

APPENDIX 5.3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

The sensitivity of the landscape character types/areas with the potential to receive significant landscape effects are assessed below. Landscape sensitivity is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location. To assess the sensitivity of a particular landscape it is good practice to consider the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the particular form of change likely to result from the proposed development. Assessment text relates to the sensitivity of the landscape receptor as a whole to the proposed development, with additional comments regarding the Site where relevant. In the main this has been taken from the NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment (quotes shown in *italics*) as well as from local sources and site assessment. The table below is based on guidance provided within LI TGN 02/21 - specifically table 1 within that document.

Host Landscape: LCT 220 Rugged Massif - Inverness

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Value Attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	A small area of Glen Affric National Scenic Area coincides with the host LCT in the northwest. Small areas of Highland council SLA (Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel, Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch and Loch Ness and Duntelchaig) also coincide with the host LCT	Regional
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	River Moriston SAC partly coincides with the LCT as does West Inverness-shire Lochs SSSI and SPA. Geological conservation review sites coincide with the western part of the LCT at Coire Dho and Glen Doe. Glen Affric NNR coincides with part of the LCT in the north.	Regional
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	The Fort Augustus-Berneria Military Road, 1890m W Of Ceannacroc Lodge is in the central area of the LCT. " <i>Archaeological sites are sparsely distributed throughout the area, mainly on the lower slopes.</i> "	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	The LCT comprises mainly of upland moorland and forestry plantation.	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	There are no known cultural associations with the LCT.	Community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	<i>"The mountains are enormous in size, ranging from ... Individual mountain peaks are relatively rare in this landscape type, where the summits are more rounded."</i>	Community
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	There are core paths mainly in the north of the LCT in woodland with a longer core path crossing between Glen Affric, Glen Moriston and the Great Glen which follows a hill track that runs alongside an overhead transmission line.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	<i>"Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif offer expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape character types."</i>	Community
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	<i>"A sense of remoteness and wildness which is particularly strong within the interior"</i> The operational wind farms at Beinneun and Millennium adjacent to the Site are a notable feature. The LCT is mainly dark with low intensity lighting in valleys.	Regional
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	Part of the LCT coincides with Glen Affric NSA with a second unit of this LCT on the north side of Glen Affric. Landform in the northern part of the LCT forms a backdrop to the Glen Affric NSA.	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Overall Judgement of Value				Regional
Susceptibility				
Scale	Large scale landscapes where the turbines may be in proportion with the landscape are generally less sensitive.	Small scale intimate landscapes are generally more sensitive to large scale structures.	<i>'Parallel ranges of massive mountains of irregular landform divided by deep glaciated valleys.'</i>	Low
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes	<i>"Mainly broad, sometimes rounded rugged summits connected by long ridges and relatively few individual mountain peaks, particularly in the east."</i>	Medium
Openness/enclosure	Open and exposed landscapes	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	<i>"Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif offer expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape character types." "...a sense of enclosure when viewed from straths."</i>	Medium/Low
Land cover	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover (including intensive farming and forestry)	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover	<i>"Landcover of rock outcrops, glacial debris, deer-grazed heather and rough grassland create a smooth surface with mottled texture, with alpine habitats on high land to the west."</i>	Medium/Low
Complexity and patterns	Simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex or irregular patterns	<i>"Heather moorlands within sporting estates are subject to muirburn and contain several access tracks, which can form prominent patterns and features in the open moorlands."</i>	Medium/Low
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	<i>"Largely uninhabited, few signs of human activity or human artefacts in the interior...."</i> There are reservoirs at Loch Cluanie and Loch Loyne in the west of the LCT. There is operational wind farm development adjacent to the Site in the LCT extending 10 km east to west across open moorland. There are overhead	Low

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
			transmission lines on pylons crossing the LCT to the east of the Site.	
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	<i>“Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif offer expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape character types”</i>	Medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	<i>“Hill ranges combine to create a fairly even undulating skyline and a sense of enclosure when viewed from straths.”</i>	Medium
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				Medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium

LCT 226 Wooded Glen – Inverness (Glen Moriston Unit)

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	No national or local landscape designations coincide with the Glen Moriston Unit.	Community
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	Levishie Wood SSSI is located in the east of this LCT unit. The SSSI is described as having the <i>“largest examples of birch-juniper woodland within Inverness-shire”</i> River Moriston SAC partly coincides with the LCT.	Regional
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	Balnacarn, Township and the Dundreggan Farm, Motte scheduled monuments are situated in this LCT and there are some listed buildings in the valley floor.	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	Forestry plantation is a notable feature on the south side of the glen, but the native birch-juniper woodland is a more valued landscape element. <i>“Central, major through-road in lower glens...”</i>	Community
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	There are no known cultural associations with the LCT.	Community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or	<i>“Distinctive mix of rugged hillsides, extensive Caledonian pine forest and lochs in the upper glens.”</i>	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
		with an important relationship to a settlement.		
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	Two core paths intersect the LCT unit these being the Eve's Road and Fort August to Glen Moriston by the old drove road. The River Moriston facilitates fishing and other water related activities such as wild swimming and kayaking.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	The LCT unit has some visual appeal in the contrast between the flat valley floor and the steep valley sides although there are no recognised viewpoints or scenic designations coinciding with this LCT unit.	Community
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	The A887 passes along the valley floor along the length of this LCT and there are power lines passing along and across the unit. There are small settlements and scattered dwellings and farmsteads. Human activity is common within this LCT unit.	Community
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	The river Moriston provides blue infrastructure and recreational activities. The River Moriston SAC qualifying interests are freshwater pearl mussel and Atlantic salmon.	Regional
Overall Judgement of Value				Regional/Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Susceptibility				
Scale	Large scale landscapes where the turbines may be in proportion with the landscape are generally less sensitive.	Small scale intimate landscapes are generally more sensitive to large scale structures.	This is a medium scale semi-enclosed valley landscape with steep sides on both the northern and southern valley sides.	Medium
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes	<i>“Lower glens broader, with steep upper slopes, undulating lower slopes and a narrow floor mostly occupied by river terraces; upper glens are narrower and more rugged, influenced by the surrounding mountains.”</i>	Medium
Openness/enclosure	Open and exposed landscapes	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	<i>“Balance between open and enclosed space formed by the diverse mix of landscape patterns, land uses, conifer forests, woodlands and fields.”</i>	Medium
Land cover	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover (including intensive farming and forestry)	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover	<i>“Contrast between the settled and farmed floor of lower glens and their open heather moorland and forests of the upper slopes.”</i> <i>“Water is a key characteristic within many areas of the lower glens. A meandering river runs along the valley floor, often within narrow river flats and associated areas of wetland. Many evenly spaced tributaries run down the glen side slopes and the base of the glen is sometimes occupied by lochs.”</i>	Medium
Complexity and patterns	Simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex or irregular patterns	<i>“In lower glens, there is a varying pattern of woodland on the glen sides and hill tops of this landscape. A simple pattern of large forests and open moorlands covers the upper slopes and surrounding hill summits. These forests become more scattered on lower slopes, where they form interlocking patterns with broadleaf woodlands, wooded stream gorges and small fields of pasture which are linked to small farms and settlements. Broadleaf woodlands are common</i>	Medium

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
			<i>along the steep gully sides, lining river banks and often associated with farmland, sheltering farmsteads and dividing fields. The mix of woodlands, small conifer forests and pastures on lower slopes creates a balanced pattern of woodlands and open land."</i>	
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	<i>"The character of the lower glens is strongly influenced by human occupation. Here, settlements tend to be very small, usually comprising small clusters of houses, related to either estate usage or river and road junctions. Otherwise, dwellings tend to be small farms or crofts located within areas of open space along the base and side slopes of the glen."</i> There are overhead transmission line passing along and across the LCT.	Low
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	<i>"Intimate, semi-enclosed landscape within the glen floor with limited visibility, due to the screening effect of trees and landform. In contrast, the areas of open hill ground allow distant views along the glens which create a feeling of openness and exposure."</i> Millennium wind farm and Beinneun wind farm in the adjacent LCT are visible from this LCT.	Medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	There are no strong features or focal points that define the setting or skyline to this LCT unit. The flat, settled valley floor farmland contrasting with the forests and moorland of the valley sides and upper slopes are a notable characteristic.	Medium
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				Medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium

LCT 225 – Broad Steep Sided Glen

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	Loch Ness and Duntelchaig and a small part of Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA coincide with this LCT unit.	Regional
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	Glen Tarff, Easter Ness Forest, Levishie Wood (part), Inverfarigaig, Urquhart Bay Wood, and the Tovean Landforms are SSSI that coincide with the LCT. The River Moriston SAC also coincides partly with the LCT. There are Geological Conservation Review (GCR) sites in the south of the LCT around Fort Augustus and at Dores in the north.	Regional
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	There is a cluster of cultural heritage features in and in proximity to Fort Augustus including Fort Augustus conservation area, Caledonian Canal, Kyltra Lock to Fort Augustus and notable listed buildings such as Fort Augustus Abbey that contribute to landscape character. Other notable cultural heritage features in the LCT include Urquhart Castle, Dochfour GDL and Aldourie Castle GDL coincide with the LCT in the north. <i>“Strong evidence of past settlement in the number and diversity of archaeological and historic sites from prehistoric times to the 20th Century.”</i>	National
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	The LCT includes trunk roads, overhead power lines, settlements and tourism facilities. The western side of the glen is more developed than the eastern side. <i>“The busy trunk road and tourism-orientated settlements contrast strongly with the quiet, minor roads and sparse, small settlements on the east side.”</i>	Regional/Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	Loch Ness is located in this LCT. The folklore surrounding the Loch Ness monster is area notable and widely known association. This LCT forms part of the Great Glen and therefore has very strong cultural associations.	National
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	"A clearly defined, broad, linear, steep sided, v-shaped glen and deep loch cutting through mountains and hills, with limited areas of flatter ground". Loch Ness is a long, linear, deep loch which, combined with the steep valley sides of the Great Glen situated on a geological fault give the LCT a distinctive and clearly expressed character.	National
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	Several water-based activities can be undertaken within this LCT. This included canoeing, fishing, swimming and other activities. Several core paths run through and along this LCT. Two sections of the national cycle route are located to the north and south of the LCT. The Great Glen Way, one of Scotland's Great Trails runs along Loch Ness and runs throughout the LCT. There are a number of core paths throughout the LCT mainly around Fort Augustus, Foyers, Inverfaig, Drumnadrochit and at Dore. There are camp sites and picnic sites throughout the LCT mainly alongside Loch Ness. In addition there are tourism facilities at Fort Augustus and Drumnadrochit. Loch Ness is used for recreational boating and other water sports and fishing.	National
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	Scenic quality is important with a large proportion of the LCT coinciding with Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA the description of which notes that "there are long vistas of grand proportions..."	Regional

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	The A82 runs along the west side of Loch Ness and overhead lines on pylons converge at Auchterlaw substation to the southwest of Fort Augustus. Fort Augustus is a busy well lit area with light sources extending along the fringes of the loch. The west side of the loch is less developed and quieter with a more remote and tranquil qualities.	Regional
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	Loch Ness is an important waterbody that provides connectivity for commercial and leisure boats along the Great Glen via the Caledonian Canal. The Caledonian Canal towpath provides a pedestrian and cycle route lining with adjacent LCT to the northeast and southwest.	Regional
Overall Judgement of Value				National

Susceptibility

Scale	Large scale landscapes where the turbines may be in proportion with the landscape are generally less sensitive.	Small scale intimate landscapes are generally more sensitive to large scale structures.	<i>"Contrast between the smaller scale landscapes of settled, lower slopes and the large scale moorland and forested backdrop."</i>	Medium
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes	<i>"A clearly defined, broad, linear, steep sided, v-shaped glen and deep loch cutting through mountains and hills, with limited areas of flatter ground."</i>	Medium
Openness/enclosure	Open and exposed landscapes	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	<i>"The glen's steep linear sides, and long even skylines create a very strong sense of linear enclosure and a distinct corridor. This landscape type has a simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of lochside land, water"</i>	High

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
			<i>and hillside backdrop leading up to the skyline and sky.”</i>	
Land cover	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover (including intensive farming and forestry)	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover	<i>“Semi-natural woodlands frequently line the loch edges, often extending up river valleys and rocky areas alongside slopes. Conifer forests dominate large areas of the lower glen slopes.</i> <i>The steep terrain restricts agricultural land use to small scale pastoral farms in a few places on the shore, at the intersections of side glens, and in some areas of the gentler higher slopes. Larger farms are located on the alluvial plains at the north and south ends of the loch.”</i>	Medium
Complexity and patterns	Simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex or irregular patterns	<i>“A simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of land, water and sky, with long skylines of even height, and the glen and loch as unifying features.”</i>	Low
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	<i>“Settlements tend to be separated by long stretches of relatively uninhabited land along the whole of the Great Glen.</i> <i>Compared to the eastern side of the glen, the western side has a greater proportion of human artefacts, notably the busy trunk road.”</i>	Low
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	<i>“The glen’s steep linear sides, and long even skylines create a very strong sense of linear enclosure and a distinct corridor. Visual movement tends to be directed either along the linear route of the glen or across the water to the opposite shore and up to the skyline.”</i>	Medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	<i>“...visual composition of bands of lochside land, water and hillside backdrop leading up to the skyline and sky. The settled lower slopes [and] contrast with their moorland and woodland backdrop.”</i>	Medium

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				Medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				High/Medium