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Red John Pumped Storage Hydro Scheme

Volume 2, Chapter 11: Landscape and Visual

ILI (Highlands PSH) Ltd.

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Quality information

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11 Landscape and Visual

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 This chapter provides an assessment of the likely Landscape and Visual effects arising from construction and operation of the Development as part of this EIA. A detailed description of the Development and the Development Site is provided in Chapter 2: Project and Site Description. The scope of the landscape and visual assessment and methodology has been informed by and agreed through consultation with the statutory stakeholders. A glossary of terms and list of abbreviations used in this chapter is provided at the start of this EIA Report.

11.1.2 This chapter is supported by the following figures presented in Volume 3: Figures:

- Figure 11.1 Landscape Designations
- Figure 11.2 Landscape Character Types
- Figure 11.3 Photographs of Landscape Character Types
- Figure 11.4 Zone of Theoretical Visibility
- Figure 11.5 Recreational Routes and Core Paths
- Figure 11.6 Representative Viewpoints

11.1.3 Visualisations produced to both THC and SNH standards are contained in Volume 4: Visualisations.

11.1.4 This chapter is also supported by the following technical appendices presented in Volume 5: Appendices:

- Appendix 11.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology
- Appendix 11.2: Landscape Assessment; and
- Appendix 11.3: Visual Assessment.

11.2 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

11.2.1 This section identifies and describes legislation, policy and guidance of relevance to the assessment of the potential landscape and visual impacts associated with the Development.

11.2.2 Legislation and policy has been considered on an international, national, regional and local level. The following is considered to be relevant to the landscape and visual assessment as it has influenced the sensitivity of receptors and requirements for mitigation or the scope and/or methodology of the EIA.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3)

11.2.3 The National Planning Framework (NPF) is a long-term strategy for Scotland identifying national and strategically important developments. NPF 3, Scotland's third National Planning Framework, sets out the Scottish Government's spatial development priorities for the next 20 to 30 years, representing clear vision of what is expected of the planning system and outcomes that it must deliver for the people of Scotland.

Scottish Planning Policy 2014

11.2.4 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) is the statement of the Scottish Government's policy on nationally important land use planning matters and sets out policy that will help to deliver the objectives of NPF3.

11.2.5 Paragraphs 193 to 206 relate to Landscape and Natural Heritage. Paragraph 202 states, inter alia, that "*The siting and design of development should take account of local landscape character. Development management decisions should take account of potential effects on landscapes and the natural and water environment, including cumulative effects. Developers should seek to minimise adverse impacts through careful planning and design, considering the services that the natural environment is providing and maximising the potential for enhancement*". (Ref 11.1).

11.2.6 With regard to statutory designated landscapes, paragraph 203 states "*Planning permission should be refused where the nature or scale of proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment. Direct or indirect effects on statutorily protected sites will be an important consideration, but designation does not impose an automatic prohibition on development*".(Ref 11.1)

11.2.7 Other national policy documents and statements that have been referred to include:

- Planning for Natural Heritage: Planning Advice Note 2008 (PAN): Provides guidance on the protection and enhancement of Scotland's natural environment. This expands on the National Planning Policy Guideline on Natural Heritage (NPPG 14).
- Renewable Energy and the Natural Heritage 2014: This position statement sets out SNH's strategy in response to NPF3, including considerations to the landscape and visual impacts through the assessment of location, scale and design.

Local Planning Policy

The Highland-wide Local Development Plan 2012

The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP*)* sets out the spatial strategy general policies and local plan proposals relating to the future development (Ref 11.2). The following are policies which are relevant to this chapter:

11.2.8 **Policy 28**- **Sustainable Design**. This policy sets out a number of requirements for all developments in the context of sustainable design and will be assessed in terms of its impact on landscape, scenery, cultural heritage, and its demonstration of sensitive siting with local character.

11.2.9 **Policy 36**- **Development in the Wider Countryside**. This policy seeks to ensure that all developments are sympathetic to the existing landscape patterns and character. It outlines a number of requirements such as to avoid incremental expansion of any one particular development type within a landscape whose distinct character relies on an intrinsic mix and range of characteristics.

11.2.10 **Policy 51**- **Trees and Development**. This policy recognises the benefits of trees and woodland to the landscape character. It therefore ensures that proposals support the protection of existing trees and woodland.

11.2.11 **Policy 57**- **Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage**. The policy sets out the criteria that development will be tested against: local and regionally important, nationally important, and internationally important, in terms of its natural and cultural heritage features. The following features are of relevance:

- Local and regionally important- Special Landscape Areas (SLA), Settlement Setting, Amenity Trees, views over open water, Wild Areas, locally important croft land; and
- Nationally important- Tree preservation orders, Inventories Gardens and Designed Landscapes, National Scenic Areas, National Park, Inventoried Ancient Woodland and Long-established woodland.

11.2.12 **Policy 61**- **Landscape**. This policy seeks to ensure that new development reflects the landscape characteristics and special qualities in terms of its form, pattern and construction materials. It also encourages proposals to consider measures to enhance the landscape characteristics of the area.

11.2.13 **Policy 67**- **Renewable Energy Developments**. The policy refers to all renewable energy developments and requires that they consider the significant effects and mitigation measures to a number of features, such as visual impacts and impacts on the landscape character of the surrounding area. This policy goes on to state that the design and location of proposals should reflect the scale and character of the landscape and seek to minimise landscape and visual impacts.

11.2.14 **Policy 74**- **Green Networks**. The policy ensures that green networks are protected. Developments in these areas should avoid fragmentation of the green network.

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2015

11.2.15 Inner Moray Firth local Development Plan is the relevant local development plans along with the HwLDP to form The Highland Council's Development Plan. Section 2.1 to 2.5 recognises the protection and value of SLAs.(Ref 11.3)

11.3 Methods

11.3.1 This section of the chapter presents the following:

- Identification of the information sources that have been consulted throughout the preparation of this chapter;
- The methodology behind the assessment of landscape and visual effects, including the criteria for the determination of the significance of the receptor and the magnitude of change from the baseline conditions;
- An explanation as to how the identification and assessment of potential landscape and visual effects has been reached;
- The significance criteria and terminology for assessment of the residual effects to the landscape and visual resource; and
- Details of consultation undertaken with respects to the landscape and visual resource.

Assessment methodology

11.3.2 This section summarises the methodology for the LVIA for the Development. It builds on the general assessment methodology presented in Chapter 4: Approach to EIA and develops this to take account of the range of likely significant effects on the landscape character and visual amenity arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Development. The detailed description of the assessment methodology is included in Appendix 11.1 and is summarised below.

11.3.3 The approach to the LVIA has been devised to address the specific effects likely to result from developments of this scale and nature. The methodology draws upon the following established best practice guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (Ref. 11.4);
- Photographs from representative viewpoints of the Development have been produced in compliance with Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11: Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment (Landscape Institute, 2011) (Ref. 11.5);
- Visualisations of the Development have been produced in compliance with The Highland Council's Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments (2016) (Ref 11.7) and Scottish Natural Heritage's guidance on the visual representation of Wind Farms (2017) (Ref 11.6).

11.3.4 The following terminology has been used throughout the assessment:

- **Landscape Character Types (LCT):** Areas of relatively homogenous landscape character. They are defined by the combination of elements that contribute to landscape context, character and value. Typical landscape elements include landform, land use, built development, vegetation and open space. Additional criteria are also considered such as scale, unity, the sense of remoteness, enclosure and perceptual quality.
- **Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV):** A computer generated map based on a 3D model of the Development and the topography within the surrounding landscape, which shows areas of land within which the Development will theoretically be visible.
- **Visual amenity:** Relates to the way in which people visually experience the surrounding landscape. Adverse visual effects may occur through the intrusion of new elements into established views, which are out of keeping with the existing structure, scale and composition of the view. Visual effects may also be beneficial, where an attractive focus is created in a previously unremarkable view or the influence of previously detracting features is reduced. The significance of effects will vary, depending on the nature and degree of change experienced and the perceived value and composition of the existing view.
- **Visual receptors**: Special interest or viewer groups who will have views of the Development. Visual receptors have been identified through desk study and fieldwork.
- **Representative viewpoints:** Viewpoints selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor (viewer) including settlements and residential properties, transport and recreational routes and other outdoor locations. Representative viewpoints are located within publicly accessible locations and have been selected in consultation with SNH and THC.

11.3.5 Potential landscape and visual impacts and the resulting effects (both adverse and beneficial) are considered for the following scenarios considered in detail in Chapter 4: Approach to EIA:

- Construction;
- Operation (year 1); and
- Operation (year 15 of operation).

11.3.6 Decommissioning of PSH schemes is extremely rare and in the unlikely event that the Development was to be decommissioned, the Headpond would remain in situ. As a result, potential effects on the landscape and visual resource during decommissioning would be no

worse than those assessed during the construction and operational phases of works. Decommissioning effects are therefore not considered further in this chapter.

Summary of Landscape Assessment Methodology

11.3.7 In assessing and classifying the predicted effects from any likely impacts to the landscape resulting from the Development, the following criteria are considered:

- Landscape character baseline characteristics;
- Landscape sensitivity;
- Magnitude of landscape effects; and
- Resulting significance of landscape effects.

11.3.8 Landscape effects associated with the Development consider the change on landscape elements and features (or components), as well as the effect upon the general landscape character of the surrounding area and how it is experienced.

11.3.9 The relationship between sensitivity and magnitude of effect allows an assessment of the relative significance of predicted landscape effects to be made. The sensitivity of the landscape to change is a combination of the value of the LCT combined with the degree to which a particular LCT or feature can accommodate changes or new features, without unacceptable detrimental effects to its key characteristics.

11.3.10 The magnitude of landscape effect relates to the size, extent or degree of change likely to be experienced as a result of the Development. The magnitude takes into account whether there is a physical change resulting in the loss of landscape components, or a change beyond the land-take of the Development that might have an effect on the character of the area, and whether the impact is permanent or temporary.

11.3.11 The combination of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of landscape effect determine the significance of landscape effects. For the purposes of this assessment, **moderate** and **major** effects will be deemed '**significan**t'. Where significant environmental effects are identified, measures to mitigate these effects are proposed (where feasible) and remaining residual effects are identified.

11.3.12 A full explanation of the criteria used to assess sensitivity, magnitude of impact and classification of landscape effects is included in Appendix 11.1 (Volume 5).

Summary of Visual Assessment Methodology

11.3.13 The assessment of visual effects is structured by receptor groups (e.g., residents, users of recreational routes, and motorists). Individual receptors are identified through the analysis of the ZTV, within which views of the Development are likely to be possible, and field survey. Individuals are subsequently categorised into receptor groups within different areas and representative viewpoints are selected. The sensitivity of each representative viewpoint is then evaluated as being high, medium or low.

11.3.14 Views from each identified representative viewpoint are recorded, considering the receptor type, a baseline description of the existing views and the value of the view.

11.3.15 For the purposes of assessment, the sensitivity of a receptor and the magnitude of effect on that receptor are combined to determine the significance of effect that the Development is predicted to have on existing baseline visual conditions for that given receptor. As previously described for the landscape impact assessment, specific terminology is used to describe the magnitude of impact (see Appendix 11.1, Volume 5) for details).

Study Area

11.3.16 The extent of the Study Area is determined by the potential visibility of the Development in the surrounding landscape and is proportionate to its size and scale and the nature of the surrounding landscape. For the purposes of this assessment the Study Area has been defined by a combination of ZTV analysis and professional judgement. Based upon this it is considered that it is highly unlikely that significant long term residual effects will be possible from further than 5 km from the Development Site boundary. Whilst the visual assessment considers a representative viewpoint beyond 5 km, it is not considered proportionate to extend the Study Area, as fieldwork has demonstrated that significant adverse effects on visual amenity would be limited to within 5 km of the Development Site.

Consultation

11.3.17 As part of the EIA and design development process, consultation has been undertaken and is outlined in Chapter 4: Approach to Environmental Impact Assessment. Consultation relevant to the landscape and visual assessment has been undertaken with relevant stakeholders and has informed the scope of the assessment. A summary of the comments raised and responses are detailed in Table 11.1 below.

Table 11.1 Summary of Consultation

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of response	Action Taken
The Highland Council (THC) Major Application Pre-Application Response	Integration of the Development into the landscape. Application of visualisation guidance and scope of LVIA.	During THC Major Pre-Application Meeting on 27th September 2017, the THC Landscape Officer noted that the design and form of the Embankment should be carefully considered to avoid hard engineered forms. THC also identified that all visualisations would need to be produced in line with THC Visualisations Standards for Wind Energy Developments. THC also noted that the LVIA must consider all aspects of the development.	The iterative approach to design and assessment is explained in Chapter 4 Approach to Environmental Impact Assessment, and demonstrates the embedded mitigation measures taken to reduce the prominence of the Embankment within the landscape. Visualisations have been produced in accordance with THC standards and are contained in Volume 4. The LVIA considers all aspects of the development during construction and operational phases.
THC (Scoping Response, as submitted to Energy Consents Unit) THC (cont.)	Integration of the Development into the landscape. Approach to LVIA and visualisation standards.	THC in the Scoping Opinion (November 2017) noted that if a Headpond is to be successfully integrated into the landscape and visual environment, a high degree of mitigation by design will have to be achieved. THC note that the LVIA must include an assessment of impacts associated from the realignment of the C1064.	Chapter 3 and Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of this chapter outline the design evolution and embedded mitigation measures associated with the Headpond. The realignment of the C1064 is considered as a component within the assessment of effects on the landscape and visual resource (Section 11.5).
		THC's response contained in the Scoping Opinion also attaches a document which explains in general terms how THC would like the Visual Impact Assessment to be carried out. A key requirement is that the Visual Impact Assessment should be receptor-led in preference to viewpoint-led. Methodology for the assessment must make clear what thresholds are defined for significance of impact.	The visual assessment describes the various receptor groups (Visual Baseline) and considers the effects of the Development on these receptors in the Assessment of Effects Section. The LVIA methodology is contained in Appendix 11.1 (Volume 5). Mitigation measures are outlined in Section 11.88. Visualisations have been produced in accordance with THC standards and

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of response	Action Taken
		Mitigation measures must be clearly identified and their effectiveness evaluated. Visualisations will be required to meet the most recent version of Highland Council Standard.	are contained in Volume 4.
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (Scoping Response, as submitted to Energy Consent Unit)	Mitigation design. Viewpoint selection. SNH Visualisation guidance.	SNH in the Scoping Opinion (November 2017) recommend that the design process leading to the final layout, any alternatives and how landscape and visual mitigation has been incorporated is explained in the LVIA. SNH requested that the following viewpoints be included: Urquhart Castle, the viewpoint lay-by on the A82, from the water to reflect the path of the Jacobite Cruises and other vessels and from Lochend. SNH also noted that visualisations should comply with the SNH Visual Representation of Windfarms Guidance, Version 2.2.	Chapter 3 explains the alternatives considered and Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of this chapter outlines the iterative process to the design and assessment and the embedded mitigation incorporated into the Development. All of the four requested viewpoints have been incorporated into the visual assessment. Visualisations have been produced in accordance with SNH standards and are contained in Volume 4.
THC	Visualisation Standards	AECOM requested by email on the 24 September 2018 that the requirement contained in THC Visualisation Standards to use monochrome images be removed.	THC Landscape Officer confirmed by email on the 24 September 2018 that this would be acceptable, but reserved the right to request them at a future date.
Inverness West Community Council	Visual effects from Carn na Leitir and Meall a Bhathaich	Inverness West Community Council noted that there was a highly successful community forest at Abriachan from which a network of forest paths and hill walks extend, including Carn na Leitir and Meall a Bhathaich from which there would be views of the Development Site.	Viewpoint 7 represents views from Carn na Leitir which sits in a more elevated position behind Meall a Bhathaich. The accompanying visualisations are contained in Volume 4.

11.4 Baseline Environment

11.4.1 In order to assess the potential effects of the Development, it is necessary to determine the environmental conditions, resources and receptors that currently exist on the Development Site and in the surrounding area.

Landscape Baseline

Location and Landform

11.4.2 The full extent of the Development Site is shown on Figure 11.1 (Volume 3). The Development Site is located on a moorland plateau between Loch Duntelchaig and Loch Ness, 14 km south of Inverness and 2 km south of the settlement of Dores. The Development Site occupies an area of 950 hectares and is comprised of varied landform rising from the western bank of Loch Ness up through pasture fields and plantation woodland to approximately 276 m AOD. A series of lochs also occupy much of study area, these include Loch Ness, Loch Duntelchaig, Loch Ashie, Loch na Curra and Lochan an Eoin Ruadha.

11.4.3 The Development Site and much of the study area is located within the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig Special Landscape Area (covered in detail in section 11.4.12).

Movement and Connectivity

11.4.4 The B852 is the main transport corridor that runs along the western boundary of the Development Site. The Development Site itself can be accessed via a minor road (C1064) off the B862. The study area as a whole is served by various smaller B and C roads with the A82 on the western bank of Loch Ness providing the major transport corridor between Fort William and Inverness.

11.4.5 There are a number of core paths and recognised recreational trails that traverse the Development Site and the study area as a whole including the Great Glen Way, Trail of the Seven Lochs and the South Loch Ness Trail. Loch Ness itself is used by recreational users including pleasure craft, private boats and canoeists on The Great Glen Canoe Trail. These recreational routes and the nature of views from them are covered in detail in the visual baseline.

Land use and Built Form

11.4.6 The Development Site is comprised of a mix of commercial coniferous plantation, semi-natural broadleaf woodland including belts of ancient woodland at the shore of Loch Ness, agricultural pasture land, local roads and small rocky hills. Pastoral land and coniferous plantation are the predominant land uses within the Development Site and the wider study area. Forestry operations including felling are common place within the study area. The irregular pattern of pastoral fields and woodland blocks are defined by the underlying landform. These blocks of woodland and pasture are interspersed with swathes of moorland and belts of deciduous woodland along watercourses and at the edge of lochs, some of which are classed as ancient woodland.

11.4.7 Dores is the most notable settlement within the study area. Other small settlements within the study area include Lochend, Abriachan, Balchraggan and Aldourie. There are numerous farmsteads and standalone residential properties scattered throughout the landscape, accessed from a network of minor roads.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs)

11.4.8 There are two Gardens and Designed Landscapes within the study area. These are listed in The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, compiled, maintained and updated by Historic Environment Scotland and are highly valued as a national resource. These two GDLs are described below and are shown on Figure 11.1 (Volume 3).

Aldourie Castle GDL

11.4.9 Aldourie Castle GDL occupies 38.9 ha of parkland approximately 1 km north of the Development Site. The policies lie between the B862, one of General Wade's Military Roads, and Loch Ness. To the east of the B862 the land rises up to Drumashie Moor. This GDL is set back from the public road amidst well wooded parkland, however, the Castle itself is visible from the opposite, northern, shores of Loch Ness. Views from the Castle extend to the north-west across Loch Ness to Bona Church and to the south-east across lawns to Drumashie Moor.

11.4.10 Vistas to the Castle are presented on the approach along the main entrance drive which extends westwards off the B862 along a short track. The parkland extends to the south and east of the Castle. Its north side is sheltered by a tree belt which stretches north-westwards from the public road to the loch, enclosing the kitchen garden, burial ground and arboretum. The easternmost park is bounded on its west by a section of the main drive leading to the kitchen garden, while its southern boundary is defined by the Dobhrag Burn, with fields to the south of the burn. West of the drive the parkland extends to the front of the Castle and around to the south-east. Tree-clumps and specimen trees form the parkland and channel views across from the drive to the Castle and Loch.

Insert 11-1 Aldourie Castle

Dochfour GDL

11.4.11 The Dochfour designed landscape is comprised of a scenic 18th century parkland and 19th century Italianate formal gardens. Dochfour is located 5 km north of the Development, 7 km south-west of Inverness, adjacent to the A82 on the west bank of Loch Dochfour, to the north of Loch Ness. The landscape layout is arranged to frame views of parkland sweeping down to the Loch. North-west of the house, Dochfour Hill rises steeply and forms a rugged wooded backdrop of rocky cliffs and peaks. This designated landscape is entirely enclosed by dense forestry and there is very little to no intervisibility with the Development. As a result potential significant effects on the Dochfour designed landscape are not predicted and it is not considered further in this assessment.

Special Landscape Areas

11.4.12 The Highland Council has designated particular landscapes considered to be of regional importance through designations entitled Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). All of the Development falls within the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA (See Figure 11.1, Volume 3). This SLA encompasses the majority of the study area.

Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA

11.4.13 This SLA surrounds and includes Loch Ness from Lochend in the north to Fort Augustus in the south. It includes the bounding hill slopes on the loch's western and eastern shores, the prominent hill Meall Fuar-mhonaidh, which lies between Drumnadrochit and Invermoriston, and the elevated moorland and agricultural interior plateau which contains Lochs Ashie, Duntelchaig, and Ruthven.

11.4.14 This area is dominated by the vast linear expanse of Loch Ness within its dramatic landform trench, flanked by steep, towering wooded slopes leading to undulating moorland ridges and a contrasting remote interior plateau of upland lochs, small woods and rocky knolls. The loch and its environs are considered to be typical of the Great Glen as a whole, an iconic and important natural feature of Scotland.

11.4.15 Key characteristics are the components of the landscape judged to be of particular value in the context of the Highland Council designated SLA and in part informed by the Landscape Character Types cited in the SNH Landscape Character Assessment. These key characteristics present within the study area can be summarised as:

- The striking, linear landform trench containing Loch Ness;
- The steep-sided glen often deeply incised by burns, rivers and waterfalls which frequently coincide with sheer rocky cliffs;
- Long vistas of grand proportions and the sheer scale of the loch dwarfs the numerous watercraft vessels;
- At regular intervals along the loch there are small areas of low lying pasture with associated settlements, which nestle at the mouths of the rivers flowing into Loch Ness. These offer a human scale juxtaposed against the vast extent of open water and dramatic linear landform character. Public access to the loch's shore is typically limited to these areas of habitation; and
- To the east of Loch Ness an undulating moorland plateau characterised by rocky knolls and small-scale woods and forests, and a series of upland lochs, creates an intricate landscape mosaic which contrasts strongly with the adjacent simple drama of the Great Glen.

11.4.16 In addition to the key characteristics of the SLA, the special qualities focus on less tangible and experiential aspects of the landscape considered to contribute strongly to what is special about the area. The Special Qualities of this SLA apparent in the study area, are identified in the citation as follows:

'The Dramatic Glen

- *The imposing steep-sided landform trench, formed by a large strike-slip fault which slices through the centre of the Highlands, creates a dramatic linear landscape which is relatively easily to access and readily appreciated. The very striking profile of the glen is typically best appreciated from either end, or from the water, although good views are also obtained from elevated viewpoints upon the loch-side ridges and hill tops.;*
- *The steep sided glen is often deeply incised by watercourses, including the notable Falls of Foyers, and is flanked by rich diverse woodlands and forests and contained by open smooth moorland skyline ridge;*
- *Strong contrasts exist between the northern and southern slopes in terms of access, activity and settlement which are all considerably more limited on the south side of the loch reflecting the variations in access, slope, aspect and microclimate*;
- *There are distinctive views of grand proportions and long vistas along a vast expanse of the loch, with the detail of foreground features gradually diminishing to distant silhouettes;*
- *Atmospheric mists and banks of low cloud over Loch Ness enhance the dramatic character. Limited visibility during these conditions may reinforce the myth of the monster which is responsible for the many visitor attractions and facilities in Drumnadrochit.*
- *Urquhart Castle is a prominent focus, occupying a magnificent situation on an irregular headland of rock and commanding splendid views up and down the Great Glen;*
- *The landscape is typically experienced from the B852, B851 and the A82. From these routes, however, the loch is viewed at an oblique angle and thus these do not reveal the striking 'v' shape of the glen that is visible at either end. High numbers of walkers and cyclists also view the landscape from the Great Glen Way and the loch is also used by a high number of boats, some travelling the length of the Caledonian Canal. From elevated locations along the glen, it is easier to appreciate the simple line, large scale and great expanse of the loch although, even from these places, it is typically difficult to see all of the loch in one view due to its great length. It is also difficult to perceive the scale of the landscape due to a lack of size indicators. From elevated viewpoints, the glen can be seen within its context of a landscape of elevated plateaux and hills;* and
- *Most of the hills and high points along the enclosing ridges are indistinct in character, however Meal Fuar-mhonaidh is one example of a distinct hill peak, nearly 700 m high, it stands out as a landmark clearly visible from both ends of the loch, and is even prominent in views southwest from the castle in Inverness. Meall Fuar-mhonaid is a good vantage point from which to appreciate the massive scale and alignment of the Great Glen fault within a backcloth of the Monadhliath massif to the south and the Balmacann and Affric mountain interior to the north west, both areas which possess wildness qualities.*

Contrasting Intimate Plateau

- *An undulating moorland plateau of rocky knolls flanked by small-scale woods and forests, patches of pastures and sporadic farmsteads, and interspersed with a sequence of tranquil lochs, that creates an intimate mix of landscape elements of changing visual interest.*

  Historic Landscape

- *Achculin, accessed from Balchraggan by a small track, is a well preserved depopulated township that is now a scheduled monument.*
- *The eastern shore of Loch Ness incorporating Loch Duntelchaig, Loch Ashie and Loch Ruthven were clear foci of intensive prehistoric activity. Numerous roundhouses and field systems, interspersed with ritual and burial monuments such as burial cairns, burnt mounds and standing stones proliferate in this area; 3 crannogs are located on Loch Ruthven. This was clearly a highly significant area in prehistory which supported a large population.'*(Ref 11.8)

11.4.17 Since the SLA covers almost the entire study area, these key characteristics and special qualities of the SLA identified above have been used to inform the judgements of value and susceptibility associated with the landscape character types present across the study area. Where these key characteristics and special qualities are present in the LCTs, an assessment of how they are affected is undertaken which in turn has informed an understanding of the effect the Development would have on the SLA as a whole.

Landscape Character Types

11.4.18 The study area is covered by the Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 11.9). This document identifies the landscape character Types (LCTs) which are considered as recognisable distinctions in landform, landcover and features that lead to a unique sense of character. The LCTs within the study are shown on Figure 11.2 (Volume 3). Photographs of each LCT are shown on Figure 11.3.

11.4.19 Not all the characteristics described in the document are relevant to the study area. The key characteristics have therefore been refined for each of the LCTs within the study area to reflect the findings of the site appraisal. The relevant LCTs and their key characteristics are detailed below.

Broad Steep-Sided Glen

11.4.20 This LCT occupies a noticeable extent of the study area around the steep-sided banks of Loch Ness. The relevant key characteristics are as follows:

- This landscape is dominated by a broad, steep-sided glen, the floor of which is occupied by the large waterbody of Loch Ness. The glen's steep linear sides and long even skylines create a strong sense of linear enclosure and a distinct corridor running through the study area;
- Sequential movement along the glen tends to be comprised of relatively long stretches of little activity, punctuated by the occasional settlement and isolated properties, monuments and forts;
- There is very little flat land along the sides of the glen, which in turn restricts the extent and frequency of small farms and settlements to more gentle slopes;
- The western side of the glen is strongly influenced by the loch itself. The A82 hugs the western boundary of the loch and is the main route from which other development is

accessed. On the western side of this landscape, the loch shore is largely experienced from the A82;

- Many of the settlements along the western side of the loch are influenced by tourism and visitor provision. Original settlements developed around sheltered bays such as Urquhart Bay or bridging points which are now influenced by tourist related services and residential housing;
- The eastern side of the loch has a more remote feeling which strongly contrasts with the western shore. Along the eastern side, the B852 road follows the loch side and settlements tend to be clustered, leaving larger areas undeveloped;
- The loch is frequently used by private and chartered craft as well as organised boat cruises. Occasional jetties extend into the Loch, most notably at the Clansman harbour but also associated with the fish farm on the eastern shore of the loch to the south-west of Dores.
- Semi-natural woodlands and coniferous plantations typically occur on the glen sides. Coniferous plantations dominate large areas of the lower glen slopes. Currently, these plantations exhibit a rigid framework of pronounced edges and create shapes which contrast with the character of the underlying landform;
- Semi-natural and ancient woodlands line the loch edges, often extending up river valleys and rocky areas alongside slopes. These plantations add an element of visual and seasonal diversity to the coniferous and moorland backdrop; and
- Grazing land use is restricted to small scale farms in a few places on the shore, at the intersections of side glens, and on the gentler higher slopes. These form brighter and more open pockets which contrast with the woodland and moorland surroundings.

11.4.21 This LCT falls entirely within the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA and is particularly representative of a majority of the special qualities of the Dramatic Glen, in particular the steep-sided landform, long vistas of grand proportions and historic places of interest and designed landscapes including Urquhart Castle and Aldourie Castle GDL. Taking all of this into account, value is considered to be **High.**

Farmed Strath

11.4.22 This LCT occupies a small portion at the south-eastern and eastern extent of the study area and is comprised of steep rocky side slopes and strath floor. The relevant key characteristics are as follows:

- The strath is dominated by a flat to gently undulating strath floor, edged by the steep, rocky, side slopes of the surrounding uplands. The consistency of the strath sides and the flatness of the strath floor, creates a linear sense of enclosure, which allows uninterrupted views of the flanking hill slopes;
- In the lower reaches, the strath floor is characterised by large fields of improved and semi-improved pasture linked to scattered farm buildings. The brightness of the field colour and smooth texture of these fields contrasts with the more muted colours and rougher textures of the open heather moorlands;
- Broadleaved woodlands are generally small sized and occur infrequently. Small areas of open birch woodland form patches in sheltered areas along the lower strath sides, and thin bands of scrubby trees occasionally line rivers and field boundaries;
- Small blocks of coniferous plantations are scattered at intervals throughout the strath. The geometric edges are particularly prominent where they extend up onto the strath

sides, due to their contrast in colour and texture with the more muted tones of other vegetation. This contrast is particularly pronounced in winter against a snow backdrop; and

- The landscape pattern is noticeably distinctive due to the close relationship between settlement and small sheltering woodlands. These woodlands highlight the clusters of buildings as a series of scattered point features along the strath floor.

11.4.23 This landscape tends to merge into the Rolling Uplands to the east and only a very small portion lies within the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA. This landscape would result in no intervisibility with the Development and is therefore unlikely to result in significant effects and has not been considered for further assessment.

Farmed and Wooded Foothills

11.4.24 This LCT occupies a southern and south-eastern portion of the study area and is comprised of irregular rocky hills with lower slopes. The Great Glen is defined and overlooked by this ridge of low rocky hills. The northern boundary of the LCT is more diffuse and less well defined particularly along the northern edge of Loch Duntelchaig. The relevant key characteristics are as follows:

- This landscape is typified by relatively low rocky hills and open summits with lower slopes, some of which are covered by coniferous plantations and broadleaved woodlands, interspersed with areas of rough and improved pasture;
- The hills are comprised of complex and irregular landform of steep slopes, rocky ridges and peaks;
- There is a contrast of experience between the upper and lower slopes. The limited visibility of the lower landform combines with the screening effect of the woodland to create a strong sense of shelter and enclosure. In contrast, the upper slopes are generally open and exposed;
- Mid and lower slopes tend to be covered by woodlands, within which, fields of pasture, lochs and small scattered farming settlements exist. However, within the study area much of the landcover is comprised of moorland which creates a contrasting texture and colour with the surrounding landscape;
- The woodlands to the south-east of the study area are actively used for recreation, including sections of the Trail of the Seven Lochs, Core Paths and informal routes to the summits of the rocky hills;
- A network of narrow roads cut through woodlands connecting scattered farms and farming settlements where the intactness and quality of land management is particularly evident;
- Parts of this landscape are strongly influenced by the nature and pattern of the plantations' continual restructuring and felling cycles. These coniferous plantations which cover many of the lower slopes create a simple pattern of landcover determined by plantation management. The linear edges of plantations contrast strongly with the surrounding landform;
- This landscape is strongly influenced by a series of natural waterbodies of which Loch Duntelchaig is the most substantial; and
- The balance of key components comprised of Loch Ruthven, moorland, pasture and low rocky slopes to the south-west contributes to a greater level of scenic quality in contrast to the rest of this LCT.

11.4.25 The majority of this LCT is located within the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA and defines the edge of the Great Glen located in the neighbouring LCT. This landscape is representative of some of the SLA's special qualities, in particular: the undulating moorland plateau typified by the rocky knolls and clusters of small-scale woodlands, and the sequence of tranquil lochs, pastures and sporadic farmsteads. Together these contribute to an intimate and diverse mix of landscape elements that contribute to a strong sense of place. Taking this into account, value is considered to be **Medium**.

Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland

11.4.26 This gently undulating plateau landscape occupies the central and north-eastern portion of the study area. The relevant key characteristics are as follows:

- This landscape is characterised by gently undulating moorland and wooded plateau with a sense of openness influenced by the open nature of the moorland and a series of lochs;
- This is a largescale landscape where the skyline is predominantly horizontal. There are few recognisable features of known scale which results in it being often difficult to determine distance or relative size;
- The plateau top is very exposed, allowing panoramic and uninterrupted views of distant hills which form far away horizons. However, the plateau side slopes restrict visibility of adjacent lower areas from the plateau top, so neighbouring settlements are not visible and have little influence;
- Landcover is fairly similar throughout. There is a mix of heather vegetation and coniferous plantation. The uniform colour and texture of the moorland emphasises the simple, gently rolling character of the plateau landform. However, the blocks of coniferous plantation occupy much of this landscape within the study area; and
- Pylon towers and overhead electrical lines pass through this landscape. This electrical infrastructure tends to be a noticeable element within the landscape in contrast to the open surroundings and is therefore a strong visual focus.

11.4.27 The central part of this LCT falls within the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA. However a noticeable extent of this LCT is comprised of coniferous plantation and influenced by the presence of the overhead line and pylons. As a result, the special qualities of the SLA are less strongly associated with this LCT. Taking this into account, value is considered to be **Medium**.

Rocky Moorland Plateau

11.4.28 This LCT is located west of the Broad Steep-Sided Glen LCT and occupies a small portion at the south-western periphery of the study area. This landscape type consists of a high rocky plateau bordering the Great Glen to the east. The relevant key characteristics are as follows:

- This landscape is characterised by small rocky hills which rise out of open, gently rolling moorland plateau at about 400 m rising up to the summit of Meall na h-Eilrig at 465 m;
- There is a noticeable sense of openness and exposure within this landscape, although there is a contrast of experience between the small hills and plateau to the west beyond the study area. The small hills and high points within the study area are shaped by rocky outcrops and offer extensive and panoramic views of the surrounding landscape;

- The distinct edges of the plateau provide a sense of isolation from adjacent areas creating an impression of being within a vast, remote, upland moor. However the plateau edges offer expansive views over inhabited straths and glens below; and
- Rocky moorland dominates the hilltops and upper slopes, and numerous small lochans and areas of bog occupy depressions in landform. Regenerating pine, birch and gorse are evident along river valleys and on hillsides in sporadic patches. This mix of diverse landscape elements result in a patchy rugged texture.

11.4.29 Within the study area this LCT is most recognised by the rising upland moor to the summit of Meall na h-Eilrig of which the eastern facing slopes fall within the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA. Taking this into account, value is considered to be **Medium**.

Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland

11.4.30 The Rocky Moorland Plateau with woodland is a distinct landscape sub-type within the Rocky Moorland Plateau. This LCT is located west of the Broad Steep-Sided Glen and is typified by its rolling plateau landform and coniferous plantations. The relevant key characteristics are as follows:

- This landscape is strongly influenced by large coniferous plantations where hills are extensively forested and occasionally revealed where rocky hilltops covered in open rough grassland form open summits or features of clearings. The colour, texture and rigid shape of the coniferous plantations contrast with the open moorland surroundings;
- Open ground between areas of forest mostly comprises large fields of windswept rough pasture associated with isolated small hill farms. In contrast to the main type, these areas have a semi-exposed character with occasional views of distant hills and distinct edges formed by coniferous plantations;
- Some lower fringes of the forests have a more broken pattern, fringed by small broadleaved woodlands which interlock with the farms and settlements of adjacent landscape types;
- The scale of plantation restructuring operations, including felling and restocking of plantation woodland, is particularly evident within the study area and has a strong influence on the quality and character of this landscape;
- Settlement within this landscape sub-type is restricted to a few isolated small farms and crofts within open clearings accessed by a number of minor roads; and
- Among the archaeological sites, prehistoric settlements are more abundant, particularly the circular stone foundations of prehistoric hut circles with evidence of arable fields and pastures.

11.4.31 This LCT is not designated and is comprised in the main of commonplace features but retains some locally important features including dramatic open summits and recreational opportunities including the Great Glen Way. However, the large-scale forestry clearance operations and the contrasting rigid structure of the plantations have a noticeable influence on the shape and texture of the surrounding landscape. Taking all of this into account, value is considered to be **Medium**.

Rolling Farmland and Woodland

11.4.32 This LCT occupies a very small proportion at the northern extent of the study area and forms the rural backdrop to the south of Inverness. The relevant key characteristics are as follows:

- This landscape is characterised by a mix of open agricultural land and woodlands on rolling, north-facing hill slopes and plateaux;
- This landscape has been strongly influenced by human occupation. There is a mix of agricultural and woodland land use. Coniferous, broadleaved woodlands and hedgerows enclose pastoral fields and occasionally arable fields bisected by the B862;
- Woodlands vary in character between dense coniferous plantations, with dark linear edges, which create a range of enclosed spaces, and open broadleaf woodlands which follow stream gorges, line river banks and are also evident in a number of small farm woodlands, shelterbelts and hedgerows; and
- Occasional open areas occupy the upper slopes and allow distant views northwards over the firths.

11.4.33 This LCA is unlikely to be significantly affected by the Development given its limited area at the periphery of the study area and the relatively limited intervisibility. Therefore this LCT is not considered for further assessment.

Visual Baseline

11.4.34 In order to identify visual receptors and locations with the potential to have views of the Development, a ZTV has been produced as described below. The ZTV identifies those areas that have the potential to experience views of the Development and is illustrated on Figure 11.4 (Volume 3).

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

11.4.35 A computer generated ZTV map has been prepared for the Development, to assist the assessment process. This has been used to inform the selection of representative viewpoints and to illustrate the potential influence of the Development in the wider landscape.

11.4.36 The ZTV map indicates areas from where it may be possible to view part of or the entire Development. However, the use of the map needs to be qualified by the following considerations:

- The ZTV is based on a bare ground model - Ordnance Survey (OS) Terrain 5, Landform Panorama data based on a 5 m grid terrain model;
- The bare ground ZTV mapping is limited by the detail of the digital terrain model data used and does not take account of local topographic variations or screening from built form or vegetation;
- Some areas of theoretical visibility may comprise woodland, moorland or agricultural land, where there is effectively no public access and the likelihood of views being experienced is consequently low; and
- The ZTV does not take account of the likely orientation of a viewer, such as the direction of travel and there is no allowance for reduction of visibility with distance, weather or light.

11.4.37 These limitations mean that the ZTV map tends to overestimate the extent of the visibility, both in terms of the area from which the Development is visible and the extent of the

Development, which is visible. It should be considered as a tool to assist in assessing the theoretical visibility of the Development and not a measure of the visual effect.

11.4.38 The ZTV illustrates the theoretical visibility of the Development including the permanent above-ground components at the Headpond, Tailpond, Permanent Access Track and Compounds. Theoretical visibility extends across the majority of the Development Site boundary and includes the majority of the central part of the study area extending across the flat expanses of Loch Ness, Loch Duntelchaig and Loch Ashie. Beyond the loch edges, visibility is restricted by the steeply sloping landform along the Great Glen and the rocky slopes to the south and east of Loch Duntelchaig. Large blocks of coniferous plantation further limit actual visibility in eastern portions of the study area.

Visual Receptors

11.4.39 Visual receptors within the scope of this assessment are described in the following section and are grouped into the following categories:

- Views from residential settlements;
- Views from recreational routes and places of interest; and
- Views from roads.

Views from residential settlements

11.4.40 There are a number of settlements and scattered properties within the study area where residents experience a range of views that have the potential to be affected by the Development.

11.4.41 **Dores:** This low level settlement is located at the shore of Loch Ness and at the north-western boundary of the Development Site. Views experienced from Dores are concentrated around the head of Loch Ness. Residential properties within Dores are primarily located along the B852, B862 and Torr Gardens and take advantage of views west to Loch Ness. Views east towards the Development Site are contained by the densely wooded steep slopes.

11.4.42 **Aldourie**: This small settlement is located further north from Dores along the B862 and is comprised of a few residential properties and the Aldourie Castle Estate. These properties are located on higher ground with more open views to the south. There are some glimpsed views towards the sloping wooded hills within the Development Site to the south-east.

11.4.43 **Abriachan**: This is an elevated settlement on the west side of Loch Ness consisting of a number of individual residential properties clustered along the hill side. The majority of residential properties have been orientated to take advantage of the wide-angle views towards the loch and the upland hills that form the backdrop of the view, within which the Development Site is located.

11.4.44 **Lochend**: This small settlement is located approximately 3.3 km north-west of the Development Site at the northern head of Loch Ness and at the mouth of Loch Dochfour. All of the residential properties within this settlement are orientated towards Loch Ness. Views from these properties are characterised by the vast scale of Loch Ness and the Great Glen with the upland hills extending across the backdrop of views south-east, within which upper parts of the Development Site are visible.

11.4.45 **Individual properties and farmsteads:** are scattered throughout the study area including within the Development Site. Some of these properties are located on the slopes near the B862 and orientated to take advantage of views towards Loch Ness and the Great Glen.

Immediately south-east of the Development Site there are a cluster of properties to the immediate north of Loch Duntelchaig, which are orientated south-east towards the loch. Other more isolated properties such as those located off the B851 at the southern extent of the study area, tend to be in part enclosed by vegetation but are often orientated to frame views of the landscape.

11.4.46 Views experienced from residential settlements are represented by Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3 (Volume 4).

Views experienced by recreational users in the landscape and at places of interest

11.4.47 Recreational routes are shown on Figure 11.5 (Volume 3) and are described below. Some of these recreational routes are also Core Paths and local routes which are evaluated further in Chapter 14: Socio-economics and Tourism in terms of their recreational merit.

11.4.48 **The Great Glen Way**: This is an iconic long distance route of notable scenic quality across the Great Glen offering dramatic views of the Great Glen landscape and Loch Ness which strongly influences the visual character of the wider area. Stage 6 of the Great Glen Way from Drumnadrochit to Inverness passes through the western portion of the study area, parallel to the A82. Parts of this route pass through enclosed woodland and plantation however, there are long stretches over elevated areas offering open and panoramic views. Within the study area there are also shorter trails and Core Paths accessed via the Great Glen Way including the Abriachan Trail from the Abriachan Forest to the summit of Carn na Leitire. This route, like others, offers expansive panoramic views including across Loch Ness towards the Development Site.

11.4.49 **South Loch Ness Trail:** This trail stretches 45 km from Inverness to Loch Tarff. Within the study area this route largely follows the B852 and the B862 at the northern periphery. Views are largely channelled along the road corridor and contained by woodland to the east and west with occasional glimpses west through to Loch Ness.

11.4.50 **The Trail of the Seven Lochs**: This 80 km circular route is well used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Large sections of this route traverse the study area with the western section of the route passing through the Development Site. This route offers a varied visual experience with large sections enclosed by coniferous plantation and recently cleared areas within the Development Site alongside sections of open moorland. More open sections of this route offer vast open views across the landscape. An important part of the experience of this route within the study area is where the route follows the eastern edge of Loch Duntelchaig where there are long distance views from elevated locations across Loch Duntelchaig and Loch Ashie.

11.4.51 **Recreational Watercraft and the Great Glen Canoe Trail**: There are numerous watercraft travelling up and down Loch Ness including private boats meandering along the loch, charters to Urquhart Castle from the Clansman (Hotel) Harbour and Caledonian Canal as well as kayakers and canoeists who tend to hug the eastern side of the Loch for its more tranquil loch edge experience.

11.4.52 **Urquhart Castle**: This medieval castle and Scheduled Monument is situated on a rocky promontory with open long distance views extending along Loch Ness which are framed by the dramatic steeply sloping landform of the Great Glen. Visitors arrive at the castle from the A82 as well as on recreational watercraft. Views from this strategic position in the landscape are an important and iconic part of the experience for visitors to Urquhart Castle.

11.4.53 **National Cycle Route 78**: Known as The Caledonia Way, this route runs from Campbeltown to Inverness. This part is mainly on-road and follows the B852 along the south

side of Loch Ness. Views tend to be enclosed by deciduous woodland that lines the road corridor with occasional glimpses through to Loch Ness.

11.4.54 Views experienced by recreational users and at places of interest are represented by **Viewpoints 4, 5, 6, 7,** and **8** (Volume 4)**.**

Views from roads

11.4.55 Roads within the Development Site and the wider context are shown on Figure 15.1 (Volume 3).

11.4.56 **A82:** This is the main road within the study area and follows the western shore of Loch Ness. Views of the loch are intermittently screened or filtered by woodland planting and as a result views tend to be focused along the road corridor with oblique views glimpsed across Loch Ness to the opposite shore. In contrast, a series of laybys along the A82 offer expansive views across Loch Ness. The laybys are often used by tourists to experience views of Loch Ness and the Great Glen.

11.4.57 **B852**: This road follows the eastern side of Loch Ness from Dores to Inverfarigaig. This road also follows one of the General Wade's Military roads and is well used by local residents as well as visitors wishing to experience a quieter route along the loch. Views are largely channelled along the road corridor with occasional glimpses of Loch Ness filtered by deciduous ancient woodland. Views east towards the Development Site are contained by the steeply sloping landform and dense semi-natural woodland.

11.4.58 **B862**: This is the main road between Inverness and Dores which then continues through the study area and Development Site to the southern extent of Loch Duntelchaig. It is well used by local traffic and tourists. As the road heads south and rises up though the woodland, views become more open across the pastoral and moorland landscape. Parts of this road to the south of the Development Site also offer long distance views north-west across Loch Ness to the dramatic rocky hills that form the backdrop.

11.4.59 **Local roads:** The network of local roads traverses the landscape linking farmsteads and settlements to the main transport corridors. Views from these roads range from more open views across the moorland plateau landscape to being enclosed and contained by the coniferous woodland plantations. Similar to the B862, some elevated sections of these minor roads offer long distance views.

11.4.60 Some of these roads are well used by cyclists, particularly on the eastern side of Loch Ness during summer months. Local roads within the study area include the C1064, C1076 and C1068.

11.4.61 Views experienced by road users are represented by Viewpoints 10 and 11 (Volume 4).

Representative viewpoints

11.4.62 A total of 11 representative viewpoints have been selected to represent the visual receptors detailed above. These viewpoints have been agreed with the statutory consultees and are shown on Figure 11.6 (Volume 3) and are identified in Table 11.2 below. The baseline description of the views and judgements on value are explained below with baseline photography for each viewpoint contained in Volume 4.

Table 11.2 Representative viewpoints

Viewpoint	Receptor type	Easting	Northing
1. Minor road adjacent to Ach-Na-Sidhe B & B	Residential	260657	832742
2. Abriachan	Residential	256335	834867
3. Lochend	Residential	259781	837876
4. Minor road to the north-east of Loch Duntelchaig (Trail of the Seven Lochs)	Recreational routes and places of interest	263182	833033
5. Trail of the Seven Lochs between Loch Duntelchaig and Loch a' Choire	Recreational routes and places of interest	262115	829994
6. Creag nan Clag	Recreational routes and places of interest	259876	828651
7. Carn na Leitire (near The Great Glen Way)	Recreational routes and places of interest	254692	834472
8. Watercraft on Loch Ness	Recreational routes and places of interest	255700	831400
9. Urquhart Castle	Recreational routes and places of interest	253046	828564
10. Layby on A82	Road users	257750	835617
11. Local road near Caisteal an Dunriachaidh	Road users	259837	831718

Viewpoint 1 Minor road adjacent to Ach-Na-Sidhe B & B

11.4.63 This viewpoint is representative of views experienced by residents and guests of the Ach-Na-Sidhe Bed and Breakfast. The primary focus of the view is orientated south-west across the open plateau moorland towards Loch na Curra rising up to the rocky hills that form the dramatic backdrop of the view. However, the Development Site is located in views north-west immediately adjacent to the property. To the north-west the foreground of the view is comprised of the open field enclosed by a thin band of deciduous woodland set against a backdrop of coniferous plantation on a gently rising landform. Views west extend across the existing C1064 with passing vehicles seen against a backdrop of coniferous plantation. Whilst the view north and west is not particularly well composed, the view south is a well composed vista across the intimate moorland plateau, which is one of special qualities of the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA. Taking all of this into account, the value of the view is considered to be **Medium**.

Viewpoint 2- Abriachan

11.4.64 This viewpoint is representative of residential receptors within the settlement of Abriachan. This elevated and wide-angle view is orientated towards Loch Ness and offers extensive vistas across the Great Glen. This view is typical of views from the majority of residential properties in Abriachan. The foreground of the view is comprised of rough grazing fields and a linear belt of trees that line the east side of the road. The foreground vegetation concentrates the view towards Loch Ness and the hillside on the opposite bank of the loch. The settlement of Dores is visible on the opposite bank at the head of the loch whilst the fish farm is visible on the loch itself. The rising landform extending from the opposite bank of Loch Ness occupies the majority of the horizontal extent of the view and is comprised of deciduous woodland rising up to coniferous plantation interspersed by pockets of cleared

forestry and pastoral fields. The background of the view is comprised of the vast rolling uplands where the turbines and access track at Farr Wind Farm are noticeable on the skyline. Overall this is a well-composed vista across the Great Glen and typical of the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA. However, forestry clearances and the presence of moving turbines at Farr Wind Farm on the distant skyline partially reduce the overall scenic quality. On balance the value of the view is considered to be **High**.

Viewpoint 3- Lochend

11.4.65 This viewpoint is representative of residential receptors in the settlement of Lochend where the majority of the waterfront residential properties are orientated to overlook Loch Ness. The foreground of the view extends across the shore of Loch Ness to the gently rising Torr Wood peninsula comprised of deciduous woodland and coniferous plantation at the head of the loch. The wooded foothills that lie beyond are pre-dominantly comprised of coniferous plantation extending south towards the backdrop of rising moorland where the telecommunications mast at the summit of Tom Bailgeann is a noticeable feature on the skyline. One of the key foci of the view is south-west along Loch Ness which is framed by the dramatic landform of the Great Glen. This is a particularity well-composed view and demonstrates many of the visual qualities of the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA, in particular the iconic long vista along the vast expanse of water towards Urquhart Castle. Taking all of this into account the value of the view is considered to be **High**.

Viewpoint 4- Minor road to the north-east of Loch Duntelchaig (Trail of the Seven Lochs)

11.4.66 This viewpoint is representative of recreational receptors, in particular people walking along this section of the Trail of the Seven Lochs, north of Loch Duntelchaig. This mid-level view overlooks the foreground pastoral fields rising up from the loch shore. The mid-ground is comprised of a sporadic mix of individual residential properties set against a backdrop of wooded foothills comprised almost entirely of coniferous plantation. A large overhead electrical transmission line and pylon towers extend across the horizontal extent of the view between the residential properties and the wooded hillside beyond. The telecommunication mast at the summit of Tom Bailgeann is a notable element on the hills that form the backdrop to the south-west. The band of pasture land rising up from the loch shore and the loch itself is well composed and is the primary focus of the view. However the height and scale of the electrical infrastructure is a distracting element. On balance the value of the view is considered to be **Medium**.

Viewpoint 5- Trail of the Seven Lochs between Loch Duntelchaig and Loch a' Choire

11.4.67 This viewpoint is representative of recreational receptors using this section of the Trail of the Seven Lochs, north of Loch a' Choire. Views from this section of the trail are largely enclosed by dense coniferous plantation however, where forestry has been cleared there are open views across the plateau moorland. The view north-west through a patch of cleared forestry, overlooks the expansive water body of Loch Duntelchaig, whilst the smaller waterbodies of Lochan an Eoin Ruadha and Loch na Curra can be seen beyond. The overhead electrical transmission line and towers can be seen between Loch Duntelchaig and Lochan an Eoin Ruadha and across the horizontal extent of the view against a backdrop of plateau moorland extending north into the coniferous woodland plantation. The steep-sided glen on the opposite side of Loch Ness shapes the backdrop and influences the sinuous skyline with some taller peaks visible on the distant horizon. This is a long distance framed vista extending across the contrasting intimate plateau to the steep-sided glen, both

of which are important special qualities of the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA. However the value of the view is tempered by the forestry clearances and the presence of the overhead electrical transmission line across the mid-ground. Taking all of this into account, the value of the view is considered to be **Medium**.

Viewpoint 6- Summit of Creag nan Clag

11.4.68 This viewpoint is representative of elevated views experienced by recreational users at the summit of Creag nan Clag, also known as Dun Chia. Although there is no formal track to the summit of this hill, it is used by recreational walkers often on a circular walk to the summits of Creag nan Clag and Tom Bailgeann. This is an elevated and panoramic view which extends to the north across the undulating moorland plateau interspersed with a series of lochs and to the south encompassing the narrow farmed strath and Loch Ruthven. The view north towards the Development Site overlooks the expansive waterbody of Loch Duntelchaig extending to Lochan an Eoin Ruadha, Loch na Curra and Loch Ashie beyond. The overhead electrical transmission line and pylon towers can be seen extending across the landscape between Loch Duntelchaig and Lochan an Eoin Ruadha. The background view is strongly influenced by the broad steep-sided glen sweeping down into Inverness beyond the Kessock Road Bridge and out to the Moray Firth. This viewpoint offers panoramic views across a vast landscape and demonstrates all of the visual qualities of the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA. On balance the value of the view is considered to be **Medium**.

Viewpoint 7- Carn na Leitire (near The Great Glen Way)

11.4.69 This viewpoint is representative of recreational walkers at the summit of Carn na Leitire. This recreational route is accessed on a marked trail and via the Great Glen Way at the Abriachan Forest Community Trust. This view is also considered to represent similar elevated views experienced along parts of the Great Glen Way. This elevated and panoramic view offers open views across a vast landscape. The foreground view east towards the Development Site extends across the rocky moorland plateau before stepping down to Loch Ness. The plateau landform limits views of the steeply sloping glen which drops down to Loch Ness where the settlement of Dores at the head of the loch is visible. The mid-to-background of the view is comprised of both coniferous plantation woodland and pastoral grazing fields which rise gently to the moorland rocky slopes. Beyond this hillside, Loch Duntelchaig can be seen at the foot of the upland hills which shape the skyline, broken only by the moving turbines at Farr Wind Farm. The panoramic nature of the view includes forestry clearances and distant wind turbines within an otherwise well composed view that demonstrates the vivid scenes and long vistas typical of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. On balance the value of the view is considered to be **Medium**.

Viewpoint 8- Watercraft on Loch Ness

11.4.70 This viewpoint is representative of sequential views experienced by people using recreational watercraft including boat cruises on Loch Ness typically from the Clansman Harbour, Loch Dochfour or Caledonian Canal to Urquhart Castle and Fort Augustus. Low-level views across Loch Ness extend across the extensive water body and up the steep-sided glen. The primary focus of views experienced on watercraft is typically channelled along Loch Ness framed by the dramatic landform. These long vistas framed by the broad steeply-sided glen encompass the vast expanse of the loch which alongside views south

towards Urquhart Castle are typical of the visual experience within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. The value of the view is considered to be **High**.

Viewpoint 9- Urquhart Castle

11.4.71 This viewpoint is representative of views experienced by recreational visitors to Urquhart Castle. The castle itself occupies an elevated rocky headland enabling visitors to experience views of Loch Ness from a relatively elevated position on the shore of the loch. The foreground view north overlooks the iconic Tower House of the Castle. The waterbody of Loch Ness and the broad steep-sided glen beyond frame the view north to the head of the loch. The dramatic long vista up the Great Glen is an important special quality and visual characteristic of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. Furthermore the historic landscape setting of Urquhart Castle in the view is an important Cultural Heritage consideration (detailed further in Chapter 13: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage). This is an iconic view with strong cultural associations with very few notable detractors. Taking all of this into account the value of the view is considered to be **High**.

Viewpoint 10- Layby on A82

11.4.72 This viewpoint is representative of views experienced by road users using the laybys on the A82. Views from this layby are orientated east across Loch Ness to the opposite bank towards Dores and the wooded foothills beyond. The wooded hillside on the opposite side of the loch occupies the horizontal extent of the view and is comprised of coniferous plantation with some clearance operations extending south to the open pastoral fields. Rocky hills and moorlands form the backdrop of the view further south. The primary focus of the view is on Loch Ness itself and takes advantage of a gap in loch-side vegetation which would otherwise channel views along the A82 road corridor. There are also oblique views along the Great Glen. Whilst the speed of vehicular traffic on the A82 detracts from the visual amenity at this viewpoint, it is a well composed view across Loch Ness which is well used by tourists who use the layby to specifically experience Loch Ness and the Great Glen and as such the value of the view is considered to be **High**.

Viewpoint 11- Local road near Caisteal an Dunriachaidh

11.4.73 This viewpoint is representative of users of the local road network just off the B862 which leads to the Ach-Na-Sidhe Bed and Breakfast. This road passes through open moorland plateau which dominates the experience of immediate views. Views towards the Development Site extend north across the open moorland to the gently rising landform comprised of coniferous plantation which forms the background and defines the skyline. The scheduled monument of Caisteal an Dunriachaidh Iron Age Fort is an important heritage asset (covered in detail in Chapter 13: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage) that appears on an elevated rocky outcrop in views further east. However, the primary focus of the view is west towards the vast upper slopes of the Great Glen. Overall the value of the view is considered to be **Medium**.

11.5 Assessment of Effects

11.5.1 This section presents the findings of the landscape and visual assessment for the construction and operational phases of the Development. The extent to which the Development would affect the landscape and visual resource is dependent on the capacity of the existing landscape and visual receptors to absorb the changes proposed. The key components of the Development are detailed in Chapter 2: Project and Site Description.

Design Development and Impact Avoidance

11.5.2 Chapter 3: Evolution of Design and Alternatives describes the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the design iterations which have led to the finalised Development as described in Chapter 2. Integral to the evolution of the design has been the iterative process to design and assessment which the LVIA has been embedded in from feasibility through scoping and public consultation to design refinement and the submitted design. From the outset, landscape and visual considerations have informed the siting and design of the various components of the Development to ensure that the submitted Development design responds as sensitively as possible to the landscape and visual resource. This design evolution specific to landscape and visual considerations is summarised below.

Design Concept

11.5.3 The key landscape and visual design concept was that the Development and its various components, particularly the Headpond and Tailpond structures had to be designed with a focus to achieving the best possible fit within the landscape and consequently in views. In order to integrate the various Development components into the existing landscape, a high degree of mitigation by design had to be achieved with an overriding principal to site the majority of ancillary facilities underground. Achieving the best possible integration into the landscape and views not only considered the specific siting of each of the Development components, but the structural form and materials and the approach to reinstatement forest planting, maximising the potential for landscape and habitat enhancement and improved recreational amenity.

11.5.4 This design concept has been applied to the various components of the Development as follows:

- Headpond – An underlying concept associated with the Headpond was the desire to minimise the requirement for additional structures and buildings to keep the area around the Headpond as uncluttered as possible. To reduce the visual impact of the Headpond Embankment, different orientations were tested to minimise the Embankment height above ground level. The structure of the Headpond Embankment necessitates some steep engineered slopes which in order to maintain their structural integrity cannot be planted with trees. Analysis of the surrounding landscape and key views from the west and north-east quickly demonstrated that it would be essential to try and soften the Embankment slopes in order to try and integrate the large structure into the landscape and in views. Using excavated material, Landscape Embankments have been designed which both soften the engineered slopes and also allow native woodland to be planted to partially screen the Headpond and Embankment from view. This combination has assisted in providing an improved integration of the Development into the landscape, particularly along the north-western extent of the Headpond Embankment where the steepest slopes exist. Figure 3.2.1 (Appendix 3.2, Volume 5) illustrates the Landscape Embankment and typical planting.
- Reinstatement Forestry - The SLA citation identifies the potential for incorporation of landscape enhancement through the opportunity to '*Restructure existing forests as the opportunity arises to reduce the adverse impacts of some existing plantations and incorporate greater proportion of native woodlands using current best forest design practice. It will be particularly important to mitigate the incongruity of some forest edges which are clearly apparent when viewing between opposite sides of the glen*'. The Woodland Restructuring Plan (Figure 12.6, Volume 3) seeks to increase the proportion

of native woodland through large areas of new planting, enhancement measures to existing areas of native woodland as well as softening some of the existing forest edges.

- Tailpond – Permanent infrastructure associated with the Tailpond Inlet / Outlet Structure, has been minimised so that the number of structures present on the loch shore is reduced. This includes the screen cleaning system which is now housed within the structure itself thereby limiting the need for additional obtrusive structures and associated railings along the loch edge. The wavewall will be clad in local natural stone to assist in integrating it within the immediate loch-side setting.
- Access Tracks – The route of the Temporary Access Track between the Tailpond and Headpond was carefully informed by landscape and visual considerations to minimise the intrusion in views particularly when experienced from receptors on the western side of Loch Ness. Initially the route took a more open path up the slope, crossing sections of woodland and fields. The final alignment is mainly contained within woodland, crossing the B862 at a point where earthworks would be minimised with an at-grade crossing and rises along the slope following a consistent gradient. This track will be fully reinstated once the Development is operational.
- Realignment of the C1064 – The route of the permanent realignment of the C1064 was similarly informed by landscape and visual considerations with the main focus, ensuring that the realigned road would remain largely indistinguishable in views from the west side of Loch Ness. The proposed route limits the requirement for earthworks, largely retaining a balance between cut and fill operations, following a contour across the slope. The reinstatement planting would largely screen the road from views on the west side of the loch whilst maintaining a visually attractive experience for road users with native woodland planting set back from the road edge, retaining the experience of travelling through a wooded landscape.
- Buildings / Permanent Structures – the architectural design of the buildings and structures within the Development Site will seek to assimilate them into the surrounding landscape as much as possible by using simple, clean forms and a palette of materials and colour which lessens the contrast with the surrounding landscape. The buildings at the loch shore will reflect the local vernacular of either white rendered facades with slate pitched roofs or stone clad structures. The Battery House and structure housing the Substation will reflect a more agricultural vernacular to help in assimilating these large structures within the re-stocked woodland. The apparent scale of the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure will be reduced by a careful combination of colour, tone and materials in order to break up the overall massing of the structure which will sit on top of the Headpond Embankment. A combination of rendered facades using muted earth tones combined with the use of wood panelling and/or sections of stone cladding would assist in reducing the apparent scale of the structure within the landscape.

11.5.5 Mitigation measures will be implemented during the construction phase as set out in the Outline CEMP (Appendix 3.1, Volume 5) in order to limit impacts on the landscape and visual resource.

11.5.6 An Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (Appendix 3.2, Volume 5) has been developed to facilitate an integrated approach to landscape and ecological mitigation providing reinstatement planting and habitat creation which will seek to integrate the various Development components into the landscape and its wider setting. The outline planting proposals shown in Figure 3.2.1 (Volume 3) would be developed further prior to construction

in combination with the ecology, detailed forestry re-stocking plan (as outlined on Figure 12.6 Woodland Restructuring Plan, Volume 3) and reinstatement of paths and recreational routes.

11.5.7 Specific earth mounding along the northern fence boundary of the Ach-Na-Sidhe B&B and to the north of the existing alignment of the C1064 is proposed along with mixed native woodland to assist in partially screening views of construction operations from Ach-Na-Sidhe B&B (Figure 3.2.1, Volume 3). The earth mounding and planting would be carried out once the forestry clearance operations are complete and before construction operations within the Headpond commence. Whilst the planting will not achieve sufficient growth during the construction period to fully screen construction operations, the combination of earth mounding and establishing native woodland would assist in creating a partial visual buffer between the property and the Development.

11.5.8 No additional or secondary mitigation measures have been proposed as there is no feasible additional landscape mitigation within the Development Site which could further reduce the landscape and visual effects. All effects described in the Summary of Assessment Effects below are, therefore, residual.

Potential Construction Phase Effects

11.5.9 The Development would introduce a number of new elements into the landscape, creating the potential for landscape or visual effects. The potential impacts relate to the loss of existing landscape features and the visibility of new features associated with the Development, including effects on perceptual qualities of landscape and visual amenity. The construction phase of works falls into two phases, pre-construction and construction. For the purposes of the LVIA, impacts associated with the two phases are considered as a single construction phase of works with sequenced activities extending over the six year period.

11.5.10 The type and duration of the construction landscape and visual effects fall within three main stages as explained below.

11.5.11 The potential for temporary impacts on the landscape and visual resource of the Study Area may arise from the following activities. These impacts would be experienced within the six year construction period and whilst temporary would be considered to be of medium term duration:

- Site Clearance – clear felling of forestry (refer to Figure 12.5: Development Felling Plan, Volume 3), temporary storage of timber and subsequent removal from Development Site. Soil stripping and mounding and erection of temporary security fencing;
- Utility Diversions – permanent diversion of low voltage overhead powerline and water main;
- Temporary Compounds – construction of four Temporary Compounds using material won from Borrow Pits. Once constructed the Temporary Compounds will be used to store large plant and equipment, concrete batching plant, office accommodation and welfare facilities, temporary accommodation if required and material storage;
- Construction of Temporary Access Tracks – using material won from Borrow Pits. The Temporary Access Tracks will also accommodate temporary storage of materials within the working width. Running parallel to the Temporary Access Track between the Tailpond and Headpond a Conveyor Belt will transport material;

- Realignment of C1064 – including a 30 m construction corridor, using material from Borrow Pits and within the Development Site;
- Temporary diversion of Public Paths;
- Headpond – excavation of material to construct the Embankment. The Headpond will be constructed in sections commencing at the southern end. Large plant will be required to excavate and transport material. Settlement lagoons will be created at the north-west end of the Headpond. Construction of Inlet / Outlet Structure, Embankment and Landscape Embankment;
- Tailpond – construction of Temporary Jetty and Cofferdam on Loch Ness which will require various large construction plant including pilling rig and barge. The TBM will be delivered by barge via the Caledonian Canal and will be assembled over a 12 month period. The launch of the TBM will require large plant including a temporary gantry crane. The Tailpond Inlet / Outlet Structure will be constructed with associated wave wall and rock armouring. At the end of construction works of the Tailpond, the Cofferdam and Temporary Jetty will be removed and the Permanent Jetty completed.
- Spillway Pipe – construction of the Spillway Pipe will follow the same corridor as the Temporary Access Track between the Tailpond and Headpond using a cut and cover method of construction with plant and material stockpiled within the working width;
- Lighting – will be required at the Headpond, Tailpond and Temporary Compounds.

Potential Operation (Year 1) and Operation (Year 15) Effects

11.5.12 The potential for long-term, operational and permanent impacts on the landscape and visual resource of the Study Area may arise from the introduction of the following Development components. These are considered to be permanent features within the landscape and in views which would be apparent for the long-term.

- Headpond – the waterbody will be retained within an Embankment structure around which a wave wall and access track will run. The Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure will sit predominantly within the Embankment structure but will also appear as a structure (8 m height and 45 m length) sitting on top of the Embankment. A further Landscape Embankment will extend around the steeper slopes of the Embankment to soften the engineered slopes and allow for reinstatement tree planting to help integrate the Headpond into the landscape and views. Security fencing will be placed around the toe of the Headpond Embankment and will incorporate a 2 m deer fence;
- Tailpond – the permanent components of the Development located at the Tailpond comprise the Tailpond Inlet / Outlet Structure which will be a partially submerged structure within Loch Ness with rock clad wave walls and screen. The Permanent Jetty incorporating navigational lighting, will extend into Loch Ness and will be located adjacent to the Inlet / Outlet Structure and will be used for accessing the structure for maintenance operations. Three structures will also be located at the Tailpond amongst the area of hardstanding; the Valvehouse (5 m height and 8 m length), a Control Building (3 m in height, 29 m length and 14 m width) and Workshop (3 m in height, 15 m length and 15 m width). Directional lighting will be used when required to facilitate access and maintenance operations;
- Permanent Compounds – there will be two Permanent Compounds (Compounds 1 and 4). Compound 1 will include a Battery House (approximately 6 m in height, 80 m length and 50 m width) and Substation (with equipment up to 5 m height, and an area of 80 m

long by 50 m wide) as well as the Tunnel Portals and car parking. This area will incorporate directional lighting. Compound 4 will allow for car parking to service the Headpond;

- Permanent Access Track – this will extend between Compound 1 and the Headpond / Compound 4 and will follow the existing forest track which will be widened and surfaced to accommodate two-way vehicle traffic;
- Realignment of the C1064 – the C1064 will be realigned and will mimic the existing composition of a single track road with passing places to reflect the existing road specification.
- New planting – large areas of forestry will be re-planted with native woodland planting as illustrated in Figure 12.6 (Volume 3). This will comprise a mix of new planting and re-stocking of existing areas.

11.5.13 At Year 15 of operation, the embedded planting proposals (refer to the LEMP in Appendix 3.2, Volume 2) would be considered to be established features within the landscape and in views.

Decommissioning

11.5.14 Decommissioning of large-scale hydro projects is extremely rare due to the long operational lifespan of the facility and is outlined in Section 2.16 of Chapter 2: Project and Site Description. Potential decommissioning effects are therefore considered to be similar to, and associated with the components described in the operational phase of work and as such are not considered as an assessment phase of the Development.

11.6 Summary Assessment of Effects

11.6.1 This section presents the findings of the landscape and visual effects assessment for the construction and operational phases of the Development. A detailed assessment of landscape and visual effects is provided in Appendix 11.2 Landscape Assessment and Appendix 11.3 Visual Assessment (Volume 5). The following section therefore, provides a summary of the likely significant effects during construction and operation on the landscape and visual resource.

11.6.2 This section should be read in conjunction with the following appendices, figures and visualisations:

- Appendix 3.2 (Volume 5) – Outline Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan;
- Appendix 11.2 (Volume 5)– Assessment of Landscape Effects;
- Appendix 11.3 (Volume 5) – Assessment of Visual Effects;
- Figures 11.1 – 11.6 (Volume 3); and
- Volume 4: Visualisations.

Summary of Construction Effects

Effects on Landscape Designations during Construction

Aldourie Castle GDL

11.6.3 Intervisibility of construction activities within the Development Site would be restricted to small portions of estate parkland at the eastern extents of this GDL. During construction, temporary effects on the setting of this GDL would therefore be limited to these areas of parkland where the scale and intensity of forestry clearance operations and the movement of plant on the cleared hillside would appear within the wider landscape setting to the east of

the GDL. However the majority of the landscape setting and framed vistas from the Castle would remain intact.

Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA

11.6.4 As identified within the assessment of LCTs, there would be significant effects within the Broad Steep-Sided Glen and on the Flat Plateau with Woodland LCTs, both of which largely fall within this SLA. As a result, construction activity would have a strong bearing on the key characteristics and special qualities of the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA. The scale and intensity of construction activity on the loch shore and the steep hillside and plateau moorland would affect the special qualities of the SLA as follows:

11.6.5 Dramatic Great Glen

- The full extent of construction activities within the landscape would be experienced from the elevated areas on the loch side hills. The scale and intensity of activities, in particular forestry clearance operations would contrast with the dramatic sequence and composition of the landscape extending from the loch shore up the hillside to the moorland plateau;
- Construction activity would alter the balance of activity experienced across both sides of the loch. The scale and extent of operations would noticeably increase the levels of activity on the southern slopes of the loch;
- The movement of largescale plant, earthworks and the storage of materials at the loch shore would partially distract from the vivid scenes and long vistas experienced along the vast expanse of water;
- Construction activities on the loch shore would disrupt the dramatic character and scenes influenced by the atmospheric mists and banks of low cloud over the Loch. The scale and intensity of movement would also distract from the well composed vistas up the Great Glen experienced from Urquhart Castle; and
- This landscape is largely experienced from the B852, B851 and the A82. Construction activity would have some bearing on each of these routes and from elevated areas along the glen. The extent of construction operations would influence the elevated moorland plateau introducing incongruent features that would temporarily alter the sense of scale across the glen.

11.6.6 Contrasting Intimate Plateau

- The scale and intensity of construction activity at the Headpond would noticeably contrast with the intimate balance and mix of high quality landscape features comprised of the undulating moorland plateau of rocky knolls, small-scale woods and forests, sequence of tranquil lochs, pastures and sporadic farmsteads.

Landscape Effects during Construction

11.6.7 Significant landscape effects are only predicted at two of the five LCTs assessed. These are the Broad Steep-Sided Glen and the Flat Plateau with Woodland. The other three LCTs would not result in significant landscape effects during construction.

Broad Steep-Sided Glen

11.6.8 Landscape value of this LCT is considered to be High. The dramatic steep-sided landform of the Great Glen combined with the open and exposed expanse of Loch Ness results in a landscape with very little capacity to accommodate the Development. Therefore

susceptibility to change is considered to be High. Taking into account value judgements and susceptibility to change, overall sensitivity of the landscape character is considered to be High.

11.6.9 Construction activities would fall within this LCT and as such there would be physical changes to the fabric of this landscape. The scale of forestry clearance operations would result in a noticeable change extending from this LCT into the neighbouring landscape. Construction activity associated with the Tailpond and Temporary Access Tracks would result in the introduction of large temporary structures including the Cofferdam and Temporary Jetty at the shore of Loch Ness. Construction activity would also include the transport and loading of barges and other vessels on the loch itself. In addition, the construction activities at the Temporary Compound (3) including the storage and transport of materials, movement of plant and earthworks would occupy a small area on the steeply sloping hillside. Together these components and construction activities would be noticeable and uncharacteristic elements in the landscape. The scale and intensity of movement of cranes, construction plant, earthworks and the storage of materials along with lighting within a largely un-lit landscape would be uncharacteristic and introduce incongruent elements that would substantially diminish the remote qualities of the eastern sides of the loch.

11.6.10 The aesthetic and perceptual qualities of this landscape would be reduced by the scale and extent of construction activity. Overall construction activity would affect a substantial proportion of this LCT within the study area resulting in a **Medium** magnitude of change.

11.6.11 The magnitude of change, assessed alongside the sensitivity would result in a **Moderate Adverse effect**, which is considered **significant**.

Flat Plateau with Woodland

11.6.12 This LCT is considered to be of Medium value. It has some capacity to accommodate the Development without affecting the overall integrity. The vast scale of coniferous plantations combined with the open moorland plateau and large water bodies within this landscape help to reduce the susceptibility with a resulting Medium landscape susceptibility to change. Taking into account value judgements and susceptibility to change, overall sensitivity of the landscape character is considered to be Medium.

11.6.13 Construction activity would be located within this LCT and would therefore result in physical changes to the fabric of the landscape. Construction activity would be associated with the Headpond and Temporary Compounds, C1064 Realignment and Temporary Access Track. Construction activity would include forestry clearance operations, movement of construction plant and vehicles, earthworks and storage of materials. The scale of this construction activity would result in a noticeable and uncharacteristic change across a large extent of this LCT and would diminish the perceptual and aesthetic quality of the landscape. The magnitude of change is considered to be Medium. The magnitude of change, assessed alongside the sensitivity would result in a **Moderate Adverse** effect, which is considered **significant**.

Visual Effects during Construction

11.6.14 All of the 11 viewpoints assessed would experience significant adverse effects during construction. Full details of the visual assessment are contained within Appendix 11.3 (Volume 5). A summary of the visual effects based on receptor groups is provided below.

Views from residential settlements

11.6.15 Views experienced from residential settlements range from Medium to High sensitivity.

11.6.16 Views from Abriachan would be significantly affected by construction activity. Forestry clearance operations and construction activity associated with the entire Development would extend from the Tailpond at the loch shore up to the Headpond. The movement of large-scale plant, the presence of lighting and the movement of cranes particularly associated with the Cofferdam and Temporary Jetty would be prominent and contrasting elements extending into the loch. The transportation and loading of material to and from barges and the assembly of plant including the Tunnel Boring Machine would be particularly noticeable on the loch itself. The movement of construction plant along the Temporary Access Track Compound and Headpond would be noticeable within the main focus of views. Overall construction activities would introduce discordant features that contrast strongly with the current view.

11.6.17 Views of construction activity from Lochend would be partially screened by intervening landform and vegetation and limited to the rising hillside beyond Torr Wood peninsula. Forestry clearance operations would be visible on the skyline at the Headpond location where the movement of plant and the presence of lighting, earthworks and the storage of materials would be seen across part of the hillside and along the skyline.

11.6.18 The scale and extent of change experienced from individual properties scattered across the study area would vary based on the proximity and orientation to the Development Site. For those properties in close proximity, construction activities would be particularly apparent with forestry clearance operations and the movement of large-scale construction plant, earthworks, storage of material and lighting associated with the Headpond dominating views. The scale and intensity of construction activity would fundamentally alter the visual experience from a number of residential properties within the Development Site.

11.6.19 Residential properties represented by **Viewpoints 1** and **2** would result in **Major Adverse** effects whilst **Viewpoint 3 Lochend** would result in a **Moderate Adverse** effect.

Views from recreational routes and places of interest

11.6.20 Views experienced from recreational routes within the study area are assessed to be of Medium sensitivity. People using the Great Glen Way and a range of recreational and core paths on the north side of Loch Ness would experience elevated and open views of construction activities. Forestry clearance operations would appear across a noticeable portion of the view to the east with construction activity associated with the entire Development extending from the Tailpond at the loch shore up to the Headpond. The scale and intensity of construction activity would be a noticeable and uncharacteristic addition which would be in contrast to the wider scenic quality experienced from these recreational routes.

11.6.21 Open views across the sequence of lochs experienced by people using the Trail of the Seven Lochs would be affected by the scale and extent of forestry clearance operations across a noticeable horizontal extent of views. Construction activities associated with the Headpond, Embankment and Temporary Compounds would at times be prominent across the main focus of the view.

11.6.22 The sensitivity of views experienced by people using recreational watercraft and Urquhart Castle are considered to be High. Forestry clearance operations would appear across a small part of wider views to the north-east of Loch Ness. The majority of the largescale construction plant would be noticeable on the loch itself. The movement of plant on the Temporary Access Track connecting the Tailpond and Headpond would also be apparent as would activity on the skyline at the Headpond. Construction activity would result in an

intensive change to a small part of the view. However, the full extent of change would vary dependant on the direction of travel and the sequential nature of the visual experience underpinned by the visual qualities of the Great Glen.

11.6.23 Views from Urquhart Caste would be influenced by forestry clearance operations stretching from the Tailpond up the slope to the Headpond area. Although distracting, the scale and intensity of construction activity would not directly conflict with the main focus of views along Loch Ness.

11.6.24 **Viewpoints 4** and **5**, would result in **Major Adverse** effects whilst **Viewpoints 6, 7**, and **8** would result in **Moderate Adverse** effects, all of which are considered to be **significant**.

Views from roads

11.6.25 Visual sensitivity for road users in the study area is considered to be Medium. Road users using a series of lay-bys along the A82 would experience views of forestry clearance operations extending from the loch shore up the hillside and across an extensive area to the skyline. Construction activities at the Tailpond would also introduce prominent features on the loch shore and within the loch itself. The movement of plant would also be visible on the hillside along the Temporary Access Track between the Tailpond and Headpond and across a large horizontal extent of the skyline. Overall, construction activities would be prominent across the main focus of the view.

11.6.26 Views experienced by users of the C1064 would be affected by construction activities associated with the Headpond, C1064 Realignment and Temporary Access Tracks would extend across the horizontal extent of the view. The scale and intensity of movement including that of large-scale construction plant along with the presence of lighting, excavation, earthworks and the storage of materials would be prominent and would diminish the overall scenic quality of the view.

11.6.27 **Viewpoints 10** and **11** would result in **Major Adverse** effects, which are considered to be **significant**.

Summary of Effects at Operation (year 1)

Effects on Landscape Designations at Operation (year 1)

Aldourie Castle GDL

11.6.28 At operation intervisibility with the Development Site would be restricted to small portions of the estate parkland at the eastern extents of this GDL. The expanse of cleared forestry and the introduction of the Embankment would be visible from eastern parts of the estate parkland but would have limited influence on the setting, with the overall landscape setting and framed vistas from the Castle remaining intact.

Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA

11.6.29 At year 1 of operation the assessment of LCTs indicated that there would be significant effects upon the Broad Steep-Sided Glen and on the Flat Plateau with Woodland LCTs both of which fall within this SLA. The Development would therefore have a bearing on and affect some of the special qualities of the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA. The following special qualities would be affected:

11.6.30 Dramatic Great Glen

- The introduction of the Development into the landscape would be experienced from the elevated areas on the loch side hills. The largescale removal of forestry would contrast

with the dramatic sequence and composition of the landscape extending from the loch shore up the hillside to the moorland plateau;

- The operation of the Development would very slightly increase the sense of activity on the southern slopes of the loch;
- The introduction of the Development and the removal of forestry would contrast with the vivid scenes and long vistas experienced along the vast expanse of water;
- The Development would be discernible from Urquhart Castle but would not disrupt the primary focus of views across the loch; and
- This landscape is largely experienced from the B852, B851 and the A82. The Development would have some bearing on each of these routes and from elevated areas along the glen. The Development would introduce a new feature within the elevated moorland plateau, however, the scale of the Headpond would not be sufficient to alter the sense of scale across the wider glen.

11.6.31 Contrasting Intimate Plateau

- The scale and extent of the Embankment and Headpond would contrast with the intimate balance and mix of high quality landscape features comprised of the undulating moorland plateau of rocky knolls, small-scale woods and forests, the sequence of tranquil lochs, pastures and sporadic farmsteads.

Landscape Effects at Operation (year 1)

11.6.32 At opening the Development would result in significant effects upon the Broad Steep-Sided Glen and the Flat Plateau with Woodland LCTs. The other three LCTs would not result in significant landscape effects at year one of operation.

Broad Steep-Sided Glen

11.6.33 The sensitivity of this LCT is considered to be High. The removal of forestry would be a noticeable physical change to the landcover across a small part of this LCT. The Tailpond Inlet / Outlet Structure, Permanent Compounds (1 and 2) and buildings including the Battery House and Substation would be located within this LCT. Whilst the Headpond is located immediately adjacent in the flat moorland plateau with woodland LCT, it would have a noticeable bearing on the character of this LCT. Together, the Development would introduce a series of uncharacteristic elements within the landscape and would change some of the key characteristics. The loss of semi-natural and ancient woodland along the loch edge would further disrupt the sequential movement experienced throughout this LCT. The Development would also contrast with the more remote character experienced along the eastern side of Loch Ness.

11.6.34 Overall the Development would affect some of the key characteristics and special qualities of the Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA across a substantial portion of this landscape. Taking all of this into account the magnitude of change is considered to be Medium.

11.6.35 The magnitude of change, assessed alongside the sensitivity would result in a **Moderate Adverse** effect, which is considered **significant**.

Flat Plateau with Woodland

11.6.36 At year 1 of operation the introduction of the Headpond, Embankment, Permanent Compound (4), re-aligned C1064 and Permanent Access Track would result in a noticeable change to the physical fabric of this LCT. The scale and extent of forestry removal would also result in a noticeable change to the landcover and overall impression of the landscape. However, the introduction of the Headpond would not be dissimilar to other large

waterbodies found in this landscape. The re-aligned C1064 would retain a similar character to the existing road and would be well integrated into the landscape. However, the Embankment, Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure and associated components would be a noticeable addition and somewhat incongruous to the scale and pattern of the landscape. The Landscape Embankment would help to integrate the Headpond and Embankment into the wider plateau landscape by softening the steeper engineered slopes.

11.6.37 Despite the scale and somewhat uncharacteristic nature of the Development, many key characteristics of the landscape would remain intact. Taking this into account the magnitude of change is considered to be Medium.

11.6.38 The magnitude of change, assessed alongside the sensitivity would result in a **Moderate Adverse** effect, which is considered **significant**.

Visual Effects at Operation (year 1)

11.6.39 Of the 11 viewpoints assessed, 6 would experience significant effects at year 1 of operation. Full details of the visual assessment are contained within Appendix 11.3 (Volume 5) with visualisations presented in Volume 4. A summary of the visual effects based on receptor groups is provided below.

Views from residential settlements

11.6.40 Significant visual effects from residential settlements would be limited to Abriachan and individual properties in close proximity to the Development. From Abriachan the removal of forestry would be apparent across a large extent of views stretching from the loch edge to the Headpond. The buildings and structures would be noticeable elements on the loch shore. However, the scale of these components would appear broadly comparable to other scattered development already present on the loch shore. The permanent structures on the hillside within the area of forestry clearance would contrast with the residential scale of other buildings within Dores. The full extent of the western elevation of the Embankment would be apparent across a large horizontal extent of views and the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure would be seen against the backdrop of the rolling hills beyond.

11.6.41 From Lochend, the removal of forestry would be noticeable on upper portions of the hillside extending to the skyline. The Embankment and the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure would be a new addition on the skyline. Overall the components of the Development visible would result in a limited change across a small part of the background of the view. The iconic vistas of the Great Glen and along Loch Ness would remain unchanged.

11.6.42 From individual properties in close proximity, the Embankment and Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure within a large expanse of cleared forestry would be dominant features in the view. The contrasting scale of the Development in close proximity views would fundamentally alter the balance of features and visual amenity experienced.

11.6.43 **Viewpoints 1** and **2** would result in **Major Adverse** and therefore **significant** effects at year 1 of operation. Whereas views experienced from Lochend at Viewpoint 3 would not result in a significant effect.

Views from recreational routes and places of interest

11.6.44 People using the Great Glen Way and a range of recreational and core paths on the north side of Loch Ness would experience elevated and open views of the operational Development. The scale of the Development would appear as a noticeable and contrasting addition in views east but would not fundamentally alter the balance and overall scenic

quality of these elevated and often panoramic views. As such visual effects from viewpoints 6 and 7 would not result in significant visual effects.

11.6.45 Views experienced from the Trail of the Seven Lochs would be significantly affected by the Development. The removal of forestry would be apparent and the Headpond, Embankment and the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure would be noticeable within the area of cleared forestry. Although the Headpond would be seen in the context of the adjacent lochs the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure would be a noticeable built element seen against the backdrop and often across the main focus of views experienced on this trail.

11.6.46 **Viewpoints 4** and **5** would result in **Moderate Adverse** and therefore **significant** effects.

11.6.47 Views experienced by people using recreational watercraft and Urquhart Castle would not result in significant visual effects. The introduction of the Tailpond Inlet / Outlet Structure and Permanent Jetty would appear on the loch shore. Although the Permanent Compound structures would be noticeable, the Development would be confined to within a small portion of the view. The overall scenic quality and composition of the view would remain largely intact and viewpoints 8 and 9 would not result in significant visual effects at year 1 of operation.

Views from roads

11.6.48 From one of the laybys along the A82 the Development would be apparent within an extensive area of cleared forestry. The Tailpond Inlet / Outlet Structure and Permanent Jetty would be visible structures on the edge of Loch Ness, whilst the Valvehouse, Control Building and Workshop would be seen set against a cleared expanse of woodland behind. The Permanent Compound (1) including the Battery House and Substation would be visible on the upper portion of the hillside within the expanse of cleared forestry whilst the Embankment would be noticeable across the background. In addition the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure would be a noticeable element on the skyline.

11.6.49 **Viewpoint 10** would result in a **Moderate Adverse** effect which is considered **significant**.

11.6.50 From the local road of the C1064 the scale and proximity of the Embankment would be apparent across the horizontal extent of the background of the view. The introduction of the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure would be apparent on the skyline above the Embankment. The Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure would be clearly distinguishable and seen in the context of smaller residential development within the surrounding context.

11.6.51 **Viewpoint 11** would result in a **Major Adverse** effect which is considered **significant**.

Summary of Effects at Operation (year 15)

Effects on Landscape Designations at Operation (year 15)

Aldourie Castle GDL

11.6.52 At year 15 of operation the Headpond and Embankment would be integrated into the landscape and would have little bearing on the landscape setting and framed vistas experienced from the Castle.

Loch Ness and Loch Duntelchaig SLA

11.6.53 The Development would be well integrated into the landscape and would have little bearing on the special qualities of the SLA. The reinstatement native broadleaved woodland has the potential to enhance the landscape elements and setting of the SLA. The improvement of existing pockets of semi-natural woodland would enhance the appearance of the lochside. The composition of native woodland and productive woodland would reduce the influence of

the former coniferous plantation and improve the edges of forestry on the slopes and plateau in which the Development is situated. Overall the Development would not result in any significant effects on the SLA.

Landscape Effects at Operation (year 15)

11.6.54 At year 15 of operation once reinstatement planting has established, no significant landscape effects are predicted. Reinstatement native broadleaf woodland would help to integrate the Headpond and Embankment into the landscape. The Headpond would sit within the context of the other large waterbodies. Once established, the reinstatement woodland would reinforce the character and pattern of semi-natural and ancient woodland that extends up the loch edge and would improve the visual and seasonal diversity within the context of the moorland plateau. Furthermore the composition of the reinstated woodland would improve the balance and scenic quality of the landscape. In the long term, the Development would not alter the overall impression and character of the landscape.

Visual Effects at Operation (year 15)

11.6.55 At year 15 of operation only 3 of the 11 viewpoints assessed would result in significant visual effects. Once established the native broadleaved woodland would help to integrate various components of the Development into the view and the scale and prominence of the Development would be reduced.

Views from residential settlements

11.6.56 Significant visual effects from residential settlements would be limited to individual properties in close proximity to the Development. Once established, the native broadleaved woodland would partially reduce the scale of vertical change experienced in views north towards the Embankment and the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure. Nonetheless the height and mass of the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure would be apparent and in relatively close proximity. The overall balance of features in the view would be altered and the contrast would be noticeable.

11.6.57 **Viewpoint 1** would result in **Moderate Adverse** and therefore **significant** effects at year 15 of operation. Whereas viewpoints 2 and 3 would not result in significant visual effects.

Views from recreational routes and places of interest

11.6.58 There would be no significant effects experienced from users of recreational routes. From elevated locations along recreational routes, the Headpond would be seen in the immediate context of the existing lochs but would appear smaller than Loch Duntelchaig, which would maintain a balance of similar features within the view. Whilst the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure would remain a small but noticeable feature within some views, the Development would not noticeably detract from the overall balance and composition of views from the majority of recreational routes and no long term significant visual effects are anticipated.

11.6.59 Views from Urquhart Castle would not be significantly affected by the Development. The establishment of woodland would help to disassociate the Development components and further reduce the scale and prominence of the Development within the view. The permanent buildings at the Tailpond would be largely integrated into the wooded loch edge. The Tailpond Inlet / Outlet Structure and Permanent Jetty would be distinguishable at the loch shore but oblique to the main focus of the view.

Views from roads

11.6.60 Views from the A82 would not be significantly affected at year 15 of operation. The established woodland would reduce the sense of scale associated with the Development

and would help to integrate it into the landscape and consequently into the view. The Landscape Embankment together with the woodland planting would substantially reduce the prominence of the Embankment across the skyline. There would only be a minor change to the overall composition of the view.

11.6.61 Effects on views experienced by road users of the local road network in close proximity to the Development, particularly the C1064 would remain significant. The vertical scale of the Embankment would be partially reduced by the reinstated woodland but would remain a contrasting feature in views. The presence of the Headpond Inlet / Outlet Structure would also remain a noticeable and discordant feature in the view.

11.6.62 Viewpoint 11 would result in **Moderate Adverse** and therefore **significant** effects at year 15 of operation.

11.7 Cumulative Effects

Inter-cumulative effects

11.7.1 The assessment of likely cumulative effects is based on the cumulative schemes identified in Chapter 4: Approach to EIA, Table 4.8**.** Schemes that have been considered as potential cumulative schemes relevant to the landscape and visual resource are as follows:

- The Coire Glas, revised application for 1500 MW PSH Scheme, Ref: 18/01564/S36;
- 15 m high EE Telecommunications Tower, Ref:17/03199/FUL; and
- Underground Water Main, Ref: 16/05768/SCRE.

11.7.2 There would be no intervisibility between the Development and the Coire Glas PSH. There is unlikely to be intervisibility between the Development and the Telecoms Tower due to its lower topographical location and surrounding wooded hills. Therefore the Coire Glas PSH and the Telecoms Tower in combination with the Development would not result in cumulative effects.

11.7.3 The Underground Water Main would broadly follow part of the Temporary Access Track corridor between the B862 and Compound 1. However, it is likely to be constructed before works at the Development Site would commence. Therefore cumulative effects from the Underground Water Main would not be anticipated.

11.7.4 No inter-cumulative effects are expected with the other projects identified in Chapter 4: Approach to EIA, including the grid connection which is expected to be underground to the Knocknagel substation.

Intra-cumulative effects

11.7.5 The Chapters where there is the potential for intra-relationship effects include the following:

- Chapter 12: Forestry - There would be combined effects on the Loch Duntelchaig and Loch Ness SLA, Broad Steep-Sided Glen LCT, Flat Plateau with Woodland LCT and the existing forestry within the Development Site. Combined effects would result from the scale and extent of felling. Reinstatement planting would also have a combined effect that would lessen the overall impression of the Development within the landscape and would reduce the overall loss of stocked woodland.
- Chapter 13: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage - There would be combined effects on the visual amenity experienced at Urquhart Castle and on the setting of the asset.
- Chapter 14: Socio Economics and Tourism - Combined effects would be experienced by recreational users of the designated trails and core paths within the study area,

where there would be intervisibility of the Development and where there are also diversions proposed.

- Chapter 15: Traffic and Transport - Combined effects would be experienced by users of the road network during the construction phase where the sense of activity would increase.

11.7.6 The intra-relationship effects identified above would not be worse than those temporary and permanent effects assessed within the Landscape and Visual Assessment.

11.8 Mitigation and Monitoring

11.8.1 Embedded mitigation measures, which have been incorporated within the design of the Development, or are standard practice measures that have been committed to, are summarised in Section 3.5 of Chapter 3: Design Evolution and Alternatives. All mitigation measures for the landscape and visual assessment are embedded such as the design of the Landscape Embankment and the production of the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

11.8.2 Whilst residual significant effects remain for some of the landscape and visual receptors, no additional mitigation it available that would be effective in further reducing effects.

11.9 Residual effects

11.9.1 As all mitigation is embedded in the Development and there is no additional mitigation, all effect described in Section 11.5 Assessment of Effects above are residual. The following tables therefore present a summary of the landscape and visual assessment.

Table 11.3 Summary of Effects: Construction

Receptor	Description of Effect	Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects	Significance
Broad Steep-Sided Glen	Effect on landscape character	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Farmed and Wooded Foothills	Effect on landscape character	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland	Effect on landscape character	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Rocky Moorland Plateau	Effect on landscape character	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland	Effect on landscape character	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 1: Minor road adjacent to Ach-Na-Sidhe B & B	Effect on visual amenity	Major Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Major Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 2: Abriachan	Effect on visual amenity	Major Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Major Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 3: Lochend	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 4: Minor road to the north-east of Loch Duntelchaig (Trail of the Seven Lochs)	Effect on visual amenity	Major Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Major Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 5: Trail of the Seven Lochs between Loch Duntelchaig and Loch a' Choire	Effect on visual amenity	Major Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is	Major Adverse	Significant

Receptor	Description of Effect	Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects	Significance
			embedded)		
Viewpoint 6: Creag nan Clag	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 7: Carn na Leitire (near The Great Glen Way)	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 8: Watercraft on Loch Ness	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 9: Urquhart Castle	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 10: Layby on A82	Effect on visual amenity	Major Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Major Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 11: Local road near Caisteal an Dunriachaidh	Effect on visual amenity	Major Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Major Adverse	Significant

Table 11.4 Summary of Effects: Operation (Year 1)

Receptor	Description of Effect	Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects	Significance
Broad Steep-Sided Glen	Effect on landscape character	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Farmed and Wooded Foothills	Effect on landscape character	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland	Effect on landscape character	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Rocky Moorland Plateau	Effect on landscape character	Negligible	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Negligible	Not Significant
Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland	Effect on landscape character	Negligible	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Negligible	Not Significant
Viewpoint 1: Minor road adjacent to Ach-Na-Sidhe B & B	Effect on visual amenity	Major Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Major Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 2: Abriachan	Effect on visual amenity	Major Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Major Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 3: Lochend	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 4: Minor road to the north-east of Loch Duntelchaig (Trail of the Seven Lochs)	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 5: Trail of the Seven Lochs between Loch Duntelchaig and Loch a' Choire	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is	Moderate Adverse	Significant

Receptor	Description of Effect	Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects	Significance
			embedded)		
Viewpoint 6: Creag nan Clag	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 7: Carn na Leitire (near The Great Glen Way)	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 8: Watercraft on Loch Ness	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 9: Urquhart Castle	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 10: Layby on A82	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 11: Local road near Caisteal an Dunriachaidh	Effect on visual amenity	Major Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Major Adverse	Significant

Table 11.5 Summary of Effects: Operation (Year 15)

Receptor	Description of Effect	Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects	Significance
Broad Steep-Sided Glen	Effect on landscape character	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Farmed and Wooded Foothills	Effect on landscape character	Negligible	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Negligible	Not Significant
Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland	Effect on landscape character	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Rocky Moorland Plateau	Effect on landscape character	Negligible	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Negligible	Not Significant
Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland	Effect on landscape character	Negligible	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Negligible	Not Significant
Viewpoint 1: Minor road adjacent to Ach-Na-Sidhe B & B	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant
Viewpoint 2: Abriachan	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 3: Lochend	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 4: Minor road to the north-east of Loch Duntelchaig (Trail of the Seven Lochs)	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 5: Trail of the Seven Lochs between Loch Duntelchaig and Loch a' Choire	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is	Minor Adverse	Not Significant

Receptor	Description of Effect	Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects	Significance
			embedded)		
Viewpoint 6: Creag nan Clag	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 7: Cairn na Leitire (near The Great Glen Way)	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 8: Watercraft on Loch Ness	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 9: Urquhart Castle	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 10: Lay-by on A82	Effect on visual amenity	Minor Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Viewpoint 11: Local road near Caisteal an Dunriachaidh	Effect on visual amenity	Moderate Adverse	N/A (All mitigation is embedded)	Moderate Adverse	Significant

11.10 References

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