

Appendix 9.C: Assessment of Effects on the Special Landscape Qualities of the Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Appendix contains the assessment of effects on the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) of the Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area (NSA). 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 NSAs or National Parks (NP).
- 1.2. The following figures are of particular relevance to the assessment of effects on the NSA 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;
 - Figures 9.25 and 9.42:** Viewpoint 3: Ptarmigan Lodge; and
 - Figure 9.31 and 9.48:** Viewpoint 9: Meall a Bhuachaille.
- 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 The draft guidance presents an approach that is intended to be "*proportionate to the scale and stage of the development, be clear and transparent so that the reasoning that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 Scenic Areas

- 2.1. National Scenic Area (NSA) is a conservation designation used in Scotland and administered by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). The purpose of the designation is to identify areas of exceptional scenery and to protect them from inappropriate development. NSAs were first established in 1980, under planning legislation, by order of the Secretary of State. Part 10 of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 gave NSAs a statutory basis. The Town and Country Planning (National Scenic Areas) (Scotland) Designation Directions 2010 then

- brought this into force. In December 2010, NSAs were designated under this new legislation.
- 2.2. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) is a statement of Scottish Government policy on how nationally important land use planning matters should be addressed. With regard to National Designations, SPP states that:
- 2.3. *"Proposed Development that affects a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve should only be permitted where:*
- the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised; or*
 - 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."*
- 2.4. The role of this assessment is to provide an appropriate level of information to enable decision makers and consultees to reach a conclusion regarding the potential effects on the qualities of the Cairngorm Mountains NSA.
- 2.5. This assessment is carried out with specific reference to the effect that the Proposed Development may have on the 'special qualities' of the NSA. Special qualities are defined as 'the characteristics that individually, or when combined together, make an NSA special in terms of landscape and scenery.' The special qualities of the Cairngorm Mountains NSA are documented in two reports: 'Scotland's Scenic Heritage' (Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1978), and 'The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms NSA' (SNH, 2010), which supersedes the 1978 report.

3. Step 1: The Proposal

- 3.1. The Proposed Development site boundary lies approximately 7.2 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, a 13-turbine scheme, together with associated infrastructure, on 28th October 2016 from THC. This wind farm 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 Cairngorms National Park (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.
- 3.5. Within the 40 km Study Area applied for the LVIA, major landform features generally align along a south-west to north-east orientation, including the Black Isle, the Cromarty and Beaully Firths, the Moray Coast, the Great Glen, the Monadhliath Mountains, and Strathdearn and Strath Spey. In the far south-eastern part of the study area, this pattern changes as the area becomes dominated by the broader interior mass of the Cairngorm Mountains. The landscape in this part of the Scottish Highlands is largely characterised by the uplands of the high mountain ranges and the contrasting lowlands of the dividing straths, lochs and firths. Towards the north-east coast, lower farmed landscapes tend to dominate the landscape, albeit often backed by higher hills. Across the Study Area, the elevation varies significantly, rising from sea level on the north-east coast, to over 1,000m across the high peaks of the Cairngorm Mountains.
- 3.6. Within the lowland and coastal areas, the land is used predominantly for agriculture, forestry and settlement, with industry concentrated within or around the few larger settlements, including Inverness and Nairn. These low-lying areas also tend to accommodate the main lines of communication. In contrast, within the upland interior areas, the study area mainly comprises extensive areas of semi-natural vegetation such as heather moorland and rough grasslands. Within these interior areas, active land-use is often not obvious, as they are generally maintained for grouse and deer grazing; however, in some areas, heavy grazing and muirburn, in addition to upland access tracks, create notable land cover patterns and evidence of human intervention. The upland areas are largely uninhabited, however some areas, particularly the Munros, are popular for active recreation - chiefly hill walking, but also mountain biking and rock climbing, with ice climbing and skiing popular in the winter.

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 NSA relative to the Proposed Development, the extent to which the Proposed Development will alter the NSA, in this case, indirectly as a result of its visibility only, and how it will affect people's experience of the NSA from, both, within and outwith the boundaries.

Location of the NSA 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 Cairngorm Mountains NSA is the only NSA to occur within the 40 km Study Area. The north-west part of the NSA coincides with the southern part of the Study Area and comprises the landscapes of Rothiemurchas, Glenmore, and the Cairngorm 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 NSA being much more contained and the objectives of its designation relating purely to scenic qualities.
- 4.4. The closest proposed turbine lies a minimum distance of approximately 20 km from the closest north-western edge of the NSA. The Proposed Development will, therefore, have no direct effect on the NSA. The ZTV in **Figure 9.9** shows the extent of theoretical visibility across the NSA. Through visibility, the Proposed Development will have an indirect effect on the NSA, 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 NSA, when looking towards the NSA in views from outwith the NSA, although for this to occur, the views will be longer range than 20 km and to the north-west.

Scotland's Scenic Heritage

- 4.5. The following description of the Cairngorms NSA is taken from 'Scotland's Scenic Heritage' 1978. It highlights the immense scale and depth of the Cairngorm mountain massif and the important role that the surrounding foothills and valleys form in the setting to these vast hills.
- 4.6. *"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 Macdhuì, 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).
- 4.7. *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.*
- 4.8. *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.*
- 4.9. *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.

- 4.10. *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 NSA

- 4.11. In order to inform the assessment of effects on the special landscape qualities of the NSA, it is important to understand the geographical extent to which the Proposed Development will be visible across the NSA, 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 Cairngorm Mountains NSA, actual visibility will be reduced in these parts by the screening effect of tree cover. Both theoretical and actual visibility is described below.
- 4.12. The Cairngorm Mountain NSA is extensive, and it is only the northern part that is covered by the southern part of the 40 km radius Study Area, with the remainder lying beyond the southern boundary. 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 Cairngorm mountain massif.
- 4.13. The ZTV in **Figure 9.9** shows that visibility will generally occur as patches across the northern extent of the NSA. The most northerly patch of visibility occurs across the northern slopes of the ridgeline between Mealla 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.
- 4.14. 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 Cairngorm 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.
- 4.15. 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 9.22** show that a

number of other operational wind farms are also already visible from this ridgeline.

- 4.16. It can be concluded that the extent to which the Proposed Development will be visible, will be limited, with most of NSA unaffected by visibility with the exception of the northern parts. While the ZTV shows that higher levels of visibility will occur across the upper slopes and high tops of the northern parts of NSA, 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 NSA.

Potential for cumulative effects

- 4.17. 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 and 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 Dunmaglass Estate to the south-west, are also referenced owing to their baseline influence on the NSA, albeit as distant or more distant from the NSA as the Proposed Development. Because these are operational wind farms that form part of the baseline, the cumulative effects are considered in the main assessment.
- 4.18. Other consented and applications stage wind farms, which add to the cumulative context are also considered, although all are distant from the NSA and, therefore, their additional influence is relatively limited.

How the NSA is used and experienced by people

- 4.19. The Cairngorms NSA 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.
- 4.20. 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 NSA albeit with some of the more remote lodges set within the boundary.
- 4.21. 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 Restaurant and is a visitor attraction all year round, for visitors pursuing a variety of recreational activities.
- 4.22. The Cairngorm Mountains NSA 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 NSA. While farmers and foresters work within the NSA, their activities are mostly also concentrated around the periphery.

- 4.23. The NSA 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 pastimes 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 NSA

- 5.1. Step 3 sets out the assessment of effects on the NSA 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 NSA, 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 Cairngorm Mountains NSA

- 5.4. The value of the Cairngorm Mountains NSA is high. This is because it is a national designation, applied in this area to signify the national importance of the scenic landscape.
- 5.5. The susceptibility of the NSA to the effects of the Proposed Development is medium. Not only is the minimum distance between the closest turbine and the closest boundary of the NSA approximately 20 km, but the Proposed Development is situated adjacent to the Operational Scheme, which already

has a baseline influence on the character of the Cairngorm Mountains NSA. The lack of direct association between the Cairngorm Mountains NSA and the Open Rolling Uplands LCT where the Proposed Development is located, moderates its susceptibility to the effects of this additional development.

- 5.6. The combination of the value of this NSA 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 Cairngorms NP. These also apply to the Cairngorms NSA which sits wholly inside the NP 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
1 General Qualities	
Magnificent mountains towering over moorland, forest and strath	There will be no direct effect on the magnificent mountains of the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Vastness of space, scale and height	There will be no direct effect on the vastness of space, scale and height experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes	There will be no direct effect on the strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising

	<p>from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.</p>
<p>A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland</p>	<p>There will be no direct effect on the landscape of layers experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.</p>
<p>'The harmony of complicated curves'</p>	<p>There will be no direct effect on the harmony of complicated curves experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.</p>
<p>Landscapes both cultural and natural</p>	<p>There will be no direct effect on the cultural or natural landscapes experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.</p>
<p>2 The Mountains and Plateaux</p>	
<p>The unifying presence of the central mountains</p>	<p>There will be no direct effect on the unifying presence of the central mountains experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising</p>

	<p>from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.</p>
<p>An imposing massif of strong dramatic character</p>	<p>There will be no direct effect on the imposing massif experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.</p>
<p>The unique plateaux of vast scale, distinctive landforms and exposed, boulderstrewn high ground</p>	<p>There will be no direct effect on the plateaux or high ground experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.</p>
<p>The surrounding hills <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</i></p>	<p>As the description highlights, the ‘surrounding hills’ refers to the smaller hills within the NP and does not include the hills where the Proposed Development will be located. There will, therefore, be no direct effect on the surrounding hills in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.</p>

<i>any other location.”</i>	
The drama of deep corries	There will be no direct effect on the deep corries experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Exceptional glacial landforms	There will be no direct effect on the glacial landforms experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Snowscapes	There will be no direct effect on the snowscapes experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
3 Moorlands	
Extensive moorland, linking the farmland, woodland and the high tops	There will be no direct effect on the moorlands in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider

	landscape setting.
A patchwork of muirburn	There will be no direct effect on the muirburn in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
4 Glens and Straths	
Steep glens and high passes	There will be no direct effect on the steep glens and high passes experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Broad, farmed straths	There will be no direct effect on the broad farmed straths experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Renowned rivers	There will be no direct effect on the rivers experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider

	landscape setting.
Beautiful lochs	There will be no direct effect on the lochs experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
5 Trees, Woods and Forests	
Dark and venerable pine forest	There will be no direct effect on the pine forests experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Light and airy birch woods	There will be no direct effect on the birch woods experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Parkland and policy woodlands	There will be no direct effect on the parkland and policy woodlands experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational

	wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Long association with forestry	There will be no direct effect on the long association with forestry experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
6 Wildlife and Nature	
Dominance of natural landforms	There will be no direct effect on the dominance of the natural landforms experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Extensive tracts of natural vegetation	There will be no direct effect on the natural vegetation experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Association with iconic animals	There will be no direct effect on the association with iconic animals experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational

	wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Wild land	There will be no direct effect on the wild land experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Wildness	There will be no direct effect on the wildness experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
7 Visual and Sensory Qualities	
Layers of receding ridge lines	As this SLQ refers to the landscape context around the NSA, 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.
Grand panoramas and framed views	As this SLQ refers to views of the landscape context around the NSA, 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.
A landscape of many colours	There will be no direct effect on the colour of the landscapes experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Dark skies	There will be no direct effect on the dark skies experienced in the

	NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the fact that the visible night-time lighting will not be required on the proposed turbines.
Attractive and contrasting textures	There will be no direct effect on the contrasting textures experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
The dominance of natural sounds	There will be no direct effect on the natural sounds experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from sound of the Proposed Development will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines will be inaudible.
8 Culture and History	
Distinctive planned towns	There will be no direct effect on the planned towns in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Vernacular stone buildings	There will be no direct effect on the stone buildings in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider

	landscape setting.
Dramatic, historical routes	There will be no direct effect on the historical routes experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
The wistfulness of abandoned settlements	There will be no direct effect on the abandoned settlements in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Focal cultural landmarks of castles, distilleries and bridges.	There will be no direct effect on the cultural landmarks in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
The Royal connection	There will be no direct effect on the Royal connection experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.

9 Recreation	
A landscape of opportunities	There will be no direct effect on the landscape of opportunities experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.
Spirituality	There will be no direct effect on the spirituality experienced in the NSA, as the Proposed Development will be located a minimum distance of approximately 20 km outwith the NSA. Indirect effects arising from visibility of the Proposed Development, seen within the wider landscape setting, will not be significant owing to the notable separation distance between the NSA and the Proposed Development, which will ensure that the proposed turbines appear as small scale and distant features. Furthermore, the effect of the additional proposed turbines will be moderated by their location adjacent to the Operational Scheme and the influence from other operational wind farms within the wider landscape setting.

- 5.8. The findings of the preliminary assessment are that two of the 42 SLQs have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development and, therefore, require more detailed assessment. Both these 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 40 SLQs will not be affected, largely owing to a combination of the fact that the Proposed Development will be located outwith the NSA boundary at distances greater than 20 km, and many of the SLQs will not be susceptible to indirect effects or effects arising in respect of the wider setting to the NSA. The two SLQs assessed in detail, have potential to be indirectly affected from within the NSA as they both relate to the effect on views. 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 NSA Description.

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

Underpinning landscape characteristics to inform detailed SLQ descriptions	Impacts of the proposal on underpinning key characteristics and the effects on SLQs
Layers of receding ridgelines <i>"It is a landscape of receding and interlocking layers, comprising a series of gently undulating and ascending ridge lines visible when</i>	The Proposed Development will be located on a distant horizon set beyond a minimum of 20 km to the north and north-west of the northern part of the Cairngorm Mountains NSA. In the baseline views from the NSA, the

<p><i>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>Operational Scheme is visible in the same location on this distant horizon 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 on this SLQ will be low owing principally to the notable separation distance between the Proposed Development and those parts of the NSA from which it will be seen, as well as the baseline influence from the Operational Scheme in the same location. The effect will be not significant.</p>
<p>Grand panoramas and framed views <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 eye led to an inviting arrangement of hill slopes and glens.”</i></p>	<p>While the most scenic views from the Cairngorm Mountains NSA features other parts of the NSA, there are also many scenic views that extend beyond the NSA to the surrounding hills, straths and glens. From the northern part of the NSA, the Monadhliath Mountains to the west and the Hills of Cromdale to the north-east form features within the wider landscape setting. The Strathdearn Hills that lie to the north are by comparison with the Cairngorm Mountains and other higher hill ranges, less of a scenic feature owing to the lower elevation of the hills and the relatively even ridge line they form. The location of the Proposed Development in this relatively unremarkable sector of the view combined with the existing presence of the Operational Scheme, will moderate its effect on this SLQ. The magnitude of change will be low and the effect will be not significant.</p>

6. Step 4: Summary of effects on Special Landscape Qualities of Cairngorm Mountains NSA

- 6.1. The assessment has considered the effect of the Proposed Development on the two relevant SLQs of the Cairngorm Mountains NSA. The finding is that the effects on these SLQs will not be significant. The Proposed Development lies outwith the NSA, with a minimum distance of 20 km between the closest turbine and the closest south-western part of the NSA boundary. This means that there will be no direct effects on the NSA, only indirect effects associated with visibility of the Proposed Development as seen from within the NSA. The ZTV in **Figure 9.9** illustrates the very limited geographical extent to which the Proposed Development would be visible, with most of the NSA unaffected. The ZTV also illustrates the variable levels of visibility that will occur across the

- NSA, where only a small proportion of the proposed turbines will be visible, from the lower slopes, albeit with medium levels occurring on the middle slopes and high levels occurring across the higher slopes and summits.
- 6.2. Of the 42 SLQs associated with the NSA, 40 will not be affected by the Proposed Development, in most cases owing to the location of the proposed turbines more than 20 km to the north or north-west of the NSA, especially in the case of those SLQs which are not susceptible to indirect effects. The two remaining SLQs with potential to be affected are 'layers of receding ridge lines' and 'grand panoramas and framed views', which would be indirectly affected through visibility of the Proposed Development in views from the NSA.
 - 6.3. Table 9C.2 presents the findings of the assessment on these SLQs, which concludes that the effects of the Proposed Development will not be significant. This finding relates chiefly to a combination of the separation distances between those areas where visibility would occur and the Proposed Development, and the existing influence from the operational wind farms in the same northerly sector of the landscape setting.
 - 6.4. The 'layers of receding ridge lines' and 'grand panoramas and framed views', are the SLQs with greatest potential to be significantly affected owing to the location of the Proposed Development within the wider landscape setting of the NSA and its potential influence on the panoramic views out of the distant hills. The effect would not, however, be significant, owing to the number and extent of operational turbines present in this sector, which are already a visible feature from these hill tops.
 - 6.5. While the Proposed Development will have effects on two of the forty-two SLQs of the NSA, the effects will be not significant.