

Appendix 6.4: Wild Land Impact Assessment



Loch Liath Wind Farm Ltd

Loch Liath Wind Farm
Appendix 6.4 Wild Land
Impact Assessment

Final report
Prepared by LUC
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Loch Liath Wind Farm Ltd

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Appendix 6.4

Wild Land Impact Assessment

Introduction

A6.4.1 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** and **Appendix 6.3: Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (Glen Affric NSA)** of the EIA Report, providing specific additional detail in respect of potential effects on the key attributes and qualities of Wild Land Areas (WLAs).

A6.4.2 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 therefore necessary to prepare a wild land impact assessment to supplement the LVIA.

A6.4.3 In preparing this wild land impact assessment, Chartered Landscape Architects from LUC have 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 23rd February 2021, and detailed in **Table 6.1** contained in **Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity** of the EIA Report). Figures and visualisations referred to within this assessment can be found in EIA Report **Volume 2: Figures** and EIA Report **Volume 3a-b: NatureScot LVIA Visualisations**.

A6.4.4 On 28 September 2020, NatureScot published finalised technical guidance² to be used for the assessment of effects on wild land areas. The assessment presented in this appendix was undertaken in accordance with the finalised technical guidance (2020).

The Context to Wild Land Assessment in Scotland

A6.4.5 Areas of Scotland which exhibit strong indicators of wildness have been identified by NatureScot and are known as WLAs. These are not designated but their importance was formally recognised in NPF3 and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (2014). NPF3 recognised wild land as a "*nationally important asset*" (NPF3, Para. 4.4, Page 42) while SPP noted that development plans "*should identify and safeguard the character of areas of wild land*" (SPP, Para. 200, Page 47). Though NPF3 has now been superseded by NPF4, the scope of this assessment was agreed, and embedded mitigation in relation to effects on Wild Land Areas considered, prior to the adoption of NPF4.

A6.4.6 NPF4, which includes National Planning Policy (NPP), notes that although not a statutory designation, WLAs and their component qualities of wildness require protection. With regard to onshore wind development and statutory landscape designations, NPF4 (Policy 11, page 53) notes that "*Development proposals for wind farms in National Parks and National Scenic Areas will not be supported*". Policy 4 (page 40) also notes that "*Development proposals that will affect a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve will only be supported where:*

- i. The objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or*
- ii. Any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.*"

A6.4.7 Policy 4 (page 41) notes that wind energy development within Wild Land Areas is not precluded but that a wind farm proposal must be developed with cognisance of the WLA and the need to protect it, as "*all such proposals must be accompanied by a wild land impact assessment which sets out how design, siting, or other mitigation measures have been and will be used to minimise significant impacts on the qualities of the wild land, as well as any management and monitoring arrangements where appropriate.*"

A6.4.8 Policy 4 of NPF4 also notes "*Buffer zones around wild land will not be applied, and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration*". WLAs are therefore protected 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.

A6.4.9 This is supported by statements in Annex 1 to NatureScot's publication 'Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines – Natural Heritage Considerations' (SNH, 2015) which state 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.*" The 2020 NatureScot guidance states that wild land areas "*are recognised by the third National Planning Framework (NPF3) and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) as nationally important and needing significant protection, but where development may be appropriate in some circumstances*" (para 1).

A6.4.10 The location and extents of WLAs were published by NatureScot in 2014, superseding earlier 'Search Areas for Wild Land' (SNH, 2002) and 'Core Areas of Wild Land' (SNH, 2014)³. NatureScot'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 2014⁴).

A6.4.11 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.

A6.4.12 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.

A6.4.13 NatureScot 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 2020 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). It is also noted that physical attributes and perceptual responses "*come together as wild land qualities – reflecting that it is a combination of factors that contributes to the value and appreciation of wildness*" (para 12).

A6.4.14 Annex 1 of the 2020 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*".

A6.4.15 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;*

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 28/09/2020)

³ SNH (2014), Core Areas of Wild Land 2013 Map - Advice to Government – 16th June 2014. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/naturescot-core-areas-wild-land-map-consultation-paper-and-advice-government> (Accessed 06/10/2020)

⁴ SNH (2014), Mapping Scotland's Wildness. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/mapping-scotland-wildness-and-wild-land-non-technical-description-methodology> (Accessed 06/10/2020)

- *Perceptions that the landscape has arresting or inspiring qualities;*
- *Fulfilment from the physical challenge required to penetrate into these places”.*

A6.4.16 The approach to the assessment of impacts on WLAs has developed since the draft guidance was published in 2017, and until the publication of the final guidance in 2020 NatureScot has provided advice to developers and consultants as they refine their own approach to undertaking wild land impact assessments for individual development proposals.

A6.4.17 In evidence for the public inquiry for Limekiln 2 and Drum Hollistan Wind Farms⁵ in 2018, NatureScot provided supplementary information⁶, in respect of the approach to wild land impact appraisal. The paper is based on the 2017 guidance and is also “*informed by responses to SNH’s consultation on the draft guidance and experience of the application of the methodology used in undertaking appraisals*” of impacts of development on WLAs.

A6.4.18 The approach to wild land impact assessment undertaken by different consultants since publication of the draft guidance has inevitably varied proportionately to reflect the nature and scale of the proposed development being assessed, its location within or in proximity to wild land, and the potential effects which may arise as a consequence.

Approach and Methodology

Guidance and Reference

A6.4.19 The following list identifies all key documents and sources of information used in preparing the assessment:

- NatureScot (2020). Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas - technical guidance;
- SNH (2017). Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas – technical guidance draft;
- SNH (2014). Assessing the Impacts on Wild Land, Interim Guidance Note;
- SNH (2017). Scotland’s Wild Land Area Descriptions: methodology;
- SNH (2017). Descriptions of Wild Land Areas – Central Highlands Wild Land Area;
- SNH (2017). Description of Wild Land Areas – Monadhliath Wild Land Area;
- SNH (2017). Descriptions of Wild Land Areas – Kinlochour - Knoydart – Morar Wild Land Area;
- SNH (2017). Description of Wild Land Areas – Braeroy - Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh Wild Land Area;
- SNH (2017). Description of Wild Land Areas – Rannoch - Nevis - Mamores - Alder Wild Land Area;
- SNH (2017). Descriptions of Wild Land Areas – Cairngorms Wild Land Area;
- SNH (2014). Core Areas of Wild Land 2013 Map - Advice to Government – 16th June 2014;
- SNH (2014). Mapping Scotland’s Wildness;
- SNH8 – Limekiln and Drum Hollistan Wind Farm Inquiry – Supplementary Information on Wild Land Appraisal;
- SNH (2003). Wildness in Scotland’s Countryside, Policy Statement No. 02/03.
- SNH (2021). Assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of onshore wind energy developments;
- SNH (2015). Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines – natural heritage considerations, Guidance; and
- Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3).

⁵ The Scottish Government Planning and Environmental Appeals Division DPEA case references: WIN-270-9 (Drum Hollistan) and WIN-270-1 (Limekiln 2)

⁶ SNH (2015), SNH8 Supplementary Information on Wild Land Impact Appraisal. Inquiry Evidence for DPEA case references: WIN-270-9 (Drum Hollistan) and WIN-270-1 (Limekiln 2). Provided via email from SNH 05/05/2020.

Data Sources

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

Methodology

A6.4.20 The assessment methodology is based upon the ‘Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas - Technical Guidance’ (2020⁷) and further clarification received during consultation with NatureScot. 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 set out below.

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

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

A6.4.21 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.

A6.4.22 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 6.2: ZTV and Visualisation Methodology**).

A6.4.23 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.

A6.4.24 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 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.*”

A6.4.25 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

⁷ 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 28/09/2020)

- Identify changes which may have individually or collectively have affected the appreciation of the baseline wild land qualities (as described in the WLA descriptions).

A6.4.26 The WLA descriptions (SNH, 2017) set out the key attributes and qualities of each WLA. As directed by the assessment guidance, this information has been 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.”

A6.4.27 In accordance with their status set out in NPF4, WLAs are judged to be of high value. However, their susceptibility 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.

A6.4.28 Sensitivity and susceptibility are sometimes used interchangeably in respect to LVIA; however, in accordance with the approach advocated by GLVIA3⁸, 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)

A6.4.29 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).

A6.4.30 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 magnitude of 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.”

A6.4.31 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-term (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.

A6.4.32 The magnitude of 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.”

A6.4.33 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.

A6.4.34 As advocated by the guidance (SNH, 2020⁹) 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 the Scope of the Assessment

WLAs within LVIA Study Area

A6.4.35 The Proposed Development is not located within any WLA. As illustrated on Figure 6.6a, the boundary of WLA 24: Central Highlands, is approximately 9.3km from the nearest wind turbine of the Proposed Development.

A6.4.36 Whilst the Proposed Development is located outside any WLA, this assessment considers the potential for effects upon WLAs located within the 45km radius Study Area used for the LVIA and focuses on those which may be indirectly affected by the introduction of the Proposed Development. It builds upon the landscape and visual impact assessment contained in **Chapter 6** of the EIA Report, providing additional detail specifically in terms of effects on the key attributes and qualities which are set out in the Descriptions of Wild Land Areas (SNH, 2017) in respect of WLA 24 Central Highlands. Figures referred to within this assessment can be found in **Volume 2: Figures** of the EIA Report.

A6.4.37 **Figure 6.6a** and **Table A6.4.1** detail the WLAs located within the Study Area, and the ZTV illustrated on **Figure 6.6b** indicates the extent of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development across each of these WLAs.

Table A6.4.1: Wild Land Areas within LVIA Study Area

WLA	Location and distance ¹⁰	Potential for effects on wild land qualities
Central Highlands WLA 24	9.3km west of the Proposed Development	Theoretical visibility indicated across eastern extents of WLA and elevated summits within the interior, at a distance of 9-35km. Considered within the assessment.
Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh WLA 19	19.8km south of the Proposed Development	Limited theoretical visibility indicated at a distance of over 20km, not considered within the assessment.
Monadhliath WLA 20	21.2km south-east of the Proposed Development	Limited theoretical visibility indicated at a distance of over 20km, not considered within the assessment.
Kinlochhourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA 18	30.8km south-west of the Proposed Development	Limited theoretical visibility indicated at a distance of over 30km, not considered within the assessment.
Rhiddoroch – Beinn Dearg – Ben Wyvis WLA 29	36.6km north of the Proposed Development	Limited theoretical visibility indicated at a distance of over 35km, not considered within the assessment.
Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder WLA 14	38.7km south of the Proposed Development	Very limited theoretical visibility indicated at a distance of over 40km, not considered within the assessment.
Coulin & Lodgowan Forest WLA 26	40.1km north-west of the Proposed Development	No theoretical visibility indicated within 45km study area, not considered within the assessment.
Fisherfield – Letterewe – Fannichs WLA 28	40.3km north-west of the Proposed Development	Very limited theoretical visibility indicated at a distance of over 40km, not considered within the assessment.

⁸ Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition

⁹ 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 28/09/2020)

¹⁰ Approximate distance from the WLA boundary to the nearest turbine of the Proposed Development

A6.4.38 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 have therefore not been considered in the detailed assessment. The wild land impact assessment therefore only considers the potential effects on the wild land qualities of WLA 24: Central Highlands.

Study Area and Scope of Assessment - WLA 24: Central Highlands

A6.4.39 The Proposed Development is not located within WLA 24, and therefore there will be no direct impacts upon physical attributes of the WLA. However, as illustrated on **Figure A6.4.1**, the boundary of WLA 24 is approximately 9.3km to the west of the nearest turbine of the Proposed Development.

A6.4.40 The elements of the Proposed Development likely to indirectly affect the qualities of WLA 24 are the 13 proposed wind turbines of up to 180-200m blade tip height (approximately 155m rotor diameter and approximately 102.5-122.5m hub height), and to a lesser extent the associated ancillary infrastructure (e.g. access tracks, onsite substation and control building). However, given the intervening distance between the WLA and the Site, this infrastructure will be largely indiscernible.

A6.4.41 The LVIA includes assessment of visual effects from representative viewpoints VP9: Meall Mor, above Glen Affric, VP10: Creag Dhubh, VP12: Beinn a' Bha'ach Ard, VP15: Core Path at Loch Affric, VP18: Toll Creagach and VP 19: Sgurr nan Conbhairean (each of which is located within WLA 24) and assessment of effects on landscape character across this area. The findings of the LVIA have been 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 for each assessment are different.

Extent of Visibility

A6.4.42 The ZTV shown on **Figure A6.4.1** indicates theoretical visibility across the eastern extents of the WLA and some elevated landform and hill summits located within the central interior of the WLA. Visibility is mostly limited to elevated landform and hill summits, however there is some visibility indicated within the lower lying extents of Glen Affric along the northern shore of Loch Affric. Much of the central, western, and northern extents of the WLA will experience no visibility of the Proposed Development.

A6.4.43 Operational wind farm development is visible in elevated outward views from much of the WLA, including hill summits within the central interior. This includes visibility of the operational Bhlaraidh Wind Farm (located approximately 6km east of the WLA boundary), Corrimony Wind Farm (located approximately 7.8km east of the WLA boundary), Fairburn Wind Farm (located approximately 1.1km east of the WLA boundary) and the cluster of development formed by Beinneun, Beinneun Extension and Millennium Wind Farms (located approximately 5.7km south-east of the WLA boundary).

A6.4.44 Introduced visibility of wind turbines resulting from the Proposed Development will be limited to very localised extents of the WLA. The CZTV, shown on **Figure A6.4.2** and **Figure 6.8**, indicates limited areas of introduced visibility resulting from the Proposed Development. Theoretical introduced visibility is indicated from small pockets of elevated landform to the north and south of Glen Strathfarrar and north of Loch Mullardoch, within limited lower-lying extents of Glen Affric near Loch Affric and Allbeithe and from localised areas of elevated landform to the south of Glen Affric. However, receptors are likely to experience sequential views of other operational wind farm developments on the routes of access to areas of the WLA with theoretical introduced visibility resulting from the Proposed Development.

Routes and movement through the WLA

A6.4.45 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 24 description notes that the WLA is accessed by recreational receptors on "short, low-level walks from the ends of the glen roads, mountain bike rides, longer hill treks, ascent of the 36 Munros and 16 Corbetts, and multi-day walks within the interior via a network of paths". It is also noted that the glens help facilitate access into the WLA by car, however the WLA is "so large and divided by mountains that only certain parts of it tend to be experienced during any single trip".

A6.4.46 The WLA description also notes that views towards the WLA are afforded by many people from outside the boundary, including from the A890, A887 and A87 and the Dingwall to Kyle railway. A number of Core Paths, primarily clustered around small settlements located along these roads, provide access into the WLA.

A6.4.47 The Affric-Kintail Way long distance trail crosses WLA 24 through Glen Affric and Gleann Lichd. A number of core paths run broadly parallel to this long-distance route and provide access between Cannich and Glen Affric.

A6.4.48 A number of Heritage Paths, promoted as part of the Heritage Paths project, cross the WLA including:

- St Duthac's Way¹¹
- Srath Duilleach Coffin Road¹²
- Strathfarrar to Strathglass Drove Road¹³
- Loch Monar Drove Road¹⁴

A6.4.49 Whilst the interior of the WLA is relatively remote, a number of Munro and Corbett hill summits are visited by recreational receptors. These include:

- The Loch Mullardoch Munros (An Socach, An Riabhachan, Sgurr na Lapaich and Carn nan Gobhar), accessed via Glen Cannich;
- The Glen Strathfarrar Munros (Sgùrr na Ruaidhe, Càrn nan Gobhar, Sgùrr a' Choire Ghlais and Sgùrr Fhuar-thuill), accessed via Glen Strathfarrar;
- The Munro summits of Carn Eige and Mam Sodhail, accessed via Glen Affric;
- The Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan Munros accessed via Glen Affric;
- The Munro summits of Toll Creagach and Tom a' Choinnich accessed via Glen Affric; and
- The Corbett summits of Càrn a' Choire Ghairbh and Aonach Shasuinn accessed via Glen Affric.

Wild Land Qualities likely to be affected

A6.4.50 The Proposed Development is located entirely outside WLA 24, and the wild land impact assessment is therefore focused on identifying where there is potential for indirect effects on the defined wild land qualities.

A6.4.51 The description of WLA 24: Central Highlands sets out the key wild land qualities, and relevant physical attributes and perceptual responses, which are defined in **Table A6.4.2** below.

A6.4.52 Fieldwork undertaken during Spring 2021-Autumn 2022 confirmed that each of the four wild land qualities are expressed, to a varying degree, within approximately 10-30km of the site. 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.

A6.4.53 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.

A6.4.54 The Study Area for the detailed assessment of effects on the wild land qualities of WLA 24, informed by the ZTV (shown on **Figure A6.4.1**) will focus on a radius of approximately 30km from the proposed wind turbines, extending from the eastern WLA boundary to cover elevated landform and hill summits in the north-east, east and south-east of the WLA, and some lower-lying extents and side slopes of Glen Affric.

¹¹ <https://scotways.com/heritage-path/?id=92>

¹² <https://scotways.com/heritage-path/?id=151>

¹³ <https://scotways.com/heritage-path/?id=149>

¹⁴ <https://scotways.com/heritage-path/?id=192>

Table A6.4.2: WLA 24 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>'An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains'</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rugged landform/physically challenging – Sense of awe/risk – Sense of naturalness – Absence of human artefacts and contemporary land use – Sense of remoteness 	<p>The wild land quality is expressed across much of the wild land area, including from elevated landform and hill summits within the east and centre of the wild land area, from which theoretical visibility is indicated within approximately 11.5km from the nearest turbine 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 <i>'An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude'</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sense of remoteness – Sanctuary/solitude – Sense of risk – Absence of human artefacts and contemporary land use 	<p>The wild land quality is expressed across much of the wild land area, including from elevated landform and hill summits within the east and centre of the wild land area, from which theoretical visibility is predicted within 11.5km from the nearest turbine 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 3 <i>'Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs and some revealing human land use'</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sanctuary – Sense of naturalness – Sense of remoteness – Sense of awe/risk – Rugged landform 	<p>The wild land quality is expressed in lower-lying glens, including Glen Affric from which theoretical visibility is predicted within approximately 19.8km of the nearest turbine 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 <i>'Small and extensive areas of native woodland that contribute to the sense of naturalness and highlight some arresting landscape features'</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sense of naturalness – Arresting 	<p>As noted in the WLA description, the wild land quality is expressed "in isolated locations that are sheltered and difficult to access, such as along burns, gorges or upon steep rocky cliffs", and within wider extents at Glen Strathfarrar and Glen Affric. Whilst the Proposed Development will be seen within limited extents of Glen Affric, views of coniferous forestry outside of the WLA are afforded from these locations and reduce the susceptibility of this wild land quality.</p> <p>Given the very limited extents of woodland within the WLA from which visibility of the Proposed Development is predicted, the Proposed Development is considered unlikely to affect this wild land quality.</p> <p>Effects on wild land quality are therefore not considered in detailed assessment.</p>

Wild Land Assessment Points

A6.4.55 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 seven wild land assessment points (five of which are also representative assessment viewpoints for the LVIA in **Chapter 6**), detailed in **Table A6.4.3** below.

A6.4.56 The assessment points represent locations from where views will be experienced by recreational receptors at popular walking routes and hill summits within WLA 24, in addition to lesser-accessed areas within WLA 24 where the Proposed Development will result in additional visibility of wind farm development.

A6.4.57 A number of these wild land assessment points are also considered as representative viewpoints in the LVIA contained in **Chapter 6** of the EIA Report. However, unlike the representative viewpoints considered within the LVIA, views from these assessment points are not assessed 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.

A6.4.58 The findings of the LVIA have been 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 for each assessment are different.

A6.4.59 Accompanying visualisations (presented in EIA Report **Volume 3a-b**) have been produced, to illustrate potential views of the Proposed Development in isolation and in conjunction with other operational, consented and proposed wind farm developments.

Table A6.4.3: Assessment Point Locations

Location	OS Grid Reference	Approx. Distance	Reason for selection
WLA 01/AESLQ 01/ LVIA VP9: Meall Mor, above Glen Affric	224908 828066	13.3km	Represents views experienced by recreational receptors from elevated landform to the north of Glen Affric, near the eastern boundary of the WLA. Representative of Wild Land Qualities 1 and 2.
WLA 02/ LVIA VP10: Creag Dhubh	222756 821621	15.1km	Represents views experienced by recreational receptors from elevated landform to the south of Glen Affric, near the eastern boundary of the WLA. Representative of Wild Land Qualities 1 and 2.
WLA 03/AESLQ 02/ LVIA VP15: Core Path at Loch Affric	217094 823062	20.4km	Represents views experienced by recreational receptors from the lower-lying extents of Glen Affric, near the eastern boundary of the WLA. Representative of Wild Land Qualities 1 and 3.
WLA 04/AESLQ 03/ LVIA VP18: Toll Creagach	219449 828285	18.6km	Represents elevated views experienced by recreational receptors in the east of the WLA, with views afforded into the remote interior of the WLA. Representative of Wild Land Qualities 1 and 2.
WLA 05/AESLQ 04/ LVIA VP 19: Sgurr nan Conbhairean	212975 813887	26.1km	Represents elevated views experienced by recreational receptors in the south-east of the WLA, with views afforded into the remote interior of the WLA. Representative of Wild Land Qualities 1 and 2.
WLA 06 Bealach Toll Easa	217713 826810	20.0km	Represents views experienced from elevated landform within the remote interior of the WLA. Representative of Wild Land Quality 2.
WLA 07/AESLQ 05: Track near Alltbeithe	208280 820526	29.0km	Represents views experienced by recreational receptors from the more remote western extents of Glen Affric. Representative of Wild Land Qualities 2 and 3.

Potential for Cumulative Effects

A6.4.60 No other operational, consented or proposed wind farm developments are located within WLA 24. **Figure 6.7a** and **Figure 6.7b** illustrate the location of other wind farm developments within a 60km and 40km radius of the Proposed Development respectively. 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. The potential for cumulative effects on the identified wild land qualities of WLA 24 are considered in the assessment below, informed by the ZTVs included on **Figure A6.4.2** and **Figure A6.4.3**.

A6.4.61 The Proposed Development will be seen in combination with the operational Bhlaraidh Wind Farm, as well as other operational and consented wind farms located in close proximity to the eastern periphery of the WLA – most notably the operational Corrimony (5 turbines, 100m blade tip height), the consented Bhlaraidh Extension (15 turbines, 180m tip height), operational Beinneun (25 turbines, 133.5m blade tip height), operational Beinneun Extension (7 turbines, 136m blade tip height), operational Millennium (26 turbines, 125m blade tip height) Wind Farms and the consented Millennium South Wind Farm (8 turbines, 132m blade tip height).

A6.4.62 The proposed Bunloinn (10 turbines, 230m tip height) and Tomchrasky (14 turbines, 185m tip height) Wind Farms will be seen within close proximity to the south-eastern boundary of the WLA. A number of other proposed wind farms, which are subject valid planning applications or at appeal/PLI, will appear in outward views from the WLA, including Corriegarh 2 (14 turbines, 149.9m tip height) and Cloiche (29 turbines, 149.9m tip height).

Step 2 – Verifying the WLA baseline

A6.4.63 Consideration of the baseline of the WLA has been informed by the WLA 24 description and supplemented by observations during fieldwork undertaken in Spring 2021-Autumn 2022. The assessment is accompanied by 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

A6.4.64 In 2014, identification and mapping of WLAs by NatureScot confirmed the presence and extent of the Central Highlands WLA. The 2017 description of WLA 24 provides context, key attributes and qualities. These have been considered during desk-based review and site survey. This has allowed for recognition of changes which have occurred since production of descriptions and mapping, as well as an understanding of the strength of the attributes and qualities across different areas. The key wild land qualities of WLA 24 are set out in **Table A6.4.2** above.

A6.4.65 The relevant landscape character types (LCTs) which cover the area defined as WLA 24: Central Highlands, within the study area for this assessment and from which theoretical visibility within 20km is indicated include:

- LCT 226 Wooded Glen - Inverness
- LCT 220 Rugged Massif - Inverness
- LCT 230 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Inverness

A6.4.66 A number of the key characteristics of these LCTs are judged to contribute to the wildness qualities defined within the WLA description:

- LCT 226 Wooded Glen - Inverness
 - *“Long glens set within uplands and mountains, divided into upper and lower glens by a cross-cutting narrow farmed strath.*
 - *Lower glens broader, with steep upper slopes, undulating lower slopes and a narrow floor mostly occupied by river terraces; upper glens are narrower and more rugged, influenced by the surrounding mountains.*
 - *Balance between open and enclosed space formed by the diverse mix of landscape patterns, land uses, conifer forests, woodlands and fields.*
 - *Distinctive mix of rugged hillsides, extensive Caledonian pine forest and lochs in the upper glens.*
 - *Sparse settlement in upper glens, limited to a few farms and crofts, isolated lodges and clusters of estate buildings usually sheltered by trees or woodland.*
 - *Intimate, semi-enclosed landscape within the glen floor with limited visibility, due to the screening effect of trees and landform.*
 - *Distant views along the glens from open hill ground creating a feeling of openness and exposure.*

- *Increasing sense of naturalness and remoteness traversing the upper glens into mountainous interior.”*

- LCT 220 Rugged Massif - Inverness
 - *“Parallel ranges of massive mountains of irregular landform divided by deep glaciated valleys.*
 - *Mainly broad, sometimes rounded rugged summits connected by long ridges and relatively few individual mountain peaks, particularly in the east.*
 - *Steep terrain with many mountain-side burns and occasional lochans in corries and depressions.*
 - *Almost uniform texture and cover from lower to upper levels in the east makes the size of the hills difficult to perceive.*
 - *Largely uninhabited, few signs of human activity or human artefacts in the interior, and sparse archaeological evidence.*
 - *Hill ranges combine to create a fairly even undulating skyline and a sense of enclosure when viewed from straths.*
 - *Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif offer expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape character types.*
 - *A sense of remoteness and wildness which is particularly strong within the interior.”*
- LCT 230 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Inverness
 - *“Glaciated mountainous landscapes with pyramidal rock peaks.*
 - *Sweeping, concave slopes with screes plunging directly into deep glens or lochs.*
 - *Mountain peaks and slopes often seen as repetitive elements within a group, appearing to interlock and overlap when viewed along glens and fjords.*
 - *No overall hierarchy of peaks, which tend to be connected by high level ridges aligned either side of central, u-shaped valleys.*
 - *Elegant profile due to the greater vertical to horizontal emphasis.*
 - *Largely uninhabited and few roads or structures.*
 - *Extensive high level views of peaks and ridgelines, and over to opposing sides of glens.*
 - *Expansive views of the vast mountainous interior, and the large scale pattern of glens and summits.*
 - *Low level views are enclosed, directed upwards or along glens and fjords.*
 - *Upward views dominated by the steep slopes and towering summits which reveal the vertical scale of mountains.*
 - *Wild character in the interior due to remoteness from roads and settlements, lack of evidence of modern human use, dominance of natural landforms, and vast scale of the mountain landscape.”*

A6.4.67 Other LCTs which cover the area defined as WLA 24: Central Highlands, beyond 20km of the nearest turbine or from which no theoretical visibility is indicated include:

- LCT 328 Rugged Mountain Massif - Ross & Cromarty
- LCT 365 Rugged Massif - Skye & Lochalsh
- LCT 329 Rounded Mountain Massif
- LCT 331 Rounded Rocky Hills - Ross & Cromarty
- LCT 369 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Skye & Lochalsh

Condition of the WLA

A6.4.68 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).

A6.4.69 The WLA 24 description notes that site assessment was carried out in May 2013, August 2014 and October 2014. Although the interior of the WLA is not considered to have significantly altered since the 2017 description was published, a number of changes have occurred around the periphery of the WLA, predominantly linked to the emergence of the operational wind farm developments which now have an influence on the wild land qualities of the WLA.

A6.4.70 A number of operational wind farm developments are now located within 15km of the eastern boundary of the WLA. This includes Bhlaraidh (commissioned in 2017), Beinneun and Beinneun Extension (commissioned in 2017) Wind Farms. Fairburn Wind Farm was operational in 2010 and Millennium Wind Farm was operational in 2011; the presence of these developments is suggested in the WLA 24 description, which notes “*some tall and/ or elevated human elements are seen from some of the tops and outward facing slopes around the margins of the WLA, for example wind farms and power lines, which can affect the wild land qualities within the area.*”

Step 3 – Sensitivity of the WLA Qualities

A6.4.71 The assessment of sensitivity has been informed by the WLA 24 description and fieldwork undertaken in Spring 2021- Autumn 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).

A6.4.72 The sensitivity of the underlying LCTs which define WLA 24 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.

A6.4.73 The sensitivity of each wild land quality to the type and scale of development proposed is set out in **Table A6.4.4** below.

Step 4 – Assessment of effects

A6.4.74 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 three assessed WLA qualities of WLA 24: Central Highlands arising from the introduction of the Proposed Development is presented in **Table A6.4.4**.

Table A6.4.4: Assessment of Effects on WLA 24 Central Highlands

Wild Land Quality 1 (from WLA description)	
<p><i>‘An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains’</i></p> <p>Relevant physical attributes and/or perceptual responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rugged landform which is physically challenging; – Sense of awe/risk; – Sense of naturalness; – Absence of human artefacts and contemporary land use; – Sense of remoteness. 	
<p>Aspects, Strength of Expression of Wild Land Quality (Baseline)</p>	<p>This wild land quality is expressed across much of the WLA, including from elevated landform, hill summits and some lower-lying glens from which the scale of landform can be appreciated.</p> <p>In views from elevated landform and hill summits, mountains form ‘<i>interlocking high ridges</i>’ which lead to the perception of an extensive <i>rugged</i> area with a high degree of <i>naturalness</i>, particularly in elevated views looking across the interior of the WLA in which there is an <i>absence of human artefacts</i>. However, operational wind farms seen in distant views east from these summits (Figure A6.4.2 and Annex Image A6.4.3) exert an existing human influence on the view and decrease the sense of <i>naturalness</i> and <i>remoteness</i>. The WLA description notes some influence of wind farm development on this wild land quality, however the operational Bhlaraidh, Beinneun and Beinneun Extension Wind Farms were fully commissioned subsequent to the site assessment work for the WLA description (undertaken in 2013-2014) and have led to further attrition to the sense of <i>naturalness</i> and <i>remoteness</i>. At night, visible lighting on the turbines of the operational Corrimony Wind Farm (located approximately 8.9km to the east of the WLA at its nearest point) and artificial lighting on human elements within the lower-lying settled coastal landscapes to the north-east of the WLA (including Inverness and the Black Isle) are perceptible in some distant views north and</p>

	<p>north-east from the WLA (as shown in Figure 6.31), and influence the sense of <i>naturalness</i> and <i>remoteness</i>. However, views towards the remote interior of the WLA to the west and north-west are relatively dark and remain uninfluenced by human development.</p> <p>From lower-lying areas in the WLA, the large scale of landform is ‘<i>emphasised where seen in contrast to the horizontal surface of adjacent lochs or glen floors</i>’, with views of <i>rugged landform</i> contributing to the <i>sense of awe</i> (Annex Image A6.4.5). However, human elements are more common within the glens and decrease the sense of <i>naturalness</i> and <i>remoteness</i> locally.</p> <p>The <i>rugged landform which is physically challenging</i> is most strongly expressed away from minor roads and estate tracks, which are primarily focused around the glens (Annex Image A6.4.5) and peripheries of the WLA. This attribute is unaffected by existing wind farm development located outside of the WLA.</p>
<p>Sensitivity of Wild Land Quality to the type of Development proposed</p>	<p>The susceptibility of this wild land quality to the type and scale of development proposed varies considerably across the WLA, dependent on the proximity and influence of existing wind farm development.</p> <p>In the eastern extents of the WLA nearest the site the operational Bhlaraidh and Corrimony Wind Farms exert an existing human influence, including visible turbine aviation lighting on the latter. Blocks of commercial coniferous forestry are also evident in outward views from locations along the eastern peripheries of the WLA. Views looking towards the rugged hill summits within the remote interior of the WLA are considered to be of higher susceptibility.</p> <p>Within the area likely to be affected by the Proposed Development, the sensitivity to the type and scale of development proposed is judged to be medium.</p>
<p>Assessment of Effects on Wild Land Quality (Magnitude of Change)</p>	<p>As indicated by the ZTV on Figure 6.6b, visibility of the Proposed Development will be predominantly focused within areas of elevated landform and hill summits in the east of the WLA. In views from these parts of the WLA (illustrated by WLA01/LVIA VP9: Meall Mor, above Glen Affric, WLA02/LVIA VP10: Creag Dhubh, WLA 04/LVIA VP18: Toll Creagach and WLA 05/LVIA VP19: Sgurr nan Conbhairean) the Proposed Development will be seen in combined and successive views with operational wind farm development, which exert an existing influence on the sense of <i>naturalness</i> and <i>remoteness</i>. The Proposed Development will typically appear as an extension to the operational Bhlaraidh Wind Farm in distant views looking north-east, east and south-east.</p> <p>In views from localised extents along the eastern boundary of the WLA (illustrated by WLA01: Meall Mor, WLA02: Creag Dubh), the Proposed Development will slightly increase the prominence of wind farm development in the view. However, this is unlikely to lead to further attrition of this wild land quality given the existing influence of wind farm development in the view.</p> <p>The introduction of the Proposed Development will not affect views looking west and north-west towards the interior of the WLA and neighbouring WLAs, where the appreciation of the ‘<i>extensive range of mountains</i>’ and <i>sense of remoteness</i> are more strongly expressed.</p> <p>The geographical extent of effects on this wild land quality is considered to be medium. The magnitude of change will be low.</p>
<p>Significance of Residual Effects on Wild Land Quality</p>	<p>Overall, the effect on this wild land quality will be minor (adverse) and not significant.</p>
Wild Land Quality 2 (from WLA description)	
<p><i>‘An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude’</i></p> <p>Relevant physical attributes and/or perceptual responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sense of remoteness; – Sanctuary/solitude; – Sense of risk; and – Absence of human artefacts and contemporary land use. 	

<p>Aspects, Strength of Expression of Wild Land Quality (Baseline)</p>	<p>This wild land quality is most strongly expressed within the interior of the WLA, particularly from lower-lying extents of the WLA where the '<i>great height and range of the mountains limits outward views</i>' and increase the sense of <i>sanctuary</i> and <i>solitude</i>. This wild land quality is strongly expressed from the bealachs and elevated shelves which pass between the glens; which '<i>possess a secluded and hidden quality</i>' given they are screened from the lower-lying glens but contained by the more elevated surrounding hill summits. This includes Bealach Coire Ghaidheil (north-west of Loch Affric), Bealach na Cloiche Duibhe (north of Loch Mullardoch) and Bealach Bhearnais (north-west of Loch Monar). This quality can also be appreciated within Bealach Feith na Gamha (south-east of Creag Dubh) and Bealach Toll Easa (north-east of Loch Beinn a Mheadhoin) (WLA06), though less strongly expressed given the influence of existing wind farm development in some views. At night, views from these extents of the WLA are relatively dark, with little human influence.</p> <p>This wild land quality is also appreciated in elevated views from hill summits looking towards the remote mountainous interior of the WLA (Annex Images A6.4.2 and A6.4.4), though less strongly expressed given the presence of existing wind farm development in other directions of successive and panoramic views (Annex Image A6.4.3). At night, visible lighting on the turbines of the operational Corrimony Wind Farm (located approximately 8.9km to the east of the WLA at its nearest point) and artificial lighting on human elements within the lower-lying settled coastal landscapes to the north-east of the WLA (including Inverness and the Black Isle) are perceptible in some distant views north and north-east from the WLA (as shown in Figure 6.31), and influence the sense of <i>naturalness</i> and <i>remoteness</i>.</p>	<p>development on the view in this direction. Views west and north-west towards the more remote interior of the WLA will remain unaffected.</p> <p>The geographical extent of effects on this wild land quality is considered to be medium. The magnitude of change will be low.</p>	<p>development on the view in this direction. Views west and north-west towards the more remote interior of the WLA will remain unaffected.</p> <p>The geographical extent of effects on this wild land quality is considered to be medium. The magnitude of change will be low.</p>
<p>Sensitivity of Wild Land Quality to the type of Development proposed</p>	<p>The susceptibility of this wild land quality to the type and scale of development proposed varies considerably across the WLA, dependent on the proximity and influence of existing wind farm development.</p> <p>This wild land quality is most strongly expressed in the bealachs and elevated shelves which pass between the glens, and elevated landform within the interior of the WLA where the influence of existing wind farm development is minimal, given screening by other hill summits and elevated landform. In the extents of the WLA where there is potential for visibility of the Proposed Development (indicated on the ZTV on Figures 6.4.1 and 6.4.2), the influence of existing wind farm development decreases the susceptibility of this wild land quality.</p> <p>Within the area likely to be affected by the Proposed Development, the sensitivity to the type and scale of development proposed is judged to be medium.</p>	<p>Overall, the effect on this wild land quality will be minor (adverse) and not significant.</p>	<p>Overall, the effect on this wild land quality will be minor (adverse) and not significant.</p>
<p>Assessment of Effects on Wild Land Quality (Magnitude of Change)</p>	<p>As indicated by the ZTV on Figure 6.6b, visibility of the Proposed Development from the remote interior of the WLA will be limited to localised extents of elevated hill summits and some of the slopes of Glen Affric.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will introduce visibility of wind turbines into the view from isolated localised areas in the west of Glen Affric (as illustrated by Figure 6.34 WLA 07: Track near Alltbeithe). The blade tips of a small number of the proposed turbines will be glimpsed above intervening landform in distant views east, and will appear as a barely perceptible feature at distances exceeding 30km. The turbines will appear as a small scale feature in comparison to the steep-sided containing landform on either side of the glen, which contributes to the sense of <i>sanctuary</i> and <i>solitude</i>. The sequential experienced for receptors accessing this part of the WLA from the north-east via the Affric-Kintail Way will be influenced by existing wind farm development which is visible from the eastern extents of the glen near Loch Affric.</p> <p>There will be similar sequential and combined visibility experienced from Bealach Toll Easa (as illustrated by Figure 6.36 WLA06; Bealach Toll Easa), which passes between Glen Affric and Glen Cannich. In views from this location, the Proposed Development will be seen in distant views east, in combined and successive views with other operational wind farm development including Corrimony, Dunmaglass, Bhlairaidh, Corriegarth, Stronelairg, Beinneun and Millennium Wind Farms. The Proposed Development will be seen beyond the operational Corrimony Wind Farm in sequential views from the southern extents of the bealach. The northern extents of the pass, where the <i>sense of remoteness</i> and <i>sanctuary/solitude</i> is more strongly expressed, will remain unaffected by wind farm development</p> <p>In views from elevated hill summits within the interior of the WLA, the Proposed Development will be seen in distant views east, typically appearing as an extension to the operational Bhlairaidh Wind Farm. A number of other operational wind farm developments exert an existing influence of human</p>	<p>Wild Land Quality 3 (from WLA description)</p> <p><i>'Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs and some revealing human land use'</i></p> <p>Relevant physical attributes and/or perceptual responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sanctuary - Sense of naturalness - Sense of remoteness - Sense of awe/risk - Rugged landform 	<p>Wild Land Quality 3 (from WLA description)</p> <p><i>'Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs and some revealing human land use'</i></p> <p>Relevant physical attributes and/or perceptual responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sanctuary - Sense of naturalness - Sense of remoteness - Sense of awe/risk - Rugged landform
<p>Aspects, Strength of Expression of Wild Land Quality (Baseline)</p>	<p>This wild land quality is expressed across the lower-lying and steep-sided glens, which generally cross the WLA east-west with some smaller glens running in varying directions. Many of the narrow and steep sided glens within the interior of the WLA including the western end of Glen Strathfarrar, western end of Glen Affric and Glen Cannich, and where this wild land quality is most evident, retain a <i>sense of remoteness</i> and <i>sense of sanctuary</i>. There is minimal influence of existing wind farm development within these glens (as illustrated by Figure A6.4.2), although other small scale, localised human artefacts and contemporary land uses are evident. However, views of the operational Corrimony Wind Farm are experienced from parts of Glen Affric along the eastern WLA boundary (Annex Image 6.4.7), and views of Fairburn Wind Farm from parts of Glen Orrin along the north-eastern WLA boundary, decreasing the <i>sense of remoteness</i> and <i>naturalness</i>. At night, visible aviation lighting on the nacelles of Corrimony Wind Farm can be seen in views from localised lower-lying extents to the north of Loch Affric. Occasional artificial lighting at Affric Lodge can also be seen in views from localised lower-lying extents of the WLA near Loch Affric, decreasing the <i>sense of remoteness</i> and <i>naturalness</i>.</p>	<p>This wild land quality is expressed across the lower-lying and steep-sided glens, which generally cross the WLA east-west with some smaller glens running in varying directions. Many of the narrow and steep sided glens within the interior of the WLA including the western end of Glen Strathfarrar, western end of Glen Affric and Glen Cannich, and where this wild land quality is most evident, retain a <i>sense of remoteness</i> and <i>sense of sanctuary</i>. There is minimal influence of existing wind farm development within these glens (as illustrated by Figure A6.4.2), although other small scale, localised human artefacts and contemporary land uses are evident. However, views of the operational Corrimony Wind Farm are experienced from parts of Glen Affric along the eastern WLA boundary (Annex Image 6.4.7), and views of Fairburn Wind Farm from parts of Glen Orrin along the north-eastern WLA boundary, decreasing the <i>sense of remoteness</i> and <i>naturalness</i>. At night, visible aviation lighting on the nacelles of Corrimony Wind Farm can be seen in views from localised lower-lying extents to the north of Loch Affric. Occasional artificial lighting at Affric Lodge can also be seen in views from localised lower-lying extents of the WLA near Loch Affric, decreasing the <i>sense of remoteness</i> and <i>naturalness</i>.</p>	<p>This wild land quality is expressed across the lower-lying and steep-sided glens, which generally cross the WLA east-west with some smaller glens running in varying directions. Many of the narrow and steep sided glens within the interior of the WLA including the western end of Glen Strathfarrar, western end of Glen Affric and Glen Cannich, and where this wild land quality is most evident, retain a <i>sense of remoteness</i> and <i>sense of sanctuary</i>. There is minimal influence of existing wind farm development within these glens (as illustrated by Figure A6.4.2), although other small scale, localised human artefacts and contemporary land uses are evident. However, views of the operational Corrimony Wind Farm are experienced from parts of Glen Affric along the eastern WLA boundary (Annex Image 6.4.7), and views of Fairburn Wind Farm from parts of Glen Orrin along the north-eastern WLA boundary, decreasing the <i>sense of remoteness</i> and <i>naturalness</i>. At night, visible aviation lighting on the nacelles of Corrimony Wind Farm can be seen in views from localised lower-lying extents to the north of Loch Affric. Occasional artificial lighting at Affric Lodge can also be seen in views from localised lower-lying extents of the WLA near Loch Affric, decreasing the <i>sense of remoteness</i> and <i>naturalness</i>.</p>
<p>Sensitivity of Wild Land Quality to the type of Development proposed</p>	<p>The susceptibility of this wild land quality to the type and scale of development proposed is relatively high across the WLA, though localised areas from which there are existing views of wind farm development are of slightly lower susceptibility.</p> <p>This wild land quality is most strongly expressed within the narrow and steep sided glens within the interior of the WLA, where the influence of existing wind farm development is limited. As indicated by the ZTV on Figure 6.6b and CZTV on Figure 6.8, the Proposed Development will not be visible from these areas.</p> <p>As indicated on the ZTV on Figure 6.6b, there is potential visibility of the Proposed Development within Glen Affric. Localised extents of the glen along the WLA boundary are considered to be of slightly lower susceptibility given the presence of existing wind farm development in some views. However, susceptibility increases for the more remote western extents of the glen.</p> <p>Within the area likely to be affected by the Proposed Development, the sensitivity to the type and scale of development proposed is judged to be high.</p>	<p>The susceptibility of this wild land quality to the type and scale of development proposed is relatively high across the WLA, though localised areas from which there are existing views of wind farm development are of slightly lower susceptibility.</p> <p>This wild land quality is most strongly expressed within the narrow and steep sided glens within the interior of the WLA, where the influence of existing wind farm development is limited. As indicated by the ZTV on Figure 6.6b and CZTV on Figure 6.8, the Proposed Development will not be visible from these areas.</p> <p>As indicated on the ZTV on Figure 6.6b, there is potential visibility of the Proposed Development within Glen Affric. Localised extents of the glen along the WLA boundary are considered to be of slightly lower susceptibility given the presence of existing wind farm development in some views. However, susceptibility increases for the more remote western extents of the glen.</p> <p>Within the area likely to be affected by the Proposed Development, the sensitivity to the type and scale of development proposed is judged to be high.</p>	<p>The susceptibility of this wild land quality to the type and scale of development proposed is relatively high across the WLA, though localised areas from which there are existing views of wind farm development are of slightly lower susceptibility.</p> <p>This wild land quality is most strongly expressed within the narrow and steep sided glens within the interior of the WLA, where the influence of existing wind farm development is limited. As indicated by the ZTV on Figure 6.6b and CZTV on Figure 6.8, the Proposed Development will not be visible from these areas.</p> <p>As indicated on the ZTV on Figure 6.6b, there is potential visibility of the Proposed Development within Glen Affric. Localised extents of the glen along the WLA boundary are considered to be of slightly lower susceptibility given the presence of existing wind farm development in some views. However, susceptibility increases for the more remote western extents of the glen.</p> <p>Within the area likely to be affected by the Proposed Development, the sensitivity to the type and scale of development proposed is judged to be high.</p>
<p>Assessment of Effects on Wild Land Quality (Magnitude of Change)</p>	<p>As indicated by the ZTV on Figure 6.6b, the introduction of the Proposed Development will affect a relatively small proportion of the WLA in which this wild land quality is strongly expressed, limited to localised extents of Glen Affric. In views from the lower-lying extents of Glen Affric (illustrated by Figure 6.28 WLA03/ VP15: Core Path at Loch Affric), the Proposed Development will be seen against the skyline in distant views east beyond the operational Corrimony Wind Farm. The Proposed Development will appear as a distant and small scale feature in views looking east beyond the WLA boundary, and will not undermine the scale or appreciation of the steep-sided glen sides, which form topographical features containing the glen to the north and south of the view and contribute towards the sense of <i>sanctuary</i> within the glen. Though the Proposed Development will</p>	<p>As indicated by the ZTV on Figure 6.6b, the introduction of the Proposed Development will affect a relatively small proportion of the WLA in which this wild land quality is strongly expressed, limited to localised extents of Glen Affric. In views from the lower-lying extents of Glen Affric (illustrated by Figure 6.28 WLA03/ VP15: Core Path at Loch Affric), the Proposed Development will be seen against the skyline in distant views east beyond the operational Corrimony Wind Farm. The Proposed Development will appear as a distant and small scale feature in views looking east beyond the WLA boundary, and will not undermine the scale or appreciation of the steep-sided glen sides, which form topographical features containing the glen to the north and south of the view and contribute towards the sense of <i>sanctuary</i> within the glen. Though the Proposed Development will</p>	<p>As indicated by the ZTV on Figure 6.6b, the introduction of the Proposed Development will affect a relatively small proportion of the WLA in which this wild land quality is strongly expressed, limited to localised extents of Glen Affric. In views from the lower-lying extents of Glen Affric (illustrated by Figure 6.28 WLA03/ VP15: Core Path at Loch Affric), the Proposed Development will be seen against the skyline in distant views east beyond the operational Corrimony Wind Farm. The Proposed Development will appear as a distant and small scale feature in views looking east beyond the WLA boundary, and will not undermine the scale or appreciation of the steep-sided glen sides, which form topographical features containing the glen to the north and south of the view and contribute towards the sense of <i>sanctuary</i> within the glen. Though the Proposed Development will</p>

	<p>increase the presence of wind farm development in the view, the Proposed Development will be seen in combined views with the operational Corrimony Wind Farm, which influences the <i>sense of remoteness</i> in this part of the glen. Views towards the more remote western extents of the glen and towards the containing skyline formed by the rugged landform of Mullach Fraoch-choire and the more distant Five Sisters of Kintail will not be affected by the introduction of the Proposed Development. The sequential experience of travelling west along the glen, and <i>'gradual decrease in the influence of human artefacts and contemporary land use from the margins to the interior'</i> will not be affected by the introduction of the Proposed Development, as areas of indicated visibility (illustrated on Figure 6.6b) from the lower-lying extents of the glen will be limited to localised extents of Glen Affric. In views from small pockets of introduced visibility resulting from the Proposed Development (as shown by the ZTV on Figure 6.8), the blade tips of the Proposed Development will be barely perceptible beyond intervening landform in views east (illustrated by Figure 6.34 WLA07: Track near Alltbeith). Whilst this will introduce a distant feature on the skyline, the influence of the Proposed Development will be localised and will result in a small scale change and will not undermine the scale or appreciation of the steep-sided glen sides. Given the intervening distance and small proportion of the view occupied by the Proposed Development, the <i>sense of naturalness</i> will not be affected.</p> <p>The geographical extent of effects on this wild land quality is considered to be small. The magnitude of change will be low.</p>
<p>Significance of Residual Effects on Wild Land Quality</p>	<p>Overall, the effect on this wild land quality will be minor (adverse) and not significant.</p>

Step 5 – Judgement of the significance of effects

Summary

A6.4.75 The Proposed Development is located 9.9km to the east of WLA 24: Central Highlands at its closest point, 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 24: Central Highlands, and the wild land impact assessment considers the potential for effects on three of these qualities, as set out in **Table A6.4.4** above. The assessment concludes that no significant adverse effects will occur for these three qualities. The effects identified above are generally considered to be more discernible within the eastern extents of the WLA, within which the assessment is focused (within approximately 30km of the proposed wind turbines). The assessment concludes that no significant adverse effects will occur for these three qualities.

A6.4.76 The Proposed Development, including lighting, will be visible in the context of human elements that are already present in wider outward views from the WLA. The Proposed Development will be seen in the context of existing wind farms, notably Bhlaraidh and Corrimony Wind Farms. Therefore, the Proposed Development will not introduce visibility of human elements into a view which previously did not feature such elements.

A6.4.77 Whilst significant visual effects were identified in the LVIA in **Chapter 6** for VP9: Meall Mor and VP10: Creag Dubh (both located along the eastern boundary of WLA 24), the existing presence of wind farm development in these views has influenced the expression and strength of wild land qualities in these locations. Additional effects on the wild land qualities are judged to be very localised in their extent, as illustrated by **Figure A6.4.2** and overall, the WLA will not be significantly adversely affected by the addition of the Proposed Development to the baseline conditions comprising the nearby operational Bhlaraidh and Corrimony Wind Farms.

A6.4.78 The wind turbines of the Proposed Development will increase the horizontal extent of turbines in views looking east from localised lower-lying extents in the east of Glen Affric, along the WLA boundary and in elevated views from hill summits within the WLA. However, views west towards the *'extensive, remote mountain interior'* will remain unaffected. Given the intervening distance between the WLA and the Proposed Development, the scale of the proposed turbines, where visible, will not undermine the appreciation of the *'awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains'* within the WLA. Where views of the Proposed Development are available from lower-lying extents of the WLA, where the *'deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes'* are experienced, the Proposed Development will appear as a relatively distant feature and will not undermine the scale or appreciation of the steep-sided glen sides, which form topographical features containing the glen to the north and south of the view and contribute towards the sense of *sanctuary* within the glen.

A6.4.79 When considered in the cumulative context of other consented wind farm developments (shown on **Figure A6.4.3**), the consented Bhlaraidh Extension in combination with the Proposed Development and the operational Bhlaraidh Wind Farm will appear

as one continuous development extending across views south-east, east and north-east from elevated landform and hill summits within the east of the WLA. Whilst these developments in combination will increase the horizontal extent of wind farm development in outward views from the WLA, there is an evident existing presence of wind farm development in these views. Views west towards the *'extensive, remote mountain interior'* will remain unaffected.

A6.4.80 The consented Millennium South Wind Farm will consolidate the cluster of operational development formed by the Millennium, Beinneun and Beinneun Extension Wind Farms in views south-east from the WLA. The Proposed Development will appear separate to this cluster of development. Given the existing presence of wind farm development in this part of the view and the relatively discrete visual appearance of Millennium South Wind Farm, there will not be any additional cumulative effects on wild land qualities. The more distant consented Dell Wind Farm will appear in the context of the operational Stronelairg Wind Farm in distant views east and south-east from hill summits within the WLA. The Proposed Development will appear separate to this cluster of development and there will not be any significant adverse additional cumulative effects on wild land qualities.

A6.4.81 When considered in the cumulative context of other proposed wind farm developments which are currently subject to valid planning applications or at appeal/PLI (shown on **Figure 6.7b**), the proposed Bunloinn Wind Farm and Tomchrasky Wind Farm will both bring wind turbines within closer proximity of the south-eastern WLA boundary. Bunloinn Wind Farm will increase the horizontal extent of turbines further west into a part of the view without an existing presence of wind farm development. Both Tomchrasky and Bunloinn will appear at the foot slopes of hills along the boundary of the WLA. This may lead to some further attrition of the appreciation of the *'extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains'*. However, the Proposed Development will appear as a separate and more distant development and will not contribute towards this attrition of the wild land quality under this cumulative scenario.

A6.4.82 Other proposed wind farms, including Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm and Cloiche Wind Farm will appear as distant features in outward views east from the WLA, with the Proposed Development appearing separately to these other proposed developments and there will not be any significant adverse additional cumulative effects on wild land qualities.

A6.4.83 No additional mitigation beyond the embedded design mitigation considered in the siting and design of the Proposed Development (as detailed in **Chapter 3**) is proposed to avoid or reduce the effects identified in this assessment.

Conclusions

A6.4.84 NPF4 recognises the sensitivity of WLAs, however, it is clear that *"Buffer zones around wild land will not be applied, and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration."* (page 41).

A6.4.85 The 2020 NatureScot 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.

A6.4.86 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 protection, and the overall integrity of the WLA will not be compromised by the introduction of the Proposed Development.

Annex – Fieldwork photographs: Wild Land Impact Assessment



Annex Image A6.4.1: View west from WLA 02/ LVIA VP10: Creag Dhubh, representing Wild Land Quality 1: *'An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains'*



Annex Image A6.4.2: View west from WLA 05/AESLQ 04/ LVIA VP 19: Sgurr nan Conbhairean, representing Wild Land Quality 1: *'An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains'* and Wild Land Quality 2 *"An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude"*



Annex Image A6.4.3: View east from WLA 05/AESLQ 04/ LVIA VP 19: Sgurr nan Conbhairean, representing existing attrition to Wild Land Quality 1 and 2 by operational wind farms (Beinneun and Beinneun Extension).



Annex Image A6.4.4: View west from WLA 04/AESLQ 03/ LVIA VP18: Toll Creagach, representing Wild Land Quality 1: *'An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains'* and Wild Land Quality 2 *"An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude"*



Annex Image A6.4.5: View south-west from estate track within Glen Affric, representing Wild Land Quality 1 (*"An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains"*, *"emphasised where seen in contrast to the horizontal surface of adjacent lochs or glen floors"*) and Wild Land Quality 3 (*"Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs and some revealing human land use"*), with some attrition to the sense of remoteness resulting from the presence of estate tracks and fencing.

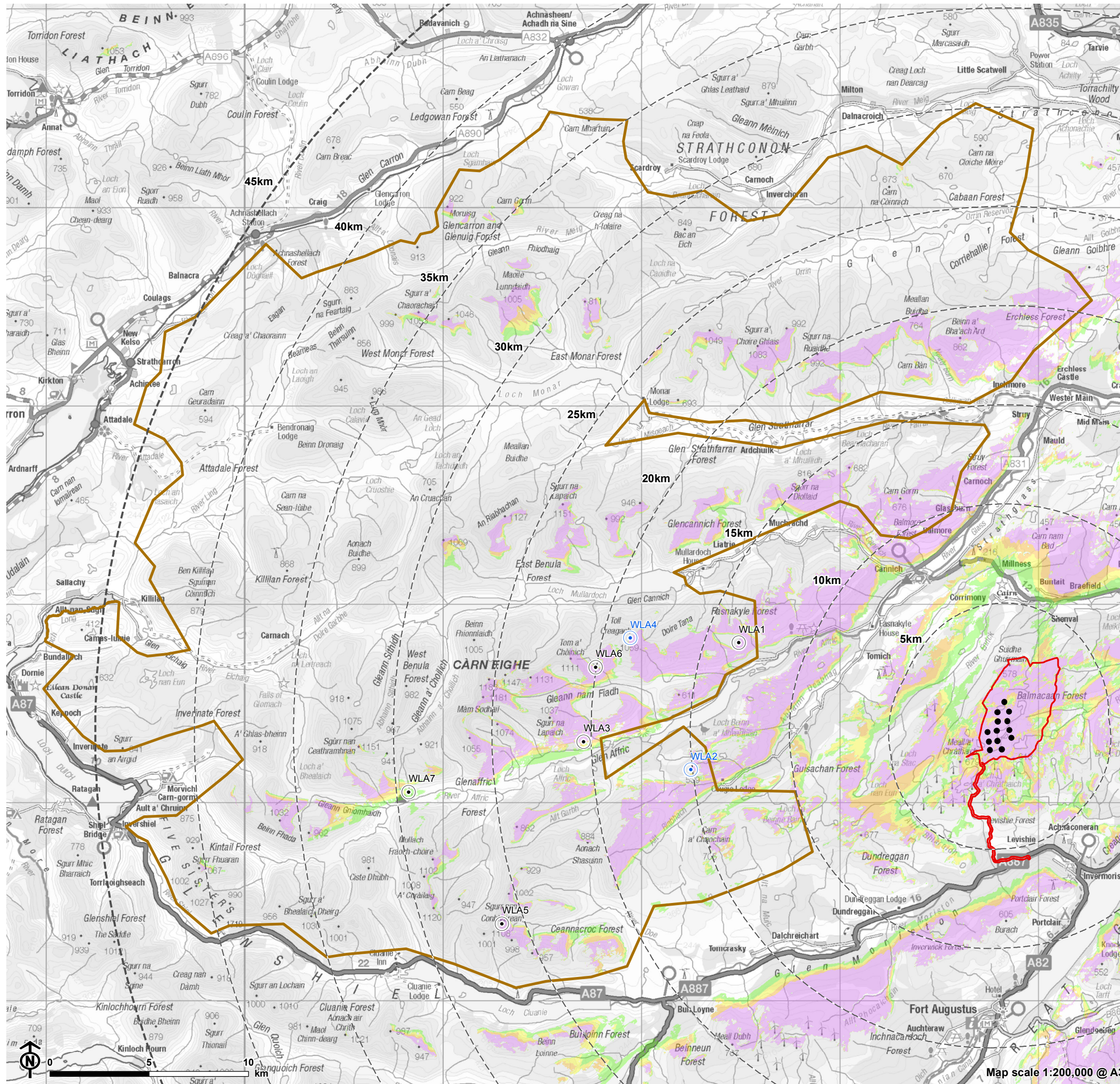


Annex Image A6.4.6: View towards the northern containing sides of Glen Affric, representing Wild Land Quality 3 (*"Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs and some revealing human land use"*).



Annex Image A6.4.7: View north-east from WLA 03/AESLQ 02/ LVIA VP15: Core Path at Loch Affric, representing views of existing wind farm development from lower-lying extents of the WLA, representing existing attrition to Wild Land Quality 3 and the sense of remoteness experienced within Glen Affric.

Appendix 6.4
Figure A6.4.1: Wild Land Area 24 - Blade Tip Height (180-200m) Zone of Theoretical Visibility



- Site boundary
- Turbine
- 5km intervals from outermost turbines
- LVIA study area 45km from outermost turbines
- Wild Land Area (WLA) - Central Highlands

Theoretical turbine visibility

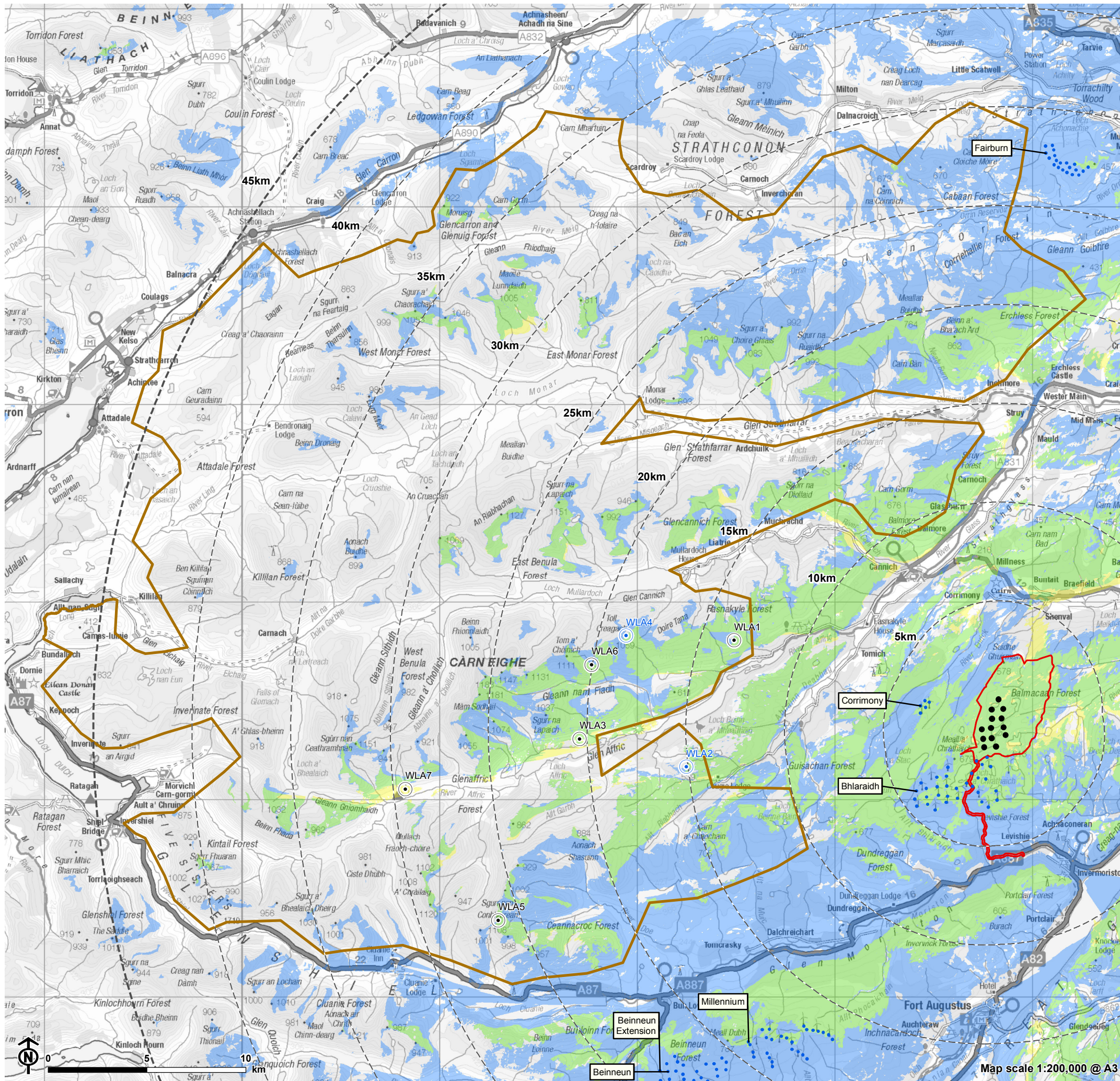
- 1-4 turbines visible
- 5-7 turbines visible
- 8-10 turbines visible
- 11-13 turbines visible

Assessment Points:

- WLA 01: Meall Mor, above Glen Affric
- WLA 02: Creag Dhùbh
- WLA 03: Core Path at Loch Affric
- WLA 04: Toll Creagach
- WLA 05: Sgurr nan Conbhairean
- WLA 06: Bealach Toll Easa
- WLA 07: Track near Alltbeithe

Notes:
Dusk viewpoints shown in blue

The ZTV is calculated to turbine tip height (180-200m) from a viewing height of 2m above ground level. The terrain model assumes bare ground and is derived from OS Terrain 5 height data (obtained from Emapsite in November 2022). Earth curvature and atmospheric refraction have been taken into account. The ZTV was calculated using ArcMap 10.8.1 software.



Loch Liath Wind Farm
for Loch Liath Wind Farm Ltd



Appendix 6.4
Figure A6.4.2: Wild Land Area 24 - CZTV: Operational Wind Farms and Loch Liath

- Site boundary
 - Turbine
 - 5km intervals from outermost turbines
 - LVIA study area 45km from outermost turbines
 - Wild Land Area (WLA) - Central Highlands
- Theoretical wind farm visibility**
- Only other wind farms visible
 - Only Loch Liath wind farm visible
 - Loch Liath and other wind farms visible

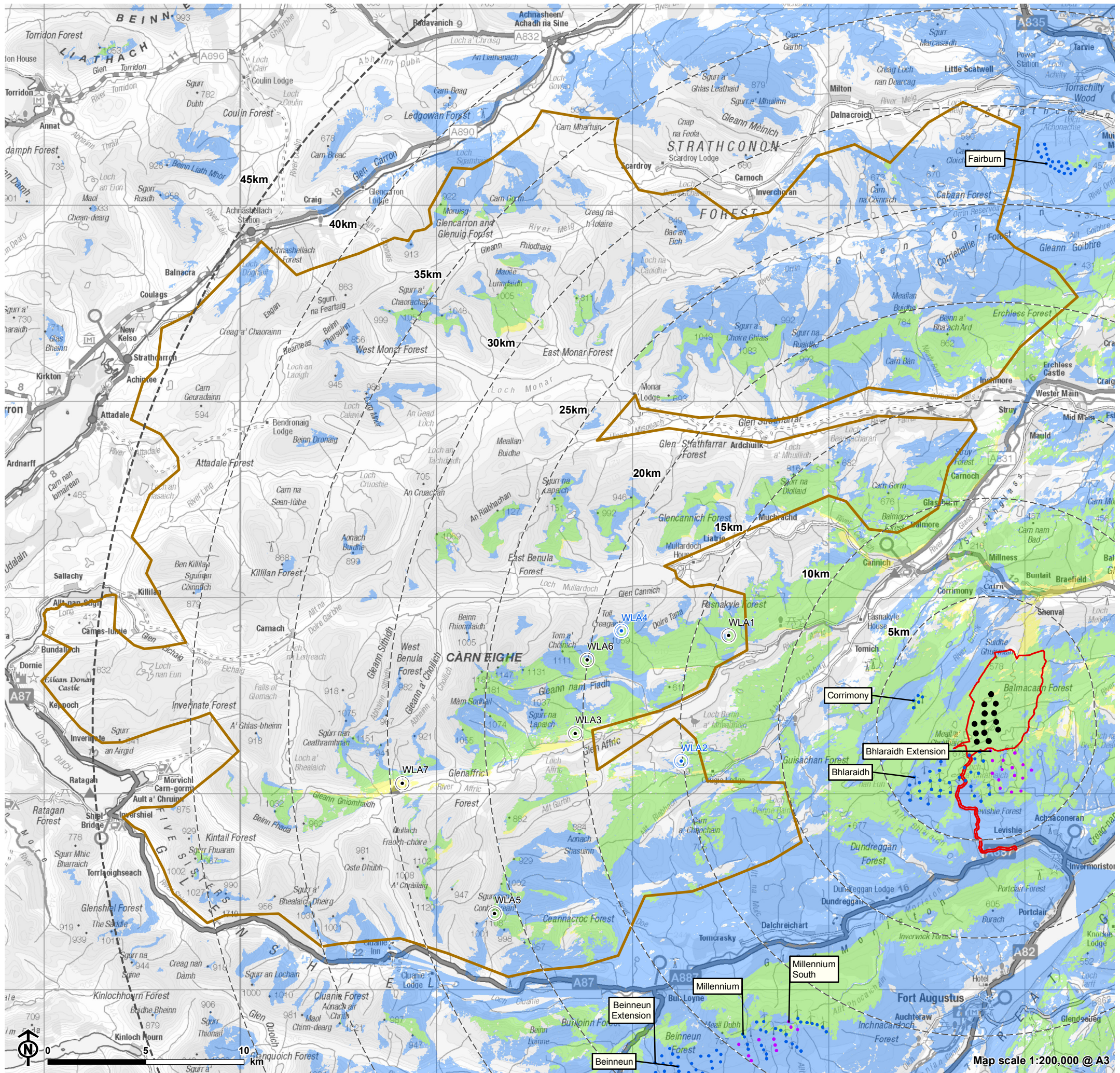
Wind farm developments (by status)

- Operational
 - Assessment Points:**
- WLA 01: Meall Mor, above Glen Affric
WLA 02: Creag Dhubh
WLA 03: Core Path at Loch Affric
WLA 04: Toll Creagach
WLA 05: Sgurr nan Conbhairean
WLA 06: Bealach Toll Easa
WLA 07: Track near Alltbeithe

Notes:
Dusk viewpoints shown in blue

Each ZTV is calculated to turbine tip height from a viewing height of 2m above ground level. The terrain model assumes bare ground and is derived from OS Terrain 5 height data (obtained from Emapsite in November 2022). Earth curvature and atmospheric refraction have been taken into account. The ZTV was calculated using ArcMap 10.8.1 software.





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Appendix 6.4
Figure A6.4.3: Wild Land Area 24 - CZTV: Operational and Consented Wind Farms and Loch Liath

- Site boundary
 - Turbine
 - 5km intervals from outermost turbines
 - LVIA study area 45km from outermost turbines
 - Wild Land Area (WLA) - Central Highlands
- Theoretical wind farm visibility**
- Only other wind farms visible
 - Only Loch Liath wind farm visible
 - Loch Liath and other wind farms visible

- Wind farm developments (by)**
- Operational
 - Consented
 - Assessment Points:**
- WLA 01: Meall Mor, above Glen Affric
 - WLA 02: Creag Dhubh
 - WLA 03: Core Path at Loch Affric
 - WLA 04: Toll Creagach
 - WLA 05: Sgurr nan Conbhairean
 - WLA 06: Bealach Toll Easa
 - WLA 07: Track near Alltbeithe

Notes:
Dusk viewpoints shown in blue

Each ZTV is calculated to turbine tip height from a viewing height of 2m above ground level. The terrain model assumes bare ground and is derived from OS Terrain 5 height data (obtained from Emapsite in November 2022). Earth curvature and atmospheric refraction have been taken into account. The ZTV was calculated using ArcMap 10.8.1 software.



Map scale 1:200,000 @ A3