

## Technical Appendix 7.6: Designated Landscapes

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## 1.0 Introduction

The site and its immediate surroundings lie within the Tweedsmuir Uplands Special Landscape Area (SLA)<sup>1</sup>. The closest nationally designated landscape is the Upper Tweeddale National Scenic Area (NSA) which lies approximately 6.0 km to the north-east.

## 2.0 Designated Landscapes within the Study Area

Designated landscapes within approximately 25 km of the Proposed Development are shown on Figure 7.5 and set out in Table 1, with observations on theoretical visibility and whether further detailed consideration of effects on qualities identified in their citations is required. Sources of citations for designated landscapes include:

- The Special Qualities of National Scenic Areas (SNH, 2010).
- Scottish Borders Council Supplementary Planning Guidance: Local Landscape Designations (2012).
- Historic Environment Scotland Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.

Designations across the wider study area that have been excluded from this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) are:

- designations in parts of the study area where there is no theoretical visibility; and
- designations beyond 25 km due to the reduced and fragmented theoretical visibility and distance which, in combination, mean that significant effects are unlikely.

**Table 1 – Designated Landscapes within 25 km**

Designated Landscape	Approximate Distance at Closest Point and Direction	Notes on Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Coverage
Upper Tweeddale NSA	6 km north-east	Limited visibility on high south-east facing slopes but considered further below.
Tweedsmuir Uplands SLA	Contains the site	Visibility from within the Tweed Valley and limited to high hill tops beyond. Considered further below.
Upper Clyde Valley and Tinto SLA	2 km north-west	Very limited visibility due to screening by Gathersnow Hill and Culter Fell. No likelihood of effects on key qualities, Not considered further.
Moffat Hills SLA	10 km south	Very limited theoretical visibility. No likelihood of effects on key qualities. Not considered further.
Leadhills and Lowther Hills SLA	14 km south-west	Limited visibility on high north-east facing slopes, with the Proposed Development visible beyond the Clyde group. No likelihood of effects on key qualities. Not considered further.
Pentland Hills and Black Mount SLA	17 km north	Very limited theoretical visibility at over 17 km away. No likelihood of effects on key qualities. Not considered further.
Tweed Valley SLA	20 km north-east	Very limited theoretical visibility at over 20 km away. No likelihood of effects on key qualities. Not considered further.
Douglas Valley SLA	20 km north-west	No theoretical visibility. Not considered further.
Thornhill Uplands Regional Scenic Area (RSA)	21 km south-west	Very limited theoretical visibility at over 21 km away. No likelihood of effects on key qualities Not considered further.
Pentland Hills SLA	23 km north	Very limited theoretical visibility at over 24 km away. No likelihood of effects on key qualities Not considered further.
Middle Clyde SLA	24 km north-west	No theoretical visibility. Not considered further.
Dawyck GDL	12 km north-east	No theoretical visibility. Not considered further.
Stobo Castle GDL	14 km north-east	Limited theoretical visibility at western end of GDL although this part is wooded. Not considered further.
The Glen GDL	20 km north-east	No theoretical visibility. Not considered further.
Kailzie GDL	24 km north-east	No theoretical visibility. Not considered further.
Falls of Clyde GDL	24km north-west	No theoretical visibility. Not considered further.

In addition to the designated landscapes listed above, NatureScot has identified Wild Land Areas (WLAs) across Scotland. The Talla Hart Fell WLA lies approximately 6 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development. Following National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), assessment of effects on WLAs is not required if the Proposed Development is not within wild land.

<sup>1</sup> NatureScot advises that all local designations can be referred to as Local Landscape Areas. The term Special Landscape Areas is retained here for consistency with SBC terminology.

## 3.0 Implications of the Findings of the LVIA

### 3.1 Upper Tweeddale NSA

**Observations:** The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility would be limited to elevated south-facing slopes and summits of hills around the fringe of the NSA only, with no visibility from the valley floor that is the focus of the NSA.

**Special Qualities:** The Special Qualities of the NSA, set out in The *Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas* (SNH, 2010), focus on the form and identity of this valley section and include:

- diverse scenery of great charm and soft beauty;
- the historical continuity of settlement;
- green, intimate pastoral valleys;
- expansive, open hills with panoramic views;
- the variety of woodlands and trees;
- the large, geometric fields;
- the distinctive vernacular buildings; and
- tranquil riverine landscapes.

Most of these Special Qualities would not be affected. One that has the potential to be affected is “expansive, open hills with panoramic views”.

**Considerations:** Viewpoint (VP) 15 is on Trahenna Hill, and VP20 on Pykestone Hill. These locations have overviews of the valley (from the edges of the summit plateaux) and panoramic views which include existing and under construction wind farms in views south-west. The Proposed Development would be visible from these locations, with not significant (minor) effects identified. However, these would not alter the quality of the hills within the NSA, they would remain expansive and open, and panoramic views would remain possible, even though the additional wind farm would be present in the wider landscape.

**Overall:** It is considered that whilst the proposed turbines would be visible from the high hills around the valley NSA, they would appear as minor elements within panoramic views, and in a direction of view that is currently influenced by wind turbines. Therefore, there would be no discernible change to the special qualities or integrity of the NSA as a result of the Proposed Development.

### 3.2 Tweedsmuir Uplands SLA

**Observations:** This SLA is extensive, covering the hills from the Yarrow Valley up to the western border of the Scottish Borders Council area; and from Hard Fell in the south, north to Blyth Bridge, wrapping around the Upper Tweeddale NSA.

The area was designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value in the 1960s when the County Councils identified specific areas to be protected under their development plans. No formal citation was provided at that time. The area continued to be reiterated as a designated area in subsequent local plans, with the first review of justification and value undertaken in 2012 (Scottish Borders Council, 2012), when the designations were renamed Special Landscape Areas<sup>2</sup>. At that time Clyde Wind Farm had been built just outside the area to the west, and Glenkerie Wind Farm was constructed within the designated area, although neither are mentioned in the citation. Since then, construction of Whitelaw Brae has started, and Glenkerie Extension Wind Farms has been granted consent within the SLA.

**Qualities:** The *Scottish Borders Local Landscape Designation Review* (2012) designation statement states:

- “This extensive area represents the Southern Uplands within the Borders. It comprises steep rolling landform, with deep valleys and rounded peaks of glacial origin. The area lacks the blanket forest cover that affects other areas, and is predominantly open moorland of rough grass and heather. This is a highly scenic area of dramatic landform, and has a significant degree of wildness. The more rugged, rocky summits in particular have a strong sense of remoteness, with little overt human influence on the landscape. The large reservoirs are the only substantive human incursion, but add variety rather than reducing remoteness. Together with St Mary’s Loch they form the only substantial water bodies in the Borders, and the Loch in particular provides scenic variety in combination with the hills. Key summits include Minch Moor overlooking the Tweed, Broad Law, the highest in the Borders,

<sup>2</sup> NatureScot advises that all locally designated areas should be referred to as Local Landscape Areas.

and Culter Fell on the South Lanarkshire boundary. The uplands extend north to Broughton Heights, providing the setting for the NSA.

- *“The uplands are well used for recreation, with the Southern Upland Way among many signposted routes in the area. Notable features include high peaks such as Broad Law, and the reservoirs at Talla and Megget which offer water-based activities, and provide access into the hills. St Mary’s Loch is also a popular recreational destination, offering outdoor access and water-based activities. The upper Tweed is an important route through the Borders, as well as providing access into the hills.”*

**Considerations:** The Proposed Development would be located within the locally designated area, on the ridge to the north-west of the Upper Tweed Valley. The ZTV shows that the Proposed Development would be visible from within the Upper Tweed Valley and across the slopes of hills either side of it where forest plantations allow. In addition, it would be visible from within some tributary valleys, the Talla and Fruid Valleys in particular, and the Kingledoors Burn Valley to the north. Further afield, visibility would be possible from high tops and ridges within approximately 10 km of the site. These include Hart Fell, to Lochcraig Head, and north-eastwards to Pykestone Hill. There would be limited visibility from Culter Fell and Broughton Heights to the north.

Most of the viewpoints used in the LVIA lie within the SLA and can be used to represent the varied views from within the ZTV (see Technical Appendix TA7.3 and Figures 7.13 onwards).

The designation statement quoted above draws heavily on the topography of the area, the sense of remoteness, and the lochs as the ‘only substantive human incursion’. It is noted, however, that there is extensive forest plantation within the Upper Tweed Valley, and wind farms are present and visible (and were at the time of the citation).

With regard to the qualities of the SLA, it is noted that:

- The SLA is an extensive area, with theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines relatively limited over the south-western part of the SLA. The Proposed Development would therefore not be visible from most of the SLA.
- The landform means that views of the Proposed Development would be limited within valleys, where most viewers are, but where visibility is possible it is likely to be along valleys in framed views. In some of these framed views existing wind farms are visible. Views from high tops and ridges (seen by walkers) are more open and also include existing wind farms, including wind farms that lie outside the SLA.
- The Proposed Development would be largely within an area of forest, and not on open moorland except for two turbines and their access tracks. This forest area reduces the wildness qualities of the site and its immediate surroundings.
- The Southern Upland Way passes through the eastern part of the SLA and has no theoretical visibility along this section.

Existing wind farms are present within and around the SLA, including Glenkerie and Whitelaw Brae within the SLA; and Clyde group that lines part of the western boundary of the SLA.

With respect to the Upper Tweed Valley, the Proposed Development would be present on the ridge to the west of Tweedsmuir, approximately 800 m from the A701 at its closest section. The assessment of the route and representative viewpoints along it (Technical Appendix 7.3) demonstrate that the greatest influence of the proposed turbines on the experience of the Upper Tweed Valley would occur between Glenbreck and Tweedsmuir, a section of approximately 7 km. Other sections briefly affected include Stanhope southbound, and past the source of the Tweed northbound. The Proposed Development would be framed in views from Talla Linn but would not be the first wind farm in the view as Clyde group turbines are visible.

From elevated vantage points within the SLA, the Proposed Development would be seen in the context of Glenkerie, Whitelaw Brae and the Clyde group and the broad panoramas over the Southern Uplands. Effects were identified as not significant for elevated viewpoints, except at Culter Fell at the edge of the SLA, where the Proposed Development would be seen between Glenkerie and the Clyde group and a significant (moderate) effect would occur.

The landscape character types (LCTs), assessed in Technical Appendix 7.2, include LCT 95: Southern Uplands – Borders which occupies the upland site and its surroundings, and LCT 113: Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor within the Tweed Valley. Significant landscape effects are identified within approximately 6 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development and would not be as distant in other directions. These relate to the direct effects on the site ridge, and indirect effects of the Proposed Development on the ridge and closer sections of the Upper Tweed Valley. Effects on landscape

character for other areas of those LCTs, and other LCTs that fall within the SLA are found not to be significant.

Aviation lights would be visible from the A701, the minor road from Talla Linn past Talla Reservoir, and from the minor road from the Fruid Reservoir. Off-road locations have few viewers at night, although occasional walkers on paths at dusk are considered in Technical Appendix 7.5.

**Overall:** It is considered that whilst the Proposed Development would be within and visible from some parts of the SLA, the proposed turbines would not add new elements into the landscape as there are existing turbines present within and around the SLA and the Upper Tweed Valley. The scale of the proposed turbines and location in relation to the Upper Tweed Valley mean that significant landscape and visual effects have been identified for the valley within approximately 8-10 km of the Proposed Development, which is a relatively small part of the SLA extent. Other qualities of the SLA would not be affected by the Proposed Development. It is judged therefore, that although the Proposed Development would alter aspects of the character of the western part of the SLA, it would not undermine the integrity of the designated area as a whole, and the reasons for designation would remain intact for the Tweedsmuir Uplands SLA, including the Upper Tweed Valley.

**Cumulative:** In the cumulative scenario, Glenkerie Extension has been consented and would be located within the SLA. This would increase the presence of turbines within the western part of the SLA. The cumulative assessment (presented in Technical Appendix 7.4) has identified that with these wind farms present, the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development would remain unchanged or be slightly reduced. In this situation, the overall effects of the Proposed Development on landscapes within the SLA would be slightly reduced, as would the effects on the experience of the Upper Tweed Valley. However, it would remain the closest and most visible group of turbines for the section of Tweed Valley from Glenbreck to Tweedsmuir.

There are no wind farms within the SLA in the application scenario, which was not considered in detail in the cumulative assessment.

## 4.0 References

Scottish Natural Heritage (2010). *The Special Qualities of National Scenic Areas, Commissioned Report No.374*. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-commissioned-report-374-special-qualities-national-scenic-areas>. Accessed on: 15 May 2024.

Scottish Borders Council (2012) *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Local Landscape Designations*. Available at: <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory-record/20043/local-landscape-designations>. Accessed on: 15 May 2024.

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