The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Debbie Flaherty
Energy Consents Unit
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Please ask for: Roddy Dowell
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Our Ref: 21/00101/S36
Your Ref: ECU00002175
Date: 24th August 2022

By email only to Econsents_Admin@gov.scot,
debbie.flaherty@gov.scot,
info@arcusconsulting.co.uk,
jillian.adams@baywa-re.co.uk,

Dear Ms Flaherty,

CORRIEGARTH 2 WIND FARM – ERECTION AND OPERATION OF A WIND FARM FOR A PERIOD OF 30 YEARS, COMPRISING OF 16 WIND TURBINES WITH A MAXIMUM BLADE TIP HEIGHT OF 149.9M, ACCESS TRACKS, BORROW PITS, SUBSTATION, CONTROL BUILDING, AND ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE ON LAND AT CARN NA SAOBHAIDHE, GORTHLECK, INVERNESS.

The Highland Council was consulted by your office on the above Section 36 Application on the 13th January 2021 and Supplementary Environmental Information on 28th April 2022 for the above Section 36 Application. This letter seeks to convey the response of the Council.

Following consideration of the item by The Highland Council's South Planning Applications Committee on the 18th August 2022 Highland Council **objects** to the application for the following reason: -

> While acknowledging the contribution the proposed development would, if approved, make to renewable energy targets, the significantly adverse visual impacts are considered to outweigh the benefits offered by the application. In particular:
>
> The application is considered to be contrary to Policy 67 (Renewable Energy), of the Highland wide Local Development Plan and Scottish Planning Policy as the development would have a significantly detrimental visual impact individually and cumulatively on recreational users of the outdoors and road users as a result of the design, scale and location of the proposed development, in particular the prominent location of the proposal and the turbines which appear as outliers when viewed from west and south west of the scheme, as demonstrated by viewpoints at Meall Fuar Mhonaidh, Carna Leitra and General Wades Military Road (Suidhe viewpoint).

I also attached a copy of the committee report for background to the Council's response.

Please be advised that any further correspondence on this case should be forwarded to Planning.Inquiries@highland.gov.uk and simon.hindson@highland.gov.uk.

Yours Sincerely

Roddy Dowell
Planner - Development Management
Development and Infrastructure

Agenda Item	**6.8**
Report No	**PLS-67-22**

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: South Planning Applications Committee

Date: 18 August 2022

Report Title: 21/00101/S36: Corriegarth 2 Windfarm Ltd

Land at Carn Na Saobhaidhe, Gorthleck, Inverness

Report By: Area Planning Manager – South

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm - Erection and Operation of a Wind Farm for a period of 30 years, comprising of 16 Wind Turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building, and ancillary infrastructure

Ward: 12 – Aird and Loch Ness

Development category: Electricity generation of over 50mw – Section 36 application

Reason referred to Committee: Section 36 Application

All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations.

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree the recommendation to **GRANT** the application as set out in section 11 of the report

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.1 The Highland Council has been consulted by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) on an application made under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended) for the construction and operation (30 years) of Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm and associated infrastructure. The proposal comprises 14 turbines, each up to a maximum of 149.9m to tip height with a total indicative generating capacity exceeding 67.2MW.

1.2 The development comprises two arrays of turbines, referred to in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) as the western array and eastern array. Key elements of the development as assessed within its supporting EIAR highlight:

- 14 wind turbines (capable of generating up to 4.8MW each) with internal transformers.
- Turbine foundations 3m deep with an approximate 21m diameter.
- Crane hardstanding at each turbine base area.
- The existing access is taken from the B862 public road. The proposed development would also make use of 25km of existing tracks within Corriegarth Wind Farm. Approximately 6km of new on-site access track, turning points and 5 associated watercourse crossings will be constructed with approximately 13km of existing track upgraded.
- Substation west of the turbines approximately 30m by 15m. Control building west of the turbines measuring approximately 25m by 15m. Both buildings will be located within a compound measuring approximately 60m by 90m which will include any other external l electrical infrastructure and vehicle parking.
- A temporary site construction compound and laydown area measuring no more than 100m by 50m.
- Underground cabling linking the turbines with the substation.
- 1 borrow pit at Carn na Saobhaidhe adjacent to the existing borrow pit used for Corriegarth.

1.3 The grid connection from the on-site substation to the National Grid would be subject to a separate consent application by the network operator. An EIA screening (21/01148/SCRE) was submitted to Scottish Ministers for the and the proposed route involves a 70m section of overhead line between the proposed substation and the existing 132kv overhead line adjacent to the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm substation.

1.4 Access to the site will be via the existing access tracks constructed for the Corriegarth Wind Farm and includes the existing site entrance off the B862 public road. The existing access will require upgrading and extension to the internal access tracks. Deliveries of abnormal loads will be via the A9 trunk road and B851 and B862 local road network. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be prepared and agreed with the Council and Transport Scotland prior to works commencing.

1.5 The applicant has requested a micro-siting allowance of 50m for site infrastructure (tracks, turbine locations, underground cables and crane hard standing areas) this is to avoid or minimise environmental or engineering constraints identified during pre-

construction ground investigation or construction phase excavation works. The final design of the turbines (colours and finish), aviation lighting, substation, welfare and store buildings/compounds/ancillary electrical equipment, landscaping and fencing etc. are expected to be agreed with the Planning Authority and the Energy Consents Unit, by condition, at the time of project procurement. Whilst indicative drawings for these elements are set out in the application, turbine manufacturers regularly update the designs that are available, thereby necessitating the need for some flexibility in the approved design details.

1.6 Pre-Application Consultation: The applicant sought formal pre-application advice from the Planning Authority in 2019 (19/04005/PREMAJ). The scheme presented at the pre-application stage was for a wind farm comprising up to 20 wind turbines with a tip height of up to 179.9m. The below is the summary of the advice provided to the applicant:

Whilst the Council is supportive of renewable energy developments in principle, this must be balanced against the environmental impact of development. It is considered that this proposal has certain positive aspects.

This is a technically challenging site, however the majority of the challenges have been overcome through the original Corriegarth proposal and advice is provided throughout this pack on the impact of the turbines proposed through the extension.

The operational Corriegarth Wind Farm does have a visual impact in close proximity and can be seen from elevated positions on the north side of Loch Ness. This is due to the mitigation secured through the design of the original scheme. There is concern that the extension as currently proposed would undo the previously secured mitigation, have an impact on the setting of Loch Ness and may not accord with the established pattern of wind energy development.

Further the increase in blade tip height and rotor diameter will increase the visual impact of the proposal and potentially have an impact on with qualities of the Wild Land Areas. These matters need to be thoroughly assessed and mitigation identified through the design process. There is concern that turbines at the larger end of the description provided would be out of keeping with the existing pattern of onshore wind energy development based on the proposals submitted to the Planning Authority.

While this would be an extension to an existing wind farm and some of the original supporting information may be used as background information, it must be recognised that a full suite of supporting documentation will be required to facilitate the consideration of any forthcoming application. This should take into consideration the advice contained within this pre-application advice pack.

The design and scale of the proposal as currently presented requires further consideration. Based upon the current layout, scale and design it is unlikely that the application could be supported. However, if there is a reduction in the scale of the wind farm, by virtue of height of turbines and number of turbines, to ensure that the visual impacts are minimised the scheme could be supported.

1.7 The amended project was later presented through Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping exercise (20/01003/SCOP). Following the preapplication advice the applicant took on board the concerns raised above with a modified layout along with numbers and tip height reduced to 18 turbines below 150m in order to

avoid the requirement for medium intensity (2000 candela), visible, red aviation lighting of the turbines and reduce the height difference in comparison to the existing turbines.

1.8 Despite the COVID-19 pandemic impeding the normal means of community engagement the applicant was able to hold a mixture of on-site and online public consultation events. The applicant held two engagement events to seek the views of the local community. A presentation was given outlining the proposals at the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council meeting with questions taken from the Community Council and members of the public who attended on the 24 February 2020. This was followed by a public exhibition held online between 03 and 24 June 2020 which was advertised via a letter drop to residents within and around the settlements of Foyers, Whitebridge & Stratherrick (approximately 355).

1.9 The applicant originally planned to hold a public exhibition event in Stratherrick Hall in April 2020 but the exhibition was hosted online due to the Scottish Government's COVID-19 advice and guidelines at the time. Exhibition materials were provided for inspection on the dedicated project webpage instead. Online attendees were invited to complete a short survey providing feedback on the development and given the opportunity to speak or communicate directly with the applicant and their representatives either via phone, email or by postal address. During the exhibition period a total of approximately 149 visitors were recorded as having visited the dedicated project webpage with 12 questionnaires completed.

1.10 The application is supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which includes chapters on Planning Policy; Landscape and Visual Impacts (including ZTVs, wireframes and visualisations); Ecology; Ornithology; Hydrology and Hydrogeology; Geology and Soils, Cultural Heritage; Traffic and Transport; Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism, Noise, Carbon Balance, Aviation and Radar and other issues. The application is also accompanied by Technical Appendices, a Pre-Application Consultation Report, an EIA Non-Technical Summary (NTS), a Design and Access Statement and a Planning Statement.

1.11 The wind farm has an expected operational life of 30 years. Following this the applicant has advised that a decision will be made as to whether to re-power the site. If the decision is made to decommission the wind farm, the applicant advises that all turbine components, transformers, substation and associated buildings and infrastructure will be removed. Foundations would remain on site; the exposed concrete plinth would be removed to a depth of 1m below the surface, graded with soil and replanted. Cables would be cut away below ground level and sealed. Some of the access tracks may be left in place. The applicant acknowledges that these matters will not be confirmed until the time of the submission of the decommissioning and restoration plan.

1.12 The applicant anticipates that the wind farm construction period will last 18 months. This period of time will include commencement on site through to site commissioning and testing. The applicant has stated it will utilise a Construction Environment Management Document throughout the construction period. This would require to be approved by the Council, in consultation with relevant statutory bodies before the start of development.

1.13 Variations: Following concerns raised by Council officers regarding the landscape and visual impacts of the proposal has been amended removing 2 turbines (T10 and T12). The layout has been reconfigured moving 8 turbines (T1, T2, T5, T8, T9, T11, T13, T14 and T15) along with hardstanding and access tracks to take on board SEPA's concerns on the impact on deep peat. Ancillary infrastructure including borrow pits and substation compound has been relocated.

1.14 A Supplementary Environmental Information Report (SEI) has been prepared by the applicant to respond to points raised from consultees during the consultation process and to provide an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of effects arising from changes proposed to the development. The SEI provides information relating to the following matters:

- Changes made to the layout of the development, specifically the removal of two turbines, the relocation of eight turbines, reduction in length of new access track and changes to the ancillary infrastructure.
- Addendum to the landscape and visual impact assessment.
- Addendum to the ecology and ornithology assessment.
- Addendum to the Noise, Traffic and Transportation, Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism and Climate Change and Carbon Balance assessments.
- Addendum to the Hydrology and Hydrogeology and Geology and Peat assessments.
- Update of the Peat Slide Risk Assessment.
- Update of the Outline Habitat Management Plan.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The proposed wind farm will encircle the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm in the Monadhliaths mountain range approximately 15 kilometres (km) north-east of Fort Augustus and 10km south-east of Foyers by Loch Ness. As detailed in the EIAR, the topography of the site and immediate vicinity is multifaceted and largely consists of rural upland farmland used for grazing and grouse shooting. The locale varies substantially in elevation ranging between approximately 550m to 720m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the central part of the site, which is within the operational Corriegarth Wind Farm, before sloping west along the access track towards the B862, with elevations reducing to approximately 200m AOD. There are a number of hilltops bordering the site boundary with only one named summit, Carn na Saobhaidhe, within the western portion (603 m AOD) within the site boundary. The site lies within the catchments of the River E, which flows east to west across the site and rises in the south east before discharging into Loch Mhor (also known as Loch Garth). The Allt Bad Fionnaich and Allt a' Ghille Charaic tributaries of the River E rise approximately 800m and 900m east of the site boundary respectively and join the River E at the south western boundary. Access is from the unclassified road and access tracks from the B862 to the north west passing Corriegarth Lodge generally following the alignment of the River E. The nearest settlements are Whitebridge, located approximately 5 km west of the Site, and Stratherrick, located approximately 5km north of the Development. The closest residential property is located at Garrogie Lodge, located approximately 3.5km south west of the closest indicative turbine location. There are also a number of residential properties, such as Corriegarth

Lodge, located along the B862 to the west of the Site; however, these properties are outwith the site boundary. The site area measures 1,694 hectares (ha) but the built development of the wind farm would be a much smaller area.

2.2 The site itself accommodates valued habitats including blanket bog and peatland. It is used by many protected species, for example otters, vole, ground water dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTEs) and deer. The site and wider area also carries a number of ornithological interests including golden eagle; white ailed eagle; red kite; peregrine; golden plover; dunlin and other interests.

2.3 River E is a significant tributary of the River Foyers and, as concluded by the Fisheries Habitat Survey (EIAR, Vol 3, TA7.4), it provides a large area of suitable salmonoid habitat and is likely to support a resident trout population. Connectivity in River E is fragmented by waterfalls and hydro weirs.

2.4 The existing Corriegarth Wind Farm has 26 turbines at a blade tip height of 120m. The site forms a ring around the existing with the nearest proposed turbine in the proposed development approximately 400m from the existing scheme. When viewed on plans, the development, as viewed from the surrounding area, generally appears as a geometric form enveloping the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm, However, the visualisations show occasional views of outlier turbines from localised lowland locations on the roads and settlements along the south eastern banks of Loch Ness. Additionally, views from upland locations show the increased horizontal spread of turbines. There are numerous other existing and consented wind farms, plus several proposed wind farms in the planning system, within the wider surrounding area as noted in the table below (Table 1) below.

2.5 The site itself is not covered by any statutory international, national, regional or local landscape-related designations. The Cairngorms National Park is located approximately 7.9km south east of the site. The nearest statutory designation to the site is the Monadhliath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is located approximately 6.2km south east of the site. There are 3 National Scenic Areas (NSA) within the wider study area, Cairngorm Mountain NSA, Glen Affric NSA and Glen Strathfarrar NSA. The closest Wild Land Area (WLA) is WLA 20: Monadhliath which is immediately adjacent to the southern site boundary with a further 5 WLAs within the wider study area. Whilst WLAs are not designated landscapes, they are afforded protection through Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). In terms of local landscape designations, the closest Special Landscape Areas (SLA) is the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA which is located approximately 5.4km to the north west. There are a further 6 SLAs within the wider study area.

2.6 The site is not located within any international or regional landscape designations. However, there are a number of designations within the wider study area defined within the EIAR:

National Park

- The Cairngorm National Park

National Scenic Areas

- Cairngorm Mountains

- Glen Affric
- Glen Strathfarrar

Special Areas of Conservation

- Loch Bran
- Monadhliath
- River Moriston
- Ness Wood

Special Landscape Areas

- Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor
- Loch Ness and Duntelchaig
- Loch Lochy and Loch Oich
- Moidart, Morar and Glen Sheil
- Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch
- Drynachan. Lochindrob and Dava Moor
- Gaick

Site of Special Scientific Interest

- Monadhliath
- Knockie Lochs
- Loch Bran
- Easter Ness Forest
- Leveshie Wood
- Inverfarigaig

2.7 The study area defined within the EIAR contains a number of Wild Land Areas (WLA) as identified on SNH's Wild Land Areas Map 2014:

- Cetnral Highlands (WLA24)
- Monadhliath (WLA20)
- Braeroy, Glenshirra, Creag Meagaidh (WLA 19)
- Kinlochhourn, Knoydart, Morar (WLA 18)
- Cairngorms (WLA 15)
- Rannoch, Nevis, Mamores, Alder (WLA 14)

2.8 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas within the application site. The surrounding area contains a number of historic environment features. The applicant has carried out an assessment based on a Core Study Area (i.e. approximately 1,540 ha around the turbines), 5km Study Area, 10km Study Area (i.e. 5km, 10km from the turbine array) and 15km Cumulative Study Area. Within the 10km Study Area there are 5 Scheduled Monument, 28 Listed Buildings (2 Category A Listed Buildings, 18 Category B Listed Buildings, and 8 Category C Listed Buildings).

2.9 The site is within an area which contains a number of tourist and recreation assets. These include but are not limited to those travelling along the A82, B862, B852 public roads; through the Corrieyairack Pass/Military Road; East Highland Way; Great Glen Way; National Cycle Network (NCN) 78; South East Loch Ness Trail); Great Glen Canoe Trail; upon Munro's (such as Carn Dearg, Carn Sgulain, A'Chailleach) upon

Corbetts (Carn na Saobhaidhe); numerous Core Paths etc. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act also allows for significant access rights for walkers across this countryside.

2.10 When considering wind farm projects consideration is also given to the issue of cumulative impact of any project with other operational or consented schemes within the surrounding landscape. The following table outlines the schemes within 25km of the site.

Table 1

Site Name	No. of Turbines	Tip Height (m)	Location and Distance from the Proposed Development
Operational Sites			
Corriegarth	23	120m	0.4km
Easter Aberchalder	1	45.5m	3.7km
Dunmaglass	33	125m	5.4km
Stronelairg	67	135m	7.4km
Kyllachy	20	110m	18.8km
Bhlaraidh	32	135m	18.8km
Farr	40	101m	19.7km
Corrimony	5	100m	24.1km
Millenium	26	125m	26.4km
Beinneun	25	132m	26.4km
Moy	20	125m	29.4km
Beinneun Extension	7	136m	32.4km
Tom Na Clach	13	125m	33.4km
Auchmore Extension	1	79m	35.9km
Auchmore	1	79m	36.2km
Fairburn	20	100m	40.6km
Consented / Sites Under Construction			
Dell Wind Farm	14	130.5m	7.4km

Aberarder Wind Farm	12	130m	8.1km
Millennium South Wind Farm	10	132m	28km
Application / Appeal Sites			
Cloiche	36	149.9m	8km
Glenshero	39	135m	11km
Bhlaraidh Extension	18	180m	16.9km
Lethen	17	185m	39.7km

Glenshero Wind Farm was recently refused by Scottish Ministers but has been included in the applicant's baseline due to timings of the application. Tom Na Clach Wind Farm Extension is now a submitted application but has not been included in the baseline assessment due to the timing of the application.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1	29.08.2003	Erection of 4 anemometry masts (03/00835/FULIN)	Application withdrawn
3.2	17.11.2003	Erection of 4 50m anemometer masts (03/00894/FULIN)	Planning Permission Granted
3.3	03.04.2006	Erection of 2 50m anemometer masts (05/01192/FULIN)	Planning Permission Granted
3.4	20.04.2007	Erection of 50m anemometer mast (07/00096/FULIN)	Planning Permission Granted
3.5	30.04.2009	Extension to planning permission for 50m anemometer mast (09/00255/FULIN)	Planning Permission Granted
3.6	24.05.2011	Extension to planning permission for 50m anemometer mast (11/01498/FUL)	Planning Permission Granted
3.7	17.08.2012	Erection of 2 80m anemometer masts (12/02414/FUL)	Planning Permission Granted
3.8	03.05.2013	Erection of 20 turbines (120m maximum blade tip height), 2 anemometer masts and ancillary infrastructure (07/00673/FULIN)	Planning Permission Granted at Committee

3.9	15.07.2013	Extension to planning permission for 50m anemometer mast (13/01916/FUL)	Planning Permission Granted
3.10	22.02.2013	Screening opinion request under Section 36 for increased capacity and additional turbines at Corriegarth Wind Farm (13/00440/SCRE)	Screened – EIA not required
3.11	20.01.2014	Screening request under Section 37 for the proposed construction of 132KV overhead transmission line from the consented Corriegarth Wind Farm to the 275/132KV Farigaig substation (13/04741/SCRE)	No objection
3.12	20.01.2014	Corriegarth Wind Farm – Proposed construction of a new 132kv overhead transmission line from the consented Corriegarth wind farm to the new 275/132kv Farigaig substation near Torness (13/04741/SCRE)	Screened – EIA not required
3.13	18.12.2014	Section 37 132KV overhead connection (14/01072/S37)	Approved by Scottish Ministers
3.14	02.04.2015	Extension to Corriegarth Wind Farm (13/02456/S36)	Approved by Scottish Ministers
3.15	06.04.2020	Corrriegarth 2 Wind Farm – Erection of 18 turbines (149.9m maximum blade tip height and ancillary infrastructure (20/01003/SCOP)	Scoped
3.16	30.03.2022	Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm Grid Connection – Construction and operation of a new 70 m 132 kilovolts (Kv) overhead transmission line (22/01148/SCRE)	Screened EIA not required

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: EIA Development

Date Advertised: 22.01.2021 in The Edinburgh Gazette and The Herald on 22 January 2021.

22.01.2021 and 29.01.2022 in the Inverness Courier.

Representation deadline: 03.03.2022

4.2 Advertised: EIA Development (Additional Information SEI)

Date Advertised:

29.04.2022 Edinburgh Gazette and Inverness Courier.

Representation deadline: 01.06.2022

Highland Council

Representations received by The Highland Council:	12 representations comprising 6 objections, 2 support comments and 4 general comments.

Scottish Government

Representations received by Energy Consents Unit:	3 representations comprising 2 objections and 1 support comment.

4.2 Material considerations raised in objection are summarised as follows:

a) Conflict with the Development Plan and planning policy (including national policy set out in Scottish Planning Policy).
b) Landscape and visual impact.
c) Additional traffic, impact on roads, cyclists and pedestrians.
d) Impact on recreational users of the outdoors including those walking in mountains.
e) Impact on natural heritage sites and protected species.
f) Impact on tourism.
g) Noise impact on residents.

4.3 Material considerations raised in support are summarised as follows:

a) Economic benefit.
b) Road improvements associated with development.
c) Lack of impact on tourism.

4.4 Non-material considerations raised are as follows:

a) Community benefits.
b) Over-provision of wind farms in Highland/Scotland.

4.5 All letters of representation are available for inspection via the ECDU website www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx. Those submitted direct to the Council are also available on the eplanning portal www.wam.highland.gov.uk/wam.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Responses from Council Consultees

5.1 **Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council** object to the application. It highlights the following reasons for its objection:

- Visual Impact – it considers that the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm can be seen from many areas within Stratherrick and Foyers including the Suidhe Viewpoint and the additional extension of turbines, alongside other wind farms and hydro/pump storage schemes, will lead to an adverse cumulative effect with further loss of visual amenity for the community;
- Additional traffic and disruption to the B851 and B862 which are not designed for heavy construction vehicles and will lead to a deterioration of the public road;

- Impact on tourism;
- No knowledge of the Community Liaison Group referenced in the supporting information provided by the applicant.

Should the application be approved the Community Council requested improvements to B862 and B851 east of the site, prioritising Gorthleck village and around Stratherrick Primary School; Restrictions to delivery times to evenings only; Variable electronic messaging signs to warn the community of abnormal load delivery times; Establish a Community Liaison Group; All site vehicles numbered including sub-contractors; Use of minibuses for construction workers.

5.2 **Glenurquhart Community Council** object to the application. It highlights the following reasons for its objection:

- Visual impact – it considers that the proposal will be seen from many vantage points and popular recreational routes such as Meall Fuar-Mhonaid and the Monadhaliath Mountains within the Wild Land Area. It considers that the extension to the existing wind farm will lead to a cumulative effect with further loss of visual amenity for visitors and the local community;
- Impact on tourism – The proposal will be seen by visitors to Loch Ness and those travelling on to the west coast, Skye and the Western Isles along with visibility from other key transport routes such as the A82 and A9;
- Impact on peat – The proposal will have an unacceptable and irreversible impact on peatland and blanket bog;
- Off shore wind energy – There should be more focus on off-shore wind energy due to a lack of grid/transmission capacity.

5.3 **Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Council** has not responded to the consultation.

5.4 **Inverness West Community Council** has not responded to the consultation.

5.5 **Strathnairn Community Council** has not responded to the consultation.

5.6 **Dores and Essich Community Council** has not responded to the consultation.

5.7 **Access Officer** does not object to the application subject to conditions that secure effective outdoor access management to address some of the shortcomings in the assessment.

5.8 **Flood Risk Management Team** do not object to the application and have no further comments to add.

5.9 **Transport Planning Team** do not object to the application. The Transport Planning Team noted shortcomings in the assessment methodology and appraisal provided with environmental assessment thresholds used for non-environmental aspects of the transport impacts such as how a road physically performs or the impact on the road safety standards and its users. It is the roads, transportation and civil engineering considerations that are needed to determine the suitability of a road to safely and effectively cater for the increased transport demands being placed on it as opposed to environmental threshold levels.

Planning conditions and legal agreement requirements are necessary with any approval to ensure effective mitigation to safeguard the interests of the local road network and the safety of road users, these include:

- A finalised Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP);
- A finalised Traffic Management Plan for the movement of abnormal loads;
- A registered legal agreement, including road bond to protect the Council's interests in the event of unforeseen damage to local roads network;
- Implementation of all agreed mitigation measures, taking into account the specific nature/scale of this development (e.g. works to sections of the B851 and/or B862 public roads including twin track widening in open road sections; Village Improvement Schemes within the villages and settlements, in keeping with the South Loch Ness - Road Improvement Strategy; and Section 48 agreement under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 which sets out the funding mechanism and the scope of works carried out in the event that the local roads authority wish to carry out some or all works themselves).

The Developer is aware of the requirements of the draft South Loch Ness – Road Improvement Strategy which has updated the previous 2014 edition.

5.10 **Environmental Health Team** do not object to the application. It has recommended a standard condition which restricts noise limits to 26dB LA90 (i.e. the maximum predicted level plus a 2dB margin). It is satisfied that potential dust and noise issues that may arise during the construction phase, particularly works to the access track and subsequent construction traffic, will be covered by the submission of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

5.11 **Landscape Officer** does not object to the proposal. Whilst they identify that the proposed development would create adverse visual impacts from the study area these are contained to a number of localised settings, albeit affecting receptors with a high sensitivity. They noted an improvement has been achieved to the visual composition of the development and its relationship to the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm from the majority of viewpoints.

They welcomed the layout changes and reduction in turbines which they considered bring about the following changes to the viewpoints that the applicant noted as having a Significant effect:

- Viewpoint 3: B862 West of Corriegarth Lodge - The composition is improved at the left side of the view, but the increased prominence of T1 negates any overall reduction in impacts and the assessment of significance is unchanged;
- Viewpoint 4: South Loch Ness Trail, north of Whitebridge - The composition is improved and impacts would be reduced although significance is unchanged;
- Viewpoint 5: Errogie - The composition suffers detriment; adverse impacts are increased over the level of the original Application Layout and the assessment of significance is unchanged;
- Viewpoint 7: General Wade’s Military Road - The composition is improved, and impacts would be reduced although significance is unchanged.

Overall, these 4 locations retain significant adverse visual effects but they are considered localised and generally transient effects that should not be regarded as overwhelming the benefits of the proposal.

Viewpoint 11: Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh was assessed as having Moderate and Not Significant effects for the original scheme. They considered there was under-assessment of the potentially deleterious effect of turbines T8, T9 and T10. These turbines have a different relationship to the horizon from that established as characteristic for the original development and which is continued through the rest of the proposed development. These turbines hubs are raised above the horizon, potentially more eye catching, dependent on light and weather conditions, and at variance with the rest of the combined Corriegarth Wind Farm. However, they considered the revisions to the design have created incremental improvements to the composition along with reduced horizontal and vertical spread. On balance, they considered this would offset the potential effects of the hub positions and they agree that the effects from VP11 would now be appropriately assessed as Not Significant.

Viewpoint 15: Carn na Leitire and Viewpoint 16: North Kessock - A9 northbound picnic area have seen some marginal detriment to the composition as a result of changes but remain below the level of significance.

In terms of Designated Landscape they noted that the viewpoints which experience the most significant visual effects are those within or on the edges of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. Only VP11 would have a relevant impact on the Special Qualities of the designation but they are content that there is no significant adverse effect on those Qualities.

No Significant landscape effects would be incurred and no thresholds of the supplementary guidance criteria would be breached by the proposal.

5.12 **Forestry Officer** does not object to the application following confirmation that no trees will be removed as part of the application.

5.13 **Development Plans Team** do not object to the application and have no further comments.

5.14 **Historic Environment Team** do not object to the application noting there are no listed buildings, and their settings, which would be directly or significantly affected by the proposal.

Responses to consultation undertaken by the Energy Consent Unit

5.15 **Transport Scotland** do not object to the application subject to conditions being attached to any consent granted. They noted that the impact of the additional traffic associated with the construction of the development would not exceed any of the thresholds for further detailed assessment of environmental effects and confirmed that no further trunk road assessment was required.

5.16 **Scottish Water** do not object to the application. A review of their records indicates that the proposed development site falls within a drinking water catchment where a Scottish Water abstraction is located, therefore, it is essential that water quality and water quantity in the area are protected. It is a relatively large catchment and the

activity is sufficient distance from the intake that it is likely to be low risk. Scottish Water will not accept any surface water connections into their combined sewer system.

5.17 **Historic Environment Scotland (HES)** do not object to the application and have no further comments.

5.18 **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)** do not object to the application subject to conditions being attached to any consent granted. They welcomed the additional environmental information which they considered demonstrates that the proposal has minimised impacts on peat by maximising the use of the existing Corriegarth 1 tracks, removing two turbines and relocating eight turbines. This has resulted in a reduction of excavated peat from 355,284m^3 to 179,770m^3, almost 50%. They noted that the largest contributors to peat excavations are turbines T6, T8 and T16 with further attention required to microsite these turbines into areas of less deep peat given much of the infrastructure is still on peat greater than 1m deep.

The conditions sought include peat management; impact on groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystem (GWDTE); habitat management; water environment protection; temporary mineral workings; micro-siting, pollution prevention and construction environmental management; decommissioning and site restoration.

5.19 **NatureScot** do not object to the application subject to conditions. In relation to the Ness Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), it notes that the proposal has potential to impact the international heritage designations and they welcome the mitigation measures proposed including the pre-construction otter survey and protection plan controlled by condition. They consider it unlikely the proposal will have a significant effect on any qualifying interests, either directly or indirectly of the River Spey – Insh Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA). And an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

In terms of impacts on the qualities of the Monadhliath Wild Land Area (WLA20) whilst the proposal would result in further attrition of the attributes and qualities of WLA20 they generally agree with the conclusion in the EIAR that adverse effects will be extremely localised and that the wider spread of effects have been minimised by the siting of the proposal in close proximity to the existing wind turbines. NatureScot considered the additional attrition of WLA 20's attributes and qualities resulting in localised significant effects on the WLA. However, they consider the effects have been minimised by the siting of the proposal in close proximity to the existing wind turbines.

In consideration of the impacts on the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) they felt the EIAR under-represented the effects of additional turbines on the "vastness of space, scale and height" Special Landscape Quality (SLQ). They disagreed that this is considered minor (high sensitivity – low magnitude) as it will more than "slightly extend the influence of wind farm development". NatureScot consider the magnitude of change would be medium and the resultant effect moderate adverse and significant due to the increase in elevation and heights of turbines which would be seen from a number of hill summits on the north western edge of the Park at approximately 10km to 15km distance (Carn Ban (AESLQ1), Càrn Fhreiceadain (AESLQ2) and Chailleach (AESLQ3). They consider the assessment of effects on the other SLQs within the EIAR are accurate. Whilst raising the above concerns they

concede the effects will be localised and limited And overall the proposal will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the National Park or the objectives of the designation.

In consideration of the appraisal of Effects on LCT 221 Rolling Uplands/LN6 Monadhliath ridge and tops, Rolling uplands they advise that the proposal will result in significant visual effects on the area south of Loch Ness including sections of the B882, small settlements such as Whitebridge, Errogie and Gorthleck, and section of the South Loch Ness Trail (represented by viewpoints VP1, VP2, VP3, VP4, VP5 and VP7).

NatureScot welcome the revised collision risk modelling and note that collision risk has reduced for all species with the exception of golden plover which has stayed the same and white-tailed eagle which has increased slightly. Despite this slight increase in collision risk for white-tailed eagle they consider the proposal will not adversely affect the current conservation status of the NHZ 10 white-tailed eagle population or significantly increase the time it will take for it to reach carrying capacity. They are in agreement with the assessment in the EIAR for all other bird species.

In relation to peatland habitat, NatureScot initially advised that a more ambitious restoration proposal would be more appropriate to mitigate any potential loss. Following the reconfigured site and removal of 2 turbines they welcome the reduction in the direct loss of blanket bog habitat from 15.05ha to 11.94ha. However, they note there is no calculation for the indirect loss of blanket bog, therefore, it is considered that the total loss of blanket bog habitat will likely be greater than 11.94ha, possibly around 40ha to 50ha in total. Whilst they note the proposed restoration area of 23.88ha and value the commitment for this area to be safeguarded from impacts of sporting management activities, deer grazing and future development further details of these measures are required and controlled by condition. Given the 11.94ha does not appear to account for indirect blanket bog loss then a greater area of restoration is required to adequately compensate for the total loss of blanket bog associated with this proposal. The absolute extent of restored habitat should be no less than 50ha, but 100 ha is advisable to allow for failures, this is controlled by condition.

5.20 **Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA)** do not object to the application. The CNPA considered the proposed development will not significantly adversely affect the landscape character and Special Landscape Qualities (SLQ's) of the National Park. Whilst it was noted that 1 SLQ would be moderately affected the effects would be limited and localised to areas that already have visibility of existing and consented wind farms. As such, the development does not conflict with national planning policies and the policies of the National Park Partnership Plan in terms of impacts upon the National Park.

5.21 **Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS)** do not object to the application. Due to the potential for such developments to impact on migratory fish species and the fisheries they support FMS recommend their guidelines are followed during the planning, construction and monitoring phases of the proposed development.

5.22 **Ness and Beauly Fisheries Trust** do not object to the application and have no further comments.

5.23 **Ness District Salmon Fishery Board** do not object to the application. River E is a significant tributary of the River Foyers and provides a large area of suitable salmonid habitat and is likely to support a resident trout population. There is currently minimal data on fish populations in River E, therefore, an appropriately designed fish survey is required in line with the recommendations of the submitted Fisheries Habitat Survey (EIAR, Vol 3, TA7.4)**.**

5.24 **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)** do not object to this application subject to conditions. They considered the collision risk for red kite and white-tailed eagle was high with the potential for an adverse impact on the local breeding populations. They considered the collision risk for golden eagle was low and welcome the developer's intention to share data and make a financial contribution to the Regional Eagle Conservation Management Plan (RECMP). The re-siting and removal of turbines is welcomed as it has reduced the amount of blanket bog that will be lost as part of the proposed development with more of a focus on targeted restoration at high altitude. However, they felt an area at least four times the size of the blanket bog habitat area directly lost should be restored, far exceeding what has been proposed initially.

5.25 **Forestry Scotland** do not object to the application. The only area of woodland within the proposed development's boundaries lies alongside existing Corriegarth Wind Farm access track, off the B862. The woodland is listed on Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) and Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) as Upland Birchwood but will remain unaffected by the proposed development.

5.26 **Mountaineering Scotland** object to the application. They consider the proposed development would have an adverse visual impact, particularly turbines T7, T8, T9 and T11. The proposed development was considered to have an adverse impact on mountaineering recreation and tourist interests given the unacceptable visual impact when viewed from the Munros and Corbetts to the south, east and north of the proposed development site.

5.27 **Scotways** do not object to the application. It considers the direct and cumulative impacts on public access, recreational amenity and on the setting historic rights of way have been adequately considered.

5.28 **Joint Radio Company (JRC)** do not object to the application.

5.29 **BT-Openreach UK** do not object to the application and have no further comments.

5.30 **Highland and Islands Airport Ltd (HIAL)** do not object to the application subject to a condition. The proposed development would infringe the safeguarding criteria of Inverness Airport with a possible impact to the Instrument Flight Procedures (IFPs) for Inverness Airport. HIAL request that an IFP Impact Assessment is conducted to ascertain if there is an impact to Inverness Airport's IFPs.

5.31 **Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO)** do not object to the application subject to conditions. A request is made for planning conditions in respect of aviation mapping and safety lighting.

5.32 **National Air Traffic Systems (NATS)** do not object to the proposal.

5.33 **Crown Estates** do not object to the application and have no further comments.

5.34 **Ironside Farrar Ltd.** do not object to the proposal. The Energy Consents Unit commissioned Ironside Farrar Ltd to technically assess the Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessments submitted by developers. The Stage 2 Checking Report submitted considered whether the responses received from the developer to Stage 1 Check Report Recommendations adequately addressed issues raised. The checking report provided a summary of findings and recommendations.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application.

Highland Wide Local Development Plan (May 2012)

6.1 28 - Sustainable Design
29 - Design Quality & Place-making
30 - Physical Constraints
31 - Developer Contributions
51 - Trees and Development
53 - Minerals
54 - Mineral Wastes
55 - Peat and Soils
56 - Travel
57 - Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage
58 - Protected Species
59 - Other important Species
60 - Other Importance Habitats
61 - Landscape
62 - Geodiversity
63 - Water Environment
64 - Flood Risk
65 - Waste Water Treatment
66 - Surface Water Drainage
67 - Renewable Energy Developments

- Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
- Other Species and Habitat Interests
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Amenity at Sensitive Locations
- Safety and Amenity of Individuals and Individual Properties
- The Water Environment
- Safety of Airport, Defence and Emergency Service Operations
- The Operational Efficiency of Other Communications
- The Quantity and Quality of Public Access
- Other Tourism and Recreation Interests
- Traffic and Transport Interests

68 – Community Renewable Energy Development
69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure

72 – Pollution
73 - Air Quality
77 - Public Access

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) (2015)

6.2 No policies or allocations relevant to the proposal are included in the adopted Local Development Plan. It does however confirm the boundaries of Special Landscape Areas within the plan's boundary.

The Highland Council Supplementary Planning Guidance

Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG, November 2016)

6.3 The document provides additional guidance on the principles set out in HwLDP Policy 67 - Renewable Energy Developments and reflects the updated position on these matters as set out in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). This document forms part of the Development Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

6.4 The document includes a Spatial Framework, which is in line with Table 1 of SPP. The proposed site lies partially within Group 2, which are Areas of Significant Protection, this is due to the presence of Carbon Rich Soils, Deep Peat and Priority Peatland Habitat (CPP). CPP is a nationally important mapped environmental asset that indicates where the resource is likely to be found with a detailed peat assessment being required to guide development away from the most sensitive areas and help inform potential mitigation. The site is also partially within Group 3, which are areas with potential for wind farm development.

6.5 The document also contains the Landscape Sensitivity Appraisals which identifies Key Views, Key Routes and Gateways as well as Landscape Character Area sensitivities and guidance. This appraisal forms part of the statutorily adopted Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. The site falls within the area covered by the Loch Ness study, with the turbine envelope for this application falling within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) LN6 - Monadhliath ridge and tops, Rolling Uplands. It identifies potential for extension to existing large scale wind farms subject to key requirements. The Loch Ness Sensitivity Study is covered in more detail later in the report.

Other Supplementary Guidance

6.6 The following Supplementary Guidance also forms a statutory part of the Development Plan and is considered pertinent to the determination of this application:

- Developer Contributions (November 2018)
- Flood Risk & Drainage Impact Assessment (January 2013)
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy (January 2013)
- Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (March 2013)
- Highland Renewable Energy Strategy & Planning Guidelines (May 2006)
- Managing Waste in New Developments (March 2013)
- Physical Constraints (March 2013)

- Special Landscape Area Citations (June 2011)
- Standards for Archaeological Work (March 2012)
- Trees, Woodlands and Development (January 2013)

7. OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The Highland Council Non-Statutory Planning Guidance

7.1 The Highland-wide Local Development Plan is currently under review and is at Main Issues Report Stage. It is anticipated the Proposed Plan will be published following publication of secondary legislation and National Planning Framework 4.

7.2 In addition to the above, The Highland Council has further advice on delivery of major developments in a number of documents. This includes Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (August 2010) and The Highland Council Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments (July 2016).

Scottish Government Planning Policy (SPP) and Guidance

7.3 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) sets out principal policies on Sustainability and Placemaking, and subject policies on A Successful, Sustainable Place; A Low Carbon Place; A Natural, Resilient Place; and A Connected Place. It also highlights that the Development Plan continues to be the starting point of decision making on planning applications. The content of the SPP is a material consideration that carries significant weight, but not more than the Development Plan, although it is for the decision maker to determine the appropriate weight to be afforded to it in each case.

7.4 SPP sets out continued support for onshore wind. It requires Planning Authorities to progress, as part of the Development Plan process, a spatial framework identifying areas that are most likely to be most appropriate for onshore wind farms as a guide for developers and communities. It also lists likely considerations to be taken into account relative to the scale of the proposal and area characteristics (Para. 169 of SPP).

7.5 Paragraph 170 of SPP sets out that areas identified for wind farms should be suitable for use in perpetuity. This means that even though the consent is time limited the use of the site for a wind farm must be considered as, to all intents and purposes, a permanent one. The implication of this is that operational effects should be considered as permanent, and their magnitude should not be diminished on the basis that the specific proposal will be subject to a time limited consent.

7.6 National Planning Framework 4 will, in due course, supersede Scottish Planning Policy and form part of the Development Plan. Draft National Planning Framework 4 was published in November 2021. It comprises four parts, summarised below:

Part 1 – sets out an overarching spatial strategy for Scotland in the future. This includes priorities, spatial principles and action areas.
Part 2 – sets out proposed national developments that support the spatial strategy.
Part 3 – sets out policies for the development and use of land which are to be applied in the preparation of local development plans; local place plans; masterplans and briefs; and for determining the range of planning consents. It is clear that this part of

the document should be taken as a whole, and all relevant policies should be applied to each application.
Part 4 – provides an outline of how Scottish Government will implement the strategy set out in the document.

7.7 The Spatial Strategy sets out that we must embrace and deliver radical change so we can tackle and adapt to climate change, restore biodiversity loss, improve health and wellbeing, build a wellbeing economy and create great places. It makes it clear that new development and infrastructure will be required to meet the net zero targets by 2045. To facilitate this, it sets out that we must rebalance our planning system so that climate change and nature recovery are the primary guiding principles for all our decisions. It sets out that significant weight should be given to the global climate emergency when considering development proposals. The draft sets out that the planning system should support all forms of renewable energy development in principle. Specific to this proposal it states that development proposals to extend and expand existing wind farms should be supported unless the impacts identified (including cumulative effects) are unacceptable. It continues to highlight a range of considerations for renewable energy applications, similar to the existing provisions of Scottish Planning Policy.

Other Relevant National Guidance and Policy

7.8 A range of other national planning and energy policy and guidance is also relevant, including but not limited to the following:

- National Planning Framework for Scotland 3, NPF3
- Scottish Energy Strategy (December 2017)
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS, 2019)
- PAN 1/2011 - Planning and Noise (March 2011)
- Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (May 2017)
- PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (January 2008)
- 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy (June 2011)
- Onshore Wind Energy (Statement), Scottish Government (December 2017)
- Onshore Wind Energy (Statement) Refresh Consultation Draft, Scottish Government (October 2021)
- Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, SNH (August 2017)
- Wind Farm Developments on Peat Lands, Scottish Government (June 2011)
- Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map, Scottish Government (May 2018)
- Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas, Technical Guidance, NatureScot (September 2020)

8. PLANNING APPRAISAL

8.1 The application has been submitted to the Scottish Government for approval under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended). Should Ministers approve the development, it will receive deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). While not a planning application, the Council processes S36 applications in the same way as a planning

application as a consent under the Electricity Act will carry with it deemed planning permission.

8.2 Schedule 9 of The Electricity Act 1989 contains tests in relation to the impact of proposals on amenity and fisheries. These tests should:

- Have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and
- Reasonably mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects.

8.3 It should be noted that for applications under the Electricity Act 1989 that the Development Plan is just one of a number of considerations and Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 which requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, is not engaged.

Determining Issues

8.4 This means that the application requires to be assessed against all policies of the Development Plan relevant to the application, all national and local policy guidance and all other material considerations relevant to the application.

Planning Considerations

8.5 The key considerations in this case are:

a) compliance with the development plan and other planning policy

b) energy and economic benefits;

c) construction;

d) transport and access;

e) hydrology, hydrogeology and peat;

f) natural heritage (including ornithology);

g) built and cultural heritage;

h) design, landscape and visual impact (including wild land areas)

i) noise and shadow flicker;

j) telecommunications;

k) aviation;

l) decommissioning, and

m) other material considerations

Development Plan/other planning policy

8.6 The Development Plan comprises the adopted Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) and all statutorily adopted supplementary guidance. The HwLDP was in place at the time of consideration and determination of the original application.

8.7 The principal HwLDP policy on which the application needs to be determined is Policy 67 - Renewable Energy. HwLDP Policy 67 sets out that renewable energy development should be well related to the source of the primary renewable resource needed for operation, the contribution of the proposed development in meeting renewable energy targets and positive/negative effects on the local and national economy as well as all other relevant policies of the Development Plan and other relevant guidance. In that context the Council will support proposals where it is satisfied, they are located, sited and designed such as they will not be significantly detrimental overall, individually or cumulatively with other developments having regard to 11 specified criteria (as listed in HwLDP Policy 67). Such an approach is consistent with the concept of Sustainable Design (HwLDP Policy 28) and aim of SPP to achieve the right development in the right place; it is not to allow development at any cost.

8.8 If the Council is satisfied that the proposal is not significantly detrimental overall, then the application will accord with the provisions of the HwLDP.

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) (2015)

8.9 No policies or allocations relevant to the proposal are included in the adopted Local Development Plan. Para 2.6 of the plan confirms the extent of the SLAs within the Inner Moray Firth area. The impact of this development on landscape is primarily assessed in the Design, Landscape and Visual Impact section of this report.

Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG)

8.10 The Council's OWESG is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The supplementary guidance does not provide additional tests in respect of the consideration of development proposals against Development Plan policy. However, it provides a clear indication of the approach the Council towards the assessment of proposals, and thereby aid consideration of applications for onshore wind energy proposals

8.11 The OWESG contains a Spatial Framework for wind energy as required by SPP. The proposed site lies partially within Group 2, which are Areas of Significant Protection, this is due to the presence of Carbon Rich Soils, Deep Peat and Priority Peatland Habitat (CPP). CPP is a nationally important mapped environmental asset that indicates where the resource is likely to be found with a detailed peat assessment being required to guide development away from the most sensitive areas and help inform potential mitigation. The site is also partially within Group 3, which are areas with potential for wind farm development. The application has been supported by a peat assessment as detailed in EIAR Chapter 10 (Geology and Soils) and a draft Peat Management Plan has also been submitted which demonstrates

how any impacts will be minimised and mitigated. The site is also partially within Group 3, which are areas with potential for wind farm development.

8.12 The spatial framework identifies a number of Group 1 Areas. These are areas where wind farms will not be acceptable. There are a number of these in in the wider surrounding area beyond the site. Given the size and prominence of the development proposed, the proximity to these interests such as the Cairngorm National Park; Monadhliath SAC and Site of Special Scientific Interest; etc. are relevant.

8.13 Further, the OWESG approach and methodology to the assessment of proposals is applicable and is set out in the OWESG Para 4.16 - 4.17. It provides a methodology for a judgement to be made on the likely impact of a development on assessed "thresholds" in order to assist the application of HwLDP Policy 67. The OWESG lists ten landscape and visual criteria that the Council uses as a framework for assessing proposals. They are not absolute requirements but set out key considerations of the Council. Consideration of the proposal against the criteria is contained within Appendix 2 of this report. The applicant has also provided an assessment against these criteria.

8.14 The OSWESG also provides strategic considerations that identify sensitivities and potential capacity for wind farm development. These are called the Landscape Sensitivity Appraisals (LSA) and form part of the statutorily adopted Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. The Appraisals identify Key Views, Key Routes and Gateways as well as Landscape Character Area sensitivities and guidance. The site falls within the area covered by the Loch Ness study, with the turbine envelope for this application falling within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) 6 - Monadhliath ridge and tops, Rolling Uplands, the most extensive landscape in the Study Area is described as a multi-layered receding landscape, giving an impression of vast extent with external views mostly from elevated viewpoints. This area is identified (OWESG: p50) as having:

- No scope for small or medium turbines
- Limited scope for micro turbines where closely associated with buildings
- Limited scope for additional large turbines within the existing pattern

The following recommendations are provided for the siting of wind turbines within this LCA:

- Turbines should: not breach the skyline when viewed from north side of Loch Ness
- Be set back from Key Routes
- Preserve mitigation established by current schemes
- Maintain the landscape setting of each existing scheme
- Avoid coalescence with current positioning respect spacing and scale of existing development pattern.
- Development of turbines (all scales) in other locations within the LCA should be avoided to ensure that the scale of the landform is maintained and that perspective, when viewed across the loch in particular, is not adversely affected.

8.15 The Sensitivity Appraisal identifies that "….remaining capacity for this scale of development should be focused around existing clusters that are generally found in rolling uplands, rugged massif and rocky moorland Landscape Character Types, but only where these are well designed, integrated into the existing pattern of development and do not undo the landscape and visual mitigation agreed for existing schemes. These limitations will help to limit any additional cumulative effect and increase the potential for future development to share existing site infrastructure".

8.16 Further consideration of this is outlined in the Design, Landscape and Visual Impact (including Wild Land) section of this report.

National Planning Policy

8.17 National planning policy remains supportive of onshore wind energy development with the framework for assessing wind farm proposals set out in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). SPP sets out that areas identified for wind farms should be suitable for use in perpetuity.

8.18 Notwithstanding the overarching context of support, SPP recognises that the need for energy and the need to protect and enhance Scotland's natural and historic environment must be regarded as compatible goals. The planning system has a significant role in securing appropriate protection to the natural and historic environment without unreasonably restricting the potential for renewable energy. National policies highlight potential areas of conflict but also advise that detrimental effects can often be mitigated, or effective planning conditions can be used to overcome potential objections to development.

8.19 Criteria outlined within SPP for the assessment of applications for renewable energy developments include landscape and visual impact; effects on heritage and historic environment; contribution to renewable energy targets; effect on the local and national economy and tourism and recreation interests; benefits and dis-benefits to communities; aviation and telecommunications; development with the peat environment, noise and shadow flicker; and cumulative impact. A number of criteria are set out in SPP against which proposals for on-shore wind energy development should be assessed (paragraph 169). These criteria are primarily reflected in Policy 67 (Renewable Energy) of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. A failure against one of these criteria does not necessarily mean that a development fails, all these criteria must be given consideration. The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 28 of Scottish Planning Policy is not applicable tilted balance concept is not applicable in this case as the Development Plan does not have primacy in decision making.

8.20 As a statement of the Government's approach to spatial planning in Scotland, National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) is a material consideration that should be afforded significant weight in the planning balance. NPF3 considers that onshore wind has a role in meeting the Scottish Government's targets to achieve at least an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and to meet at least 30% overall energy demand from renewables by 2020, including generating the equivalent of at least 100% of gross electricity consumption from renewables.

However, it should be noted that the targets set out in NPF3 have now been superseded by legislation which sets the legally binding target of net zero by 2045.

8.21 As set out above, National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was published in draft form in November 2021. This document is still going through the parliamentary process and consultation, therefore the weight to be attached to the document is not the same as the adopted Scottish Planning Policy, National Planning Framework 3 or the Development Plan. However, it can be given weight in the process of determining applications. It will be up to Scottish Ministers to determine the weight to be afforded to it in reaching their determination depending on the status of the document at the time of reaching their determination on this application. It is anticipated that the Planning Authority may wish to make further representation to the application if it is not determined at the time of adoption of NPF4.

8.22 A number of matters of relevance arise out of the draft NPF4 in relation to this proposal and these are explored further below:

- Draft NPF4 identifies electricity generation from renewable sources of, or exceeding 50MW as national development. The proposed development would therefore be classed as a national development as it would have a capacity of 67.2MW (based on a candidate turbine with an indicative 4.8MW capacity). Such developments have been identified as national developments due to the need an increase in renewable energy production in order to meet net zero targets. It also highlights that Generation is for consumption domestically as well as for export to the UK and beyond, with new capacity helping to decarbonise heat, transport and industrial energy demand. It notes that this has the potential to support jobs and business investment, with wider economic benefits.
- For the first time in a planning policy document, confirmation has been provided that when considering all developments significant weight should be given to the Global Climate Emergency. As a development that generates renewable energy this proposal has inherent support from this aspect of NPF4, however the impact on the carbon resource as a result of the development will require further consideration to determine whether the impact of the proposed development is positive or negative in this regard. This aspect is outlined later in this report, the overall carbon payback period is considered to be acceptable.
- Recognising the Ecological Emergency, the draft NPF4 also sets out that proposals should contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity. The proposed development includes provision for peatland restoration which meets with the provisions of the proposed approach in draft NPF4 for the restoration of degraded habitats and the strengthening of nature networks.
- Considerations for green energy applications have been updated and there is no longer an explicit spatial framework for onshore wind energy developments. Instead, it sets out that proposals for new development, extensions and repowering of existing renewable energy developments should be supported. The proposal subject to this application would be considered an extension so would benefit from this in principle support. However, it goes on to set out that such proposals should be supported unless the impacts identified (including cumulative effects), are unacceptable. Draft NPF4 also highlights a number of matters which must be taken into account

in reaching a determination on an application for renewable energy. Subject to some minor wording changes, this is largely reflective of the considerations set out in SPP paragraph 169.

8.23 A number of publications relating to national energy policy have been published by the Scottish Government. In short, none indicate a relevant distinct policy change. Most relevant to this application are as follows:

- Scottish Energy Strategy: The future of energy in Scotland (December 2017).
- On-shore Wind Policy Statement (December 2017).
- Scottish Government, Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero: Climate Change Plan 2018–2032 (update December 2020).
- Committee on Climate Change, The Sixth Carbon Budget, The UK's Path to Net Zero (including Policy and Methodology) (December 2020).
- National Audit Office, Net Zero Report,(December 2020).
- HM Government, Energy White Paper, Powering our Net Zero Future (December 2020).

8.24 Further to the above, in late 2019 the Scottish Government's targets for reduction in greenhouse gases were amended by The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019. This sets targets to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030, 90% by 2040.

8.25 However, it is also recognised that such support should only be given where justified. The Onshore Wind Policy Statement sets out the need for a more strategic approach to new development that acknowledges the capacity that landscapes have to absorb development before landscape and visual impacts become unacceptable. With regard to planning policy, these statements largely reflect the existing position outlined within NPF3 and SPP, a policy framework that supports development in the justified locations. In addition, it must be recognised that the greenhouse gas reduction targets and the targets in the Energy Strategy are related not just to production of green energy but also related to de-carbonisation of heat and transportation.

8.26 The Scottish Government published Onshore Wind Policy Statement Refresh 2021: Consultative Draft in October 2021. This set out that onshore wind remains vital to Scotland's future energy mix and that we will need additional onshore wind energy toward the target of net zero. However, in doing so it was clear that additional capacity is not at any cost and it needs to be balanced and aligned with protection of natural heritage, native flora and fauna. The document also highlights the challenges and opportunities faced by the deployment of additional onshore wind energy capacity as well as consulting on a target of an additional 8-12GW of onshore wind energy capacity being delivered. Importantly it notes that the matter of landscape and visual impacts of onshore wind development remains an evolving area. As part of this evolution, it considers that while decisive action to tackle climate change will change how Scotland looks Scotland's most cherished landscape are a key part of natural and cultural heritage and must be afforded the necessary protection.

Energy and Economic Benefits

8.27 The Council continues to respond positively to the Government's renewable energy agenda. The government's recent Onshore Wind Energy Statement Consultation Draft states that there is currently 8.4GW of installed capacity in Scotland, with a further 4.69GW in the planning/consenting process, 4.64 GW are awaiting construction and 0.43 GW under construction. Highland wind energy projects currently have an installed capacity of 2.53GW, there is a further 1.47GW of generation permitted but not yet built and 1.3GW currently under construction. Installed onshore wind energy developments in Highland therefore accounts for around 30.12% of the national installed onshore wind energy capacity. There is also a further 2.1GW of onshore wind farm proposals currently in planning pending consideration in Highland.

8.28 It remains the case that there are areas of Highland capable of absorbing renewable developments with limited significant effects. However, given the contribution made in Highland to date the Council could take a more selective approach to determining which wind farm developments should be supported, consistent with national and local policy. This is not treating targets as a cap or suggesting that targets cannot be exceeded, it is simply a recognition of the balance that is called for in both national and local policy.

8.29 The scheme has the potential to generate up to 67.2MW, with each turbine expected to have the potential to generate around 4.8MW. The existing 23 turbine Corriegarth Wind Farm has an installed capacity of 108MW. The applicant has taken on board the concerns raised regarding the visual impact of the original 16 turbine scheme which has since been repositioned with 2 turbines removed. If accepted by Ministers, this will reduce the energy yield from the originally submitted scheme by approximately 9.6MW. However, even with this reduction, the yield from this development would be significant. Therefore, notwithstanding any significant impacts that this proposal may have upon the landscape resource, amenity and heritage of the area, the development could be seen to be compatible with Scottish Government policy and guidance and increase its overall contribution to the Government targets

8.30 The proposed development anticipates a construction period of 18 months and 30 years of operation prior to decommissioning or repowering. Such a project can offer significant investment/opportunities to the local, Highland, and Scottish economy including businesses ranging across construction, haulage, electrical and service sectors. The application has been accompanied by a socio-economic, recreation, tourism and recreation assessment (EIAR, Vol 1, Chapter 14: Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism) which looks at both the construction and operational phases for the development.

8.31 There is also likely to be some adverse effects caused by construction traffic and disruption, albeit the applicant has sought to utilise the existing infrastructure in place for Corriegarth Wind Farm. These adverse impacts are most likely to be within the service sector particularly during the construction phase when abnormal loads are being delivered to site.

8.32 The economic impact of the proposed development has been assessed using a model that has been developed by BiGGAR Economics specifically to estimate the economic impacts of wind farm developments and capital estimates by the developer. The applicant advises that this approach is generally considered industry best practice in assessing the economic impact of the onshore wind sector.

8.33 The applicant highlights that the project, including its potential connection to the grid, represents a significant investment in the region of £100m (assuming the installed capacity will be 76MW). The BiGGAR Report estimates that, of these construction costs, regional expenditure would be 12% (within Highland), national expenditure would be 36% (within Scotland) and UK expenditure would be 47%. The remaining 53% of construction costs will be spent outwith the UK. On this basis, it is estimated that, during the construction phase, the Development will be worth approximately £47 million to the UK economy. Of that approximately £36 million is expected to be spent within Scotland and £12 million is expected to be spent within Highland.

8.34 In addition, there would be annual expenditure of £4.5m per annum during the 30 years of operation. It is estimated that 42% would be spent in local area. This would include business rates and a contribution to public finance expenditure over its lifetime. The applicant states the investment will benefit UK and international businesses, local businesses and the wider Scottish economy.

8.35 It is anticipated that a temporary workforce peaking at 60 people will be employed during the 18 month construction period. This has been calculated by “job years”, one individual working for 18 months would result in 1.5 job years, therefore, 60 individuals working during the 18 month construction period represents 90 job years.

8.36 The applicant states that the developer is committed to maximising the local economic impact from the proposed development. Additional wider benefits associated with the proposed development include a contribution to a Community Benefit Fund is covered further in paragraph 8.45 and 8.48 below.

8.37 The applicant states that the proposed development is consistent with national and regional economic development policy objectives, which emphasise the role and importance of renewable energy as a source of employment. In particular, the proposed development, by creating or safeguarding jobs, could contribute to meeting the targets set by the Highland and Islands Enterprise.

8.38 SEI Report, Vol 1, Chapter 15: Climate Change and Carbon Balance states that the net emissions of carbon dioxide from the development are expected to be 235,469 tonnes of CO2. Over its 30 year lifetime the project is expected to generate 7,064,064 MWh of electricity, this represents a savings of carbon dioxide for each unit of electricity generated by the project which otherwise would have been generated by other sources. The EIAR states that the project has a payback time of 1.7 years compared to grid-mix electricity generation. In comparison, fossil fuel-mix electricity (1 years) and coal-fired electricity (0.5 years) respectively. These calculations are based on the amended 14 turbine scheme. Further elements of the carbon offsetting will come in the form of peatland restoration which will occur as part of the habitat management plan.

8.39 A project of this scale can offer significant investment and opportunities for the economy through a range of associated businesses which is balanced against potential adverse effects such as construction disruption and construction traffic. Representations have raised the economic impact that turbines may have on tourism. These adverse impacts are most likely to be within the service sector particularly during the construction phase when abnormal loads are being delivered to site.

8.40 Scenery and the natural environment within the Highlands are important factors for many visitors when choosing the area as a holiday destination. Any detrimental impact of the proposed development on tourism, whether visually, environmentally or economically should be identified and considered in full.

8.41 EIAR, Volume 1, Chapter Chapter 14: Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism considers how the proposal might be expected to affect the local economy. The chapter oultines that a significant proportion of the population of the local area are employed in accommodation and food services as well as art, entertainment and recreation, often attributed to the tourism industry.

8.42 The assessment of socio-economic impact by the applicant identifies that the development is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on tourism. The applicant notes that there will be economic benefits to the local community and economy arising from the community benefit fund and additional expenditure in the local economy. This was echoed by a representation stating that many visitors and local residents found the turbine structures very pleasing and tranquil.

8.43 However, as highlighted in representations and the responses from Community Councils in the area there is also likely to be some adverse effects caused by construction traffic and disruption, these will be temporary in nature and managed through the identified mitigation. In terms of impact upon tourism, the applicant's socio-economic assessment identified several visitor attractions within 15km primary study area of the proposed development. A list of the key tourist activities and attractions within the primary study area is covered in Table 14.5. This assessed the potential impact upon on, in order of distance from the centre of the proposal, grouse shooting within the site, Monadhliath Mountain range, Trail of the Seven Lochs, Loch Mhor, National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 78, South Loch Ness Trail, General Wade's Military Roads, Cairngorms National Park, The Falls of Foyers, Boleskine House, Loch Ness, Scottish Highland Art, Clog and Craft Shop, Invermoriston Falls, Urquhart Castle, Loch Ness by Jacobite (Clansman Harbour), 4 Great Glen Cycle Route, Iceberg Glassblowing Studio, Caledonian Canal (From Fort Augustus) and Caledonian Canal Centre.

8.44 Consideration of impacts on these matters is contained elsewhere in this report. However, it is considered that while wind farms may not stop people from visiting the area for the first time to take part in walking, mountaineering or other recreational activities and tourist attractions, it may discourage repeat visits.

8.45 Additional wider benefits associated with the proposed development will be via a Community Fund, this will provide funding to local communities and community projects. In addition, the applicant is committed to supporting the Scottish

Government's ambitions for shared ownership and to offering opportunities for communities to share in the value of its wind farm developments where possible. It is currently considering potential options and will engage with relevant local communities at the appropriate time. The economic benefits of the development are highlighted in letters of support for the development.

8.46 The applicant states the development will contribute £5,000 per megawatt installed capacity to a Community Benefit Fund. Based on an assumed installed capacity of 76 MW, this will result in an annual value of approximately £380,000 per year. This will provide approximately £11.4 million in community benefit during the 30 year operational lifetime of the proposal.

8.47 The operational Corriegarth Wind Farm has an existing Community Benefit Fund with Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust, with the owner of the Corriegarth Wind Farm contributing to the fund. The Community Trust is owned and managed by local trust members who organise events and invest in the local area. They have agreements with renewable energy companies to receive community benefit funds to be invested in the local area.

8.48 The applicant will consult the local community as to the best way to manage the community fund contribution, however, it expects payments will be made to the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Benefit Fund as per the existing agreement with the owners of Corriegarth Wind Farm.

Construction Impacts

8.49 It is anticipated that the construction period for the development would take 18 months. Working hours on site are anticipated to be 07.00–19.00 Monday to Saturday with no Sunday working, nor deliveries to site after 13.00 on Saturdays. Some flexibility is normally granted at turbine erection stage and electrical fit out. Such activities involve specialist labour and are weather dependent and generally do not involve works which generate impacts beyond the site boundary. The applicant is committed to ensuring that best practice mitigation measures are adopted to manage noise emissions during construction, including restrictions on construction working hours. These will form part of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

8.50 Environmental Health is content that given the distance from receptors and the commitments controlled through the CEMP that construction noise is not likely to be a significant issue. EIAR, Volume 1, Chapter 10: Noise noted that construction noise would be limited to the effects of haulage at noise sensitive receptors located along the existing access track – Corriegarth Lodge, Garthbeg Bungalow, Garthbeg and Keepers Cottage. Table 10.5 details the worst case months between months 6 to 8 when there would be an average daily flow of 42 HGV vehicle movements. The predicted construction noise levels would marginally exceed the 65db level at Garthbeg Bungalow, an effect that is significant in terms of EIA regulations. The applicant has proposed mitigation measures in the form of temporary noise control barriers installed at the boundary of the property garden. The barriers will likely reduce the traffic noise between 5dB and 10dB resulting in residual effects which are no longer significant in terms of EIA regulations.

8.51 Developers have to comply with reasonable operational practices with regard to construction noise so as not to cause nuisance. Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 sets restrictions in terms of hours of operation, plant and equipment used and noise levels etc. and is enforceable via Environmental Health.

8.52 The applicant has stated they will utilise a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) that will be used in conjunction with a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) throughout the construction period. SEPA have also requested adherence to the mitigation outlined in the Schedule of Mitigation (Volume 1, Chapter 17) and that all works are carried out following the Outline Environmental Management Plan. It is recommended that the final versions of these documents should be secured via planning conditions. These should be "plan based" highlighting the measures being deployed to safeguard specific local environmental resources and not simply re-state best practice manuals. Due to the scale of the development SEPA will control pollution prevention measures relating to surface water run-off via a Controlled Activities Regulations Construction Site Licence.

8.53 In addition to the requirement for submission and agreement on a CEMD, the Council will require the applicant to enter into legal agreements and provide financial bonds with regard to its use of the local road network (Wear and Tear Agreement) and final site restoration (Restoration Bond). In this manner the site can be best protected from the impacts of construction and for disturbed ground to be effectively restored post construction and operational phases. This would include the full restoration of any new access tracks and other associated infrastructure.

8.54 The applicant has requested a micro-siting allowance of 50m for site infrastructure (tracks, turbine locations, underground cables and crane hard standing areas) this is to avoid or minimise environmental or engineering constraints identified during pre-construction ground investigation or construction phase excavation works. This is considered to be a reasonable allowance to address unforeseen onsite constraints, anything in excess of 50m may have a significant effect on the composition of a development. Whilst SEPA are content with this distance development should avoid deeper peat along with other sensitive features such as GWDTE and watercourses than currently shown on the Final SEI layout - Peat Probe Depths: Figure 3a. SEPA noted that the largest contributors to peat excavations are turbines T6, T8 and T16 with further effort required to microsite these turbines into areas of less deep peat.

8.55 Should the development be granted consent, a Community Liaison Group should be set up to ensure that the community council and other stakeholders are kept up to date and consulted before and during the construction period.

Roads and Transport

8.56 The submitted Transport Assessment (TA) has predicted likely peak traffic flows at a number of locations on the trunk road network. Full details are included in EIAR, Volume 1, Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport. The EIAR indicates that it is proposed that all abnormal turbine loads will originate from Cromarty port and would route via the B817, A9(T), B851, B862 to reach the existing access. General construction traffic will travel would route via the A9, B851, B862 to reach the existing access. Whilst Transport Scotland acknowledge the proposal forms an extension to the

operational Corriegarth Wind Farm and, therefore, a turbine delivery route has been established previously, the proposed turbines are considerably larger than those currently in use. They require to be satisfied that these larger turbines can negotiate the selected route and that their transportation will not have any detrimental effect on structures within the trunk road route path. Transport Scotland is prepared to apply a condition to the abnormal load route, however, they note that the granting of Section 36 consent would be no guarantee that technical approval for the abnormal load route will be achieved.

8.57 There will be an upsurge on trunk road traffic on the A9 with an increase in total traffic of 0.9% while HGV traffic will increase by 6.5%. As these results are below both the 10% and 30% thresholds identified with the IEMA Impact Assessment Guidelines, Transport Scotland is satisfied that no further detailed assessment of the trunk road link is required.

8.58 The main impacts of the proposal are on the local road network including the B851 (south west of A9), B851 (north of Aberarder) and B862 (Bailebeag). During the peak 6 – 8 months there will be an increase in predicted average daily traffic movements in HGV's of 13.9%, 27.5% and 29.5% along the 3 roads respectively. There will be an increase in total vehicle movements of 10.8%, 25.1% and 23.% along the 3 roads respectively. Whilst the increase is substantial the applicant's TA found that there would be no significant effects as a result of increased vehicle movement which are below the 30% assessment threshold.

8.59 Representations and Community Council consultation responses have highlighted concerns with regard to the level of traffic and the transport implications of the proposed development, predominantly during the delivery of components and materials to site. The EIAR details the average two-way flows for the daily construction traffic movements for the anticipated 18-month construction programme, with the maximum traffic movements predicted to occur in months 6-8 of the programme. During these months, an average of 38 HGV movements and 51 car/van movements are predicted per day above the predicted baseline. Table 11.8 in Chapter 11 provides a summary of the anticipated total vehicle movements throughout the duration of construction with the total flow in the peak month being 2,317 vehicles.

8.60 Additionally, concerns also focus on amenity and safety of pedestrians as the B851 and B862 do not have pedestrian footways, except where they pass through settlements. The EIAR states HGV traffic levels are predicted to increase above the relevant thresholds of significance throughout construction at the B851 and B862. Additionally, HGV and overall traffic levels are likely to significantly increase on the U112 minor road to site, which is identified as containing a long-distance walking trail. Several of the 21 identified sensitive receptors are located at the affected points of these routes including Farr Primary School, Stratherrick Primary School and The Trail of the Seven Lochs (between the B862 and Garthbeg Lodge). It is likely that students of these schools will walk on, and may cross, the delivery route on the way to and from school. It is considered that the increase in overall traffic flow and HGV flow may have an effect on pedestrian amenity at these sensitive receptors which is considered significant in terms of the EIA Regulations and further mitigation measures are required which include:

- Deliveries should be scheduled outside of school opening and closing times;
- Drivers of all delivery vehicles to undergo induction notifying them of the presence of schools and other sensitive receptors;
- A temporary 30mph speed limit shall be implemented on the U112 between the B862 and Garthbeg Lodge for the duration of construction. Drivers to undergo induction notifying the route is a walking trail and to expect pedestrians.
- Prior to deliveries commencing the Applicant will consult with the Community Liason Group with respect to timings of deliveries and any other issues raised by the Group.

8.61 The applicant has highlighted its commitment to preparing a finalised Traffic Management Plan (TMP) for the delivery of abnormal loads with the aim of reducing conflict between abnormal load traffic and other road users. A framework for the TMP is provided in the submitted Transport Assessment. This has been reviewed by Transport Scotland and is considered appropriate at this stage with the final document to be discussed and agreed with the Network Area Manager. This requirement can be set by planning condition and is typical of the approach deployed for such projects.

8.62 Whilst the Transport Planning Team noted inadequacies in using environmental thresholds for non-environmental aspects of the transport impacts in the assessment methodology and appraisal provided they have no concerns with the proposal subject to conditions to secure effective mitigation for the local road network and road users. These include a finalised Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), a finalised Traffic Management Plan (TMP) for the movement of abnormal loads, a registered legal agreement, including road bond to protect Highland Council's interests in the event of unforeseen damage to local roads network. Additionally, mitigation works are required to the B851 and B862 including twin track widening, Village Improvement Schemes as part of the South Loch Ness - Road Improvement Strategy which is due to be updated this year. If access arrangements were to change the developer will be required to agree a commensurate level of road mitigation, in line with the Council's South Loch Ness Road Improvement Strategy, to offset impacts.

8.63 Road mitigation is expected to be directed to Strategy Priority Schemes on the B851 and B862. There are several Priority Schemes on these routes combining twin track widening schemes and Village Improvement Schemes, including;

- Scheme 3 - B851 Whitemill Bridge to Inverarnie (twin track widening);
- Scheme 9 – B851 Inverarnie & Farr Village Improvement Scheme;
- Scheme 11 – B851 Farr to Sochich's Corner (twin track widening);
- Scheme 13 – B851 Druim Dubh to Brin Bridge (twin track widening);
- Scheme 13A – B851 Flichity Bridge Replacement;
- Scheme 17 – B851 Croachy Village Improvement Scheme;
- Scheme 29 – B862 Calanour Junction to Errogie (twin track widening);
- Scheme 31 – B862 Errogie Village Improvement Scheme;
- Scheme 35 – B862 Gorthleck Village Improvement Scheme;
- Scheme 37A – B862 Glebe Settlement Improvement Scheme;

Whilst the applicant would not be expected to deliver all of these Priority Schemes the above provides an overview of the extent of the public road network that is substandard on the "route to site". Transport Planning note there are also schemes requiring upgrade to address deficiencies, but these are considered as lower importance than the Priority Scheme noted above. Meaningful road mitigation works will be expected to be agreed from the Priority Scheme list above. The Council will work with the developer to deliver road mitigation works with value engineering, cost effective solutions and manage these works to remove ransom situations to avoid unnecessary costs and delays. Should the development be granted consent all road mitigation must be implemented prior to the start of construction unless otherwise agreed with the Council.

8.64 A number of large scale projects have been built, and are planned, in the area. The EIAR identifies potential cumulative impact of construction traffic arising from surrounding renewable energy schemes including Cloiche Wind Farm (36 Turbines), Aberarder Wind Farm (12 Turbines), Glenshero Wind Farm (39 Turbines), Dell Wind Farm (14 turbines) and Red John Pumped Storage Hydro Scheme. Given the history of large scale development in the area, it is considered that the road network can accommodate the delivery of such projects but the cumulative impact of a number of the projects requires further assessment and co-ordination. The applicant notes that in the event that a number of the identified developments are scheduled to be constructed simultaneously, respective TMP's would be agreed in consultation to minimise disruption, furthermore a number of the identified cumulative developments may route construction traffic via alternative routes.

8.65 To help manage community concerns regarding construction traffic and abnormal loads will be mitigated by the creation of a community liaison group should be secured by condition. This will disseminate information and take feedback regarding traffic movements associated with the proposed development, particularly through the B851, B862 and U112. If other projects are brought forward at the same/similar time a joint group may be appropriate. This would be agreed with the Council, as local roads authority and the Trunk Roads Authority for traffic movements along the A9. It is recommended that the performance of the mitigation measures being taken should be reported to and reviewed by the local community liaison group referred to in paragraph.

8.66 The applicant will need to be aware that construction traffic only arises in particular phases of the development. Clearly this happens at project commencement however it re-occurs during significant repairs/turbine replacement and on decommissioning/site restoration. It will therefore be necessary to ensure construction impacts and mitigation as offered, for example the review with the road authorities, will apply in advance of each significant construction/repair/ decommissioning phase.

8.67 The development proposes the use of 1 on site borrow pit to win material for access track construction etc. at Carn na Saobhaidhe adjacent to the existing borrow pit used for Corriegarth Wind Farm. This is significant in respect of reducing the potential construction traffic impact on local roads and is to be welcomed. In a similar manner support is given to the preference for the on-site batching of concrete. However, there will be aggregates that will remain to be imported, for example dressing stone,

which will be procured from off-site quarries. Such deliveries need to form part of the final CTMP assessment.

8.68 The above details along with a range of other mitigation measures which will be contained within a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). This will also ensure that potential cumulative impacts arising with other major developments are mitigated. In addition, the applicants are committed to establishing a Community Liaison Group (CLG) to facilitate meaningful engagement between the applicant and representatives of communities who may be impacted by construction activity of the development.

8.69 Whilst the Access Officer noted deficiencies in the applicant's assessment they have no concerns subject to an Access Management Plan submitted and agreed prior to development detailing public access across the site currently, during construction and upon completion. Should the application be granted consent this can be secured by condition.

Water, Flood Risk and Drainage

8.70 The EIAR has identified, assessed impacts and offered mitigation measures on hydrology and hydrogeology. The results of the applicant's assessment are outlined in the EIAR, Volume 1, Chapter 12: Hydrology and Hydrogeology with a summary of the mitigation measures detailed in Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design along with the further details submitted as Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI). Mitigation through design and layout has been used as far as practical, for instance the use of buffers from watercourses, turbine locations avoiding the deepest peat and blanket bog. In addition, the applicant is committed to providing a finalised Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) which will ensure that potential sources of pollution on site can be effectively managed throughout construction. A draft CEMP has been submitted with the application. During the operational phase, water quality mitigation measures will be included as part of the permanent drainage design and run-off from the site will be managed and monitored as part of an Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP).

8.71 To safeguard the water environment in and around the site the applicant has committed to undertake a water quality monitoring programme prior to the construction period and implement an Ecological Management Plan to protect and enhance the ecology and hydrology during the construction phase, including conducting pre-construction surveys, water quality and biodiversity enhancements. It also proposes 50m buffer zones between water sources and development infrastructure; the use of floating roads where peat deposits exceed 1m in areas of deep peat; drainage management including SUDs principles; the appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works; adhering to pollution prevention measures; and the adoption of good practice construction techniques. Furthermore, information has been supplied to demonstrate that the development will not have an effect on local groundwater abstractions. The conclusions of the EIAR are supported subject to conditions.

8.72 The Core Study Area is overlain by blanket sphagnum bog with areas of wet heathland and modified bog in the west on the lower topography. There are a number of watercourses and waterbodies across the site including the streams Allt Bad

Fionnaich, Allt a Ghille Chrraich and the River E along with associated tributaries. The Development lies within the overall surface water catchments of the River E and River Foyers (drained by the River Gourag/Allt an Lòin). The River E flows east to west across the Core Study Area before discharging into Loch Mhor (also known as Loch Garth). It is a wide, meandering channel with steep-sided banks ranging from approximately 3 to 4m width and relatively shallow (50cm deep) with moderate flow level. A number of smaller tributaries of the River E drain south to north from higher topography.

8.73 In the north of the Core Study Area, the Allt Bad Fionnaich channel of varying width approximately 2m and is also relatively shallow (30cm deep) with evidence of wider channel and banks during periods of heavier rainfall. The Allt a Ghille Charaich flows east to west through the centre of the Core Study Area, where the majority of Corriegarth Wind Farm is present. It is similar in nature to the Allt Bad Fionnaich being a 2-3m wide channel with evidence of widening during periods of heavier rainfall. The River Gourag (also known as Allt an Lòin immediately downstream of the existing access track crossing for Corriegarth Wind Farm) is located to the west of the Core Study Area where the existing access track is located for the Operational Corriegarth Wind Farm fed from Loch Mohr flowing south into the River Foyers.

8.74 The EIAR considers that the potential flood risk to the site is low with flood maps showing flooding is restricted to the waterbodies noted above and do not indicate widescale flooding across the Core Study Area. The Flood Risk Management Team have offered no objection to the application. The EIAR also states that the majority of the site drainage is anticipated to flow to the water catchments of the River E and River Foyers (drained by the River Gourag/Allt an Lòin).

8.75 The potential presence of Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs) has been one of the elements which has informed the design evolution process. SEPA welcomes the fact that the layout of the scheme has taken steps to minimise direct impacts on the water environment. The majority of infrastructure (159.6ha, 11.7 % of the total Core Study Area) is situated on M15 habitat – wet shrub heath. A smaller portion is situated on M6 – acid flush and spring (sphagnum) (approximately 45ha, 3.2 % of the total Core Study Area). M32b – spring and M10a – flush and spring habitat were also found in surface water pools and springs. EIAR, Vol 1, Chapter 12 confirms that following the reduction in turbines and amended layout these habitats are generally outwith the 250m buffer area apart from the following:

- A moderate dependency M10a habitat and high dependency M32b habitat 50m from an existing access track and turbines for the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm with no direct loss of habitats will occur;
- 2 moderate dependency communities of M32b are located 218m and 236m north of turbine turbine T15. Given that the GWDTE communities are located upslope from construction works the extent of indirect effects is likely to be limited;
- 1 moderate dependency community of M32b is located approximately 223m north of the new access track to turbine T8 and there will be no direct or indirect loss.

- A GWDTE community of high dependency M10a habitat lies approximately 200m south of the new access track leading to turbine T8 and there will be no direct or indirect loss.

8.76 As no area of GWDTE will be directly lost as a result of infrastructure the effect is not considered significant. However, there may be potential indirect effects of the on GWDTEs during the construction phase. Prior to access track construction flush areas, depressions or zones which may concentrate water flow will be identified. These sections will be spanned with plastic pipes or drainage matting to ensure hydraulic conductivity under the road and reduce water flow over the road surface during heavy precipitation. Additionally, the following design measures will ensure that effects on wetland habitats are minimised:

- A PPP is implemented to ensure good practice working methods are followed;
- Silt traps will be deployed to trap and filter sediment-laden run-off throughout the construction phase;
- Settlement lagoons will be constructed and actively managed to control water levels and ensure that any run-off is contained, particularly during times of rainfall;
- Wind turbine foundations are constructed in holes in the ground that will be de-watered to prevent concrete leaching into groundwater or surface water in the event of shutter collapse; and

All excavations will be sufficiently de-watered before concrete pours begin and that de-watering continues while the concrete cures.

8.77 The reduction in turbines and amended layout has meant that the number of proposed watercourse crossings has decreased from 8 to 4 along with the length of access track required which lessens the impediments to water flow. Due to the relocation of turbine T1 the watercourse crossing that may have required a new bridge over the River E is no longer required. In relation to the 4 new watercourse crossings it is recommended that a condition should be applied that all should be oversized bottomless culverts or single span bridges designed to accommodate the 1 in 200 year peak flow and allow fish and mammal passage. This will ensure that best practice design is implemented. The designs of such crossings require to be submitted for approval by the Planning authority in consultation with SEPA.

8.78 SEPA requests a condition is applied requiring a 50m buffer around all water bodies except in the vicinity of watercourse crossings. The development will utilise a number of existing watercourse crossings which were put in place a number of years ago for the Corriegarth Wind Farm. The design of many of these may not meet current recognised best practice design. Should improvements to the existing tracks be required in the vicinity of any poorly designed existing crossing then they should be replaced with an improved design. This could be covered by condition.

8.79 The applicant has undertaken a survey of private water supplies given the following properties are located within 2km of the site boundary - Fairyburn Lodge, Tir Nan Og, Corriegarth Lodge and Keepers Cottage, Garthbeg Farm (The Bothy) and Garthbeg Bungalow. The effects on private water supplies are not considered significant with the implementation of standard mitigation. Environmental Health has

no objection subject to a planning condition to secure an ongoing monitoring regime of private water supplies that should include contingency plans in the event of an adverse impact occurring.

8.80 Scottish Water noted that review of their records indicates that the proposed development site falls within a drinking water catchment where a Scottish Water abstraction is located, therefore, it is essential that water quality and water quantity in the area are protected. It is a relatively large catchment with the activity sufficiently distance from the intake that it is likely to be low risk. Scottish Water advised they will not accept any surface water connections into their combined sewer system.

Geology and Peat

8.81 Representations from members of the public, Community Councils and RSPB have raised concern over impact on peat. The EIAR has identified, assessed impacts and offered mitigation measures on geology and peat. The results of the applicant's assessment are outlined in the EIAR, Volume 1, Chapter 13: Geology and Peat with a summary of the mitigation measures detailed in Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design along with the further details submitted as Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI). As such, one of the key design objectives was to ensure that no turbines would be located in areas where peat depths were greater than 1.5m. However, following initial concerns raised by SEPA the scale of the proposal and layout has been amended.

8.82 The presence of priority Class 1 and Class 2 peatland habitat soils places the Site within Group 2 of the Scottish Government planning policy category (SPP), where wind farms may be appropriate in some circumstances, but further consideration is required to demonstrate that any significant effects on the qualities of these areas are substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation.. Detailed site-specific peat depth surveys and a peatland condition assessment have been completed and the design of the wind farm layout has evolved to avoid the deepest pockets of peat on the site. The application has been accompanied by a peat depth survey, a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) Peat Management Plan and a Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessment.

8.83 The Revised Development includes the removal of two turbines (T10 and T12) and relocation of turbines T1, T2, T8, T9, T11, T13, T14, T15 to areas of shallower peat to limit peat disturbance and in-turn peat instability. Additionally, ancillary infrastructure, including borrow pit and substation compound has also been relocated. Peat depths vary across the site but the average depth across the site is 1.2m. From the 4791 peat probes used to assess peat depth for the SEI 15.5% were less than 0.5m and over 46% were less than 1m. Peat depths extending greater than 1m were recorded in 56% of probes.

8.84 The key changes to the design took place in the north of the site with the amended layout significantly improving the impacts on peat in comparison to the original layout and proposed. Turbine removal and a redesign of the track use has resulted in a reduction in new track lengths from 10km to 6km. The EIAR and SEI anticipates the amendments will reduced the estimated peat excavation from 355,284m^3 to

182,800m^3 with the overall footprint of new infrastructure reduced from 31ha to 23ha. This reduction of peat excavation by almost 50% is welcomed.

8.85 SEPA noted the site is a substantial carbon store, regardless of the condition of the blanket bog. Whilst the applicant states in the EIAR "peatland within the Site is now considered to be of low ecological value; and has very limited hydrological, carbon sequestration functionality", SEPA do not consider this an appropriate reason for peat disturbance. Disturbance of peat in any condition will result in greater impacts, including rate of emissions. It is also important to note that these emissions will not stop once the wind farm has ceased operating, nor does the storing and sequestering potential of peatlands.

8.86 A Peat Management Plan will be developed and implemented to assess the quantities of peat likely to be excavated during construction and identify suitable reuse and management options. This will include methods and timing involved in excavating, handling and storing peat for use in reinstatement. Whilst SEPA have no objection following the amendments they advise the finalised Peat Management Plan should demonstrate how micro-siting and other measures have been used to further minimise impacts on peat and carbon loss. The largest contributors to peat excavation are turbines T6, T8 and T16 and further effort is required to microsite these turbines which are still on peat that is greater than 1m. SEPA accept the requested micro-siting allowance of up to 50m but require that the re-sting is not onto peat deeper than currently shown in the submission. In addition, a Habitat Management Plan controlling peatland restoration is proposed.

8.87 The Peat Management Plan should be based on the current submission, follow recognised best practice and address the following:

- Plan showing how micro-siting has been used to ensure that the finalised layout minimises impacts on peat;
- Recalculation of volumes of peat as a result of micro-siting;
- Plan showing the finalised location of all temporary peat stores;
- Plan showing floating tracks.

8.88 In terms of peat slide risk the EIAR highlighted that the changes in the northern half of the site with the relocation of turbines T9, T11, T13, T14, and T15 generally presents low risk. The new track to T8 and T9 is classified as moderate risk as a result of deep peat lying on slightly sloping ground in an area with proposed infrastructure and blanket bog present.

8.89 All tracks on peat greater than 1m must be floated with the feasibility of constructing these tracks should have now been determined. To minimise the volume of imported material brought onto the site, and any associated environmental impact, a single borrow pit located at Carn na Saobhaidhe adjacent to the existing borrow pit used for Corriegarth Wind Farm. This will be used to source stone for infrastructure construction including access tracks and hardstanding. To ensure that reinstatement and decommission works are carried out in a way that is sensitive to the environment, SEPA has requested that further details of the borrow pit restoration be secured by a planning condition. Pre-disturbed land, such as track shoulders, should be prioritised for cable trenching, with any excavation of virgin ground only taking place once the electrical contractors have cables on site ready for installation. In addition,

SEPA require a finalised Decommissioning and Restoration Plan with proposals in line with their Guidance on the life extension and decommissioning of onshore wind farms.

8.90 SEPA has advised that it is content that all the search areas are located a significant distance from watercourses; are not on deep peat; and minimise impacts on GWDTE. It is content that some form of extraction is likely to be achievable in these areas. However, they request conditions are applied requiring the finalised extraction areas and restoration proposals. The final designs should be demonstrated to manage and minimise impacts on GWDTE and peat. Surface water management and risks of pollution as a result of these workings will be addressed via the Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) Construction Site Licence.

8.91 SEPA welcomes the inclusion of an Outline Habitat Management Plan (OHMP) as part of the submission particularly with regard to the proposed areas for blanket bog. This should increase the areas ability to act as a carbon sink and mitigate for loss of GWDTE habitats. However, in addition it is expected that there would be peatland and bog restoration on the wind farm site itself and therefore any finalised plan must include this as well.

Natural Heritage including Ornithology

8.92 The Environmental Statement has identified and assessed impacts on protected species, ornithology, ecology and designated sites. The site itself does accommodate valued habitats including blanket bog and peatland. It is used by many protected species such as otters, vole, ground water dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTEs) and deer. The site and wider area also carry a number of ornithological interests including golden eagle, white ailed eagle, red kite, peregrine, golden plover, dunlin and other interests. The closest designated site is approximately 6.8km away so all designated sites were scoped out of the assessment due to a lack of connectivity in agreement with relevant consultees.

8.93 RSPB raised concerns that the proposed development would result in unacceptable collision risk to white tailed eagle and red kite with collision and displacement risk to golden eagle. They considered the potential impact to protected bird species is not minimsed to an acceptable level. The development site overlaps with three golden eagle territories in Natural Heritage Zone 10 Central Highlands (NHZ 10). A detailed assessment of the potential impact on the NHZ 10 golden eagle population is provided in the EIAR and Technical Appendices. NatureScot welcome the revised collision risk modelling following the amended proposal and note that collision risk has reduced for all species with the exception of golden plover which has stayed the same and white-tailed eagle which has increased slightly. Despite this slight increase in collision risk for white-tailed eagle they consider the proposal will not adversely affect the current conservation status of the NHZ 10 white-tailed eagle population or significantly increase the time it will take for it to reach carrying capacity.

8.94 The information in the EIAR shows that the proposal will not adversely affect the current conservation status of the NHZ golden eagle population or significantly increase the time it will take for it to reach its carrying capacity. The effects on golden eagle, white ailed eagle, red kite, peregrine, golden plover and dunlin are not considered to be significant. This assessment is accepted by NatureScot. However,

like other wind energy schemes within NHZ 10, it is considered that a contribution to the Regional Golden Eagle Conservation Management Plan and a Nature Conservation Management Plan as mitigation is appropriate. These can be secured by condition should consent be granted.

8.95 Ecological surveys for bats, badger, otter, red squirrel, wildcat, water vole and pine marten were all submitted. The surveys recorded the presence of water vole, badger and otter with protected resting areas for all these species. No evidence of pine marten, red squirrel or wildcat was recorded, however, evidence of wildcat was recorded during the desk study. Low levels of bat activity and very low species diversity (limited to soprano pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pygmaeus), common pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus) and Myotis spp). Soprano and common pipistrelle were noted as high collision risk species, however, the risk assessment carried out concluded a low risk for soprano and common pipistrelle bats within the site. Myotis species are low collision risk species. This assessment is accepted by NatureScot.

8.96 The application site contains high altitude blanket bog and the proposal is likely to damage peatland features of national importance. The applicant identifies that much of the blanket bog is eroded. EIAR, Vol 1, Chapter 7: Ecology and SEI predicts direct loss of blanket bog totalling 11.94ha, a reduction from 15.05ha for the initial proposal, which represents 1.07% of the blanket bog loss in comparison to the development. The Habitat Management Area (HMA) will comprise a minimum of 23.88ha, a reduction of peatland habitat with a focus on the restoration of high altitude blanket bog within the site. However, NatureScot note there does not appear to be a calculation for the indirect loss of blanket bog with the total loss of habitat likely be greater than 11.94ha, possibly around 40ha to 50ha in total. Further details of these measures should be detailed in the Habitat Management Plan with NatureScot advising that the absolute extent of restored habitat should be no less than 50ha with 100ha advisable to allow for failures.

8.97 Consultees note that the River E is a significant tributary of the River Foyers and provides a large area of suitable salmonid habitat and is likely to support a resident trout population. Ness District Salmon Fishery Board note there is currently minimal data on fish populations in the River E, therefore, an appropriately designed fish survey is required. Additionally, Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) note the potential for the proposal to impact on migratory fish species and the fisheries they support and recommend their guidelines are followed during the planning, construction and monitoring phases of the proposed development.

8.98 The applicant states that although the proposed minimum extent of restoration is clarified above, the location of restoration is yet to be finalised. They advise that following consent, further surveys will be required to finalise the full extent of peatland restoration with 4 search areas proposed as presenting potential sites for peatland restoration to be established. These four areas are presented in Figure 7.3 of Chapter 7: Ecology, and are defined as follows:

- Area A is located offsite and is an expansion of the HMP area proposed in the OHMP presented within the EIA Report and comprises approximately 30.5ha of degraded peatland habitat. Further information on NVC communities will be required to establish if the blanket bog habitat is of similar type to those impacted by proposal.

- Area B is also located offsite and comprises approximately 48.4ha of degraded peatland habitat. As above, further information on NVC communities will be required to establish if the blanket bog habitat is of similar type to those impacted by proposal.
- Area C is located in the south western boundary of the site and comprises of approximately 26.9ha of blanket bog habitat. NVC data confirms this area comprises the same bog communities (M17a) at a similar altitude as those impacted by the proposal.
- Area D is located in the south western boundary of the site and comprises of approximately 44.5ha of blanket bog habitat. NVC data confirms that this area comprises of the same bog communities (M17a) at a similar altitude as those impacted by the proposal.

8.99 Ness Woods SAC is protected for its mixed woodland and otter qualifying interests. The SAC is located 3.4km west of the access track for proposed wind farm and 9.3km north west of the closest turbine location. NatureScot welcomes the applicant's commitment to provide an otter survey (Section 7.7.2.2 of the EIAR) as further mitigation through pre-commencement condition to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations.

8.100 The River Spey – Insh Marches SPA is located 19km south east from the proposed wind farm and is protected for its range of both breeding and non-breeding raptors, wildfowl, waterfowl and waders. NatureScot advise that due to the separation distance there is no connectivity between any SPA species and the proposed development. They agree with the assessment within the EIAR that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on any qualifying interests either directly or indirectly, therefore, an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Built and Cultural Heritage

8.101 Historic Environment Scotland has indicated that it agrees with the EIAR conclusion that the proposal is unlikely to have any significant adverse impacts on the nationally important heritage assets located in proximity to the proposed development. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas within the application site. The surrounding area contains a number of historic environment features.. Within the 10km Study Area there are 5 Scheduled Monument, 28 Listed Buildings (2 Category A Listed Buildings, 18 Category B Listed Buildings, and 8 Category C Listed Buildings).

8.102 Highland Council's Historic Environment Team do not object to the application noting there are no listed buildings, and their settings, which would be directly or significantly affected by the proposal. The Council's archaeologist has no objection to the proposal. The EIAR noted there are 13 recorded heritage features within the 5km Core Study Area with most of these related to post-medieval transhumance land use concentrated in close proximity to waterways. As such, the greatest potential for unknown archaeology is along waterways, which should be mitigated by the 50m buffer condition. Potential to encounter further unrecorded archaeological remains is low due to the exposed upland nature of the Core Study Area except in close proximity to waterways where the potential is moderate.

8.103 Although the EIAR indicates that monitoring during construction may be required so that mitigation can be agreed where buried historic environment assets are identified, this is not considered to be justified as the potential for survival has been classified as negligible. Therefore, there is no recommendation for any additional mitigation works for the proposed development.

Design, Landscape and Visual Impact (including Wild Land)

8.104 The applicant has presented a number of submissions to best illustrate the impact of the development by design, particularly upon the surrounding landscape and receptors using this countryside, from local roads and communities and in combination with existing wind farm developments. In this regard the applicant has tabled design iterations following input from pre-planning considerations and further discussion following the submission of the application which led to the smaller scheme with amended layout. The viewpoints are representative of a range of receptors including residents, recreational users of the outdoors and road users. The expected bare earth visibility of the development can be appreciated from the Blade Tip Height (149.9m and Hub Height (83.4m) comparative Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Viewpoint Locations (see SEI Figure 6.5) in the EIAR. The applicant has provided maps highlighting the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV's) in isolation and in combination with other wind farms; 17 viewpoints across a study area of 40km; assessment against Landscape Character Areas, CNPA Special Landscape Qualities, Special Landscape Area Citations; Descriptions of Areas of Wild Land; and key recreational routes.

8.105 The methodology for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment generally follows that set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3). However, it does not set a threshold for significance; instead relying solely on professional judgement to identify when the threshold of an effect is significant. As set out in para 3.32 of GLVIA 3 the "LVIA should always distinguish clearly between what are considered to be significant and non-significant effects". EIAR, Volume 1 Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity and SEI sets out the indicative level of effect diagrams which the applicant has used to attribute significant effects. The EIAR states that the threshold for both landscape and visual impact is for a negligible or minor level of effect this is generally taken as not significant, and a moderate or major level of effect is generally taken as significant. This is in line with the approach taken by Highland Council in the identification of significant effects. NatureScot have also confirmed that the LVIA has been carried out in accordance with good practice outlined in the GLVIA.

8.106 EIAR, Volume 1 Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity and SEI also included the methodology used in visual representation. In the assessment of each viewpoint, the applicant has come to a judgement as to whether the effect is significant or not. In assessing visual impacts in particular, it is important to consider that the viewpoint is representative of particular receptors i.e. people who would be at that point and experiencing that view of the landscape not just in that single view but in taking in their entire surroundings.

8.107 The applicant has considered the sensitivity of some receptors as Medium, particularly, for those road users on the A82 and B862 along with LCT 221 – Rolling

Uplands – Inverness and Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. Highland Council do not agree with this assessment. When travelling scenic routes, whether designated as such or not, they will have a higher sensitivity to views. While a driver of a vehicle is likely to be concentrated on the view immediately in front, passengers have a greater scope for looking at their surroundings. As such, it is considered that road users travelling through the SLA are generally higher sensitivity receptors.

8.108 Whilst it is important to recognise that the proposed development sits outwith the SLA, many receptors that experience the special qualities of the SLA are those who travel through this designation particularly using the main roads (A82, B862), popular recreational routes and rights of way in the area (Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh). The visual impact on these receptors is considered further in the visual impact section of the report.

8.109 The applicant has considered the sensitivity of the landscape and receptor from each viewpoint and has specified whom the receptor is likely to be. The study area is very well used by local residents, tourists, hill walkers, recreational walkers, cyclists and those partaking in various other recreational activities.

8.110 The landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development will be reversible as the scheme will be capable of being decommissioned. However, as set out in Scottish Planning Policy (Paragraph 170), wind farm sites should be suitable in perpetuity. Therefore, it is considered reasonable to assess all landscape and visual effects as non-reversible in that context.

Design and Layout Evolution

8.111 The project has progressed from a desire to generate additional renewable energy at the location. The proposed development is sited within an area partially defined as having potential for such development within SPP Group 3 Area and with the advantage of being close to the grid infrastructure.

8.112 The scheme has evolved over time. The initial proposal presented at the pre-application stage was for a wind farm comprising up to 20 wind turbines with a tip height of up to 179.9m. Following preapplication advice a scheme for up to 18 turbines up to 149.9m was presented through Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping exercise. This was reduced further to 16 turbines with an amended layout when the application was submitted. Following concerns raised regarding the landscape and visual effects along with the impact on deep peat the finalised scheme is for 14 turbines in the current layout.

8.113 During previous discussion with the applicant it was considered the original layout of 16 turbines would have significant visual effects, particularly the area south of Loch Ness including sections of the B862 and small settlements along this road, such as Whitebridge, Errogie and Gorthleck (generally represented by viewpoints VP1, VP2, VP3, VP4 VP5 and VP7) and sections of the South Loch Ness Trail and National Cycle Network (NCN) 78. From upland locations across Loch Ness (such as VP11) the scheme appeared to be spilling beyond the contained bowl with the horizontal spread of Corriegarth extended, particularly by turbines T1 and T2 in the western extent of the site and T8, T9, T10 and T11 in the eastern extent of the site. When viewed from VP11 it was considered that turbines T3 and T12 should mark the

furthest extent of the scheme with potential scope for the turbines beyond T3 and T12 to be relocated within the scheme. Turbine T6 also appeared incongruous from VP11. It was noted that amended turbine locations would have to be appropriate and avoid detrimental visual impacts from other locations.

8.114 Across the immediate landscape of the study area there are several distinctive groups of wind turbines/wind farms with heights ranging between 117.5m up to 135m. The applicant considers the submitted design has a degree of coherence with the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm and the pattern of wind farms within the Monadhliath. Whilst there is a difference in scale of approximately 30m between the existing and proposed development (120m tip height of the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm turbines in comparison to 149.9m tip height for the proposed turbines) the result does not generally appear incongruous. When the layout which encircles Corriegarth Wind Farm is assessed on a 2D basis reviewing plans there is an expectation that the change in turbine scale would be immediately apparent but this is not the case when reviewing the visualisations. The potential effects have been minimised due to the positioning of the proposed turbines and scale of the landscape. As the proposed development envelopes Corriegarth Wind Farm the majority of proposed turbines appear in the foreground or side of the existing scheme so the change in height is less apparent, this is particularly noticeable from upland locations. Where the height difference is noticeable the grand scale of the Rolling Uplands and location within the shallow bowl landscape often backclothing turbines diminishes the effect of the different heights. Whilst there are examples of the height difference becoming apparent these are generally limited to views along the B862 where skylining turbines spill beyond the contained landform towards the road (viewpoints such as VP2 and VP3). Additionally, the proportions of the turbines assist in diminishing the differences in scale. The proposed turbines will be up to 83.4m hub height, 149.9m tip height with rotor diameter of 133m in comparison with the existing turbines at Corriegarth Wind Farm which are 80m hub height, 120m tip height and 80m rotor diameter. The larger rotor diameter of the proposed turbines mean that it is harder to directly compare to the existing turbines and as a result gauge the scale.

8.115 It has become increasingly important to consider the context in which wind farm development is seen and cumulative effects. Of particular importance is how developments relate to each other in design and relationship to their surroundings; their frequency when moving through the landscape; and their visual separation to allow experience of the character of the landscape in between. When viewed from surrounding locations, particularly the Monadhliath Mountains (WLA20) to the east/south east of the proposed development, the simple, open landscape appears on an immense scale with a feeling of “emptiness”. Introducing prominent new structures into a landscape that is noted for its feeling of sanctuary and remoteness is generally likely to have a significant effect. From the other perspective, when viewed from the hills to the south and south east of the proposed development the additional turbines will be viewed against a backdrop of other operational and consented wind energy with Glenshero, Stornelairg, Dell, Aberarder and Dunmaglass wind farms particularly apparent. Care and attention is required regarding design, siting and location to avoid detrimental visual impacts and the creation of a “wind farm landscape”.

8.116 As identified in the Loch Ness Sensitivity Appraisal, current wind farm development consists broadly of:

- Large windfarms set 2.5km - 3km back from Rolling Uplands Boundary with Farmed Straths LCAs.
- Generally the layout is deeper in the axis perpendicular to the Great Glen than the parallel axis.
- Tend to be contained within shallow 'bowls' in the landscape which are visible from within the LCA but not in more distant views.

Earlier developments appear at a regular spacing of 7km - 10km edge to edge. More recent applications/scoping reduce this spacing.

8.117 Whilst there is potential for extension to existing large scale wind farms, care is needed to ensure that:

- Mitigation established by current schemes is not undone and that the landscape setting of each scheme is maintained.
- Skylining and coalescence is avoided with current positioning, spacing and scale of turbine respected.

Commentary on these matters are contained elsewhere in the report.

8.118 Development of turbines (all scales) in other locations within the LCA should be avoided to ensure that the scale of the landform is maintained and that perspective, when viewed across the loch in particular, is not adversely affected. It is considered that there is an element of overspill due to the horizontal spread of turbines beyond Corriegarth Wind Farm which is relatively contained within the “bowl” type landform. When viewed from across Loch Ness, particularly Meal Fuar-Monaidh and a portion of the Great Glen Way, the proposed development would represent a notable increase in the influence of wind energy in the composition of the view appearing to extend either side of Corriegarth Wind Farm, therefore, attention to the layout of this new scheme is required to avoid undoing previous mitigation.

8.119 Corriegarth Wind Farm was consented by Scottish Ministers following consideration of, amongst other matters, its landscape and visual impact. In doing so, Ministers recognised the proposal, and its associated impacts, were relatively contained with limited visibility from the north, east and south of the 35km study area. However, they noted there was potential for some localised significant cumulative effects with Dunmaglass wind farm. Since consent was granted by Scottish Ministers in 2015 further wind farms have been constructed in the wider surrounding area such as Stronelairg and Corriegarth.

8.120 Whilst the Corriegarth Wind Farm was consented, the Minister’s decision (ECDU reference EC00003115) recognised the reduction in impacts of the scheme were in part due to the turbines siting in a hollow location within an expansive, undulating landscape which can be regarded as setting a guidance threshold for acceptable impacts for a development in this area. These include the development extending beyond the contained hollow landform, risk of encirclement of the National Park and impacts on wild land areas.

Landscape

8.121 The locale forms a strong contrast to the Rugged and Rocky LCT's opposite the Great Glen. The contrast has value which should be protected by ensuring that wind energy development on elevated ground either side of the Great Glen remains inferior in scale and extent to the landscape character and does not lessen their apparent distinctiveness or the effect of the Great Glen as a great natural boundary.

8.122 The Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal identifies a number of key routes which may be affected by this development. The study identifies that any remaining capacity for larger scale wind energy development should be focused around existing clusters that are generally found in rolling uplands, rugged massif and rocky moorland Landscape Character Types, but only where these are well designed, integrated into the existing pattern of development and do not undo the landscape and visual mitigation agreed for existing schemes. These limitations will help to limit any additional cumulative effect and increase the potential for future development to share existing site infrastructure.

8.123 Generally, the LCT has a lower sensitivity, this LCA is rated at 2 – 3 (4 being least sensitive to change), in recognition of existing density of development. People at key viewpoints, visitors/tourists, cyclists and walkers are the visual receptors with the highest sensitivity.

8.124 The proposed development is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 6 - Monadhliath ridge and tops, Rolling Uplands. LCA 6 is the most extensive landscape in the Study Area. External views are mostly from elevated viewpoints north of Loch Ness where it presents a multi-layered receding landscape, giving an impression of vast extent. Views are varied in character according to elevation from within the LCA. Key views are from:

- LCA 15: Farmed Straths, Strath Errick and Strath Nairn with visibility along the B862 and from local settlements.
- LCA 16: Farmed and Wooded Foothills, Loch Tarff to Loch Duntelchaig along the B862 and from local settlements.
- LCA 19: Area directly around Loch Ness, Broad Steep-Sided Glen with visibility from the A82 Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh.
- Views of the Great Glen from Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh (forms a sweeping receding landscape to the south).

8.125 LCA 6 is generally visible from either within the LCA or from more distant elevated vantage points. The height of existing schemes means that development on the ground may be visible where the ground level itself is not, making distinctions between developments indistinct. Therefore, maintaining space between developments is important to prevent coalescence.

8.126 The Landscape and Visual Amenity Chapter of the EIAR, Vol 1, Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity and SEI gives an overview of the predicted landscape character effects.

8.127 The applicant considered the Rolling Uplands – Inverness (LCT 221) which the site is located within was subject to moderate/adverse (Significant effect) locally. The

applicant assessed the sensitivity of receptors as Medium within LCT 221 given the effect of the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm. Highland Council do not agree with this assessment and consider the sensitivity of receptors as High. The applicant considered the Rolling Uplands - Cairngorms (LCT 125), Farmed Strath – Inverness (LCT 227), Farmed and Wooded Foothills (LCT 224) and Broad Steep Sided Glen (LCT 225) would all be subject to minor/adverse (Not Significant) effects from upland locations and summits within the LCT's.

8.128 NatureScot noted the LVIA describes a Not Significant effect for LCT Rolling Uplands – Inverness due to a low sensitivity combined with a medium magnitude locally and a low magnitude for the area as a whole. Table 6.11 in the EIAR (SEI, Table 6.3 Summary of Effects) identifies a medium sensitivity and therefore it is considered that the effects should be described as Significant but localised, and low, not Significant overall.

8.129 The applicant considers that the landscape impacts of the proposed development are localised. It is considered that effects are more widespread than that identified by the applicant. Whilst Highland Council's Landscape Officer does not object to the proposal they noted the proposed development would create adverse visual impacts from at a number of localised settings within the study area. They noted an improvement has been achieved to the visual composition of the development and its relationship to the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm from the majority of viewpoints. They welcomed the layout changes and reduction in turbines which they considered bring about the following changes to the viewpoints that the applicant noted as having a Significant effect:

8.130 They welcomed the layout changes and reduction in turbines through SEI and considered the amendments improved the visual composition of the proposed development and enhanced its relationship to the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm. The improvements of the modified configuration are particularly noticeable along the B862. Whilst the Landscape Officer still considers there are Significant effects from VP3, VP4, VP5 and VP7 along the B862 they are relatively localised and transient effects that do not diminish the benefits of the proposal.

8.131 The Landscape Officer considered the applicant has understated the detrimental impact from Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh (VP11) which was assessed as having a Not Significant. They noted a number of turbines, particularly T8, T9 and T11, have a different relationship to the horizon from that established as characteristic for the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm and which is continued through the rest of the proposed development. Whilst these turbine hubs are elevated above the horizon and appear inconsistent they noted the revisions to the design through SEI have created marginal improvements to the composition along with a reduced horizontal and vertical spread. Although understated, they agree the overall effects from VP11 would be Not Significant.

Special Landscape Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park (SLQ's)

8.132 The Cairngorms National Park (CNP) is located approximately 9.7 km from the nearest wind turbine of the Proposed Development. Policy 3.3 of the National Park Partnership Plan sets out that large scale wind turbines are inappropriate within the CNP or where outside the Park they significantly adversely affect its landscape

character or SLQ's. Consequently, the impacts of the development upon the landscape character of the National Park must be fully assessed.

8.133 The Cairngorms National Park Authority and NatureScot considered areas of the Park would not be significantly affected by the proposed development are generally within 20km of the proposal, as determined largely by the ZTV. Visualisations from 3 viewpoints are located within the CNP - VP9: Carn Sgulain, VP13: Geal Charn (both in the Monadhliaths near the boundary of CNP) and VP19: Ptarmigan restaurant (at the summit of Cairngorm mountain) have been provided at distances of approximately 12km, 13km and 42km respectively to the nearest proposed turbine. In addition, visualisations were produced to support the Wild Land Area Assessment, including 3 viewpoints looking from within CNP towards the proposed wind farm. These are also of use when considering the effects on the SLQ's of CNP - AESLQ1, Carn Ban (VP6.42), AESLQ 2, Càrn Fhreiceadain (VP6.43) and AESLQ 3, A'Chailleach (VP6.44).

8.134 NatureScot considered the following SLQ to be the most significant:

- Vastness of space, scale and height.

The assessment of SLQ's within the EIAR and SEI concludes that the proposed development will not compromise any of the SLQ's of the CNP. The EIAR states that the effects on the SLQ "vastness of space, scale and height" is Minor (high sensitivity – low magnitude). NatureScot consider that this under represents the effects of the addition of the proposed development to existing wind farms and that the it will more than "slightly extend the influence of wind farm development". They consider the magnitude of change would be Medium and the resultant effect moderate/adverse and Significant due to the increase in elevation and heights of turbines which would be seen from the following:

- AESLQ1, Carn Ban (VP6.42) with visibility almost to the base of some turbines.
- AESLQ2 Càrn Fhreiceadain (VP6.43) and AESLQ3 A'Chailleach (VP6.44) with turbines breaching the skyline.

Outwith these details above NaturseScot consider the assessment of effects on other the SLQ's within the EIAR are accurate. The position of the CNPA and SNH is supported.

Special Landscape Area's (SLA's)

8.135 The Assessment of Effects on Designated Landscapes within 40km of the site has been considered within EIAR, Vol 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Amenity and gives an overview of the impacts and effects of the proposed development on landscape designations within the study area. It is agreed with the applicant's assessment that there will be no significant effects on Cairngorm Mountain NSA, Glen Affric NSA, Glen Strathffarrar NSA and Ben Alder, Laggan, and Glen Banchor SLA within the study area. It is also agreed with the applicant's assessment that there will be no significant effects on Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, Moidart, Morar and Glen Sheil SLA and Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA, Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor SLA, Gaick SLA and Ben Alder, Laggan, and Glen

Banchor SLA. Potential effects upon the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA were considered further within the assessment.

Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA

8.136 The Council has designated Loch Ness and Duntelchaig as an SLA noted for its ever changing compositions. This area is dominated by the vast linear feature of Loch Ness and its dramatic landform trench, flanked by steep, towering wooded slopes that lead to undulating moorland ridges and a contrasting remote interior plateau of upland lochs, small woods and rocky knolls.

8.137 The SLA is particularly sensitive to additional large features upon the side slopes or ridge lines of the glen. This is because these may contrast to the distinct linear form of the glen, the characteristic concentration of built elements along the shore or over flatter adjacent areas, interrupt the sequential experience travelling along the glen, affect the perception of its scale, and change the open nature of views passing between the shore and the surrounding slopes. Both sides of Loch Ness are sensitive to the introduction of built development which would intrude on views up and down the loch and also across the loch. Combinations of developments which would result in a series of linear or point features may distract from the sequential experience when travelling along the loch. The addition of some developments may introduce levels of activity which would disturb the tranquillity experienced during still weather conditions.

8.138 The Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA is located approximately 7.3km from the nearest wind turbine within the proposed site. The ZTV indicates visibility of wind turbines from within the SLA within 7km to 20km of the proposed site. Many receptors that experience the special qualities of the SLA are those using the area for recreation, including tourists, particularly along the upland landscapes above both the east and west shore including the South Loch Ness trail, Great Glen Way and Meal Fuar-Monaidh. A key visual characteristic of the SLA are long vistas of grand proportions. The striking, linear landform of the loch creates a dramatic sequence of landscape elements along its length. The water's surface combines with adjacent steep slopes to create a simple and distinctive profile of contrasting planes and edges. The skyline is generally horizontal; however, there are occasional features such as hill peaks, pylons, telecommunications mast and views of wind turbines.

8.139 The initial proposal showed raised concerns as there was an element of "overspill" due to the horizontal spread of turbines beyond Corriegarth Wind Farm which is relatively contained within the bowl landform. Whilst it is important to recognise that the proposed development sits outwith the SLA, many receptors that experience the special qualities of the SLA are those who use the area for recreation. The amended proposal lessens the visual impact on these receptors from upland locations, represented by VP11. Whilst the original development would have been experienced within the context of existing turbines the scheme would represent a notable increase in the influence of wind energy in the composition of the view appearing to extend either side of Corriegarth Wind Farm to an unacceptable level. The amended proposal has reduced the bulk to the end of the array that otherwise with a more tapered approach helping to lessen the prominence of the proposed turbines either side of Corriegarth Wind Farm turbines. The changes secured through further

engagement with the applicant has led to an improved layout that helps lessen the sense of the horizon south east of the loch being dominated by turbines.

8.140 Elsewhere within the SLA the LVIA noted that localised Moderate (adverse) and Significant effects were anticipated from locations along the south eastern side of Loch Ness (VP4: South Loch Ness Trail North of Whitebridge and VP7: General Wade's Military Road). However, the introduction of the Development was not judged to significantly affect or alter the Special Qualities of the SLA. An overall Minor (adverse) and not Significant effect was identified for the SLA. Given that wind farms, including the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm, are already present in views from the SLA, and as no direct effects on key landscape features would occur, the Development would not significantly affect the integrity of the SLA by adversely impacting on the qualities for which it has been designated.

8.141 This assessment is generally agreed. Whilst there are visual impacts within the SLA, particularly from upland locations on the eastern slopes above Loch Ness and the lowland interior set back from the south eastern shore of Loch Ness, it is considered the proposed development would not affect the special qualities and integrity of the SLA.

Wild Land Areas (WLA)

8.142 No element of the proposed development would be within a Wild Land Area (WLA), however, the development would be theoretically visible from a number of WLA's. As the proposed development is not within a WLA, Paragraph 215 of Scottish Planning Policy does not apply, but the general test considering the effects on wild land as set out in Paragraph 169 of SPP and reflected in Policy 67 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance does apply. This requires consideration of the impacts of the proposed development on the qualities of each WLA. Of particular interest are the:

- Introduction of turbines and other infrastructure into views from the WLAs;
- Introduction of a dominant contemporary land use affecting the physical and perceptual qualities of wildness that comes together as wild land qualities.

8.143 NatureScot published descriptions for each of the 42 WLA's across Scotland in January 2017. These descriptors set out wild land qualities for each of the WLA's. Wild land qualities are the result of a particular combination of wild land attributes and responses and how they influence an experience.

8.144 The following Wild Land Areas (WLA) are within the study area of the proposed development. Rannoch, Nevis, Mamores, Alder (WLA 14), Cairngorms (WLA 15), Kinlochhourn, Knoydart, Morar (WLA 18), Braeroy, Glenshirra, Creag Meagaidh (WLA 19), Monadhliath (WLA20) and Cetnral Highlands (WLA24). WLA20 is located less than 1km from the nearest wind turbine within the proposed development.

8.145 A Wild Land Impact Assessment was included in of the LVIA (Appendix A6.4). The adverse effects on the wild land qualities identified within the assessment were judged not to undermine the objectives for its protection, and the overall integrity of the WLA was judged not to be compromised by the introduction of the Development. The existing influence of wind farm development to the south west, west and north

west of the WLA20 (Monadhliaths) was acknowledged, with additional effects resulting from the proposed development considered to be localised in their extent as large areas of the WLA20 would remain unaffected by the influence of wind farm development.

8.146 WLA20 lies directly east/south east of the proposed development, extending approximately 15km south and 25km east of the site. The Key Qualities of this WLA are described by NatureScot as:

1. A range of massive rounded hills and plateaux that are awe-inspiring in their simplicity, openness and immense scale, and offer panoramic views to distant mountain ranges;
2. An extensive, simple interior with few human artefacts, contributing to a perceived 'emptiness' and a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary;
3. A hill range in which many types of recreation take place, but its large, remote interior maintains a sense of sanctuary, challenge and risk; and
4. Long, narrow glens cutting into the hill and plateau edges which are remote but facilitate access.

8.147 Whilst NatureScot agree with the conclusion in the EIAR that adverse effects will be localised and that the wider spread of effects have been minimised through the amended proposal sited in close proximity to the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm they consider these adverse effects are Significant at a local level based on the following rationale:

- WLQ 1 - the proposal will expand the horizontal extent of panoramic views occupied by wind turbines, specifically at close range combined with the operational Corriegarth Wind Farm.
- WLQ 2 – The proposed development will be visible from fragmented pockets of land within 5km of the proposal which currently have no visibility of turbines.
- WLQ 3 and WLQ 4 - will be affected around the western periphery of WLA20 in terms of the sense of sanctuary and remoteness experienced in areas which have no views of existing turbines.

8.148 VP9 and VP13 are located towards the eastern and southern edge of WLA 20 at a distance of 11.6km and 13.3km from the nearest turbine at the proposed development. The applicant has considered the sensitivity as High against the above qualities and the impact as Minor (adverse) and Not Significant on the basis that the proposal will add to the existing wind farms which are prominent features reducing the sanctuary/solitude, naturalness and simplicity of the WLA. Whilst it is agreed that there are a number of existing wind farms that can be viewed from WLA20, along with Corriegarth Wind Farm, which have a cumulative effect the proposed development would not reduce the contrast between the hills and plateaux with the straths, glens and corries. The southern portion of WLA20 is popular for many types of recreation and contains a number of Munros (e.g. Carn Dearg, Carn Sgulain, A'Chailleach). Whilst the hills are relatively undistinguished Carn Dearg, for example, has a feeling of remoteness and isolation. Receptors walking and experiencing the landscape within the WLA would have a reduced sense of wildness should the proposed development from the localised settings noted. However, the presence of Corriegarth Wind Farm, Stronelairg Wind Farm, Dell Wind Farm, Aberarder Wind

Farm and Dunmaglass Wind Farm in the wider surrounding area, form a prominent feature that does result in a reduction in the perceived naturalness of the WLA.

8.149 It is accepted that through each stage of the application process from preapplication to the recent submission of SEI the applicant has been willing to take on board concerns raised regarding visual impacts on the designated sites noted above reducing both the scale and numbers of turbines since the initial project design aswell as amending the layout.

Visual Impact

8.150 The applicant's assessment draws upon the supportive elements of how the proposal could be viewed within the landscape. The ZTV demonstrates that the scheme will generally not be visible in isolation and will be viewed alongside Corriegarth Wind Farm from upland locations either side of Loch Ness and the lower land alongside the B862 and small settlements. The proposed development would extend the theoretical visibility of turbines beyond that already experienced as a result of the operational/consented wind farms in the area.

8.151 These effects are experienced by a mixture of recreational receptors accessing surrounding hills, trails and other outdoors activities as well as receptors using local transport networks. There are significant adverse visual effects within the zone of visual influence, but the zone of visual influence is such that impacts are limited to a particular subset of receptors.

8.152 The closest properties are to the north west of the adjacent to the existing access track – with the cluster of Garthbeg Bungalow, Garthbeg Farm Cottage and Garthbeg Bothy set back approximately 5.3km from the closest turbine and Corriegarth Lodge and Keepers Cottage 6set back approximately 6.25km from the closest turbine. There is visibility of the proposed development from these properties and the closest closest residential areas such Whitebridge, Errogie and Gorthleck set back from the B862.

8.153 The Council considers visual impact using the Criterion set out in Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. The assessment against this criterion is contained in Appendix 3 to this report and comes to a view as to whether the threshold set out in the guidance is met or not.

8.154 As visual impact assessment is largely subjective and dependant on the application of professional judgement, it is not surprising that there is a difference between the applicant's assessment and that of officers. It should be noted that no particular expertise is required to assess visual impact, as opposed to landscape impact, and there is no framework in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3 or elsewhere upon which to assess let alone judge the "acceptability" of a proposal. A comparison of the applicant's assessed affects and the view of officers is contained in Appendix 2 to this report with consideration of each of these viewpoints expanded in commentary below. There is disagreement with the applicant's view that not all the receptors from the viewpoints are of high sensitivity.

8.155 The visibility of the proposed turbines would be in association with Corriegarth Wind Farm and other schemes within the wider surrounding area. This additional visibility has the potential to cause significant landscape and visual effects.

8.156 The visual impact of the development has been considered against the Landscape and Visual Assessment Criteria contained within Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. The applicant considers that all of the thresholds set out in the criteria have been met. This position is shared by the Planning Authority, however, there is some disagreement with the applicant's assessment which appears to have downplayed some of the impacts as there are a number of Significant effects noted which are localised but do not have a significant effect on the criteria overall. An assessment of the proposals against the criteria is set out in Appendix 3.

8.157 The visual receptors for the development have been assessed by the applicant in Table 6.3 Summary of Effects EIAR, SEI, Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity. The applicant has identified significant adverse impacts on receptors at viewpoints VP3, VP4, VP5 and VP7 where the proposed development will create a Substantial magnitude of change and have a Major effect on receptors. There is agreement with this assessment as it relates to these viewpoints. The remaining 15 viewpoints outwith VP3, VP4, VP5 and VP7 have been assessed by the applicant and considered Not Significant. Having undertaken an appraisal of the applicant's assessment using the same methodology, it is also considered that there are 2 further viewpoints where there are Significant effects on receptors VP2 and VP11. These viewpoints range in their proximity to the site with VP2 representative of views along the low lying land set back from Loch Ness to the south east along the B862 with a stark new element is introduced into the view in close proximity to the receptor. VP11 is representative of upland locations popular for recreation, whilst existing wind farms can be seen in the surrounding area further turbines risk overspilling beyond the existing bowl landform that was controlled by previous mitigation measures.

8.158 Whilst it is considered that the applicant has downplayed some of the effects from other upland locations they are not considered to be Significant in EIA terms following the amended scheme and layout where the mitigation measures have led to an improved proposed development overall.

8.159 6 viewpoints (VP2, VP3, VP4, VP5, VP7 and VP11) are considered to have a Significant effect in EIA terms. An appraisal of all 19 viewpoints is summarised in Appendix 2.

8.160 The following viewpoints are where the appraisal undertaken by the Planning Authority does not agree with the assessment undertaken by the applicant:

Viewpoint 2: Boleskin Parish Church

8.161 This viewpoint like the others the applicant consider have a Significant effects is representative of receptors travelling along this road B862. The viewpoint looking south east is set back from the existing access to Corriegarth Wind Farm. Prominent, skylining turbines and blades particularly turbines T1, T2 and T3 appear incongruous appearing to spill towards the receptor from this viewpoint. Whilst turbines are not an uncharacteristic feature in the landscape with Corriegarth Wind Farm also within view

T1 appears particularly stark with the increased height drawing attention. The changes proposed through the SEI have improved the sense of horizontal spread, however, T2 and T3 still appear as outliers making the viewer question what is beyond the ridgeline.

8.162 In this view the turbines at Corriegarth Wind Farm are relatively well confined. A guiding principle of Corriegarth Wind Farm was containment of development within a natural bowl of the landscape. The proposed development undermines the visual containment of Corriegarth Wind Farm with the additional turbines appearing to spill out and over the bowl landform and down the hillside.

8.163 This viewpoint is effectively representative of the issues associated with the views from higher ground across Loch Ness (such as VP11) from a lower vantage point and raises the same concerns. As such, It is considered there is Moderate change to the baseline conditions. Overall, this has lead to a conclusion of Moderate impact on receptors. The effect is considered Significant.

Viewpoint 11: Meall Fuar Mhonaidh

8.164 The turbines will be visible from a section of the Great Glen Way route and a number of popular hill tops including Meal Fuar-Monaidh (VP11) on the north western side of Loch Ness overlooking Loch Ness to the east/south east. Meal Fuar-Mhonaidh in particular, is one example of a distinct hill peak nearly 700m high that stands out as a landmark clearly visible from both ends of the loch. Meall Fuar-Mhonaid is a good vantage point from which to appreciate the massive scale and alignment of the Great Glen fault within a backcloth of the Monadhliath massif to the south and the Balmacann and Affric mountain interior to the north west, both areas which possess wildness qualities. While the proposed turbines would not be dominant features in the view they could be considered to add to a sense of encirclement given the proposed development would extend the horizontal spread of turbines – particularly the notable outliers T8, T9 and T11 and T2, and T3 to the east and west on either side of Corriegarth Wind Farm from this view. The proposed development is not seen in isolation, with Dunmaglass Wind Farm and Stronelarig Wind Farm viewed either side of Corriegarth Wind Farm. The proposed development maintains a level of separation from the existing wind energy developments.

8.165 The applicant has taken on board previous concerns raised regarding the horizontal expansion and overspill beyond the bowl landform. The amended SEI layout, negotiated by officers has somewhat mitigated the visual effects. The furthest extent on either side east and west has been pulled in to better reflect the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm composition. Whilst T8 and T9 are still prominent, T11 has been reduced, making it appear closer to the horizon. This has produced a better fit with the landform. Whilst it is considered there are localised Significant effects in EIA terms from upland locations such as Meall Fuar Mhonaidh, the proposed development in general does meet the threshold of Criteria 3.

8.166 Some of the other key viewpoints include the rest of the B862, A82, Suidhe viewpoint, General Wade's Military Road, Monadhliath Mountain range and upland locations. Significant localised effects are anticipated at the above viewpoints. Lowland areas set back from the eastern shore of Loch Ness along the B862 are generally represented by VP1, VP3, VP4, VP5, VP7 and VP12. Views from within

the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA looking across the loch are generally represented by VP8, VP10, VP11 and VP15. Upland areas containing the proposed wind farm and immediately surrounding area of the Monadhliath Mountain range to the east, south east and south are generally represented by VP9, VP13, VP14, WLA1, WLA2, WLA3, WLA5 and WLA7. From these directions the proposed turbines would be a noticeable addition to the landscape and would increase the prominence of this feature in the landscape. As a brief overview some of the issues from each of these areas are summarised through a single viewpoint below:

Viewpoint 7: General Wade's Military Road

- Approximately 11km from the nearest turbine with 7 hubs and 3 tips in view.
- The proposed development will be seen either side of the intervening landform with the horizontal expanse increased by T11, T13, T14, T15 and T16 expanding beyond the hill.
- The changes proposed through SEI removing the exposed T10 and reducing stacking effects of T2 and T7 has improved the composition.
- Localised Significant effects remain for road users on the B862 between Dunmaglass Lodge in the north and Loch Tarf.

Viewpoint 8 - Great Glen Way, East of Creag Dhearg

- Approximately 12km distance from nearest turbine all 14 hubs and tips in view.
- T8, T9, T11 and T2, T3 appear on the periphery risking overspill beyond the contained bowl landform and T1 will noticeably emphasise the change in scale from the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm.
- The changes proposed through SEI removed the prominent T10 with a more rational line of turbines contained within the undulating upland plateau.
- Localised Significant effects remain for recreational users of the Great Glen Way and Meall Fuar Mhonaidh but the effect is considered Not Significant overall.

Viewpoint 9 - Carn Sgulain

- Approximately 12 km distance from nearest turbine with 8 hubs and 11 tips in view.
- The proposed development will be seen from the Monadhliath Mountains with T8, T9 and T11 appearing as outliers extending the horizontal pull of turbines across the landscape. The increased elevation of these turbines draw the eye.
- The changes proposed through SEI removed the projecting T10 with a more comprehensible layout of turbines that better flow across the landscape. The appearance is now more coherent within the bowl landform.
- Localised Significant effects remain for recreational users of the Monadhliath Mountains but the effect is considered Not Significant overall.

8.167 Aviation lighting to a specification agreed with the CAA is required on all structures over 150m at the highest practicable point, the proposed development is marginally under 150m to blade tip. The applicant notes that aviation safety lighting will be limited to infrared lighting only and no visible lighting is required. It is recommended

that the applicant work with the Civil Aviation Authority regarding any further aviation lighting which shall consist of infra-red lights.

8.168 The site is not a designated dark skies park. Aviation lighting will be required in relation to public safety but will be infra-red which would reduce the impact. This is a technical issue that needs to be agreed with aviation interests.

8.169 The changes proposed through SEI with the removal of T10 and T12 along with the relocation of T8, T9, T11, T13, T15 has gone some way to minimise overspill of the eastern outlier turbines beyond the contained landform. The western outliers have been pulled in towards the existing scheme and the prominence of a number of turbines in key views noted has been diminished. Whilst some concerns remain with Significant effects still experienced by receptors from 6 viewpoints (VP2, VP3, VP4, VP5, VP7 and VP11) there are undoubtedly improvements to the scheme. The combination of removal and relocation of these turbines better retains the "resting in a bowl" characteristic of the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm and would generally not undo hard won mitigation measures secured for the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm.

Access and Recreation

8.170 The site, like most land in Scotland, is subject to the provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. There are paths running through and around the site and the wider area is rich in opportunities to access the outdoors. The applicant has highlighted within its supporting submissions existing outdoor access interests. The most likely direct impact is during the construction phase where some access will be restricted. Any impacts arising through the construction or operational phases of development can be controlled through outdoor access management which should cover both construction phase and operation of the wind farm. Should the application be granted consent this can be secured by condition.

8.171 Representations raise concerns with the potential visual impact on users of the key walking routes and surrounding hills including the south and south east Monadhliath, surrounding Munros such as Carn Dearg, Carn Sgulain, A'Chailleach, Corbetts such as Carn na Saobhaidhe and further afield routes such as Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh. The visual impact of the development on recreational users of the outdoors is considered earlier in this report. The consultation response from Scotways and Highland Council Access Officer have raised the impact on the amenity of those using the Core Paths in the area. There are 6 Core Paths within 10km from the centre of the site with Garthbeg to Errogie, south side of Loch Mhor (IN25.02) the closest at 5.2km and within the wider site although it does not directly link to the site access. It is accepted that there is likely to be an effect on the amenity of those using these paths as the perceived tranquillity of the surroundings will be affected by the construction and operation of the wind farm.

8.172 The Council's Access Officer noted previous access and signage issues at Corriegarth Wind Farm and has advised it is important that the applicant confirms that public access to and along access tracks will remain before, during and after construction. The applicant is required to illustrate and detail proposals for improved paths and signage for public access during the operational phase in line with Policy 77 of the HwLDP which seeks enhancement from development that affects a Core Path and/or which significantly affects wider access rights. Proposed enhancements

should include the signposting and waymarking of the Core Path/Trail of the 7 Lochs from the B862 junction, through Garthbeg and onto the route south of Loch Mhor. Appropriate formats, styles, palettes and standards for such signs are available from the Access Officer. Enhancements should also include the provision of gates and paths accessible to walkers, cyclists and horse riders where there are existing or planned new gates.

8.173 To address this matter, and those raised in representations, full details of access during construction, operation and decommissioning and details of any gates can be secured via the submission of a recreational access management plan. Should the application be granted consent this can be secured by condition.

Noise and Shadow Flicker

8.174 The applicant has submitted a noise assessment in support of the application (Volume 1 EIAR, Chapter 10: Noise), this identifies predicted levels from the wind farm. There are also cumulative impacts from other wind turbine developments. The nearest noise sensitive receptors are located approximately 5.3km from the closest turbine - the cluster of Garthbeg Bungalow, Garthbeg Farm Cottage and Garthbeg Bothy.

8.175 The applicant has suggested that these matters can be addressed via a noise management and mitigation scheme which would include mode management of the turbines. This is accepted and should the application be granted consent this can be secured by condition. This type of system will allow the Council's noise limits of 35dB (daytime) and 38dB (night time) to be met.

8.176 Environmental Health has assessed the report and do not anticipate that operational noise will be a significant issue both individually and in combination with the existing operational wind farm. This is due to the distance between the development and noise sensitive properties. Environmental Health has requested a condition to ensure that individual and cumulative noise can be monitored and enforced should an issue arise.

8.177 Shadow flicker may occur under certain combinations of geographical position and time of day when the sun passes behind the rotors of a wind turbine and casts a shadow over neighbouring properties. As the blades rotate, the shadow flicks on and off, an effect known as shadow flicker. The effect can only occur inside buildings, where the flicker appears through a window opening. The maximum rotor diameter of the proposed turbines would not exceed 133m, so the area where shadow flicker could be a problem extends to a maximum of 1.33km (138km if you include the requested 50m micro-siting allowance). The nearest residential property is located 5.3km from the nearest turbine. Therefore, it is not anticipated that shadow flicker will be an issue for the proposed development either individually or cumulatively given the location of the development in relation to properties. However, as a precautionary approach a scheme for mitigation via mode management can be controlled by condition should the application be granted consent.

Telecommunications

8.178 No concerns have been raised in relation to potential interference with radio/ television reception in the locality. Highland Council has a standard practice of recommending that developers address adverse impacts that may emerge during construction and over the initial year of operation when problems may be detected and/or experienced. It is recommended that a planning condition is attached to secure a scheme of mitigation should an issue arise.

Aviation

8.179 The application has raised no concerns with regard to aviation interests in relation to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Ministry of Defence (MOD). Should the application be granted consent a condition can be applied to secure suitable mitigation in terms of aviation lighting and notification to the appropriate bodies of the final turbine positions. If granted consent, the MOD has requested notice of the following prior to commencement of construction:

- The date construction starts and ends;
- The date any wind turbine generators are brought into use;
- The maximum height of construction equipment;
- The latitude and longitude of every turbine.

8.180 Highlands and Islands Airport Ltd., Civil Aviation Authority and National Air Traffic Systems have no objections subject to conditions. Due to the height and position of the wind farm, it would become the dominant structure in the area and aviation warning lights may be required to be fitted at the hub height of some of the turbines, a scheme for which will require to be approved if consent were to be given.

8.181 Additionally, HIAL note that the proposed amended location of turbines would infringe the safeguarding criteria of Inverness Airport with a possible impact to the Instrument Flight Procedures (IFPs) for Inverness Airport. They have requested an IFP Impact Assessment is conducted to ascertain if there is an impact to Inverness Airport's IFPs with the applicant.

Decommissioning and Site Restoration

8.182 The applicant has advised that at the end of their operational life, if the decision is made to decommission the wind farm, all turbine components, transformers, substation and associated buildings and infrastructure will be removed from the site. Foundations would remain on site; the exposed concrete plinths would be broken out to a depth of 0.5m below the surface, graded with soil and replanted. Volume 1 EIAR, Chapter 13: Geology and Peat states that the access tracks and underground electrical cabling may be left in-situ to also minimise habitat disturbance. However, this is yet to be agreed. The expectation would normally be for all new tracks and laydown areas constructed during development of the wind farm to be reinstated to the approximate pre-wind farm condition. The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be updated prior to decommissioning by the applicant to reflect current legislation and policy and be agreed with Highland Council, NatureScot and SEPA. All material arising from demolition will need to be disposed of responsibly and in accordance with relevant waste management regulations

prevailing at the time. Similarly, re-instatement of all land affected will be carried out in accordance with best practice at the time. The applicant anticipates decommissioning would take up to 12 months to complete.

8.183 The applicant acknowledges that these matters will not be confirmed until the time of the submission of the Decommissioning and Restoration Plan (DRP). The DRP would be submitted to and approved in writing by The Highland Council in consultation with NatureScot and SEPA no later than 12 months prior to the final decommissioning of the wind farm. The detailed DRP would be implemented within 18 months of the final decommissioning of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

8.184 The requirements to decommission and restore a wind farm site at its end of life is relatively standard and straight forward, with any request for re-powering to be considered with the submission of a relevant future application. SEPA may also require best practices and the removal of buried cables at the time of decommissioning. It is important to ensure that any approval of this project secures by condition a requirement to deliver a draft decommissioning and restoration plan for approval prior to the commencement of any development and ensure an appropriate financial bond is put in place to secure these works.

Other Material Considerations

8.185 Given the complexity of major developments, and to assist in the discharge of conditions, the Planning Authority seek that the developer employs a Planning Monitoring Officer (PMO). The role of the PMO, amongst other things, will include the monitoring of, and enforcement of compliance with, all conditions, agreements and obligations related to this permission (or any superseding or related permissions) and shall include the provision of a bi-monthly compliance report to the Planning Authority.

8.186 As set out in the relevant policy sections earlier proposals should contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, restoration of degraded habitats and net gain. The proposed development includes provision for peatland restoration, however, representations along with consultees including Glenurquhart Community Council, SEPA and NatureScot raised concerns that the peatland restoration initially proposed was inadequate. The absolute extent of restored habitat should be no less than 50ha but 100ha is advisable to allow for failures, this is controlled by condition. The location of restoration is yet to be finalised but the applicant has confirmed that additional surveys will be required to conclude the full extent of peatland restoration with 4 search areas proposed. Additionally, a scheme for the delivery of biodiversity net gain along with a suitable financial mechanism for the delivery of the scheme is controlled by condition should the application be approved.

8.187 In line with Highland Council policy and practice, community benefit considerations are undertaken as a separate exercise and generally parallel to the planning process.

8.188 There are no other relevant material factors highlighted within representations for consideration of this application.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Scottish Government gives considerable commitment to renewable energy and encourages planning authorities to support the development of wind farms where they can operate successfully and where concerns can be satisfactorily addressed. The proposed development has the potential to provide a further 67.2MW generation of renewable energy towards Scottish Government targets. This investment opportunity and energy contribution needs to be given weight in the decision making process, but also balanced against the progress already made by the renewable energy sector in fulfilling these needs. As with all applications the benefits of the proposal must be weighed against potential drawbacks and then considered in the round, particularly against the policies of the Development Plan and Scottish Planning Policy.

9.2 The Council's response to this application is considered against the policies set out in the Development Plan, principally Policy 67 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan with its eleven tests which are expanded upon with the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. This policy also reflects policy tests of other policies in the plan, for example Policy 28. This policy also draws in the range of subject specific policies as also contained within the HwLDP as listed in Section 8 above. The Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal identifies that any remaining capacity for larger scale wind energy development should be focused around existing clusters that are generally found in rolling uplands, rugged massif and rocky moorland Landscape Character Types, but only where these are well designed, integrated into the existing pattern of development and do not undo the landscape and visual mitigation agreed for existing schemes. Following amendments to the layout and a reduction from 16 to 14 turbines, this is considered to be the case with this proposed development.

9.3 Whilst officers recognise and acknowledge the potential significant impacts (namely in relation to landscape and visual impacts) these are considered on balance to be acceptable when all matters are taken into account. The applicant has worked with officers on the design iterations made at various stages through pre-application, Scoping, planning application and submission of SEI. These modifications are considered to have significantly improved the scheme. Further mitigation of the impacts can be secured by the recommended planning conditions, which includes peatland habitat restoration and biodiversity net gain.

9.5 However, there are objections from Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council, Glenurquhart Community Council and a number of objections (6 submitted to Highland Council, 2 submitted to ECU) from the public. Objections generally focussed on the cumulative effects associated with further development and noting the potential implications on the local road network and pedestrians. No objections have been received from any technical consultees subject to recommended planning conditions. No objection has been received from SEPA in relation to peat and the water environment subject to planning conditions. No objection has been received from NatureScot in relation to natural heritage matters (including peat and ornithology) and it considers that the integrity of the identified SPA, SAC, SLA, WLA and SLQ of the CNP will not be subject to likely significant effects beyond localised settings. However, more ambitious mitigation measures are recommended in

relation to habitat restoration. NatureScot has also raised no objection to the application on landscape and visual impact and designated landscapes will not be significantly affected by the proposal. No objections from consultees have been made in relation to cultural heritage, noise, aviation or road network impacts.

9.7 Given the above analysis, the application is considered acceptable in terms of the Development Plan, national policy and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations.

9.8 All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal does not accord with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which would lead to a different conclusion.

10. IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Resource: Not applicable.

10.2 Legal: If the committee determine that an objection should be raised to the application, the application will be subject to a Public Local Inquiry prior to determination by Scottish Ministers.

10.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Not applicable.

10.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: The proposed development will generate a total of 67.2MW of renewable energy, reduced by 11.4MW if the proposed mitigation is accepted. Furthermore, the scheme will deliver a comprehensive peatland restoration plan.

10.5 Risk: Not applicable.

10.6 Gaelic: Not applicable.

11. RECOMMENDATION

Action required before decision issued: N

Subject to the above actions, it is recommended to **RAISE NO OBJECTION** to the application subject to the following conditions and reasons;

All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of applicable material considerations.

It is recommended that the Council Raise an Objection to the proposal for the following reasons:

Conditions to be attached to any Section 36 consent which may be approved:

Annex 1

ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 AND TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

CONSENT AND DEEMED PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF [insert name of project] WIND POWERED ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATION IN [insert location]

Part A

Section 36 Consent and Deemed Planning Permission

The Scottish Ministers, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 hereby:

i. consent, subject to conditions set out in paragraphs 1 to 4 of Annex 1 Part C below, to the construction and operation of the Corriegarth 2 wind powered electricity generating station, as described in Annex 1 Part B below; and
ii. direct, subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 5 to 32 of Annex 1 Part C below, that planning permission for the development shall be deemed to be granted.

The consent hereby granted will last for a period of 30 years from the earlier of:

i. the date when electricity is first exported to the electricity grid network on a commercial basis from the last of the wind turbines constructed as part of the development; or
ii. the date falling 18 months after the date electricity is exported to the grid on a commercial basis from any of the wind turbines constructed as part of the development.

The Scottish Ministers direct that section 58(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 is not to apply with regard to the deemed planning permission, and that planning permission is to lapse on the expiry of a period of 5 years from the date of this direction, unless the development to which the permission relates is begun before the expiry of that period.

Part B

Description of the Development

The Development shall comprise of a wind power powered electricity generating station known as Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm, located on land at Carn Na Saobhaidhe, Gorthleck, Inverness, in the planning jurisdiction of Highland Council.

The Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm and related ancillary development shall be comprised of:

- 14 wind turbines not exceeding 149.9m
- Turbine foundations
- Crane hardstanding at each turbine base area

- Access tracks
- Substation
- A temporary site construction compound and laydown area
- Underground cabling
- Borrow pit

All as more particularly shown on plan reference Revised Development Site Layout Plan Figure 4.1 forming Annex 1 Part D below.

1. Notification of Date of First Commissioning and Final Commissioning

1. Written confirmation of the Date of First Commissioning shall be provided to the Planning Authority and Scottish Ministers no later than one calendar month after that date.
2. Written confirmation of the Date of Final Commissioning shall be provided to the Planning Authority and Scottish Ministers no later than one calendar month after that date

Reason: To allow the Planning Authority and Scottish Ministers to calculate the date of expiry of the consent.

2. Commencement of Development

1. The Development shall be commenced no later than 5 years from the date of this consent, or such other period as the Scottish Ministers may direct in writing.
2. Written confirmation of the intended Date of Commencement of Development shall be provided to the Scottish Ministers and the Planning Authority as soon as is practicable after deciding on such a date and in any event no later than 3 weeks prior to the Commencement of Development.

Reason: To ensure that the consent is implemented within a reasonable period. And to allow the Planning Authority and Scottish Ministers to monitor compliance with obligations attached to this consent and deemed planning permission as appropriate.

3. Assignation

1. This consent shall not be assigned, alienated or transferred without the prior written authorisation of the Scottish Ministers. The Scottish Ministers may authorise the assignation (with or without conditions), or refuse the assignation.
2. In the event that the assignation is authorised, the Company shall notify the Planning Authority and Scottish Ministers in writing of principal named contact at the assignee and contact details within fourteen days of the consent being assigned.
3. The consent shall not be capable of being assigned, alienated or transferred otherwise than in accordance with this condition.

Reason: To safeguard the obligations of the consent if transferred to another company.

4. Serious Incident Reporting

In the event of any breach of health and safety or environmental obligations relating to the development during the period of this consent, the Company will provide written notification of the nature and timing of the incident to the Scottish Ministers, including confirmation of remedial measures taken and/or to be taken to rectify the breach, within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

Reason: To keep the Scottish Ministers informed of any such incidents which may be in the public interest.

Conditions to be attached to deemed planning permission

5. Design of wind turbines

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until full details of the proposed wind turbines (including, but not limited to, the make, model, size, external finish and colour which should be non-reflective pale grey semi-matt), any anemometry masts and all associated apparatus have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.
2. The wind turbines, any anemometry masts and all associated apparatus shall be constructed and operated in accordance with the approved details.
3. All wind turbine blades shall rotate in the same direction.

Reason: To ensure that the environmental impacts of the turbines forming part of the Development conform to the impacts assessed in the EIA Report and in the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

6. Design of sub-station and ancillary development

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until final details of the external appearance, dimensions, and surface materials of the substation building, associated compounds, construction compound boundary fencing, external lighting and parking areas have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority.
2. The substation building, associated compounds, fencing, external lighting and parking areas shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the environmental impacts of the sub-station and ancillary development forming part of the Development conform to the impacts assessed in the EIA Report and in the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

7. Signage

No wind turbine, anemometer mast, power performance mast, switching station, transformer building or enclosure, ancillary building or above ground fixed plant shall display any name, logo, sign or advertisement (other than health and safety signage) unless and until otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

8. Micrositing

All wind turbines, buildings, masts, areas of hardstanding and tracks shall be constructed in the locations shown on plan reference Revised Development Site Layout Plan Figure 4.1 forming Annex 1 Part D. The locations of wind turbines, buildings, masts, areas of hardstanding and tracks may be adjusted by micro-siting within the approved redline boundary shown on plan reference Revised Development Site Layout Plan Figure 4.1. Any such micro-siting is subject to the following restrictions unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority (in consultation with SEPA and NatureScot);

a. No wind turbine foundation shall be positioned higher, when measured in metres Above Ordinance Datum (AOD), than the position shown on Revised Development Site Layout Plan Figure 4.1;

b. no wind turbine, building, mast or hardstanding shall be moved more than 50 metres from the position shown on plan reference Revised Development Site Layout Plan Figure 4.1;

c. no access track shall be moved more than 50m from the position shown on plan reference Revised Development Site Layout Plan Figure 4.1;

d. no micro-siting shall take place within areas of peat of greater depth than the original position shown on plan reference Interpolated Peat Depths Figure 13.5;

e. no micro-siting shall take place within areas hosting ground water dependent terrestrial ecosystems;

2. All micro-siting permissible under this condition shall be approved in advance in writing by the Environmental Clerk of Works ("ECoW") [and Archaeological Clerk of Works ("ACoW")];

3. No later than one month after the Date of First Commissioning[16]an updated site layout plan showing the final position of all wind turbines, buildings, masts, areas of hardstanding, tracks and associated infrastructure forming part of the Development shall be submitted to the Planning Authority. The plan shall also specify areas where micrositing has taken place and, for each instance, be accompanied by copies of the ECoW [and ACoW] or Planning Authority's approval, as applicable.

Reason: to control environmental impacts while taking account of local ground conditions.

9. Planning Monitoring Officer

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until the terms of appointment by the Company of an independent and suitably qualified environmental consultant as Planning Monitoring Officer ("PMO") have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority in consultation with the Scottish Ministers. The terms of appointment shall:

a. impose a duty to monitor compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and the conditions attached to it;

b. require the PMO to submit a monthly report to the Planning Authority summarising works undertaken on site; and

c. require the PMO to report to the Planning Authority any incidences of non-compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and conditions attached to it at the earliest practical opportunity.

The PMO shall be appointed on the approved terms throughout the period from Commencement of Development to completion of construction works and post-construction site reinstatement works.

Reason: To enable the development to be suitably monitored to ensure compliance with the planning permission and the conditions attached to it.

10. Environmental Clerk of Works

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until the terms of appointment of an independent Environmental Clerk of Works ("ECoW") by the Company have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The terms of appointment shall:

a. impose a duty to monitor compliance with the ecological and hydrological commitments provided in the EIA Report, any micrositing under condition 8, the Construction and Environmental Management Plan approved under condition 11, the Habitat Management Plan approved under condition 20, including the monitoring and reporting of blanket bog habitat, pre-construction otter survey and otter protection plan, ("the ECoW works");

b. require the ECoW to report to the nominated construction project manager any incidences of non-compliance with the ECoW works at the earliest practical opportunity;

c. require the ECoW to submit a monthly report to the Planning Authority summarising works undertaken on site; and

d. require the ECoW to report to the Planning Authority any incidences of non-compliance with the ECoW works at the earliest practical opportunity.The ECoW shall be appointed on the approved terms throughout the period from Commencement of Development to completion of construction works and post-construction site reinstatement works.

2. No later than 18 months prior to the Date of Final Generation or the expiry of this consent (whichever is the earlier), details of the terms of appointment of an ECoW by the Company throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for written approval. The ECoW shall be appointed on the approved terms throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development**.**

Reason: To secure effective monitoring of and compliance with the environmental mitigation and management measures associated with the Development during the construction, decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases.

11. Construction and Environmental Management Plan

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) containing site specific details of all on-site construction works, post-construction

reinstatement, drainage and mitigation, together with details of their timetabling, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority.

2. The CEMP shall include (but is not limited to):

a. a site waste management plan (dealing with all aspects of waste produced during the construction period other than peat), including details of contingency planning in the event of accidental release of materials which could cause harm to the environment;

b. details of the formation of the construction compound, welfare facilities, any areas of hardstanding, turning areas, internal access tracks, car parking, material stockpiles, oil storage, lighting columns, and any construction compound boundary fencing;

c. a dust management plan;

d. site specific details for management and operation of any concrete batching plant (including disposal of pH rich waste water and substances);

e. details of measures to be taken to prevent loose or deleterious material being deposited on the local road network including wheel cleaning and lorry sheeting facilities, and measures to clean the site entrances and the adjacent local road network;

f. a pollution prevention and control method statement, including arrangements for the storage and management of oil and fuel on the site;

g. details of soil storage and management;

h. a drainage management strategy, demonstrating how all surface and waste water arising during and after development is to be managed and prevented from polluting any watercourses or sources;

i. a surface water and groundwater management and treatment plan, including details of the separation of clean and dirty water drains, and location of settlement lagoons for silt laden water;

j. details of temporary site illumination;

k. details of the construction of the access into the site and the creation and maintenance of associated visibility splays;

l. a Construction Method Statement for the following:

    i. crane pads;

    ii. turbine foundations;

    iii. working cable trenches;

    i. erection of the wind turbines and meteorological masts;

    ii. watercourse crossings;

m. details of post-construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas not required during the operation of the Development;

n. a wetland ecosystems survey and mitigation plan; and

o. a tree management plan.

3. The approved CEMP shall be implemented throughout the construction, post-construction site reinstatement and operational phases in full unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that all construction operations are carried out in a manner that minimises their impact on road safety, amenity and the environment, and that the mitigation measures contained in the EIA Report accompanying the application, or as otherwise agreed, are fully implemented.

12. Borrow Pit – Scheme of Works

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until a scheme for the working and restoration of the borrow pit forming part of the Development has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:

a. a detailed working method statement based on site survey information and ground investigations;

b. details of the handling of any overburden (including peat, soil and rock);

c. drainage measures, including measures to prevent surrounding areas of peatland, water dependant sensitive habitats and ground water dependent terrestrial ecosystems from drying out;

d. a programme of implementation of the works described in the scheme; and

e. details of the reinstatement, restoration and aftercare of the borrow pit to be undertaken at the end of the construction period, including topographic surveys of pre-construction profiles and details of topographical surveys to be undertaken of the restored borrow pit profiles.

2. The approved scheme shall thereafter be implemented in full**.**

Reason: To ensure that excavation of materials from the borrow pit(s) is carried out in a manner that minimises the impact on road safety, amenity and the environment, and to secure the restoration of borrow pit(s) at the end of the construction period.

13. Borrow Pit – Blasting

1. No blasting shall take place unless and until a scheme of blasting monitoring locations is submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Ground vibration from blasting shall not exceed a peak particle velocity of 6mm/second at the blasting monitoring locations approved in the scheme. The measurement is to be the maximum of three mutually perpendicular directions taken at the ground surface.

2. Subject to paragraph 3, blasting shall only take place on the site between the hours of 10.00 to 16.00 on Monday to Friday inclusive and 10.00 to 12.00 on Saturdays, with no blasting taking place on a Sunday or on a Public Holiday.

3. Blasting may take place at other times if approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that blasting activity is carried out within defined timescales to control impact on amenity.

14. Construction Hours

1. Construction work which is audible from any noise-sensitive receptor shall only take place between the hours of 07.00 to 19.00 on Monday to Friday inclusive and 07.00 to 16.00 on Saturdays, with no construction work taking place on a Sunday or Public Holiday. Outwith these specified hours, construction works on the site are to be limited to wind turbine erection, maintenance, emergency works, dust suppression, and the testing of plant and equipment unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.
2. HGV movements to access and leave the site (excluding abnormal loads) during construction of the wind farm shall be limited to 07.00 to 19.00 Monday to Friday, and 07.00 to 16.00 on Saturdays with no HGV movements to or from site taking place on a Sunday or Public Holiday unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the HGV movement.

Reason: In the interests of local amenity.

15. Traffic Management Plan

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until a Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland. The Traffic Management Plan shall include (but is not limited to):

a. the routeing of all traffic associated with the Development on the local road network;

b. measures to ensure that the specified routes are adhered to, including monitoring procedures;

c. details of all signage and lining arrangements to be put in place;

d. provisions for emergency vehicle access;

e. identification of a nominated person to whom any road safety issues can be referred; and

f. a plan for access by vehicles carrying abnormal loads, including but not limited to the number and timing of deliveries and the length, width and axle configuration of all extraordinary traffic associated with the Development.

2. The approved Traffic Management Plan shall be implemented in full, unless and until otherwise agreed in advance in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and to ensure that abnormal loads access the site in a safe manner.

16. Abnormal Loads Route Assessment

1. At least three months prior to the first delivery of an abnormal load, the Company shall undertake an Abnormal Load Route Assessment (ALRA), including trial runs, and submit a report describing the outcome of the ALRA for the written approval of the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland. The report shall include:

a. Details of a public relations strategy to inform the relevant communities of the programme of abnormal load deliveries;

b. Details of any accommodation measures required for the local road network including the removal of street furniture, junction widening and traffic management;

c. Details of the route for abnormal loads on the local and trunk road networks and any recommendations for delivery of abnormal loads; and

d. An assessment of the capacity of any bridge crossings on the route to cater for abnormal loads, and details of proposed upgrades and mitigation measures required for any bridge crossings.

2. Prior to the first delivery of an abnormal load, a programme for abnormal load deliveries shall be submitted to and approved in writing by Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland.

3. The details in the approved report shall thereafter be implemented in full in line with the approved programme for abnormal load deliveries.

Reason: In the interest of road safety and to ensure that abnormal loads access the site in a safe manner.

17. Road Mitigation Works

1) No development shall commence until a Road Mitigation Works Plan including physical road mitigation works has been submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Planning Authority. This shall include the delivery of:

a) physical mitigation works to sections of the B851 and/or B862 which the local roads authority determine are physically incapable of safely serving the predicated construction traffic, in addition to base traffic. In these sections the mitigation works shall include but not necessarily limited to:

   i. Twin Track Widening in open road sections;

   ii. Village Improvement Schemes within the villages and settlements, in keeping with the South Loch Ness - Road Improvement Strategy.

b) any additional roads mitigation identified in the Construction Traffic Management Plan once implemented, and through feedback gained from the Community Liaison Group.

c) a signed Section 48 agreement under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 which sets out the funding mechanism and the scope of works carried out in the event that the local roads authority wish to carry out some or all works themselves.

The agreed road mitigation works shall be implemented and operational prior to any construction works or development commencing on the Development site or as otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority in consultation with the local roads authority.

Reason: In order to secure a proportionate level of road mitigation works to safeguard the local road network and local communities due to the increased

numbers of HGV and workers traffic which will be generated and the ability of the network to cope with the increased vehicular movements.

18. Community Liaison Group

No development shall commence unless and until a Community Liaison Plan has been approved in writing by the Planning Authority after consultation with the relevant local community councils. This plan shall include the arrangements for establishing a Community Liaison Group to act as a vehicle for the community to be kept in formed of project progress by the Company. The terms and condition of these arrangement must include that the Community Liaison Group will have timely dialogue in advance on the provision of all transport-related mitigation measures and keep under review the timing of the delivery of turbine components. The terms and conditions shall detail the continuation of the Community Liaison Group until the wind farm has been completed and is fully operational. The approved Community Liaison Plan shall be implemented in full.

Reason: To assist with the provision of mitigation measures to minimise potential hazards to road users including pedestrians, travelling on the road networks.

19. Outdoor Access

No development shall commence until a finalised and detailed Outdoor Access Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The purpose of the plan shall be to site tracks and paths to maintain public access routes during construction, and to enhance public outdoor access in the long-term. The Outdoor Access Plan shall include details showing:

1) All existing access points, paths, core paths, tracks, rights of way and other routes (whether on land or inland water), and any areas currently outwith or excluded from statutory access rights under Part One of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, within and adjacent to the application site;
2) Any areas proposed for exclusion from statutory access rights, for reasons of privacy, disturbance or effect on curtilage related to buildings or structures;
3) All proposed paths, tracks and other alternative routes for use by walkers, riders, cyclists, canoeists, all-abilities users, etc. and any other relevant outdoor access enhancement (including construction specifications, signage, information leaflets, proposals for on-going maintenance etc.);
4) Any diversion of paths, tracks or other routes (whether on land or inland water), temporary or permanent, proposed as part of the Development (including details of mitigation measures, diversion works, duration and signage);
5) Formats, styles, palettes and standards for signposting and waymarking of the core path/Trail of the 7 Lochs from the B862 junction, through Garthbeg and onto the route south of Loch Mhor.

The approved Outdoor Access Plan, and any associated works, shall be implemented in full prior to the commencement of development or as otherwise may be agreed within the approved plan.

Reason: In the interests of securing public access rights.

20. Habitat Management Plan

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA NatureScot.
3. The HMP shall set out proposed habitat management of the site during the period of construction, operation, decommissioning, restoration and aftercare, and shall provide for the maintenance, monitoring and reporting of blanket bog habitat, pre-construction otter survey and otter protection plan outlined in 7.7.2 of the EIAR.
4. The HMP shall include provision for regular monitoring and review to be undertaken against the HMP objectives and measures for securing amendments or additions to the HMP in the event that the HMP objectives are not being met.
5. Unless and until otherwise agreed in advance in writing with the Planning Authority, the approved HMP (as amended from time to time with written approval of the Planning Authority) shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interests of good land management and the protection of habitats.

21. Species Protection Plan

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until protected species surveys have been carried out by a suitably qualified person. The surveys shall inform the mitigation measures required for the protection of such species which shall be incorporated into a Species Protection Plan.
2. The Species Protection Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot prior to the Commencement of Development.
3. The approved Species Protection Plan shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation.

22. Water Quality and Fish Monitoring Plan

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until an integrated Water Quality and Fish Monitoring Plan (WQFMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with Marine Scotland Science.
2. The WQFMP must take account of Marine Scotland Science's guidance and shall include:

a. provision that water quality sampling should be carried out for at least 12 months prior to construction commencing, during construction and for at least 12 months after construction is complete;

b. key hydrochemical parameters (including turbidity and flow data), the identification of sampling locations (including control sites), frequency of sampling, sampling methodology, data analysis and reporting;

c. fully quantitative electrofishing surveys at sites potentially impacted and at control sites for at least 12 months before construction commences, during construction and for at least 12 months after construction is completed to detect any changes in fish populations; and

d. appropriate site specific mitigation measures including those detailed in the EIA Report.

3. Thereafter, the WQFMP shall be implemented in full within the timescales set out in the WQFMP.

Reason: To ensure no deterioration of water quality and to protect fish populations within and downstream of the development area.

23. Golden Eagles

No development shall commence on site until a reasonable financial contribution to the NHZ10 Regional Eagle Management Plan has been agreed with the Council and paid.

Reason: To safeguard the eagle population in the area.

24. Peat Management Plan

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until a detailed site specific Peat Management Plan (PMP), taking account of the Outline Peat Management Plan (SEI Technical Appendix 13.2 of the EIA Report), ensuring reuse of all excavated peat onsite and delivering no less than the area of peat restoration works as outlined in Figure 13.2.7, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot and SEPA.

2. The PMP shall take account of site and ground investigations to minimise the loss of blanket bog including modified wet bog habitat from the track and turbine locations.

Reason: To ensure that disruption to peat is minimised.

25. Biodiversity Enhancement

No development shall commence until a scheme for the delivery of biodiversity enhancement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This shall include a suitable financial mechanism for the delivery of the scheme. Thereafter the scheme shall be implemented prior to first export of electricity from the site and maintained throughout the operation and decommissioning of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the development secures positive effects for biodiversity.

26. Construction Noise

No development shall commence until a full details of the temporary noise control barriers installed at the boundary of surrounding properties and all other mitigation measures has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority

Reason: to protect nearby residents from undue noise and disturbance and to ensure that noise limits are not exceeded and to enable prompt investigation of complaints.

27. Operational Noise

The rating level of noise immissions from the combined effects of the wind turbines forming part of the Development (including the application of any tonal penalty) when determined in accordance with the Guidance Notes, shall not exceed 35dB LA90 at any noise sensitive property at the time of consent and:

A) Prior to the First Export Date, the wind farm operator shall submit to the Local Authority for written approval a list of proposed independent consultants who may undertake compliance measurements in accordance with this condition. Amendments to the list of approved consultants shall be made only with the prior written approval of the Local Authority.

B) Within 21 days from receipt of a written request of the Local Authority, following a complaint to it alleging noise disturbance at a dwelling, the wind farm operator shall, at its expense, employ an independent consultant approved by the Local Authority to assess the level of noise imissions from the wind farm at the complainant's property (or a suitable alternative location agreed in writing with the Local Authority) in accordance with the procedures described in the attached Guidance Notes.
The written request from the Local Authority shall set out at least the date, time and location that the complaint relates to. Within 14 days of receipt of the written request of the Local Authority made under this paragraph (B), the wind farm operator shall provide the information relevant to the complaint to the Local Authority in the format set out in Guidance Note 1(e).

C) Prior to the commencement of any measurements by the independent consultant to be undertaken in accordance with these conditions, the wind farm operator shall submit to the Local Authority for written approval the proposed measurement location identified in accordance with the Guidance Notes where measurements for compliance checking purposes shall be undertaken.
Where the proposed measurement location is close to the wind turbines, rather than at the complainants property (to improve the signal to noise ratio), then the operators submission shall include a method to calculate the noise level from the wind turbines at the complainants property based on the noise levels measured at the agreed location (the alternative method). Details of the alternative method together with any associated guidance notes deemed necessary, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Authority prior to the commencement of any measurements.
Measurements to assess compliance with the noise limits of this condition shall be undertaken at the measurement location approved in writing by the Local Authority

D) Prior to the commencement of any measurements by the independent consultant to be undertaken in accordance with these conditions, the wind farm operator shall submit to the Local Authority for written approval a proposed assessment protocol setting out the following:
   i. the range of meteorological and operational conditions (the range of wind speeds, wind directions, power generation and times of day) to determine the assessment of rating level of noise imissions.
   ii. a reasoned assessment as to whether the noise giving rise to the complaint contains or is likely to contain a tonal component.

   The proposed range of conditions shall be those which prevailed during times when the complainant alleges there was disturbance due to noise, having regard to the information provided in the written request of the Local Authority under paragraph (B), and such others as the independent consultant considers necessary to fully assess the noise at the complainant's property. The assessment of the rating level of noise imissions shall be undertaken in accordance with the assessment protocol approved in writing by the Local Authority and the attached Guidance Notes.

E) The wind farm operator shall provide to the Local Authority the independent consultant's assessment of the rating level of noise imissions undertaken in accordance with the Guidance Notes within 2 months of the date of the written request of the Local Authority made under paragraph (B) of this condition unless the time limit is extended in writing by the Local Authority. The assessment shall include all data collected for the purposes of undertaking the compliance measurements, such data to be provided in the format set out in Guidance Note 1(e) of the Guidance Notes. The instrumentation used to undertake the measurements shall be calibrated in accordance with Guidance Note 1(a) and certificates of calibration shall be submitted to the Local Authority with the independent consultant's assessment of the rating level of noise emissions.

F) Where a further assessment of the rating level of noise imissions from the wind farm is required pursuant to Guidance Note 4(c) of the attached Guidance Notes, the wind farm operator shall submit a copy of the further assessment within 21 days of submission of the independent consultant's assessment pursuant to paragraph (E) above unless the time limit for the submission of the further assessment has been extended in writing by the Local Authority.

G) The wind farm operator shall continuously log power production, wind speed and wind direction, all in accordance with Guidance Note 1(d) of the attached Guidance Notes. The data from each wind turbine shall be retained for a period of not less than 24 months. The wind farm operator shall provide this information in the format set out in Guidance Note 1(e) of the attached Guidance Notes to the Local Authority on its request within 14 days of receipt in writing of such a request.

H) Where it is proposed to operate any turbine in a reduced running mode in order to meet the limits, no turbine shall be erected until a curtailment plan for the turbines has been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The curtailment plan shall demonstrate how the limits will be complied with and shall include the following:
   i. Definition of each noise reduced running mode including sound power data;

ii. The wind conditions (speed & direction) at which any noise reduced running mode will be implemented;
iii. Details of the manner in which the running modes will be defined in the SCADA data or how the implementation of the curtailment plan can be otherwise monitored and evidenced.

The Curtailment Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

I) Prior to the First Export Date, the wind farm operator shall submit to the Local Authority for written approval, a scheme of mitigation to be implemented in the event that the rating level, after adjustment for background noise contribution and any tonal penalty, is found to exceed the conditioned limits. The scheme shall define any reduced noise running modes to be used in the mitigation together with sound power levels in these modes and the manner in which the running modes will be defined in the SCADA data.

J) The scheme referred to in paragraph I above should include a framework of immediate and long term mitigation measures. The immediate mitigation measures must ensure the rating level will comply with the conditioned limits and must be implemented within seven days of the further assessment described in paragraph F being received by the Local Authority. These measures must remain in place, except during field trials to optimise mitigation, until a long term mitigation strategy is ready to be implemented.

Reason: to protect nearby residents from undue noise and disturbance and to ensure that noise limits are not exceeded and to enable prompt investigation of complaints.

28. Private Water Supplies

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until a private water supplies method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, detailing all mitigation measures to be delivered to secure the quality, quantity and continuity of water supplies to properties which are served by private water supplies at the date of this consent and which may be affected by the Development.
2. The method statement shall include water quality sampling methods and shall specify abstraction points.
3. The approved method statement shall thereafter be implemented in full.

Reason: To maintain a secure and adequate water supply to all properties with private water supplies that may be affected by the Development.

29. Aviation Safety

1. Prior to the installation of any turbine, the Company shall provide the Planning Authority, Ministry of Defence, Defence Geographic Centre and NATS with the following information in writing, and provide evidence to the Planning Authority that this has been done:
   (a) the dates of the expected stages of construction of the Development;
   (b) the height above ground level of the tallest structure forming part of the Development;
   (c) the maximum height of any construction equipment; and
   (d) the position of the wind turbines and masts in latitude and longitude.

Reason: In the interests of aviation safety.

30. Turbine operation

1. The wind turbines shall be maintained in the approved colour, free from external rust, staining or discolouration, until such time as the wind farm is decommissioned.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

31. Redundant turbines

If one or more wind turbines fails to generate electricity for a continuous period of 12 months, then unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority, the Company shall:

(a) Within one month of the expiration of the 12 month period, submit a scheme to the Planning Authority setting out how the relevant wind turbine(s) and associated infrastructure will be removed from the site and the ground restored; and

(b) Implement the approved scheme within six months of the date of its approval, all to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that any redundant wind turbine is removed from site, in the interests of safety, amenity and environmental protection.

32. Decommissioning, restoration and aftercare strategy

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until a decommissioning, restoration and aftercare strategy has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The decommissioning, restoration and aftercare strategy shall outline measures for the decommissioning of the Development and restoration and aftercare of the site, and shall include proposals for the removal of the Development, the treatment of ground surfaces, the management and timing of the works and environmental management provisions.

Reason: To ensure the decommissioning and removal of the Development in an appropriate and environmentally acceptable manner and the restoration and aftercare of the site, in the interests of safety, amenity and environmental protection.

33. Site Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare

1. The Development shall cease to generate electricity to the grid network by no later than the date falling 30 years from the Date of Final Commissioning.

2. No later than one year prior to the Date of Final Generation or the expiry of the section 36 consent (whichever is earlier) a detailed decommissioning, restoration and aftercare plan, based upon the principles of the approved decommissioning, restoration and aftercare strategy, shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The detailed decommissioning, restoration and aftercare plan shall provide updated and detailed proposals, in accordance with relevant guidance at that time, for the removal of the Development, the treatment of ground surfaces, the management and timing of the works and environment management provisions which shall include (but is not limited to):

(a) a site waste management plan (dealing with all aspects of waste produced during the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases and, including details of measures to be taken to minimise waste associated with the Development and promote the recycling of materials and infrastructure components);

(b) details of the formation of the construction compound, welfare facilities, any areas of hardstanding, turning areas, internal access tracks, car parking, material stockpiles, oil storage, lighting columns, and any construction compound boundary fencing;

(c) a dust management plan;

(d) details of measures to be taken to prevent loose or deleterious material being deposited on the local road network, including wheel cleaning and lorry sheeting facilities, and measures to clean the site entrances and the adjacent local road network;

(e) a pollution prevention and control method statement, including arrangements for the storage and management of oil and fuel on the site;

(f) details of measures for soil storage and management;

(g) a surface water and groundwater management and treatment plan, including details of the separation of clean and dirty water drains, and location of settlement lagoons for silt laden water;

(h) details of measures for sewage disposal and treatment;

(i) temporary site illumination;

(j) the construction of any temporary access into the site and the creation and maintenance of associated visibility splays;

(k) details of watercourse crossings; and

(l) [a species protection plan based on surveys for protected species (including birds) carried out no longer than eighteen months prior to submission of the plan.

3. The Development shall be decommissioned, the site restored and aftercare undertaken prior to the date falling three years after the Date of Final Generation and in accordance with the approved detailed decommissioning, restoration and aftercare plan.

Reason: To ensure the decommissioning and removal of the Development in an appropriate and environmentally acceptable manner and the restoration and aftercare of the site, in the interests of safety, amenity and environmental protection.

34. Financial Guarantee

1. There shall be no Commencement of Development unless and until a bond or other form of financial guarantee in terms reasonably acceptable to the Planning Authority which secures the cost of performance of all decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in condition 27 is submitted to the Planning Authority.
2. The value of the financial guarantee shall be agreed between the Company and the Planning Authority or, failing agreement, determined (on application by either party) by a suitably qualified independent professional as being sufficient to meet the costs of all decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in condition 27
3. The financial guarantee shall be maintained in favour of the Planning Authority until the completion of all decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in condition 27.
4. The value of the financial guarantee shall be reviewed by agreement between the Company and the Planning Authority or, failing agreement, determined (on application by either party) by a suitably qualified independent professional not less than every five years, and at the time of the approval of the detailed decommissioning, restoration and aftercare plan approved under condition 27. The value of the financial guarantee shall be increased or decreased to take account of any variation in costs of compliance with decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in condition 27 and best practice prevailing at the time of each review.

Reason: to ensure that there are sufficient funds to secure performance of the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare conditions attached to this deemed planning permission in the event of default by the Company.

Definitions

In this consent and deemed planning permission:-

“Commencement of Development” means the implementation of the consent and deemed planning permission by the carrying out of a material operation within the meaning of section 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

“the Company” means BayWa r.e UK Limited having its registered office at 22 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1LS, Company No. 07538870, or such other person who from time to time may lawfully have the benefit of this consent.

“Date of First Commissioning” means the date on which electricity is first exported to the grid network on a commercial basis from any of the wind turbines constructed as part of the Development.

“Date of Final Commissioning” means the earlier of (i) date when electricity is first exported to the electricity grid network on a commercial basis from the last of the wind turbines being constructed as part of the Development; or (ii) the date falling [eighteen] months from the Date of First Commissioning.

“Date of Final Generation” means the date that the Development ceases to generate electricity to the grid network.

“Development” means the development authorised by this section 36 consent and deemed planning permission as described in Annex 1 Part B.

“EIA Report” means the Environmental Impact Assessment Report in respect of the Development dated January 2021 and SEI dated June 2022.

“Planning Authority” means Highland Council.

“Public Holiday” means;

- New Year's Day, if it is not a Sunday or, if it is a Sunday, 3rd January.
- 2nd January, if it is not a Sunday or, if it is a Sunday, 3rd January.
- Good Friday.
- Easter Monday.
- The first Monday in May.
- The first Monday in August.
- The third Monday in September.
- 30th November, if it is not a Saturday or Sunday or, if it is a Saturday or Sunday, the first Monday following that day.
- Christmas Day, if it is not a Sunday or, if it is a Sunday, 27th December.
- Boxing Day, if it is not a Sunday or, if it is a Sunday, 27th December.

“SEPA” means the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

Reason: To ensure that a plan is in place to deal with the storage and reuse of peat within the application site, including peat stability and slide risks.

Guidance Notes for Operational Noise Condition – Condition 27

These notes are to be read with and form part of the noise condition. They further explain the condition and specify the methods to be employed in the assessment of complaints about noise imissions from the wind farm. The rating level at each integer wind speed is the arithmetic sum of the wind farm noise level as determined from the best-fit curve described in Note 2 of these Guidance Notes and any tonal penalty applied in accordance with Note 3 with any necessary correction for residual background noise levels in accordance with Note 4. Reference to ETSU-R-97 refers to the publication entitled "The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms" (1997) published by the Energy Technology Support unit (ETSU) for the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Guidance Note 1

a. The LA90,10 minute noise statistic should be measured at the complainant’s property, using a sound level meter of EN 60651/BS EN 60804 Type 1, or BS

EN 61672 Class 1 quality (or the equivalent UK adopted standard in force at the time of the measurements) set to measure using the fast time weighted response as specified in BS EN 60651/BS EN 60804 or BS EN 61672-1 (or the equivalent UK adopted standard in force at the time of the measurements). This should be calibrated in accordance with the procedure specified in BS4142: 1997 (or the equivalent UK adopted standard in force at the time of the measurements). Measurements shall be undertaken in such a manner to enable a tonal penalty to be applied in accordance with Guidance Note 3.

b. The microphone should be mounted at 1.2 – 1.5 metres above ground level, fitted with a two-layer windshield or suitable equivalent approved in writing by the Planning Authority, and placed outside the complainant's dwelling. Measurements should be made in "free field" conditions. To achieve this, the microphone should be placed at least 3.5 metres away from the building facade or any reflecting surface except the ground at the approved measurement location. In the event that the consent of the complainant for access to his or her property to undertake compliance measurements is withheld, the Company shall submit for the written approval of the Planning Authority details of the proposed alternative representative measurement location prior to the commencement of measurements and the measurements shall be undertaken at the approved alternative representative measurement location.

c. The LA90,10 minute measurements should be synchronised with measurements of the 10-minute arithmetic mean wind and operational data logged in accordance with Guidance Note 1(d), including the power generation data from the turbine control systems of the wind farm.

d. To enable compliance with the conditions to be evaluated, the Company shall continuously log arithmetic mean wind speed in metres per second and wind direction in degrees from north for each turbine and arithmetic mean power generated by each turbine, all in successive 10-minute periods. Unless an alternative procedure is previously agreed in writing with the Planning Authority, such as direct measurement at a height of 10 metres, this wind speed, averaged across all operating wind turbines, and corrected to be representative of wind speeds measured at a height of 10m, shall be used as the basis for the analysis. It is this 10 metre height wind speed data, which is correlated with the noise measurements determined as valid in accordance with Guidance Note 2. All 10-minute periods shall commence on the hour and in 10- minute increments thereafter.

e. Data provided to the Planning Authority in accordance with the noise condition shall be provided in comma separated values in electronic format.

f. A data logging rain gauge shall be installed in the course of the assessment of the levels of noise immissions. The gauge shall record over successive 10-minute periods synchronised with the periods of data recorded in accordance with Note 1(d).

Guidance Note 2

a. The noise measurements shall be made so as to provide not less than 20 valid data points as defined in Guidance Note 2 (b)

b. Valid data points are those measured in the conditions specified in the agreed written protocol under paragraph (d) of the noise condition, but excluding any periods of rainfall measured in the vicinity of the sound level meter. Rainfall shall be assessed by use of a rain gauge that shall log the occurrence of rainfall in each 10 minute period concurrent with the measurement periods set out in Guidance Note 1. In specifying such conditions the Planning Authority shall have regard to those conditions which prevailed during times when the complainant alleges there was disturbance due to noise or which are considered likely to result in a breach of the limits.

c. For those data points considered valid in accordance with Guidance Note 2(b), values of the LA90,10 minute noise measurements and corresponding values of the 10- minute 10- metre height wind speed averaged across all operating wind turbines using the procedure specified in Guidance Note 1(d), shall be plotted on an XY chart with noise level on the Y-axis and the 10-metre height mean wind speed on the X-axis. A least squares, “best fit” curve of an order deemed appropriate by the independent consultant (but which may not be higher than a fourth order) should be fitted to the data points and define the wind farm noise level at each integer speed.

Guidance Note 3

a. Where, in accordance with the approved assessment protocol under paragraph (d) of the noise condition, noise immissions at the location or locations where compliance measurements are being undertaken contain or are likely to contain a tonal component, a tonal penalty is to be calculated and applied using the following rating procedure.

b. For each 10 minute interval for which LA90,10 minute data have been determined as valid in accordance with Guidance Note 2 a tonal assessment shall be performed on noise immissions during 2 minutes of each 10 minute period. The 2 minute periods should be spaced at 10 minute intervals provided that uninterrupted uncorrupted data are available (“the standard procedure”). Where uncorrupted data are not available, the first available uninterrupted clean 2 minute period out of the affected overall 10 minute period shall be selected. Any such deviations from the standard procedure, as described in Section 2.1 on pages 104-109 of ETSU-R-97, shall be reported.

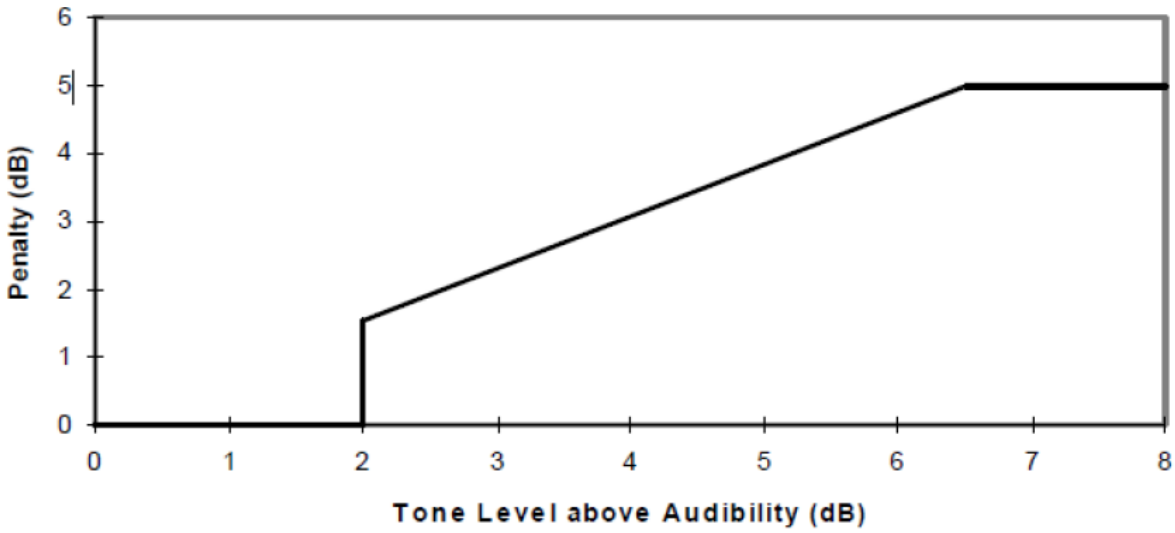
c. For each of the 2 minute samples the tone level above or below audibility shall be calculated by comparison with the audibility criterion given in Section 2.1 on pages 104-109 of ETSU-R-97.

d. The tone level above audibility shall be plotted against wind speed for each of the 2 minute samples. Samples for which the tones were below the audibility criterion or no tone was identified, a value of zero audibility shall be used.

e. The average tone level above audibility shall be calculated for each wind speed bin, each bin being 1 metre per second wide and centred on integer

wind speeds. This process shall be repeated for each integer wind speed for which there is an assessment of overall levels in Note 2.

f. The tonal penalty is derived from the margin above audibility of the tone according to the figure below.



Note 4

a. If a tonal penalty is to be applied in accordance with Guidance Note 3 the rating level of the turbine noise at each wind speed is the arithmetic sum of the measured noise level as determined from the best fit curve described in Guidance Note 2 and the penalty for tonal noise as derived in accordance with Guidance Note 3 at each integer wind speed within the range specified by the Planning Authority in its written protocol under paragraph (d) of the noise condition.

b. If no tonal penalty is to be applied then the rating level of the turbine noise at each wind speed is equal to the measured noise level as determined from the best fit curve described in Guidance Note 2.

c. In the event that the rating level is above the limit(s) set out in the Table attached to the noise conditions or the noise limits for a complainant's dwelling approved in accordance with paragraph (e) of the noise condition, the independent consultant shall undertake a further assessment of the rating level to correct for background noise so that the rating level relates to wind turbine noise immission only.

d. The Company shall ensure that all the wind turbines in the development are turned off for such period as the independent consultant requires to undertake the further assessment. The further assessment shall be undertaken in accordance with the following steps:

e. Repeating the steps in Guidance Note 2, with the wind farm switched off, and determining the background noise (L3) at each integer wind speed within the range requested by the Planning Authority in its written request under paragraph (c) and the approved protocol under paragraph (d) of the noise condition.

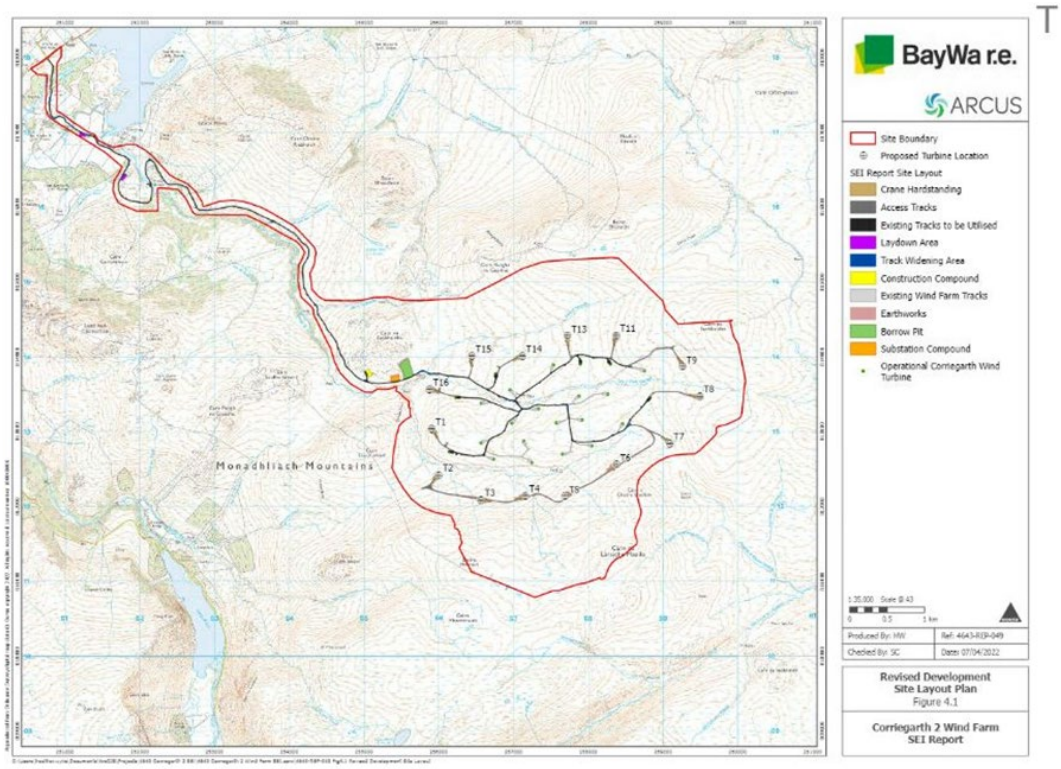
f. The wind farm noise (L1) at this speed shall then be calculated as follows where L2 is the measured level with turbines running but without the addition of any tonal penalty:

$$L_1 = 10 \log\left[10^{L_2/10} - 10^{L_3/10}\right]$$

a. The rating level shall be re-calculated by adding arithmetically the tonal penalty (if any is applied in accordance with Note 3) to the derived wind farm noise L1 at that integer wind speed.

b. If the rating level after adjustment for background noise contribution and adjustment for tonal penalty (if required in accordance with note 3 above) at any integer wind speed lies at or below the values set out in the Table attached to the conditions or at or below the noise limits approved by the Planning Authority for a complainant's dwelling in accordance with paragraph (e) of the noise condition then no further action is necessary. If the rating level at any integer wind speed exceeds the values set out in the Table attached to the conditions or the noise limits approved by the Planning Authority for a complainant's dwelling in accordance with paragraph (e) of the noise condition then the Development fails to comply with the conditions.

Part D



Signature:	David Mudie
Designation:	Area Planning Manager – South
Author:	Roddy Dowell
Background Papers:	Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans:

1. Location Plan	Figure 1.1
2. Revised Development Site Layout Plan	Figure 4.1
3. EIA v SEI Layout Comparison	Figure 3.2

Appendix 2 – Viewpoint Assessment Appraisal – Visual Impact

Viewpoint		Receptor	Sensitivity of Visual Receptor	Magnitude of Impact/Change	Effect on Visual Receptor at Viewpoint	Notes
Viewpoint 1 – Gorthleck. 6.59 km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 0 Turbine tips - 3	APP	Local residents and road users	High	Minor	Not Significant	The tip of turbine T13 will be visible from this view with the tips of T11 and T15 almost hidden. The overall visual effect is considered to be perceptible but not a detracting feature. The amended scheme has reduced the height of T13 with T15 pulled in to better relate to the other 2 turbines. Agree with the applicant's assessment that there will be a Moderate Impact on receptors will not be significant.
	THC			Minor	Not Significant	
Viewpoint 2 – Boleskine Parish Church 6.96km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 4 Turbine tips -8	APP	Local residents and road users	High	Minor	Not Significant	Whilst turbines are not an uncharacteristic feature in the landscape with Corriegarth Wind Farm also within view T1 appears particularly stark with the increased height drawing attention. The changes proposed through the SEI have improved the sense of horizontal spread, however, T2 and T3 still appear as outliers making the viewer question what is beyond the ridgeline. In this view the turbines at Corriegarth Wind Farm are relatively well confined. A guiding principle of Corriegarth Wind Farm was containment of development within a natural bowl of the landscape. The proposed development undermines the visual containment of Stronelairg to a certain extent. This viewpoint is effectively representative of the issues associated with the views from higher ground across Loch Ness (such as VP11) from a lower vantage point and raises the same concerns. This has led to a conclusion that the magnitude of
	THC			Moderate	**Significant**	

						impact has been slightly underplayed by the applicant at this viewpoint. It is considered there is Moderate change to the baseline conditions. The effect on receptors is considered Significant.
Viewpoint 3 - B862 West of Corriegarth Lodge 7.24km 6.59 km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 10 Turbine tips -14	APP	Local residents and road users	Medium	Moderate	**Significant**	It is not agreed with the applicant's assessment that receptors have Medium sensitivity from this location which is considered High for all the viewpoints. Broad agreement with the applicant's comments noting that a significant number of hubs and blade tips will be seen from this location (10 turbines) along with those that will skyline (4 turbines). T15 is still fairly prominent within the landscape. T1 still appears raised within the landscape. Previous outlier turbines have been pulled in marginally towards Corriegarth Wind Farm. Stacking effects from clustered turbines have been improved slightly. The changes proposed through the SEI have brought about some improvements noted above. However, the large numbers of turbines in view with many skylining above the ridgeline means It is considered there is Moderate change to the baseline conditions. Overall, this has lead to a conclusion of Moderate impact on receptors. The effect on receptors is considered Significant.
	THC		High	Moderate	**Significant**	
Viewpoint 4 - South Loch Ness Trail, north of Whitebridge 7.54 km distance from nearest turbine	APP	Recreational users	High	Moderate	**Significant**	Broad agreement with the applicant's comments noting the 3 prominent turbines T9, T11 and T13 skylining turbines which increase the horizontal expanse. The amended scheme has improved the effects from this view with minimised stacking effects, reduced turbine heights with outlier turbines pulled

Visibility: Turbine hubs – 3 Turbine tips - 8	THC			Moderate	**Significant**	in further to better reflect the existing grouping which has improved. Whilst the changes proposed through SEI has a better geometric balance the 3 skylining turbines in particular means there is Moderate change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Significant.
Viewpoint 5 – Errogie 8.17km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 4 Turbine tips - 7	APP	Local residents and road users	High	Moderate	**Significant**	Broad agreement with the applicant's comments noting there is stacking of the prominent T1 and T16 in the dipped landform. Whilst only tips are visible above the ridgeline for both T11 and T14 appear disconnected from the rest of the group. The changes proposed through SEI are negligible. There is Moderate change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Significant.
	THC			Moderate	**Significant**	
Viewpoint 6 - Beinn Bhreac Mhor 10.38km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 6 Turbine tips - 7	APP	Hill walkers, recreational users	High	Minor	Not Significant	Broad agreement with the applicant's comments that the proposed development will be seen in at relative distance combined with successive views of existing wind farms including Dunmaglass, Millenium and Beinneun. The changes proposed through SEI removed the projecting T10 but the hub and tips of the pronounced T8 remain above the ridgeline. T11 and T13 still appear on the periphery of the existing cluster. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant.
	THC			Minor	Not Significant	
Viewpoint 7 - General Wade's Military Road	APP	Walkers, recreational users	High	Moderate	**Significant**	Broad agreement with the applicant's comments noting the proposed development will be seen either side of the intervening landform. There is a lack of containment with the horizontal expanse increased by T11, T13, T14, T15 and T16.

11.19km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 7 Turbine tips - 3	THC			Moderate	**Significant**	The changes proposed through SEI removed the conspicuous T10 which is an improvement. There is Moderate change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant.
Viewpoint 8 - Great Glen Way, East of Creag Dhearg 11.7km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 14 Turbine tips - 14	APP	Hill walkers, walkers, recreational users	High	Minor	Not Significant	All 14 turbine hubs and blade tips are seen from this viewpoint. T8, T9, T11 and T2, T3 still appear on the periphery and T1 will noticeably emphasise the change in scale from the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm turbines to the proposed development. Ideally, these turbines would have been pulled in further to the rest of the group, however, on balance the proposed development does not extend beyond the bowl landform from this viewpoint. The changes proposed through SEI removed the prominent T10 with a more rational line of turbines contained within the undulating upland plateau. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant.
	THC			Minor	Not Significant	
Viewpoint 9 - Carn Sgulain 11.6 km distance from nearest turbine	APP	Hill walkers	High	Minor	Not Significant	T8, T9, T11 appear as outliers extending the horizontal pull of turbines across the landscape. The increased elevation of T8, T9, T11 means they appear more noticeable drawing the eye.

Visibility: Turbine hubs – 8 Turbine tips - 11	THC			Minor	Not Significant	The changes proposed through SEI removed the prominent T10 with a more comprehensible layout of turbines that better flow across the landscape. The appearance is now more coherent looking like the same development as opposed to different turbines merging. Sticks to the bowl/plate landscape. As above for VP8, ideally, T8, T9, T11 would have been pulled in further to the rest of the group, however, on balance the proposed development does not extend beyond the bowl landform from this viewpoint. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant.
Viewpoint 10 - A82 Achnahannet 13.2km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 7 Turbine tips - 11	APP	Local residents, road users	Medium	Minor	Not Significant	It is not agreed with the applicant's assessment that receptors have Medium sensitivity from this location which is considered High for all the viewpoints. The end cluster of T1, T2, T3, T16 appears pronounced but generally contained within the landform. T5, T14, T15 draw the eye with hubs breaching the skyline. The changes proposed through SEI removed the protruding T10 with turbines dragged back from the rugged peaks. The relocated T11 has reduced the horizontal expanse with the overall composition marginally improved. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant.
	THC		High	Minor	Not Significant	

Viewpoint 11 - Meall Fuar-mhonaidh 13.2km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 14 Turbine tips - 14	APP	Hill walkers, recreational walkers and tourists. Representative of elevated views from a popular local hill summit on the north-western side of Loch Ness, within Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA.	High	Minor	Not Significant	From this viewpoint there are expansive views from the south and east to the Monadhliaths and Cairngorm Mountains. All 14 tubines are in view. Some turbines are backclothed by the landscape but there is an element of “overspill” into a different part of the landscape due to the horizontal spread of turbines beyond Stronelairg Wind Farm which is contained within a bowl in the landform. The horizontal spread and the location of turbines T8, T9, T11 along with T2 and T3 make them appear prominent with the eye drawn to these outliers. In doing so it is considered that there is a discernible alteration to one of the key characteristics of the baseline but it is acknowledged that the underlining view composition would be broadly consistent with the baseline. This has led to a conclusion that the magnitude of impact has been slightly underplayed by the applicant at this viewpoint. It is considered there is Moderate change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Significant.
	THC			Moderate	**Significant**	

Viewpoint 12 – B862 north of Torness 13.6km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 3 Turbine tips - 8	APP	Local residents, road users	Medium	Minor	Not Significant	It is not agreed with the applicant's assessment that receptors have Medium sensitivity from this location which is considered High for all the viewpoints T1 and T16 at the end of the group increase the horizontal expanse of development. Although generally contained within the landscape T16 draws the eye with the hub breaching the skyline. The changes proposed through SEI removed the perceptible T10 with T1 and T2 relocated closer to the group minimising the horizontal spread. The overall arrangement has marginally improved. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant.
	THC		High	Minor	Not Significant	
Viewpoint 13 - Geal Charn 13.3km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 6 Turbine tips - 11	APP	Hill walkers	High	Minor	Not Significant	T7, T8, T9 at the end of the group increase the horizontal span of development. Whilst generally contained within the landform the height would have been reduced to minimise the current skylining effects experienced. T1 and T3 appear as outliers at the end of the group and whilst only a portion of the blade tips will be seen above the ridgeline it makes the viewer question how far development extends beyond the hills. The changes proposed through SEI removed the perceptible T10 with T8 relocated closer to the group curtailing the horizontal spread. The overall composition has marginally improved. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant.
	THC			Minor	Not Significant	

Viewpoint 14 - Corrieyairack Hill 18.3km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 8 Turbine tips - 14	APP	Hill walkers, recreational walkers, cyclists and recreational events (duathalon)	High	Minor	Not Significant	Wind turbines are not an uncharacteristic feature in the view with Stronelairg, Dell, Correigarth, Aberarder and Dunmaglass Wind Farms also within the wider surrounding area. T5, T6, T7, T8 slightly increase the horizontal expanse of development. In this view the turbines are generally contained within the rolling uplands of the Mondhaliath, albeit, with the occasional skylining hub and blades such as T8 and T11 breaching the horizon. The changes proposed through SEI are negligible from this viewpoint. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant.
	THC			Minor	Not Significant	
Viewpoint 15 - Carn na Leitire 20.4km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 10 Turbine tips - 14	APP	Hill walkers	High	Minor	Not Significant	T8 and T9 appear as outliers at the end of the group with hubs and tips above the horizon which makes the viewer question how far development extends beyond the hills. The changes proposed through SEI are negligible from this viewpoint. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant.
	THC			Minor	Not Significant	

Viewpoint 16 - North Kessock - A9 northbound picnic area 34.5 km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 2 Turbine tips - 9	APP	Local residents, road users	High	Minor	Not Significant	T7 appears slightly more prominent than the rest of the group but does not raise concern given the distance. The changes proposed through SEI are negligible from this viewpoint. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant
	THC			Minor	Not Significant	
Viewpoint 17 - Ben Tee 35.4km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 10 Turbine tips - 14	APP	Hill walkers	High	Minor	Not Significant	Skylining is generally limited with the majority of turbines backlothed by the landform, however, there are some stacking effects. The changes proposed through SEI are negligible from this viewpoint. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant
	THC			Minor	Not Significant	
Viewpoint 18 - Toll Creagach 39.3km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 14 Turbine tips - 14	APP		High	Minor	Not Significant	The development can be seen encircling the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm from this viewpoint. The backlothed turbines appear as an appropriate extension contained within the bowl landform with minimal inappropriate horizontal spread. The overall effect is to reinforce the design concept of containment of Corriegarth Wind Farms which creates a disciplined visual flow into the landscape. The changes proposed through SEI are negligible from this viewpoint.
	THC			Minor	Not Significant	

						There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant
Viewpoint 19 - Ptarmigan Restaurant, Cairngorm 41.9km distance from nearest turbine Visibility: Turbine hubs – 5 Turbine tips - 11	APP		High	Minor	Not Significant	The distance and topography will limit the number of turbines in the view and will mitigate the visual effects to a large extent. Even so, the turbines are discernible in the distance. The changes proposed through SEI are negligible from this viewpoint. There is Minor change to the baseline conditions. The effect is considered Not Significant
	THC			Minor	Not Significant	

Appendix 3 - Assessment against Landscape and Visual Assessment Criteria contained within Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

Criterion 1 is related to relationships between settlements/key locations and the wider landscape. The nearest settlement is Fort Augustus, 17km to the south west with Newtonmore and Kingussie 17km and 19km respectively to the south east. Various other smaller settlements such as Whitebridge, Errogie and Gorthleck. Due to the site location and topography, the proposed turbines are relatively well screened from larger settlements/key locations and access routes and approaches into settlements/key locations within the study area. This is demonstrated by the ZTV and the visual impact assessment contained within SEI Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity. Where visible, from residential areas, it is considered unlikely to lead to many significant visual effects, although some significant visual effects are anticipated for a small number of visual receptors in scattered properties to the south east of Loch Ness along the B862 as noted by VP1, VP2, VP3, VP4, VP5 and VP7.

In terms of Key Views noted by the Loch Ness Sensitivity Study the ZTV indicated that the turbines would be seen from Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh. Whilst the effects from Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh are considered to be Moderate (Significant), the scheme would not intrude on key views down the Great Glen and there would be limited views toward the scheme from key routes.

The proposed development would not contribute to the perception of settlements or key locations being encircled by wind energy development to a point that would be unacceptable. The proposed development would not be seen in the majority of views within or from settlements/key locations or from the majority of settlement approach routes. The proposed development meets the threshold of Criteria 1, however there will be localised sections where it is not met.

Criterion 2 is related to the transitional nature of key gateway locations and routes. The site is located within LN6: Monadhliath ridge and tops, Rolling Uplands. The Supplementary Guidance does not identify any gateway locations for LN6. The A9, A82 and B862 are noted as key routes. Given the site location and topography the proposed turbines are generally screened from the trunk road with very little theoretical visibility and an intermittent stretch of approximately along the B862 where both the proposed development and Corriegarth Wind Farm will be seen. This is generally this limited to areas within the vicinity of the Suidhe viewpoint (VP 7: General Wade's Military Road), near the junction with the B852 (VP3: B862 West of Corriegarth Lodge) and Errogie (VP5: Errogie). From these locations, whilst the effects are considered Significant, the proposed development will be seen in oblique views from short extents of the road and will not adversely affect the overall sequential experience of road users travelling on the B862. Screening from intervening vegetation and landform between the site and the road mitigates the impact of the visual effect for the B862 as a whole.

The proposed development would not reduce or detract from the transitional experience of key gateway locations and routes or overwhelm or otherwise detract from landscape characteristics which contribute the distinctive transitional experience found at key gateway locations and routes. It is agreed the proposed development meets the threshold of Criteria 2.

Criterion 3 is related to the extent to which the proposal affects the fabric and setting of valued natural and cultural landmarks. The surrounding land hosts a number of archaeological remains and built heritage.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas within the application site. The surrounding area contains a number of historic environment features. Within the 10km Study Area there are 5 Scheduled Monuments, 28 Listed Buildings (2 Category A Listed Buildings, 18 Category B Listed Buildings, and 8 Category C Listed Buildings). The site is within a wider area which contains a number of cultural landmarks such as General Wade's Military Road, popular routes such as the Great Glen Way, Munro's such as Carn Dearg, Carn Sgulain, A'Chailleach) and numerous Core Paths.

Popular hill tops and recreational routes include Meal Fuar-Monaidh (VP11) on the north western side of Loch Ness overlooking Loch Ness to the east/south east. Meal Fuar-mhonaidh in particular, is one example of a distinct hill peak nearly 700m high that stands out as a landmark clearly visible from both ends of the loch. Meall Fuar-Mhonaid is a good vantage point from which to appreciate the massive scale and alignment of the Great Glen fault within a backcloth of the Monadhliath massif to the south and the Balmacann and Affric mountain interior to the north west, both areas which possess wildness qualities. While the proposed turbines would not be dominant features in the view they could be considered to add to a sense of encirclement given the proposed development would extend the horizontal spread of turbines. However, the amendments have reduced these effects further by amending the layout to pull in outlier turbines to better reflect Corriegarth Wind Farm and limit unacceptable overspill from the contained bowl landform.

In terms of VP11 Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh, the removal of 2 turbines and amended layout is considered beneficial as its help to limit the horizontal expanse spilling out further beyond the contained bowl landform that Corriegarth Wind Farm currently sits in. However, it is acknowledged that this will not change the overall effect at VP11 which is still considered to be Moderate (Significant).

The Great Glen is located approximately 9km from the nearest wind turbine of the Development. The setting and characteristics of this natural feature, including the dramatic and linear nature of the landform is represented by VP8 Great Glen Way, East of Creag Dhearg and VP10: A82 Achnahannet). General Wade's Military Road is approximately 7km from the nearest turbine of the proposed development. In views from the Suidhe viewpoint (VP 7: General Wade's Military Road), the Development will be seen extending across the angle of the view between the Corriegarth Wind Farm and Dunmaglass Wind Farm.

The Monadhliath Mountains and a number of Munros to the south/south east will have visibility of the proposed development and are represented by VP9. The table in Appendix 2 of this report reviews effects at these viewpoints further. The proposed development would be visible from within a number of sites designated for their natural qualities including Cairngorms National Park, Wild Land Areas, Special Landscape Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest. There are significant concerns regarding the impact on the WLA20 given the proposed development will introduce a new prominent feature into an area noted for its solitude, sanctuary and sense of remoteness. However, the effects are relatively localised and set against the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm and the design objectives to limit the impacts on designated sites more widely have generally been achieved.

The proposed development generally meets the threshold of Criterion 3.

Criterion 4 is related to the amenity and visual appeal of key recreational routes and ways. For this scheme this would include a number of popular recreational routes and the core paths in the area.

These include but are not limited to those travelling along the A82, B862, B852 public roads; through the Corrieyairack Pass/General Wade's Military Road; East Highland Way; Great Glen Way; National Cycle Network (NCN) 78; South East Loch Ness Trail); Great Glen Canoe Trail; upon Munro's (such as Carn Dearg, Carn Sgulain, A'Chailleach) upon Corbetts (such as Carn na Saobhaidhe) and numerous Core Paths.

As covered above in Criterion 3, the turbines will be visible from a section of the Great Glen Way and Meal Fuar-Monaidh (VP11) on the north western side of Loch Ness. Whilst not the dominant features the proposed development would have a cumulative affect as the turbines would extend the horizontal spread of development either side of Corriegarth Wind Farm when looking south east across Loch Ness. Given the upland location of this stretch of the Great Glen Way there will be views of the development for sustained periods walking in a northerly or southerly direction. Whilst the slopes above the northern shores of Loch Ness have views of the wind farm the southern slopes do not. There is intermittent visibility from key recreational routes to the south of Loch Ness including the National Cycle Route, the South Loch Ness Trail from Fort Augustus to Foyers.

Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (VP11) is regarded as a key recreational route which would have visibility of the proposed wind farm for a sustained period of approximately with further intermittent views along the track. As noted previously, the removal of 2 turbines and amended layout is considered beneficial as its help to limit the horizontal expanse spilling out further beyond the contained bowl landform that Corriegarth Wind Farm currently sits in. However, it is acknowledged that this will not change the overall effect at VP11 which is still considered to be Moderate (Significant).

The proposed development generally meets the threshold of Criterion 4 albeit there will be Significant adverse effects and some localised effects from Meall Fuar-Mhonaidh.

Criterion 5 is related to the amenity and visual appeal of transport routes. The proposed development is generally hidden from view with only minimal theoretical visibility from the A9. There is theoretical visibility along the A82 between Invermoriston and Drumnadrochit at distance of approximately 11km to 15km to the west and north west of the proposed development. Views east from the road are mostly screened by intervening vegetation, however there are occasional views looking across Loch Ness (such as VP10: Achnahannet). The visual effect along the A82 is considered Not Significant.

There is theoretical visibility for intermittent stretches of along the B862 where both the proposed development and Corriegarth Wind Farm will be seen. This is generally limited to areas within the vicinity of the Suidhe viewpoint (VP 7: General Wade's Military Road), near the junction with the B852 (VP3: B862 West of Corriegarth Lodge) and Errogie (VP5: Errogie). From these locations, whilst the effects are considered Significant, the proposed development will be seen in oblique views from short extents of the road and will not adversely affect the overall sequential experience of road users travelling on the B862.

Screening from intervening vegetation and landform between the site and the road mitigates the impact of the visual effect for the B862 as a whole.

Whilst a Moderate and Significant visual effect has been identified for localised extents of the B862, this will be limited to short sections of the road. As such, the proposed development would not affect the amenity or visual appeal of transport routes (including tourist routes as well as local road access) on balance. The turbines and associated infrastructure would not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes. It is agreed the proposed development meets the threshold of Criteria 5.

Criterion 6 is related to pattern of development. The pattern of development is discussed under Criteria 1 above in so far as it relates to encirclement and raised no issues given the lack of views from settlements.

The proposed development will reduce the visual separation between wind energy developments and from a number of viewpoints there is no clear visual break from Corriegarth Wind Farm. This is noticeable from lowland viewpoints such as VP2, VP3, VP4, VP5, VP7 and upland viewpoints such as VP11.

Significant mitigation was sought prior to Corriegarth Wind Farm gaining permission. Turbine heights and location limited skylining with the scheme generally backclothed by the bowl landform that lessened the visual and landscape impacts. The previous mitigation limited significant detrimental impacts to the surrounding areas – particularly Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA and Monadhliath WLA20 by containing development within the basin landform. The current proposal risks undoing the previous mitigation. However, the evolution of the proposal since the preapplication stage along with the more recent amendments submitted through SEI have reduced these effects with the amended layout pulling in outlier turbines to better reflect Corriegarth Wind Farm and limit unacceptable overspill from the contained bowl landform.

Changes to the proposed development include the relocation of the most westerly and easterly turbines closer to Corriegarth Wind Farm along with the removal 2 of the most north-easterly turbines. These changes have resulted in a slightly more improved relationship between Corriegarth Wind Farm with a reduction in prominence and horizontal extent of turbines seen in some views, particularly from the lower lying landscapes. The amended layout will be deeper along the axis perpendicular to the Great Glen, further limiting the horizontal extent of the proposed development from upland locations looking east across the Great Glen (such as VP 11: Meall Fuar-mhonaidh). The overall composition with Corriegarth Wind Farm will generally maintain the existing simple and balanced spacing between turbines. The amended scheme has reduced the previous overlapping turbine blades and hubs which created stacking effects and raised concerns. Whilst the proposed development will introduced tubines of a greater height (149.9m) in comparison to Corriegarth Wind Farm (120m) the differences in wind turbine height and rotor diameter will only be discernible from locations in relatively close proximity to the site.

Whilst there are still Significant effects from the viewpoints noted above, these are in a localised context and not representative of the proposed development over the wider study area. It is considered that the proposed development will not contribute positively to the

existing pattern or objectives for development in the area. The proposed development is considered to meet the threshold of Criteria 6.

Criteria 7 and 9 are related to the separation between development/and or clusters both in visual and landscape terms. The majority of the viewpoints provided show the proposed development with other wind farms, particularly Corriegarth Wind Farm given the close proximity and to a lesser extent Dunmaglass Wind Farm and Aberarder Wind Farm. Stronelairg, Dell, Aberarder, Kyllachy and Farr Wind Farms can also be seen alongside the proposed development from upland viewpoints looking across Loch Ness. The Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal concludes that proposed development in this Landscape Character Type should maintain space between existing development to prevent coalescence.

The wider site appears as a topographical bowl of the site within the larger scale landscape of the Rolling Uplands – Inverness (LCT 221). The closest turbines at the proposed development would sit at a distance of approximately 400m from the closest turbines at Corriegarth Wind Farm. Whilst the turbines are located in close proximity to Corriegarth Wind Farm groups the larger scale of turbines (149.9m compared to the existing 120m) are evident in a number of viewpoints, albeit from closer upland and lowland locations. This is less apparent from upland locations set further in the distance from the proposed development. Whilst the horizontal expanse of development has increased the overspill effect beyond the bowl landform has been minimised. Following the amendments submitted as SEI the existing pattern of development clusters and open spaces would generally be maintained. The design iterations made by the applicant at each stage of the planning process along with the removal of 2 turbines (from the north eastern portion of the site) and amended layout (relocation of the most western and eastern turbines closer to Corriegarth Wind Farm) have improved the composition and design both when looking in isolation and within a wider cumulative context.

The proposed development would generally retain appropriate and effective separation between existing development following the amendments noted and the proposed development generally relates better to the landscape setting. Whilst the proposed development would increase the visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines Significant effects are from localised settings. As such, the proposed development does not meet the threshold of Criteria 7 or Criteria 9.

Criterion 8 is related to perception of landscape scale and distance. The Proposed Development would be formed of larger turbines than those used adjacent at Corriegarth Wind Farm (149.9m compared to 120m). The rationale for this has been addressed by the applicants and is detailed in this report. Where the turbines appear with other wind energy developments, they are located in the foreground and to the sides of Corriegarth Wind Farm, sometimes beyond at least one “layer” in the landscape from certain views. While the proposed turbines do not create a focal point in the view in themselves from such outlooks, they do increase the impact of the existing schemes.

NatureScot Siting and Designing Windfarms in the landscape states that a:
“wind farm should be: of minor vertical scale in relation to the other key features of the landscape. This does not suggest a literal physical comparison between turbine heights measured against landform height, rather, where the perceived vertical scale of landform is

an important attribute of the landscape, the perception of vertical scale should not suffer a reduction by the introduction of turbines".

Whilst the large scale and expansive landscape can generally accommodate the development and the separation distance mitigates the impact to a certain extent there are a number of viewpoints that raise concerns. These are where the proposed development is viewed side by side Corriegarth Wind Farm creates compositional issues. At VP2, VP3, VP4, VP5 and VP7 in particular on the lower lying land and from hill summits within the Monadhliath Mountain range (WLA20). wind turbines will appear at a similar distance from the viewpoint as the Operational Corriegarth Wind Farm. The appearance of rotors beyond the skyline emphasises the scale of the constructed elements at the expense of the perceived scale of the landform.

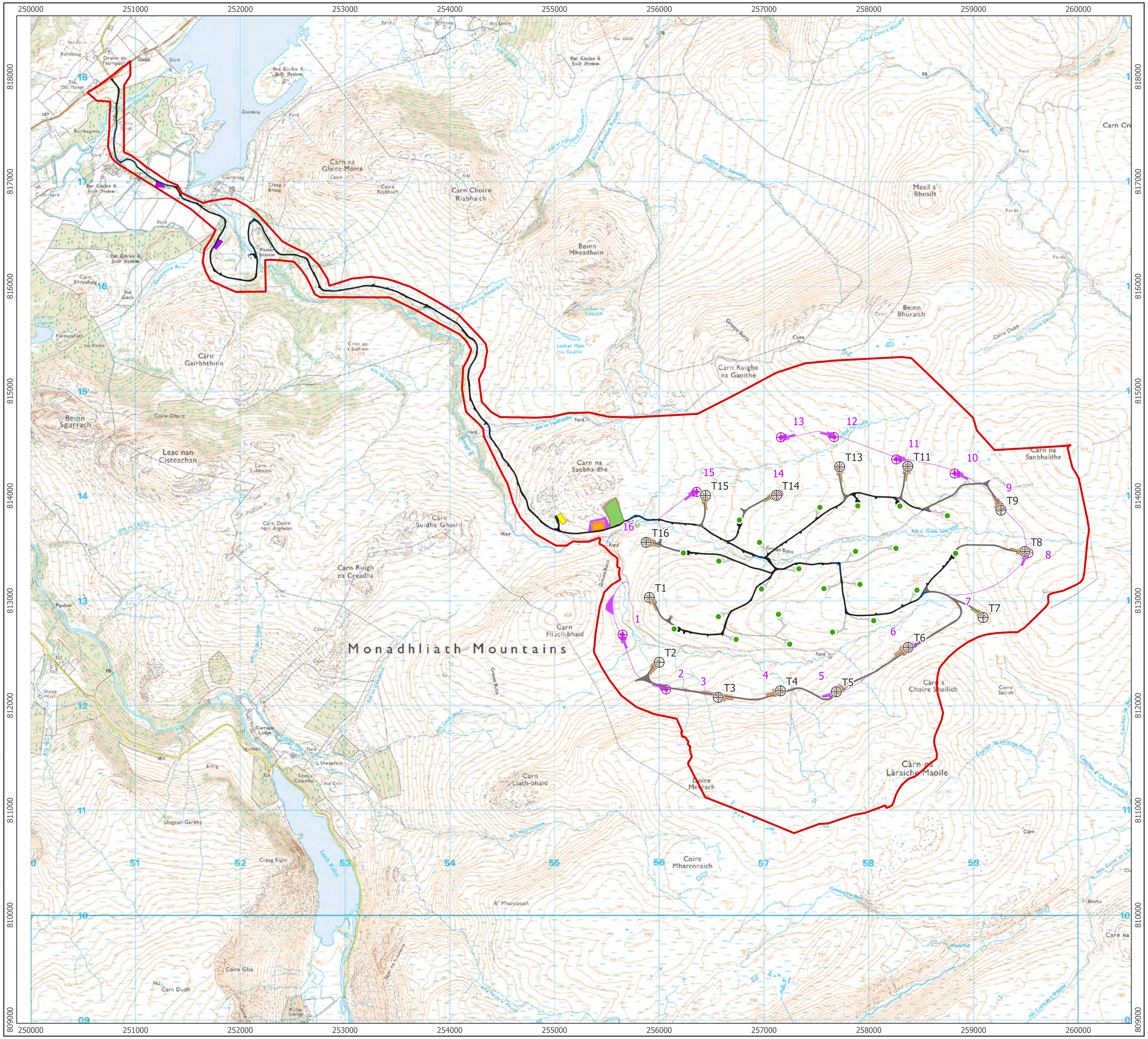
The recommended mitigation has improved the composition of the scheme in terms of horizontal spread turbines, turbine stacking and encroachment down slopes to a certain extent. Whilst the proposed development introduces a number of turbines with hubs, rotors and blade tips that breach the skyline of the existing landscape from the views noted and increase the perceived visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines these concerns are generally concentrated to a number of localised settings. Whilst there are Significant effects at the viewpoints mentioned above, overall, the proposed development is considered to meet the threshold of Criteria 8.

Criterion 10 is related to distinctiveness of landscape character. For the avoidance of doubt this does not relate to landscape designations. Consideration should be given to the variety of landscape character as one travels through the area and how that changes and transitions as one moves through the area.

The proposed development will envelope the existing Corriegarth Wind Farm which risks undermining the mitigation and design concept of Corriegarth Wind Farm. Ministers said of Corriegarth Wind Farm that the landscape setting within a indented bowl landform mitigated the visual and landscape effects. The proposed development risks spreading the landscape and visual impact overspilling beyond the bowl boundary.

The Development will be located within the Rolling Uplands – Inverness (LCT 221) where there is an existing presence of wind farm development within LCT 221. The LVIA concludes that there would be no significant adverse effects on landscape character affecting any of the LCT's considered in the assessment. From these directions the proposed development would be a noticeable addition to the landscape and would increase the prominence of this feature in the landscape which may have some potential to alter the perception of scale and distance within parts of this LCT. Localised Significant effects are anticipated, particularly from upland locations, represented by VP11 and summits within the Monadhliath Mountain range (WLA20). Whilst existing schemes, including Corriegarth Wind Farm are already present in views from the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA, it is considered that the Development will have Significant effects from the popular recreational route but will not affect the integrity of the SLA overall..

It is considered the proposed development generally does maintain the integrity and variety of Landscape Character Areas and does not meet the threshold for Criteria 10.



C:\Users\heather.wylie\Documents\ArcGIS\Projects\4643 Corriegarth 2 SEI\4643 Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm SEI.aprx\4643-REP-046 Fig3.2 EIA vs SEI Layout

BayWa r.e.

ARCUS

Site Boundary

Operational Corriegarth Wind Turbine

SEI Report Site Layout

Crane Hardstanding

Access Tracks

Existing Tracks to be Utilised

Laydown Area

Track Widening Area

Construction Compound

Existing Wind Farm Tracks

Earthworks

Borrow Pit

Substation Compound

Proposed Turbine Location

EIA Report Site Layout

EIA Report Site Layout

EIA Report Turbine Location

1:35,000 Scale @ A3

0 0.75 1.5 km

NORTH

Produced By: HW	Ref: 4643-REP-046
Checked By: SC	Date: 07/04/2022

EIA vs SEI Layout Comparison
Figure 3.2

Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm
SEI Report

BayWa r.e.

ARCUS

Site Boundary

1:150,000 Scale @ A3

0 2 4 km

NORTH

Produced By: EL	Ref: 3369-REP-046
Checked By: HK	Date: 09/09/2020

Site Location
Figure 1.1

Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm
EIA Report

P:\Projects\Environment\3369 Corriegarth EIA\3369 Corriegarth EIA Report.aprx\3369-REP-046 Fig01.1 Site Location Plan

BayWa r.e.

ARCUS

- Site Boundary
- Proposed Turbine Location
- Operational Corriegarth Wind Turbines
- Existing Track (Use restricted to construction phase for access to borrow pit only)
- Borrow Pit Extents
- Construction Compound
- Crane Hardstanding
- Existing Tracks to be Utilised
- Existing Wind Farm Tracks
- Laydown Area
- Proposed Access Tracks
- Substation Compound
- Track Widening Area

Proposed Turbine Locations

Turbine ID	Easting	Northing
1	255650	812676
2	256065	812153
3	256563	812077
4	257157	812139
5	257690	812131
6	258376	812555
7	259091	812839
8	259524	813455
9	259249	813893
10	258820	814213
11	258262	814348
12	257669	814560
13	257161	814559
14	257136	814013
15	256358	814038
16	255875	813556

1:35,000 Scale @ A3

0 0.5 1 km

NORTH

Produced By: SC	Ref: 3369-REP-074
Checked By: HK	Date: 01/10/2020

Site Layout Plan
Figure 4.1

Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm EIA Report

P:\Projects\Environment\3369 Corriegarth EIA\3369 Corriegarth EIA Report.aprx\3369-REP-074 Fig04.1 Site Layout Plan