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# Cairn Duhie Wind Farm

## Additional Information: Landscape and Visual Matters

### Cumulative Update, Assessment of Visual Effects on Local Communities and Special Landscape Area Update

Prepared by LUC on behalf of RES Ltd.  
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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Overview</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Cumulative update</b>	<b>3</b>
	Approach to CLVIA	3
	Summary of changes in planning status	3
	Implications for CLVIA	5
<b>3</b>	<b>Assessment of Visual Effects on Local Communities</b>	<b>8</b>
	Methodology	8
	Assessment	9
	Conclusion	10
<b>4</b>	<b>Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors Special Landscape Area</b>	<b>12</b>
	Methodology	12
	Changes to the SLA boundary	12
	Assessment of Effects	12
	Implications for the SLA	13
	Conclusion	14
	<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>16</b>
	Assessment of Effects on Individual Properties	16
	Introduction	17
	Context of the Assessment	17
	Methodology	18
	<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>22</b>
	Property Assessment Tables	22
	<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>33</b>
	New A3 Figures	34
	Updated LVIA Figures	35

## Tables

Table 2-1	Operational wind farms in the study area	3
Table 2-2	Consented and proposed wind farms within the study area	4
Table 2-3	Summary of cumulative visual effects	5
Table 3-1	Individual Properties Assessed	8
Table 4-1	Special Qualities of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor SLA	13
Table 4-2	Magnitude of change in visual amenity	21

## Appendix 3: Figures

[New A3 Figures](#)

Figure 1 Cumulative Wind Farms within 35 km

Figure 2 Cumulative Wind Farms within 15 km

Figure 3 Residential Properties and ZTV to 3 km

Figure 4.1 Viewpoint A A939 near Dava Schoolhouse – Overview Map

Figure 4.2 Viewpoint A A939 near Dava Schoolhouse – Photomontage

Figure 4.3 Viewpoint A A939 near Dava Schoolhouse – Existing View and Wireline

Figure 5.1 Viewpoint B Kerrow Farmhouse - Overview Map

Figure 5.2 Viewpoint B Kerrow Farmhouse - Photomontage

Figure 5.3 Viewpoint B Kerrow Farmhouse - Existing View and Wireline

Figure 6.1 Viewpoint C A940 near Tomdow - Overview Map

Figure 6.2 Viewpoint C A940 near Tomdow - Photomontage

Figure 6.3 Viewpoint C A940 near Tomdow - Existing View and Wireline

Figure 7.1 Viewpoint D Tomnarroch – Overview Map

Figure 7.2 Viewpoint D Tomnarroch – Photowireframe

Figure 7.3 Viewpoint D Tomnarroch – Existing View and Wireline

Figure 8.1 Viewpoint E B9007 near Score - Overview Map

Figure 8.2 Viewpoint E B9007 near Score - Photowireframe

Figure 8.3 Viewpoint E B9007 near Score – Existing View and Wireline

Figure 9 Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor SLA and ZTV

Figure 10 Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor SLA and Cumulative ZTV (Existing, Under Construction and Consented Wind Farms)

#### Updated LVIA Figures (A3)<sup>1</sup>

Figure 7.12.7 Viewpoint 1, Little Aitnoch, Cumulative wireframes

Figure 7.13.7 Viewpoint 2, Ferness, Cumulative wireframes

Figure 7.14.7 Viewpoint 3a, A940 above Kerrow, Cumulative wireframes

Figures 7.15.7 Viewpoint 3b, Knock of Braemoray, Cumulative wireframes (1 of 2 sheets)

Figure 7.15.8 Viewpoint 3b, Knock of Braemoray, Cumulative wireframes (2 of 2 sheets)

Figure 7.16.7 Viewpoint 4, A939 West of Aitnoch, Cumulative wireframes

Figure 7.17.7 Viewpoint 5, B9007 near Mount, Cumulative wireframes

Figure 7.18.7 Viewpoint 6, Ardclach Bell Tower, Cumulative wireframes (1 of 2 sheets)

Figure 7.18.8 Viewpoint 6, Ardclach Bell Tower, Cumulative wireframes (2 of 2 sheets)

Figure 7.19.7 Viewpoint 7, Dava Junction, Cumulative wireframes

Figure 7.20.7 Viewpoint 8, B9007 Old Military Road, Cumulative wireframes

Figure 7.21.7 Viewpoint 9, A940 Auchearn, Cumulative wireframes

Figure 7.22.7 Viewpoint 10 A939 and Dava Way, Wireframe

Figure 7.23.7 Viewpoint 11, Carn nan Gabhar above Lochindorb, Cumulative wireframes

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<sup>1</sup> Figures are intended to replace those in the ES Volume 3 with the same figure numbering, which can now be considered as superseded. Overview maps have not been reproduced – reference should be made to Additional Information Figures 1 and 2. Colours indicate wind farm status and are consistent with the 2013 LVIA: Cairn Duhie (red); Operational (blue); Consented (pink); Application submitted or under appeal (orange).

Figure 7.24.4 Viewpoint 12, Carn Kitty, Cumulative wireframes (1 of 3 sheets)

Figure 7.24.5 Viewpoint 12, Carn Kitty, Cumulative wireframes (2 of 3 sheets)

Figure 7.24.6 Viewpoint 12, Carn Kitty, Cumulative wireframes (3 of 3 sheets)

Figure 7.25.7 Viewpoint 13, Carn Allt Laoigh, Cumulative wireframes

Figure 7.26.7 Viewpoint 14, Mill Buie, Cumulative wireframes (1 of 2 sheets)

Figure 7.26.8 Viewpoint 14, Mill Buie, Cumulative wireframes (2 of 2 sheets)

Figure 7.27.4 Viewpoint 15, Carn an Uillt Bhric, Cumulative wireframes (1 of 2 sheets)

Figure 7.27.5 Viewpoint 15, Carn an Uillt Bhric, Cumulative wireframes (2 of 2 sheets)

Figure 7.28.7 Viewpoint 16, Califer, Cumulative wireframes (1 of 2 sheets)

Figure 7.28.8 Viewpoint 16, Califer, Cumulative wireframes (2 of 2 sheets)

Figure 7.29.4 Viewpoint 17, Creagan a' Chaise, Cumulative wireframes



# 1 Overview

1.1 This document provides Additional Information to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of Cairn Duhie Wind Farm contained within Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement (ES). The document includes an update to the cumulative assessment and provides more detailed information on visual effects on communities, within approximately 3 km of the proposed development. It also contains an assessment of effects in relation to the extension of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors Special Landscape Area (SLA). This report is supplemented by Additional Information **Figures 1 to 10** and updated LVIA Figures 7.12.7 to 7.29.4 in **Appendix 3** of this report. Additional photomontages / photowirelines have been prepared to supplement the LVIA Viewpoints and their locations are shown on Additional Information **Figures 9 and 10**.

1.2 **The conclusions made within this document add additional detail to those contained in the LVIA, and do not materially alter its findings.**

## Cumulative Update

1.3 The cumulative update is found in Section 2, and sets out the cumulative context of the proposed development, as of 8 January 2016. Notably, since the 2013 Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) was prepared: Hill of Glaschyle and Meikle Hill are consented; Tom nan Clach is subject to re-application (an increase to turbine height and reduction in number is proposed); and Moy is under construction.

## Assessment of Visual Effects on Local Communities

1.4 The Assessment of Visual Effects on Local Communities is found in Section 3, and builds on the Residential Amenity Report submitted in April 2015. This Additional Information was prepared following field work in November 2015, including visits to the closest properties. Effects on communities within approximately 3 km are described, supplemented by a detailed assessment for a selection of individual properties within 2 km of the nearest turbine and with views in the direction of the site.

## Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor Special Landscape Area

1.5 The SLA boundary has been extended northwards to include the section of the Findhorn Valley between Drynachan Lodge and Dulsie, and the north facing slopes of the Hill of Aitnoch, as shown on Map 22 in the Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas<sup>2</sup>, a background paper to support the Highland wide Local Development Plan. The SLA now borders the site at its south west corner, and is 760 m from the nearest turbine (T1). Potential effects relating to the SLA boundary extension and changes to the cumulative baseline are discussed in Section 4.

## Reading Guide

1.6 The LVIA is contained within Chapter 7 of the ES Volume 2 and Landscape and Visual Figures are contained within Volume 3. Technical appendices are contained within Volume 4. Reference should be made to the following report paragraphs, figures and appendices to provide the background to this Additional Information:

- Paragraphs 7.14 to 7.54 Assessment Methodology (pages 7-3 to 7-8) and Technical Appendix 7 Landscape and Visual;
- Paragraphs 7.173 – 7.175 Settlements (pages 7-18 to 7-19) and 7.191 – 7.209 Impacts on Settlements (pages 7-22 to 7-23);

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<sup>2</sup> The Highland Council in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage (2011) Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas

- Paragraphs 7.176 – 7.181 Routes (pages 7-19 to 7-20) and 7.210 – 7.290 Impacts on Routes (pages 7-23 to 7-27);
- Paragraphs 7.182 – 7.184 Viewpoints (pages 7-20 to 7-21) and 7.291 – 7.420 Impacts on Viewpoints (pages 7-27 to 7-36), and Figures 7.12.1 – 7.29.5 for visualisations to accompany specific viewpoints;
- Paragraphs 7.421- 7.470 Cumulative Assessment (pages 7-36 to 7-41), and Figures 7.6 – 7.11b Cumulative Wind Farms, Cumulative ZTVs and Paired ZTVs; and
- Paragraphs 7.471 – 7.495 Implications for Designated Landscapes (pages 7-41 to 7-43), and Figures 7.4a and 7.4b Designated Landscapes.

1.7 Reference should also be made to the ES Addendum submitted in 2014 and the Residential Amenity Report submitted in April 2015.

## 2 Cumulative update

- 2.1 The following provides an update to the CLVIA (2013), originally included as paragraphs 7.421-7.470 (pages 7-36 to 7-41) of the LVIA. This section sets out the key changes in the status of wind farms included in the detailed assessment of cumulative effects, and implications of these changes on the findings of the CLVIA (2013).

### Approach to CLVIA

- 2.2 The methodology used in assessing cumulative landscape and visual effects is described in paragraphs 7.14 to 7.54 (pages 7-3 to 7-8) and 7.421 to 7.422 (pages 7-36 to 7-37) of the LVIA. Wind farms considered in the cumulative assessment are listed in LVIA Table 7.5 (operational and under construction) and Table 7.10 (consented schemes and those at application or appeal stage). LVIA Figures 7.6 to 7.11b provide cumulative base plans and cumulative ZTVs.
- 2.3 The LVIA includes as part of its baseline, existing operational and under construction wind farm developments which are present in the landscape at the time of undertaking the assessment. The CLVIA speculatively considers cumulative effects in relation to future schemes – consented developments which have not yet been built or those currently in planning (live applications or at appeal). Schemes at scoping are not considered, as agreed with statutory consultees, and because the information available about them is very limited.
- 2.4 The cumulative assessment examines both total and additional cumulative effects, in order to outline:
- the overall effect of future development patterns; and
  - the individual role of the proposed development in relation to other developments.

### Summary of changes in planning status

- 2.5 The cumulative baseline was updated, focusing on wind farms within the 35 km study area assessed in the CLVIA (2013). Cumulative wind farms within 35 km are shown in **Figure 1**, and a more detailed map of cumulative wind farms within 15 km is shown in **Figure 2**. Cumulative wireframes for all LVIA Viewpoints have been updated and are included in **Appendix 3** as Figures 7.12.7 through to 7.29.4. For clarity, these cumulative wirelines replace those in the 2013 ES which can now be considered as superseded.
- 2.6 Table 2-1 below lists operational and under construction wind farms within the 35 km study area. Changes since the LVIA was undertaken are highlighted in *blue italics*.

**Table 2-1 Operational wind farms in the study area**

Wind Farm	Status	Number of turbines	Blade tip height (m)	Distance <sup>3</sup> (km)
Berry Burn	<i>Operational</i>	29	104	8.4
Paul's Hill - Phase 1 and 2	Operational	28	100	12.3
Cluny Farm	<i>Operational</i>	1	61	13.8
Bognie Farm	Operational	1	61	14.8

<sup>3</sup> Distance between the turbines of the development and the turbines of the other wind farm (closest).

Wind Farm	Status	Number of turbines	Blade tip height (m)	Distance <sup>3</sup> (km)
Moy	<i>Under construction</i>	20	126	17.5
Rothes - Phase 1 and 2	Operational	22 and 18	100 and 125	19.4
Findhorn	Operational	4	44	21.5
Hunthill	<i>Under construction</i>	4	67	25.4
Farr	Operational	40	101	25.8

2.7 Table 2-2 below lists consented and proposed wind farms within the 35 km study area. Changes since the CLVIA was undertaken are highlighted in *blue italics*.

**Table 2-2 Consented and proposed wind farms within the study area**

Wind Farm	Status	Number of turbines	Blade tip height	Distance <sup>4</sup>
Hill of Glaschyle	<i>Consented</i>	12	99.5	6.5
Tom nan Clach	<i>Re-application</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>125</i>	12.5
<i>Meikle Hill</i>	<i>Consented</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>126.5</i>	<i>17.5</i>
Kellas	<i>Consented</i>	<i>4</i>	110	20.6
Glen Kyllachy	<i>Consented</i>	20	110	26.2
Brown Muir	<i>At appeal</i>	<i>12</i>	126	29.8
Dorenell	Consented	59	126	34.8

2.8 The most notable change to the future cumulative scenario is that Hill of Glaschyle to the east of the A940 near Beachans is now consented (was at application stage) and will be the closest wind farm to Cairn Duhie when it is built.

2.9 Other changes include:

- Berry Burn to the east of the site is now operational (was under construction during the CLVIA);
- The single turbine at Cluny Farm is now operational (was consented);
- Six turbines of 126.5 m to tip at Meikle Hill have been consented (was at scoping during the CLVIA and therefore not considered as part of the cumulative baseline);
- Moy, partially within the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor SLA, is now under construction (was consented);
- Hunthill, east of Rothes Wind Farm, is now under construction (was consented);
- Tom nan Clach, within the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor SLA, was consented, but is now subject to a re-application with four fewer turbines and an increased height to tip of 125 m;
- Four turbines at Kellas have been consented (was eight at application stage) and Glen Kyllachy has been consented (was at application stage);
- Brown Muir (withdrawn during the production of the ES) is now subject to a new application for 12 turbines;
- Allt Duine Wind Farm and the single turbine at Fearndearn were refused at appeal.

2.10 Several new schemes at scoping stage are shown on **Figures 1 and 2**, however these are not considered within this updated assessment as both layouts and information about them is uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> Distance between the turbines of the development and the turbines of the other wind farm (closest).

## Implications for CLVIA

- 2.11 It is considered that the changes in the status of a wind farm as described in the tables above (eg consented to operational) will not result in any significant effects beyond those already described in the LVIA or CLVIA (2013). For schemes which have been consented since the CLVIA (2013), namely Hill of Glaschyle, Kellas and Glen Kyllachy, there is a greater likelihood that the effects described would occur as it is more likely that these wind farms will be constructed, but the levels of effects will remain as described.
- 2.12 Changes to the cumulative assessment may occur where the layout of a cumulative wind farm has changed, or where a new scheme has been introduced. This section therefore discusses the implications of the layout changes for the revised Tom nan Clach scheme (re-application), the four Kellas turbines (consented) and the six turbine development at Meikle Hill (consented).
- 2.13 The refusal of Allt Duine Wind Farm and the single turbine at Fearndearn are not considered to result in any changes to the findings of the CLVIA, largely due to their distance of over 30 km from the proposed development.

### Cumulative Landscape Effects

- 2.14 The CLVIA (2013) finds that the proposed development reflects the wider pattern of wind farm development, which follows the Rolling Uplands/Uplands/Open Uplands/Upland Moorland and Forestry LCTs south west to east across the study area:
- “In general, however, the Proposed Wind Farm Development would be seen as a discrete group of turbines set to the west of the Knock of Braemoray, but following the same development trend as is seen across the study area, with wind farms located in Rolling Uplands/Uplands/Open Uplands/Upland Moorland and Forestry LCTs.”<sup>5</sup>*
- 2.15 The CLVIA (2013) found that the proposed development would reduce the separation between wind farms in Moray and wind farms in the Scottish Highlands, but was sufficiently distant from other proposed wind farms such that the character of the Uplands / Rolling Uplands LCT would not materially change. The closest operational wind farms to the proposed development are Berry Burn (8.4 km) and Paul’s Hill Phases 1 and 2, as described in the LVIA baseline. The closest proposed wind farms are the Hill of Glaschyle (6.5 km) and Tom nan Clach (12.5 km).
- 2.16 The pattern of wind farms across the study area, stretching between Farr and Rothes, will remain as per the CLVIA (2013). The separation between Cairn Duhie and other wind farms within the Uplands / Rolling Uplands LCT will be maintained, such that there will not be a material change to this character type should these wind farms all be present in the landscape. Meikle Hill will be 17.5 km to the east north east, in proximity to the existing Rothes grouping, and generally visible in conjunction with the proposed development from hill tops including Knock of Braemoray and more distant and elevated hill tops. No further cumulative effects on landscape are anticipated, and the findings stated in paragraph 7.434 (page 7-38) of the ES will remain valid.

### Cumulative Visual Effects

- 2.17 One significant cumulative effect is identified in the 2013 CLVIA: a moderate cumulative visual effect on receptors at Viewpoint 3b Knock of Braemoray (ES paragraph 7.443 on page 7-39). This is as a result of the proposed development being seen to make a connection between the wind farms to the north and east of the hill (including Hill of Glaschyle, Rothes Phases 1 and 2 and Berry Burn) and those in the distance to the west (including Farr and Tom nan Clach).
- 2.18 Table 2-3 summarises the main changes to cumulative visibility at each of the LVIA Viewpoints and the Additional Information Viewpoints (**Figures 4 to 8**). Reference should be made to ES pages 7-39 to 7-40 for consideration of other projects.

**Table 2-3 Summary of changes to cumulative visual effects**

Viewpoint	Change to cumulative visibility	Figure Reference
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<sup>5</sup> ES Chapter 7 LVIA, paragraph 7.470.

Viewpoint	Change to cumulative visibility	Figure Reference
<b>LVIA Viewpoints</b>		
Viewpoint 1, Little Aitnoch	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible on distant horizon to south west. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.12.7
Viewpoint 2, Ferness	Tom nan Clach (re-application) theoretically visible but screened by forestry. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.13.7
Viewpoint 3a, A940 above Kerrow	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible on distant horizon to south west. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated Figure 7.14.7
Viewpoint 3b, Knock of Braemoray	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible on distant horizon to south west. Meikle Hill and the reduced Kellas scheme visible on the distant horizon behind Berry Burn and alongside Rothes to the north east. As described in ES paragraph 7.443 on page 7-39 the effect will remain moderate and significant.	Updated LVIA Figures 7.15.7 and 7.15.8
Viewpoint 4, A939 West of Aitnoch	No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.16.7
Viewpoint 5, B9007 near Mount	Tom nan Clach (re-application) theoretically visible but screened by forestry. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.17.7
Viewpoint 6, Ardclach Bell Tower	Tom nan Clach (re-application) theoretically visible but screened by forestry. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.18.7 – 7.18.8
Viewpoint 7, Dava Junction	Tips of Tom nan Clach (re-application) theoretically visible. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.19.7
Viewpoint 8, B9007 Old Military Road	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible on skyline to south west. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.20.7
Viewpoint 9, A940 Auchearn	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible on distant horizon to south west, behind the proposed development. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.21.7
Viewpoint 10, A939 and Dava Way	No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.22.7
Viewpoint 11, Carn nan Gabhar above Lochindorb	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible on horizon to west, beyond Dava Moor. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.23.7
Viewpoint 12, Carn Kitty	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible on horizon to south west. Meikle Hill visible to north east, mainly backclothed and part of the Rothes and Kellas grouping. Both schemes are distant and no change to cumulative assessment anticipated.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.24.4 – 7.24.6
Viewpoint 13, Carn Allt Laoigh	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible to north west, backclothed and skylined. Meikle Hill visible on distant horizon to north east as part of the Rothes grouping. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.25.7
Viewpoint 14, Mill Buie	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible on distant horizon to south west, beyond the proposed development. Meikle Hill visible to east in front of the Rothes grouping. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.26.7 and 7.26.8
Viewpoint 15, Carn an Uillt Bhric	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible in close views to the south east. Meikle Hill visible on the distant horizon to the north east as part of the Rothes grouping. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.27.4 and 7.27.5

Viewpoint	Change to cumulative visibility	Figure Reference
Viewpoint 16, Califer	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible in distant views to the south west. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.28.7 and 7.28.8
Viewpoint 17, Creagan a' Chaise	Tom nan Clach (re-application) visible in distant views to the north west. Meikle Hill visible on the distant horizon to the north east, between Paul's Hill and Rothies. No change to cumulative assessment.	Updated LVIA Figure 7.29.4
<b>Additional LVIA Viewpoints (ES Addendum 2014)</b>		
A939 South of Ferness <sup>6</sup>	Tom nan Clach (re-application) theoretically visible in distant views to the south west, however likely to be screened by roadside trees.	ES Addendum 2014
<b>Additional Information Viewpoints</b>		
Viewpoint A A939 near Dava Schoolhouse	The tips of Tom nan Clach (re-application) would be theoretically visible on the distant skyline to the west, beyond Dava Moor.	Additional Information <b>Figure 4.1-3</b>
Viewpoint B Kerrow Farmhouse	The tips of Tom nan Clach (re-application) would be theoretically visible on the distant skyline to the south west, but are likely to be screened by vegetation from this viewpoint.	Additional Information <b>Figure 5.1-3</b>
Viewpoint C A940 near Tomdow	The tips of Berry Burn are visible to the east. Tom nan Clach (re-application) would be theoretically visible behind the proposed development, to the south west, but likely to be screened by intervening vegetation. The Hill of Glaschyle would be visible in close views to the north east.	Additional Information <b>Figure 6.1-3</b>
Viewpoint D Tomnarroch	Tom nan Clach (re-application) would be theoretically visible to the south west but screened by forestry.	Additional Information <b>Figure 7.1-3</b>
Viewpoint E B9007 near Score	Berry Burn is theoretically visible but screened by forestry, as would be the Hill of Glaschyle. Tom nan Clach (re-application) would be visible to the south west.	Additional Information <b>Figure 8.1-3</b>

- 2.19 As described in Table 2-3, the proposed changes to the Tom nan Clach layout (removal of four turbines, increase in height to tip of 15 m) will be theoretically visible from the majority of viewpoints, but most noticeable from viewpoints 8, 13 and 15 within the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor SLA. From these locations Tom nan Clach and the proposed development will continue to be seen in successive views, and with a separation distance of 12.5 km no additional effects above those described in the CLVIA are anticipated to occur.
- 2.20 Meikle Hill is consented to the west of the Rothies Phase 1 and 2 and Kellas grouping, approximately 17.5 km to the north east of the site. As described in Table 2-3, the consented Meikle Hill turbines will be visible in successive views from moorland hills in the north east of the study area (eg viewpoints 12 and 14) and also from more distant elevated viewpoints (viewpoints 13, 15, 17) within the Cairngorms National Park and Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor SLA. Meikle Hill will also be visible from Viewpoints 3b Knock of Braemoray. From these locations a wide array of wind farms would be visible, both near and far, and it is not considered that Cairn Duhie would introduce any cumulative effects above those described in the CLVIA (ES paragraph 7.443 on page 7-39).
- 2.21 In conclusion, it is not considered that the updated cumulative baseline results in any changes to findings of significance made within the LVIA.

<sup>6</sup> Additional viewpoint requested by the Highland Council and submitted in an ES Addendum in 2014.

## 3 Assessment of Visual Effects on Local Communities

- 3.1 This section provides an assessment of views from the communities within approximately 3 km of the proposed development, including a detailed assessment for individual properties within 2 km of the nearest turbine and with views towards the site. There was no separate assessment of effects on residential views in the LVIA, although settlements were assessed where theoretical visibility was indicated by the ZTV (Ferness, Edinkillie and Dava). This report supplements the Residential Amenity Report submitted in April 2015.

### Methodology

#### Study Area

- 3.2 In order to consider views from the wider community it was decided to group properties and settlements with similar views. All properties within 3 km of the nearest turbine are shown on **Figure 3**. Effects on groups of properties with similar views are described generally, and supplemented by a detailed assessment of properties within 2 km of the nearest turbine and with views towards the site (see **Appendix 2**).
- 3.3 Properties which lie outside the ZTV, and which accordingly will have no view of the turbines were not included in the assessment.
- 3.4 Properties were identified and verified using aerial imagery and observations made on visits to the study area. Individual properties are listed in Table 3-1. The methodology for assessing individual properties is described within **Appendix 1**.

**Table 3-1 Individual Properties Assessed**

Property	Grid Reference		Approximate Distance to Nearest Turbine <sup>7</sup> (Turbine No)
Little Aitnoch	296891	840817	1.2 km (T1)
Braemoray Lodge	299789	842834	1.3 km (T11)
Muckle Lyne	297924	845289	1.3 km (T20)
Little Lyne	297390	845305	1.5 km (T20)
Achnabechan Farm	295788	843732	1.5 km (T14)
Kerrow Farmhouse	299625	841891	1.3 km (T6)
Tomnarroch	296158	844552	1.6 km (T19)
The White House	300059	843252	1.7 km (T11)
Culfearn	300008	843810	1.8 km (T16)
Aitnoch Farmhouse	298159	839664	2.1 km (T1)

<sup>7</sup> Distance given is from the central point of the property to the nearest turbine

## Assessment

### Properties to the North / North West

- 3.5 Properties to the north and north west of the site (see **Figure 3**) include the settlement of Ferness, dwellings and farmsteads along the B9007 and A939 and properties at Ardclach. Views from this area are represented by LVIA Viewpoints 2 (Ferness), 5 (B9007, near Mount) and 6 (Ardclach Bell Tower) and Additional Information Viewpoints at Tomnarroch (**Figure 7.1-3**) and the B9007 near Score (**Figure 8.1-3**). The majority of properties in this area have no, or very limited theoretical visibility.
- 3.6 As described in the LVIA paragraphs 7.192 to 7.197 (page 7-22) and in the Residential Amenity Report (2015), properties at the southern end of Ferness have very limited theoretical visibility due to landform and forestry (see LVIA Figure 7.13), and would experience an imperceptible magnitude of change.
- 3.7 Theoretical visibility is indicated from Airdrie Farm, The Mount and Score Farm to the north of the site, as represented by LVIA Viewpoint 5 (B9007, near Mount) where a moderate, significant effect is anticipated. However LVIA Viewpoint 5 is located at a high point on the B9007 and views from the properties themselves would be screened by forestry.
- 3.8 Theoretical visibility is indicated from Glebe Cottage and Roundwood House, both of which are located above the River Findhorn to the north west, in proximity to LVIA Viewpoint 6 (Ardclach Bell Tower) which represents views from the slopes above the River Findhorn. However this viewpoint is more elevated than the properties and deciduous woodland along the Findhorn valley is likely to screen views from the properties themselves.
- 3.9 Factors Cottage has theoretical visibility of the turbines, however is located within forestry to the north west and views in the direction of the site are likely to be screened.
- 3.10 Muckle Lyne, Little Lyne, Tomnarroch and Achnabechan are included in the detailed assessment in **Appendix 2**. Views in the direction of the site are screened by forestry from Muckle Lyne and the magnitude of change will be low. The magnitude of change at Tomnarroch will be imperceptible due to screening by forestry (see **Figure 7.1-3**). At both Little Lyne and Achnabechan the magnitude of change in visual amenity will be high, as close views will be available from the primary outlook of the properties as well as their gardens and access tracks.

### Properties to the East / South East

- 3.11 Properties to the east of the site (see **Figure 3**) are mostly located along the east side of the wooded Dorback Burn, and include Kerrow Farmhouse, Braemoray Lodge, the White House, Culfearn, Tombain and Tomdow. Views from this area are represented by LVIA Viewpoints 3a (A940, above Kerrow) and Additional Information Viewpoints B Kerrow Farmhouse (**Figure 5.1-3**) and C A940 at Tomdow (**Figure 6.1-3**).
- 3.12 Views from the cottages at Tomdow are represented by the photomontage from the A940 in **Figure 6.1-3**, which shows that the majority of the proposed development is screened by woodland along and above the Dorback Burn to the west of the property. Tombain Farm is located east of the A940 adjacent to forestry which would screen views in the direction of the site.
- 3.13 There are also several properties at Dava to the south east of the site, outside of the 3 km study area. Views from this area are represented by LVIA Viewpoint 7 (Dava Junction) and Additional Information **Figures 4.1-3** which show the photomontage from Viewpoint A A939 near Dava Schoolhouse. **Figure 4.2** shows that the majority of the proposed development will be screened by landform and forestry, with turbine tips visible.
- 3.14 Kerrow Farmhouse, Braemoray Lodge, the White House and Culfearn are included in the detailed assessment in **Appendix 2**. The magnitude of change to visual amenity at all of these properties is high, despite woodland along the Dorback Burn and forestry in the intervening landscape providing some screening. New woodland planting to the west of the Dorback Burn will continue to grow and in the long run will provide further screening of the proposed development.

### Properties to the South and South West

- 3.15 There are three properties to the south / south west of the site (see **Figure 3**): Little Aitnoch, Aitnoch Farm and Refoule. Views from this area are represented by LVIA Viewpoints 1 (Little Aitnoch), 4 (A939, west of Aitnoch) and 8 (B9007, Old Military Road).
- 3.16 Refoule is located on the edge of the SLA, off the minor Aitnoch to Dulsie road. The property is set in a sheltered position on the lower slopes of the Hill of Aitnoch and is orientated north west – south east. There are no windows facing the site, however oblique views may be available from the front and rear aspects, and also the garden and driveway. The proposed development would be visible on the skyline in open views to the north east, partially screened by the landform. The magnitude of change would be medium.
- 3.17 Little Aitnoch and Aitnoch Farm are included in the detailed assessment in **Appendix 2**. Little Aitnoch and Aitnoch Farm have close and open views towards the site from the south west and south respectively, and residents would experience a high magnitude of change to their visual amenity.

### Properties to the West

- 3.18 Properties to the west of the site (see **Figure 3**) are located on both sides of the B9007 and include Milltown, Ballindore, The Lodge, Glenferness Mains, Drumore Cottages and Achnabechan Farm. Despite having theoretical visibility of the proposed development, forestry in the surrounding landscape limits visibility of the site.
- 3.19 Milltown is situated to the west of the B9007 at a lower elevation than the road, and forestry to the east screens views in the direction of the site. Ballindore is similarly to the west of the B9007 and surrounded by forestry, screening outward views. The Lodge is located on the B9007 at the junction with the track leading to Glenferness, and forestry on the east side of the B9007 screens views towards the site. Drumore Cottages are located to the west of the B9007 and slightly elevated above the road, however views towards the site are screened by intervening mature trees along the west side of the road, and also forestry beyond. Glenferness Mains is set back further from the B9007 and appears to have an open outlook in the direction of the site, however forestry to the east will likely screen views of the proposed development. Views from the Lodge at the entrance to Glenferness Mains (on the B9007) are contained by garden vegetation and forestry within the wider landscape.
- 3.20 Achnabechan Farm is considered in the detailed assessment in **Appendix 2**. The magnitude of change will be high as the proposed development will be visible from the primary outlook, garden and access track.

## Conclusion

- 3.21 All people at their place of residence are considered to be of high sensitivity to changes in their visual amenity. It is recognised that changes in their views resulting from the presence of wind turbines at close proximities will inevitably give rise to significant visual impacts in the context of the EIA Regulations. Effects of significance are not unexpected, nor are they in any way unique to the wind farm in question.
- 3.22 The purpose of this Additional Information was to explore the nature of these effects in more detail, and identify the extent of the resulting change in visual amenity. Where a high magnitude of change in visual amenity was predicted, the effect of this on 'living conditions' at the property was considered.
- 3.23 Visibility is variable within the local study area, with commercial forestry and deciduous woodland providing screening from many locations. The following properties were identified as experiencing a high magnitude of change in visual amenity: Little Lyne; Achnabechan; Kerrow Farmhouse; Braemoray Lodge; the White House; Culfearn; Little Aitnoch; Aitnoch Farm and Achnabechan Farm.
- 3.24 The assessment considered the contributing factors described in paragraph 4.31 in the methodology in **Appendix 1**, and concluded that, at none of the properties assessed will

residents experience impacts on the visual component of residential amenity or living conditions from the proposed development which will affect *"the outlook of these residents to such an extent, i.e. be so unpleasant, overwhelming and oppressive that, the property would become an unattractive place to live."*<sup>8</sup> An objective approach has been taken, and a judgement has been made with respect to each property, and in no instances are the predicted changes considered to *"have the potential to affect living conditions such that living at that property would become unpleasant or undesirable"*.<sup>9</sup>

3.25 This is, variably, because of:

- The distance to the nearest turbines from the communities and properties, in particular the fact that no property would lie closer than 1.2 km to a turbine;
- Screening provided by intervening topography, forestry or other vegetation;
- The position of the turbines in relation to the main outlook of the properties and their gardens and driveways;
- The extent of the skyline which would be affected;
- The limited visibility of other existing and consented wind farms due to screening provided by topography, forestry or other vegetation, including the separation provided by Knock of Braemoray; and
- The proposed size of the Cairn Duhie turbines which means that they would be well assimilated into the landscape.

3.26 Visibility is strongly influenced by existing vegetation in the landscape. Properties were assessed in winter, and in summer more screening would be provided by deciduous trees. In particular deciduous trees along the Dorback Burn would provide further screening in views from properties along the A940 to the east of the site. Conversely, if commercial plantations were to be felled views would be more open, in particular from the properties along the B9007 to the west and north of the site.

3.27 It is concluded that the potential relationship between residential properties in proximity to the proposed development is not unusual when compared and calibrated with other existing and consented wind farm developments within Scotland and throughout the UK.

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<sup>8</sup> Paragraph 232 Land North of Burnthouse Farm, Appeal Decision APP/D0515/A/2123739. 6th July 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Paragraph 4.115 Harelaw Renewable Energy Park Reporters decision, 17th June 2013.

## 4 Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors Special Landscape Area

- 4.1 This section provides an assessment of effects on the northern part of the SLA between Drynachan Lodge and the site boundary. The SLA boundary was extended to include this area during consultation on the Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas<sup>10</sup>. This section also considers potential cumulative landscape and visual effects on the SLA as a result of changes to the cumulative baseline. Relevant viewpoints within the SLA (including Additional Information Viewpoints) are shown on **Figure 9**.

### Methodology

- 4.2 The methodology used to assess landscape effects is described in paragraphs 7.14 to 7.54 of the LVIA. Designated landscapes (such as the SLA) have informed the value judgements for landscape and visual receptors. Implications for the key characteristics and special qualities of the SLA are discussed, with reference to the underlying assessment of landscape and visual effects.

### Changes to the SLA boundary

- 4.3 The SLA boundary was extended northwards to include the Findhorn Valley between Drynachan Lodge and the scenic viewpoint at Dulsie, and the north facing slopes of the Hill of Aitnoch up to the Aitnoch to Dulsie road on its north side. The SLA now borders the site at its south west corner, and is 760 m from the nearest turbine (T1) as shown in **Figure 9**.
- 4.4 **Figure 9** shows that, within the extended SLA area, there is theoretical visibility of the proposed development from: the north facing slopes of Hill of Aitnoch; the B9007 / Old Military Road and Aitnoch to Dulsie road along the SLA boundary; upper moorland and forested slopes on the north and south sides of the Findhorn Valley; and farmsteads including Torgarrow, Lynemore and Dunearn Lodge.

### Assessment of Effects

- 4.5 The Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors SLA is described in LVIA paragraphs 7.484 – 7.489. Implications for the key characteristics and special qualities of the SLA are discussed, drawing on the assessment of landscape, visual and cumulative effects for receptors within the SLA, as summarised below.

#### Landscape Effects

- 4.6 Landscape effects covering the SLA extension are assessed in the following sections of the LVIA:
- Open Uplands LCT (7.110 to 7.121) – a moderate, significant impact within 3.5 km of the site, reducing to minor and not significant beyond 3.5 km;
  - Narrow Wooded Valley LCT covering the Findhorn Valley (7.140 to 7.148) – despite some close views, a minor and not significant effect on the LCT overall due to extensive deciduous woodland within the valley, and forestry in the adjacent upland areas, limiting intervisibility.

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<sup>10</sup> The Highland Council in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage (2011) Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas

- 4.7 The LVIA concludes that there will be indirect impacts on the SLA relating to the introduction of turbines into the landscape to the north, including to areas which previously had no visibility of turbines. However, it is judged that this would not affect the integrity of the designated landscape or the special qualities for which the area was designated, as identified in the Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011).
- 4.8 In a cumulative scenario which included Moy and Tom nan Clach Wind Farms (both located within the SLA to the south west of the proposed development) it was also judged that cumulative effects would not affect the reasons for which the area was designated.<sup>11</sup> The proposed development would be seen as an additional wind farm outside the SLA to the north or north east.

### Visual Effects

- 4.9 LVIA Viewpoints 1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 and Additional Information Viewpoint A are either within or on the edge of the SLA (see **Figure 9**). Viewpoints 1, 4 and 8 are of particular relevance to the boundary extension and visual effects, as described in the LVIA, are summarised as follows:
- Viewpoint 1 (Little Aitnoch) – represents views from Little Aitnoch, the Aitnoch to Dulsie road which runs along the northern boundary of the SLA and the A939;
  - Viewpoint 4 (A939, west of Aitnoch) – represents views from Aitnoch Farm, the A939 and the SLA; and
  - Viewpoint 8 (B9007, Old Military Road) - represents views of road users, walkers on the Old Military Road and the SLA.
- 4.10 Given the proximity of these viewpoints to the site, and the open nature of views, significant effects are described in the LVIA for visual receptors at these locations. Such effects are considered to be typical of wind farm developments and, taking account of the local landscape, are commensurate with a scheme of this size.
- 4.11 As shown on LVIA Figure 7.7 (CZTV of Existing and Under Construction Wind Farms), existing wind farms (eg Berry Burn, Paul’s Hill Phases 1 and 2) are currently visible from parts of the SLA, including from within the SLA extension. In terms of proposed wind farms, no cumulative visual effects are identified for LVIA viewpoints within the SLA. This is due to the separation distance between Cairn Duhie and the other closest proposed wind farms (in particular Tom nan Clach and Hill of Glaschyle) and the proposed development reflecting the pattern of wind farms within the study area.

## Implications for the SLA

- 4.12 As described above, significant landscape and visual effects are identified for receptors within the SLA. To establish whether the proposed development would affect any of the special qualities of the SLA<sup>12</sup>, each is examined in turn in Table 4-1 below.

**Table 4-1 Special Qualities of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moor SLA**

Special Quality	Comment
<b>A Sense of Solitude, Views over Heather Moorland, and Big Skies</b>	
<i>“Expansive views and broad panoramas across open, rolling moorland and vast skies instil a boundless sense of scale and space, enhanced by the consistency of moorland cover and landform character.”</i>	The proposed development will be visible from parts of the SLA (see <b>Figure 9</b> ), including the rolling hills in the west of the SLA, the A939 corridor in the east and the Hill of Aitnoch in proximity to the site. The proposed development will generally occupy a small angle of view in the “broad panoramas” which are available. From elevated areas the proposed development will be visible in the

<sup>11</sup> APP1.3 Cairn Duhie Environmental Statement (2013) – Volume 2: Main Report, Chapter 7, Pages 7-42 to7-43

<sup>12</sup> As identified in The Highland Council in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage (2011) Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas

Special Quality	Comment
	context of other existing wind farms spread across the horizon, including Farr, Berry Burn and Pauls' Hill Phases 1 and 2 (see <b>Figure 10</b> ).
<i>"A narrow, deep section of the Findhorn river valley at Streens offers enclosed and intimate relief in contrast to the elevated and exposed moorland. Elsewhere, valleys frame views to Lochindorb."</i>	Theoretical visibility from the Findhorn Valley at Streens is limited due to its valley landform (see <b>Figure 9</b> ).
<i>"Land management practices create distinctive abstract muirburn patterns, accentuated by ever-changing weather and light patterns."</i>	The proposed development would not affect land management practices within the SLA.
<i>"The limited extent of tree cover and human habitation creates a simple yet powerful moorland image of tranquillity, simplicity and isolation which is emphasized by Lochindorb and its ruined castle."</i>	The site is located outside of the SLA within an area of moorland surrounded by extensive coniferous plantations and small settlements, and does not exhibit the sense of remoteness which can be experienced in parts of the SLA. From the SLA the proposed development would generally be seen on the distant horizon in views to the north, and in the context of other wind farms (see <b>Figure 10</b> ). As shown on <b>Figure 9</b> there is limited visibility of the proposed development from Lochindorb. The higher ground running through the Hill of Aitnoch near the northern edge of the SLA effectively serves to screen the land south of it from potential views of the wind farm, giving protection to the Lochindorb area.
<i>"Where buildings exist, these are of a distinctive estate character. Also building remains from pre clearance farmsteads, with enclosures, head dykes and associated field systems and improved land form one of the few built and 'managed' elements within the landscape. These engender a strong atmosphere which can arouse contemplative emotions of past human endeavour and hardship."</i>	The proposed development would not affect buildings within the SLA.
<i>"The long, fairly straight routes through this landscape allow an easy appreciation of the openness and simplicity of the landscape. These are typically lined with permanent snow poles which serve to reinforce the impression that this is a landscape exposed to adverse weather."</i>	There would be theoretical visibility of the proposed development from the majority of the A939 as it passes through the SLA, and a short section of the B9007 in proximity to the northern boundary of the SLA. The "openness and simplicity" of the moorland would continue to be appreciated, with the proposed development generally appearing on the horizon, with forestry providing screening of views in some locations eg in proximity to Dava (see photomontage in Additional Information <b>Figure 4.2</b> ).

## Conclusion

- 4.13 The purpose of this Additional Information is to consider effects on the SLA, taking into account the extended boundary to the north as well as changes to the cumulative baseline.
- 4.14 The proposed development has the potential to affect the *"expansive views and broad panoramas across open, rolling moorland and vast skies"* which are available from within the SLA, including the extended area. The LVIA recognises that there would be locally significant effects on landscape character (within 3.5 km) and some visual receptors (within 12 km), including within the SLA. However, the proposed development will generally be seen on the horizon, in the context of other existing and consented wind farms, including within the SLA, and occupying a small angle of view in the wider panorama. The relatively limited area of extension of the SLA (shown on **Figure 9**) would not result in any alteration to the findings of the ES in respect of the SLA (ES pages 7-42 and 7-43).

- 4.15 The proposed development also has the potential to affect the "*tranquillity, simplicity and isolation*" experienced within the interior of the SLA, however the site is located outside of the SLA in a more modified landscape with extensive forestry, small settlements / farmsteads, power lines and other existing and consented wind farms. As shown on **Figure 9** there is limited visibility of the proposed development from Lochindorb, which is at the heart of the SLA and referred to in the special qualities. The higher ground running through the Hill of Aitnoch near the northern edge of the SLA effectively serves to screen the land south of it from potential views of the wind farm, giving protection to the Lochindorb area. There is also limited potential for visibility from the valley of the River Findhorn, and from much of the SLA east of the A940.
- 4.16 The proposed development will be visible from the "*long straight routes*" through the SLA including the A939, although it will form a distant feature on the horizon except in close views, and forestry in the landscape will screen views from parts of the route.
- 4.17 Overall it is judged that the proposed development can be accommodated within the landscape, and would not affect the special qualities of the SLA to the degree that its intrinsic values or reasons for designation would be compromised. The proposed development would introduce theoretical visibility of wind farm development into new areas of the SLA such as the A939 between Dava and the boundary with the Cairngorms National Park, but as shown (in green) on **Figure 10** these areas are limited in extent. There would be no, or limited, visibility from some of the more well visited places within the SLA, including the Findhorn Valley and Lochindorb, which benefits from screening provided by the Hill of Aitnoch ridge to the north.
- 4.18 If the wind farm were to be built it is not considered that the boundary of the SLA would need to be amended to reflect the change – the landscape character of the SLA and its special qualities and core areas would remain intact, albeit that would be a change in distant views in some areas.