

APPENDIX 6.3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

The sensitivity of the host landscape character is assessed below. Landscape sensitivity is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location. To assess the sensitivity of a particular landscape it is good practice to consider the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the particular form of change likely to result from the proposed development. Assessment text relates to sensitivity of the landscape receptor as a whole, to the proposed development, with additional comments regarding the Site where relevant. In the main this has been taken from the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment (quotes shown in italics) as well as from local sources and site assessment. The table below is based on guidance provided within LI TGN 02/21 - specifically table 1 within that document.

Host Landscape: LCT 359 – Upland Sloping Moorland

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	No national or local landscape designations	Community
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	There is presence of peat and some ecologically valued habitats in this LCT.	Regional
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	<i>'the remains of scattered mediaeval and later farmsteads and townships can be found across this Landscape Character Type' 'The presence of brochs and duns, particularly overlooking the valleys which form natural routes through this landscape, demonstrates the use and importance of the landscape during prehistory.'</i>	Regional
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	<i>'Land use is mainly rough grazing and forestry, and higher locations are used for wind energy generation, with two moderately-sized windfarms. The ground conditions and exposure have limited modern settlement to a few isolated farms.'</i>	Regional

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
			<i>'The majority of land cover is rough, boggy grassland and heather, alongside a few large-scale plantations on well-drained margins and better soils.'</i>	
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	There are no strong associations with this LCT.	Community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	This LCT contains mainly commonplace elements and is <i>'closely associated, and often merging, with Stepped Moorland – the key difference being the general lack of stepped profile due in part to erosion and depth of surface deposits. The type merges with Low Smooth Moorland at lower levels in several locations.'</i> <i>'Land use is mainly rough grazing and forestry, and higher locations are used for wind energy generation, with two moderately-sized windfarms.'</i>	Community
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	There is some amenity / recreation function with two core paths located inside the LCT and existing tracks used as informal routes. <i>'Some tracks penetrate the interior, but this area is rarely visited by walkers and there is a sense of remoteness and exposure on high road passes.'</i>	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	Whilst there are extensive views from this LCT to surrounding mountains, islands, coastlines and the sea, views to this LCT are not remarkable and <i>'have a relatively simple composition.'</i>	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	<i>'this area is rarely visited by walkers and there is a sense of remoteness and exposure on high road passes.'</i>	Regional
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	This is mainly upland moorland with some peat deposits but no important landscape function.	Community
Overall Judgement of Value				Regional

Susceptibility

Scale	Large scale landscapes where the turbines may be in proportion with the landscape are generally less sensitive.	Small scale intimate landscapes are generally more sensitive to large scale structures.	This LCT is large scale with <i>'expansive moorland'</i> and <i>'large scale patchwork of contrasting colours and textures.'</i>	Low
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes	<i>'The topography is gently sloping and undulating with the lower slopes cut by small burns radiating from below the summits.'</i> <i>'Mainly smooth' and 'expansive moorland with gentle slopes and broad undulations above 50 metres and sweeping, rounded summits up to 260 metres.'</i> <i>Occasional finer grain, ridge-like or hummocky undulations in surface deposits, found in places at the base of slopes.</i>	Low
Openness/enclosure	Open and exposed landscapes	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	<i>'Exposed and open, with extensive views to surrounding mountains, islands, coastlines and the sea.'</i>	Low

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Land cover	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover (including intensive farming and forestry)	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover	<i>'Simple overall composition.'</i>	Low
Complexity and patterns	Simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex or irregular patterns	<i>'Mainly used for grazing on rough grass land, and for forestry, which together form a large scale patchwork of contrasting colours and textures'</i> <i>'The dark colour and texture of conifers contrasts with smooth, muted colours of rough grass, forming a large scale patchwork which traverses slopes and summits.'</i>	Medium/Low
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	<i>'Little settlement – occasional isolated modern farms.'</i> <i>'Groups of wind turbines occur as prominent man-made features.'</i> Evidence of population fluctuation from early history onwards with presence of brochs and duns.	Medium
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	<i>'extensive views to surrounding mountains, islands, coastlines and the sea.'</i>	High
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	This LCT whilst being an upland area, is relatively low-lying compared to the surrounding mountains. It tends not to form a distinctive skyline or horizon.	Low
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				Low
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium/low