

## Appendix 9.B: Assessment of Effects on the Special Landscape Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Appendix contains the assessment of effects on the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) of the Cairngorms National Park (CNP). It follows guidance set out in Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNHs) Working Draft 11 entitled 'Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities' (November 2018). The guidance is aimed specifically at landscape professionals undertaking Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) for developments or land use changes with potential to impact on the SLQs of NPs or National Scenic Areas (NSA).
- 1.2. The following figures are of particular relevance to the assessment of effects on the CNP and have been used in the assessment process.
  - **Figure 9.3:** Landscape Designations and Wild Land Areas;
  - **Figure 9.9:** Landscape Designations and Wild Land Areas with ZTV;
  - **Figure 9.24 and 9.41:** Viewpoint 2: Carn Glas Choire;
  - **Figure 9.25 and 9.42:** Viewpoint 3: Ptarmigan Lodge;
  - **Figure 9.26 and 9.43:** Viewpoint 4: Creagan a Chaise;
  - **Figure 9.29 and Figure 9.46:** Viewpoint 7: Geal Charn Mor;
  - **Figure 9.31 and Figure 9.48:** Viewpoint 9: Meall a' Bhuachaille; and
  - **Figure 9.34 and Figure 9.51:** Viewpoint 12: Gorton Hill.
- 1.3. The draft guidance presents an approach that is intended to be "*proportionate to the scale and stage of the development, be clear and transparent so that the reasoning that informs judgements can be tracked and convey the complexity of effects*". Presented in the associated Pro Forma, the guidance sets out a four-step approach under the following four headings;
  - **Step 1:** The Proposal – gain as full an understanding of the proposal as possible.
  - **Step 2:** Definition of the Study Area and Scope of the Assessment - identifying the area likely to be affected.
  - **Step 3:** The Analysis of Impacts and Effects on SLQs.
  - **Step 4:** Summary of Impacts on the SLQs, implications for the NSA/NP and possible future effects on SLQs and recommendations for mitigation.

### 2. Role of National Parks

- 2.1. This section of the Report sets out a brief summary of the CNP and its particular interest, whilst an analysis of the likely effects of the wind farm is carried out in Section 5.
- 2.2. The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 sets out the conditions which an area designated as a National Park must satisfy. These are:

- That the area is of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage, or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage;
  - That the area has a distinctive character and a coherent identity;
  - That designating the area as a National Park would meet the special needs of the area and would be the best means of ensuring that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the area in a co-ordinated way.
- 2.3. In addition to these three conditions, the Act also sets out four aims for National Parks in Scotland:
- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
  - To promote sustainable use of natural resources of the area;
  - To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;
  - To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.
- 2.4. These aims are referred to at paragraph 84 of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (2020). There are currently two National Parks in Scotland; the Cairngorms (2003) and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs (2002). With effect from 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010, the Cairngorms National Park was extended to the south, to include Blair Atholl, while further north it ties back to the existing boundary by crossing the A9 to the west of Drumochter.
- 2.5. It is relevant to note that there has been no change to the boundary in the vicinity of the application site of the Proposed Development, which lies some 5 km outside of the CNP. SPP notes at paragraph 196 of SPP that Planning Authorities should not impose additional zones of protection around areas designated for their landscape or natural heritage value. At paragraph 85 of SPP the comment is also made that the considerations applied in respect of proposed developments within the CNP will also be applied to proposed developments outwith the CNP that affects it.
- 2.6. The shared vision, objectives and priority actions for the CNP are set out in the 'Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017 to 2022', which is a material consideration in planning authority decisions. The Plan sets out how the four aims for National Parks can be met collectively and in a co-ordinated way to achieve the following three outcomes for the CNP;
- Conservation: A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced;
  - Visitor Experience: People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences; and
  - Rural Development: A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities.
- 2.7. In the event of a tension or conflict between the four aims, the Act requires that priority is given to the first Aim, to 'conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage'. As a consequence, it is the 'Special Qualities' of the Park that provide a consistent principle throughout the Plan. In relation to this assessment, the key consideration is whether the Proposed Development would harm those special qualities, to the extent that the first aim is compromised.

- 2.8. To date there are no commercial wind farms within either of the National Parks, but a number have been built or are consented which have a visual presence from within the CNP boundary, for example operational wind farms at Kildrummy, 3.17 km from the closest CNP boundary, Paul's Hill at 5.56 km, Berry Burn at 6.67 km and Farr at 8.75 km.
- 2.9. The 5 km distance between the Proposed Development and the CNP boundary is, therefore, directly comparable with other wind farms that have been considered to form an acceptable relationship with the Park, notwithstanding that site specific factors may be relevant in each instance. Of particular relevance to the Proposed Development is the fact that there is very limited theoretical visibility from within the parts of the CNP that are closest to the site, due to the ridgeline that encloses the northern boundary of the Park in this area. This is evident from the ZTV in **Figure 9.9**.
- 2.10. In 2010, SNH published a separate study assessing 'The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park'. This follows on from SNH's evaluation of the special qualities of the NSAs across Scotland, which provides an update to Scotland's Scenic Heritage, published in 1978. This latest publication was produced in association with the CNPA and Historic Scotland and assesses the two NSAs within the Park, but also sets this in the context of the Park as a whole. The study follows a clear methodology, which is informed by professional judgement. It found that the two special qualities within the two NSAs in the Park 'does not differ significantly from the list of qualities of the Park as a whole' and accordingly the qualities of the NSAs are not itemised separately. However, the study makes the assumption 'that the qualities were contained within the existing boundaries and fieldwork was confined to these.' It is reasonable to assume that there is clear justification behind the selection of the Park boundaries and that the landscape of the application site, which is outside the Park, has lesser qualities when compared with those within the Park.
- 2.11. Part 2 of the study summarises the special qualities identified within the Park under nine headings. These elements are then described in greater detail in the following sections of the report. The SNH study separately addresses the visual and sensory qualities, concerned with how the landscape is perceived. With regard to the high ground of the Cairngorms, the study emphasises the 'absence of signs of civilisation' as being a major draw. It does not reconcile this with the apparent influence of wind farms from outside the Park, which are indeed apparent, but not particularly conspicuous, from the summit of Cairngorm and the Ptarmigan Lodge visitor centre, and the fact that the 'high ground' is concentrated away from the fringes of the Park must assist in maintaining this perception of wildness or remoteness. Towards the fringes of the Park, external influences become more apparent and indeed the wind farms at Tom nan Clach (operational), Farr (operational); Paul's Hill (operational); Berry Burn (consented); Rothes (operational) and Kildrummy (consented) are examples of this, which diminish the sense of wildness and introduce signs of civilisation. The many settlements that exist within the Park clearly introduce signs of civilisation into the Park itself.
- 2.12. The study does differentiate between the massif and the surrounding hills within the Park on page 15, where it notes that 'the central massif merely represents the extreme end of a range. The 'lesser hills' within the Park have their own ridges, summits and plateaux and would be impressive in any other location.' Carn Glas-choire must fall within this 'lesser hills' analysis, but it

and its adjoining hill summits are nonetheless massive in their appearance, size and scale – often misrepresented by an annotation on a map. OPEN supports the analysis undertaken within SNH’s study and does not dispute that the landscape of the Cairngorms represents the very best of landscape found within Scotland. The author does, however, maintain that it is inconceivable that all parts of the Park have the same sensitivity to change in landscape terms. The Park covers a hugely diverse mix of landscape types and contrasts urban development, at one extreme, with some of the remotest and inaccessible mountain summits at the other. The special qualities capture this diversity, but in themselves carry different sensitivity to change. The NSAs must represent the most highly valued parts of the Park in scenic terms and were in place long before the Park was founded. Towards the perimeter, the scenic quality, whilst unquestionably high, is influenced by external factors which reduce its sensitivity to a degree. This is the case from the perimeter of the Park at Carn Glas-Choire, from where a number of wind farms is discernible, the most noticeable being Farr, to the west of the A9. The likely effects on the special qualities of the National Park are discussed further in Section 5 of this appendix.

### 3. Step 1: The Proposal

- 3.1. The Proposed Development site boundary lies approximately 7.5 km north-east of Tomatin and west of the B9007. It comprises upland moorland located adjacent to Tom nan Clach in the immediate west, and immediately adjacent to Tom nan Clach Wind Farm (the ‘Operational Scheme’). The elevation of the site ranges from 420 m to 550 m above ordnance datum (AOD). The site location and site boundary are shown in **Figure 1.0** and **Figure 1.1**.
- 3.2. The Applicant received a planning permission for Tom nan Clach Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as the ‘Operational Scheme’) from THC on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The Operational Scheme comprises a 13-turbine scheme, together with associated infrastructure. It was built out in 2018 / 2019 and is currently operational.
- 3.3. The site lies in an elevated upland area, where the hills range in height from approximately 400 m to 600 m AOD. The hills are broad and rounded with long horizontal ridges, mostly aligned north-east to south-west, albeit lacking distinct summits. Steep slopes fall away towards the valley of the Findhorn River and a locally known stretch of the river called the Streens, to the north and west, while the upland hills extend to the east and south. Of particular note, is the distinct ridgeline to the south-east of the site, which forms the northern boundary of the CNP, and which acts to shield the Carrbridge and Grantown-on-Spey areas from visibility of the Proposed Development, as evident in the ZTV in **Figure 9.9**.
- 3.4. The hills comprise open moorland with small blocks of forestry around their peripheries. Access tracks follow the river valleys and cross the hills over Carn na Sguabaich. There are a small number of isolated properties but no settlements within the close range of the site.

## 4. Step 2: Definition of the Study Area and Scope of the Assessment

- 4.1. The aim of Step 2 is to identify the extent of the area likely to be affected through consideration of the location of the CNP relative to the Proposed Development, the extent to which the Proposed Development will alter the CNP, in this case, indirectly as a result of its visibility only, and how it will affect people's experience of the CNP from, both, within and outwith the boundaries.

### Location of the CNP relative to the Proposed Development

- 4.2. Guidance set out in SNH's 'Visual Representation of Wind Farms Version 2.2' (February 2017), indicates that an area with a radius of 40 km from the nearest turbine is appropriate for turbines of the size proposed (up to 149.9 m). The CNP is the only NP to occur within the 40 km Study Area. The north-west part of the CNP coincides with the southern part of the Study Area and comprises the landscapes of Rothiemurchas, Glenmore, and the Cairn Gorm mountain massif. The NSA extends over a much wider area to the south and south-east of the Study Area, although the 'core' is formed by the mountain massif that occurs partly within the southern edge of the Study Area.
- 4.3. SNH's 'The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park' covers both the CNP and the NSA despite the extent of the CNP being much more expansive and the objectives of its designation relating to recreational as well as scenic qualities.
- 4.4. The Cairngorms National Park (CNP) covers a large part of the upland landscape in the north-east of the Highlands. The north-west part of the CNP coincides with the southern part of the Study Area and generally comprises three distinct landscapes; the southern part of the Strathdearn Hills, the Spey Valley, and the Cairngorm Mountains; all of which follow the north-east to south-west alignment of the wider landscape. The Proposed Development lies to the north of the northern CNP boundary.
- 4.5. The Strathdearn Hills form the north-west boundary of the CNP and as such, are the closest part of the designated area to the Proposed Development. These hills are relatively low and rounded, lacking the distinct summits, corries and ridgeline profiles that characterise the Cairngorm Mountains to the south. The importance of the Strathdearn Hills relates to the wider setting they provide to the Cairngorm Mountains and more specifically, the visual envelope they provide to the Spey Valley. This explains the location of the boundary along the ridgeline such that only the southern slopes, which face into the Spey Valley are included in the CNP, while the northern slopes that face towards the Proposed Development are excluded.
- 4.6. The closest proposed turbine lies a minimum distance of approximately 5 km from the closest north-western edge of the CNP. The Proposed Development will, therefore, have no direct effect on the CNP. The ZTV in **Figure 9.9** shows the extent of theoretical visibility across the CNP. Through visibility, the Proposed Development will have an indirect effect on the CNP, as it will be seen from within the designated area, despite its location outwith the designated area. There is also the potential that the Proposed Development will have an effect on the setting of the CNP, when looking towards the CNP in

views from outwith the CNP, although for this to occur, the views will be from the opposite north-west side of the Proposed Development.

### **Scotland's Scenic Heritage**

- 4.7. The following description of the CNP is taken from 'Scotland's Scenic Heritage' 1978. It highlights the immense scale and depth of the Cairn Gorm mountain massif and the important role that the surrounding foothills and valleys form in the setting to these vast hills.
- 4.8. *"The granite plateau of the Cairngorm Mountains forms the most extensive area of land above 1,000 metres anywhere in Britain. Its height is less immediately apparent than its bulk, but there are four summits over 1,200 metres (Cairngorm, Ben Macdhui, Cairn Toul and Braeriach) while three others, Cairn Lochan, Beinn a'Bhuird and Ben Avon are nearly so. The high plateau is bleak and bare and it is the immensity of scale, once realised, which impresses. Its edges are glacially sculptured into huge corries which excel in grandeur anything to be found elsewhere in Scotland, with the exception of Coire Leis of Ben Nevis. This scale '...with the vast corries, the massive slopes, the long passes, the wide skies, and the very bareness of the ground, where the elements work with a power not known at lower altitudes, gives to these plateaux their distinctive quality.' (Murray, 1962).*
- 4.9. *The edge of the plateau, where not etched by corries, is well defined by long smooth steep slopes which, seen from Speyside or Deeside, rise in tiers. Snow lies for a long time at the top of these slopes. Lower down, deer forest, sheep grazing and forestry assume a greater importance in the appearance of the landscape. It is the forests around the plateau foot which for many people characterise the Cairngorm Mountains; three extensive and differing remnants of the native Caledonian Pine Forest occur at Rothiemurchus and Abernethy, Glen Feshie, and Mar.*
- 4.10. *In Rothiemurchus the pines on the upper forest slopes give way to a mixture of pine and birch, and then to the rich policy woodlands of Strathspey. The forests are deeply carpeted with heather, blaeberry and other flora, and the woods are interspersed with lochans of varying character, and views culminating in the peaty waters of the Spey itself.*
- 4.11. *Glen Feshie is wilder and sterner, the pines mature and solitary, interspersed with juniper. The river dominates in this forest, a great, braided, mountain stream with shingle beds cast over an uneven flood plain, almost continental in scale.*
- 4.12. *Mar Forest is different yet again. Higher, and therefore less rich than Rothiemurchus in its flora, it graduates from birch, pine, and fir to massive pines alone, again with a ground cover of heather and blaeberry. Like Glen Feshie the rivers are important here but not for their scale and grandeur. They are noisy burns dashing over granite boulders washed brightly pink by their clear waters, a lively element in the landscape. These wooded flanks of the Cairngorm plateau form a setting of rare beauty for the mountain massif, and are in turn enhanced by the mountain backdrop."*

### **General visibility of the Proposed Development from the CNP**

- 4.13. In order to inform the assessment of effects on the special landscape qualities of the CNP, it is important to understand the geographical extent to which the



Proposed Development will be visible across the CNP, the distance from which the Proposed Development will be visible and the extent to which the proposed turbines will be visible. The ZTVs illustrate theoretical, bare ground visibility. Owing to the extent of coniferous plantations and mixed woodlands across parts of the CNP, actual visibility will be reduced in these parts by the screening effect of tree cover. Both theoretical and actual visibility is described below.

- 4.14. While the CNP centres on the Cairngorm Mountains it covers a much broader expanse, extending from Dalwhinnie in the west to Ballater in the east, and from Granton-on-Spey in the north to Blair Atholl in the south. It is only the northern and north-western parts of the CNP that are covered by the 40 km radius of the Study Area, albeit with the northern boundary extending to within 5 km of the centre where the Proposed Development is located.
- 4.15. The areas outwith the 40 km Study Area can be discounted from the assessment, as significant effects will not arise from these distant ranges. Furthermore, visibility beyond the 40 km Study Area will be very limited in extent owing to the screening effect of the intervening high tops of the Cairn Gorm mountain massif.
- 4.16. The ZTV in **Figure 9.9** shows a distinct pattern of theoretical visibility which is defined by the landform of this area. The northern CNP boundary is marked by a ridgeline through the summits of the enclosing hills on this northern side of the Spey Valley. This ridgeline effectively screens visibility, not only from the northern side of the Spey Valley, but also from the floor of the Spey Valley and from the lower and other parts of the southern side of the Spey Valley. There are some exceptions where visibility occurs, but these are small in extent as the following descriptions denote.
- 4.17. Small patches of low-level theoretical visibility are shown to the north and west of Aviemore. Low level visibility comprising a small number of tips or blades will occur across the open northern slopes of Carn Sleamhuinn (677 m AOD) and Carn Dearg Mor (702 m), where visibility of the Operational Scheme also occurs. Further north-east, where low-level theoretical visibility is shown to extend over Carn Beinn Ghuilbin (578 m AOD), actual visibility will be reduced by the extensive forest cover over this hill. These patches occur from separation distances of 15 to 21 km, such that the blades and tips visible would appear as small-scale and distant features.
- 4.18. Small patches of theoretical visibility are also shown along the north-east boundary of the CNP to the north of Grantown-on-Spey. While there are some substantial patches of forest cover in this area, actual visibility will occur across the open north-west facing hillsides, although the effect will be moderated by their separation from the Proposed Development of 13 to 23 km and the existing influence from visibility of the Operational Scheme in these areas.
- 4.19. Where small patches of low-level theoretical visibility occur across the valley floor, typically these coincide with areas with forest cover, for example to the north of Nethybridge and to the east of Grantown on Spey. If actual visibility were to occur, its influence would be limited by the small number of blades or tips, and their separation distance of 18 to 22 km.
- 4.20. With an increase in the elevation of the hillsides across the southern side of the Spey Valley, so too will theoretical visibility increase. A band of theoretical

visibility is shown across the north-west facing slopes of the Hills of Cromdale, albeit from ranges of 22 to 27 km and through the valley of the Dorback Burn to cover the north-west slopes of the Braes of Abernethy. In most of these areas there is existing visibility of the Operational Scheme in the same location to the north-west, as well as Paul's Hill and Berry Burn to the north.

- 4.21. In respect of the Cairngorm Mountains, visibility occurs across the northern slopes of the ridgeline between Meall a Bhuachaille (810m AOD), Creagan Gorm (732 m AOD) and Craiggowrie (687 m AOD). At a minimum distance of approximately 21 to 25 km and with low levels of visibility occurring apart from across the summits and upper slopes, the effect of the Proposed Development will be limited.
- 4.22. While patches of low-level visibility are shown on the ZTV to occur across the low hills to the south of Loch Morlich and Loch an Eilein, the extent of forestry in these areas will notably limit the extent of actual visibility. The level of visibility is shown to increase with elevation across these north-facing hill and mountain sides of the Cairn Gorm mountain massif, albeit from ranges of approximately 28 to 37 km. The limit to the visibility in this southerly direction is broadly marked by the south-west to north-east ridgeline formed by the high tops, including Braeriach (1,235m AOD), Cairn Gorm (1,245 m AOD) and Cairn Lochan (1,215 m AOD). The ZTV shows that visibility north of this ridgeline will reduce with elevation, with the proposed turbines becoming increasingly or completely screened by the intervening landform.
- 4.23. Theoretical visibility is also shown on the ZTV to extend over the hills to the north-west of Cairn Gorm (1,245 m AOD) and the south-east of the Proposed Development. From the high point of Bynack More (1,090 m), the hills to the east of Strath Nethy occur between 600 and 800 m and visibility occurs across their north and north-west facing slopes from ranges of approximately 25 to 33 km.
- 4.24. The cumulative ZTV in **Figure 9.13** shows that the seven proposed turbines will be seen mostly in conjunction with the turbines of the Operational Scheme, while the cumulative ZTVs in **Figures 9.14 to 9.18** show that a number of other operational wind farms are also already visible from this ridgeline.
- 4.25. It can be concluded that the extent to which the Proposed Development will be visible will be limited, with most of CNP unaffected by visibility with the exception of parts on the southern side of the Spey Valley. While the ZTV shows that higher levels of visibility will occur across the upper slopes and high tops of the Cairngorm Mountains, the distant range of visibility, beyond 27 km, combined with the existing influence from other visible operational wind farms will mean that the Proposed Development will have a limited influence on the CNP.

#### **Potential for cumulative effects**

- 4.26. The potential for cumulative effects to arise relates principally to the interactions of the Proposed Development with the adjacent operational Tom nan Clach Wind Farm, nearby operational Moy Wind Farm at a minimum of approximately 7 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development, and operational Farr and Glen Kyllachy wind farms at a minimum of approximately 9 km to the south-west. More distant operational wind farms including Paul's



Hill and Berry Burn to the north-east and Dumnaglass Estate to the south-west, are also referenced owing to their baseline influence on the CNP.

- 4.27. Other consented and applications stage wind farms, which add to the cumulative context are also considered, although all are distant from the CNP and, therefore, their additional influence is relatively limited.

#### **How the CNP is used and experienced by people**

- 4.28. The CNP is a popular location for a broad range of recreational activities, including hillwalking, shooting, fishing, climbing, wildlife-watching, skiing and mountain-biking. Many hillwalkers target the Munros and Corbetts, with well-used paths providing access to the summits and connecting ridgelines. There are also many lochside and riverside routes, as well as a number of mountain passes, which are popular with walkers and mountain bikers, such as Lairig Ghru and Linn of Dee. Many people on longer routes or who chose to explore the remoter areas can wild camp or stay in bothies within the interior.
- 4.29. Many of the estates offer guests activities such as shooting and fishing, and while fishing is largely confined to the lower-lying valleys, glens and lochs, much of the shooting takes place on the elevated and exposed hillsides, from where the wider landscape can often be experienced. Estate accommodation is mostly located outwith the CNP albeit with some of the more remote lodges set within the boundary.
- 4.30. In winters, when there is sufficient snow, the Cairngorm Ski Centre is a popular resort for skiers and snowboarders, with ski tows providing access onto the more elevated northern slopes of Cairn Gorm. The funicular railway provides access to the Ptarmigan Lodge visitor centre and is a visitor attraction all year round, for visitors pursuing a variety of recreational activities.
- 4.31. The CNP is largely uninhabited other than the few bothies and estate buildings, which are located in more sheltered parts and used only periodically through the year, as well as a few rural farmsteads and cottages found around the periphery. There are also very few roads in this area other than the access road to the Cairngorms ski centre. This means there are very few residents and road-users experiencing views from the CNP. While farmers and foresters work within the CNP, their activities are mostly also concentrated around the periphery.
- 4.32. The CNP is, therefore, used and experienced by people in different ways. It is especially popular with hillwalkers and climbers, attracted by the vast choice of dramatic big tops, as well as lower-lying routes. There are also those who enjoy the traditional hunting and shooting past times that the estates have to offer, as well as the farmers and foresters who work on the land. The occurrence of residents and road-users is, however, more limited.

### **5. Step 3: The Assessment of Effects on the CNP**

- 5.1. Step 3 sets out the assessment of effects on the CNP that will potentially arise as a result of the Proposed Development. Within Step 3, the following four key considerations are made;
- identify those SLQs with potential to be affected;

- establish the key landscape characteristic that underpin the SLQs;
  - assess the effects of the Proposed Development on the relevant SLQs; and
  - consider the potential for mitigation and determine the level of effect.
- 5.2. Table 9C.1 sets out a preliminary assessment to identify those SLQs with potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. Table 9C.2 then establishes the key characteristics that underpin the SLQs with reference to SNH's NP / NSA citation and Landscape Character Assessment and are supplemented with the experiences of the assessor gained through site work. Table 9C.2 also sets out the effects that all relevant SLQs would undergo as a result of the Proposed Development and determines the potential level of effect.
- 5.3. While SNH's draft guidance requests mention of mitigation measures, no such measures are included as part of the Proposed Development, although the iterative design process has mitigated, as far as is practically possible, the potential landscape and visual effects, with particular reference to valued landscapes such as the CNP, through consideration of the layout of the turbines and the other infrastructure, as described in Sections 9.7 of the LVIA chapter.

#### **Sensitivity of the CNP**

- 5.4. The value of the CNP is high where it coincides with the NSA and medium-high in those remaining areas outwith the CNP. Only the central core around the Mountain Massif is designated as NSA. Many of the surrounding landscapes are important in terms of the setting they provide to this core, although lacking the same high scenic value.
- 5.5. The susceptibility of the CNP to the Proposed Development will be medium. The Proposed Development will be located to the north of the CNP, beyond the Strathdearn Hills which mark the outer edge of the designated area. A number of operational wind farms located close to this northern boundary, have an existing influence that reduces the susceptibility of the CNP to the Proposed Development. For example, the Proposed Development is situated adjacent to the Operational Scheme, which already has a baseline influence on the character of the Cairngorms CNP. Furthermore, the lack of direct association between the CNP and the Open Rolling Uplands LCT, where the Proposed Development is located, moderates its susceptibility to the effects of this additional development. The ridgeline marking the northern extent of the CNP also forms something of a physical and visual divide between these landscapes.
- 5.6. The combination of the value of this CNP and its susceptibility to the effects of the Proposed Development results in an overall **medium-high** sensitivity.

#### **Preliminary Assessment to identify SLQs with potential to be affected**

- 5.7. NatureScot's 'The Special Landscape Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park – Commissioned Report 375' sets out the SLQs of the CNP. These also apply to the Cairngorm Mountains NSA which sits wholly inside the CNP boundary. These SLQs are listed below along with an assessment as to whether they have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development.

**Table 9C.1: Preliminary assessment to identify SLQs with potential to be affected.**

Special Landscape Quality	Potential for SLQ to be affected by the Proposed Development
<b>1 General Qualities</b>	
<b>Magnificent mountains towering over moorland, forest and strath</b>	There will be no direct effect on the magnificent mountains of the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP and a minimum distance of approximately 20 km from the Cairngorm Mountain Massif. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Vastness of space, scale and height</b>	There will be no direct effect on the vastness of space, scale and height experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes</b>	There will be no direct effect on the strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland</b>	The 'landscape of layers' refers to the tiers of transitional landscapes that occur across the CNP. Although located outwith the CNP, the uplands upon which the Site is located forms one such layer in the landscape and although there will be no direct effects, there is the potential for indirect effects to arise through visibility of the Proposed Development.
<b>'The harmony of complicated curves'</b>	There will be no direct effect on the harmony of complicated curves experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the

	Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Landscapes both cultural and natural</b>	There will be no direct effect on the cultural or natural landscapes experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>2 The Mountains and Plateaux</b>	
<b>The unifying presence of the central mountains</b>	There will be no direct effect on the unifying presence of the central mountains experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP and over 20 km from the Cairngorm Mountain Massif. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>An imposing massif of strong dramatic character</b>	There will be no direct effect on the imposing massif experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP and over 20 km from the Cairngorm Mountain Massif. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>The unique plateaux of vast scale, distinctive landforms and exposed, boulderstrewn high ground</b>	There will be no direct effect on the plateaux or high ground experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP and over 20 km from the Cairngorm Mountain Massif. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>The surrounding hills</b>	The 'surrounding hills' refers to the smaller hills within the CNP. Such small hills occur on the northern boundary of the CNP and as this area lies a minimum of approximately 5 km from the Proposed Development there is the potential that indirect effects could arise in respect of the experience of these hills owing to visibility of the Proposed Development, albeit located outwith the CNP.

<b>The drama of deep corries</b>	There will be no direct effect on the deep corries experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Exceptional glacial landforms</b>	There will be no direct effect on the glacial landforms experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Snowscapes</b>	There will be no direct effect on the snowscapes experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>3 Moorlands</b>	
<b>Extensive moorland, linking the farmland, woodland and the high tops</b>	There will be no direct effect on the moorland in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>A patchwork of muirburn</b>	There will be no direct effect on the muirburn in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>4 Glens and Straths</b>	
<b>Steep glens and high passes</b>	There will be no direct effect on the steep glens and high passes experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the steep glens and high passes arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the

	wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Broad, farmed straths</b>	There will be no direct effect on the broad farmed straths experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the broad farmed strath arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Renowned rivers</b>	There will be no direct effect on the rivers experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the rivers arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Beautiful lochs</b>	There will be no direct effect on the lochs experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the lochs arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>5 Trees, Woods and Forests</b>	
<b>Dark and venerable pine forest</b>	There will be no direct effect on the pine forests experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the pine forests arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Light and airy birch woods</b>	There will be no direct effect on the birch woods experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the birch woods arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to



	this existing wind farm.
<b>Parkland and policy woodlands</b>	There will be no direct effect on the parkland and policy woodlands experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Long association with forestry</b>	There will be no direct effect on the long association with forestry experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the long association with forestry arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>6 Wildlife and Nature</b>	
<b>Dominance of natural landforms</b>	There will be no direct effect on the dominance of the natural landforms experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the dominance of the natural landforms arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Extensive tracts of natural vegetation</b>	There will be no direct effect on the natural vegetation experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising on the natural vegetation from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Association with iconic animals</b>	There will be no direct effect on the association with iconic animals experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the association with iconic animals arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.

	farm.
<b>Wild land</b>	There will be no direct effect on the wild land experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP and 23 km beyond WLA 15. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Wildness</b>	There will be no direct effect on the wildness experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on wildness arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>7 Visual and Sensory Qualities</b>	
<b>Layers of receding ridge lines</b>	As this SLQ refers to the landscape context around the CNP, there is the potential that the Proposed Development could have effects on this SLQ and therefore, a detailed assessment is presented in the following section.
<b>Grand panoramas and framed views</b>	As this SLQ refers to views of the landscape context around the CNP, there is the potential that the Proposed Development could have effects on this SLQ and, therefore, a detailed assessment is presented in the following section.
<b>A landscape of many colours</b>	There will be no direct effect on the colour of the landscapes experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the colours of the landscape arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Dark skies</b>	There will be no direct effect on the dark skies experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on dark skies arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the fact that visible night-time lighting will not be required on the proposed turbines.
<b>Attractive and contrasting textures</b>	There will be no direct effect on the contrasting textures experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be

	located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the contrasting textures arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>The dominance of natural sounds</b>	There will be no direct effect on the natural sounds experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising from the sound of the Proposed Development will not be significant owing to the separation distance between the CNP and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the natural sounds will continue to dominate.
<b>8 Culture and History</b>	
<b>Distinctive planned towns</b>	There will be no direct effect on the planned towns in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the planned towns arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Vernacular stone buildings</b>	There will be no direct effect on the stone buildings in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the stone buildings arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Dramatic, historical routes</b>	There will be no direct effect on the historical routes experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on historical routes arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>The wistfulness of abandoned settlements</b>	There will be no direct effect on the abandoned settlements in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects arising on abandoned settlements from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the

	Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Focal cultural landmarks of castles, distilleries and bridges.</b>	There will be no direct effect on the cultural landmarks in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the cultural landmarks arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>The Royal connection</b>	There will be no direct effect on the Royal connection experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on the Royal connection arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>9 Recreation</b>	
<b>A landscape of opportunities</b>	There will be no direct effect on the landscape of opportunities experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on a landscape of opportunities arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting of the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.
<b>Spirituality</b>	There will be no direct effect on the spirituality experienced in the CNP, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 5 km outwith the CNP. Indirect effects on spirituality arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting to the CNP, will not be significant owing to the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and the limited additional effect that the seven proposed turbines will have when seen as an extension to this existing wind farm.

5.8. The findings of the preliminary assessment are that four of the 42 SLQs have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development and, therefore, require more detailed assessment. The SLQ 'A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath, to remote, uninhabited upland' is listed under the heading 'General Qualities', while the SLQ 'The surrounding hills' is listed under 'The Mountains and Plateaux'. The two remaining SLQs fall under the heading 'Visual and Sensory Qualities' and include 'Layers of receding ridge lines' and 'Grand panoramas and framed views'.

5.9. The remaining 38 SLQs will not be affected, largely owing to a combination of the fact that the Proposed Development will be located outwith the closest northern CNP boundary at distances greater than 5 km, and 20 km from the Cairngorm Mountain Massif. Moreover, many of the SLQs will not be susceptible to indirect effects or effects arising in respect of the wider setting to the CNP. The four SLQs assessed in detail, have potential to be indirectly affected from within the CNP as they relate to the effect on views of the wider landscape setting. These SLQs are assessed in detail in Table 9C.2 below. In the left-hand column, the description of the SLQs is presented in bold text, while 'further information' is presented in normal text - as presented in the original CNP Description.

**Table 9C.2: Effects of the Proposed Development on the SLQs**

<b>Underpinning landscape characteristics to inform detailed SLQ descriptions</b>	<b>Impacts of the proposal on underpinning key characteristics and the effects on SLQs</b>
<p><b>A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland.</b></p> <p><i>"The landscape tends to be horizontally stratified, ascending to the summits in a series of layers: from a meandering river, through a strath of settlement and farmland, through rough pasture, wood pasture, wood and forestry, to moorland with its patchwork of muirburn, and eventually to the high, corrie-fringed mountains. Within the landscape there are also layers of time-depth, with traces of past land use stretching from present day back into prehistory."</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development will be situated in the upland moorlands to the north of the CNP. Although located outwith the CNP, there is the potential that it could have an effect on this SLQ as it forms one of the background layers to the setting of the CNP. The magnitude of change that the Proposed Development will have on this SLQ will be moderated by its location adjacent to the Operational Scheme. This will mean that it will not introduce a new influence along the northern boundary of the CNP, but instead will add to an existing influence that already characterises this layer of the landscape. The small number of additional turbines, their close proximity to the operational turbines and the continuity in their appearance, means that the magnitude of change will be <b>medium-low</b> from this northern part of the CNP and <b>low, negligible</b> or with <b>no change</b> from the remaining parts, where the separation distance is greater and the influence of the Proposed Development on this SLQ is weaker.</p>
<p><b>The surrounding hills</b></p> <p><i>"Within a landscape of hills and plateaux, the central massif merely represents the extreme end of a range. The 'lesser hills' within the Park have their own ridges, summits and plateaux and would be impressive in any other location. They tend to be heather-covered, smooth and rounded, albeit with sudden unexpected crags, screes,</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development will not be located in the 'lesser hills' within the Park and, therefore, there will be no direct effects. It will, however, be located in the hills to the north of the northern CNP boundary and will have an effect on the setting of the 'lesser hills'. The effect on this SLQ will, however, be moderated by its location adjacent to the Operational Scheme. This will mean that it will not introduce a new influence along the northern boundary of the CNP, but instead will add to an existing influence that already</p>

<p><i>gullies and glens. They contribute significantly to the wild, untamed appearance of the area, and many are easily accessible from the main roads."</i></p>	<p>characterises this layer of the landscape. The small number of additional turbines, their close proximity to the operational turbines and the continuity in their appearance, means that the magnitude of change will be <b>medium-low</b> from this northern part of the CNP and <b>low, negligible</b> or with <b>no change</b> from the remaining parts, where the separation distance is greater and the influence of the Proposed Development on this SLQ is weaker. The effect will be <b>not significant</b>.</p>
<p><b>Layers of receding ridgelines</b></p> <p><i>"It is a landscape of receding and interlocking layers, comprising a series of gently undulating and ascending ridge lines visible when looking across to distant horizons. In hazy light these appear as hues of decreasing intensity, giving great depth to the landscape. Where ridges are not broken by human structures, the receding horizons reinforce the impression of natural landforms dominating. This quality is reflected in the logo of the Cairngorm National Park Authority."</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development will be set below a ridgeline, a minimum of approximately 5 km to the north of the northern part of the CNP. In the baseline views from the CNP, the Operational Scheme is visible in the same location along this ridgeline as the Proposed Development will be. This means the ridge is already broken by human structures. The seven additional turbines will be seen as an extension to the existing 13 operational turbines. They will also be seen in a sector of the view where other wind farm developments are also visible, most notably Moy, Farr and Glen Kyllachy. The magnitude of change will be <b>medium-low</b> from this northern part of the CNP and <b>low, negligible</b> or with <b>no change</b> from the remaining parts, where the separation distance is greater and the influence of the Proposed Development on this SLQ is weaker. The effect will be <b>not significant</b>.</p>
<p><b>Grand panoramas and framed views</b></p> <p><i>"Vast and distant panoramic views are frequent throughout the Park, made possible by open landscapes and elevated viewpoints, and visibility and colours always highly susceptible to changing weather and season. Views range from broad pastoral straths of green, improved pasture; middle-distance open, rolling hills of brown heather moor, with woodland at lower levels; and far distant, exposed, wild mountain terrain. The assemblage of landscape features is aesthetically pleasing, with views often framed by vegetation and landform, and the</i></p>	<p>While the most scenic views from the CNP feature other parts of the CNP, there are also many scenic views that extend beyond the CNP to the surrounding hills, straths and glens. From the northern part of the CNP, views extend over the upland moorlands where the Proposed Development will be located. These hills are relatively unremarkable compared with the higher and more dramatic hills to the south. The magnitude of change will also be moderated by the existing presence and influence of the Operational Scheme, with which the Proposed Development will be closely associated with. The small number of additional turbines and the consistency in their appearance with the operational turbines means that this SLQ will not be notably altered. The magnitude of change will be <b>medium-low</b> from this</p>



<i>eye led to an inviting arrangement of hill slopes and glens."</i>	northern part of the CNP and <b>low, negligible</b> or with <b>no change</b> from the remaining parts, where the separation distance is greater and the influence of the Proposed Development on this SLQ is weaker. The effect will be <b>not significant</b> .
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## 6. Step 4: Summary of effects on Special Landscape Qualities of Cairngorms CNP

- 6.1. The assessment has considered the effect of the Proposed Development on the four relevant SLQs of the CNP. The finding is that the effects on these SLQs will be not significant. The Proposed Development lies outwith the CNP, with a minimum distance of 5 km between the closest turbine and the closest northern part of the CNP boundary. This means that there will be no direct effects on the CNP, only indirect effects associated with visibility of the Proposed Development as seen from within the CNP.
- 6.2. The ZTV in **Figure 9.9** illustrates the very limited geographical extent to which the Proposed Development will be visible, with most of the CNP unaffected. The ZTV also illustrates the variable levels of visibility that will occur across the CNP, where only a small proportion of the proposed turbines will be visible from the lower slopes and valley floors, albeit with medium levels occurring on the middle slopes and high levels occurring across the higher slopes and summits. Most notably, the northern ridgeline of the CNP forms a screen that prevents the closest range parts of the CNP from being affected by visibility of the Proposed Development, such that there is no visibility within the first 13 km and then patches of low-level visibility between 13 km and 23 km, and with higher levels of visibility only occurring beyond this range.
- 6.3. Of the 42 SLQs associated with the CNP, 38 will not be affected by the Proposed Development, in most cases owing to the location of the proposed turbines outwith the CNP, especially in the case of those SLQs which are not susceptible to indirect effects. The four remaining SLQs which will be indirectly affected through visibility of the Proposed Development in views from the CNP include;
- *'A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland;*
  - *The surrounding hills;*
  - *Layers of receding ridge lines; and*
  - *Grand panoramas and framed views'.*
- 6.4. The findings of the assessment on these SLQs concludes that the effects of the Proposed Development will not be significant. This finding relates chiefly to a combination of the separation distances between the Proposed Development and those areas where visibility of the Proposed Development will occur, as well as the existing influence from the Operational Scheme and other operational wind farms in the same northerly sector of the landscape setting.

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- 6.5. *'A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland', 'The surrounding hills', 'Layers of receding ridge lines' and 'Grand panoramas and framed views'*; are the SLQs with greatest potential to be significantly affected as they all relate to some extent to the setting of the CNP, within which the Proposed Development will be located and from where there is the potential that it could have indirect effects on these SLQs. The effect would not, however, be significant, owing principally to location of the Proposed Development immediately adjacent to the Operational Scheme, such that the proposed turbines will appear as an extension and the two wind farms will appear as the one development. Furthermore, the Proposed Development would be located in one of the less remarkable landscape settings around the CNP and in an area where other operational wind farms already have a baseline influence.
- 6.6. While the Proposed Development will have effects on the perception of four of the forty-two SLQs of the CNP, the effects will be not significant.