3.5 km, E), Innellan (6 km, S), Blairmore (5.2 km, NE), Greenock (11km, E), Coulport (10km, NE) and settlements around the Gare Loch (11-15km, NE).
- Settlements with distant views giving rise to localised Negligible or Small/negligible changes to views from waterfront areas, including Helensburgh, Rothesay and Port Bannatyne.
- Core Paths to the east and west of Loch Eck – Both of these routes would have a Limited extent of Small scale changes due to screening by a combination of forestry and terrain. The western shore is less forested than shown by Figure 5.6, but visibility along this shore would primarily be restricted by the nearby hillsides as shown by Figure 5.1.
- Long distance routes with short sections of distant views in which changes would be Small/negligible or Negligible scale, or which would have no visibility, including John Muir Way (15 km, E), Cowal Way (13.5 km, W), A886 (10.6 km, SW), A814 (13 km, NE), A8003 (13.5 km, W),

A78 (13.5 km, SE), Glasgow-Wemyss Bay Railway (8.5 km, SE) and West Island Way (11.7 km, W).

Designated Areas

Loch Lomond the Trossachs National Park (LLTNP),

5.10.53 The Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) considered in the assessment below are a sub-set, requested by NatureScot as part of the scoping process as requiring assessment in relation to the Proposed Development. The approach used below is informed by the guidance provided in 'Special Landscape Qualities - Guidance on assessing effects' (Nature Scot, 2025). This guidance was issued after the scoping process had been completed.

5.10.54 The SLQs requested for assessment were drawn from both the documented general qualities and Argyll Forest special qualities, and omit only the general qualities of 'rich variety of woodlands' and 'famous through routes', and the Argyll Forest quality of 'dramatic pass of Rest and Be Thankful' which are agreed to be unaffected.

5.10.55 This assessment follows the approach set out within the guidance as follows:

- Identify how and where SLQs are experienced and which are relevant to the proposal: This assessment starts from the SLQs suggested and provides description of where they are experienced as part of the baseline description below.
- Identify the study area: This was initially set as areas of visibility within the LLTNP and within 45 km of the Proposed Development and is further refined below.
- Identify the sensitivity of the SLQs: To a degree this was done by NatureScot in suggesting the shortlisted SLQs, and is further refined below. The susceptibility of each SLQ is considered and described and all SLQs are assessed to be of National value.
- Assessment of effects on the SLQs taking account of night-time and seasonal effects: This is provided below. All effects are assessed as though permanent, taking account of the very long duration of operational effects. The scale and extent of changes to the SLQs are assessed using the approach set out in Appendix 5.1 for landscape receptors.

Potential effects on SLQs at night

5.10.56 Most of the SLQs are less able to be appreciated at night. Qualities which may come more to the fore are tranquillity and the sense of remoteness in the Argyll Forest. Settled areas around the coast do not exhibit these qualities, and other areas of visibility on the summits are places where people are less likely to be present at night. The LLTNP has a web page relating to star gazing, but does not recommend any particular locations in the National Park. The main area of the LLTNP which would exhibit these qualities and have visibility of the aviation lights would be around the Head of Holy Loch and further north along Loch Eck.

5.10.57 Views from the A815 as it passes Loch Eck are considered at section 5.10.82 – 5.10.84. Other receptors are likely to be local residents and people staying at the campsite and holiday park between Loch Eck and Holy Loch who would see the aviation lights while moving around outdoors at night.

Table 5.6 Effects on SLQs and LLTNP

SLQ	Where experienced	Susceptibility and Sensitivity	Description of changes to SLQ	Scale and extent of changes to SLQ
General Qualities				
A world-renowned landscape famed for its rural beauty	Throughout the LLTNP and beyond.	**None** – the reputation of the National Park is not likely to be affected by a nearby wind farm, given that this would require the wind farm itself to become a feature of equal renown to LLTNP. Rural beauty is substantially the same quality as 'Landscape splendour' which is considered below.		N/A
Wild and rugged highlands contrasting with pastoral lowlands	Throughout the LLTNP, though more apparent inland beyond Helensburgh and the narrow peninsulas between sea lochs; this quality is not readily apparent from or near any of the viewpoints included within the LVIA, except viewpoint 11 which lies west of Helensburgh.	**High** – the experience of the contrasting scale and nature of these two landscape types could be altered by a nearby wind farm affecting perceptions of scale and distance; or altering the perception of the highlands as being 'wild', and/or the lowlands as being 'pastoral'.	From the areas of the LLTNP in which this quality is more apparent, to the east and north-east of Helensburgh, the Proposed Development would be seen as a distant element, as illustrated by viewpoint 11. Effects would be restricted to a Localised extent of the LLTNP to the north and north-east of Helensburgh and eastern shores of Loch Lomond, looking across the Loch as illustrated by Figure 5.1.	**Negligible scale and Limited extent**
Water in its many forms	Within and around the lochs, burns and rivers. Viewpoints 4 and 8 illustrate examples of this SLQ within the study area.	**Medium susceptibility and High/medium sensitivity** – The turbines may be seen in views looking across or from lochs, or near upland burns and their movement may distract from appreciation of the water.	As shown by Figure 5.1, viewpoints 4 and 8 and illustrative views J and K in Appendix 5.3, the turbines would be seen in close, open views looking across Holy Loch. The loch itself is outside of LLTNP. The turbines would also be seen in some long views looking south along Loch Eck, though such views are relatively infrequent from the shoreline due to tree cover and terrain. The turbines would also be seen from small number of locations where tree cover permits looking across Loch Lomond from the area north of Drymen. They would be 30 km or more distant in such views and barely noticeable even in good visibility.	**Medium scale (north shores of Holy Loch) and Small scale (where visible from Loch Eck) for a very Limited extent.**
Settlements nestled within a vast natural backdrop	All of the settlements within the National Park.	**High susceptibility and High sensitivity** – the setting of a settlement may be perceived differently where wind turbines are seen on the skyline from the settlement.	The only settlements within LLTNP whose settings may be affected due to visibility of the Proposed Development would be Kilmun and Strone, as illustrated by viewpoint 4 and illustrative view J in Appendix 5.3. Holy Loch and the Site form part of the visual setting of these settlements, but are outside of the National Park and do not form part of the 'vast natural backdrop' that the SLQ relates to. The distant visibility indicated from Drymen by Figure 5.1 would be reduced in practice by tree cover and the turbines would be too small and distant where visible to affect the setting of Drymen.	**Medium/Small scale, affecting a Limited extent** of the settlements within the LLTNP.
Tranquillity	Away from settlements, roads and tourist hot-spots.	**Medium/low susceptibility and Medium sensitivity** – Noise and the presence of high numbers of people and movement, particularly of vehicles, are the primary factors in reducing tranquillity. Changes to views to include large man-made structures and red lights at night may reduce perceptions of naturalness which contribute to tranquillity.	The turbines may sometimes be audible from Kilmun and Strone, but the noise levels are anticipated to be negligible. The leisurely movement of the large turbines would not markedly increase the perception of movement within the LLTNP. At night, red lights would be visible from darker areas between the head of Holy Loch and Dornoch Point. However, these would mostly be seen from the holiday park, main road or campsite, which are not, in themselves, locations with particularly high tranquillity.	**Negligible scale and Limited extent.**

SLQ	Where experienced	Susceptibility and Sensitivity	Description of changes to SLQ	Scale and extent of changes to SLQ
The easily accessible landscape splendour	More readily accessble areas, particularly where striking or panoramic vistas across the National Park are available.	**High/medium susceptibility and High sensitivity** – the availability of access would not be affected, but the perception of 'splendour' may be reduced by views of wind turbines.	The more accessible areas of LLTNP closer to the Site mostly already have views out across the water towards the settlements, ports and Inverclyde Wind Farm on the south side of the firth, and the turbines would be clearly set within and associated with the more developed landscape outside of the LLTNP. Long views south along Loch Eck would be affected in places, with the turbines forming a focal point at the southern end of the loch. In views from higher summits deeper within the LLTNP to the north and north-east, the turbines would be a distant element seen in better visibility conditions only and would not detract from the appreciation of the splendour of the surrounding landscape, as shown by viewpoints 10, 11 and cumulative wirelines from Conic Hill, Ben Narnian and Ben Bheula in Appendix 5.3.	**Small scale for a Limited extent.**
Argyll Forest Qualities				
A remote area of high hills and deep glens	Areas away from larger settlements and A-roads	**None** (during the day) – The presence of a wind farm outside of the National Park would not affect perceptions of remoteness experienced within LLTNP. Wind farms are often located in remote areas. **High susceptibility and High sensitivity** (at night) – Red lights would be an incongruous feature seen from a location perceived as remote.	The presence of the holiday park, campsite and main road in themselves reduce the sense of remoteness in this part of the LLTNP. Views of the lights from the A815 along Loch Eck and from the campsite and holiday park would give rise to a further slight reduction in this quality.	**Small scale for a very Limited extent.**
A land of forests and trees	Throughout the Argyll forest	**None** - The presence of a wind farm outside of the National Park would not affect tree cover within the LLTNP or the experience of the landscape as being one which is afforested.		N/A
Arrochar's mountainous and distinctive peaks	Arrochar Alps and areas with views of these.	**Medium susceptibility and High/medium sensitivity** – The peaks themselves would not be altered, but views of a wind farm outside LLTNP may distract from the appreciation of the form of the rocky summits both when at the mountain tops and where there are views towards the peaks.	The Proposed Development and Arrochar Alps would be visible from locations to the north of Helensburgh, as illustrated by viewpoint 10 and Figure 5.1, but the turbines would be distant in such views and seen in a different direction to the Arrochar Alps. As shown by the cumulative wirelines from Ben Narnian in Appendix 5.3 and Figure 5.1, in views from the summits, the nearby landform and loch would be the focus of views and the turbines would only be seen from limited areas and would be small, relatively distant features where visible.	**Negligible scale and Limited extent.**
The variety of glens	Within the glens	**High susceptibility and High sensitivity** – Views of turbines beyond a glen could alter the character of these enclosed landscapes.	The only glen with notable visibility of the proposed turbines from within LLTNP would be the small area between the Head of Holy Loch and the southern end of Loch Eck. As illustrated by viewpoint 5, the turbines would be a dominant focal point in this area, seen above the skyline to the south.	**Large/medium scale around the head of Holy Loch**, reducing to **Small scale beyond, in a very Limited extent** of the Glens within LLTNP**.**

SLQ	Where experienced	Susceptibility and Sensitivity	Description of changes to SLQ	Scale and extent of changes to SLQ
The slender jewel of Loch Eck	Loch Eck	**High susceptibility and High sensitivity** – Views of turbines beyond the Loch could alter the character of this enclosed landscape.	Effects on the character of Loch Eck are set out in Appendix 5.2, in relation to NS LCT254 Straths and Glens with Lochs, and illustrated by viewpoint 8.	**Small scale and Localised extent.**
The seaside architecture of Kilmun and Blairmore	Kilmun and Blairmore	**Medium susceptibility and High/medium sensitivity** – The architecture would not be altered, but views of a wind farm may distract from appreciation.	The architecture of these villages is appreciated by looking to one side of the coast road, whilst the turbines would be seen in the opposite direction as illustrated by viewpoint 4 and illustrative view J in Appendix 5.3. In this respect whilst viewers may initially be distracted by the scale and movement of the turbines seen across the loch, they would be able to appreciate the architecture without also seeing the turbines as they look towards the nearby buildings.	**Small scale and Wide extent.**

5.10.58 Considering the above effects on SLQs together, non-negligible effects would arise along the south-west boundary of the LLTNP from Strone to Kilmun and the accessible hillsides above these villages, and extend through the glen at the southern boundary closest to the Site and along Loch Eck as far as Dornoch Point. Considered together, these would give rise to impacts of Small magnitude on qualities of between High and High/medium sensitivity and effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.

Bute and South Cowal LLA (1.7 km, W)

5.10.59 As shown on Figure 5.2, this large LLA wraps around the Kyles of Bute NSA and extends more than 15 km to the west of the Site. As a local designation the LLA is considered to be of Regional value. Argyll and Bute Council have not published any special qualities for their Local Landscape Areas; for the purpose of this assessment the impact of the Proposed Development is considered against the 'scenic value' of the LLA, the protection of which is listed as the core aim of the policy within LDP2. Scenic value is a quality which derives from the visual composition of the landscape and is judged to be of High susceptibility and High/medium sensitivity.

5.10.60 As shown by Figure 5.2, visibility of the proposed turbines within the LLA would principally arise from hill summits and facing slopes within 5-7 km to the west and north-west of the proposed turbines; from the western end of Glen Lean as illustrated by viewpoint 7, and from Beinn Bhreac around 7-8 km to the south-west. Visibility would also arise from areas on the Isle of Bute, but as illustrated by viewpoint 20, the turbines would be distant, and mostly screened by hills in such views. Permanent, Large to Large/medium scale changes to views would arise over the upland areas within 5 km of the turbines, decreasing to Medium and Medium/small scale up to 9 km. The area affected by such changes to views would be divided by areas of no visibility due to terrain and forestry and would comprise a Limited extent of this Large LLA, focussed around the northwest boundary. The magnitude of impact would be Medium/small and effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.

West Renfrewshire Hills LLA (9.4 km, SE)

5.10.61 The documented special qualities include the landform, landcover, waterbodies, recreational opportunities, sense of remoteness, habitats and wildlife of this upland area, which would not be affected by the Proposed Development. One quality identified which has the potential to be affected as follows:

- Views and skylines – "*a panoramic view stretching to the south-west over the Isle of Bute across the length of the Cowal Peninsula northwards to the Holy Loch and the Rosneath Peninsula. The Renfrew Heights and plateau moorlands separating the Clyde and the Ayrshire basin to the south create strong and containing skylines*", and

5.10.62 These views are judged to have a high susceptibility to change arising from the Proposed Development and are of Regional value and High/medium sensitivity. Viewpoint 18 shows the Permanent, Small scale changes to views that would arise as result of the Proposed Development, with turbines seen in the skyline of the Cowal Peninsula to the northwest. Given the orientation of the slopes within the LLA, this would affect a Wide extent of the designated area as illustrated by Figure 5.2. The magnitude of impact would be Small and effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.

Other Designated Landscapes

5.10.63 Some designated landscapes within the study area as shown on Figure 5.2 would experience negligible effects and do not require detailed assessment, as follows:

- Mainland SLA (10.8 km, SE) – The Special Qualities of this SLA are not documented, but are judged to include views out to sea and islands from hill summits and west facing slopes. As illustrated by Figure 5.2 and viewpoints 17 and 18, changes to views within this SLA, which is more distant than those two viewpoints, would be at most Small scale and more typically Small/negligible scale, affecting a Limited extent of the SLA near its northern boundary.

Night-time Effects

Introduction

5.10.64 The lighting requirements and embedded mitigation measures for the Proposed Development are described in section 5.7 and further detail is provided in Appendix 13.1.

5.10.65 The aviation lights would be visible as points of light, especially where there would be a high degree of contrast at the viewpoint (i.e. the lights were seen against a dark sky / dark landmass or where there would be little or no existing artificial light sources present).

5.10.66 During periods of greater ambient light, (e.g. sunset, twilight, dusk, dawn) there would be a reduced effect as the contrast of the aviation lighting against the background would be less. The lights would be switched on 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise. This variation means that in summer the lighting would not be switched on when people are predominantly active and contrast with

the background would be reduced. However, in winter the lighting would be switched on during peak active times.

5.10.67 Due to the location of the lighting on the turbines relative to the rotating blades, this can result in a blinking effect caused by the screening effect of blades as they travel past the lights. These effects are dependent upon the rotation speed of the blades, direction of wind and the location of the receptor. Where a number of lit turbines are present in the view, such blinking is likely to be at the same frequency but uncoordinated.

Baseline

5.10.68 Figure 5.7 gives a broad impression of the level of existing lighting within the study area based on satellite observations of light pollution. It illustrates that the existing night-time environment in the study area is typically dark to the west of the Site, but well lit around the coast and hinterland of the Firth of Clyde. This can be observed travelling around the coastal settlements and there are particularly bright lights at the ports and on ferries. The flashing red lights on the port cranes at Greenock are the most noticeable red lights in the vicinity of the Site, though the more distant aviation lights on the Erskine Bridge can also be seen in longer views along the Clyde to the east.

5.10.69 Views towards Dunoon, Sandbank and the Site include noticeably less lighting than those looking towards the south and east banks of the Firth of Clyde.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

5.10.70 As shown by Figure 5.8, the three aviation lights would be widely visible from the Firth of Clyde and the shore roads of coastal settlements (excluding Greenock and settlements within the valleys occupied by sea lochs). There would also be views of the lights from the streets of Dunoon and Sandbank. Other areas of visibility would be facing slopes and summits in the uplands and parts of Glen Lean and Loch Eck. One or at most two of the lights may be visible from areas within and around Rothesay.

Viewpoint analysis

5.10.71 Night-time montages from viewpoints 2, 9 and 16 are from well-lit areas, looking towards areas that are also lit, whilst viewpoint 5 at the head of Holy Loch is noticeably dark with a few nearby lights – including at the nearby garage – but limited visibility of other lights due to vegetation and terrain which screen views out towards the Firth of Clyde and other settlements.

5.10.72 Views from and/or towards coastal settlements and ports typically include a wide range of lights of varying brightness and colours – in part depending on the movements of shipping. The three proposed aviation lights would be in a different position (above the skyline), located in one of the darker areas of the view to the west, and would be a different colour to the majority of lights seen. They would give rise to Small scale changes to views in this context.

5.10.73 More pronounced effects would arise in views from dark areas where existing lights are not (or are less) visible, but the lights on the turbines would be seen. The main locations where this would arise would be around the head of Holy Loch, continuing north along Loch Eck, and in views from Glen Lean (near viewpoint 7). In these views the nearby area is dark and bright, red lighting would be an eye-catching feature seen by drivers on the B836 and A815 as they travel towards Dunoon.

Night-time visual effects

5.10.74 For visual receptors, night-time views are considered to be of Community value unless there is a particular element that can be best appreciated in the hours of darkness. This may include views of landmarks that are lit at night or recognised dark skies areas (e.g. Dark Sky Parks and Discovery Sites as identified by https://www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk/), or Special Qualities of designated areas.

5.10.75 The susceptibility of visual receptors also differs at night reflecting the different activities people undertake in the hours of darkness. For example, drivers using roads at night tend to be more focused on the road and the area illuminated by their headlights than during the day and may have oncoming headlights, cats eyes or reflective signage drawing their attention, resulting in low susceptibility. This is particularly the case on unlit rural roads that may be narrow and winding. People taking part in activities such as stargazing, would be of high susceptibility. People in settlements would be of similar sensitivity as in the daytime.

5.10.76 The assessment focusses on locations where people are likely to be present at night. Recreational routes and other outdoor recreational locations are generally unlikely to be used at night (unless they are lit or specifically promoted for e.g. stargazing) and are not usually considered.

Coastal Settlements

5.10.77 People moving around the coastal settlements at night within Dunoon, Sandbank, Kilmun, Strone, Kilcreggan, Cove, Gourock, Inverkip, Wemyss Bay and Skelmorlie would experience Small scale changes to views as illustrated by viewpoints 2,9 and 17 and described at 5.10.75 above.

5.10.78 Within **Dunoon, Sandbank, Kilmun, Strone, Cove and Kilcreggan** these Permanent changes to views would arise for a Wide extent of each settlement, giving rise to impacts of Small magnitude and effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.

5.10.79 Within **Gourock and Inverkip** these Permanent changes to views would arise for an Intermediate extent of the town, giving rise to impacts of Small magnitude and effects would be **moderate/minor, adverse and not significant**.

5.10.80 Within **Wemyss Bay and Skelmorlie** these Permanent changes to views would arise for a Limited extent of each settlement, giving rise to impacts of Small/negligible magnitude and effects would be **minor, adverse and not significant**.

5.10.81 From **Helensburgh and Cardross**, the lights would be visible, but distant and less noticeable than those more nearby at Greenock and impacts would be **negligible**.

A815

5.10.82 Road users of the A815 would be travelling in vehicles with bright lights and would need to concentrate on the road as they drive. They would have a Low susceptibility to views of red lights from their route. The A815 is a main road which passes through well-lit areas (assessed above) where it is closest to the Site. Where the route passes through the National Park, views are of National value and road users would have a Medium sensitivity to changes to views.

5.10.83 The A815 is a main road which passes through well-lit areas (assessed above), where it is closest to the Site. Approaching Dunoon from the north, there would be glimpsed views from the road as it runs alongside Loch Eck, with all three lights seen ahead of the direction of travel beyond the end of the loch as illustrated by viewpoint 8 at Dornoch Point. As shown by Figure 5.8, visibility of the lights from the road along the loch side would be limited to three or four glimpsed views at most, with the steep and wooded valley sides screening views elsewhere. Passing around the head of Holy Loch, there would be a short stretch of more open views of the lights as illustrated by viewpoint 5, before the route enters Sandbank.

5.10.84 All of these stretches of road are dark at night, and in the absence of other cars seen in front, the red lights seen in the direction of travel would be an eye-catching and incongruous feature, albeit quite distant in the initial glimpsed view from near Dornoch Point. Changes to views would be Medium to Large/medium (as the route gets closer to the Site) scale for a Localised extent of the route, giving rise to a Medium magnitude of impact. Effects would be **moderate, adverse and not significant**.

B836

5.10.85 Road users of the B836 would be travelling in vehicles with bright lights and would need to concentrate on the road as they drive. They would have a Low susceptibility to views of red lights from their route. Views from the B836 where it passes through the Local Landscape Area are of Regional value, decreasing to Community value at the eastern end near the junction with the A815. Road users would have a Medium/low sensitivity to changes to views.

5.10.86 As shown by Figure 5.8, depending on their direction of travel, road users would see a brief glimpse of the lights either as from a short stretch at the western end of Glen Lean where one or two lights may be seen (as shown by viewpoint 7), of from near the junction with the A815. Each of these two brief views would give rise to Large medium to Medium scale changes to views for a very Limited extent of the route, giving rise to a Medium/small magnitude of impact. Effects would be **moderate/minor, adverse and not significant.**

Ferry passengers

5.10.87 Ferry passengers would have the leisure to look at the view and would have a Medium susceptibility to changes to views at night. The views from the Firth of Clyde at night are of Community value and ferry passengers would have Medium/low sensitivity. The ferry ports are brightly lit, as are the ferries themselves, and the surrounding firth has lit navigation beacons and the lights in coastal settlements line the shores.

5.10.88 The aviation lights would be seen in a different position to other lights around the firth – above the skyline looking towards Dunoon, but red lights are relatively commonplace in views from the water – on the cranes at Gourock, and on navigation beacons. There would be Small scale changes to views for a Wide extent of the ferry crossings, giving rise to a Small magnitude of impact. Effects would be **moderate/minor, adverse and not significant.**

<u>Night-time effects on designated areas</u>

5.10.89 Effects at night on the LLTNP are considered in the assessment of effects on SLQs provided above, in line with NatureScot guidance.

5.10.90 Local Landscape Areas in Argyll and Bute are designated for their scenic value, which as set out at 5.10.59 above primarily relates to the visual composition of the landscape. This is not readily able to be

appreciated at night and it is considered that impacts on this quality of the Bute and South Cowal LLA at night would be **negligible**.

5.10.91 The areas of the West Renfrewshire Hills LLA and Mainland SLA with visibility of the aviation lights as shown by Figure 5.8, would be open upland areas which are less likely to be visited at night.

5.11 Cumulative Assessment

Introduction

5.11.1 The assessment is based on the same landscape and visual baseline and receptor groups as the main LVIA, and the methodology is the same in terms of forming and expressing judgements. Two types of judgement are provided:

- Additional effects –The effects that would arise from the addition of the Proposed Development to a baseline which includes the cumulative development(s) being considered.
- Combined effects – The effects that would arise from the addition of both the Proposed Development and the cumulative development(s) being considered to the main assessment baseline.

5.11.2 Typically only the additional effects need to be considered and the cumulative assessment is provided to inform decision-making in the event that one or more of the cumulative developments have been consented prior to the Proposed Development (i.e. the future baseline has changed). The combined effects may be relevant where two or more development applications are determined together.

5.11.3 Landscape and visual receptors that are considered to receive impacts of Small/negligible or Negligible magnitude from the Proposed Development are not included in this assessment, as an impact of such low magnitude adds nothing or very little regardless of the effects of other developments.

Assessment Scenarios

5.11.4 All cumulative schemes within 30 km of the Site are illustrated on Figure 5.9. Operational and consented developments have been included within the landscape and visual baseline within the main assessment.

5.11.5 Wind farms in planning and scoping stages within 30 km are also illustrated on Figure 5.9 and shown in wirelines and include:

- Vale of Leven (in planning) – 10 turbines of up to 220 m tip height (29 km, E);
- Eredine (in planning) – 22 turbines of up to 200 m tip height (29 km, NW);
- Crosbie (in planning) – 14 turbines of up to 200 m tip height (25 km, S); and
- Inverchaolain (in scoping) – 13 turbines of up to 200m tip height (adjacent to Site, SW).

5.11.6 Proposals in scoping (or that have been screened for EIA purposes) may not proceed to application with the same design as scoped. They also may not become applications before the Proposed Development is determined and are therefore less certain and are not typically included in cumulative assessment. In this instance, cumulative effects with Inverchaolain Wind Farm would be heavily dependent on the design of that Wind Farm, as illustrated by visualisations. Figure 5.12 provides a cumulative ZTV study for the Proposed Development and Inverchaolain Wind Farm, which indicates that apart from the head of Holy Loch and Lock Eck, Inverchaolain Wind Farm would typically also be visible where the Proposed Development is seen, and that Inverchaolain Wind Farm would also have a large area of visibility without the Proposed Development across Loch Striven and facing slopes to the west.

5.11.7 If the Inverchaolain Wind Farm design evolves to include turbines which are not as tall, or excludes turbines from areas closer to the Site, Inverchaolain Wind Farm would be less visible from areas to the east and the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in that scenario would tend to be more similar to those identified in the main assessment above. If the design of Inverchaolain Wind Farm retains the current 200 m tip heights and turbines close to the Proposed Development, the two wind farms would appear as a single cluster and the cumulative effects of adding the Proposed Development to a future baseline including Inverchaolain Wind Farm would be reduced from those identified in the main assessment. In both instances, the combined cumulative effects of both wind farms would be likely to be very similar to those for the Proposed Development as assessed above. Given the uncertainties involved, a detailed assessment of cumulative effects with Inverchaolain Wind Farm is not included within this assessment.

5.11.8 Crosbie and Eredine wind farms would both form additions to existing distant wind farm clusters and cumulative effects of the Proposed Development would remain as set out in the main assessment if these wind farms were consented.

5.11.9 Scenarios considered within this cumulative assessment are:

- Scenario 1 – The Proposed Development with operational and consented development – i.e. the effects of the Proposed Development compared to the current baseline – as described in the main LVIA.
- Scenario 2 – The Proposed Development with operational and consented development & Vale of Leven Wind Farm.

Cumulative ZTV Studies

5.11.10 Figure 5.11 provides a cumulative ZTV Study of the Proposed Development and Vale of Leven Wind Farm. Areas with visibility of both wind farms would be the Inner Firth of Clyde and some of the coastal settlements – including Dunoon, Sandbank, Strone, Kilcreggan and Cardross. Visibility along the coastline depends on the angle of the coast and other settlements would only see one of the two wind farms.

5.11.11 There would also be combined visibility from hill summits. Though mostly these are markedly closer to one of the schemes than the other, and given the separation between the two, would only be affected by the nearer wind farm.

Scenario 2 - Potential cumulative effects

5.11.12 Based on the combined visibility pattern discussed above, cumulative effects may be different from Scenario 1 in areas with combined visibility that are roughly equidistant between the two sites; and travellers using routes that would pass close to both wind farms. These include:

- Rosneath Peninsula, including Kilcreggan – this area is more than 20 km from where Vale of Leven Wind Farm would be, and it is considered that the limited areas of visibility of Vale of Leven Wind Farm would not alter the effects arising from the Proposed Development.
- Uplands south of Gourock –the nearby Inverclyde Wind Farm would mean that impacts arising from the Proposed Development would be Negligible in all development scenarios.
- Cardross – as illustrated by nearby viewpoint 21, impacts arising from the Proposed Development would be Negligible in this location.
- Glasgow to Wemyss Bay railway and A78 – impacts arising from the Proposed Development on both of these routes are identified as being Negligible (at section 5.10.52).

5.11.13 Based on the above analysis, it is considered that effects arising from the Proposed Development would remain the same in Scenario 2 as for Scenario 1, described in the main assessment provided in section 5.10.

5.12 Summary

Scope and purpose

5.12.1 This assessment describes the existing landscape and views, considers their sensitivity to change and identifies changes likely to arise from the proposed development, providing judgements of the importance of the effects arising.

Design

5.12.2 The layout of the Proposed Development has been carefully considered in order to mitigate landscape and visual effects. The final design performs well against three of the four design criteria set out for the host landscape type in the ABLWECS.

5.12.3 Measures included within the design to prevent or reduce landscape and/or visual effects include:

- Moving turbines away from nearby homes to the north-west to reduce effects on residential visual amenity.
- Seeking to avoid, as far as practicable, turbine bases being seen in front of the skyline in views from the east, albeit this aim had to be balanced against the need to avoid moving turbines too far to the north-west and other environmental constraints – particularly areas of deep peat.
- A reduction in the number of turbines to facilitate the aims described above.
- A reduction in tip height of the two turbines closest to Dunoon, Sandbank and other visual receptors to the east of the Site to mitigate effects on those receptors and ensure a more even composition in views across the Firth of Clyde.
- Agreement of a reduced aviation lighting scheme with the CAA to minimise the number of lights required to 3 nacelle lights and no mid-tower lights.

- Standard mitigation so that aviation lights reduce to 200 candela (from 2000 candela) in good visibility conditions (more than 5 km).

Effects on character

5.12.4 Significant effects on the character of landscapes and seascape would arise as follows:

- The host landscape character type 1 Steep Ridgeland and Mountains (**major/moderate** and adverse);
- the adjacent LCT4 Mountain Glens covering Holy Loch, 1.4 km north-east of the turbines (**major** and adverse); and
- the adjacent Seascape Character Area 3 Inner Firth of Clyde, which extends east along the Clyde from Holy Loch and Dunoon (**major**/**moderate** and adverse).

5.12.5 These significant effects would arise as a result of the physical presence of the turbines within the Site and close views of the turbines such that they are a key feature of the landscape within the upland area south of Glen Lean, up to 5 km from the turbines, within Dunoon and Sandbank and areas up to 4 km from the turbines across Holy Loch to the north-east, and within the firth up to 6-7 km from the turbines.

5.12.6 Effects on the character of other landscape and seascape receptors would not be significant.

Visual effects

5.12.7 Significant visual effects would arise for the following groups of visual receptors:

- Users of Core Paths within 2 km – which run through the forested slopes between the Site and the edge of Sandbank and from where there would be views of the turbines from felled areas (**major**/**moderate** and adverse);
- People living in and visiting Sandbank – which lies at the foot of the forested slopes to the east of the Site and would have open views from some streets (**major** and adverse);
- People living in and visiting Dunoon – which lies at the foot of the forested slopes to the east of the Site and would have open views from some streets and open spaces (**major/moderate** and Adverse);
- Users of local roads and Core Paths between Sandbank and Loch Eck – from where there would be some open views of the turbines from closer routes including the B836, with visibility decreasing further north due to tree cover (**major/moderate** and Adverse);
- Ferry passengers on the two routes between Gourock and Dunoon/Sandbank – who would see close views of the turbines on the skyline above Dunoon throughout their journey (**major/moderate** and adverse);
- People living in and visiting Kilmun – from where there would be open, close views of the turbines across Holy Loch, which is the main outlook from the village (**major** and adverse);
- People living in and visiting Strone – from where there would be open views of the turbines across Holy Loch, which is the main outlook from the village (**major/moderate** and adverse); and
- Recreational water users between Gourock, Kilcreggan and Dunoon and within Holy Loch – from where there would be close views of the turbines on the skyline above Dunoon and Sandbank.

5.12.8 These significant effects would arise as a result of close views of the turbines within Dunoon and Sandbank and areas up to 5 km from the turbines across Holy Loch to the north-east, and within the firth up to 7-8 km from the turbines.

5.12.9 Effects on other visual receptors would not be significant.

Effects on designated areas

5.12.10 There would be no significant effects on the special qualities of designated landscapes.

5.12.11 A detailed assessment of effects on the Special Landscape qualities of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park was undertaken as part of this LVIA and concluded that there would be a number of relatively minor and localised effects would arise along the south-west boundary of the LLTNP from Strone to Kilmun and the accessible hillsides above these villages, and extend through the glen at the southern boundary closest to the Site and along Loch Eck as far as Dornoch Point. Considered together, these would give rise to impacts of Small magnitude on qualities of between High and High/medium sensitivity and effects would be Moderate, Adverse and not significant.

5.12.12 Non-significant effects are also identified on the Bute and South Cowal and West Renfrewshire Hills Local Landscape Areas.

Night-time effects

5.12.13 The coastal settlements around the Firth of Clyde are well lit and there are bright lights at the various port facilities, including noticeable red lights on the port cranes at Greenock. The area to the west of the Site is more rural and typically dark at night.

5.12.14 No significant effects would arise as a result of views of the three red aviation lights on the turbines. Mostly they would be seen as an addition to views which already include a wide variety of lights. The only areas where this is not the case would be briefly glimpsed views from the B836 as it passes through Glen Lean and the A815 as it passes alongside Loch Eck and around the head of Holy Loch.

Cumulative effects

5.12.15 Cumulative effects are considered with operational and consented wind farms in the main assessment summarised above.

5.12.16 Other wind farm proposals within 30 km include Crosbie and Eredine wind farms which are located 25 km or more, adjacent to operational and consented wind farms, and Vale of Leven wind farm 29 km to the east. The separation of these proposed wind farms from the Site and pattern of existing and consented development is such that the effects of the Proposed Development in cumulative development scenarios including these wind farms would be the same as described above.

5.12.17 Inverchaolain Wind Farm is at the scoping stage and located adjacent to the southeast of the Site. Cumulative effects with this potential development would be heavily influenced by the final design of Inverchaolain Wind Farm and have not been considered in detail within this assessment.

Assessment summary table

Table 5.7 Main Assessment Summary (only non-Negligible effects are included)

Receptor	Distance/ Direction	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level of Effect
Landscape Character				
AB LCT1 Steep Ridgeland and Mountains	Includes Site	High/medium	Medium	**Major/moderate,** Adverse and significant
AB LCT4 Mountain Glens	1.4 km, NE	High	Large/medium	**Major,** Adverse and significant
SCA3 Inner Firth of Clyde	2.0 km, E	High/medium	Medium	**Major/moderate,** Adverse and significant
AB LCT5 Open Ridgeland	7.7 km, NE	Medium/low	Small	**Minor**, Adverse and not significant
NS LCT250 Steep Ridges and Hills	3.9 km, NE	High	Small	**Moderate**, Adverse and not significant
NS LCT254 Straths and Glens with Lochs	6.9 km, N	High	Small/negligible	**Minor**, Adverse and not significant
IC LCT1 Raised Beach	6.5 km, SE	Medium	Small	**Moderate/minor**, Adverse and not significant
IC LCT20 Rugged Moorland Hills	6.5 km, SE	Medium	Small/negligible	**Minor**, Adverse and not significant
SCA7 Upper Firth of Clyde SCA	3.4 km, SE	Medium	Medium/small	**Moderate/minor**, Adverse and not significant
Visual Receptors				
Core Paths within 2 km	0.5 km, NE	High/medium	Large	**Major/moderate,** Adverse and significant
Sandbank	2.0 km, E	High/medium	Large	**Major,** Adverse and significant
Dunoon	2.5 km, E	High/medium	Large/medium	**Major/moderate,** Adverse and significant
Local roads and Core Paths between Sandbank and Loch Eck	2.0 km, N	High	Medium	**Major/moderate,** Adverse and significant
Ferry users – Gourock to Dunoon	3.5 km, E	High/medium	Large/medium	**Major/moderate,** Adverse and significant
Kilmun	3.3 km, NE	High	Large/medium	**Major,** Adverse and significant
Strone	4.3 km, E	High	Large/medium	**Major/moderate,** Adverse and significant
Recreational water users	2.0 km, E	High/medium (tourists/travelling for pleasure) Medium (those engaged in water sports)	Medium	**Major/moderate,** Adverse and significant
Gourock	6.8 km, E	High/medium	Medium	**Moderate**, Adverse and not significant

Cove, Kilcreggan, Rosneath Core Paths and Kilcreggan-Gourock Ferry	7.7 km, E	High/medium	Medium/small	**Moderate,** Adverse and not significant
Inverkip	8.0 km, SE	High/medium	Medium/small	**Moderate**, Adverse and not significant
Clyde Muirsheil Regional Park	6.7 km, SE	High/medium	Medium/small	**Moderate**, Adverse and not significant
Wemyss Bay and Skelmorlie	8.7 km, SE	High/medium	Small/negligible	**Minor**, Adverse and not significant
Ferry users – Wemyss Bay to Rothesay	10.5 km, S	Medium	Small	**Moderate/minor,** Adverse and not significant
Ayrshire Coastal Path	10.5 km, SE	High/medium	Small/negligible	**Minor**, Adverse and not significant
A815	1.7 km, E	High/medium (within the National Park) Medium (elsewhere)	Medium/small	**Moderate/minor**, Adverse and not significant
National Cycle Route 75/753	6.4 km, SE	Medium	Medium/small	**Moderate/minor**, Adverse and not significant
Portavadie to Dunoon Cycle Route	2.0 km, E	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**, Adverse and not significant
Visitors to Benmore Botanic Garden	5.0 km, N	High	Small	**Moderate/minor**, Adverse and not significant
Visitors to Lyle Hill Viewpoint	11.0 km, E	High	Small	**Moderate/minor**, Adverse and not significant
Designated Areas				
Loch Lomond the Trossachs National Park (LLTNP)	2.7 km, NE	SLQs of High to High/medium sensitivity	Small	**Moderate**, Adverse and not significant
Bute and South Cowal LLA	1.7 km, W	High/medium	Medium/small	**Moderate**, Adverse and not significant
West Renfrewshire Hills LLA	9.4 km, SE	High/medium	Small	**Moderate**, Adverse and not significant
Night-time Effects				
Dunoon, Sandbank, Kilmun, Strone, Cove and Kilcreggan	See above	High/medium	Small	**Moderate**, Adverse and not significant
Gourock and Inverkip	See above	High/medium	Small	**Moderate/minor**, Adverse and not significant
Wemyss Bay and Skelmorlie	See above	High/medium	Small/negligible	**Minor**, Adverse and not significant
A815	See above	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**, Adverse and not significant
B836	2.0 km, N	Medium/low	Medium/small	**Moderate/minor**, Adverse and not significant
Ferry Passengers	See above	Medium/low	Small	**Moderate/minor**, Adverse and not significant
Cumulative Effects				
Cumulative effects would be the same as assessed in the main LVIA, as set out above.				

5.13 References

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