

Appendix 6.3: Ben Lui Wild Land Impact Assessment



Car Duibh Wind Farm Limited

**An Càrr Dubh Wind
Farm EIA**

**LVIA - Appendix 6.3
Ben Lui Wild Land
Impact Assessment**

Final report

Prepared by LUC
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Car Duibh Wind Farm Limited

An Càrr Dubh Wind Farm EIA

LVIA - Appendix 6.3

Ben Lui Wild Land Impact Assessment

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Contents

Appendix 6.3

Wild Land Impact Assessment **1**

| | |
|--|---|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Context to Wild Land in Scotland | 1 |
| Approach and Methodology | 1 |
| Step 1 – Defining the Study Area and Scope of the Assessment | 3 |
| Step 2 - Verifying the WLA Baseline | 5 |
| Step 3 – Sensitivity of the WLA Qualities | 7 |
| Step 4 – Assessment of Effects | 7 |
| Step 5 – Judgement of the Significance of Effects | 8 |

Appendix 6.3

Wild Land Impact Assessment

Introduction

A6.3.1 This wild land impact assessment is independent of, but draws upon, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) contained in **Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Amenity** of the EIA Report, providing specific additional detail in respect of potential effects on the key attributes and qualities of Wild Land Areas (WLAs).

A6.3.2 Due to the presence of WLAs within the Study Area for the LVIA, there was potential for visibility of wind turbines of the Proposed Development to result in significant effects on the wild land qualities of the WLA, and it was therefore necessary to prepare a wild land impact assessment to supplement the LVIA.

A6.3.3 In preparing this wild land impact assessment, Chartered Landscape Architects from LUC engaged with NatureScot (formerly known as Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)¹) to agree the approach, scope and presentation of the assessment as requested in NatureScot's scoping response (dated 18th March 2020, and detailed in **Table 6.1** contained in **Chapter 6** of the EIA Report). Figures and visualisations referred to within this assessment can be found in EIA Report Volume 1: Main Text EIA Report Volume 2: Figures and EIA Report Volume 3: LVIA and Cultural Heritage Visualisations.

A6.3.4 On 28th September 2020, NatureScot published finalised technical guidance² to be used for the assessment of effects on WLAs. The assessment presented in this appendix was undertaken in accordance with the finalised technical guidance (2020).

Context to Wild Land in Scotland

A6.3.5 Areas of Scotland which exhibit strong indicators of wildness, were identified by SNH and are known as WLAs. These are not designated but their importance is recognised in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). NPF4³ sets out that *"development proposals for wind farms in National Parks and National Scenic Areas will not be supported"* (Page 53). It also outlines that *"effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration"* (NPF4, Policy 4, Page 41) and states that proposals within a WLA should be accompanied by a wild land impact assessment. Although not a statutory designation, WLAs and their component qualities of wildness require protection, but not to the same level as nationally designated landscapes and therefore, as a matter of national policy, WLAs do not have the same level of protection as National Parks and National Scenic Areas.

A6.3.6 This is supported by statements in Annex 1 to SNH's publication 'Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines – Natural Heritage Considerations' (SNH, 2015) which states that, in relation to the landscape objectives for accommodation of wind farms in the Scottish landscape, WLAs (unlike NSAs) may be considered suitable for the development of wind farms: *"Within local landscape designations and Wild Land Areas, the degree of landscape protection will be less than for National Scenic Areas. In these areas, an appropriate objective may be to accommodate wind farms, rather than seek landscape protection."*

A6.3.7 The location and extents of WLAs were published by SNH in 2014, superseding earlier 'Search Areas for Wild Land' (SNH, 2002) and 'Core Areas of Wild Land' (SNH, 2014)⁴. SNH's identification of WLAs was a phased approach, as set out in 'Mapping of Scotland's Wildness and Wild Land: Non-technical Description of the Methodology' (SNH, June 2014⁵).

A6.3.8 The first stage in this process was to identify indicators of potential wildness according to four attributes:

- Perceived naturalness of land cover;

- The ruggedness of the terrain which is therefore challenging to cross;
- Remoteness from public roads, ferries or railway stations;
- The lack of visible buildings, roads, pylons and other modern artefacts.

A6.3.9 Areas were scored in relation to these four attributes and the largest areas with the highest scores were identified. Informed judgement then confirmed which of these areas merited selection as a WLA.

A6.3.10 SNH published descriptions for each of the 42 WLAs within which the wild land qualities (physical and perceptual) particular to each WLA are described under the heading of *"Key attributes and qualities of the wild land area"*. The finalised technical guidance required that these should form the starting point for an assessment of impacts on a WLA, and notes that the *"strength to which the wild land qualities are expressed will vary in different parts of the WLA"*, but that in general they will *"strengthen progressively as a person moves into a WLA"* (para 20).

A6.3.11 The guidance goes on to list the *physical attributes* of a WLA as:

- *"A high degree of perceived naturalness;*
- *A lack of modern human artefacts or structures;*
- *Little evidence of contemporary land uses;*
- *Landform which is rugged, or otherwise physically challenging; and*
- *Remoteness and / or inaccessibility'.*

A6.3.12 Whilst the *perceptual responses* evoked by these physical attributes include:

- *"A sense of sanctuary or solitude;*
- *Risk or, for some visitors, a sense of awe or anxiety;*
- *Perceptions that the landscape has arresting or inspiring qualities;*
- *Fulfilment from the physical challenge required to penetrate into these places"*.

Approach and Methodology

Guidance and Reference

A6.3.13 The following list identifies all key documents and sources of information used in preparing the assessment:

- Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas – Technical Guidance⁶;
- Assessing the Impacts on Wild Land, Interim Guidance Note⁷;
- Scotland's Wild Land Area Descriptions: methodology⁸;

¹ Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) rebranded in August 2020 as NatureScot. Where relevant, reference is still made to SNH within this chapter in respect of guidance which remains valid and is yet to be updated or republished.

² NatureScot (September 2020). Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas – Technical Guidance. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/assessing-impacts-wild-land-areas-technical-guidance> (Accessed 07/07/2022)

³ Scottish Government (2022) National Planning Framework 4 Revised Draft [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2022/11/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/documents/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/govscot%3Adocument/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft.pdf>

⁴ SNH (2014), Core Areas of Wild Land 2013 Map - Advice to Government – 16th June 2014. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-02/CAWL%202013%20map%20-%20Advice%20to%20Government%20-%20Revised%20Final%20-%2017%20June%202014%20.pdf> (Accessed 07/07/2022)

⁵ SNH (2014), Mapping Scotland's Wildness. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/mapping-scotlands-wildness-and-wild-land-non-technical-description-methodology> (Accessed 07/07/2022)

⁶ NatureScot (September 2020). Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas – Technical Guidance. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/assessing-impacts-wild-land-areas-technical-guidance> (Accessed 07/07/2022)

⁷ SNH (2014), Assessing the Impacts on Wild Land, Interim Guidance Note.

⁸ SNH (2017), Scotland's Wild Land Area Descriptions: methodology.

- Description of Wild Land Areas – Ben Lui Wild Land Area⁹;
- Descriptions of Wild Land Areas – Loch Etive Mountains Wild Land Area¹⁰;
- Descriptions of Wild Land Areas – Ben More – Ben Ledi Wild Land Area¹¹;
- Description of Wild Land Areas – Jura, Scarba lunga and Garvellachs Wild Land Area¹²;
- Description of Wild Land Areas – Breadalbane - Schiehallion Wild Land Area¹³;
- Description of Wild Land Areas – Ben More, Mull Wild Land Area¹⁴;
- Core Areas of Wild Land 2013 Map - Advice to Government – 16th June 2014¹⁵;
- Mapping Scotland's Wildness¹⁶;
- Wildness in Scotland's Countryside, Policy Statement No. 02/03¹⁷;
- Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments¹⁸;
- Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines – natural heritage considerations, Guidance¹⁹; and
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA)²⁰

Data Sources

- Ordnance Survey (OS) maps;
- OS 'Terrain50' and 'Terrain5' Digital Terrain Model; and
- SNH Natural Spaces (GIS data for wild land and attribute mapping).

Methodology

A6.3.14 The assessment methodology is based upon the draft and final 'Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas - Technical Guidance' (NatureScot 2020²¹). The assessment considers potential effects on both the physical and perceptual attributes and qualities of wild land. The five-step process is described in the guidance and each step is described below.

Step 1 – Define the study area and the scope of the assessment

“Identify a study area appropriate to the scale of the proposal and extent of likely significant effects on the WLA.”

A6.3.15 The study area should reflect the extent of the likely effects on WLAs, including any cumulative effects.

- The scale of development and extent of effects;
- The extent of visibility;
- Routes and movement through the WLA;

- The wild land qualities likely to be affected; and
- The potential for cumulative effects.

A6.3.16 Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs) and Cumulative ZTVs (CZTVs) are prepared to illustrate the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development, and the influence of other operational, consented and proposed wind farms across WLAs within the Study Area. The ZTVs are based on a 'bare ground' computer generated terrain model, which does not take account of potential screening by buildings or vegetation or of atmospheric conditions, and therefore represents a 'maximum potential visibility' scenario (details of how the ZTVs are generated provided in **Appendix 6.1: LVIA Visualisation Methodology**).

A6.3.17 The ZTVs and CZTVs are used to inform the selection of WLAs to be considered in the wild land impact assessment, and the identification of the Study Area(s) to be considered for each WLA. The ZTV also informs the selection of the wild land assessment points to be used, and from which visualisations are prepared to illustrate the effects of the Proposed Development (along with cumulative effects in conjunction with other evident operational, consented and proposed wind farms) on particular wild land qualities.

A6.3.18 Not all wild land qualities of a particular WLA will necessarily require consideration within the detailed assessment. It is necessary, based on the type and scale of development proposed, and the nature of the wild land qualities to determine whether each in turn could be affected by the Proposed Development. This exercise should also consider how both the physical attributes and/or perceptual responses associated with the particular wild land quality could be affected.

Step 2 – Verify the WLA Baseline

“Confirm the wild land qualities (set out in the WLA description) relevant to the study area, describing any major changes that have occurred since the description was prepared and the nature of their contribution to the WLA.”

A6.3.19 When reviewing the baseline, the following are undertaken:

- Establish and describe the extent or strength to which physical and perceptual attributes which contribute to wild land qualities of the WLA are present;
- Describe the character and condition of the area affected and its contribution to the wild land areas as a whole, and how this may vary progressively as a receptor moves through a WLA; and
- Identify changes which may have individually or collectively have affected the appreciation of the baseline wild land qualities (as described in the WLA descriptions).

A6.3.20 The WLA descriptions (SNH, 2017) set out the key attributes and qualities of each WLA. As directed by the assessment guidance, this information was supplemented by site visits.

Step 3 – Assess the sensitivity of the WLA qualities

“Through detailed field assessment within the study area, assess the sensitivity of the wild land qualities scoped in (including their physical attributes and perceptual responses), to the type and scale of change proposed.”

⁹ SNH (2017), Description of Wild Land Areas – Ben Lui Wild Land Area. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-06/Wild%20land%20Description%20Ben-Lui-January-2017-06.pdf> (Accessed 18/10/2021)

¹⁰ SNH (2017), Descriptions of Wild Land Areas – Loch Etive Mountains Wild Land Area. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-09/Wild%20land%20Description%20Loch-Etive-mountains-July-2016-09.pdf> (Accessed 18/10/2021)

¹¹ SNH (2017), Descriptions of Wild Land Areas – Ben More – Ben Ledi Wild Land Area. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-06/Wild%20land%20Description%20Ben-More-Ben-Ledi-January-2017-07.pdf> (Accessed 18/10/2021)

¹² SNH (2017), Description of Wild Land Areas – Jura, Scarba lunga and Garvellachs Wild Land Area. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-06/Wild%20land%20Description%20Jura-Scarba-Lunga-and-Garvellachs-July-2016-05.pdf> (Accessed 18/10/2021)

¹³ SNH (2017), Description of Wild Land Areas – Breadalbane - Schiehallion Wild Land Area. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-06/Wild%20land%20Description%20Breadalbane-Schiehallion-July-2016-10.pdf> (Accessed 18/10/2021)

¹⁴ SNH (2017), Description of Wild Land Areas – Ben More, Mull Wild Land Area. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-06/Wild%20land%20Description%20Ben-More%2C-Mull-July-2016-08.pdf> (Accessed 18/10/2021)

¹⁵ SNH (2014), Core Areas of Wild Land 2013 Map - Advice to Government – 16th June 2014. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-02/CAWL%202013%20map%20-%20Advice%20to%20Government%20-%20Revised%20Final%20-%202017%20June%202014%20.pdf> (Accessed 15/07/2022)

¹⁶ SNH (2014), Mapping Scotland's Wildness. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/mapping-scotlands-wildness-and-wild-land-non-technical-description-methodology> (Accessed 15/07/2022)

¹⁷ SNH (2003), Wildness in Scotland's Countryside, Policy Statement No. 02/03. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2019-10/Wildness%20in%20Scotland%27s%20Countryside%20-%20Policy%20Statement.pdf> (Accessed 15/07/2022)

¹⁸ Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (2012), Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/guidance-assessing-cumulative-impact-onshore-wind-energy-developments> (Accessed 15/07/2022)

¹⁹ SNH (2015), Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines – natural heritage considerations, Guidance. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2019-10/Guidance%20-%20Spatial%20Planning%20for%20Onshore%20Wind%20Turbines%20-%20natural%20heritage%20considerations%20-%20June%202015.pdf> (Accessed 15/07/2022)

²⁰ Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment (2013), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)

²¹ NatureScot (September 2020). Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas – Technical Guidance. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/assessing-impacts-wild-land-areas-technical-guidance> (Accessed 08/07/2022)

A6.3.21 The susceptibility of WLAs to different forms of development will vary according to the particular wild land qualities (and relevant physical attributes and perceptual responses), to what extent they are intact and the scale and likely effect of different development types on such qualities.

A6.3.22 Sensitivity and susceptibility are sometimes used interchangeably in respect to LVIA; however, in accordance with the approach advocated by GLVIA3²², the assessment considers both value and susceptibility to inform an overall judgement of sensitivity. The NatureScot 2020 guidance also notes factors that may influence sensitivity, including:

- *“The strength of the qualities expressed within the area likely to be affected by the proposal, together with the influence of existing detractors on the individual qualities;*
- *Where there may be overlap between individual qualities and their contributing attributes or responses, explanatory text should clearly state how the WLA description has been interpreted and which qualities, and associated attributes and responses, are considered in the assessment.*
- *Whilst the qualities experienced from well visited destinations and routes within the WLA will be particularly sensitive, the assessment should recognise that WLAs even if not highly visited are sensitive.” (para 23)*

A6.3.23 The sensitivity of the wild land qualities, and the relevant physical attributes and perceptual responses, is informed by the WLA descriptions and fieldwork (the Annex to this assessment contains photographs taken during fieldwork).

A6.3.24 The assessment therefore considers the sensitivity of wild land qualities to the specific type and scale of development, and is classified as **High, Medium** or **Low**.

Step 4 – Assess the effects

“Assess the effects on individual and/ or combinations of qualities, drawing out which physical attributes and perceptual responses will be affected, how and to what degree. This should reflect the size or scale of change, its extent and duration.”

A6.3.25 The assessment of effects on wild land qualities is undertaken in accordance with the principles of GLVIA3, combining professional judgement on the size or scale of change, geographical extent of the area influenced, and the duration and reversibility of the change and combined to consider the overall effect (magnitude of change). In all cases, effects are considered to be adverse, duration is considered to be long-term²³ (in excess of 10 years), and reversibility is considered to be reversible or partially reversible, unless otherwise stated. The assessment considers effects on the attributes and qualities of the WLA as they are experienced from within, not outside, the WLA.

A6.3.26 The effects on wild land qualities are described as **High, Medium, Low** or **Negligible**.

Step 5 – Judgement of the significance of effect

“Conclude on the overall significance (taking into account any mitigation), in terms of the study area and where relevant the wider WLA.”

A6.3.27 The assessment concludes with an overall judgement on the significance of effects on each wild land quality of the WLA and is undertaken in accordance with the principles of GLVIA3. Where appropriate, potential mitigation measures may be identified to further reduce the identified effects, which may result in a subsequent judgement of the residual effects following implementation of these measures.

A6.3.28 As advocated by the guidance (NatureScot, 2020²⁴) the assessment is set out in accordance with the above key steps, presenting a transparent assessment with clear reasoning for the effects and complexity of effects identified.

Step 1 – Defining the Study Area and Scope of the Assessment

WLAs within the LVIA Study Area

A6.3.29 Whilst the Proposed Development is located outside any WLA, this assessment considers the potential for effects upon WLAs located within the 45 km radius Study Area used for the LVIA and focuses on those which may be indirectly affected by the introduction of the Proposed Development.

A6.3.30 **Figure 6.1.6** and **Table A6.3.1** detail the WLAs located within the Study Area, and the ZTV illustrated on **Figure 6.1.7** indicates the extent of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development across each of these WLAs.

Table A6.3.1: Wild Land Areas within LVIA Study Area

| WLA | Location and distance ²⁵ | Potential for effects on wild land qualities |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 06 Ben Lui | 12.9km | The Proposed Development is located within 15km of the south-western boundary of WLA. It is likely to extend the existing influence of wind farm development, including the operational An Suidhe next to the Proposed Development, and have indirect effects on the physical attributes and perceptual responses of the WLA. Considered in assessment. |
| 09 Loch Etive mountains | 16.5km | Given the distance and presence of other intervening developments in views from this WLA, attributes and qualities of the WLA will not be significantly compromised. WLA not considered in detailed assessment. |
| 07 Ben More – Ben Ledi | 28.1km | Given the intervening distance and limited visibility indicated by the ZTV, attributes and qualities of the WLA will not be significantly compromised. WLA not considered in detailed assessment. |
| 05 Jura, Scarba lunga and Garvellachs | 29.6km | Given the intervening distance and limited visibility indicated by the ZTV, attributes and qualities of the WLA will not be significantly compromised. WLA not considered in detailed assessment. |
| 10 Breadalbane - Schiehallion | 35.0km | Given the intervening distance and limited visibility indicated by the ZTV, attributes and qualities of the WLA will not be significantly compromised. WLA not considered in detailed assessment. |

²² Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition

²³ Assessment considers effects arising during the operational (long-term) phase of the project only.

²⁴ NatureScot (September 2020). Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas – Technical Guidance. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/assessing-impacts-wild-land-areas-technical-guidance> (Accessed 08/07/2022)

²⁵ To the nearest turbine within the Proposed Development

| WLA | Location and distance ²⁵ | Potential for effects on wild land qualities |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 08 Ben More, Mull | 42.7km | Given the intervening distance and limited visibility indicated by the ZTV, attributes and qualities of the WLA will not be significantly compromised. WLA not considered in detailed assessment. |

A6.3.31 Given the intervening distance between the Proposed Development and the majority of the WLAs listed above, the key attributes and qualities of these WLAs are not considered likely to be significantly compromised by the introduction of the Proposed Development, and are therefore not considered in the detailed assessment²⁶. The wild land impact assessment therefore only considers the potential effects on the wild land qualities of **WLA 06: Ben Lui**.

Study Area and Scope of Assessment – WLA06 – Ben Lui

A6.3.32 WLA 06 lies to the north-east of the Site, extending between approximately 12.8km and 33km north-east of the Proposed Development. The majority of effects on wild land qualities are expected to be experienced closest to the Site across the south-western extents of the WLA and from localised elevated summits within the interior.

A6.3.33 The Proposed Development is not located within WLA 06, and therefore there will be no direct impacts upon physical attributes of the WLA.

A6.3.34 The elements of the Proposed Development which are likely to indirectly affect the qualities of WLA 06 are the up to 13 proposed wind turbines of up to 180m to blade tip height (155m rotor diameter and 102.5 m hub height). The associated ancillary infrastructure (e.g. access tracks) will be largely indiscernible. The aviation lights which are proposed on seven of the turbine hubs are also a consideration, with further detail being provided in **Appendix 14.2**.

Extent of Visibility

A6.3.35 The ZTV shown on **Figure 6.1.7** indicates theoretical visibility across a relatively large proportion of the south-west of the WLA and more limited visibility in the north-east, from where indirect effects upon parts of the WLA may occur. This will predominantly be experienced in conjunction with the operational An Suidhe Wind Farm which is adjacent to the Proposed Development and Clachan Flats Wind Farm which is just beyond the south-western boundary of the WLA, to the north of Loch Fyne. The wind turbines within the existing wind farms exert an influence across the western and south-western extents of the WLA.

A6.3.36 Although potential effects on WLA 06 are considered as a whole, the assessment focusses on potential effects in areas of additional visibility of wind turbines introduced by the Proposed Development, as highlighted by the ZTV shown on **Figure 6.1.10**. There are very limited areas of visibility where only the Proposed Development will be visible, primarily at slightly lower elevations on the site-facing slopes of Ben Lui (LVIA Viewpoint 26), and Ben Oss. These are areas which generally cannot be accessed without experiencing views of existing wind farm development whilst travelling to these areas. The exception is if people access these slopes via Gleann nan Caorann in the east of the WLA. However, as receptors generally would continue to the summits of these popular hills, they would experience panoramic views which include existing wind farms.

A6.3.37 The western and north-western extents of the WLA, and the interior of the WLA, will experience no visibility of the Proposed Development (as illustrated on **Figure 6.1.7**)

Routes and movement through the WLA

A6.3.38 The guidance (NatureScot, 2020) notes that the “*extent of visibility and recognised routes/ movement through the WLA*” should inform the scope of the assessment. The WLA 06 description²⁷ notes that the WLA is “*readily accessible from the Central Belt and none of the WLA lies over 10 km from a public road*”. It continues to state that “*busy glens with roads and rail lines lie beyond the*

WLA on three sides: Glen Falloch to the south-east, Strath Fillan to the north-east and Glen Lochy to the north” and that the settlements of Crianlarich, Inveraman and Tyndrum serve as “*gateways*” for visitors.

A6.3.39 Whilst the hills in the south-west are generally more difficult to access, the Munro summit of Ben Lui (Viewpoint 26) and the nearby peaks are popular with walkers and climbers due to their proximity to nearby settlements. These hills are located along the northern boundary of the WLA and are typically accessed by hillwalkers from Glen Lochy to the north.

A6.3.40 There are no promoted long-distance routes within the WLA; however, several core paths extend up Gleann nan Caorann. Private tracks follow most of the larger glens and provide access to hydro schemes within the WLA. Tracks are generally restricted to glens, although some newer tracks climb into the open lower hills.

Wild Land Qualities likely to be affected

A6.3.41 The Proposed Development is located entirely outside WLA 06, and the wild land impact assessment is therefore limited to identifying where there is potential for indirect effects on the defined wild land qualities.

A6.3.42 The description of WLA 06: Ben Lui sets out the key wild land qualities, and relevant physical attributes and perceptual responses, which are defined in **Table A6.3.2**.

A6.3.43 Fieldwork undertaken during August 2021 and July 2022 confirmed that two of the four wild land qualities are expressed, to a varying degree, primarily within a radius of approximately 15km although also from some more distant site-facing slopes. These were agreed with NatureScot²⁸. The Annex to this assessment contains photographs taken during fieldwork, and, where relevant, reference is made to the specific wild land quality, physical attribute and/or perceptual response which they illustrate.

A6.3.44 Each wild land quality in turn is considered in respect of the potential for it to be affected by the Proposed Development; however, the potential for these to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development will vary.

A6.3.45 The Study Area for the detailed assessment of effects on the wild land qualities of WLA 06, informed by the ZTV (shown on **Figure 6.1.7**) primarily focuses on a radius of approximately 15km from the proposed wind turbines, within the south-western extents of the WLA. However, the assessment also considers more distant locations such as the popular Ben Lui summit (Viewpoint 26). Although large extents of the WLA will experience no visibility of the Proposed Development, where relevant, consideration is given to how particular wild land qualities will remain unaffected by wind farm development.

Table A6.3.2: WLA 06 Wild Land Qualities

| Wild Land Quality (from WLA description) | Relevant physical attributes and perceptual responses (from WLA description) | Expressed within the Study Area and potential for effects |
|---|--|---|
| Wild Land Quality 1 <i>“Contrast between the more massive and remote hills in the south-west and the arresting, more visible and popular hills to the north-east”</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Awe-inspiring</i> ■ <i>Arresting</i> ■ <i>Rugged</i> ■ <i>Sense of solitude</i> ■ <i>Physically challenging</i> ■ <i>Sense of remoteness and sanctuary</i> ■ <i>Sense of risk</i> | <p>The wild land quality is expressed across much of the WLA, notably from elevated landform and hill summits within the south-west and north-east of WLA, from which theoretical visibility is indicated within 14.5km from the nearest turbine forming part of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Potential for wild land quality to be indirectly affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Effects on wild land quality considered in detailed assessment</p> |
| Wild Land Quality 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Naturalness</i> ■ <i>Arresting</i> | <p>The wild land quality is best experienced from the lower-lying glens to which it refers, as providing arresting views, from</p> |

²⁷ SNH (2017), Description of Wild Land Areas – Ben Lui Wild Land Area. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-06/Wild%20land%20Description%20Ben-Lui-January-2017-06.pdf> (Accessed 18/10/2021)

²⁸ Wild Land Qualities to be assessed were agreed with NatureScot on 29th September 2021.

| Wild Land Quality (from WLA description) | Relevant physical attributes and perceptual responses (from WLA description) | Expressed within the Study Area and potential for effects |
|---|--|--|
| "Rugged and highly natural mountains, penetrated by steep-sided glens that contain well-used routes and provide arresting views" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sense of naturalness ■ Human artefacts ■ Rugged ■ Evidence of contemporary land use ■ Awe-inspiring ■ Sense of solitude, sanctuary and remoteness | <p>which there is no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development predicted.</p> <p>Effects on wild land quality are therefore not considered in detailed assessment.</p> |
| Wild Land Quality 3 "A landscape that generally well-defined by surrounding human elements in views from higher slopes" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Arresting ■ Rugged ■ Awe-inspiring ■ Extent ■ Human artefacts ■ Sense of remoteness and sanctuary | <p>The wild land quality is expressed across much of the WLA, particularly near the boundary, and from elevated landform and hill summits which offer long-ranging views into the surrounding areas. Theoretical visibility is indicated within 14.5km from the nearest turbine forming part of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Potential for wild land quality to be indirectly affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Effects on wild land quality considered in detailed assessment</p> |
| Wild Land Quality 4 "Few human artefacts within much of the upland area, in contrast to some of the glens where hydro development is a recurring feature" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sense of remoteness, sanctuary and solitude ■ Human artefacts ■ Contemporary land use | <p>The wild land quality is expressed across the uplands within the WLA. The Proposed Development will not be 'within' the uplands of the WLA. In the lower-lying glens, there is no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development predicted.</p> <p>Effects on wild land quality are therefore not considered in detailed assessment.</p> |

Wild Land Assessment Points

A6.3.46 To support the assessment of effects on each wild land quality, wild land assessment points were identified within the Study Area from which particular wild land qualities, and their physical attributes and/or perceptual responses are expressed. The ZTV informed the selection of the three wild land assessment points which were shared and agreed with NatureScot and are detailed in **Table A.3** below. The assessment points represent locations from where views will be experienced by recreational receptors at popular walking routes and hill summits within WLA 06.

A6.3.47 Two of these wild land assessment points are also considered as representative viewpoints in the LVIA contained in **Chapter 6** of the EIA Report. A wireline from Viewpoint 29: Beinn Bhuie is provided for reference, and this viewpoint is a night-time viewpoint, used to show the effects of aviation lighting on the turbines. However, unlike the representative viewpoints considered within the LVIA, views from these assessment points are not assessed individually within the wild land impact assessment, rather they are used as a means of understanding and illustrating the effects upon each of the wild land qualities.

²⁹ To the nearest turbines within the Proposed Development

A6.3.48 The findings of the LVIA were referred to in preparing this assessment of effects on WLAs and used to inform it. Whilst assessed levels of landscape and visual effects inform the assessment, they are not directly transferable or comparable to the levels of effect on WLAs identified here, as the criteria used for each assessment are different.

A6.3.49 Accompanying visualisations (presented in EIA Report Volume 3) were produced, in order to illustrate potential visibility of the Proposed Development in isolation and in conjunction with other operational, consented and proposed wind farm developments.

Table A6.3.3: Assessment Point Locations

| Location | OS Grid Reference | Approx. Distance ²⁹ | Reason for Selection | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| WLA2/ LVIA VP25: Troisgeach | 229034 | 719385 | 25.7km | Represents views experienced by recreational receptors from the hill summit within the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and within the eastern extents of WLA 06. Representative of Wild Land Qualities 1 and 3. |
| WLA1/ LVIA VP26: Ben Lui | 226631 | 726289 | 26.4km | Represents views experienced by recreational receptors from the Munro hill summit within the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and within the most northern extents of WLA 06. Representative of Wild Land Qualities 1 and 3. |
| WLA3/ LVIA VP29: Beinn Bhuidhe | 220344 | 718699 | 17.3km | Represents views experienced by recreational receptors from the remote Munro hill summit within the North Argyll APQ and within the south-western extents of WLA 06. Representative of Wild Land Qualities 1 and 3. |

Potential for Cumulative Effects

A6.3.50 No other operational, consented or proposed wind farm developments are located within WLA 06. **Figure 6.1.8** illustrates the location of other wind farm developments within a 60km radius of the Proposed Development. Potential cumulative effects on the landscape and visual amenity of the Study Area are described within the CLVIA contained in **Chapter 6** of the EIA Report; however, the potential for cumulative effects on the identified wild land qualities of WLA 06 are considered in the assessment below, and informed by the ZTVs included on **Figure 6.1.10 - 6.1.14**, as well as relevant LVIA and WLA assessment viewpoints, which are referenced where appropriate.

A6.3.51 The Proposed Development will be seen in combination with the operational An Suidhe Wind Farm, as well as the other operational wind farms located to the south-west of the WLA and which have already resulted in adverse effects on the qualities of the WLA – most notably: Clachan Flats Wind Farm, adjacent to the south-western WLA boundary, and Beinn Ghlas and Carraig Gheal Wind Farms to the west.

Step 2 - Verifying the WLA Baseline

A6.3.52 Consideration of the baseline of the WLA has been informed by the WLA 06 description and supplemented by observations during fieldwork undertaken between August 2021 and July 2022. The assessment is accompanied by annotated photographs (contained in the Annex to this assessment) obtained during fieldwork, selected where possible to illustrate the key wild land qualities of the WLA.

Baseline Characteristics

A6.3.53 In 2014, identification and mapping of WLAs by SNH confirmed the presence and extent of the Ben Lui WLA. The 2017 description of WLA 06³⁰ provides context, and describes key attributes and qualities. These were considered during desk-based review and site survey. This has allowed for recognition of changes which have occurred since production of descriptions and

³⁰ SNH (2017), Description of Wild Land Areas – Ben Lui Wild Land Area. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-06/Wild%20land%20Description%20Ben-Lui-January-2017-06.pdf> (Accessed 18/10/2021)

mapping, as well as an understanding of the strength of the attributes and qualities across different areas. The key wild land qualities of WLA 06 are set out in **Table A6.3.2** above.

A6.3.54 The relevant landscape character types (LCTs) which cover the area defined as WLA06: Ben Lui include the Steep Ridgeland and Mountains (LCT1), High Tops (LCT2), North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands (LCT7c) as defined in the LWECS³¹, and Highland Summits (251) LCT³². A number of the key characteristics of these LCTs are judged to contribute to the wildness qualities defined within the WLA description³³. Those of relevance are listed below:

Steep Ridgeland and Mountains (LCT1)

- *"The Steep Ridgeland and Mountains generally rise to around 700 m but with lower hills occurring on the western and southern fringes of the character type.*
- *The higher mountains have a massive scale although the narrow glens and sea lochs which cut into the hills and occasional small basins occurring between peaks are more contained.*
- *This landscape comprises mountains and long ridges (some of these very narrow) with steep slopes, patterned with small craggy knolls and deep gullies and occasionally featuring rocky summits.*
- *Vegetation cover is simple, largely comprising extensive coniferous forestry covering lower steep slopes and with rough grass between scattered boulders, rocky outcrops and traces of birch woodland.*
- *These uplands are very sparsely settled with isolated farms and estate houses located on narrow coastal edges and within glens accessible by road."*

High Tops (LCT2)

- *"The massive peaks and ridges of these mountains are highly visible and form a scenic rugged backdrop to the lower settled loch shores and coastal areas of Argyll and Bute.*
- *Many of these mountains have an instantly recognisable form and are important landmark features seen across a wide area.*
- *Mountains have a massive scale although the narrow valleys which cut into the mountains are strongly contained by steep slopes.*
- *Vegetation cover is simple, largely comprising grass moorland with patchy heather.*
- *The landscape is strongly patterned with exposed rock, crags, small lochs and myriad water courses significantly increasing complexity. Coniferous forestry occurs on the edges of this landscape.*
- *This mountainous area is very sparsely populated with roads and dispersed settlement occurring only on its fringes.*
- *An absence of built development and difficulty of access to the interior of these uplands give a strong sense of remoteness in places. The perception of wildness is accentuated by the ruggedness of the terrain.*
- *These uplands are popular with walkers because of their highly natural and rugged character and the presence of 'Munro' and 'Corbett' hills."*

North Loch Awe Craggy Uplands (LCT7c)

- *"This elevated moorland of horizontal ridges abuts steep-sided vertical hills, a contrast which is most dramatic when seen against the hills to the north. This juxtaposition limits the sense of expansive scale of this type, as the sense of horizontal expanse is curtailed by the massiveness of some of the High Tops, such as Ben Cruachan. Elevated to around 200-300m but with the highest ridge of hills extending to over 500m, the area appears as an undulating plateau, but on closer inspection is made up of a more complex series of long slopes, low ridges and valleys which create a medium scale landscape over much of the area.*
- *In many places, this craggy landform is irregular and complex, with numerous rocky outcrops and a knobbly texture.*

- *Open upland moorland predominates with some large conifer plantations.*
- *Rivers wind their way through some of the elevated glens, and small lochans, often at high elevations punctuate this landscape.*
- *This upland area is very sparsely settled.*
- *The presence of extensive forestry, tracks and the reservoir as well as its overall limited extent combine to limit the sense of naturalness.*
- *Roads, settlements, the railway line, recreational watercraft on Loch Awe and views from surrounding Munros and hill tops ensure that this area is generally widely visible."*

Highland Summits (251) LCT

- *"High mountains generally lying above 800 metres, but lower and intensely craggy in the core of the Trossachs where geology is particularly complex.*
- *Steep slopes often covered in scree.*
- *Narrow rocky ridges, deeply scooped corries and rocky gullies on many of these mountains.*
- *Narrow glens deeply cut into the mountains, often contain fast-flowing burns and waterfalls.*
- *Strongly patterned landscape with exposed rock, crags, small lochs and myriad water courses significantly increasing complexity.*
- *Simple vegetation cover is, largely comprising semi-natural grassland with patchy heather and ground-hugging alpine species on upper slopes and summits. Bracken and bog occurs on lower slopes and within glen floors. Coniferous forestry present on some lower slopes, extending up into glens.*
- *Broadleaf woodlands rare, confined to steeper slopes with fragments of oak and birch tracing burns and gullies.*
- *Very sparsely populated with roads and dispersed settlement occurring only on its fringes.*
- *Impounded lochs, coniferous forestry and hydroelectric infrastructure and transmission lines close to the mountains northwest of Loch Lomond.*
- *Highly visible massive peaks and ridges of the mountains forming a scenic rugged backdrop to the lower settled loch shores, glens and straths.*
- *Instantly recognisable mountain forms such as the Cobbler and Ben Lomond. Ben Ledi, Ben Vorlich and Ben Lomond are important landmark features, marking the Highland edge seen widely from the Central Lowlands of Scotland*
- *Popular mountains with walkers because of their highly natural and rugged character, and the presence of 'Munro' and 'Corbett' peaks. The higher summits offer extensive views.*
- *Distinct sense of wild character of the summits due to their rugged and natural qualities, especially away from hydro-electric infrastructure and poorly integrated forestry.*
- *Where snow is held on the high summits and the corries of Ben Lui and Ben Oss long in the year, this accentuates the exposure and wild character"*

Condition of the WLA

A6.3.55 The 2020 guidance states that: "When examining the baseline, the strength of attributes and responses and their contribution to the identified wild land qualities of the area should be verified against the WLA descriptions. The baseline should take into account any relevant and substantial changes that have occurred within or outwith the WLA since the descriptions were produced. Changes should only be referenced if individually or collectively they materially affect the wild land qualities." (para 19, page 4).

³¹ Carol Anderson Landscape Associates (2017) Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study [Online] Available at: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/landscape-wind-energy-capacity-study> (accessed 18/01/2023)

³² <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20251%20-%20Highland%20Summits%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf>

³³ NatureScot (2017) Description of Wild Land Areas – 2017 Ben Lui Wild Land Area [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2021-06/Wild%20land%20Description%20Ben-Lui-January-2017-06.pdf> (accessed 18/01/2023)

A6.3.56 The WLA 06 description notes that site assessment was carried out May 2016. Both the interior and exterior of the WLA are not considered to have significantly altered since the 2017 description was published. No new operational wind farm developments have been constructed around the periphery of the WLA which would have had a recent influence on the wild land qualities of the WLA. There have however been various alterations to overhead powerlines, roads and their embankments, changes to settlements including the construction of new buildings, and it is likely that a number of run of river hydroelectric power projects have been installed.

Step 3 – Sensitivity of the WLA Qualities

A6.3.57 The assessment of sensitivity was informed by the WLA 06 description and fieldwork undertaken between August 2021 and July 2022, and as noted in the 2020 guidance: '*Sensitivity is a combination of the nationally important value attached to WLAs and susceptibility to the type of change proposed. Susceptibility should take into account any evidence of past or current use and how they enhance or detract from the qualities*' (para 21, page 5).

A6.3.58 The sensitivity of the underlying LCTs which define WLA 06 was judged to be **High** within the LVIA and took account of both the characteristics of the LCT which contribute to wildness and the existing presence and/or influence of wind farm development.

A6.3.59 The sensitivity of each wild land quality to the type and scale of development proposed is set out in **Table A6.3.4** below.

Step 4 – Assessment of Effects

A6.3.60 The assessment of effects (including judgments of the sensitivity to the type of development proposed, the magnitude of change and the significance of effects) on each of the WLA qualities of WLA 06: Ben Lui arising from the introduction of the Proposed Development is presented in **Table A6.3.4**.

Table A6.3.4: Assessment of Effects on WLA 06 Ben Lui

| Wild Land Quality 1 (from WLA description) | |
|--|---|
| <p>"Contrast between the more massive and remote hills in the south-west and the arresting, more visible and popular hills to the north-east"</p> <p>Relevant physical attributes and/or perceptual responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Awe-inspiring – Arresting – Rugged – Sense of solitude – Physically challenging – Sense of remoteness and sanctuary – Sense of risk | |
| <p>Baseline and sensitivity (Step 2 and 3)</p> | <p>This wild land quality is expressed across much of the WLA, including lower-lying glens and more elevated hill summits. The extent to which this wild land quality is expressed varies depending on location. The contrast between the south-western and north-eastern hills is apparent from hill summits across the WLA, where the south-western hills appear more remote and steep compared to the larger, rounded hills of the north-east.</p> <p>However, the contrast is more variable when viewed from lower-lying areas. Views of the north-eastern hill summits, particularly Ben Lui, are "<i>awe-inspiring</i>" especially when viewed from lower-lying areas, whereas views of Beinn Bhuidhe and some of the south-western hills appear rounded and "<i>less arresting</i>".</p> <p>The south-western hills, including Stac a Chuirn, Beinn Bhuidhe and Ceann Garbh are more difficult to access, which provides a "<i>greater sense of solitude</i>" and "<i>sense of</i></p> |

| | <p><i>remoteness and sanctuary</i>" although it is noted the sense of solitude is reduced in places by access tracks.</p> <p>Operational wind farms seen in distant views to the west and south-west from these summits exert an existing human influence on the view which may also decrease the sense of <i>remoteness, sanctuary</i> and <i>solitude</i>. There is less influence exerted by wind farms to the north east, given these developments are more common to the west and south west.</p> <p>Overall, sensitivity to the type and scale of development proposed is judged to be high.</p> |
|---|---|
| <p>Summary of Effect and Judgement on Significance (Step 4 and 5)</p> | <p>There will be no direct effects on the wild land quality. The contrast between the shape of the mountains in the north-east and that of the mountains to the south-west will not be affected by wind farm development outside the WLA to the south-west.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located outside the WLA to the south-west, approximately 13km from the WLA boundary. The Proposed Development will introduce views of wind turbines outside the WLA, at distances of at least 15km from the massive, and remote hills to the south-west of the WLA, and at least 25km from the more visible and popular hills to the north-east.</p> <p>From elevated locations, the Proposed Development will be seen in long distance views alongside An Suidhe Wind Farm and other operational schemes. This will not result in a material change to the '<i>awe inspiring</i>', '<i>rugged</i>' and '<i>arresting</i>' qualities of the WLA. Furthermore, the introduction of the Proposed Development, at distances of over 15km from the south-western mountains will not reduce the sense of '<i>solitude, remoteness and sanctuary</i>'. The '<i>awe-inspiring</i>' views towards Ben Lui from the lower-lying areas of the WLA will not be affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>In terms of cumulative effects, the Proposed Development will be seen in the context of other proposed wind farms that are present to the west and south-west of the WLA. The proposed Ladyfield Wind Farm is closer to the WLA boundary, and will appear of a larger scale than the Proposed Development. As with the Proposed Development, visibility of other proposed schemes is limited to from the elevated slopes and hill summits. Given the intervening distance of the Proposed Development along with other proposed wind farms from the WLA, it is unlikely that the massive scale of the hills in the south-west will be adversely affected. Overall, given the geographical spread of theoretical visibility and the intervening distance between the Proposed Development alongside other proposed wind farms and the WLA, the cumulative effects on this key quality are considered to be limited.</p> <p>Magnitude of change on wild land quality: Low</p> <p>Overall, effects on this wild land quality are judged to be Not Significant (minor).</p> |
| Wild Land Quality 3 (from WLA description) | |
| | <p>"A landscape that [is] generally well-defined by surrounding human elements in views from higher slopes"</p> <p>Relevant physical attributes and/or perceptual responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Arresting – Rugged – Awe-inspiring – Extent – Human artefacts |

| | |
|---|--|
| – Sense of remoteness and sanctuary | |
| Baseline and sensitivity (Step 2 and 3) | <p>The more elevated slopes and hill summits within the WLA offer long distance expansive views across the surrounding landscapes (refer to Figure 6.2.25: Viewpoint 25: Troisgeach and Figure 6.2.26: Viewpoint 26: Ben Lui).</p> <p>The extensive forest plantations surrounding the WLA to the north, south and west, form part of the “<i>human elements</i>” that “<i>interrupt the sense of a continuous mountain landscape</i>” and emphasise the limited extent of the WLA in views from the elevated parts of the WLA. Existing wind farms including An Suidhe, A’Chruach, Carraig Gheal and Beinn Ghlas also contribute to these “<i>human elements</i>”. The WLA description notes that wind farms impinge little on the wild land qualities, however notes that the nearby Clachan Wind Farm affects the “<i>sense of sanctuary</i>” from the south/ south-west of the WLA, including Beinn Bhuidhe.</p> <p>At night, artificial lighting on human elements within the settled lowland surrounding the WLA are visible in distant views from the hill summits and elevated slopes within the WLA. The A82 and A85 are perceptible in some views from the east and north of the WLA, respectively. Likewise, settlements such as Inveraray are visible in views from the summit of Beinn Bhuidhe (as shown in Figure 6.2.29). From most to the interior of the WLA, including both hill summits and the contained lower lying areas views are dark and largely unaffected by artificial sources of lighting.</p> <p>Overall, sensitivity to the type and scale of development proposed is judged to be medium.</p> |
| Summary of Effect and Judgement on Significance (Step 4 and 5) | <p>There will be no direct effects on the wild land quality. The Proposed Development is located outside the WLA to the south-west, approximately 12.8km from the WLA boundary.</p> <p>Visibility of the Proposed Development will be seen from hill summits and site-facing slopes within the WLA (refer to the ZTV in Figure 6.1.7). The Proposed Development will be seen in the existing context of “<i>human elements</i>”, including the operational wind farms of An Suidhe, A’Chruach, and Carraig Gheal and Beinn Ghlas. The operational Clachan Flats Wind Farm is also visible from the more southerly extents of the WLA, just beyond the boundary of the WLA.</p> <p>At night, the Proposed Development will introduce a new source of artificial lighting in views to the south-west from the WLA. The aviation lighting on the Proposed Development will be seen, by a small number of visual receptors on elevated slopes and at hill summits within the WLA, in the context of other sources of artificial light outside of the WLA, notably settlements such as Inveraray (see dusk Viewpoint 29: Beinn Bhuidhe). The aviation lights will be visible from some hill summits and site-facing slopes within the WLA, and may affect the “<i>sense of remoteness and sanctuary</i>” from these hilltops. Lower lying areas of the WLA, including the glens will not have visibility of the aviation lighting. This quality is therefore likely to be affected at night-time however given the intervening distance between the Proposed Development and the WLA, and the limited area across which the aviation lighting would be seen, the magnitude of change is considered to be low. It is also noted that if seen at this distance, it is likely that the lights will be at the lower 10% candela brightness which will be used when atmospheric visibility exceed 5km distance from the turbines.</p> <p>In terms of cumulative effects, the Proposed Development will be seen in the context of other proposed wind farms that will further add to the “<i>human elements</i>” that surround the WLA to the west and south-west, including Ladyfield Wind Farm which will be closer to the WLA boundary. This will include views by day and night as noted above. As with the Proposed Development, the other wind farms and further sources of artificial light</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>will not be visible across much of the interior of the WLA, including from both hill summits and within the lower lying areas of the WLA. Visibility of other artificial light on proposed wind farms will be limited to site-facing slopes in the south-west of the WLA, the prominent summit of Ben Lui (Viewpoint 26) in the north-east and other less popular hill summits. Overall, given the geographical spread of theoretical visibility and the intervening distance between the proposed developments and the WLA, the cumulative effects on this wild land quality are considered to be limited.</p> <p>Magnitude of change on wild land quality: Low</p> <p>Overall, effects on this wild land quality are judged to be Not Significant (minor).</p> |
|--|---|

Step 5 – Judgement of the Significance of Effects

Summary

A6.3.61 The Proposed Development is located approximately 12.8km to the south-west of WLA 06: Ben Lui, at its closest, and as such there will be no direct effects on the wild land qualities of the WLA. Four wild land qualities are included in the description of the WLA 06: Ben Lui, and the wild land impact assessment considers the potential for effects on two of these qualities:

- “*Contrast between the more massive and remote hills in the south-west and the arresting, more visible and popular hills to the north-east*”; and,
- “*A landscape that generally well-defined by surrounding human elements in views from higher slopes.*”

A6.3.62 The assessment of these wild land qualities is set out in **Table A6.3.4** above. The assessment concludes that no significant adverse effects will occur for these two qualities. The Proposed Development, including lighting, will be visible in the context of human elements that are already present in wider views looking out from the WLA. By day, the Proposed Development will be seen in the context of existing wind farms, notably the nearby An Suidhe Wind Farm, albeit with smaller turbines. Therefore, the Proposed Development will not introduce visibility of human elements into a view which previously did not feature such artefacts.

A6.3.63 The “*sense of remoteness and sanctuary*” associated with the WLA may be slightly altered at night due to the introduction of aviation lighting in south-westerly views, however this would be experienced by a small number of recreational receptors that may be present at elevated locations in the WLA at night. However, existing distant sources of artificial light are visible in views, primarily associated with settlement around Loch Awe and Loch Fyne. Given the intervening distance and the small geographical extent of visibility, the visibility of existing human development during the day and existing artificial lighting at night results in the effects on the wild land quality of the Ben Lui WLA being judged as not significant.

A6.3.64 The Proposed Development will be visible in views from the remote mountains in the south-west of the WLA and from the more popular mountains in the north-east. However, given the intervening distance between the Proposed Development and the WLA, the Proposed Development is unlikely to materially change the ‘*rugged*’ and ‘*arresting*’ qualities of the WLA. Likewise, perceptual qualities relating to the sense of ‘*solitude, remoteness and sanctuary*’ are unlikely to be substantially affected due to the intervening distance and presence of existing wind farm development, which is noted within the descriptions.

Conclusions

A6.3.65 Protection of WLAs is recognised in the NPF4, however it is noted that “*effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration*” and it is clear that “*buffer zones around wild land will not be applied*” (page 41).

A6.3.66 The 2020 guidance states that the “*guidance should only be applied to proposals whose nature, siting, scale or design are likely to result in a significant effect on the qualities of a WLA. Given this, assessments are more likely for proposals within a WLA, and are less-likely for proposals outwith the WLA*” (para 5, page 1). However, significant effects on wild land qualities can occur particularly in relation to large scale wind farm development located within close proximity to WLAs.

A6.3.67 The WLA assessment presented above concludes that the adverse effects on the wild land qualities identified within the assessment are judged not to undermine the objectives for its mapping, and the overall integrity of the WLA will not be compromised by the introduction of the Development. Considerable areas will remain, across which the wild land qualities will be unaltered and expressed as they are today.

ANNEX – Fieldwork photographs: Wild Land Impact Assessment



Figure 1 Human elements are present in views west from the summit of Ben Lui. The A85, settlement and extensive tracts of forestry are visible across the lower lying land to the west of the WLA, reducing the "sense of remoteness and sanctuary" (WLA Quality 1) experienced from this part of the WLA. The presence of these human elements helps define the extent of the WLA, and "interrupts the sense of a continuous mountain landscape" (WLA Quality 3) which extends across to Ben Chruachan and Stobb Daimh in the distance.



Figure 2 Access tracks and wind turbines are visible in south-westerly views from the summit of Beinn Bhuidhe. These increase the influence of human activity around the WLA, and as such contribute towards reducing the sense of "solitude" and "sanctuary" experienced at this location (WLA Quality 1 and 3).



Figure 3 Panoramic views of the massive and remote south-western hills (WLA Quality 1) within Ben Lui WLA (View looking south from Troisgeach).



Figure 4 There is evidence of human elements within the interior of the Ben Lui WLA. This view north of Troisgeach illustrates an overhead line (OHL) and access track cutting through the landscape along Cleann nan Caorann. This interrupts the mountainous landscape and reduces the sense of remoteness and sanctuary (WLA Quality 1 and 3).