5. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This Chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report) presents a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Development. The purpose of an LVIA, when undertaken in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), is to identify any likely significant landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development. An LVIA must consider both:

- effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right (the landscape effects); and
- effects on specific views and visual amenity more generally (the visual effects).

5.1.2 Therefore, this LVIA considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon:

- individual landscape features and elements;
- landscape character;
- specific views; and
- people who view the landscape.

5.1.3 In this Chapter, landscape and visual effects are assessed separately although the procedure for assessing each of these is closely linked and follows The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).

5.1.4 The main objectives of the landscape assessment can be summarised as follows:

- to identify, evaluate and describe the baseline landscape character of the Site and its surroundings and also any notable individual landscape features within the Site;
- to determine the nature of the landscape receptor (i.e. the sensitivity of the landscape) through a consideration of its susceptibility to the type of development proposed and any values associated with it;
- to identify and describe any impacts of the Proposed Development in so far as they affect the landscape resource;
- to evaluate the nature of the landscape effects (i.e. the magnitude, duration and reversibility of the effect);
- to identify and describe mitigation measures that have been adopted to avoid, reduce and compensate for landscape effects;
- to evaluate the relative significance of residual landscape effects; and
- to determine which landscapes effects, if any, are significant.

5.1.5 The main objectives of the visual assessment are similar and can be summarised as follows:

- to identify, evaluate and describe the baseline visual context of the Site and its surroundings with a focus on both specific views and the more general visual amenity experienced by people who have views of the Site;
- to determine the nature of the visual receptor (i.e. the sensitivity of the viewpoint or person whose visual amenity is affected) through a consideration of the susceptibility of the viewpoint/person to the type of development proposed and any values associated with either the viewpoint or visual amenity experienced;
- to identify and describe any impacts of the development in so far as they affect a viewpoint or views experienced;
- to evaluate the nature of the visual effects (i.e. the magnitude, duration and reversibility of the effect);
- to identify and describe mitigation measures that have been adopted to avoid, reduce and compensate for visual effects;
- to evaluate the relative significance of residual visual effects; and
- to determine which visual effects, if any, are significant.

5.1.6 The LVIA also considers any cumulative landscape and visual effects which may arise as a result of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other wind farm developments.

5.1.7 The main LVIA presented in this Chapter is supported by figures in EIA Report Volume 2b, visualisations in Volume 2c and technical appendices in Volume 3.

5.1.8 The location of the Proposed Development and the initial 35 km study area for the LVIA is illustrated on **Figure 5.1**. The site location and detailed 20 km LVIA study area is illustrated on **Figure 5.2**.

5.1.9 For reference, other operational, consented and proposed wind farms within the initial 35 km LVIA study area which are referred to throughout this Chapter are illustrated on **Figure 5.23**, and **Figure 5.24** shows other wind farms within 20 km.

5.1.10 This Chapter is structured as follows:

- Legislation, Policy and Guidance;
- Consultation;
- Assessment Methods & Significance Criteria;
- Baseline;
- Scope of the Assessment;
- Assessment of Potential Effects;
- Mitigation;
- Assessment of Cumulative Effects;
- Summary; and

- References.

5.2 Legislation, Policy & Guidance

European Landscape Convention, Adopted 2000

5.2.1 The European Landscape Convention (ELC), is the first international convention to focus specifically on the landscape as a resource in its own right. The convention promotes landscape protection, management, and planning, as well as European co-operation on landscape issues. Signed by the UK Government in February 2006, the ELC became binding from March 2007. It applies to all landscapes, towns, and villages, as well as open countryside; the coast and inland areas; and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection.

5.2.2 The UK Government has stated that it considers the UK to be compliant with the ELC's requirements and in effect the principal requirements of the ELC are already enshrined in the existing suite of national policies and guidance on the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

5.2.3 The ELC defines landscape as:

"An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors."

5.2.4 It is important to recognise that the ELC does not require the preservation of all landscapes; although, landscape protection is one of the core themes of the convention. Equally important though is the requirement to manage and plan future landscape change.

5.2.5 The ELC highlights the importance of developing landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management, and planning of landscapes. In this regard, NatureScot, East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway Council have a suite of landscape character assessments and landscape capacity studies which enables decisions to be made with due regard to landscape character, as promoted by the ELC.

Planning Policy

5.2.6 The Planning Statement associated with this Section 36 application sets out the planning policy framework that is relevant to the EIA. The following currently adopted planning policy documents were reviewed as part of the desk study for the LVIA:

- National Planning Framework for Scotland 4 (NPF4) (2023);
- Onshore Wind Policy Statement (OWPS) (2022);
- Planning Advice Note 60. Planning for Natural Heritage (2000);
- East Ayrshire Adopted Local Development Plan 2 (2024).

5.2.7 It is noted however that there are a number of policies of particular relevance to landscape and visual matters. In particular, these include Policy 11 of NPF4 and

specifically section (e) ii, which states that *"Where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable"*. Whilst there is no definition of 'localised' set out in NPF4, it is considered that localised relates to not just the distance to which significant effects would occur, but also the type of landscape, the scale of the Proposed Development and the number of receptors who may be impacted by significant effects. In this context it is considered that the Proposed Development only gives rise to localised landscape and visual effects, and this is demonstrated in the assessments set out in subsequent sections of this Chapter. It is also considered that appropriate design mitigation has been applied, which is discussed in the wider application submission material.

5.2.8 The OWPS states at paragraph 3.6.1 that:

"Meeting the ambition of a minimum installed capacity of 20 GW of onshore wind in Scotland by 2030 will require taller and more efficient turbines. This will change the landscape."

5.2.9 It also goes on to reaffirm at paragraph 3.6.3 that NPF4 states:

"that significant landscape and visual impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy, and makes clear that where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable."

5.2.10 The Site is situated within East Ayrshire, the assessment has also had regard to the East Ayrshire Adopted Local Development Plan 2 (2024), abbreviated EAALDP and in particular to the following policies:

- Policy HE4 Gardens and Designed Landscapes;
- Policy NE1 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape and Features;
- Policy NE3 Local Landscape Area;
- Policy NE4 Nature Crisis;
- Policy NE8 Trees, Woodland, Forestry and Hedgerows; and
- Policy RE1 Renewable Energy.

Guidance

5.2.11 The following supplementary guidance and technical reports which provide the evidence base for current planning policy were also reviewed:

- East Ayrshire Local Landscape Area Boundary Review, 2021;
- East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study (EALWCS) 2018; and
- Local Landscape Areas, Draft Supplementary Guidance, 2024.

5.3 Consultation

5.3.1 Throughout the EIA scoping process, and subsequently during the ongoing EIA process, relevant organisations were contacted with regards to the Proposed

Development. **Table 5.1**, below, outlines the consultation responses received in relation to landscape and visual issues.

Table 5.1: Consultation Responses

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
East Ayrshire	The Planning Authority agrees that a 35km study area is appropriate in this case given the scale of the proposed turbines. It appears 60 km is also proposed for the cumulative study area and the Planning Authority would agree to that distance. A 20km detailed study area is also proposed and based on the ZTV (Figure 5.1) this would probably be appropriate and would represent the distances over which the most significant impacts are likely to be experienced.	This approach has been adopted throughout LVIA material.
	In terms of identifying Landscape Character Types (LCTs) the Council would advise that the East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study 2018 represents the most accurate record of LCTs locally within East Ayrshire and should guide the assessment of landscape character types.	This approach has been adopted throughout LVIA material.
	In terms of the proposed viewpoints shown in Figure 5.2, the Planning Authority would agree in principle to these, though would consider a further opportunity to agree to a final set of viewpoints at a later date would be needed, once the site layout has evolved / finalised to ensure the viewpoints would still be appropriate.	Pegasus Group wrote to Graham Mitchell at East Ayrshire on 20.02.2025 to present the proposed 15 viewpoints (set out in Table 5.1 of the Scoping report) on an updated ZTV, which was based on the Design Freeze layout. Mr Mitchell replied: Your email below was passed on to myself this week and I've had the opportunity to consider the ZTV and set of viewpoints for the proposed Breezy Hill wind farm and can confirm they seem reasonable for taking forward in the LVIA. It's not clear the full extent of visibility across the Dumfries House estate, though it might be worth doing a couple of viewpoints within the estate, depending on visibility, including the house itself. This could be done as supplemental to the 15 LVIA viewpoints to help inform any heritage/historic assets chapter and would probably prove useful for Historic Environment Scotland when they are consulted by the ECU. Pegasus consulted with the Heritage consultant to respond to Mr Mitchell on the Cultural Heritage matters which were raised.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	The Applicant is advised to keep the cumulative situation under review during the preparation of the EIA Report as this is an evolving situation, particularly in this part of the district where there is considerable wind energy development pressure. In this respect, it is suggested that they make contact with any local authorities within the study area to obtain up to date information relating to wind energy development in their respective authority areas. Section 36 wind farm applications will also need to be kept under review to ensure these are accurately reflected in any assessment. Currently South Kyle 2 and Greenburn S36c are expected in 2024 and therefore will likely require to be considered as part of the cumulative scenario for Breezy Hill, however the cumulative status can be confirmed at the design freeze stage.	This approach has been adopted throughout LVIA material, in particularly with reference to the nearby Greenburn Wind Farm.
	The Planning Authority welcomes the addition of a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment out to 2 km, and would request that cumulative schemes are shown on separate wirelines to the project-alone wirelines.	This approach has been adopted within the RVAA.
	In general terms regarding visualisations, it would be expected that other elements of the proposed development, particularly the BESS infrastructure, but also tracks, substations, and other infrastructure be shown on the photomontages out to distances of 5 km and should be represented as accurately as possible on the photomontages.	This approach has been adopted within the LVIA visualisations for viewpoints 1 and 15.
NatureScot	We recognise that significant landscape and visual impacts are likely to arise as a result of this proposal. However, our approach to advising on wind farm applications is to focus upon impacts on Scotland's landscapes that potentially raise issues of national interest (i.e. as identified in our National Interest guidance). In this case, it is unlikely that we will consider that the landscape and visual effects of the proposal will raise natural heritage issues of national interest, and we are therefore unlikely to provide any specific landscape advice at application stage. NatureScot guidance on landscape and visual impacts of wind farms can be found on our website. Our pre-	Pegasus Group wrote to Adaica Rodriguez at NatureScot on 20.02.2025 to present the proposed 15 viewpoints (set out in Table 5.1 of the Scoping Report) on an updated ZTV, which was based on the Design Freeze layout. Adaica Rodriguez replied: Thanks for contacting NatureScot. In this occasion we won't comment on the proposed VPs to undertake the LVIA. Please find the link to our updated NatureScot guidance on landscape and visual impacts of wind farms https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/planning-and-development-

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	application guidance includes updated advice on turbine lighting assessment (including potential mitigation options).	advice/renewable-energy/onshore-wind-energy/wind-farm-impacts-landscape

5.4 Assessment Methods & Significance Criteria

5.4.1 The primary source of best practice for LVIA in the UK is 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).'

5.4.2 The LVIA presented in this Chapter has been undertaken in accordance with the principles established in this document. It must however be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 recognises that:

"This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand."

5.4.3 The methodology adopted for this LVIA follows GLVIA3 to ensure that it is appropriate and fit for purpose.

5.4.4 Consideration has also been given to the following documents:

- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance (Methodology), (2022), NatureScot;
- Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments (March 2021) NatureScot;
- Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, Version 3a (August 2017) NatureScot;
- Visual Representation of Wind farms – Version 2.2 (February 2017), NatureScot;
- General pre-application and scoping advice for onshore wind farms. Guidance. (November 2024) NatureScot;
- LI Technical Guidance Note 2/19. Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) (March 2019) Landscape Institute;
- LI Advice Note 02/17 Visual representation of development proposals (March 2017) Landscape Institute; and
- LI Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside of national designations.

Landscape Assessment Methodology

5.4.5 A baseline landscape assessment was carried out to determine the current features and character of the landscape within and surrounding the Site.

5.4.6 The baseline landscape assessment involved firstly a review of desk material including:

- Ordnance Survey maps at 1:250,000; 1:50,000; 1:25,000 and 1:10,000 scales;
- Aerial photographs of the Site and surrounding area;
- Topography;
- Current and historical land use;
- Geology and soil maps;
- Historic Parks and Designated Landscapes;
- Relevant planning policy;
- Relevant landscape sensitivity/capacity studies;
- Relevant landscape character assessments; and
- Relevant Historic Landscape Character Assessments.

5.4.7 Field visits have been conducted in a variety of weather conditions and at different times of the year during the pre-application stage.

5.4.8 The baseline assessment identified the existing landscape features on the Site, and in the immediate vicinity, and how these elements combine to give the area a sense of landscape character. Plans and construction details of the Proposed Development were used to determine the impacts of the scheme on landscape features and character.

5.4.9 The LVIA firstly assesses how the Proposed Development will impact directly on any existing landscape features or elements (e.g. removal of trees etc.).

5.4.10 The LVIA then considers impacts on landscape character with reference to landscape character areas/types identified in published landscape character documents.

Visual Assessment Methodology

5.4.11 Potential visual receptors of the Proposed Development were identified by interpretation of digitally generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility plans (ZTV), with **Technical Appendix 5.2** providing an explanation of how the ZTVs were produced.

5.4.12 A selection of viewpoints was identified and agreed with statutory consultees to represent a range of views and viewer types as discussed in Visual Representation of Wind farms – Version 2.2 (NatureScot) and in Paragraphs 6.16-6.20 of GLVIA3. The assessment viewpoints are listed in **Table 5.2**.

5.4.13 The viewpoints cover a variety of different character areas, are in different directions from the Site and are at varying elevations. Some of the viewpoints are intended to

be representative of the visual experience in a general location whereas other viewpoints illustrate the view from a specific or important vantage point. The viewpoints are located at a range of distances from the Proposed Development to illustrate the varying magnitude of visual impacts.

5.4.14 Visualisations were produced for each of the viewpoints; these are presented in Volume 2c of the EIAR. An explanation of how they were produced and information to be read in conjunction with the visualisations is provided in **Technical Appendix 5.2**.

5.4.15 Each of the representative viewpoints were visited to gain an understanding of the sensitivity of the viewpoint receptors and to make professional judgements on the likely visual effects arising from the Proposed Development.

5.4.16 The viewpoints were used as the starting point for considering the effects on visual receptors within the entire study area. The visual assessment does not rely solely on the viewpoint assessments to determine the significance of effects on different visual receptor groups throughout the study area. It should be recognised that the viewpoints illustrated in the LVIA simply represent a series of snapshots from a small selection of the locations within the study area from where the proposed Development will be visible. It should also be noted that the Proposed Development is always centred within the viewpoint visualisation. This follows NatureScot visualisation guidance and does not imply that the Proposed Development will be the focus of the view from any given viewpoint. Following the viewpoint assessment, the LVIA considers the effect on visual amenity throughout the study area with reference to different visual receptor groups at varying distances from the Site.

Assessment Criteria

5.4.17 The purpose of an LVIA when produced in the context of an EIA is to identify any significant landscape and visual effects within the study area to assist the determining authority in deciding the acceptability of the scheme under consideration.

5.4.18 In accordance with the GLVIA3, the level (relative significance) of an effect is ascertained by considering in tandem the nature (sensitivity) of the baseline landscape or visual receptor and the nature (magnitude) of change as a result of the Proposed Development. These two judgements are described as very high, high, medium, low or very low.

5.4.19 The relative significance of landscape or visual effects is described as **Major**, **Moderate/Major**, **Moderate**, **Moderate/Minor**, **Minor** or **Negligible**. **No effect** may also be recorded where the effect is so **Negligible** it is not even noteworthy. Professional judgement is then employed to determine whether the effect is *Significant* or *Not Significant.* Those effects described as **Major**, **Moderate/Major** and in some cases, **Moderate** may be regarded as *Significant*.

5.4.20 The detailed assessment criteria used to determine landscape and visual sensitivity, magnitude of change and significance of effect are set out in **Technical Appendix 5.1.** The approach to the assessment of cumulative effects is set out in

Section 5.11 of this chapter. The approach to the residential visual amenity assessment is set out in **Technical Appendix 5.6**.

Study Area

5.4.21 The initial study area for the landscape and visual impact assessment is 35 km radius from the turbines in all directions, as set out in the EIA Scoping Report. The extent of this study area is illustrated in **Figure 5.1**. Initial site work informed by analysis of preliminary ZTVs indicated that any significant landscape and visual effects are likely to occur within a much narrower radius from the Site; therefore, the level of assessment work in this LVIA incrementally decreases with distance from the Site, with the greatest focus of assessment being within broadly 20 km of the Site. The intention is that the detail of the LVIA remains proportional to the likely significance of effects, as advocated in GLVIA3.

5.4.22 In terms of cumulative effects, the intention has again been that assessment work is proportional to the likelihood of significant effects arising, noting that there is less likelihood that wind farms currently in planning will all be consented. The approach adopted in the cumulative LVIA has been to focus on other wind farms which are either operational, under construction, consented or the subject of a full planning application within 60 km at the Proposed Development. This exercise was undertaken, and it was determined that a more detailed approach of adopting a 35 km study area was necessary for the assessment. Furthermore, as agreed in the EIA Scoping Opinion, a 20 km radius from the turbines in all directions was adopted which will have the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects when considered in combination with the Proposed Development. The approach has been to focus the assessment on those wind farms which have the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects. Further details of this approach are set out in the cumulative impact assessment at **Section 5.11**.

Limitations, Difficulties and Uncertainties

5.4.23 The assessment of effects within this LVIA has been derived through the use of publicly available information only. Within such a large study area it is unfeasible to visit every single location from which the Proposed Development might be visible as illustrated on the ZTVs. The authors of the LVIA have, however, spent a considerable length of time 'in the field' and visited all important viewpoints and locations.

5.4.24 Limitations to the use of ZTVs and in relation to photography, wireframes and photomontages are set out in **Technical Appendix 5.2**.

5.5 Baseline

5.5.1 For the avoidance of doubt all distances are approximate and have been measured to the nearest turbine within the Proposed Development, unless otherwise stated.

Current Baseline

Site Location

5.5.2 The Site is located approximately 4.75 km north of Dalmellington, approximately 4.75 km to the south-east of Drongan and approximately 10.5 km south-west of Cumnock. The Site occupies an area of commercial coniferous plantation woodland which is in various stages of growth, including some recent replanting. The Site is crossed by numerous watercourses including Water of Coyle, Shield Burn, Drumbowie Burn and Hawford Burn.

5.5.3 North Kyle Energy Project is located to the east of the Site, which, at the time of site visits was under construction. However, for the purposes of the assessment of the Proposed Development, it has been assumed that, because construction work on North Kyle Energy Project is due to be completed in November 2025, all of the turbines will be in place and act as baseline conditions. The locations of the North Kyle turbines in relation to the Site and the Proposed Development are shown on **Figure 5.12**.

Landscape Designations

5.5.4 Landscape designations within the initial 35 km study area are illustrated on **Figure 5.7.** Landscape designations within the detailed 20 km study area, which are overlaid with the blade tip ZTV are illustrated at **Figure 5.8**.

International/National Landscape Designations

5.5.5 There are no national landscape designations covering the Site and there are no national landscape designations within the initial 35 km study area.

Local Landscape Designations

5.5.6 There are no local landscape designations covering the Site. There are a number of Local Landscape Areas (LLA) within the initial 35 km study area, as well as Regional Scenic Areas within the Dumfries and Galloway local authority boundary.

5.5.7 Doon Valley LLA lies approximately 1.35 km to the south of the Site at its closest point and extends up to 15 km to the east and up to 25 km to the south. Doon Valley LLA is described East Ayrshire Councils Local Landscape Area Draft Supplementary Guidance as:

"A grand and dramatic landscape of mountains and large water bodies, large-scale, and a sparsely settled landscape with a lack of woodland gives a strong sense of wildness and naturalness. This area is also important as it encompasses part of the Dark Sky Park and the UNESCO Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere…"

5.5.8 Other LLAs within the initial 35 km study area are illustrated on **Figure 5.7** and comprise:

- River Ayr Valley LLA, approximately 4.6 km to the north-west at its closest point;

- The Ayr Valley LLA, approximately 6.5 km to the north-west at its closest point;
- Water of Girvan Valley LLA, approximately 9.2 km to the south-west at its closest point;
- High Carrick Hills LLA, approximately 9.7 km to the south-west at its closest point;
- Uplands and Moorlands LLA approximately 11 km to the east at its closest point;
- Brown Carrick Hills & Coast LLA, approximately 14km to the north-west at its closest point;
- The Stinchar Valley LLA, approximately 17.25 km to the south-west at its closest point;
- Culzean LLA, approximately 18.75 km to the east at its closet point;
- Girvan to Ballantrae Coast & Hills LLA, approximately 32 km to the south-west at its closest point;
- Douglas Valley LLA, approximately 33.75 km to the north-east at its closest point; and
- Leadhills and Lowther Hills LLA, approximately 34.5 km to the north-east at its closest point.

5.5.9 The Regional Scenic Areas (RSA) within the Dumfries and Galloway local authority boundary within the initial 35 km study area comprise:

- Galloway Hills RSA, approximately 10.5 km to the south-east at its closest point; and
- Thornhill Uplands RSA, approximately 26.5 km to the south-east at its closest point.

Wild Land

5.5.10 The Site is not located within a Wild Land Area (WLA). The nearest WLA is Merrick (WLA 01) located approximately 17.25 km to the south-west at its closest point.

5.5.11 Although it is acknowledged that there is theoretical visibility covering the WLA as shown by **Figure 5.8**, any effects will be very minimal given the distance from the Proposed Development and the very limited theoretical visibility from within the WLA. Furthermore, with reference to Policy 4 (g) of NPF4 that states that *"Buffer zones around wild land will not be applied and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration".* Therefore, as also set out in

Technical Appendix 5.3, effects on the WLA are not considered further within the assessment.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

5.5.12 There are no Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL) covering the Site, however, there are a number within the initial 35 km study area, which are illustrated in **Figures 5.7** and **5.8**.

5.5.13 Craigengillan GDL (GDL00111) lies approximately 4.5 km to the south at its closest point. The GDL is described as:

"…a rare example of a complete and unfragmented estate landscape, started in the 16th century…The designed landscape dates from the late 18th/early 19th century and includes a Category A listed mansion house and stables, formal gardens, a walled garden and a Japanese water garden… Garden buildings and notable drystone walling, extensive policy woodland, a rocky gorge and industrial archaeological remnants are also elements of the designed landscape"

5.5.14 Dumfries House GDL (GDL00149) lies approximately 7.3 km to the north-east at its closest point. The GDL is described below:

"The gardens, parkland and woodland make an enormous contribution to the surrounding Ayrshire valley scenery and date from the 17th century or earlier. The designed landscape also forms a very impressive setting for the category A listed Dumfries House."

5.5.15 Other GDL within the detailed 20 km study area include:

- Skeldon House GDL, approximately 8.6 km to the west at its closest point;
- Blairquhan GDL, approximately 10.5 km to the south-west at its closest point;
- Auchincruive GDL, approximately 11 km to the north-west at its closest point;
- Rozelle (La Rochelle) GDL, approximately 14 km to the north-west at its closest point;
- Kilkerran GDL, approximately 16.5 km to the south-west at its closest point;
- Carnell GDL, approximately 17 km to the north at its closest point; and
- Culzean Castle GDL, approximately 20 km to the west at its closest point.

Published Landscape Character Descriptions

5.5.16 A review was undertaken of the following published sources of information regarding regional and local landscape character, landscape value and landscape sensitivity:

- East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 Landscape Wind Capacity Study (2024);
- South Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study (2018);
- Dumfries and Galloway Landscape Capacity Study (2020);

- Part 1 Wind Energy Development: Development Management Considerations, Appendix 'C' Dumfries & Galloway Wind Farm Landscape Capacity Study (2017);
- South Lanarkshire Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy (2016) and Tall Wind Turbines: Landscape Capacity, Siting and Design Guidance Addendum (2019);
- South Lanarkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2010); and
- NatureScot National Landscape Character Assessment (2019).

5.5.17 NatureScot guidance advises that any topic-specific landscape sensitivity studies take precedence over the National Landscape Character Types. The East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study area provides guidance upon landscape sensitivity to wind development, therefore, has been used to help inform the assessment of effects on landscape character within East Ayrshire Council local authority boundary. Landscape sensitivity has also been informed by the relevant wind capacity studies as set out above, for both South Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway councils.

5.5.18 At this point, for clarity, it is necessary to distinguish between two terms that are frequently used in published guidance and this Chapter. They originate from the 'Guidelines for Landscape Character Assessment' (Countryside Agency and NatureScot, 2002):

- Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are defined as tracts of landscape, which have a generic unity of character due to the particular combinations of landform, land cover, pattern and elements. The same landscape character type can occur at several different locations throughout a study area; and
- Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are defined as discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape character type and can only occur at a single location.

5.5.19 LCTs covering the detailed 20 km LVIA study area overlaid with the ZTV are illustrated on **Figure 5.10**.

Landscape Character Types Covering the Site

5.5.20 The Site and all elements of the Proposed Development are located within LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining, which is identified by NatureScot as LCT 76 Foothills – Ayrshire.

5.5.21 The summary description for each topic of within LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining as defined by East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 Landscape Wind Capacity Study, is as follows:

'Landscape context – *This upland landscape is fairly large in extent. It forms a long, low and generally even upland backdrop to the settled East Ayrshire Lowlands (7c) with a gradual transition occurring between the character types in the north-west. It also forms a simple containing edge to the Upland Basin (15) to the east and the Upland River Valley (10) of the upper Doon to the west, where Benquhat Hill forms a more prominent backdrop. The higher and more rolling hills of the Southern Uplands with Forest (20c) lie to the south of this generally simpler and lower-lying plateau.*

Scale – *An expansive and gently undulating upland plateau with rounded hills rising to just over 400m. This landscape is very sparsely settled and there are few small-scale features.*

Landform – *This gently undulating plateau rises to form subtly rounded summits, valleys and shallow basins and occasional more pronounced steep-sided hills such as Benquhat which is prominent in views from the Doon Valley. Former opencast workings are evident in areas of spoil, excavations and ponds.*

Landscape pattern – *This landscape has a simple land cover pattern dominated by grass moorland and extensive coniferous plantations. Remnant areas of moss are fringed by stunted spruce and broadleaves.*

Built environment – *There are no settlements in this landscape. Access tracks, spoil and lagoons from former and current opencast mining operations are evident around the periphery of this landscape.*

Perceptual qualities – *The presence of extensive commercial forestry and areas of disturbed ground/former mine workings negates a strong sense of wildness.*

Visual amenity – *This upland plateau is unsettled and recreational use of this landscape is likely to be inhibited by extensive opencast operations. The B741 is aligned on its southern edge although forestry and landform largely screens views of this landscape from this road. This landscape sits on the northern edge of an extensive very sparsely settled upland area reducing effects on visual amenity to the south. There are relatively close views from surrounding settled Doon valley and the East Ayrshire Lowlands to the east, north and west.*

Cumulative effects – *No operational or consented wind farms are located in this landscape. The operational and consented wind farms of Hare Hill, Afton, South Kyle and Dersalloch are located close to this LCT and already affect the surrounding settled landscapes of the Upland Basin (15) and the Upland River Valleys of the upper Doon (10).'*

Other Landscape Character Types

5.5.22 In order to consider the indirect effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character, LCTs within the detailed 20 km LVIA study area overlaid with the ZTV are illustrated on **Figure 5.10**. Within 20 km, these cover LCTs within East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway.

Local Landscape Description and Character Appraisal

5.5.23 A plan illustrating the landscape features/elements within the site and its immediate context, within a 5 km radius of the Proposed Development, is provided in **Figure 5.12**. The following discussion provides an overview of the physical and perceptual characteristics of the site and immediately surrounding landscape.

Topography

5.5.24 Topography within 20 km of the Proposed Development is illustrated at **Figure 5.11**.

5.5.25 The Site is generally undulating, consisting of a series of rounded peaks interspersed by local water courses forming small valleys. Highest points within the Site are located to the east, rising to 363 m AOD at Stannery Knowe on the eastern

Site boundary. Other locally high points within the Site include Green Hill (344 m AOD) to the north-east, Brown Rigg (342 m AOD) to the south-east and Auchingee Hill (311 m AOD) to the north-west. The Site generally falls from east to west, with lowest points within the Site at approximately 240 m AOD to the north-west. Evidence of past and more recent quarries and extraction is evident within the Site, particularly to the east and south-east, forming localised changes in level.

5.5.26 The land immediately surrounding the Site is similar in nature to the topography of the Site. Locally higher rounded peaks are located to the south and south-west of the Site, including Ewe Hill (379 m AOD), Kilmein Hill (429m AOD) and Benquhat Hill (435 m AOD). Land generally falls from the Site to the north-west, towards Drumbowie Burn. Evidence of past and more recent quarries and extraction is evident to the north-east and south-east, as well as localised changes in level associated with the North Kyle Energy Project.

5.5.27 Within the wider detailed study area, a number of river valleys pass through the landscape, including the River Doon to the south-west, the River Nith to the south-east, the River Ayr to the north-west and Lugar Water to the north-east. Land generally gently falls towards the coast and Ayr to the north-west and west, with a few areas of higher ground at Brown Carrick Hill, Newark Hill and Blacktop Hill adjacent to the coast further to the west. Beyond the River Nith to the south-east, land rises steeply, forming higher peaks, including Benbrack (495 m AOD), Cairnsmore of Carsphairn (797 m AOD) and Blackcraig Hill (700 m AOD), amongst others.

Watercourses and Waterbodies

5.5.28 A number of small watercourses cross the Site generally falling from higher ground to the east, towards lower ground to the west and north-west, with smaller tributaries flowing into larger watercourses including the Water of Coyle, Shield Burn, Drumbowie Burn and Hawford Burn. A water body is located to the south-east of the Site, appearing to be the result of localised extraction.

5.5.29 A similar pattern of smaller watercourses is evident immediately surrounding the Site, falling towards larger river valleys. Similarly, the water bodies surrounding the Site are mostly as a result of localised extraction. As stated above, a number of river valleys pass through the landscape, including the River Doon to the south-west, the River Nith to the south-east, the River Ayr to the north-west and Lugar Water to the north-east. Some scattered small-scale lochs are located within the surrounding landscape, including Belston Loch to the north and Bogton Loch to the south. The larger water body of Loch Doon lies approximately 9 km to the south of the Site.

Vegetation

5.5.30 The Site is predominantly a commercial coniferous plantation woodland, with a variety of levels of maturity, including evidence of recent swathes of tree removal and replanting south of the Water of Coyle and between the peaks of Stannery Knowe and Green Hill. More mature stands of coniferous plantation woodland include areas to the north, woodland at Stannery Knowe and limited patches to the

south of the Site. Some limited patches of land remain rough grassland, including close to watercourses and an area to the north-west.

5.5.31 The pattern of vegetation is similar to that found within the Site, including large areas of coniferous plantation woodland to the west, south-east and north-east. The exceptions to this are higher ground to the south and south-west which are mostly open featureless rough grassland/moorland, as well as agricultural land to the north-west, which includes riparian vegetation along water courses and deciduous woodland surrounding properties.

5.5.32 Further detailed information on the habitats within and surrounding the Site can be found in **Chapter 6: Ecology** of the EIA Report.

Built Infrastructure

5.5.33 Built infrastructure within the Site is very limited, confined to above ground structures such as forestry access tracks and wider tracks associated with material extraction to the south and south-east. There are no known buildings or structures in use within the Site.

5.5.34 North Kyle Energy Project with its associated turbines, access tracks and other associated infrastructure is located to the east and south-east of the Site. Overhead powerlines with associated pylons pass the Site to the east, located within 0.5 km of the Site boundary at the closest point. Areas of mineral extraction are evident within the landscape in all directions of the Site, often including associated buildings and machinery.

5.5.35 A number of scattered farms surround the Site, particularly to the west and north, with the closest settlement being Rankinston at approximately 2 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development.

5.5.36 Larger settlements are predominantly located within the river valleys surrounding the Site and include Dalmellington approximately 4.75 km to the south, Drongan approximately 4.75 km to the north-west and Cumnock approximately 10.5 km to the north-east. The network of A and B roads are also predominantly located within the river valleys.

5.5.37 In addition to the adjacent North Kyle Energy Project, other operational wind farms are located within the detailed 20 km study area, including Dersalloch wind farm approximately 7 km to the south-west, South Kyle wind farm approximately 9 km to the south-east, Afton wind farm approximately 14 km to the south-east, Windy Standard II wind farm approximately 14 km to the south-east, Hare Hill and Hare Hill Extension wind farms approximately 16 km to the east and Windy Rigg wind farm approximately 17.5km to the south-east. There are some wind farms under construction, which include Benbrack and Enoch Hill wind farms to the south-east.

Sensory and Perceptual Characteristics

5.5.38 The Site is perceived as a relatively remote area of coniferous plantation woodland on elevated ground surrounding the populated valleys in all directions. However, its remoteness is influenced by extraction activities within and close to the Site, by the

presence of the North Kyle Energy Project to the east and south-east and by the proximity of the overhead powerlines with associated pylons to the east.

5.5.39 Despite its elevated location, due to the presence of woodland within the Site, outward views over the surrounding landscape are limited in nature. However, views are possible towards the Site from surrounding valleys to the west and north in particular, however, restricted to the south and south-west by intervening landform.

5.5.40 In recent years, wind energy has become a defining element of the character of the local landscape. In addition to North Kyle Energy Project adjacent to the Site, the nearby operational wind farms of Dersalloch, South Kyle, Afton, Windy Standard II, Hare Hill and Windy Rigg, together with the under construction Enoch Hill and Benbrack wind farms in the surrounding area give rise to the perception of a landscape within which wind farms are a familiar and established feature.

Future Baseline

5.5.41 If the Site were not to be developed to accommodate the Proposed Development, the land would largely remain in its present condition over the short-term.

5.5.42 Over the medium and longer term, the main foreseeable forces for change in the landscape surrounding the Site relate to changes to the forest plantations, with areas of felling and replanting in line with forest management plans.

5.5.43 Within the wider landscape, there are several commercial wind energy developments and several consented schemes which, if built, would also influence the existing nature of the wider landscape surrounding the Proposed Development as set out in the Cumulative Assessment. In relation to operational wind energy developments, it is recognised that some may be subject to applications for repowering, but that decommissioning would be the default.

5.5.44 In addition to the consented or proposed developments within the vicinity of the Site, it is widely recognised that climate change will have an impact on the future character of the Scottish landscape through changes to weather conditions that will in turn result in changes to vegetation that will affect the intrinsic character of the landscape.

5.5.45 Other pressures that may cause change in the baseline landscape and visual context in the future may include built development along infrastructure corridors and trunk roads, and potential settlement expansion.

5.6 Scope of the Assessment

Spatial Scope

5.6.1 This chapter considers both the initial 35 km study area and a detailed 20 km study area. The potential for significant effects is also determined by the ZTVs produced.

More detail upon the how the spatial scope defines the landscape and visual receptors to be considered in this assessment is set out below.

Temporal Scope

5.6.2 The LVIA assesses both the long-term effects (assessed as though they were permanent) relating to the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development and the short-term temporary effects associated with the construction of the Proposed Development.

5.6.3 Where appropriate, the LVIA also considers any residual effects once the turbines have been decommissioned and removed (40 years from the commencement of operation).

5.6.4 The LVIA considers both direct and indirect landscape and visual effects. It not only assesses the impacts associated with the turbines but also any related impacts resulting from the associated infrastructure e.g. construction compound, borrow pits, underground cabling, site tracks, substation, battery energy storage system (BESS) and access tracks.

5.6.5 Consideration has been given to the movement of the turbine blades, along with seasonal variations when assessing the visibility of the Proposed Development.

5.6.6 The LVIA also considers any cumulative effects arising in combination with other wind farm schemes in the study area, as defined in **Section 5.11** below. Best practice guidelines identify two principal types of cumulative visual impact:

- combined visibility – where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint; and
- sequential visibility – where two or more sites are not visible at one location but will be seen as the observer moves along a linear route, for example, a road or public right of way.

5.6.7 The guidelines state that ‘combined visibility’ may either be ‘in combination’ (where two or more sites are visible from a fixed viewpoint in the same arc of view) or ‘in succession’ (where two or more sites are visible from a fixed viewpoint, but the observer is required to turn to see the different sites). Both types are discussed in this LVIA. The published GLVIA3 also indicates a difference in emphasis between sequential effects that are frequent and those which are occasional.

5.6.8 The primary purpose of the cumulative impact assessment is to consider the additional effects that might arise as a result of the Proposed Development if the other consented and in planning (awaiting determination) schemes were also operational. In addition, the cumulative assessment also includes a further consideration of the overall totality of the effect, when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational or proposed schemes across the study area.

5.6.9 In relation to both the effects of the Proposed Development alone and the cumulative effects with other wind farm schemes in the study area, both beneficial (positive) and adverse (negative) effects are considered. Wind farms give rise to a

wide spectrum of opinions, ranging from strongly negative to strongly positive, with a wide range of opinions lying somewhere between these two positions. Some people view turbines as incongruous or industrial structures whilst others view them as aesthetically pleasing, elegant structures and a positive response to climate change. This spectrum of opinion has come to be referred to in relation to wind farms as the concept of valency. For the avoidance of doubt, in considering the effects of the Proposed Development, a precautionary approach to the assessment has been adopted and it is assumed that, unless specifically stated otherwise, the effects of the Proposed Development will be adverse in nature even though it is acknowledged that, for some people, the impacts may be considered to be beneficial.

Receptors Requiring Assessment

Landscape Designations

5.6.10 An initial filtering exercise has been undertaken to determine which landscape designations will have the potential for significant effects to arise and will therefore require detailed consideration in this Chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each landscape designation is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising.

5.6.11 All landscape designations located beyond 20 km have been scoped out of further assessment due to the distance from the Proposed Development, the influence of other wind farm development within the study area and the relatively limited theoretical visibility.

5.6.12 Landscape designations within the detailed 20 km LVIA study area have been subject to an initial filtering exercise. The findings of this exercise are presented within **Technical Appendix 5.3**.

5.6.13 The LLAs assessed in detail within this Chapter are:

- Doon Valley LLA (within East Ayrshire), located approximately 1.35 km to the south of the Proposed Development at its closest point;
- River Ayr Valley LLA, located approximately 4.6km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point;
- Uplands and Moorlands LLA, located approximately 11 km to the east of the Proposed Development at its closest point; and
- The Ayr Valley LLA, located approximately 6.5 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

5.6.14 The GDL assessed in detail within this Chapter is Dumfries House GDL, located approximately 7.3 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

Landscape Character Types

5.6.15 An initial filtering exercise has been undertaken to determine which LCTs will have the potential for significant effects to arise and will therefore require detailed

consideration in this Chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each LCT is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The discussion below summarises the process followed in deciding which LCTs have the potential to experience significant effects and hence to scope out various character types from further consideration.

5.6.16 All LCTs located beyond 20 km have been scoped out of further assessment due to the distance from the Proposed Development, the influence of other wind farm development within the study area and the relatively limited theoretical visibility.

5.6.17 All LCTs present within the detailed 20 km LVIA study area have been subject to an initial filtering exercise. The findings of this exercise are presented within **Technical Appendix 5.3**.

5.6.18 The LCTs within East Ayrshire (illustrated on **Figure 5.9)** are assessed in detail within this chapter and are as follows:

- 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining, where the Proposed Development is located;
- 7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part) located approximately 0.6 km to the north at its closest point;
- 10 Uplands River Valley (south-western part) located approximately 2.6 km to the south-west at its closest point;
- 9 Lowland River Valley (western part) located approximately 4.2 km to the west at its closest point;
- 17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley located approximately 4.75 km to the south-west at its closest point;
- 15 Upland Basin located approximately 4.9 km to the east at its closest point;
- 9 Lowland River Valley (north-eastern part) located approximately 5.4 km to the north-east at its closest point;
- 20a East Ayrshire Southern Uplands (south-eastern nearest part) located approximately 6.3 km to the south-east at its closest point; and
- 7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (north-eastern part) located approximately 8 km to the north-east at its closest point.

5.6.19 The LCTs within South Ayrshire assessed in detail in this chapter are:

- 7d South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part) located approximately 2.5 km to the north-west at its closest point;
- 9 Lowland River Valley (north-western nearest part) located approximately 5.5 km to the north-west at its closest point;
- 9 Lowland River Valley (western part) located approximately 6 km to the north-west at its closest point; and
- 17d Maybole Foothills located approximately 6.3 km to the west at its closest point.

5.6.20 It was considered that no LCTs within Dumfries and Galloway will be assessed further within the chapter, mainly due to the distance from the Proposed Development and limited theoretical visibility as shown on **Figure 5.10**.

Visual Receptors

5.6.21 The blade tip ZTV is illustrated up to 35 km by **Figure 5.5** and up to 20 km by **Figure 5.4**.

5.6.22 Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development extends up to 7-8 km to the north and north-east, where visibility becomes intermittent through the River Ayr and Lugar Water valleys and then becomes more consistent up to 10 km to the north and up to 15 km to the north-east. Theoretical visibility extends up to 5 km to the west and north-west, then becomes intermittent in nature, before reaching the edge of Ayr and hills to the south, where theoretical visibility becomes more consistent.

5.6.23 Due to intervening landform, theoretical visibility to the south-west and south is very limited in nature for the first 5 km and then occurs sporadically on higher ground beyond 5 km. Theoretical visibility to the south-east extends up to 4 km, before becoming more intermittent up to 10 km, with limited or no theoretical visibility beyond 10 km from the Proposed Development. Theoretical visibility extends up to 5 km to the east and then becomes sporadic in nature up to 12 km from the Proposed Development, however, some theoretical visibility is possible to the north of the River Nith valley.

5.6.24 It was determined that there was no potential for the Proposed Development to result in any significant visual effects at distances over 20 km from the Site as with increased distance from the Site, the likelihood of significant visual effects occurring incrementally decreases. Therefore, whilst the initial study area for this LVIA extends out to 35 km and the various figures which accompany this report illustrate an initial 35 km study area, the assessment has focused on visual receptors within the detailed 20 km LVIA study area.

Residential Receptors and Settlements

5.6.25 Residential visual receptors have been identified in bands of distance from the nearest turbine with a greater level of detail provided in relation to those properties nearest to the Proposed Development, although it is recognised that there may be views from individual properties and clusters of properties throughout the wider study area.

Residential Properties within 2 km

5.6.26 There are twelve residential properties within 2 km of the Proposed Development as follows:

1. Rankinston Farm - 1.055 km to the west;
2. Seaview House - 1.85 km to the west;
3. Ravenscroft Farm - 1.3 km to the north-west;
4. The Castle - 1.55 km to the north-west;

5. Waterton Farm - 1.9 km to the north-west;
6. Drumbowie Farm - 1.1 km to the north-west;
7. Elymains - 2 km to the north-west;
8. Muirston Farm - 1.75 km to the north, north-west;
9. Hillside - 2 km to the north, north-west;
10. Tams Place - 1.8 km to the north;
11. Trelaw - 1.85 km to the north; and
12. Polquhairn - 1.75 km to the north.

5.6.27 The location of these properties is illustrated on **Figure 5.6.1** in **Technical Appendix 5.6**.

Settlements

5.6.28 An initial filtering exercise has been undertaken of settlements within the detailed 20 km LVIA study area to determine which have the potential to experience significant effects and will therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial filtering exercise are presented at **Technical Appendix 5.4**. Settlements overlaid with the blade tip ZTV is illustrated on **Figure 5.14.**

5.6.29 The filtering exercise identified the following settlements within 5 km of the Proposed Development, to have the potential to experience significant effects:

- Rankinston (including Littlemill), located approximately 2 km to the north-west;
- Hayhill, located approximately 2 km to the north-west;
- Sinclairston, located approximately 2.2 km to the north;
- Dalmellington, located approximately 4.4 km to the south;
- Patna, located approximately 4.6 km to the south-west; and
- Drongan, located approximately 4.3 km to the north-west.

5.6.30 The filtering exercise identified the following settlements beyond 5 km of the Proposed Development, to have the potential to experience significant effects:

- Bellsbank, located approximately 5.5 km to the south;
- Ochiltree, located approximately 7 km to the north-east;
- Hillhead, located approximately 7.1 km to the north-west;
- Holybush, located approximately 7.3 km to the west;
- Coylton, located approximately 7.5 km to the north-west; and
- Auchinleck, located approximately 10.4 km to the north-east.

Recreational Receptors

Core Paths

5.6.31 There are numerous core paths located within the detailed 20 km study area, illustrated at **Figure 5.14** The effects on views from these paths are not assessed individually but are grouped together where appropriate.

5.6.32 An initial filtering exercise has been undertaken upon core paths, to determine which have the potential for significant effects to arise and will therefore require detailed consideration in this Chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each core path is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial sieving exercise are presented at **Technical Appendix 5.4**.

5.6.33 This filtering exercise identified that users of the following core paths have the potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development:

- Core Paths 66, 226 and 247 – south of Rankinston, located approximately 1.4 km to the west at its closest point;
- Core Paths 55, 57, 204, 205, 223, 224 and 246 – between Drongan and Ochiltree, located approximately 4.1 km to the north at its closest point;
- Core Paths 52 and 230 – between Ochiltree and Cumnock, located approximately 7.75 km to the north-east at its closest point;
- Core Paths 53 and 54 – between Auchinleck and Catrine, located approximately 8.6 km to the north-east at its closest point;
- Core Path 235, located approximately 9.5 km to the east at its closest point.

Long Distance Walking Routes

5.6.34 The River Ayr Way passes through the detailed study area, located approximately 9.5 km to the north-west at its closest point. Due to limited or no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development along most of the route, whilst there is potential for some effects, they will not be considered significant and therefore, users of the route are not considered further within the assessment.

5.6.35 Ayrshire Coastal Path is approximately 15.5 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. Although theoretical visibility covers the route, it is considered that built form within Ayr, along with the distance from the Proposed Development, will not give rise to any significant effect and therefore, users of the route are not considered further within the assessment.

Cycle Network

5.6.36 Due to the distance of NCN Route 7 being located approximately 13 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point, as well visibility being restricted by built form within Ayr, no significant effects are predicted. Therefore, users of the route are not considered further within the assessment.

5.6.37 The National Byway is located approximately 10 km to the west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. Whilst the potential for some effects are predicted,

they are not considered to be significant and therefore, users of the route are not considered further within the assessment.

Roads and Rail

5.6.38 An initial filtering exercise has been undertaken to determine which roads and rail routes have the potential to experience significant effects and will therefore require detailed consideration in this chapter. The intention has been to ensure that the level of attention given to each route is proportionate to the likelihood of significant effects arising. The findings of the initial filtering exercise are presented at **Technical Appendix 5.4.**

5.6.39 This filtering exercise identified that users of the following roads have the potential to experience significant visual effects:

- B7046, located approximately 2.1 km to the north at its closest point;
- B730, located approximately 2.25 km to the north-west at its closest point;
- A713, located approximately 3.9 km to the south-west at its closest point;
- A70, located approximately 5.4 km to the north at its closest point;
- B742, located approximately 7.25 km to the north-west at its closest point;
- B7036, located approximately 7.5 km to the north-east at its closest point; and
- B7034, located approximately 7.6 km to the west at its closest point.

5.6.40 No rail routes are considered further, for reasons set out in **Technical Appendix 5.4**.

Assessment Viewpoints

5.6.41 The following table sets out the viewpoints considered as part of this assessment. These viewpoints have been derived through desk-based, site visits, interpretation of ZTVs and through consideration of the viewpoints used in the assessment of other nearby wind farms. The assessment viewpoints have also been consulted on as part of scoping, as set out above.

5.6.42 The viewpoints are representative of the range of views towards the Proposed Development. They are not intended to cover every single view but are representative of a range of distances from the Site and receptor types (e.g. residents, walkers, road users) and have been used to inform the assessment of

effects on landscape character, the visual assessment, the cumulative assessment and the assessment of visual receptor groups.

5.6.43 The table below identifies the 15 assessment viewpoints. The locations of these viewpoints are illustrated on **Figures 5.3** and **5.4**, as well as on numerous other figures.

Table 5.2 Assessment Viewpoints

Viewpoint	OS Grid Reference	Approximate Distance to Nearest Turbine	Receptor
1. Rankinston, Littlemill Place	245176, 614537	2,095 m (T1)	Residential
2. B705 Outskirts of Mauchline	250379, 626717	12,598 m (T1)	Residential and Road
3. A70 Approach to Lugar	261452, 623086	16,058 m (T7)	Road
4. B7036 Dumfries House Estate Access	254316, 621878	10,195 m (T1)	Recreational
5. A70 between Drongan and Ochiltree	248196, 620369	5,933 m (T1)	Road
6. Ayr Road, Dalmellington	247226, 606257	4,539 m (T18)	Road
7. B7083 at Holmhead	256029, 620718	10,422 m (T7)	Residential and Road
8. Drongan, Mill of Shield Road	244401, 618330	4,779 m (T1)	Residential
9. Avisyard Hill	260892, 618123	13,015 m (T8)	Recreational
10. B7046 Skares Road	251965, 617437	5,272 m (T7)	Road
11. Connel View, New Cumnock	261893, 612573	12,938 m (T8)	Residential
12. Auchenroy Hill	244545, 605601	5,945 m (T18)	Recreational
13. Sinclairston	247109, 616896	2,393 m (T1)	Residential and Road
14. B741 at Dalleagles	256600, 610646	7,973 m (T8)	Road
15. Craigs Road	243318, 615064	3,991 m (T1)	Road

5.6.44 **Technical Appendix 5.5** provides a baseline description of the view from each assessment viewpoint, followed by a detailed analysis and assessment of the effects.

Environmental Measures Embedded into the Development Proposals

5.6.45 The primary mitigation adopted in relation to the Proposed Development is embedded within the design of the Proposed Development and relates to the consideration that was given to avoiding and minimising landscape and visual effects during the evolution of the layout of the Proposed Development. This is sometimes referred to as 'mitigation by design'. A detailed discussion of the design evolution and the iterative process underpinning it is provided in Chapter 3: Design Evolution and Alternatives.

5.6.46 Consideration was also given to the Proposed Development in this location, its relationship with other constructed and consented wind farms in the locality, and the capacity of the receiving landscape to accommodate further wind farm development.

5.6.47 Based on general good practice design principles (as set out in NatureScot guidelines) and an analysis of site-specific opportunities and constraints, the wind farm layout has evolved to take into consideration a number of landscape and visual constraints whilst maintaining an optimal development, resulting in the 20-turbine layout which has been taken forward to the EIA phase.

5.6.48 A design rationale has been adopted to avoid inconsistent turbine spacing, turbine outliers, or excessive overlapping of turbines, to minimise visual confusion and ensure a balanced/compact array from key views in the local landscape.

5.6.49 The above principles have been applied as a number of iterations to the design were made. Taking all other engineering and environmental constraints into account, the final layout of the turbines was specifically designed to achieve a balanced array of turbines when viewed from the surrounding landscape.

5.6.50 In considering the layout of other structures and ancillary features of the Proposed Development, the position of the substation, construction compound, battery energy storage system area, and borrow pits are located to minimise their impact on peat and influence on the surrounding area.

5.6.51 The turbines themselves will be painted an off-white colour with a low reflectivity semi-matt finish (or similar as agreed with East Ayrshire Council). Such a finish is widely regarded to be the least intrusive in the landscape when seen against the sky in a host of weather conditions typically experienced within the UK.

5.6.52 In the long term, when the Proposed Development is decommissioned, the turbines will be removed from the Site, and the hardstands will be restored in accordance with a restoration plan to be approved by East Ayrshire Council.

5.7 Assessment of Potential Effects

5.7.1 Following a brief summary of the Proposed Development, this section of the LVIA considers the effects of the Proposed Development on the physical features of the Site (landscape fabric), landscape character, and visual amenity. It considers the

effects during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

5.7.2 Effects during the construction and decommissioning phases are considered to be temporary and will have a short duration. Effects associated with the operational phase of the Proposed Development are considered to be long-term and largely reversible.

Proposed Development

5.7.3 A detailed description of the Proposed Development is set out in **Chapter 2: Proposed Development**. The description below summarises those details of the Proposed Development that have particular relevance to this LVIA.

5.7.4 The Proposed Development will have a maximum total generating capacity of 140 MW, comprised of the following visible features which may have an impact on landscape character or visual amenity:

- Up to 20 standalone, three bladed horizontal axis turbines up to 149.9 m tip height, each with a generating capacity of up to 5 MW each, totalling 100 MW generating capacity; and
- A battery energy storage system (BESS) of up to 40 MW capacity will also be included as part of the Proposed Development.

5.7.5 In addition to the turbines and BESS, the Proposed Development will include the following long-term ancillary infrastructure:

- turbine foundations;
- crane hardstands;
- a site entrance;
- internal and private access road network;
- watercourse crossings;
- transformers and underground cables; and
- an on-site substation / switchgear building.

5.7.6 Temporary infrastructure required for construction will include:

- three construction compounds;
- a construction compound for exclusive use by the Transmission Operator;
- crane assist pads;
- blade laydown supports;
- boom supports;
- laydown areas;
- a concrete batching plant; and
- potential excavations/borrow pit workings.

5.7.7 The Proposed Development will provide various enhancement measures, including:

- Biodiversity enhancements; and
- Potential Recreation and Access enhancements.

Assessment of Landscape Features Effects During Construction

5.7.8 As set out in the baseline section, the only existing landscape features present on the Site or that may be affected by the Proposed Development are:

- Existing vegetation within the Site; and
- Watercourses and Waterbodies crossing and within the Site.

Vegetation

5.7.9 The construction phase will result in the removal of select areas of coniferous plantation woodland, through the construction of on-site access tracks, hardstand areas, a substation, BESS, on-site underground cabling, temporary borrow pit workings, construction compounds, and turbine foundations. Underground electricity cables will generally follow access tracks.

5.7.10 The existing vegetation within the Site will be removed to allow construction of foundations for the various elements. Soils stripped as part of the establishment works will be stored in accordance with established soil handling best-practice for use during reinstatement works on completion of construction activities.

5.7.11 As set out in **Chapter 2: Proposed Development**, up to three borrow pit working search areas will be required. The final location, number and estimate of material won from the search area will be determined once full ground investigation works and testing have been completed. Borrow pit excavations will be short-term and will result in the removal of vegetation, soils and subsurface rock. Borrow pit workings will be restored following construction so as to encourage re-vegetation, although it is accepted that some regrading of the land profile will be expected.

5.7.12 The coniferous plantation woodland is a common feature within the locality and within the wider surrounding landscape. It does not form part of the fabric of a site designated for its scenic value although it is generally deemed as a feature with relatively limited landscape value. The ongoing felling regimes resulting from ongoing management practices, lowers its susceptibility. Combining its value and susceptibility results in the sensitivity of the vegetation being low.

5.7.13 The coniferous plantation woodland will experience a medium/low magnitude of change resulting from the construction of new access tracks, laydown areas, crane pads and turbine foundations and substation and BESS compounds, affecting a small part of the overall woodland within the Site. Large areas of woodland will remain and surround areas of the Proposed Development. The overall level of effect

on the vegetation resulting from the Proposed Development is considered to be **Minor** and *Not Significant*.

Watercourse and Waterbodies

5.7.14 There are a number of watercourses running through the Site including the Water of Coyle, Hawford Burn, Shield Burn and the Drumbowie Burn. These features are considered to be of low value in landscape terms due to their location amongst coniferous woodland plantation but highly susceptible to changes which affect their course or their quality. Combining their value and susceptibility results in the watercourse and drainage features having a medium sensitivity.

5.7.15 The turbines and associated infrastructure have been located away from most watercourses on the Site. However, a proposed access tracks crosses the Water of Coyle over an existing culverted section of the watercourse and continues to pass close to the water body to the south-east, again following existing tracks. Effects will be limited and controlled through best-practice construction and environmental practices. As such, a no greater than low magnitude change is predicted, resulting in a Moderate/Minor level of effect, which will be *Not Significant*.

Summary

5.7.16 The Proposed Development will result in a **Minor** level of effect to the vegetation and a **Moderate/Minor** effect to watercourses and waterbodies. These effects are considered to be *Not Significant*.

Assessment of Landscape Character Effects

5.7.17 All LCTs present within the detailed 20 km LVIA study area have been subject to an initial filtering exercise. The findings of this exercise are presented within **Technical Appendix 5.3** and set out above. LCTs within the 20 km LVIA study area overlaid with the ZTV are illustrated by **Figure 5.10**.

Sensitivity of Landscape Character to Wind Energy Development

5.7.18 The first stage in assessing the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character is to evaluate the sensitivity of the LCTs brought forward into detailed assessment, to the type of change proposed. As indicated within GLVIA3, sensitivity of landscape character should be determined through a consideration of both susceptibility to change and any values associated with the landscape.

5.7.19 The East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway all provide some guidance in assessing the sensitivity of those LCTs brought forward into detailed assessment. These documents should however be read with caution as they do not necessarily just consider landscape sensitivity (value and susceptibility). NatureScot advise that such studies should not be referred to as '*capacity studies'* as no local or regional targets are available on which to determine the 'capacity' for development. They advise that these studies:

'should reflect their purpose, which is to provide a strategic assessment of relative landscape and visual sensitivity to certain defined forms of development'.

5.7.20 Furthermore, some of the studies are outdated to some extent as a result of wind farm developments which have been either consented or constructed in the intervening period and changes to the onshore wind energy planning policy context. It is therefore necessary to evaluate whether changes to the baseline (including in terms of recently consented or constructed wind farms) have altered sensitivity as reported in these studies.

5.7.21 It is also important to note that the judgements of the studies concern how sensitive each character type is to wind energy development being deployed within that specific unit. This is not necessarily the same as being of a particular sensitivity to wind farm development in an adjacent or distant character unit, which may only result in indirect effects on landscape character. The sensitivity of the character unit to wind energy development in an adjoining or distant character unit will typically be lower. This is because at any given location in a landscape, whilst features of the wider landscape do help to characterise that area, even where views out of a character area are not specifically mentioned as an important characteristic, the physical features and perceptual characteristics of the landscape in the immediate vicinity have a far greater influence on character and one's sense of landscape character than distant features, no matter how tall they may be.

5.7.22 Therefore, whilst the relevant studies are useful tools to help inform the consideration of the value and susceptibility of the LCTs brought forward into detailed assessment, it should be noted that the findings have not necessarily been adopted verbatim. Rather the approach taken has been to seek to provide a sensitivity rating for each LCT in line with the approach advocated in GLVIA3, whilst taking the findings of these assessments into consideration.

5.7.23 The sensitivity ratings for each LCT being considered further as part of the assessment is set out below and summarised in listed in **Table 5.3**.

17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining

5.7.24 This LCT covers the Site of the Proposed Development, where the Site is covered relatively centrally. The LCT is gently undulating, with some steeper rounded hills and although sparsely settled, is predominantly covered with commercial plantation woodland and active/former open cast mining activities. The LCT is also crossed by overhead powerlines and features North Kyle Energy Project.

5.7.25 Most of the LCT is not covered by landscape designations, however, higher land to the south-west features Doon Valley LLA. There are limited recreational opportunities within the LCT, with commercial forestry, mining and wind farms

limiting the overall value. On balance, the LCT is assessed as having a medium value.

5.7.26 The LCT is influenced by the coniferous plantation woodland, North Kyle Energy Project, overhead powerlines and mining operations. It is assessed as having a medium susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.27 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a medium sensitivity to the change proposed.

7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part)

5.7.28 The LCT is located approximately 0.6 km to the north of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The LCT is a gently undulating predominantly agricultural landscape formed by a network of small watercourses, featuring A and B roads, scattered farmsteads and the settlements of Drongan and Cumnock. There is evidence of past industry, as well as active industry including an industrial rail route and a number of overhead powerlines cross the landscape.

5.7.29 Most of the LCT is not covered by landscape designations, however, peripheral river valleys to the north-west and north-east include part of the River Ayr Valley LLA. The value of the LCT is influenced by the industrial activities, settlements and roads. On balance, the LCT is assessed as having a medium value.

5.7.30 The LCT is influenced by the overhead powerlines, roads, settlements and existing and former industrial operations, balanced against the pattern of agricultural uses. It is assessed as having a medium susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.31 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a medium sensitivity to the change proposed.

10 Uplands River Valley

5.7.32 The LCT is located approximately 2.6 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The River Doon valley is relatively wide with steep valley sides and well settled, including the settlements of Patna, Waterside, Dalmellington and Bells Bank. Past industrial activity is evident, with areas of commercial plantation woodland to the north-west and south-east of the LCT.

5.7.33 The LCT is covered by the Doon Valley LLA, as well as most of Craigengillan GDL being located within the south-eastern part of the LCT. Although influenced by former industrial activity, the LCT is assessed as having a high value.

5.7.34 The LCT is influenced by the settlement pattern, roads, rail and former industry, however, is visually contained and relatively intimate in nature. It is assessed as having a medium susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.35 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a high sensitivity to the change proposed.

9 Lowland River Valley (western part)

5.7.36 The LCT is located approximately 4.2 km to the west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The LCT features a narrow steep sided valley featuring the River Doon, which features mature riparian vegetation. Past industrial activity is evident, with the B7034, B742 and A713 located to the north of the valley.

5.7.37 The LCT is covered by the Doon Valley LLA, as well as most of Skeldon House GDL. The LCT is assessed as having a high value.

5.7.38 The LCT is influenced by roads and former industry, however, is visually contained and intimate in nature. It is assessed as having a medium/high susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.39 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a high sensitivity to the change proposed.

17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley

5.7.40 The LCT is located approximately 4.75 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The LCT forms part of the valley side of the River Doon to the north and is generally steeply sloping, including the peak of Auchenroy Hill. The LCT is predominantly covered by commercial coniferous plantation woodland, with some areas of upland pasture and moorland in between and with limited settlement and roads.

5.7.41 The LCT is covered by the Doon Valley LLA, as well as part of Craigengillan GDL. The LCT is assessed as having a high value.

5.7.42 Although the LCT is relatively undeveloped and remote, it is influenced by the presence of coniferous plantation woodland covering most of the area. It is assessed as having a medium susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.43 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a high sensitivity to the change proposed.

15 Upland Basin

5.7.44 The LCT is located approximately 4.9 km to the east of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The LCT forms part of a wide relatively level and open river valley associated with the River Nith, with steeper peripheral valley slopes. The agricultural valley is relatively well settled, including the settlement of New Cumnock and crossed by the A76, B741 and Glasgow South Western Line, with numerous scattered farmsteads. Former and existing mining activities are evident, which are particularly prominent to the west.

5.7.45 Most of the LCT is not covered by landscape designations, however, peripheral areas to the east include part of the Uplands and Moorlands LLA. The value of the

LCT is influenced by the industrial activities to the west and settlements and roads to the east. On balance, the LCT is assessed as having a medium value.

5.7.46 The LCT is relatively settled and influenced by industrial activity to the west, as well as transport routes to the north-east. It is assessed as having a medium/low susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.47 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a medium sensitivity to the change proposed.

9 Lowland River Valley (north-eastern part)

5.7.48 The LCT is located approximately 5.4 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The LCT features the relatively narrow valleys associated with Lugar Water and the River Ayr, both of which are meandering in nature and feature extensive areas of mature woodland and riparian vegetation adjacent to them. Both feature recreational routes along them and are well settled, including part of Cumnock and Catrine, as well as being crossed by roads and rail.

5.7.49 The LCT is covered by the River Ayr Valley LLA, as well as part of Dumfries House GDL. The LCT is assessed as having a high value.

5.7.50 The LCT is relatively settled and crossed by transport routes. However, the river valley is intimate in nature, featuring established landscape features. It is assessed as having a high susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.51 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a high sensitivity to the change proposed.

20a East Ayrshire Southern Uplands (south-eastern nearest part)

5.7.52 The LCT is located approximately 6.3 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The LCT is formed of a series of steeply sided hills dissected by a series of small burns and covered by open moorland with some scattered coniferous plantation woodland. There are no roads or settlements within the LCT, however, a wind farm is located to the south-west and industrial activity is located to the north.

5.7.53 The LCT is not covered by any landscape designations, however, has some value at a local level. The LCT is assessed as having a medium value.

5.7.54 The LCT is remote, with a sense of wildness, influenced by the adjacent wind farm and industrial activity. It is assessed as having a medium/high susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.55 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a medium sensitivity to the change proposed.

7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (north-eastern part)

5.7.56 The LCT is located approximately 8 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The LCT is set within a gently undulating

agricultural landscape, with areas of coniferous plantation woodland, as well as former and existing industrial activities and mining. The LCT is relatively settled, including the settlement of Auchinleck and is crossed by the A76, B705, B7036 and the Glasgow Southwestern Rail Line.

5.7.57 Most of the LCT is not covered by landscape designations, however, peripheral areas include part of the Uplands and Moorlands LLA to the east, as well the River Ayr Valley LLA to the south, west and north. The value of the LCT is partly influenced by industrial activities, settlements, roads, rail and commercial plantation woodlands. On balance, the LCT is assessed as having a medium/high value.

5.7.58 The LCT is relatively settled and influenced by industrial activity and transport routes. It is assessed as having a medium susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.59 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a medium sensitivity to the change proposed.

7d South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part)

5.7.60 The LCT is located approximately 2.5 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The LCT is set within a gently undulating agricultural landscape with areas of scattered native and coniferous plantation woodlands. It is relatively sparsely populated to the south and east, however, features the settlement of Coylton to the north-east, with industry, a hospital complex and caravan site to the west, close to urban edge of Ayr. The Ayr Coastline railway line and the A713 cross the LCT.

5.7.61 Most of the LCT is not covered by landscape designations, however, peripheral river valleys to the north are covered by part of The Ayr Valley LLA. The value of the LCT is influenced by the settlements, other scattered development, roads and rail. On balance, the LCT is assessed as having a medium value.

5.7.62 The LCT is influenced by the roads, settlements and other development, balanced against the pattern of agricultural uses. It is assessed as having a medium susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.63 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a medium sensitivity to the change proposed.

9 Lowland River Valley (north-western nearest part)

5.7.64 The LCT is located approximately 5.5 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The LCT includes the meandering valleys associated with the River Ayr and Water of Coyle, which are steep sided in places and feature woodland and riparian vegetation along the valleys. The valleys are relatively well settled and include the settlements of Annbank and Hillhead, as well

as being cross by numerous B roads and the Killoch Colliery Washery Rail Line. Several core paths and the River Ayr Way feature within the river valleys.

5.7.65 The LCT is mostly covered by the the Ayr Valley LLA and includes Auchincruive GDL, as well as feature many recreational routes including the River Ayr Way. The LCT is assessed as having a high value.

5.7.66 The LCT is relatively settled and crossed by transport routes. However, the river valley is intimate in nature, featuring established landscape features. It is assessed as having a medium/high susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.67 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a high sensitivity to the change proposed.

9 Lowland River Valley (western part)

5.7.68 The LCT is located approximately 6 km to the west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The LCT features a narrow steep sided valley featuring the River Doon to the east, which features mature riparian vegetation. The valley opens up to the west and north-west and features areas of woodland, as well as being crossed by the Ayr Coastline railway line, as well as by a number of roads including the A77.

5.7.69 The LCT is mostly covered by the Doon Valley LLA. The LCT is assessed as having a high value.

5.7.70 The LCT is influenced by roads and rail, however, is visually contained and intimate in nature. It is assessed as having a medium/high susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.71 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a high sensitivity to the change proposed.

17d Maybole Foothills

5.7.72 The LCT is located approximately 6.3 km to the west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. It is rolling and generally elevated open agricultural landscape. North-eastern and south-western parts of the LCT are relatively unsettled, featuring minor roads and farmsteads. Central areas include the settlement of Maybole and feature the A77, along with a number of B roads and the Ayr Coastline railway line. Whilst mostly open, the LCT features areas of scattered coniferous plantation woodland and some linear native woodland, mainly along field boundaries.

5.7.73 The LCT is mostly not covered by landscape designations, however, peripheral areas are covered by the Water of Girvan Valley LLA, Culzean LLA, Brown Carrick Hills & Coast LLA and Doon Valley LLA. Despite these peripheral areas of the LCT

covered by landscape designations, the LCT is assessed as having a medium value.

5.7.74 The LCT is influenced by roads and rail, however, is open, undulating and unsettled in parts. It is assessed as having a medium/high susceptibility to the change proposed.

5.7.75 Combining the LCT's value and susceptibility results in a medium sensitivity to the change proposed.

Table 5.3: Landscape Character Sensitivity

Landscape Character Type	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (2024)			
17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining	Medium	Medium	Medium
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part)	Medium	Medium	Medium
10 Uplands River Valley (south-western part)	High	Medium	High
9 Lowland River Valley (western part)	High	Medium/High	High
17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley	High	Medium	High
15 Upland Basin	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium
9 Lowland River Valley (north-eastern part)	High	High	High
20a East Ayrshire Southern Uplands (south-eastern nearest part)	Medium	Medium/High	Medium
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (north-eastern part)	Medium/High	Medium	Medium
South Ayrshire Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (2013)			
7d South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part)	Medium	Medium	Medium
9 Lowland River Valley (north-western nearest part)	High	Medium/High	High
9 Lowland River Valley (western part)	High	Medium/High	High
17d Maybole Foothills	Medium	Medium/High	Medium

Effects on Landscape Character During Construction

5.7.76 During the construction phase, there will be the temporary presence of cranes on the Site and the movement of other construction traffic, consistent with the formation of access tracks, hardstands, turbine foundations, BESS and substation compounds, other associated infrastructure and the installation of the turbines.

5.7.77 Effects during construction on landscape character will increase incrementally through the construction phase as more turbines, foundations, hardstands, and ancillary elements are constructed. Construction activities will move from turbine

location to turbine location and, as activities increased in one location, they will decrease at locations where construction is finished.

5.7.78 Cranes will be involved in the erection of the turbines, but these will be onsite for a relatively short period during the overall construction phase. The cranes will form noticeable vertical features in the landscape for a short period of time but will be a relatively diminutive visual component given their slender form compared with the turbines being erected.

5.7.79 As set out above, there will be no significant effects on any existing landscape features. There will be localised areas of medium/high magnitude of change to the landscape character of 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining, directly within the Site and up to 1 km from the Proposed Development, limited in areas by the pattern of coniferous plantation woodland. This will result in a **Moderate** *Significant* effect.

5.7.80 Beyond approximately 1 km from the Proposed Development within the 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining, there will be a medium magnitude of change upon the LCT during the construction phase. These effects are likely to be less beyond 2-3 km from the Site. This will give rise to a temporary effect which will be no greater than **Moderate/Minor** and *Not Significant*.

Table 5.4: Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character During Construction

Landscape Character Type	Approximate distance/ direction from Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (2024)					
17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining	Within approximately 1 km	Medium	Medium/ High	**Moderate**	**Yes**
	Elsewhere within the LCT	Medium	Medium/ Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part)	Within 3 km	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	No
	Elsewhere within the LCT	Medium	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
10 Uplands River Valley	Throughout	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
9 Lowland River Valley (western part)	Throughout	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley	Throughout	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
15 Upland Basin	Throughout	Medium	Very Low	**Minor**	No
9 Lowland River Valley (north-eastern part)	Throughout	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No

Landscape Character Type	Approximate distance/ direction from Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
20a East Ayrshire Southern Uplands (south-eastern nearest part)	Throughout	Medium	Very Low	**Minor**	No
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (north-eastern part)	Throughout	Medium	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
South Ayrshire Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (2013)					
7d South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part)	Within 4 km	Medium	Medium/ Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
	Elsewhere within the LCT	Medium	Very Low	**Minor**	No
9 Lowland River Valley (north-western nearest part)	Throughout	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
9 Lowland River Valley (western part)	Throughout	High	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
17d Maybole Foothills	Throughout	Medium	Very Low	**Minor**	No

Effects of Landscape Character During Operation

5.7.81 The effects on landscape character are discussed below in relation to each landscape character type brought forward into detailed assessment (refer to **Technical Appendix 5.3**). The magnitude of change on landscape character as a result of the Proposed Development has been determined using professional judgement based on the following factors:

- The percentage of the character type from where the Site will theoretically and actually be visible;
- The distance between the character type and the Site;
- The likely prominence of the turbines from the character type taking account of existing locally dominant characteristics in the character type; and
- The degree to which the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape will change as a result of the Proposed Development.

5.7.82 To aid the consideration of the operational effects on landscape character, the landscape character types within the detailed 20 km LVIA study area have been overlaid with the blade tip ZTV at **Figure 5.10**.

5.7.83 Beyond the immediate environs of the Site, the ground-level components of the Proposed Development, including the BESS, will not be discernible from lower-lying areas due to the elevation and the coniferous plantation woodland where the Proposed Development will be located. Therefore, effects on landscape character, as experienced in the wider landscape, for most locations arise largely in relation to the introduction of the turbines into the landscape and the resultant changes to the experience of landscape character.

5.7.84 It is noted that in general, the magnitude of change in landscape character will incrementally decrease with distance from the turbines as they become gradually less prominent.

5.7.85 A summary of the effects on landscape character during operation is presented in the table below. Note that for all LCTs stated within this table, the duration of the Proposed Development is considered to be long-term and reversible.

17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining

5.7.86 The Proposed Development, including all infrastructure will be located within this LCT. Views from this LCT are represented by Viewpoint 1.

5.7.87 The turbines, BESS and associated infrastructure will be located relatively centrally within the LCT, set amongst coniferous commercial plantation woodland, which is characteristic within the locality. Beyond the Site to the south and south-west, land rises steeply forming a series of rounded hills. The Site and land to the east is influenced by mining activities, as well as by the North Kyle Energy Project and overhead powerlines. Although the turbines will represent a notable change to the immediate vicinity of the Site, their location within and close to large areas of coniferous plantation woodland, as well as the adjacent wind farm, powerlines and mining activities, influences the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape.

5.7.88 The Proposed Development will introduce a medium magnitude of change upon the LCT, that will include the Site and extend to approximately 4 km to the west and north-east, 1 km to the north, south and south-west and approximately 2 km to the east and south-east. Combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, this will result in a **Moderate** *Significant* effect.

5.7.89 Due to either the intervening landform, coniferous plantation woodland covering the land, the influence of North Kyle Energy Project or mining/industrial activities, the Proposed Development will introduce a no greater than low magnitude of change

elsewhere within the LCT. Combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, this will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part)

5.7.90 The LCT is located approximately 0.6 km to the north of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect. Views from the LCT are represented by Viewpoints 5, 8, 10 and 13.

5.7.91 With reference to Figure 5.10, the LCT has extensive theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development over most of the area, up to approximately 6-7 km away. Beyond this distance, theoretical visibility becomes more sporadic and intermittent in nature.

5.7.92 The landscape to the north and west of the Proposed Development is gently undulating and apart from the pattern of field boundaries and vegetation aligning watercourses, is relatively open in nature. However, the LCT is influenced by past and existing industry to a degree, as well as being influenced by the North Kyle Energy Project to the east of the Site. The Proposed Development will introduce a medium magnitude of change upon the LCT, that will extend to approximately 4 km to the west and north, north-east and west. Combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, this will result in a **Moderate** *Significant* effect.

5.7.93 Beyond 4 km, the perception of the Proposed Development will reduce, due to the pattern of the gently undulating landscape and landscape features, along with influence of industry and overhead powerlines within the landscape. The Proposed Development will introduce a medium/low magnitude of change upon the LCT, that will extend between approximately 4 km and 7 km. Combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, this will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.94 Beyond 7 km, the influence of the Proposed Development will reduce, due to the distance from the Site, as well the intermittent nature of views towards the turbines from the LCT. A no greater than low magnitude of change is predicted upon the LCT beyond 7 km, which when combined with the sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** Not Significant effect.

10 Uplands River Valley

5.7.95 The LCT is located approximately 2.6 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect. Views from the LCT are represented by Viewpoint 6.

5.7.96 Due to the intervening landform to the south-west and south of the Site, the Proposed Development will have limited or no influence upon the LCT within 5 km. The Proposed Development will introduce a no greater than very low magnitude of change upon the LCT, that will extend up to 5 km. Combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, this will result in a **Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.97 Beyond 5 km within the LCT, as land begins to rise close to the settlements of Patna and Bellsbank, it is predicted that the Proposed Development will have some limited influence upon the landscape character. This influence will be limited by the

coverage of coniferous plantation woodland. The Proposed Development will introduce a no greater than low magnitude of change upon the LCT beyond 5 km. Combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, this will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

9 Lowland River Valley (western part)

5.7.98 The LCT is located approximately 4.2 km to the west of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect.

5.7.99 Within 7 km of the Proposed Development, there will be limited or no theoretical visibility within the LCT, therefore, limiting the influence of the turbines upon the river valley. The Proposed Development will introduce a very low magnitude of change upon the LCT, that will extend up to 7 km. Combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, this will result in a **Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.100 Beyond 7 km from the Proposed Development, some intermittent theoretical visibility will be possible from select locations within the river valley, limited by the pattern of mature vegetation, particularly near Hollybush, Skeldon Mills and Skeldon House. The Proposed Development will introduce a low magnitude of change upon the LCT, extending beyond 7 km. Combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, this will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley

5.7.101 The LCT is located approximately 4.75 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect. Views from the LCT are represented by Viewpoint 12.

5.7.102 The influence of the Proposed Development upon most of the LCT will be limited by the coverage by coniferous plantation woodland. However, south-eastern parts of the LCT are more elevated and open (refer to Viewpoint 12), where the Proposed Development will have some influence upon the perceptual qualities of the landscape, limited by intervening landform on the opposing valley side and the context of North Kyle Energy Project. The Proposed Development will introduce a low magnitude of change upon the LCT, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

15 Upland Basin

5.7.103 The LCT is located approximately 4.9 km to the east of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect. Views from the LCT are represented by Viewpoints 11 and 14.

5.7.104 Those areas of the LCT closest to the Proposed Development will have no theoretical visibility, however, some visibility will be possible along higher ground at approximately 6 km from the Site. Where intervisibility with the LCT is possible, these views are already influenced by industrial activity in the foreground and the intervening North Kyle Energy Project. The Proposed Development will introduce a

no greater than low magnitude of change upon the LCT, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

9 Lowland River Valley (north-eastern part)

5.7.105 The LCT is located approximately 5.4 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect. Views from the LCT are represented by Viewpoint 7.

5.7.106 Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development will be limited along the rivers within the valleys, mainly as a result of intervening landform, as well as the dense network of riparian vegetation along the rivers edges. However, as land extends up from Lugar Water to the south and west and the River Ayr to the north, the Proposed Development will have some influence upon the river valleys. Within 10 km of the Proposed Development, the influence upon the LCT is predicted to be limited in nature and within a landscape already partly influenced by the North Kyle Energy Project. The Proposed Development will introduce a no greater than low magnitude of change upon the LCT within 10 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.107 Beyond 10 km of the Proposed Development, the influence upon the LCT is predicted to be very limited. The Proposed Development will introduce a very low magnitude of change upon the LCT beyond 10 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

20a East Ayrshire Southern Uplands (south-eastern nearest part)

5.7.108 The LCT is located approximately 6.3 km to the south-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect.

5.7.109 Intermittent theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is possible over higher ground, limited in part by the scattered coniferous plantation woodland. Within 10 km of the Proposed Development views towards the turbines will be possible from higher peaks, seen in context of North Kyle Energy Project and industrial activity to the east of the Site. The Proposed Development will introduce a no greater than low magnitude of change upon the LCT within 10 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.110 Beyond 10 km of the Proposed Development, theoretical visibility is very limited, restricting the influence upon the LCT. The Proposed Development will introduce a

very low magnitude of change upon the LCT beyond 10 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (north-eastern part)

5.7.111 The LCT is located approximately 8 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect. Views from the LCT are represented by Viewpoint 4.

5.7.112 Extensive theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development covers the landscape within 10 km, however, this is limited in part by areas of industrial development, the woodland surrounding the Barony A Frame and the woodland surrounding Auckinleck House. The LCT is already influenced by Kyle North Energy Project to the east and south-east of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will introduce a medium/low magnitude of change upon the LCT within 10 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.113 Beyond 10 km of the Proposed Development, whilst theoretical visibility continues, the greater distance, along with the presence of the Glasgow South Western Line, the A76, Auchinleck and large areas of coniferous plantation woodland, limit the influence upon the landscape character. The Proposed Development will introduce a low magnitude of change upon the LCT beyond 10 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

7d South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part)

5.7.114 The LCT located approximately 2.5 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect. Views from the LCT are represented by Viewpoint 15.

5.7.115 Within 5 km of the Proposed Development, there is extensive theoretical visibility, partly limited by the undulating landform and some coniferous plantation woodlands to the west of Craigs Road. However, parts of the landscape are relatively open on the opposing side of Kerse Burn, with the Proposed Development seen on the skyline. The Proposed Development will introduce a medium magnitude of change upon the LCT within 5 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate** *Significant* effect.

5.7.116 Beyond 5 km, the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development becomes more sporadic in nature, with intervening landform restricting visibility in parts of the landscape. However, the Proposed Development will still have an influence upon the landscape character of the LCT. The Proposed Development will introduce a medium/low magnitude of change upon the LCT beyond 5 km, which when

combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

9 Lowland River Valley (north-western nearest part)

5.7.117 The LCT located approximately 5.5 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect.

5.7.118 Within 8 km, there is some theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development, however, this will be limited by the network of vegetation along the Water of Coyle and adjacent fields, as well as by the sewage works and large farm complexes. The settlement of Hillhead and vegetation along stretches of the A70 will also limit the influence of the Proposed Development upon the LCT. The Proposed Development will introduce a medium/low magnitude of change upon the LCT within 8 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.119 Beyond 8 km, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is more sporadic in nature due to the pattern of landform, which will be further limited by the pattern of vegetation along the River Ayr, Water of Coyle and other watercourses and the distance from the Site. The Proposed Development will introduce a low magnitude of change upon the LCT beyond 8 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

9 Lowland River Valley (western part)

5.7.120 The LCT located approximately 6 km to the west of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect.

5.7.121 Within 8 km of the Proposed Development, theoretical visibility is mainly limited to higher ground above the River Doon, with the dense network of vegetation along the river limiting the influence of the turbines upon the river corridor. The Proposed Development will introduce a no greater than medium/low magnitude of change upon the LCT within 8 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.122 Beyond 8 km, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is sporadic in nature, located on higher land above the River Doon. At this distance and when considering the network of vegetation both along the river and within the landscape, the influence of the Proposed Development will be limited. The Proposed Development will introduce a no greater than low magnitude of change upon the

LCT within 8 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

17d Maybole Foothills

5.7.123 The LCT located approximately 6.3 km to the west of the Proposed Development at its closest point, therefore, any effect discussed below will be indirect.

5.7.124 Within 10 km of the Proposed Development, theoretical visibility is mainly limited to hills closest to the Site, with land further to the west having limited on no theoretical visibility. The influence of the Proposed Development will be limited by the woodland located on higher ground either side of Loch Croot and Loch Barnshean. The Proposed Development will introduce a medium/low magnitude of change upon the LCT within 10 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.125 Beyond 10 km of the Proposed Development the intervening landform limits theoretical visibility with the turbines having little or no influence upon the LCT. Beyond 15 km of the Proposed Development, whilst there is increased theoretical visibility, due to the distance from the Site and the presence of settlements, roads and railway lines, the turbines will have little influence upon the landscape character. The Proposed Development will introduce a very low magnitude of change upon the LCT beyond 10 km, which when combined with the sensitivity of the LCT, will result in a **Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Table 5.5: Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character During Operation

Landscape Character Type	Approximate distance/ direction from Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (2024)					
17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining	4 km to the west and north 1 km to the north, south and south-west 2 km to the east and south-east	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**
	Elsewhere within the LCT	Medium	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part)	4 km to the north, north-east and west	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**
	Between 4 km and 7 km	Medium	Medium/Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
	Beyond 7 km	Medium	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
10 Uplands River Valley	Within 5 km	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
	Beyond 5 km	High	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
	Within 7 km	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No

Landscape Character Type	Approximate distance/ direction from Proposed Development	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
9 Lowland River Valley (western part)	Beyond 7 km	High	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley	Throughout	High	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
15 Upland Basin	Throughout	Medium	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
9 Lowland River Valley (north-eastern part)	Within 10 km	High	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
	Beyond 10 km	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
20a East Ayrshire Southern Uplands (south-eastern nearest part)	Within 10 km	Medium	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
	Beyond 10 km	Medium	Very Low	**Minor**	No
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (north-eastern part)	Within 10 km	Medium	Medium/Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
	Beyond 10 km	Medium	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
South Ayrshire Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (2013)					
7d South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part)	Within 5 km	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**
	Beyond 5 km	Medium	Medium/Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
9 Lowland River Valley (north-western nearest part)	Within 8 km	High	Medium/Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
	Beyond 8 km	High	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
9 Lowland River Valley (western part)	Within 8 km	High	Medium/Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
	Beyond 8 km	High	Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
17d Maybole Foothills	Within 10 km	Medium	Medium/Low	**Moderate/ Minor**	No
	Beyond 10 km	Medium	Very Low	**Minor**	No

Assessment of Visual Effects

5.7.126 This section considers the effects of the Proposed Development on viewpoints and the visual receptor groups brought forward into detailed assessment. Principal visual receptors within the detailed 20 km study area are illustrated on **Figure 5.14**.

Assessment of Effects upon Viewpoints

5.7.127 A detailed viewpoint assessment of the operational effects is presented at **Technical Appendix 5.5** and this considers the long-term visual effects during the operational phase of the Proposed Development for each of the 15 viewpoints.

5.7.128 For each of the assessment viewpoints, a short description is given of the baseline view, and a judgement is provided regarding the sensitivity of the key receptors likely to experience the view. This is followed by a description of the features of the Proposed Development that will be visible from that viewpoint. This includes a description of how many turbine hubs and blades will be visible and the ground-level components of the Proposed Development which will be visible. For each viewpoint, there is a comment on how vegetation or topography will affect the actual visibility of the turbines.

5.7.129 A judgement is then provided of the magnitude of change that will be experienced at each viewpoint, the level of the effect on the view and a statement provided to clarify whether the additional effect resulting from the Proposed Development is *Significant* or not.

5.7.130 A summary of the sensitivity of the view, magnitude of change in the view, the level of effect and its significance is given in the table below. Where a viewpoint is representative of more than one type of visual receptor, the assessment carried forward into the table represents the most sensitive receptor group represented by the viewpoint.

5.7.131 With reference to **Technical Appendix 5.5**, when considered against the existing baseline it has been assessed that there will be a *Significant* visual effect from three of the 15 representative viewpoints. These are as follows:

- Viewpoint 1 – Rankinston, Littlemill Place;
- Viewpoint 13 – Sinclairston; and
- Viewpoint 15 – Craigs Road.

Table 5.6: Summary of Operational Effects on Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
1. Rankinston, Littlemill Place	High	Medium/High	**Moderate/Major**	**Yes**
2. B705 Outskirts of Mauchline	High	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
3. A70 Approach to Lugar	Medium	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
4. B7036 Dumfries House Estate Access	High	Medium/Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
5. A70 between Drongan and Ochiltree	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	No
6. Ayr Road, Dalmellington	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
7. B7083 at Holmhead	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
8. Drongan, Mill of Shield Road	High	Medium	**Moderate**	No
9. Avisyard Hill	High	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
10. B7046 Skares Road	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	No
11. Connel View, New Cumnock	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
12. Auchenroy Hill	High	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
13. Sinclairston	High	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**
14. B741 at Dalleagles	Medium	Very Low	**Minor**	No
15. Craigs Road	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

5.7.132 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is defined through consideration of the susceptibility of the person to the type of development proposed and any values associated with either the viewpoint or visual amenity experienced. In accordance with the methodology set out in **Technical Appendix 5.1**, the sensitivity of residents at home is considered to be high, with recreational receptors varying between medium to very high and roads varying between low and medium. Unless otherwise stated, the following levels of sensitivity have been assumed:

- Residential receptors – high sensitivity;
- Recreational receptors – high sensitivity; and
- Road receptors – medium sensitivity.

Construction Effects on Visual Receptors

5.7.133 It is recognised that there will be some additional temporary visual effects during the construction of the Proposed Development over and above those assessed under the operational phase.

5.7.134 The vast majority of effects, of note, when considering the construction phase will be experienced within the local environs of the Site.

5.7.135 The network of coniferous plantation woodland covering the Site and surrounding areas will restrict some direct views towards construction activity. Therefore, views of the construction phase will be restricted to views of cranes appearing above intervening landform and vegetation with ground-level components screened from view. These views will only be experienced for a relatively short duration during the construction, and they will be experienced within the context of the turbines being constructed.

5.7.136 Overall, it is assessed that there will be a low magnitude of additional effect during construction over and above the operational phase effects assessed below. This will result in a temporary **Moderate/Minor** visual effect which will be *Not Significant*,

and these effects need to be considered in conjunction with the operational effects identified below.

Operational Effects on Visual Receptors

5.7.137 Views of the ground level components of the Proposed Development will be limited to a relatively short radius around the Site, limited by coniferous plantation woodland and/or experienced from receptors at elevated locations which allow views onto the Site where the Proposed Development is located. Therefore, except where indicated, the discussion below relates primarily to views of the turbines.

Residential Receptors

5.7.138 As set out in **Technical Appendix 5.6**, the RVAA concluded that, when the experience from each property is considered in the round, its residents will not experience such an overbearing or overwhelming effect on their visual amenity that their property will become an unattractive place to live.

Settlements within 5km

Rankinston (including Littlemill)

5.7.139 Rankinston is a small settlement located approximately 2 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development and consists of mostly semi-detached properties along a single residential road linking to the B730. The southern end of the settlement is generally visually enclosed by vegetation, however, properties further to the north benefit from views over surrounding agricultural land. Views towards the Site are obscured by intervening landform.

5.7.140 All turbines, including hubs, will be clearly noticeable on the skyline from most of the properties within the settlement, with some views filtered by vegetation surrounding the properties to the south. The turbines will appear relatively well spaced and over a wider field of view. Other elements of the Proposed Development, including the BESS and substation, will not be visible due to intervening landform. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium/high magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Major** *Significant* effect.

Hayhill

5.7.141 Hayhill is a small group of properties located either side of the B7046, located approximately 2 km to the north-west. The settlement consists of semi-detached properties, including some bungalows, which are orientated to face the Site. The settlement is surrounded by open agricultural fields, however, scattered trees within select field boundaries provide some visual enclosure. The Site is visible on the skyline.

5.7.142 All turbines, including hubs, will be clearly noticeable on the skyline from most of the properties within the settlement, with some views filtered by trees within adjacent field boundaries. Glimpses of North Kyle Energy Project will be possible to the east of the Proposed Development. Other elements of the Proposed

Development, including the BESS and substation, will not be visible due to intervening landform. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium/high magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Major** *Significant* effect.

Sinclairston

5.7.143 The settlement lies approximately 2.2 km to the north of the Proposed Development, located on both sides of a slight bend within the B7046. The settlement is dissected by a disused railway line, including its former embankments and cuttings, which are lined with vegetation. Some views towards the Site from the settlement are filtered by vegetation surrounding select properties to the south-east. Most views towards the Site are obscured by the pattern of intervening vegetation, including woodland areas surrounding and leading up to Polquhairn Farm.

5.7.144 All turbines, including hubs and towers will be visible on the skyline, however, some views of select turbines will be obscured by the pattern of vegetation and woodland in the foreground, particularly the woodland surrounding Polquhairn Farm. The turbines will appear relatively well spaced, however, due to intervening foreground feature will have a limited field of view when considering the proximity of the Proposed Development. Other elements of the Proposed Development, including the BESS and substation, will not be visible due to intervening landform. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate** *Significant* effect.

Dalmellington

5.7.145 Dalmellington is a small market town located approximately 4.4 km to the south of the Proposed Development. Muck Water passes through the town, with land rising up on both sides from the river. The A713 connects the town to the south, with the B741 passing through the centre. Views towards the Site are obscured by intervening landform, including Benbeoch (463 m AOD) and Benquhat Hill (435 m AOD).

5.7.146 Views from the town towards the Proposed Development will be mostly obscured by intervening landform, with views of the turbines limited to glimpses of blade tips. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a very low magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Patna

5.7.147 Patna is a village located approximately 4.4 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development. The village is located either side of the River Doon, with the A713 and the Doon Valley Railway located to the north-east. Views towards the Site are obscured by intervening landform, including Bow Hill (339 m AOD), Ewe Hill (379 m AOD), Kilmein Hill (429 m AOD) and Benquhat Hill (435 m AOD).

5.7.148 Most of the village will have no view towards the Proposed Development, including all properties north-east of the A713 and those to the south-west of the River Doon.

Some limited glimpses of turbine blade tips will be possible from those properties occupying higher ground to the south-west. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a very low magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Drongan

5.7.149 Drongan is village located approximately 4.3 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development. The village is dissected by Taiglum Burn, which flows into Water of Coyle to the south of the settlement. Properties are located either side of the burn and to the south-west of the B730 and Killoch Colliery Washery Rail Line. Glimpses of the North Kyle Energy Project are possible from select locations within the settlement.

5.7.150 The Proposed Development will be clearly noticeable on the skyline, which will be seen in context of buildings within the settlement, as well as filtered by vegetation surrounding properties and along watercourses including Taiglum Burn and the Water of Coyle. Other elements of the Proposed Development, including the BESS and substation, are unlikely to be visible due to intervening landform and vegetation. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate** *Not Significant* effect.

Settlements between 5 km and 10 km

Bellsbank

5.7.151 Bellsbank is a village located to the south of Dalmellington and the A713, located approximately 5.5 km to the south of the Proposed Development. The properties occupy rising land to the east of River Doon, with areas of woodland located to the east, west and south of the village. Most properties are orientated to face westward over the River Doon valley.

5.7.152 Views from the village towards the Proposed Development will be mostly obscured by intervening landform, with views of the turbines limited to glimpses of blade tips. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a very low magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Ochiltree

5.7.153 Ochiltree is a village located approximately 7 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development to the north of the A70. The village is located to the west of where the meandering Burnock Water meets Lugar Water. Most properties are located off two **Minor** roads, with the village surrounded by relatively open agricultural land. Eastern parts of the village are relatively enclosed by vegetation along watercourses, however, western parts of the village are more open in nature, including glimpses of the Site on the distant skyline. Views towards the North Kyle

Energy Project are possible, with wind turbines visible on the skyline to the east and south-east of the Site.

5.7.154 The Proposed Development will be clearly noticeable on the skyline, seen in context of those turbines associated with Kyle North Energy Project already visible on the skyline to the east and south-east of the Site. The turbines will appear relatively well spaced when viewed by residents within the village, however, with some turbines overlapping and appearing stacked in limited places. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate** *Not Significant* effect.

Hillhead

5.7.155 Hillhead is a small village located to the east of Coylton, dissected by the A70 and is located approximately 7.1 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development. Most of the properties lie to south of the A70, with a line of properties located to the north. Although the settlement is surrounded by relatively open agricultural fields, vegetation, including along the Water of Coyle, provides some visual enclosure to the east and south.

5.7.156 Due to the sloping nature of the settlement and intervening buildings, properties to the north of the settlement will have limited views towards the Proposed Development. Those to the south of the settlement will have views towards the Proposed Development on the skyline, however, due to the distance from the Site, these are predicted not to be prominent. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium/low magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Hollybush

5.7.157 Hollybush consists of a collection of residential properties at the junction of the A713 and B7034, located approximately 7.3 km to the west of the Proposed Development. Hollybush House is located to the south, set within woodland, with the Doon Valley Railway located within cutting to the north-east beyond the A713.

5.7.158 Due to the network of vegetation along the A713, adjacent to the railway line and associated with Hollybush House, views to the Proposed Development are largely filtered and limited to occasional glimpses from select locations. Where glimpses are possible, views towards the Proposed Development are mostly obscured by intervening landform. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a low magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Coylton

5.7.159 Coylton is a village located along the A70, approximately 7.5 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development. The centre of the village is generally level, rising up

to the north and south. The Site is not visible from the village, apart from elevated locations to the north.

5.7.160 Due to intervening landform and buildings within the village, central and southern parts of the settlement will have limited or no view of the Proposed Development. However, as land rises to the north, views towards the Proposed Development will be possible on the skyline. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium/low magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Table 5.7: Summary of Operational Effects on Settlements

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
Settlements within 5 km				
Rankinston	High	Medium/High	**Moderate/Major**	**Yes**
Hayhill	High	Medium/High	**Moderate/Major**	**Yes**
Sinclairston	High	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**
Dalmellington	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
Patna	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
Drongan	High	Medium	**Moderate**	No
Settlements between 5 km and 10 km				
Bellsbank	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
Ochiltree	High	Medium	**Moderate**	No
Hillhead	High	Medium/Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
Hollybush	High	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
Coylton	High	Medium/Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No

Recreational Receptors

Core Paths up to 5 km

Core Paths D4 and D10 – south of Rankinston

5.7.161 Core paths D4 and D10 provide a link between the settlements of Rankinston and Waterside, including a circular route around the peak of Green Hill (300 m AOD) to the north-east of Waterside. The core paths are predominately to the north-west and south-west of the Site, however, the closest point is located approximately 1.4 km to the west.

5.7.162 Views towards the Proposed Development will be possible from short stretches of the core path crossing relatively open rough grassland to the south of Rankinston, with the Site seen at an oblique angle to the direction of travel. Views towards the Proposed Development from the path to the south of Rankinston will be limited by blocks of coniferous plantation woodland, limiting open views to two short stetches, equating to 0.6 km and 0.25 km west of the Site. Other elements of the Proposed

Development, including the BESS and substation, are unlikely to be visible due to intervening landform and vegetation. Further to the south, the core path enters coniferous plantation woodland, limiting views towards the Proposed Development. Beyond the woodland, the path crosses open land, however, with limited or no views towards the Proposed Development, due to intervening landform, including Bow Hill (339 m AOD), Ewe Hill (379 m AOD), Kilmein Hill (429 m AOD) and Benquhat Hill (435 m AOD).

5.7.163 Along the limited 0.6 km and 0.25 km stretches of core path to the west of the Proposed Development, a medium/high magnitude of change is predicted. When combined with a high sensitivity, it will result in a **Moderate/Major** *Significant* effect. However, on the remaining stretches on core path, a no greater than low magnitude of change is predicted, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

*Core Paths D19, C7, C8 and C9 – between Drongan and Ochiltree (as illustrated on **Figures 5.12 and 5.14**)*

5.7.164 These core paths are located approximately 4.1 km to the north at the closet point from the Proposed Development. The core paths cross the gently undulating agricultural landscape between the settlements of Drongan and Ochiltree, occasionally following stretches of road including the B7043 in proximity to Drongan and minor roads within and surrounding Ochiltree. The path passes under two overhead powerlines with associated pylons radiating from the Coylton Grid substation located adjacent to the A70.

5.7.165 Views towards the Proposed Development on the skyline will be possible along most of the route, with the exception of paths north of Ochiltree, obscured by landform. Most views towards the Proposed Development will be seen at an oblique angle to the direction of travel, however, with limited intervening vegetation. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate** *Significant* effect.

Core Paths C3 and C6 – between Ochiltree and Cumnock

5.7.166 These core paths are located close to the northern side of Lugar Water, between the settlements of Ochiltree and Cumnock, located approximately 7.75 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

5.7.167 Western parts of the path in proximity to Cumnock will have no view of the Proposed Development. Most views towards the Proposed Development will be at an oblique angle to the direction of travel and limited by the network of trees and woodland along Lugar Water, as well as the woodland and vegetation within Dumfries House gardens. However, some limited occasional glimpses towards the Proposed Development are predicted from select locations. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a no greater than medium/low

magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Core Paths B8, B14 and B7/C15 – between Auchinleck and Catrine

5.7.168 The core paths extend from the A76 to the south-west of Auchinleck and follow the B7036, before passing close to Auchinleck House and then following farm tracks close to the south-west of Catrine. The paths are located approximately 8.6 km from the Proposed Development at its closest point.

5.7.169 Due to the dense vegetation aligning the B7036, views towards the Proposed Development will be limited to occasional field gate gaps, with views considered to be fleeting and incidental in nature. After leaving the B7036, the path follows estate roads close to Auchinleck House, passing through areas of linear woodland, restricting outward views. Beyond Auchinleck, the route follows the well vegetation edges of Dippol Burn, before following vegetated field boundaries crossing agricultural land to the River Ayr. In summary, there are very few opportunities for outward views along the core paths. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a no greater than medium/low magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Core Path C12

5.7.170 The core path crosses agricultural land to the west of New Cumnock, occupying locally elevated land, located approximately 9.5 km to the east of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

5.7.171 Eastern parts of the path will have no view towards the Proposed Development, either as a result of intervening landform or passing through an area of woodland to the south-east of the B741. However, those parts of the path above Lane Burn and in proximity to Lanemark Farm will see glimpses towards the Proposed Development, which will be seen in context of North Kyle Energy Project located to the east and south-east of the Site. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a no greater than low magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Table 5.8: Summary of Operational Effects on Core Paths

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
Core Paths within 5 km				
Core Paths D4 and D10 – south of Rankinston 0.6 km and 0.25 km stretches only	High	Medium/High	**Moderate/Major**	**Yes**
Core Paths D4 and D10 – south of Rankinston	High	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
Excluding 0.6 km and 0.25 km stretches				
Core Paths D19, C7, C8 and C9 – between Drongan and Ochiltree	High	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**
Core Paths between 5 km and 10 km				
Core Paths C3 and C6 – between Ochiltree and Cumnock	High	Medium/Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
Core Paths B8, B14 and B7/C15 – between Auchinleck and Catrine	High	Medium/Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
Core Path C12	High	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No

Road and Rail Receptors

5.7.172 As set out in **Technical Appendix 5.4**, due to a number of factors, no rail routes are assessed further. Therefore, only select roads are assessed, as set out below.

Roads within 5 km

B7046

5.7.173 The road passes through a gently undulating agricultural landscape between the settlements of Drongan and Cumnock, located approximately 2.1 km to the north of the Proposed Development at its closest point and is approximately 14 km in length. Views from the road are relatively open in nature, restricted by areas of linear woodland adjacent to the road, particularly between Skares and Cumnock, to the north-east of the Site.

5.7.174 Due to the open nature of the road and proximity to the Proposed Development, the turbines will be clearly noticeable on the skyline from a number of locations, albeit with most views seen at an oblique angle to the direction of travel. Other elements of the Proposed Development, including the BESS and substation, will not be visible due to intervening landform. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium magnitude of change within 5 km of the Proposed Development, which when combined with a medium sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate** *Significant* effect.

5.7.175 However, beyond 5 km of the Proposed Development to the north-east, views towards the Site become more intermittent due to areas of woodland aligning the road, although it is acknowledged that outward views are possible from the road. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a no greater than medium magnitude of change beyond 5 km of the Proposed

Development, which when combined with a medium sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate** *Not Significant* effect.

B730

5.7.176 The road provides a connection between the A719 to the north-west of Tarbolton, situated approximately 15 km to the north-west of the Site and the A713 near Polnessan, situated approximately 4.5 km to the west of the Site. The road is located approximately 2.25 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point. The road crosses a relatively open and gently undulating agricultural landscape, influenced by former industrial activities.

5.7.177 Due to the open nature of the road and proximity to the Proposed Development, the turbines will be clearly noticeable on the skyline from a number of locations. However, other elements of the Proposed Development, including the BESS and substation, will not be visible due to intervening landform. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium magnitude of change within 4 km of the Proposed Development, which when combined with a medium sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate** *Significant* effect.

5.7.178 Beyond 4 km to the south-west, views towards the Proposed Development will be obscured by landform and coniferous plantation woodland either side of the road.

5.7.179 Beyond 4 km to the north-west, views will be partly obscured by buildings either side of the road within Drongan and by vegetation along the Killoch Colliery Washery Rail Line. Beyond Drongan and Coalhill, glimpsed views towards the Proposed Development will be possible, limited by vegetation along the road and by other features within the landscape. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a no greater than medium/low magnitude of change beyond 4 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development, which when combined with a medium sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

A713

5.7.180 The A713 provides a link between Ayr to the north-west of the Site, to Castle Douglas to the south-east. The road is located approximately 3.9 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

5.7.181 Where the A713 passes closest to the south-west of the Site and to the south-east, any view will be limited to glimpses of blade tips only. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a very low magnitude of change to the south-west and south-east of the Proposed Development, which when combined with a high sensitivity (high value due to the roads location within the Doon Valley LLA), will result in a **Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.182 Beyond 7 km to the west, glimpsed views towards the Proposed Development from limited higher sections of the A713 will be possible, limited by vegetation adjacent to the road. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a no greater than low magnitude of change to the west and north-west

of the Proposed Development, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Roads between 5 km and 10 km

A70

5.7.183 The A70 travels between Ayr to the north-west and extends to Edinburgh to the north-east. The road is located approximately 5.4 km to the north of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

5.7.184 Where closest to the Site and up to 7.5 km to the north-west and north-east, the Proposed Development will be clearly noticeable on the skyline from several locations along the road. However, intervening areas or vegetation and buildings within settlements serve to limit views along some sections of the road. Most views from the road towards the Proposed Development will be seen at an oblique angle to the direction of travel. The Proposed Development will be seen in context of those turbines associated with Kyle North Energy Project visible on the skyline to the east and south-east of the Site, particularly when viewed from the road to the north-east. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium magnitude of change up to 7.5 km north-west and north-east of the Proposed Development, which when combined with a medium sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.185 Beyond 7.5 km both to the north-west and the north-east of the Site, views towards the Proposed Development will be intermittent along the road, limited by vegetation along the road. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a low magnitude of change beyond 7.5 km north-west and north-east of the Proposed Development, which when combined with a medium sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

B742

5.7.186 The B742 provides a loop from the A77 near Ayr, back to the A77 to the north-east of Maybole and is located approximately 7.25 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

5.7.187 The Proposed Development is clearly noticeable along a locally elevated 3.25 km stretch of the B742, located between south-east of Coylton to an area between Fergus Loch and Martnaham Loch. Most views from the road towards the Proposed Development will be seen at an oblique angle to the direction of travel. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium magnitude of change along this 3.25 km stretch, which when combined with a medium sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.188 Beyond the 3.25 km stretch along either side of the road, views towards the Proposed Development are limited in nature due to intervening landform and the pattern of foreground vegetation. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a no greater than low magnitude of change

elsewhere along the road, which when combined with a medium sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

B7036

5.7.189 The road provides a connection between Ochiltree and Auchinleck crossing agricultural land, located approximately 7.5 km from the Proposed Development at its closest point.

5.7.190 Some outward views from the road are relatively limited by vegetation east of Ochiltree, as well as woodland surrounding the Barony A Frame and nearby industrial development. Elsewhere, vegetation along the road views towards the Proposed Development are largely limited to field gates. However, as the road falls towards Ochiltree over a 0.9 km stretch, views are relatively open, with views possible towards the Proposed Development on the skyline. The Proposed Development will be seen in context of those turbines associated with Kyle North Energy Project visible on the skyline to the east and south-east of the Site. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium/low magnitude of change, which when combined with a medium sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

B7034

5.7.191 The B7034 extends from Hollybush at the junction with the A713, to the A77 further to the west. The road is located approximately 7.6 km to the west of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

5.7.192 To the south-west of Hollybush, as the road rises, glimpses of the Proposed Development will be visible on the skyline, filtered in part by the vegetation surrounding the settlement. However, due to the woodland and mature field boundaries along the road and the mature vegetation surrounding Skeldon Mills, views towards the Proposed Development will be limited to an approximate 0.15 km stretch to the south-west of Hollybush. Beyond Skeldon Mills, occasional fleeting and incidental views will be possible though field boundary vegetation along the road. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a medium/low magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity (the road is mostly on the edge of the Doon Valley LLA), will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.193 Glimpses of the Proposed Development will also be possible from elevated land either side of Dalrymple over short stretches of road and where roadside vegetation allows, partly filtered vegetation either side of the Doon valley. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a low magnitude of change, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

Table 5.9: Summary of Operational Effects on Roads

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significant
Roads within 5 km				
B7046 – within 5 km	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**
B7046 – beyond 5 km	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	No
B730 – within 4 km	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	**Yes**
B730 – beyond 4 km to the north-west	Medium	Medium/Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
A713 – to the south-west and south-east	High	Very Low	**Minor**	No
A713 – to the west and north-west	High	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
Roads between 5 km and 10 km				
A70 – up to 7.5 km to the north-west and north-east	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	No
A70 – beyond 7.5 km to the north-west and north-east	Medium	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
B742 – 3.25 km stretch to the north-west	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**	No
B742 – elsewhere	Medium	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
B7036	Medium	Medium/Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
B7034 – near Hollybush	High	Medium/Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No
B7034 – near Dalrymple	High	Low	**Moderate/Minor**	No

Decommissioning Effects on Visual Receptors

5.7.194 Visual effects of decommissioning the Proposed Development at the end of its operational life will be very similar in nature to those experienced during the construction, except in reverse.

Assessment of Effects upon Landscape Designations

5.7.195 The effects on landscape designations are discussed below in relation to each LLA or GDL brought forward into detailed assessment, as set out in **Technical Appendix 5.3.**

Local Landscape Areas (LLA)

Doon Valley LLA

5.7.196 Doon Valley LLA is located approximately 1.35 km to the south of the Proposed Development at its closest point and shown on **Figure 5.8**.

5.7.197 The LVIA has already considered landscape and visual effects within the LLA. The visual receptors that are considered to be *Not Significant* are Viewpoint 6 from Dalmellington, Viewpoint 12 from Auchenroy Hill, the settlements of Dalmellington, Patna and Bellsbank, Core Paths south of Rankinston (excluding 0.6 km and 0.25 km stretches) and roads A713, B742 and B7034. *Not Significant* effects are identified upon 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining where within the LLA. In addition, other LCTs within the LLA are also identified as having no significant effects, including 10 Uplands River Valley, 17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley and 9 Lowland River Valley.

5.7.198 A *Significant* visual effect is identified for users of Core Paths D4 and D10 – south of Rankinston, however, the stretches of the route giving rise to these significant effects are not located within the LLA. A *Significant* effect is also identified for users of the B730, however, due to intervening coniferous plantation woodland and the pattern of local landform, there will be no view towards the Proposed Development where the road crosses the LLA.

5.7.199 The Local Landscape Areas draft Supplementary Guidance (2024) as part of East Ayrshire Councils LDP2 sets out an evaluation of Criteria for the Doon Valley LLA and a ranking of either high, medium or low. The criterion, along with how the Proposed Development will influence these, are set out in the table below, noting that the first three columns are taken verbatim from the councils' guidance.

Table 5.10: Effects upon the Criterion of the Doon Valley LLA

Criterion	Rank	Justification	Effect of the Proposed Development
Identity and sense of place	*High*	*The rich combination of hills (forested, open moorland), lochs, streams, wild land areas with extensive views is very scenic and attractive to visitors who come to*	The Proposed Development may indirectly influence the sense of place of very limited parts of the LLA, seen in context of the North Kyle Energy Project to the east and south-east.

Criterion	Rank	Justification	Effect of the Proposed Development
		enjoy nature. A pleasing balance of natural and managed landscapes.	
Rarity	*High*	*There is only one are of wild land within East Ayrshire (Merrick), located to the south of Loch Doon, which is a freshwater loch and is the largest inland loch in southern Scotland at around seven miles long.*	The Proposed Development will have **No effect** upon the rarity of the LLA.
Intactness and condition	*High*	*The landscape and combinations of elements are generally in a good state of repair. Some damage to verges around Loch Doon, by cars, due to insufficient parking space / passing places. Some encroachment of wind turbines within some views detracts slightly from the natural landscape around Loch Doon. Changes will occur as part of forestry felling and restocking (over time) but the requirement to include greater mix of native, deciduous species will beneficial. Currently, no wind farms or other infrastructure projects within the planning system.*	The Proposed Development will not directly affect the condition of the LLA. However, the Proposed Development will contribute to the encroachment of nearby wind turbines, seen in context of the North Kyle Energy Project to the east and south-east.
Wildness	*Medium*	*This LLA includes an area designated as wild land, where it borders Dumfries and Galloway / Galloway Dark Skies Park. Some encroachment of wind turbines within some views detracts slightly from the natural landscape around Loch Doon.*	The Proposed Development may contribute to the encroachment of wind turbines and the influence upon the natural landscape, in context of the North Kyle Energy Project wind farm to the east and south-east.
Scenic Qualities	*High*	*The rich combination of hills (forested, open moorland), lochs, streams, wild land areas with extensive views is very scenic and attractive to visitors who come to enjoy nature. Some encroachment of wind turbines within some views detracts slightly from the natural landscape.*	The Proposed Development may contribute to detracting from the natural landscape to a limited degree, in context of the North Kyle Energy Project to the east and south-east.
Enjoyment	*High*	*A landscape that is highly valued by locals and tourists for walking (a number of Core Paths), cycling, horse riding, fishing, bird watching, simply enjoying nature, including dark skies.*	The Proposed Development will not directly influence the enjoyment of the landscape.
Built heritage assets	*Medium*	*Doon Castle, Dunaskin Heritage Centre, Craigengillan Estate. Attractions within the landscape but they do not significantly influence the character of the landscape. Views to*	N/A

Criterion	Rank	Justification	Effect of the Proposed Development
		and from are constrained by landform.	
Cultural Qualities	*Low*	*Doon Castle, Dunaskin Heritage Centre, Craigengillan Estate. These places attract locals and tourists. These are built heritage assets rather than cultural associations.*	N/A
Naturalness and natural heritage assets	*High*	*Loch Doon and other smaller lochs, River Doon valley, Dalcairney Falls, proximity to Galloway Forest Park/Dark Skies park, Ness Glen, relationship of hills to lochs and rivers and SSSIs. These all combine to create a rich and diverse landscape appreciated by locals and tourists.*	The Proposed Development will not directly affect the naturalness or natural heritage assets.
Settlement setting	*High*	*Settlements nestle in the landscape and sit within the valley corridor. Rising higher ground provides enclosure and setting.*	The Proposed Development will have limited effects upon the setting of settlements located within the valley corridor.
Views	*Medium*	*Higher ground and wild land area provide panoramic viewpoints, but there are no specific/special viewpoints noted. Within the Doon Valley and around/across Loch Doon, views are contained by landform. Views of turbines encroach into some views.*	The Proposed Development may encroach into some views from the LLA, seen in context of views which will already be influenced by North Kyle Energy Project.

5.7.200 In summary, whilst it is acknowledged that there will be some localised effects upon the LLA and its criterion, the assessment of landscape and visual receptors do not give rise to any significant effects. Overall, any limited indirect effects upon the Doon Valley LLA are considered to be *Not Significant*.

River Ayr Valley LLA

5.7.201 River Ayr Valley LLA is located approximately 4.6 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point and shown on **Figure 5.8**.

5.7.202 The LVIA has already considered landscape and visual effects within the LLA. The visual receptors that are considered to be *Not Significant* are Core Paths between Ochiltree and Cumnock and between Auchinleck and Catrine, and the roads A70 and B730. Those LCTs within the LLA that are considered to be *Not Significant* effects include 7C East Ayrshire Lowlands and 9 Lowland River Valley.

5.7.203 The Local Landscape Areas draft Supplementary Guidance (2024) as part of East Ayrshire Councils LDP2 sets out an evaluation of Criteria for the River Ayr Valley LLA and a ranking of either high, medium or low. The criterion, along with how the

Proposed Development will influence these, are set out in the table below, noting that the first three columns are taken verbatim from the councils' guidance.

Table 5.11: Effects upon the Criterion of the River Ayr Valley LLA

Criterion	Rank	Justification	Effect of the Proposed Development
Identity and sense of place	*Medium*	*The combination of woodland, rivers and streams, agriculture, valleys and settlements is significantly different to other areas of East Ayrshire. The area also includes a number of heritage features and visitor attractions.*	Due to the distance from the Proposed Development, it is considered that the identity and sense of place of the LLA will not be adversely affected.
Rarity	*Medium*	*The combination of woodland, rivers and streams, agriculture, valleys and settlements is significantly different to other areas of East Ayrshire. The Ayr River valley is strongly influenced by former mining, although so are other areas of East Ayrshire.*	The Proposed Development will have **No effect** upon the rarity of the LLA.
Intactness and condition	*Medium*	*Former mining and coalfields have influenced the natural landscape to an extent, but the area is not in a state of decline.*	The Proposed Development will not directly affect the intactness or condition of the LLA.
Wildness	*Low*	*Too settled and cultivated to be wild. Landscape intertwined with development (historic and current), which is an important element of it character.*	N/A
Scenic Qualities	*High*	*Rich combination of woodland, rivers and streams, agriculture, valleys and settlements with some localised high points offering panoramic views and particularly to the moorlands and upland areas.*	Due to the distance from the Site, it is considered that the Proposed Development will have limited influence upon the scenic qualities of the LLA.
Enjoyment	*High*	*Rich combination of woodland, rivers and streams, agriculture, valleys and settlements with the River Ayr Way, Dumfries House Estate, Auchinleck Estate and area around the Barony A-frame enjoyed by local people and visitors.*	The Proposed Development will not directly influence the enjoyment of the landscape.
Built heritage assets	*Medium*	*Dumfries House and Estate, Barony A-frame particularly have a positive influence in and on the landscape. The A-frame being a very striking feature in views.*	N/A
Cultural Qualities	*Low*	*The area is heavily influenced by forming and current mining and quarrying.*	N/A
Naturalness and natural	*High*	*Combinations of landform, deciduous woodland, rivers, water courses, agriculture, pasture,*	The Proposed Development will not directly affect naturalness or

Criterion	Rank	Justification	Effect of the Proposed Development
heritage assets		*lowland moorland make for a rich and diverse landscape and intricate landscape.*	the natural heritage assets within the LLA.
Settlement setting	*High*	*Settlements are nestled into the landscape, contained by landform, hedges and woodland.*	The Proposed Development will not adversely affect the setting of settlements located within the LLA.
Views	*Medium*	*Some high points giving rise to panoramic views, but views are mostly constrained by valley landform, hedges and woodland.*	The Proposed Development may form part of some views from the LLA, however, mostly at a distance of over 5 km and in context of North Kyle Energy Project to the east and south-east of the Site.

5.7.204 In summary, there will be very limited and localised effects upon the LLA and its criteria and the assessment of landscape and visual receptors will not give rise to any significant effects. Overall, any limited indirect effects upon the River Ayr Valley LLA are considered to be *Not Significant*.

Uplands and Moorlands LLA

5.7.205 The Uplands and Moorlands LLA is located approximately 11 km to the east of the Proposed Development at its closest point and shown on **Figure 5.8**.

5.7.206 The LVIA has already considered landscape and visual effects within the LLA. The visual receptors that are considered to be not-significant are roads including the A70 and A76. Those LCTs within the LLA are considered to be not-significant effects include 10 Upland River Valley, 15 Upland Basin and 20a East Ayrshire Southern Uplands.

5.7.207 The Local Landscape Areas draft Supplementary Guidance (2024) as part of East Ayrshire Councils LDP2 sets out an evaluation of Criteria for the Uplands and Moorlands LLA and a ranking of either high, medium or low. The criterion, along with how the Proposed Development will influence these, are set out in the table below, noting that the first three columns are taken verbatim from the councils' guidance.

Table 5.12: Effects upon the Criterion of the Uplands and Moorlands LLA

Criterion	Rank	Justification	Effect of the Proposed Development
Identity and sense of place	*Medium*	*Contains striking moorland character but they are not unique to East Ayrshire as they extend into Dumfries and Galloway and South Ayrshire. Contains some elements of past and present industrial use which also extend across neighbouring Council areas.*	Due to the distance from the Proposed Development, it is considered that the identity and sense of place of the LLA will not be adversely affected.

Criterion	Rank	Justification	Effect of the Proposed Development
Rarity	*Medium*	*Contains striking moorland character but they are not unique to East Ayrshire as they extend into Dumfries and Galloway and South Ayrshire. Contains some elements of past and present industrial use which also extend across neighbouring Council areas.*	The Proposed Development will have **No effect** upon the rarity of the LLA.
Intactness and condition	*Low*	*Parts of the LLA have already been impacted by wind farms and further pressures will continue with more in the planning system. Notably, large upland areas remain free of turbines, in part due to the European nature designations. Quite a state of change although the underlying landscape is not in decline. Subject to numerous large-scale planning applications which will shape the qualities and characteristics of the landscape.*	The Proposed Development will not directly affect the intactness or condition of the LLA.
Wildness	*Medium*	*Some perception of wildness as more difficult to access due to lack of footpaths but modern interventions (wind turbines, Overhead lines) impinge on views and qualities, significantly affecting the sense of remoteness.*	Due to the distance of the LLA from the Proposed Development and the presence of North Kyle Energy Project, the turbines are deemed to have no additional effect upon wildness within the designation.
Scenic Qualities	*High*	*Dramatic, large-scale, simple rolling hills which act as the backdrop to East Ayrshire in the east and south, contrasting strongly with the valleys and open agricultural areas.*	Due to the distance from the Site and the presence of North Kyle Energy Project, it is considered that the Proposed Development will have very limited influence upon the scenic qualities of the LLA.
Enjoyment	*Medium*	*Not as popular a destination due to lack of easy access across much of these areas.*	The Proposed Development will not directly influence the enjoyment of the landscape.
Built heritage assets	*Low*	*Few built assets - only Robert Burns Cairn, near Laight. However, it is tucked away in the landscape and does not influence the landscape character.*	N/A
Cultural Qualities	*Low*	*Robert Burns Cairn (built in 1973 to mark the 50th anniversary of the New Cumnock Burns Club) and Robert the Bruce Way, although the latter is not well used (in disrepair in places) and appears to have been affected by the windfarm access tracks.*	N/A
Naturalness and natural	*High*	*Dramatic, large-scale, simple rolling hills which act as the backdrop to*	The Proposed Development will not directly affect naturalness or

Criterion	Rank	Justification	Effect of the Proposed Development
heritage assets		*East Ayrshire in the east and south, contrast strongly with the valleys and open agricultural areas.*	the natural heritage assets within the LLA.
Settlement setting	*Medium*	*Fewer settlements but backdrop is important to defining the eastern and southern extents of East Ayrshire.*	The Proposed Development will not adversely affect the setting of settlements located within the LLA.
Views	*High*	*Elevated and panoramic views, but forestry does restrict some views.*	The Proposed Development may form part of some distant views from the LLA at over 11 km, seen in context of North Kyle Energy Project to the east and south-east of the Site.

5.7.208 In summary, there will be very limited and localised effects upon the LLA and its criteria, mainly as a result of the distance from the Proposed Development. In addition, the assessment of landscape and visual receptors will not give rise to any significant effects. Overall, any limited indirect effects upon the Uplands and Moorlands LLA are considered to be *Not Significant*.

The Ayr Valley LLA

5.7.209 The Ayr Valley LLA is located approximately 6.5 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development at its closest point, as shown by Figure 5.8.

5.7.210 The LVIA has already considered landscape and visual effects within the LLA. The visual receptors that are considered to be not-significant are roads including the B730 and B742. Those LCTs within the LLA are considered to be not-significant effects include 9 Lowland River Valley and 7d South Ayrshire Lowlands.

5.7.211 The South Ayrshire Local Landscape Designations Review does not provide any specific special qualities for the LLA. However, the special qualities have been interpreted from the heading 'Description of character and special qualities', set out within the South Ayrshire Local Landscape Designations Review (2018), as follows:

'…predominantly narrow meandering river channels that are enclosed by steep, mostly well-wooded slopes…'

'…Craigie Estate…grounds are dominated by recreational, residential and – most extensively – educational development…'

'…in the centre and west, the pattern of landcover varies more with topographical complexity…'

'…Auchencruive, the most substantial estate within the Ayr valley in terms of size and influence…'

'…Sundrum Castle sits perched above the steep wooded banks of the Coyle…'

'…extensive, mainly broadleaved, riparian woodlands along both the Ayr and Coyle riverbanks…'

'…An extensive network of footpaths…'

5.7.212 The Proposed Development will likely have limited influence upon the narrow meandering river channels and the extensive riparian woodlands along the riverbanks, with the combination of topography and vegetation, particularly along the well-wooded slopes, restricting outward views from the valleys.

5.7.213 In relation to the Craigie Estate and Auchencruive, the Proposed Development is over 10 km from these historic assets and therefore will have limited influence upon these special qualities. Sundrum Castle is also over 9 km from the Proposed Development and surrounded by woodland, with limited influence upon this special quality.

5.7.214 Some views may be possible from the extensive network of footpaths within the LLA, however, at over 6.5 km from the Proposed Development and when considering the riparian woodland and well-wooded slopes, most outward views are restricted and will have very limited effects upon the special qualities of the LLA.

Garden and Designed Landscapes

5.7.215 All GDLs present within the detailed 20 km LVIA study area have been subject to an initial filtering exercise, with the findings presented within **Technical Appendix 5.3**. The LVIA assesses those visiting the GDL and does not assess the effects upon the setting of the GDL or buildings and features within it; instead this assessment is set out within **Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage**.

Dumfries House GDL

5.7.216 Dumfries House GDL is located approximately 7.3 km to the north-east of the Proposed Development at its closest point, with its location shown on **Figure 5.8**.

5.7.217 When considering the value and susceptibility to change of the GDL, the sensitivity of those visiting the designation is considered to be high.

5.7.218 As shown on Figure 5.8 and as set out in **Technical Appendix 5.3**, most central and southern parts of the GDL have no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development, which includes the house and gardens. Although some theoretical visibility is evident to the west of the GDL, this is limited by the dense network of woodland, including along the A70 which dissects the designation. Therefore, it is predicted that visitors to the GDL will have very limited or no views towards the Proposed Development. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a very low magnitude of change upon those visiting central and southern parts of the GDL, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a Minor *Not Significant* effect.

5.7.219 Northern parts of the GDL have extensive theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. However, this theoretical visibility is limited by the vegetation surrounding the events and educational buildings and grounds, by dense vegetation aligning the A76 which crosses the north-eastern part of the GDL and by other blocks of woodland dividing agricultural fields. Some views towards the Proposed Development will be possible from select locations within the GDL, seen in context

of the North Kyle Energy Project to the east and south-east of the Site. When considering these factors, the Proposed Development is judged to result in a no greater than medium/low magnitude of change upon those visiting select northern parts of the GDL, which when combined with a high sensitivity, will result in a **Moderate/Minor** *Not Significant* effect.

5.8 Mitigation

5.8.1 Due to the size and scale of the Proposed Development, there will be no additional mitigation over and above that already set out in the chapter, which is referred to as embedded mitigation.

5.9 Assessment of Cumulative Effects

5.9.1 The following section provides an assessment of potential cumulative landscape and visual effects. The assessment criteria that underpin the judgements for the cumulative landscape and visual assessment is detailed in **Technical Appendix 5.1**. The approach and methodology are set out below.

Cumulative Baseline

5.9.2 The initial step of the cumulative assessment is to establish the existing cumulative baseline. Consideration was initially given to a 60km radius from the Proposed Development Site, as recommended by NatureScot best practice guidance. Following this, all other wind energy developments that are operational, under construction, consented or subject to a valid full planning application within 20 km of the Proposed Development were identified and reviewed as part of the cumulative baseline, as illustrated at **Figure 5-24**.

5.9.3 Analysis was then undertaken to refine this list in order to ensure a proportionate approach focused on potentially significant effects, as advocated by NatureScot guidelines 'Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments' (2021) which states that:

"We therefore only seek cumulative impact assessments where we consider that a proposal could result in significant cumulative impacts which could affect the eventual planning decision."

5.9.4 In this regard, it was set out at scoping that the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) would focus on a 20 km cumulative study area. Furthermore, in order that the assessment remains focused on those other schemes which have the greatest potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects, it was deemed appropriate to scope out any turbines under 50m, or any turbines between 50m and 80m which lie over 10 km from the nearest proposed turbine. The cumulative sites within the 20 km cumulative study area are illustrated

at **Figure 5-24** and listed in **Table 5.13** below. The cumulative schemes are based on a cut-off date of Jan 31st 2025.

Table 5.13: Other Wind Farms within 20 km of the Proposed Development

Site	Number of Turbines	Blade Tip Height	Distance and Direction
Operational / Under Construction			
North Kyle	49	149.9m	0.8 km East
Afton	25	120m	14.5 km south-east
Dersalloch	23	120m	7.1 km south-west
Hare Hill	20	64m	15.8 km east and south-east
Hare Hill Extension	35	70m	17.1 km east and south-east
South Kyle	50	150m	9.8 km south-east
Windy Rig	12	125m	17.4 km south-east
Windy Standard II	30	125m	12.9 km south-east
Benbrack	15	149m	10.5 km east and south-east
Enoch Hill	15	149.9m	8.3 km south-east
Consented			
Ailsa	1	100m	12.5 km north-west
Knockshinnoch	2	126.5	3.3 km west and north-west
Lethans	22	176m/220m	18.4 km east and north-east
Lethans Ext	10	235m/251m	21.5 km north and north-east
Overhill	10	180m	2.4 km east
Pencloe	12	149.9m	12.6 km south-east
Windy Standard III (Brockloch Rig 2)	20	125.5m/177.5m	14.5 km south-east
In Planning			
Greenburn	14	167.5m/180m	5.8 km east and north-east
Craiginmoddie	14	200m	18.2 km south-west
Enoch Hill II	2	149.9m	11.5 km south-west
Knockkippen	12	150m/180m	1.9 km south-west
Quantans Hill	14	200m	18.5 km south and south-east
Schlenteuch	9	200m	6.1 km south-west
The Drum	8	162m	16.6 km north-east
Windy Standard I Repowering	8	200m	14.8 km south-east

The baseline against which the solus effects of the Proposed Development has been assessed includes all operational wind farms. Therefore, an assessment of the Proposed Development with consideration of other operational wind farms is already presented in this chapter.

5.9.5 The primary purpose of the cumulative impact assessment is therefore to consider the additional effects that might arise as a result of the Proposed Development if the above consented schemes were also operational and formed part of the baseline landscape. In addition, this cumulative assessment also includes a further consideration of the overall totality of the effect, when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational or consented schemes across the 20 km CLVIA study area.

5.9.6 The baseline in the cumulative impact assessment is therefore extended to consider other developments that are not yet present in the landscape but are at various stages in the planning process. Two scenarios are generally considered which reflect the different degrees of certainty that these developments will be constructed:

- Scenario 1 assumes that other consented (but as yet unbuilt) wind farms are operational; and
- Scenario 2 extends this further to assume that all developments in planning are also operational. In reality, it is possible that other developments that are in planning may not be approved and constructed but this scenario assumes planning developments are operational as this presents the 'worst case'.

Cumulative ZTVs and Wireframes

5.9.7 Cumulative ZTVs (CZTVs) have been produced to illustrate the theoretical visibility of various other wind farms and combinations of wind farms with the Proposed Development.

5.9.8 It should be reiterated that ZTVs imply a much greater geographical extent of influence on the landscape and views of it than would actually be the case. It therefore follows that the cumulative ZTVs also exaggerate the actual impacts of the turbines on landscape character and visual amenity as they do not take account of vegetation or buildings in the landscape, which may restrict the nature and extent of views.

5.9.9 Cumulative ZTVs have been produced for the following combinations of existing, consented, and other wind farm sites in planning:

- Operational: North Kyle Energy Project (refer to **Figure 5.25**);
- Operational: Dersalloch (refer to **Figure 5.26**);
- Operational: Schemes to the south-east (refer to **Figure 5.27**);
- Consented: Overhill and Knockshinnoch (refer to **Figure 5.28**);
- Consented: Ailsa Wind Turbine (refer to **Figure 5.29**);
- Consented: Lethans and Lethans Extension (refer to **Figure 5.30**);
- Consented: Schemes to the south-east (refer to **Figure 5.31**);

- In Planning: Knockkippen and Schlenteuch (refer to **Figure 5.32**);
- In Planning: The Drum (refer to **Figure 5.33**);
- In Planning: Craiginmoddie (refer to **Figure 5.34**);
- In Planning: Schemes to the south-east (refer to **Figure 5.35**); and
- In Planning: Greenburn (refer to **Figure 5.51**).

Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character

5.9.10 It is acknowledged that wherever more than one wind farm is visible at any given location in the landscape, there will be a greater overall or cumulative effect on landscape character than if just one wind farm was visible in the landscape.

5.9.11 It is also noted however that in any given landscape where turbines are already present, the additional effect on landscape character of introducing further turbines may not be as significant as the initial introduction of turbines. Furthermore, in general, the greater the number of turbines in the baseline landscape the less significant the addition of further turbines may be in landscape character terms as the landscape will be more heavily characterised by turbines in the baseline situation.

5.9.12 Generally speaking, such additional cumulative effects would arise when the addition of the Proposed Development to the baseline results in an increase in effects, when viewed in combination with the other wind turbines forming part of the baseline landscape.

Cumulative Scenario One – Other Consented Developments are also considered to be Operational

5.9.13 In this cumulative scenario (where other consented developments are also considered to be operational) there would be seven additional developments within 20 km.

Overhill and Knockshinnoch

5.9.14 Overhill is the closest of the other consented developments and lies 2.4 km east of the Site, within the same LCT as the Site, namely 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining. Knockshinnoch lies around 3.3 km to the west and north-west of the Site and is also located within the same LCT. The cumulative ZTV prepared for the consented Overhill and Knockshinnoch (refer to **Figure 5.28**) illustrates the potential for visibility of the Proposed Development with these two consented schemes from parts of the landscape.

5.9.15 The theoretical visibility of the combined visibility of the Proposed Development with the two consented wind farms covers similar parts of the study area, with the exception of land to the south and south-west up to a distance of 8 km. However, as demonstrated by Viewpoint 6 (refer to **Figure 5.41**), views of the Proposed

Development are limited to mainly blade tips to the south and south-west, with intervening landform and vegetation restricting visibility.

5.9.16 There would be potential for cumulative effects to arise within LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining in which the Proposed Development and the two consented wind farms are located. It is considered that, due to the number of turbines, the greater effects upon the LCT are likely to arise from the Proposed Development. However, when considering the context of North Kyle, the schemes are already located within a landscape influenced by wind farm development, with Overhill separated from the Proposed Development by this wind farm. Therefore, when considering the Proposed Development in addition to the two consented schemes and with the influence of North Kyle, there would be no additional significant cumulative effects upon LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining. Similarly, there would be no additional cumulative effects upon other surrounding LCTs within the study area, including upon LCT 7c East Ayrshire Lowlands to the north for similar reasons as stated above.

Other Wind Farms to the East and South-East

5.9.17 Ailsa Wind Turbine is located 12.5 km to the north-west of the Proposed Development, located within LCT 7d South Ayrshire Lowlands. Although the nearest Proposed Turbine is located only 2.5 km from the edge of this LCT, the Proposed Development and Ailsa Wind Turbine influence different parts of LCT 7d South Ayrshire Lowlands. However, due to the distance between them, no additional cumulative effects are predicted as a result of the Proposed Development with Ailsa Wind Turbine. Similarly, there will be no additional significant cumulative effects upon LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining as a result of the Proposed Development and Ailsa Wind Turbine.

5.9.18 As shown on the cumulative ZTV prepared for the consented schemes to the south-east (refer to **Figure 5.31**) the visibility of the Proposed Development and these consented schemes influence different parts of the landscape. In addition, the consented schemes to the south-east already sit amongst operational wind farms. Therefore, no additional significant cumulative effects are predicted upon those LCTs either directly or indirectly influenced by the Proposed Development or consented schemes to the south-east. Similar outcomes will occur when considering the Proposed Development in addition to Lethans and Lethans Extension to the east (refer to **Figure 5.30**), with no additional significant cumulative effects predicted.

Cumulative Scenario Two – Other In-Planning Developments are also considered to be Operational

5.9.19 In this cumulative scenario (where other developments in planning are also considered to be consented and operational) there would be eight further additional development within 20 km of the Site.

Knockkippen and Schlenteuch

5.9.20 Knockkippen is located 1.9 km to the south-west of the Proposed Development, with Schlenteuch further to the south-west at approximately 6.1 km away. As

illustrated by the cumulative ZTV (refer to **Figure 5.32**), theoretical visibility is similar for the Proposed Development and the two in planning schemes. However, due to the intervening landform, the Proposed Development would have additional visibility to the north-east and the two in planning schemes will have influence upon the River Doon and Water of Girvan valley.

5.9.21 Knockkippen lies within the same LCT as the Proposed Development, namely 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining. Knockkippen will extend the influence of wind farm development within the LCT further to the south-west and in combination with the existing North Kyle Energy Project, along with other consented schemes, has the potential to increase the level of effect upon 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining. Therefore, there is potential for additional Moderate significant cumulative effects upon LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining, when considering Knockkippen, the Proposed Development and other consented schemes, primarily in the landscape between the Proposed Development and Knockkippen. However, the Proposed Development lies adjacent to North Kyle Energy Project and therefore would only influence a limited additional area of the LCT which is not already influenced by other wind farm development.

5.9.22 Due to the proximity of both Knockkippen and Schlenteuch to LCT 10 Upland River Valley, as well as to LCT 9 Lowland River Valley (both in East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire), there is potential for increased influence upon the landscape character of these river valleys in combination with the Proposed Development and other operational and consented schemes. It is predicted that additional cumulative effects will arise upon these LCTs, however, the Proposed Development will not give rise to the greater effects, instead the two in planning schemes will have considerably more influence upon the river valleys.

5.9.23 Schlenteuch lies within LCT 17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley (both in East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire). There would be no potential for additional significant effects upon the LCT as a result of the Proposed Development or other operational or consented schemes due to the distance from the LCT and the intervening landform.

Greenburn

5.9.24 Greenburn is located 5.8 km to the east and north-east of the Proposed Development, mostly located within LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining. As shown on the cumulative ZTV (refer to **Figure 5.51**), although similar parts of the landscape are influenced by the Proposed Development and Greenburn, the Proposed Development has greater influence upon landscape character to the south-west, with Greenburn solely influencing landscape character between Cumnock and New Cumnock.

5.9.25 Greenburn will extend the influence of wind farm development within LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining further to the north-east. In combination with the existing North Kyle Energy Project, along with other consented schemes, Greenburn has the potential to increase the level of effect upon 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining. Therefore, there is potential for additional cumulative effects upon LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining, when considering

Greenburn, the Proposed Development and other consented schemes. Both the Proposed Development and Greenburn are located west and east of North Kyle. However, such that the LCT is already influenced by wind farm development.

Other Wind Farms beyond 10km

5.9.26 Most of the in planning schemes to the south-east lie amongst operational or consented wind farms. Therefore, no additional significant cumulative effects are predicted upon those LCTs either directly or indirectly influenced by the Proposed Development.

5.9.27 The Drum lies 16.6 km to the north-east and although the cumulative ZTV shows that it would influence similar parts of the landscape as the Proposed Development (refer to **Figure 5.33**), due to the distance between them, there will be no potential for additional significant cumulative effects upon landscape character. Craiginmoddie lies 18.2 km to the south-west and due to the distance between it and the Proposed Development, there is no potential for additional cumulative effects upon landscape character.

Totality of the Combined Effect of All Developments, including the other Operational Developments

5.9.28 Consideration has also been given to the overall totality of the effect, when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational, consented, and in planning developments.

5.9.29 Collectively, all development within LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining will create a landscape noticeably influenced by wind energy and would result in additional significant cumulative effects upon the LCT. With most development appearing consolidated within the LCT including the Proposed Development, North Kyle Energy Project, Overhill and Greenburn, it is considered that each of these developments would have some influence upon the landscape character of the LCT, however, it is noted that the operational North Kyle is much greater in size and number of turbines. Knockkippen and Knockshinnoch are separated from other the developments within the LCT and therefore, have the potential to further extend the influence of wind farms upon the LCT not overly affected by the other developments.

5.9.30 The totality of the Proposed Development with other developments, particularly the in planning Knockkippen and Schlenteuch, has the potential to create additional significant cumulative effects upon LCT 10 Upland River Valley and LCT 9 Lowland River Valley (both in East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire). However, the Proposed Development will not overly increase these additional levels of effect, instead the two in planning schemes will have considerably more influence upon these LCTs.

5.9.31 The totality of all developments and specifically those to the south-east will have the potential to create additional significant cumulative effects upon LCT 19a Southern Uplands with Forest and LCT 19 Southern Uplands in particular. However,

due to the distance of the Proposed Development from these LCTs, it will have little or no contributing factor to the levels of effect upon the landscape character.

Cumulative Effects on Views and Visual Amenity

5.9.32 As with cumulative landscape character effects, it is acknowledged that the addition of the Proposed Development to the baseline has the potential to result in an increase in effects, when viewed in combination with other wind turbines forming part of the visual baseline.

5.9.33 It is also noted however that in any given view where turbines are already present, the additional effect on visual amenity of introducing further turbines may not have as great an effect as the initial introduction of turbines. Furthermore, in general the greater the number of turbines in the baseline view, the less significant the addition of further turbines may be. It is also recognised however that a slight additional effect on top of an existing effect, which at present is not quite significant, could in theory tip the balance such that the overall effect is deemed to be significant.

5.9.34 Again, generally speaking, such additional cumulative effects would arise where a visual receptor would now lie between a cumulative wind farm in one direction and the Proposed Development in a different direction, such that the visibility of turbines as a result of the addition of the Proposed Development would become notable in multiple, usually directly opposite, directions.

Cumulative 'In Combination' Visual Effects

5.9.35 An 'in combination' cumulative visual effect is the term used to refer to the situation where a viewer is able to see one or more further wind farms, in addition to the Proposed Development, whilst standing in the one location. These effects are either 'simultaneous', where the viewer can see the additional turbines in the same angle of view, or 'successive', where the view can see the additional turbines in a different angle of view by turning their head.

5.9.36 As set out in the chapter above, there are many locations where other existing wind turbines are seen in views from the landscape in and around the Proposed Development. The table below provides an illustration as to where this occurs. In particular, this is most evident from elevated viewpoints such as Avisyard Hill.

(Viewpoint 9) and Auchenroy Hill (Viewpoint 12), as well as from nearby roads including the B705 (Viewpoint 2) and the A70 (Viewpoint 5).

Table 5.14: Summary of Combined Cumulative Visual Effects by Viewpoint Location[1]

Viewpoint Location	Operational/Under Construction North Kyle	Operational Dersalloch	Operational schemes to the south-east	Consented Overhill and Knockshinnoch	Consented Ailsa Wind Turbine	Consented Lethans and Lethans Ext	Consented schemes to the south-east	In Planning Knockkippen and Schlenteuch	In Planning The Drum	In Planning Craiginmoddie	In Planning schemes to the south-east	In Planning Greenburn
1. Rankinston, Littlemill Place	X	O	-	X	O	-	-	O	-	-	-	X
2. B705 Outskirts of Mauchline	X	X	X	X	O	-	X	X	-	X	X	X
3. A70 Approach to Lugar	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	X	O	-	-	X
4. B7036 Dumfries House Estate Access	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	X	O	-	O	X
5. A70 between Drongan and Ochiltree	X	-	X	X	-	O	X	X	O	X	X	o
6. Ayr Road, Dalmellington	X	-	O	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
7. B7083 at Holmhead	X	-	X	X	-	O	-	O	O	-	O	o
8. Drongan, Mill of Shield Road	X	-	X	X	-	O	-	X	O	-	-	-
9. Avisyard Hill	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	X
10. B7046 Skares Road	X	-	O	X	O	O	-	X	O	-	-	-
11. Connel View, New Cumnock	X	-	X	X	O	-	O	X	O	-	O	X
12. Auchenroy Hill	X	-	O	X	O	X	O	X	-	O	O	X
13. Sinclairston	X	-	-	X	-	O	-	X	O	-	-	o
14. B741 at Dalleagles	X	-	-	X	-	O	-	-	-	-	-	X
15. Craigs Road	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	-	-	X

[1] Key: X = Simultaneous, O = In Succession and '-' = No Combined Visibility

Cumulative Scenario One – Other Consented Developments are also considered to be Operational

5.9.37 In this cumulative scenario (where other consented developments are also considered to be operational) there would be seven additional developments within 20 km.

5.9.38 It is considered that although the proximity of Knockshinnoch is closer to the settlement of Rankinston and seen in succession, due to its limited number of turbines, there will be no additional significant cumulative effects when combining with the Proposed Development. Similarly, Overhill will be physically and visually separated from the settlement of Rankinston and seen behind the Proposed Development and North Kyle Energy Project (refer to **Figure 5.36**), resulting in no additional significant cumulative effects. A similar scenario will occur for the settlements of Sinclairston (refer to **Figure 5.48**) and Hayhill to the north and north-west respectively.

5.9.39 From other settlements within the study area, the Proposed Development in combination with other consented schemes will not give rise to any additional significant cumulative visual effects.

Cumulative Scenario Two – Other In-Planning Developments are also considered to be Operational

5.9.40 Within the settlement of Rankinston, the Proposed Development in combination with Knockkippen will bring about additional visibility of wind development. Due to intervening landform, views towards Knockkippen from Rankinston will be limited in nature, with the greatest effects occurring as a result of the Proposed Development. However, the Proposed Development will be seen in context of North Kyle Energy Project and Overhill, with no additional significant cumulative effect predicted.

5.9.41 Additional significant cumulative effects would occur upon Patna and Waterside as a result of the combined effects of the Proposed Development and Knockkippen, noting that the greatest level of effects will result from the introduction of Knockkippen.

5.9.42 From other settlements within the study area, the Proposed Development in combination with other consented schemes will not give rise to any additional significant cumulative visual effects.

Cumulative 'Sequential' Effects

5.9.43 A 'sequential' cumulative visual effect is the term used to refer to the situation where a viewer is able to see one or more further wind farms in addition to the Proposed Development, whilst travelling along a linear route. This could be either on foot, whilst walking on a footpath, or by bicycle or car along the public highway. The main assessment focussed on the following routes which were identified as having the greatest potential to experience significant effects as a result of the Proposed Development and these were also used as the basis for the cumulative assessment:

- Core Paths D4 and D10 – south of Rankinston

- Core Paths D19, C7, C8 and C9 – between Drongan and Ochiltree
- Core Paths C3 and C6 – between Ochiltree and Cumnock
- Core Paths B8, B14 and B7/C15 – between Auchinleck and Catrine
- Core Path C12
- B7046 – within 5 km and beyond 5 km
- B730 – within 4 km and beyond 4 km to the north-west
- A713
- A70
- B742
- B7036
- B7034

5.9.44 The main assessment identified significant effects on core paths D4 and D10 – south of Rankinston and D19, C7, C8 and C9 – between Drongan and Ochiltree, as well as from drivers using the B7046 within 5 km and from the B730 within 4km. The others were considered no greater that moderate and Not Significant.

5.9.45 The potential for the effects of the Proposed Development to result in significant cumulative effects once the other consented and in-planning schemes are also included has been considered and no significant cumulative effects have been identified from most visual receptors.

5.9.46 From Core Paths D4 and D10 – south of Rankinston, the Knockkippen in planning scheme will give rise to additional significant cumulative visual effects when combined with the Proposed Development as well as other operational and consented. The additional cumulative effects will arise primarily as a result of the proximity of the core path to both Knockkippen and the Proposed Development, noting that Knockkippen will have the greatest effects to the south of the route, and the Proposed Development having greatest effects to the north.

5.9.47 Additional significant cumulative effects would occur upon A713 as a result of the combined effects of the Proposed Development and Knockkippen, noting that the greatest level of effects will result from the introduction of Knockkippen.

5.9.48 For all other routes set out above, they will have some periodic visibility of existing wind energy. The additional effect introduced by the Proposed Development would not lead to a significant sequential effect alongside the other developments, where

such a significant effect does not already arise from the other developments in isolation.

Totality of the Combined Effect of All Developments, including the other Operational Developments

5.9.49 Consideration has also been given to the overall totality of the cumulative visual effect, when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational and consented schemes.

5.9.50 It has already been identified in the main assessment that the Proposed Development introduces significant effects on a number of visual receptors during daylight hours.

5.9.51 When the combined effects of the other operational and consented schemes are considered, in most cases there would not be any additional overall significant cumulative effects. The exception to this is brought about by the influence of Knockkippen in relation to Patna and Waterside, noting that the greatest level of effects will result from the introduction of Knockkippen, rather than the Proposed Development.

Summary of Cumulative Effects

5.9.52 It is acknowledged that wherever more than one wind farm is visible at any given location in the landscape, there will be a greater overall or cumulative effect on landscape character and visual amenity than if just one wind farm was visible in the landscape. Likewise, it is acknowledged that the more wind turbines that are constructed in any given landscape, the greater the magnitude of overall (or combined) change to the landscape character or views.

5.9.53 At the time of preparing this assessment, there were there were 25no. other wind farms within the detailed 20km cumulative study area which were either operational, under construction, consented or in planning. These include seven consented schemes and eight in planning schemes.

5.9.54 Additional significant cumulative effects are predicted to occur upon LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining as a result of the Proposed Development combined with consented and in planning schemes, noting that the landscape is already influenced by operational wind farm development. Some nearby LCTs would also experience additional significant cumulative effects, noting that the Proposed Development will not be the greatest contributing factor to the level of effect.

5.9.55 Despite the proximity of the Proposed Development along with other consented and in planning schemes to the settlement of Rankinston, no additional cumulative effects are predicted from Rankinston or most other visual receptors, however, some additional significant cumulative visual effects occur from core paths, other settlements and roads in proximity to the Proposed Development and the in

planning scheme of Knockkippen, noting that the greatest level of effects will result from the introduction of Knockkippen.

5.9.56 Consideration has also been given to the overall totality of the cumulative landscape and visual effects when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational and proposed developments. Collectively, the operational and proposed developments would serve to result in wind energy being seen as a noticeable feature in many views in the landscape of the wider study area to the east and south-west of the Site. The addition of the Proposed Development would serve to reinforce this pattern, albeit extending the significant landscape character effects and the significant effects upon some nearby settlements.

5.10 Summary

5.10.1 This chapter presents the findings of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and identifies the likely significant effects arising from the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity. It has been informed by field visits carried out on separate occasions at different times of the year.

5.10.2 The existing landscape and visual baseline has been documented and is presented at Section 5.6 and the assessment has been supported by figures (presented in Volume 3) and visualisations produced to NatureScot visualisation standards (presented in Volume 4) that show representative views during daylight hours from a select number of viewpoint locations. Supporting Technical Appendices are included in Volume 5.

5.10.3 The Site is located approximately 4.75 km north of Dalmellington, approximately 4.75 km to the south-east of Drongan and approximately 10.5 km south-west of Cumnock. The Site occupies an area of commercial coniferous plantation woodland which is in various stages of growth, including some recent replanting. The Site is crossed by numerous watercourses including Water of Coyle, Shield Burn, Drumbowie Burn and Hawford Burn.

North Kyle Energy Project is located to the east of the Site, which, at the time of site visits was under construction. However, for the purposes of the assessment of the Proposed Development, it has been assumed that, because construction work on North Kyle is due to be completed in November 2025, all of the turbines will be in place and act as baseline conditions. The Proposed Development is located within the North Kyle Forest Estate adjacent to the North Kyle Energy Project. The Site falls within the East Ayrshire Council (EAC) administrative area.

5.10.4 The Proposed Development is not located in or near to an international or national landscape designations. There are a number of Local Landscape Areas (LLA) within the initial 35 km study area, as well as Regional Scenic Areas within the Dumfries and Galloway local authority boundary. Doon Valley LLA lies approximately 1.35 km to the south of the Site at its closest point and extends up to 15 km to the east and up to 25 km to the south.

5.10.5 There are no Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL) covering the Site, however, there are a number within the initial 35 km study area and Craigengillan GDL (GDL00111) lies approximately 4.5 km to the south at its closest point.

5.10.6 In terms of effects on landscape character, during construction the Proposed Development would result in localised temporary significant effects to the Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining landscape character type (LCT 17A). During the operational phase, the Proposed Development would result significant effects to

limited parts of several landscape character types comprising: Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining landscape character type (LCT 17A); East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part) (LCT 7c); and the South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part) (LCT 7c). During the construction and decommissioning, phases are considered to be temporary and will have a short duration.

5.10.7 All effects on landscape character during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases are either contained within the site or its immediate vicinity and as such would be localised.

5.10.8 In terms of effects from residential properties within 2 km of the proposed turbines, some would experience a significant visual effect, but none would experience an overbearing or overwhelming effect.

5.10.9 In terms of effects on visual amenity, during construction it is recognised that there will be some additional temporary visual effects during the construction of the Proposed Development over and above those assessed under the operational phase. The vast majority of effects of note, when considering the construction phase, will be experienced within the local environs of the Site.

5.10.10 During operation, S*ignificant* visual effects would be experienced from **Viewpoint 1** at Littlemill Place, Rankinston, **Viewpoint 13** at Sinclairston and **Viewpoint 15** at Craigs Road.

5.10.11 Significant visual effects would be experienced from the settlements of Rankinston, Hayhill and Sinclairston. Significant visual effects would also be experienced from core paths D4 and D10, which are located to the south of Rankinston, and from Core Paths D19, C7, C8 and C9, which travel between Drongan and Ochiltree. Significant visual effects would be experienced from sections of the B7046 and B730.

5.10.12 Visual effects of decommissioning the Proposed Development at the end of its operational life will be very similar in nature to those experienced during the construction, except in reverse.

5.10.13 The LVIA has considered landscape and visual effects within the LLA. The visual receptors that are considered to be *Not Significant* are Viewpoint 6 from Dalmellington, Viewpoint 12 from Auchenroy Hill, the settlements of Dalmellington, Patna and Bellsbank, Core Paths south of Rankinston (excluding 0.6 km and 0.25 km stretches) and roads A713, B742 and B7034. *Not Significant* effects are identified upon 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining where within the LLA. In addition, other LCTs within the LLA are also identified as having no significant effects, including 10 Uplands River Valley, 17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley and 9 Lowland River Valley.

5.10.14 The primary mitigation adopted in relation to the Proposed Development is embedded within the design of the Proposed Development and relates to the consideration that was given to avoiding and minimising landscape and visual effects during the evolution of the layout of the Proposed Development. This is sometimes referred to as ‘mitigation by design’.

5.10.15 Regarding cumulative effects, additional significant cumulative effects are predicted to occur upon LCT 17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining as a result of the Proposed Development combined with consented and in planning schemes, noting that the landscape is already influenced by operational wind farm development.

Some nearby LCTs would also experience additional significant cumulative effects, noting that the Proposed Development will not be the greatest contributing factor to the level of effect.

5.10.16 Despite the proximity of the Proposed Development along with other consented and in planning schemes to the settlement of Rankinston, no additional cumulative effects are predicted from Rankinston or most other visual receptors, however, some additional significant cumulative visual effects occur from core paths, other settlements and roads in proximity to the Proposed Development and the in planning scheme of Knockkippen, noting that the greatest level of effects will result from the introduction of Knockkippen.

5.10.17 Consideration has also been given to the overall totality of the cumulative landscape and visual effects when the Proposed Development is considered alongside the other operational and proposed developments. Collectively, the operational and proposed developments would serve to result in wind energy being seen as a noticeable feature in many views in the landscape of the wider study area to the east and south-west of the Site. The addition of the Proposed Development would serve to reinforce this pattern, albeit extending the significant landscape character effects and the significant effects upon some nearby settlements.

5.10.18 Localised significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity are inevitable as a result of commercial wind energy development anywhere in the UK. Whilst the LVIA identified some significant landscape and visual effects it is considered that the landscape has the capacity to accommodate the effects identified.

5.10.19 Wind turbines give rise to a wide spectrum of opinions, ranging from strongly adverse to strongly positive, with a wide range of opinions lying somewhere between these two positions. Some people view wind turbines as incongruous or industrial structures whilst others view them as aesthetically pleasing, elegant structures and a positive response to climate change. In the case of the Proposed Development the turbines and associated development may be viewed by some as a symbol of continued progress by society towards a low carbon future.

5.10.20 However, in considering the effects of the Proposed Development, a precautionary approach has been adopted, and it is therefore assumed that the effects identified will be adverse in nature even though it is recognised that for some people the impacts could be perceived to be beneficial.

Table 5.15: Summary

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		
	Level of Effect	Significant	Beneficial / Adverse
During Construction & Decommissioning			
Landscape Character			
17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining – Within approximately 1 km	Moderate	**Yes**	Adverse
17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining – Elsewhere within the LCT	Moderate/ Minor	No	Adverse
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part) – Within 3 km	Moderate	No	Adverse
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part) – Elsewhere within the LCT	Moderate/ Minor	No	Adverse
10 Uplands River Valley	Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (western part)	Minor	No	Adverse
17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley	Minor	No	Adverse
15 Upland Basin	Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (north-eastern part)	Minor	No	Adverse
20a East Ayrshire Southern Uplands (south-eastern nearest part)	Minor	No	Adverse
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (north-eastern part)	Minor	No	Adverse
7d South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part) – Within 4 km	Moderate/ Minor	No	Adverse
7d South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part) – Elsewhere within the LCT	Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (north-western nearest part)	Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (western part)	Moderate/ Minor	No	Adverse
17d Maybole Foothills	Minor	No	Adverse
Visual Receptors			
All visual receptors	Moderate/ Minor	No	Adverse

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		
	Level of Effect	Significant	Beneficial / Adverse
During Operation			
Landscape Character			
17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining – 4 km to the west and north, 1 km to the north, south and south-west, 2 km to the east and south-east	Moderate	**Yes**	Adverse
17a Foothills with Forest & Opencast Mining – Elsewhere within the LCT	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part) – 4 km to the north, north-east and west	Moderate	**Yes**	Adverse
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part) – Between 4 km and 7 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (northern nearest part) – Elsewhere within the LCT	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
10 Uplands River Valley – Within 5 km	Minor	No	Adverse
10 Uplands River Valley – Beyond 5 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (western part) – Within 7 km	Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (western part) – Beyond 7 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
17b Foothills with Forest west of Doon Valley	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
15 Upland Basin	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (north-eastern part) – Within 10 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (north-eastern part) – Beyond 10 km	Minor	No	Adverse
20a East Ayrshire Southern Uplands (south-eastern nearest part) – Within 10 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
20a East Ayrshire Southern Uplands (south-eastern nearest part) – Beyond 10 km	Minor	No	Adverse
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (north-eastern part) – Within 10 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
7c East Ayrshire Lowlands (north-eastern part) – Beyond 10 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
7d South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part) – Within 5 km	Moderate	**Yes**	Adverse
7d South Ayrshire Lowlands (north-western nearest part) – Beyond 5 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		
	Level of Effect	Significant	Beneficial / Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (north-western nearest part) – Within 8 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (north-western nearest part) – Beyond 8 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (western part) – Within 8 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
9 Lowland River Valley (western part) – Beyond 8 km	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
17d Maybole Foothills	Minor	No	Adverse
Visual Receptors			
Rankinston	Moderate/Major	**Yes**	Adverse
Hayhill	Moderate/Major	**Yes**	Adverse
Sinclairston	Moderate	**Yes**	Adverse
Dalmellington	Minor	No	Adverse
Patna	Minor	No	Adverse
Drongan	Moderate	No	Adverse
Bellsbank	Minor	No	Adverse
Ochiltree	Moderate	No	Adverse
Hillhead	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
Hollybush	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
Coylton	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
Core Paths D4 and D10 – south of Rankinston - 0.6 km and 0.25 km stretches only	Moderate/Major	**Yes**	Adverse
Core Paths D4 and D10 – south of Rankinston – Excluding 0.6 km and 0.25 km stretches	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
Core Paths D19, C7, C8 and C9 – between Drongan and Ochiltree	Moderate	**Yes**	Adverse
Core Paths C3 and C6 – between Ochiltree and Cumnock	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
Core Paths B8, B14 and B7/C15 – between Auchinleck and Catrine	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		
	Level of Effect	Significant	Beneficial / Adverse
Core Path C12	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
B7046 – within 5 km	Moderate	**Yes**	Adverse
B7046 – beyond 5 km	Moderate	No	Adverse
B730 – within 4 km	Moderate	**Yes**	Adverse
B730 – beyond 4 km to the north-west	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
A713 – to the south-west and south-east	Minor	No	Adverse
A713 – to the west and north-west	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
A70 – up to 7.5 km to the north-west and north-east	Moderate	No	Adverse
A70 – beyond 7.5 km to the north-west and north-east	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
B742 – 3.25 km stretch to the north-west	Moderate	No	Adverse
B742 – elsewhere	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
B7036	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
B7034 – near Hollybush	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse
B7034 – near Dalrymple	Moderate/Minor	No	Adverse

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