

Eastern Green Link 4: Scottish Onshore Scheme

Volume 2: Main Report

Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity

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06.

Landscape and Visual Amenity

6. Landscape and Visual Amenity

6.1 Introduction

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), as presented within this chapter, assesses the potential landscape and visual effects arising from construction and operation of the Scottish Onshore Scheme, as part of this Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The scope of the LVIA and methodology has been informed by and agreed through consultation with the statutory stakeholders.

A full description of the Scottish Onshore Scheme is provided in **Chapter 2: Project Description (Volume 2 Main Report)** and should be read in conjunction with the LVIA. The Application Boundary for the Scottish Onshore Scheme is shown on **Figure 1-4 Scottish Onshore Scheme Location Plan (Chapter 1 Introduction)** and the key components which make up the Scottish Onshore Scheme consist of:

- The Landfall
- The Underground Direct Current (DC) Cable Route
- The Converter Station
- The Underground Alternating Current (AC) Cable Route

The Scottish Onshore Scheme has been assessed during the construction phase considering all of its key components. The operational phase assessment includes consideration of the proposed converter station only due to the underground and largely temporary nature of the works associated with the HVDC and HVAC cable routes and temporary nature of the works at the landfall. The LVIA also considers potential cumulative effects of the Scottish Onshore Scheme in combination with other developments. The cumulative assessment can be found within **Chapter 14 Cumulative and In-Combination Effects**.

The LVIA has been carried out by Chartered Landscape Architects, with extensive experience of the assessment of energy development in Scotland, and in accordance with best practice guidance and consultation with statutory stakeholders. This chapter is supported by the following figures presented throughout this chapter:

- **Figure 6.1: Topography**
- **Figure 6.2: Landscape Designations**
- **Figure 6.3: Landscape Character Types and Seascape Character Types**
- **Figure 6.4: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Representative Viewpoints**
- **Figure 6.5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Cumulative Schemes**
- **Figure 6.6: Outline Landscape Plan**

Visualisations produced to Landscape Institute¹ standards are contained in **Volume 3: Visualisations** and further information on the methodology is located within **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology (Volume 4: Appendices)**.

This chapter is also supported by the following technical appendices presented in **Volume 4: Appendices**:

- **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology**
- **Appendix 6.2: Landscape Assessment**
- **Appendix 6.3: Visual Assessment**

The following terminology has been used throughout the assessment:

- **Landscape Character Types (LCT):** Areas of relatively homogenous landscape character. They are defined by the combination of elements that contribute to landscape context, character and value. Typical landscape elements include landform, land use, built development, vegetation and open space. Additional criteria are also considered such as scale, unity, the sense of remoteness, enclosure and perceptual quality.
- **Representative viewpoints:** Viewpoints selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptors including residential dwellers, users of transport and recreational routes and other outdoor locations. Representative viewpoints are located within publicly accessible locations and have been selected in consultation with NS and Fife Council.
- **Visual amenity:** Relates to the way in which people visually experience the surrounding landscape. Adverse visual effects may occur through the intrusion of new elements into established views, which are out of keeping with the existing structure, scale and composition of the view. Visual effects may also be beneficial, where an attractive focus is created in a previously unremarkable view, or the influence of previously detracting features is reduced. The significance of effects would vary, depending on the nature and degree of change experienced and the perceived value and composition of the existing view.
- **Visual receptors:** Special interest or viewer groups who would have views of the Scottish Onshore Scheme. Visual receptors have been identified through desk study and fieldwork.
- **Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV):** A computer-generated map based on a 3D model of the Scottish Onshore Scheme and the topography within the surrounding landscape, which shows areas of land within which the Scottish Onshore Scheme would theoretically be visible.

6.2 Legislation and Policy

Legislation

This section identifies and describes legislation and policy of relevance to the assessment of the potential landscape and visual impacts associated with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.

¹ Landscape Institute. (2019). Visual Representation of Development Proposals Technical Guidance Note 06/19 [Online] Available: <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/visualisation/> (Accessed: 31/10/2024)

Legislation and policy have been considered on an international, national, regional and local level. The following is considered to be relevant to the landscape and visual assessment as it has influenced the sensitivity of the receptors, requirements for mitigation and the scope and methodology of the EIAR.

National Planning Policy

National planning policy relevant to landscape and visual matters includes:

- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)²; and
- Planning Advice Note 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (PAN 60) (2000)³.

National Planning Framework 4

NPF4² is a long-term strategy for Scotland identifying a national spatial strategy. NPF4 highlights the importance and value of landscape to Scotland and notes the importance of landscape in place making and sustaining local distinctiveness.

Policy 3 of NPF4 sets out the intent to protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks. It notes under criterion (b) that “*development proposals for national or major development, or for development that requires an Environmental Impact Assessment will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention. This will include future management.*”

Policy 11 of NPF4 sets out that development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies would be supported, including enabling works, such as grid transmission and distribution infrastructure. It notes under criterion (e)(ii) that developments must demonstrate how project design and mitigation have addressed any significant landscape and visual impacts. It acknowledges however, that it should be recognised that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy and where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they would generally be considered acceptable.

NPF4² (page 04) sets out six overarching spatial principles as follows:

- “*Just transition: We will empower people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive;*

² Scottish Government (2023). National Planning Framework 4. Available from: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2023/02/national-planning-framework-4/documents/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/national-planning-framework-4-revised-draft/govscot%3Adocument/national-planning-framework-4.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

³ Scottish Government (2000). Planning for Natural Heritage: Planning Advice Note 60. Available from: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2000/01/pan-60-natural-heritage/documents/planning-advice-note-60-planning-natural-heritage-pdf/planning-advice-note-60-planning-natural-heritage-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/Planning%2BAdvice%2BNote%2B60%2BPlanning%2Bfor%2BNatural%2BHeritage.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

- *Conserving and recycling assets: We will make productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure, and services, locking in carbon, minimizing waste, and building a circular economy;*
- *Local living: We will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work, and leisure locally;*
- *Compact urban growth: We will limit urban expansion so we can optimize the use of land to provide services and resources, including carbon storage, flood risk management, blue and green infrastructure, and biodiversity;*
- *Rebalanced development: We will target development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline and manage development sustainably in areas of high demand; and*
- *Rural revitalisation: We will encourage sustainable development in rural areas, recognizing the need to grow and support urban and rural communities together.”*

By applying these spatial principles, the national spatial strategy will support the delivery of:

- *“Sustainable Places where we reduce emissions, restore, and better connect biodiversity;*
- *Liveable Places where we can all live better, healthier lives; and*
- *Productive Places where we have a greener, fairer, and more inclusive wellbeing economy.”*

Table 6-1 Relevant Policies in NPF4 to Landscape and Visual Matters below outlines the policies in NPF4 most relevant for the Scottish Onshore Scheme in relation to landscape and visual matters.

Of note, Policy 4 (part d) refers to development proposal effects on local landscape designations. The policy sets out that *“Development proposals that affect a site designated as a local nature conservation site or landscape area in the LDP will only be supported where: i. Development will not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been identified; or ii. Any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of at least local importance”*.

Table 6-1 Relevant Policies in NPF4 to Landscape and Visual Matters

Sustainable Places	Policy	Policy Principles
Tackling the Climate and nature crises	Policy 1	Policy Intent: To encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis. Policy Outcomes: • Zero carbon, nature positive places.

Sustainable Places	Policy	Policy Principles
Climate mitigation and adaptation	Policy 2	Policy Intent: To encourage, promote and facilitate development that minimises emissions and adapts to the current and future impacts of climate change. Policy Outcomes: - Emissions from development are minimised. - Our places are more resilient to climate change impacts.
Biodiversity	Policy 3	Policy Intent: To protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks. Policy Outcomes: Biodiversity is enhanced and better connected including through strengthened nature networks and nature-based solutions.
Natural Places	Policy 4	Policy Intent: To protect, restore and enhance natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions. Policy Outcomes: - Natural places are protected and restored. - Natural assets are managed in a sustainable way that maintains and grows their essential benefits and services.
Forestry, woodland, and trees	Policy 6	Policy Intent: To protect and expand forests, woodland, and trees. Policy Outcomes: - Existing woodlands and trees are protected, and cover is expanded. - Woodland and trees on development sites are sustainably managed.
Historic assets and places	Policy 7	Policy Intent: To protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places. Policy Outcomes: - The historic environment is valued, protected, and enhanced, supporting the transition to net zero and ensuring assets are resilient to current and future impacts of climate change. - Redundant or neglected historic buildings are brought back into sustainable and productive uses. - Recognise the social, environmental, and economic value of the historic environment, to our economy and cultural identity.

Sustainable Places	Policy	Policy Principles
Energy	Policy 11	Policy Intent: To encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore. Policy Outcomes: Expansion of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies.

Planning Advice Note 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (PAN 60) (2000)

The Planning Advice Note 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (PAN 60)³ as published by the Scottish Government in 2000. This document refers to safeguarding and enhancing landscape character as well as the use of published Landscape Character Assessments.

Local Planning Policy

The Scottish Onshore Scheme is within the Fife Council Local Authority Area. The implications of the statutory changes in relation to NPF4² means that if Local Development Plan (LDP) policies are not in accordance with NPF4, then NPF4 will prevail until such time as all Local Planning Authorities update their LDPs. It is the more recently adopted policy that will prevail, where there is any incompatibility between NPF4 policies and LDP policies. Landscape character assessments will remain a relevant consideration where land is designated as a Local Landscape Area, Special Landscape or similar in the relevant LDP.

The Scottish Onshore Scheme is located within the Fife Council local authority area. FIFEplan (2017)⁴ is the adopted local development plan for Fife and sets out the spatial strategy and policies for development (adopted September 2017). The following policies are considered to be relevant to this chapter:

- Policy 1: Development Principles – This policy sets out the requirement to adhere to the relevant FIFEplan policies and proposals as well as reporting individual and cumulative impacts. This includes to safeguard the character and qualities of the landscape and loss of nature resources.
- Policy 3: Infrastructure and Services – This policy sets out the requirement for development to incorporate green infrastructure and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) in line with Making Fife’s Places Supplementary Guidance. Green infrastructure must support the wider green network, enhance amenity, and ensure integration with the landscape.
- Policy 7: Development in the Countryside – This policy sets out the requirement for all countryside development to be appropriately scaled, well-located, and designed to protect the overall landscape and environmental quality of the area. Proposals must demonstrate sensitivity to rural character and avoid adverse landscape and visual impacts.

⁴ Fife Council (2017). Adopted FIFEplan Local Development Plan.

Available from: <https://fife-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/30240/section/4395822>. [Accessed August 2025]

- **Policy 10: Amenity** – This policy sets out the requirement for development to avoid significant detrimental impacts on amenity, including visual impact on the surrounding area. Proposals must demonstrate appropriate siting, design, and mitigation, such as landscape buffers or screening, to protect the character and quality of adjacent land uses and open spaces.
- **Policy 13: Natural Environment and Access** – This policy sets out the requirement for development to protect or enhance landscape character, views, green networks, and designated natural assets. Proposals must assess and mitigate potential impacts on natural heritage and provide enhancements where possible, in line with Making Fife's Places Supplementary Guidance.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Making Fife's Places Supplementary Planning Guidance⁵ as published by Fife Council to support the Local Development Plan, sets out a spatial framework and design principles for delivering well-designed, sustainable places. This guidance expects all new development to incorporate green and blue infrastructure and to connect to Fife's wider green network. It highlights the role of green infrastructure in placemaking, enhancing biodiversity, managing water, and ensuring development integrates visually with the landscape.

6.3 Consultation

Response to Scoping Opinion

The Scoping Opinion from Fife Council (dated 17th February 2025) has several areas relevant to landscape and visual matters which are summarised as follows in **Table 6-2 Relevant parts of the Fife Council Scoping Opinion to Landscape and Visual Matters**:

Table 6-2 Relevant parts of the Fife Council Scoping Opinion to Landscape and Visual Matters

Summary of Scoping Opinion	Summary of Response	Action Taken
Concur with Scoping Report for operational assessment within the LVIA to be restricted to the likely significant impacts of the converter station and above ground infrastructure associated with the proposed scheme, noting that most of	Acknowledge the agreement.	Scope of LVIA to include the consideration of the likely effects arising from the converter station only within the operational assessment of the LVIA, as this comprises the only permanent above ground infrastructure as part of the Scottish Onshore Scheme.

⁵ Fife Council (2018). Making Fife's Places Supplementary Guidance. Available from: [Making-Fifes-Places-Supplementary-Guidance-August-2018.pdf](#) [Accessed August 2025]

Summary of Scoping Opinion	Summary of Response	Action Taken
the proposed scheme involves underground cabling.		
The scope and methodology of the LVIA is broadly acceptable and should be prepared in line with GLVIA3⁶.	Acknowledge the acceptability.	The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with GLVIA3.
Any proposal should refer to the Fife Landscape Character Assessment 1999.	Fife Council were contacted following the receipt of the Scoping Opinion to request a copy of the publication, but no response was received.	The landscape assessment has considered potential landscape effects on the relevant landscape designations and landscape character within the study area using the national level NatureScot Landscape Character Types (2019) and Coastal Character Types (2005). The information for the Fife Landscape Character Assessment 1999 published assessment could not be sourced. A letter was issued to Fife Council on 15 May 2025 to explain this and requested for the published study to be circulated and the suggestion that given the date of the publication, that the LCTs within the 2019 NatureScot publication are used for the basis of the landscape assessment, with any other relevant information considered from the 1999 Fife Landscape Character Assessment and supplemented with field work. Unfortunately, no response from Fife Council was received therefore the study has not been considered.
Early contact should be made with Fife Council to agree viewpoints.	Acknowledgement of request.	The viewpoints were reissued to Fife Council attached to a letter on 15 May 2025. See further information in Table 6-3 Additional Consultation regarding Landscape and Visual Matters below.
Photomontage images to be provided for all viewpoints for	Response given in letter to Fife Council on 15 May 2025 to set out the different photomontages	Type 1 annotated photographs have been prepared from each of the viewpoint locations in accordance with the Landscape Institute's

Summary of Scoping Opinion	Summary of Response	Action Taken
existing, operation and final restoration stages.	that were to be produced as part of the application material to accompany the LVIA.	Technical Guidance Note 06/19. Type 3 photomontages at year 1 and year 15 have been prepared from each of the viewpoints from which the operational converter station would be visible. Type 3 photomontages have not been prepared from the remaining viewpoints as no operational infrastructure would be visible.
The content of the Design and Access Statement to be discussed with planning officers, including to ensure mitigating against visual effects and integration of development into the countryside.	Acknowledged. Approach to design of converter station was discussed with Fife Council.	Details of landscape mitigation are set out within this chapter and in the standalone DAS submitted with the Application.
Any built heritage assets which may be identified as potentially being affected in terms of their setting should be included in the LVIA.	Response given in letter to Fife Council on 15 May 2025 to set out the key differences between the LVIA and the heritage assessment.	Cultural heritage is a separate topic and has been separately assessed within the EIAR Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage (Volume 2 Main Report) , including listed buildings and scheduled monuments. Aspects of cultural heritage assets are considered within LVIA. The landscape assessment has taken into account cultural heritage assets where they influence landscape value. The visual assessment has taken into account cultural/historical components with regard to value attached to views. As the visual assessment is required to identify and assess the effects on the views of people, areas of land where there are no views have not been included, including for example scheduled monuments enclosed by vegetation which are not publicly accessible.

Additional Consultation

Additional consultation regarding landscape and visual matters is detailed in **Table 6-3 Additional Consultation regarding Landscape and Visual Matters** below.

Table 6-3 Additional Consultation regarding Landscape and Visual Matters

Body	Description of consultation	Action Taken
Fife Council	As requested within the Fife Council Scoping Opinion, the viewpoints were reissued to Fife Council with the aim to update on several locations and to agree the representative and specific viewpoints in a letter dated 15 May 2025. This noted that the locations were likely to be micro sited during field work dependent on visibility from each location. Fife Council responded via email on 30 May 2025 to provide commentary on viewpoints 2 and 4 to assist in finding the optimal visibility towards the site. The email also noted that subject to these comments, the visual assessment scope, proposed viewpoint selection and commentary made on the Type 1 and Type 3 imagery was considered to be acceptable.	The location of viewpoints 2 and 4 were revised to align with the advice given by Fife Council during field work in June 2025. The agreement of the visual assessment approach and viewpoint selection is noted.

6.4 Methodology

Introduction

The following section summarises the methodology for the LVIA which builds on the general assessment methodology presented in **Chapter 5: Environmental Impact Assessment Methodology (Volume 2: Main Report)**. It should be noted that the methodology for the LVIA does not use the standard significance matrix set out within Chapter 5, as the approach to determining significance is based on professional judgement supported by narrative descriptions. For clarity and in accordance with good practice, the assessment of potential effects on landscape character and visual amenity, although closely related, are undertaken separately.

Guidance and Standards

The LVIA has been undertaken using the following best practice guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3)⁶;

⁶ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) Third Edition. London: Routledge, p.1-169.

- Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3) Technical Guidance Note - 2024-01⁷;
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Technical Guidance Note 02/21⁸;

GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. The LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects who are experienced in undertaking and reporting assessments of similar types of projects. Professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to determine the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors (informed by their value and susceptibility to change), the magnitude of effects on those receptors, and the significance of effects.

Study Area

The extent of the study area is determined by the potential visibility of the Scottish Onshore Scheme in the surrounding landscape and is proportionate to its size and scale and the nature of the surrounding landscape. For the purposes of this assessment the study area (shown on **Figures 6.1 to 6.5**) has been defined by a combination of ZTV analysis, fieldwork and professional judgement. Based on this, it is considered that it is highly unlikely that significant long term residual adverse effects relating to landscape character and visual amenity would be possible beyond 5 km from the converter station platform and 1 km from the landfall and AC and DC cable corridors.

Assessment Scope

The assessment considers the effects during the two phases of the Scottish Onshore Scheme lifespan as identified in **Chapter 2: Project Description (Volume 2: Main Report)**. The phases comprise construction and operation.

The anticipated operational life of the converter station is approximately 40 years. It is likely that after this period refurbishment and plant replacement will extend the life of the converter station rather than decommissioning. As a result, it is not proposed to assess the impacts of decommissioning as part of the EIA.

Landscape and visual effects can differ from one stage of the Scottish Onshore Scheme to the next and change over time as mitigation planting establishes and matures. The assessment therefore considers potential effects of the Scottish Onshore Scheme at each of the following stages:

- Construction: including consideration of all temporary structures and works areas relating to construction, such as temporary construction compounds including lay-down

⁷ Landscape Institute (2024). Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01: Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA3. Available at: https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/LITGN-2024-01-GLVIA3-NC_Aug-2024.pdf. [Accessed August 2025]

⁸ Landscape Institute (2021). Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations. Available at: <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2021/05/tgn-02-21-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

areas and the movement of plant and machinery. The construction programme is contained within **Chapter 2: Project Description (Volume 2: Main Report)** and is expected to last for six years.

- Operation year 1 (winter): potential effects associated with the Scottish Onshore Scheme following completion of the construction phase and associated reinstatement of temporary construction works areas. This stage is intended to represent the potential worst-case operational effects prior to establishment of mitigation planting; and
- Operation year 15 (summer): potential longer-term effects of the Scottish Onshore Scheme 15 years after becoming operational. This stage is intended to help demonstrate how proposed mitigation planting around the converter station platform would influence effects once it is established.

Baseline Data Collection

In order to assess the potential effects of the Scottish Onshore Scheme, it is necessary to determine the environmental conditions, resources and receptors that currently exist within the Scottish Onshore Scheme Site and in the surrounding area.

Field work was undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects and viewpoint photography was captured in June 2025 to inform the iterative design process, assess the existing character of the landscape and visit the representative viewpoints. Seasonal differences are taken into consideration within the LVIA and the operational year 1 assessment on landscape character and visual amenity reports the worst-case scenario when broadleaf vegetation would not be in leaf.

Data sources that have been used to inform the baseline data gathering include but are not limited to the following:

- Planning policy and local plan evidence base documents;
- Published landscape character documents;
- Ordnance Survey mapping;
- ZTV mapping;
- Aerial photography; and
- Fieldwork photography.

Assessment Methodology

This section summarises the methodology for the LVIA for the Scottish Onshore Scheme. It builds on the general assessment methodology presented in **Chapter 5: Environmental Impact Assessment Methodology (Volume 2: Main Report)** and develops this to take account of the range of likely significant effects on the landscape character and visual amenity arising from the construction, operation year 1 and operation year 15 of the Scottish Onshore Scheme. The detailed description of the assessment methodology is included in **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology (Volume 4: Appendices)** and is summarised below.

Summary of Landscape Assessment Methodology

In assessing and classifying the predicted effects from any likely impacts to the landscape resulting from the Scottish Onshore Scheme, the following criteria are considered:

- Landscape character baseline characteristics;
- Landscape sensitivity;
- Magnitude of landscape effects (note GLVIA3⁶ refers to magnitude of effect rather than magnitude of impact as used in other chapters); and
- Resulting significance of landscape effects.

Landscape effects associated with the Scottish Onshore Scheme consider the change on landscape elements and features (or components), as well as the effect upon the general landscape character of the surrounding area and how it is experienced.

The relationship between sensitivity and magnitude of effect allows an assessment of the relative significance of predicted landscape effects to be made. The sensitivity of the landscape to change is a combination of the value of the LCT combined with the degree to which a particular LCT or feature can accommodate changes or new features, without unacceptable detrimental effects to its key characteristics.

The magnitude of landscape effect relates to the size, extent or degree of change likely to be experienced as a result of the Scottish Onshore Scheme. The magnitude takes into account whether there is a physical change resulting in the loss of landscape components, or a change beyond the land-take of the Scottish Onshore Scheme that might have an effect on the character of the area, and whether the impact is permanent or temporary.

The combination of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of landscape effect determines the significance of landscape effects. For the purposes of this assessment, **moderate** and **major** effects would be deemed '**significant**'. Where significant environmental effects are identified, measures to mitigate these effects are proposed (where feasible) and remaining residual effects are identified.

A full explanation of the criteria used to assess sensitivity, magnitude of impact and classification of landscape effects is included in **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology (Volume 4: Appendices)**.

Summary of Visual Assessment Methodology

The assessment of visual effects is structured by receptor groups (e.g., residents, users of recreational routes and motorists). Individual receptors are identified through the analysis of the ZTV and field survey, within which views of the Scottish Onshore Scheme are likely to be possible. Individuals are subsequently categorised into receptor groups within different areas and representative viewpoints are selected.

Views from each identified representative viewpoint are recorded, considering the receptor type, a baseline description of the existing views and the value of the view.

For the purposes of assessment, the sensitivity of a receptor and the magnitude of effect on that receptor are combined to determine the significance of effect that the Scottish Onshore Scheme is predicted to have on existing baseline visual conditions for that given receptor. As

previously described for the landscape impact assessment, specific terminology is used to describe the magnitude of impact (see **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology (Volume 4: Appendices)** for details).

Limitations and Assumptions

Regarding limitations, no technical difficulties or practical problems were encountered in producing the LVIA. Fieldwork to inform the design process and assessment of the Scottish Onshore Scheme was undertaken in variable weather with moderate visibility. However, photographs used to inform the assessment were taken with good visibility.

Assumptions of the assessment of effects within the LVIA are set out as follows:

- The assessment has been undertaken based on the worst-case scenario of the Scottish Onshore Scheme. This includes the maximum heights and footprints of the proposed converter station which have been illustrated on the visualisations (refer to **Volume 3**). This includes a zone at a maximum of 28.5 metres (m) and another at a maximum of 18 m;
- The illustrative bunding shown on **Figure 6.6 Outline Landscape Plan** has been identified within desirable locations as part of the iterative design process. As this is an outline planning application and the design is not finalised at this stage, the cut and fill balance is not known. Therefore, the assessment has been undertaken on a worst-case basis in which the bunding is not present but the landscape planting proposed on these areas will be;
- The construction of the Scottish Onshore Scheme is expected to start in 2027 and last for approximately 6 years. Further details of the construction programme should be referred to within **Chapter 2: Project Description (Volume 2: Main Report)** and timings for the LVIA within **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology (Volume 4: Appendices)**. This is assumed to be the following for separate aspects of the project:
 - Landfall: exact timing influenced by installation of Marine Scheme but expected to be short-term;
 - HVDC cable route: over a 2–3-year period which is considered to be short-term;
 - Converter station: over a 6-year period which is considered to be medium-term; and
 - HVAC cable route: during the final year of construction which is considered to be short-term.
- The construction compounds at the converter site will be lit during normal working hours as required. Temporary lighting will be provided via lighting masts and will be powered via generators or where reasonably practicable lower carbon alternatives such as battery, solar or mains. In addition, for site security reasons, the construction compounds will be fitted with electrical sensors to activate the compound lighting during the hours of darkness should movement be detected, but otherwise lighting will be limited outside working hours.; and
- Operational lighting will be minimised wherever possible and will be directional to prevent/reduce light spill. External lighting will be off as a default during the hours of

darkness unless otherwise needed. The design of the lighting scheme for the converter station is subject to detailed design.

6.5 Baseline Environment

An overview of the current baseline conditions for landscape and visual amenity is outlined in this section. The baseline provides a description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment that may be affected. In line with GLVIA3⁶, the visual baseline therefore establishes the “*area in which the development may be visible*” (page 32) in order to define the relevant aspects of the current landscape and visual environment of the study area.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

ZTV plans show the area in which the Scottish Onshore Scheme will theoretically be visible, highlighting the locations where people may experience views of the Scottish Onshore Scheme and assisting in the identification of the study area, the scope of the LVIA and viewpoints in those locations that may be affected. The ZTV for the Scottish Onshore Scheme is shown on **Figure 6.4: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Representative Viewpoints**.

The ZTV parameters and limitations are detailed below:

- The ZTV is generated using OS Terrain 5 digital terrain model (DTM) data, which is a 5 m grid resolution terrain model and does not take into account the screening effects of vegetation, buildings or other structures. Woodland data from the National Forestry Inventory (assumed to be 10m in height) has been incorporated into the DTM data;
- The proposed converter station has been assumed to have two zones with a maximum height of 28.5 m and 18 m respectively. It should be noted that this assumes the maximum parameters for the proposed converter station;
- Some areas of theoretical visibility may comprise woodland, plantation, moorland or agricultural land, where there is effectively no public access and the likelihood of views being experienced is consequently low; and
- The ZTV does not take account of the likely orientation of a viewer, such as the direction of travel and there is no allowance for reduction of visibility with distance, weather or light.

These limitations mean that the ZTV maps tend to overestimate the extent of the visibility, both in terms of the area from which the Scottish Onshore Scheme is visible and the extent of the Scottish Onshore Scheme which is visible. It should be considered as a tool to assist in assessing the theoretical visibility of the Scottish Onshore Scheme and not a measure of the visual effect.

The extent of theoretical visibility as shown on **Figure 6.4: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Representative Viewpoints** within the study area will be largely concentrated within the inland lowland landscape surrounding the **converter station site**. **This theoretical visibility extends** across a broad and continuous area in the central part of the study area and tapering into smaller and more discrete areas toward the outer edges where intervening landform and vegetation limit views. Occasional outlying areas of **theoretical** visibility will also occur, predominantly on higher ground in the northern part of the study

area near Scotlandwell and within the open lowland hills and valleys landscape to the east near Cardenden. There would be limited locations where the full extent of the proposed converter station would be visible at once, with lower elements or parts of the built form often screened by intervening landform and vegetation.

Landscape Baseline

Landform and Hydrology

The landform within the study area is varied but primarily includes an area associated with the lowland and surrounding hills (refer to **Figure 6.1: Topography**). The northern part of the study area predominantly comprises a large area of lowland hills and valleys and lowland basin, with hills on the outskirts. The southern part of the study area predominantly comprises pronounced hills and crags with coastal hills nearer to the coastline. Localised high points include Benarty Hill at approximately +356 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The landform within the proposed converter station site rises gently from north to south from approximately +83 m AOD to +109 m AOD. The landform then rises to the south associated with Hare Law to approximately +145 m AOD.

There are various bodies of water within the study area, including Loch Gelly and Loch Ore. There are also numerous burns within the landscape, including Tiel Burn, Tyrie Burn, Dronachy Burn, Den Burn which connects close by to Loch Gelly and River Ore connecting to Loch Ore. There are waterbodies located immediately to the north of the proposed converter station site. The two larger waterbodies and one smaller manmade waterbody are interlinked with a series of burns, channels and smaller ponds.

Movement and Connectivity

There are several A roads and B roads within the study area which are interconnected to a series of minor roads serving local towns and villages. This includes the A92 connecting Dunfermline to Kirkcaldy, continuing north to Dundee. Other A roads include the A911 in the northern part of the study area and the A921 in the southern part near to the coastline. The B9097 lies adjacent to the proposed converter station site.

There are numerous core paths and recreational routes within the study area. These include the Fife Pilgrim Way, which lies adjacent to the proposed converter station site, Fife Coastal Path and National Cycle Network route 76.

Land Use, Built Form and Vegetation

Land use in the study area is varied, predominantly comprising areas of settlement and agricultural land. The settlement areas are largely concentrated in the northern part of the study area, including Ballingry, Lochore, Auchterderran, Lochgelly and Cardenden and also along the coastline including Kinghorn. Parts of the land use in the study area is defined by past or present coal mining. The proposed converter station site is located within an area of agricultural land southeast of the Westfield Substation and the B9097. Land-use within the site and to the south of the B9097 is largely defined by medium to large agricultural fields.

The study area, particularly in close proximity to the proposed converter station site, comprises industrial built form. This includes Westfield Substation, Westfield Energy Recovery Facility and Westfield Biomass Plant. The study area also comprises other energy infrastructure including wind farms and overhead towers and lines.

Vegetation cover within the study area is varied. There are numerous linear strips of mature trees and woodland vegetation, often following the courses of burns in the southern part of the study area. There is also extensive plantation forestry, including on the lowland hills and surrounding hill slopes, providing some containment. The converter station site is within a well vegetated part of the study area, including blocks of mature woodland cover and hedgerow. Hare Law and the associated plantation forestry defines the land immediately south of the converter station site.

Landscape Scope

The landscape receptors included within the study area are outlined in

Table 6-4 Landscape Assessment Scope below with further information on inclusion and exclusion within the Landscape Assessment (refer to **Appendix 6.2: Landscape Assessment (Volume 4: Appendices)**). A rationale is also included for explanation, informed by professional judgement, field work and the ZTV plan.

Table 6-4 Landscape Assessment Scope

Receptor	Inclusion or exclusion in landscape assessment	Rationale for inclusion or exclusion
Cullaloe Hills and Coast Local Landscape Area (LLA)	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the special landscape qualities due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.
Loch Ore and Benarty LLA	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the special landscape qualities due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.
Lomond Hills LLA	Excluded	Unlikely for significant adverse effects on the special landscape qualities due to distance and the limited intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme. For the small area of theoretical intervisibility, the likelihood for significant adverse effects is minimal due to existing vegetation cover and influence from existing features including overhead towers and lines and the A911 in close proximity.
Raith Park And Beveridge Park Garden and Designed Landscapes (GDL)	Excluded	Unlikely for significant adverse effects on the qualities due to the extensive woodland cover which reduces intervisibility.
LCT 186 Lowland Hills and Valleys	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the key characteristics due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.
LCT 185 - Pronounced Hills and Crags	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the key characteristics due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.

Receptor	Inclusion or exclusion in landscape assessment	Rationale for inclusion or exclusion
LCT 192 - Coastal Hills - Fife	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the key characteristics due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.
LCT 182 - Upland Hills	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the key characteristics due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.
LCT 183 - Hill Slopes	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the key characteristics due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.
LCT 184 - Foothills Fife	Excluded	Unlikely for significant adverse effects on the key characteristics due to distance and the limited intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme. For the small area of theoretical intervisibility, the likelihood for significant adverse effects is minimal due to existing vegetation cover and influence from existing features including overhead towers and lines and the A911 in close proximity.
LCT 191 - Lowland Loch Basins – Fife	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the key characteristics due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.
LCT 383 - Rugged Lowland Hills	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the key characteristics due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.
LCT 390 - Lowland Basins	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the key characteristics due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.
CCT 5: Developed Inner Firths	Included	Potential for significant adverse effects on the key characteristics due to proximity and intervisibility with the Scottish Onshore Scheme.

For the purposes of the landscape assessment, the magnitude of effect will be described together for the following LCTs. This is due to similarities in key characteristics and the likely similarities of change experienced by the Scottish Onshore Scheme. As the landscape sensitivity between the LCTs may vary, the significance of effect will be reported separately.

- LCTs 182, 183 and 383; and
- LCTs 191 and 390.

Landscape Designations

Parts of the study area have been designated for their scenic qualities or historic landscape qualities as shown on **Figure 6.2 Landscape Designations**. The ZTV plan has been used to identify the extent to which there is theoretical visibility of the Scottish Onshore Scheme from these designated landscapes.

Local Landscape Areas (LLAs)

Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA

The Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA is located in the southern part of the study area to the south of the A92 extending to the coastline. The relevant key characteristics summarised from the published documentation⁹ include:

- Varied landform including rounded interlocking hills with distinctive summits and lower rolling farmland generally towards the coastal edge;
- Scenic qualities are present including coastal views, a strong sense of naturalness and scenic value associated with the distinct pattern and integrity of the designed landscapes such as Raith Park and Beveridge Park; and
- Coastal hills and braes providing a key setting and visual backdrop for coastal settlements and also connectivity.

The Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA is a locally designated landscape and the Raith Park and Beveridge Park GDL also lies partly within the LLA. The woodland cover within the LLA, including associated within Raith Park and Beveridge Park, and geological coastline contribute towards the natural heritage value of the LLA. The perceptual values of the LLA, including scenic coastal views and tranquillity, are evident. The landscape of the LLA also provides functional value and distinctiveness, including the coastal hills and braes forming connectivity between the coastal landscape. Taking all of this into account, the landscape value of the LLA in the study area is deemed to be **high**.

Loch Ore and Benarty LLA

The Loch Ore and Benarty LLA is located in the western part of the study area to the west of the settlements of Ballingry and Lochore. The relevant key characteristics summarised from the published documentation⁹ include:

- The diverse landscape associated with the prominent and isolated elongated hill of Benarty Hill provides scenic quality;
- Continuity of woodland on the lower valley floor around Loch Ore with that on the slopes of Benarty Hill;
- Benarty Hill provides a backdrop to surrounding settlements;
- Recreation available at Loch Ore;
- Extensive views from footpaths at elevated positions;

⁹ Fife Council (2009). Fife Local Landscape Designation Review. Available at: https://www.fife.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/643342/Fife_Local_Landscape_Designation_Review_March_2009.pdf. [Accessed August 2025]

- The combination of Benarty Hill and Lore Ore form a strong visual connectivity and contribute to a rich diversity of overall landscape composition; and
- Important cultural associations relating to mining and hill forts.

The Loch Ore and Benarty LLA is a locally designated landscape. The woodland cover within the LLA contributes towards the natural heritage value of the LLA and the historical associations contribute towards the cultural heritage value. The LLA has a strong sense of identity, relating to Benarty Hill and Loch Ore and the relationship between the two landscape features, as well as recreational value. Taking all of this into account, the landscape value of the LLA in the study area is deemed to be **high**.

Other relevant designations

Other designations that are found either within the Red Line Boundary or within a 1 km buffer and may influence landscape value but are not assessed in relation to landscape and visual matters include various Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area, Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings. For further information on other relevant designations, refer to **Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation (Volume 2 Main Report)** and **Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage (Volume 2 Main Report)**.

Landscape Character

The landscape assessment is based on the national Landscape Character Types (LCTs) defined and described by NatureScot¹⁰. The following section gives baseline information and a landscape value judgement for all those LCTs scoped into the assessment on landscape character as shown on **Figure 6.3 Landscape Character Types and Seascape Character Types**.

LCT 186 - Lowland Hills and Valleys

LCT 186¹¹ is located in the central part of the study area on the lowland landscape around the settlements of Lochgelly, Lochore and Auchterderran. The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are given as follows:

- *“Variety and subtlety of land form.*
- *Generally dominated by open, regular farmland patterns of medium scale fields of arable and grasslands.*
- *Variable pattern of post and wire fences and mostly tall hedges with hedgerow trees.*
- *Extensive areas of forestry, shelter planting, roadside planting and policies linked to large estates.*
- *Regular, often linear, pattern of the distribution of steadings and larger settlements and towns, all of which are generally well related to the landscape.*

¹⁰ NatureScot (2019). Landscape character assessment in Scotland. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/landscape-character-assessment-scotland>. [Accessed August 2025]

¹¹ NatureScot (2019) Landscape Character Type 186 Lowland Hills and Valleys. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20186%20-%20Lowland%20Hills%20and%20Valleys%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

- *Towns in valleys enclosed by the landform of low hills which form a rural backdrop.*
- *Network of roads often well related to landform.*
- *Dominant linear and point features of forests and tree groups, individual trees or local buildings.*
- *A generally tended, safe, quiet, balanced and calm landscape, but also a busy, random, disturbed and noisy one in the more urban, industrialised areas.*
- *Variety of interrelated middle and long distance views of, from and across the low hills”.*

A small part of the LCT lies within the Loch Ore and Benarty LLA and Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA. The plantation forestry cover and other features in the landscape such as overhead line with towers and wind turbines reduces the scenic value of the LCT. Although there are some quiet and calm landscapes, the wildness and tranquillity qualities are generally reduced by the more urban and industrialised areas. The recreational value is increased due to the coverage of core paths across the LCT and the Fife Pilgrim Way recreational route. The dominant vegetation features increase the natural heritage value as well as creating a strong sense of identity within this lowland landscape. Taking all of this into account, the landscape value of the LCT in the study area is deemed to be **medium**.

LCT 185 - Pronounced Hills and Crag

LCT 185¹² is located in the northern and southern parts of the study area across several prominent hill ranges. The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are given as follows:

- *“Conspicuous, pronounced, often distinctive and recognisable hills or hill ranges sometimes protruding high above the lowlands or extending the Upland Hills or Foothills – Fife, so defining the edge of other Landscape Character Types and the extent of views across the lowlands.*
- *Important backdrops to other Landscape Character Types.*
- *Medium to large scale, open, simple landscapes.*
- *Distinctive shapes, silhouettes and skylines, with recognisable shapes, peaks and slopes; the evidence of active natural systems and processes e.g. weathering and erosion; burns, often in gullies or folds or narrow valleys.*
- *Woodlands, steadings and other buildings well-related to landform.*
- *Farm steadings and other individual buildings and structures and the lack of villages or larger settlements.*
- *Evidence of historic human settlement in a range of heritage features including forts, enclosures, field systems, castles and towerhouses.*

¹² NatureScot (2019) Landscape Character Type 185 Pronounced Hills and Crag. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20185%20-%20Pronounced%20Hills%20and%20Crag%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

- *Presence of numerous small quarries, most now disused and well screened but some large, exposed quarries, either disused or re-opened and extended, that detract from the landscape character.*
- *Combination of steep sided, rugged, open landform and land cover on the hills, and the shallower, smoother, more vegetated and more intensively used lower slopes.*
- *Some extensive views across other Landscape Character Types”.*

The majority of the LCT within the southern part of the study area lies within the Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA and within the Raith Park and Beveridge Park GDL. The pronounced landforms within the LCT which form distinctive skylines and silhouettes contribute strongly to the sense of identity. The sense of wildness and tranquillity is reinforced by the limited presence of built development, complemented by stone walls or low hedgerows and scattered mature trees, which further enhance its rural landscape qualities. This LCT also includes a range of heritage features such as forts, castles and field systems, contributing to the cultural heritage value of the landscape. Evidence of active geomorphological processes, such as weathering and erosion, further supports the distinctive landform and contributes to the natural heritage value of the LCT. The network of core paths increases the recreational value of the LCT. Scenic qualities are associated with the extensive views available from elevated locations and towards the coast, as well as the visual prominence of the hills as focal points and landmarks within the wider landscape. However, these are reduced somewhat by the presence of the small quarries. Taking all of this into account, the landscape value of the LCT within the study area is deemed to be **high**.

LCT 192 - Coastal Hills - Fife

LCT 192¹³ is located in the southern part of the study area along the coastline. The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are given as follows:

- *“Close association with the coast, either through views of the sea, the Firths or the estuaries or indirect coastal experiences of sounds, smell, etc.*
- *Predominantly medium to large, open, undulating arable fields, often with no field boundaries or with mainly wire fences, low hedges or some stone dykes and little other vegetation cover.*
- *Isolated farms and extended or converted farmsteads amongst open, exposed fields.*
- *Extensive seaward views across the North Sea or the Firths and land beyond, but generally landward views are contained by hills in the near distance.*
- *Distinctive edges to the character type, created either by distinct breaks of slope or by rivers, roads, built development or the Coastal Cliffs or Coastal Braes.*
- *General lack of tree cover, with relatively few forests and shelterbelts.*

¹³ NatureScot (2019) Landscape Character Type 192 Coastal Hills – Fife. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20192%20-%20Coastal%20Hills%20-%20Fife%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

- *Some pasture and rough hill grazing on the poorer hill soils. Occasional field corner plantations and small semi-natural woodlands alongside burns.*
- *Infrequent, small, often exposed and conspicuous settlements of stone or white or pale colour-washed render and grey roofs and single storey or two storey houses with small windows to the sea.*
- *Designed landscapes, castles, dovecotes historic villages and rural churches.*
- *Golf courses, primarily in eastern parts.*
- *Medium to large scale, often open or exposed coastal landscape, where the character is always influenced by the sea and can be particularly affected by the weather conditions and views of the sky and the sea.*
- *Generally a simple, sloping, organised, tended, farming landscape with regular or geometric patterns”.*

Part of the LCT lies within the Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA. The LCT is closely associated with the adjacent coastal landscape through extensive seaward views and the sensory influence of the sea and sky, which increases the scenic quality. Within the LCT, the undulating glacial landform and distinctive breaks of slope contribute to the geomorphological interest and natural heritage value. The presence of designed landscapes, castles and historic villages contributes to its cultural heritage value. The core path network and Fife Coastal Path enhances the recreational value by providing public access and opportunities for appreciation of the coastal setting. Scenic qualities are reinforced by long views across the Firths and the North Sea, particularly where the landform allows visual connections beyond the coast. However, localised effects from infrastructure, settlement, and past mining activity slightly reduce perceptual qualities in parts. The simple, sloping farmland with geometric patterns and limited tree cover reflects an ordered and managed rural character but contributes less to sense of place. The landscape value of the LCT in the study area is deemed to be **medium**.

LCT 182 - Upland Hills

LCT 182¹⁴ is located in the northern part of the study area along elevated ground across the Ochil Hills, Lomond Hills, Benarty Hill, and the Cleish Hills. The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are given as follows:

- *“Elevated, massive, pronounced, dramatic physical landform.*
- *Distinctive and conspicuous shapes, silhouettes, slopes and skylines.*
- *Open, large scale, rolling hills of upland semi-natural land cover and pasture with peaks, knolls and ridges.*
- *Burns and evidence of active natural systems and processes, such as weathering and erosion.*

¹⁴ NatureScot (2019) Landscape Character Type 182 Upland Hills. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20182%20-%20Upland%20Hills%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

- *Varied texture and mainly green/brown colour patchwork of the grasses, bracken, sedge and rush communities with pockets of heather.*
- *Stone dykes, burns and occasional minor roads flowing over and along the contours.*
- *Lack of present day settlements and man-made features, except for areas of forestry.*
- *Regular evidence of ancient human settlement with many historical and archaeological features visible, such as cairns, forts and field systems.*
- *Vast scale, exposure, openness, peacefulness, simplicity.*
- *Generally quiet, calm, harmonious, semi-natural, enduring landscape with irregular patterns responding to the landform.*
- *Weather conditions are important and can rapidly change the experience of the upland landscapes.*
- *Extensive, panoramic and elevated views across substantial distances and many other landscape types”.*

This LCT lies within the Loch Ore and Benarty LLA. Within the LCT, the elevated and dramatic landform with its distinctive silhouettes and skylines contributes to the strong sense of place and orientation across the wider landscape. The land cover in this LCT is predominantly agricultural, featuring scattered farmsteads and large agricultural sheds. The large-scale, openness and exposure of the landscape, along with the absence of modern settlement, reinforces its simple, peaceful and enduring character. The presence of peatland, mature and upland semi-natural vegetation, along with archaeological features such as cairns, hillforts and historic field systems, contributes to both the natural and cultural heritage value of the LCT. The network of core paths across the LCT increases its recreational value, while panoramic and elevated views across adjacent landscape character types further enhance its scenic quality. Taking all of this into account, the landscape value of the LCT in the study area is deemed to be **high**.

LCT 183 - Hill Slopes

LCT 183¹⁵ is located in the northern part of the study area on rising land to the west of the settlement of Ballingry. The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are given as follows:

- *“Large scale, exposed, simple, rugged landscape.*
- *Highly conspicuous slopes and skylines, often defining the edge of other landscape types and the extent of views across the lowlands.*
- *Natural, steep, massive, often dramatically contrasting and pronounced vertical physical landform.*
- *Form distinctive backdrops, edges and skylines to other Landscape Character Types.*
- *Burns and occasional waterfalls, gullies and folds and steep-sided, narrow valleys.*
- *Evidence of active natural systems and processes e.g. weathering and erosion.*

¹⁵ NatureScot (2019) Landscape Character Type 183 Hill Slopes. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20183%20-%20Hill%20Slopes%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

- *Generally open semi-natural land cover.*
- *Woodland cover strongly related to buildings and both buildings and tree cover strongly related to landform, aspect, shelter etc.*
- *General lack of built development and the lack of intrusive man-made features (except for some areas of forestry).*
- *Gentler, smoother, open, regular landform and land cover of the Benarty slopes and Cleish slopes west.*
- *Balanced, harmonious, colourful, many-featured, vertical, open, seminatural upland characteristics of the slopes with the ruggedness of the Benarty and northern Cleish slopes and the sweeping patchwork of regular but not geometric patterns of the western Cleish slopes.*
- *Extensive, panoramic and elevated views across substantial distances and many other predominantly lowland Landscape Character Types.”*

The LCT lies within the Loch Ore and Benarty LLA. Within the LCT, the slopes which form the edge to other landscape types are considered to have a strong sense of identity and have functional value in terms of the transition between LCTs. The coverage of Benarty Wood and active geomorphological processes contributes to the natural heritage value of the LCT. The network of core paths across the LCT increases the recreational value and there are scenic qualities associated with the extensive views across the surrounding lowland landscape from the LCT. Taking all of this into account, the landscape value of the LCT in the study area is deemed to be **high**.

LCT 191 - Lowland Loch Basins – Fife

LCT 191¹⁶ is located in the northern and central parts of the study area and includes key features such as Loch Ore, Loch Gelly and part of the Loch Leven basin. The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are given as follows:

- *“Lochs and their islands and shorelines.*
- *Flat, relatively low-lying landform with strong horizontal lines.*
- *Open, large scale, regular, tended pattern of fields.*
- *Regular distribution of steadings and plantations/tree groups/shelter-belts and small settlements.*
- *Dominance and enclosure of the distinctive upland skylines and slopes.*
- *Diverse, calm, settled and (away from the motorway and main roads) a quiet, calm character.*
- *Presence of wildlife on and around the lochs, and birds overhead in flight”.*

Part of this LCT lies within the Loch Ore and Benarty LLA. The open water bodies, flat landform and regular field pattern contribute to a distinctive landscape. The presence of

¹⁶ NatureScot (2019) Landscape Character Type 191 Lowland Loch Basins – Fife. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20191%20-%20Lowland%20Loch%20Basins%20-%20Fife%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

lochs and associated shorelines, framed by the distinctive enclosing slopes and skylines of surrounding LCTs, such as the Benarty Hill, reinforce a strong sense of place. Perceptual qualities are generally calm and settled, with areas offering a quiet rural character experienced away from the influence of roads and infrastructure. The network of core paths and country park facilities across the LCT increases the recreational value and there are scenic qualities associated with the views across the wider lowland landscape, particularly from the area around Loch Ore. However, localised effects from settlement edges, infrastructure and past mining activity slightly reduce perceptual qualities in parts. Taking all of this into account, the landscape value of the LCT in the study area is deemed to be **high**.

LCT 383 - Rugged Lowland Hills

Two areas of the LCT 383¹⁷ are located in the northern part of the study area, forming a prominent upland backdrop to the surrounding lowland basin. The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are given as follows:

- *“Hard quartzite hills enclosing the Loch Leven basin.*
- *Distinctive silhouette and skylines, giving a strong sense of place and orientation.*
- *Natural and dramatic landform, contrasting with and providing a backdrop to the lower, flatter Loch Leven basin.*
- *Steep slopes and ruggedness.*
- *Open, semi natural landcover, with predominance of rough grazing. There are some areas of coniferous forestry, particularly on the Cleish Hills.*
- *Lack of built development, with small settlements and farms nestled at the bottom of hill slopes in the adjacent Loch Leven Lowland Basin.*
- *Fine views to the north, south and west across the Loch Leven basin to the Ochil Hills and the Devon Valley and beyond.*
- *Large scale, exposed, simple landscapes.”*

A very small part of this LCT partially lies within the Loch Ore and Benarty LLA. The LCT forms a dramatic steep-edged enclosure to the Loch Leven Lowland Basin, with rugged hills such as Benarty, Cleish and Bishop Hill creating distinctive silhouette and skyline, resulting in a strong sense of place. Historic hillforts and estates contribute to the cultural heritage value. Two short sections of core path cross through the LCT, enhancing recreational value by providing public access and opportunities to experience the landscape. Scenic qualities are

¹⁷ NatureScot (2019) Landscape Character Type 383 Rugged Lowland Hills. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20383%20-%20Rugged%20Lowland%20Hills%20-%20final%20pdf.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

reinforced by elevated views from the LCT across the surrounding lowland basin. Taking all into account, the landscape value within the study area is deemed to be **high**.

LCT 390 - Lowland Basins

LCT 390¹⁸ is located in the northern part of the study area, encompassing the flat and low-lying land surrounding Loch Leven. The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are given as follows:

- *“Broad basins formed where sandstones have been eroded away leaving harder enclosing rocks.*
- *Flat, relatively low lying landform with strong horizontal composition.*
- *Extensive mudflats, reinforce openness and flatness of landscape, and dynamic character reinforces by presence of large populations of birds, and reflections of sky.*
- *Open, large scale, regular, tended pattern of fields on fringes of waterbodies.*
- *Rich natural heritage, particularly migratory and wading birds.*
- *Historic sites and associations.*
- *Dominance of water, sky and distant shores.*
- *Diverse, calm, settled and (away from main roads and other discordant elements) the quiet, calm and balanced ambience.*
- *Views are wide and panoramic across the basins along strong visual links to adjacent landscape types”.*

A small part of this LCT lies within the Loch Ore and Benarty LLA. Within the LCT, the flat and low lying landform as well as dominance of water and sky create a clear sense of place and visual links to surrounding LCTs. The broad basin, shaped through the erosion of sandstones and enclosed by harder volcanic rocks, represents an active geomorphological feature that contributes to the geological and natural heritage value of the LCT. The core path network enhances the recreational value by providing public access and opportunities to experience the landscape. Panoramic views across the basin and towards the enclosing hills contribute to the scenic qualities of the LCT. Taking all of this into account, the landscape value of the LCT in the study area is deemed to be **high**.

Seascape Character

‘Seascape’ refers to ‘an area, as perceived by people, from land, sea or air, where the sea is a key element of the physical environment’¹⁹. The Coastal Character Assessment informs and guides coastal and marine planning as well as individual development proposals. The seascape assessment for the Project will be based on the national Coastal Character Types

¹⁸ NatureScot (2019) Landscape Character Type LCT 390 Lowland Basins. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20390%20-%20Lowland%20Basins%20-%20final%20pdf.pdf>. [Accessed August 2025]

¹⁹ Council of Europe (2000). The European Landscape Convention. Available from: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treaty-num=176>. [Accessed August 2025]

(CCTs) which were defined within the SNH Coastal Character Assessment Guidance note²⁰ and described within the Description of Coastal Character Types – (including Caithness)²¹. The CCTs found within the study area are shown on **Figure 6.3 Landscape Character Types and Seascape Character Types** and described below:

CCT 5: Developed Inner Firths

CCT 5 is located in the southern part of the study area off the coastline near to Kinghorn. The relevant key characteristics summarised from the published documentation include:

- The coastline has low rock platforms, small rocky headlands and raised beaches, often altered by settlements and infrastructure.
- Bridges, communications and industry are prominent features within this type.
- Settlements are larger and closer together, often extending onto the lower slopes of the braes, with farmland behind them.
- Views directed towards the water.
- Views across the narrow firths are prominent, with the Clyde and Forth acting as focal points due to their reflective water and surrounding hills.

The coastal landscape contributes towards the natural heritage value, albeit with modifications in places. The influence of industry and settlement reduce the perceptual qualities of the CCT. Taking all of this into account, the landscape value of the CCT in the study area is deemed to be **medium**.

Visual Baseline

Visual Receptors

The visual assessment determines the degree of anticipated change to visual amenity experienced by people (visual receptor) that would occur as a result of the Scottish Onshore Scheme. The visual assessment considers static and sequential effects through analysis of individual viewpoints which are considered to be representative of the range of views within the study area.

Visual receptors within the scope of this assessment are described in the following section and are grouped into the following categories:

- Residential, comprising those in residential dwellings;
- Recreational, including users of walking and cycling routes; and
- Road users, including users of the local transport network.

The visual receptors included within this scope of assessment are those located within the area of theoretical visibility shown on the ZTV plan (**Figure 6.4 Zone of Theoretical Visibility**

²⁰ Scottish Natural Heritage (2017) Guidance Note Coastal Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-02/Guidance%20Note%20-%20Coastal%20Character%20Assessment.pdf> [Accessed August 2025]

²¹ NatureScot (2005) Description of Coastal character types - (including Caithness) Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/description-coastal-character-types-including-caithness>. [Accessed August 2025]

(ZTV) and Representative Viewpoints) as those outside of this theoretical visibility are not considered to have the potential for significant adverse effects by the Scottish Onshore Scheme.

Residential

There are a number of settlements and scattered properties within the study area. There are residential dwellers present which experience a range of views that have the potential to be affected by the Scottish Onshore Scheme.

Ballingry and Lochore

Two settlements largely merged together which are located to the north of Lochgelly. The settlements are located within the edge of lowland landscape at the foot of the hill slopes associated with Benarty Hill and Navitie Hill. The B920 passes through the central part of the settlements. The settlements occupy slightly elevated land, particularly on the northern edge, with some properties on the edges orientated across the surrounding lowland. The settlements are somewhat contained by mature vegetation and the rising landform of the adjacent hill slopes to the north and west and Hare Law to the east. Views experienced from residential receptors within Ballingry and Lochore include Viewpoint 3, as shown within **Volume 4: Visualisations**.

Kinglassie

A settlement located to the southwest of Glenrothes. The settlement lies on the edge of lowland landscape at the foot of the hill slopes associated with Redwells Hill, White Hill and Broom Hill. The settlement has some containment due to rising land to the north and also to the south in between Kinglassie and Auchterderran. The B921 passes through the central part of the settlement. Properties on the southern edge are orientated towards open farmland, with outward views extending across fields towards the wider landscape. Views experienced from residential receptors within Kinglassie include Viewpoint 6, as shown within **Volume 3: Visualisations**.

Auchterderran and Cardenden

Two settlements located to the northeast of Lochgelly and west of Kirkcaldy. The settlements lie within the central part of the lowland landscape on lower, gently undulating land associated with the River Ore. The settlements have some containment from rising land to the north between the settlements and Kinglassie and south before falling again near to Auchtertool. The settlements are also generally contained by mature vegetation, small pockets of woodland and localised landform. The properties on the edge of the settlements are generally orientated on the surrounding landscape. Several B roads enter the settlements, including the B981 from the east and west and the B921 from the north. Views experienced from residential receptors within Auchterderran and Cardenden include Viewpoints 4, 8 and 9, as shown within **Volume 3: Visualisations**.

Kinghorn

Settlement located between Burntisland and Kirkcaldy. The settlement lies along the coastline and the A921 lies centrally through the settlement. The settlement has some containment provided by rising land to the northwest including Stoneyhall Hill. There is a

steep fall from the main settlement area to the coastline. Views experienced from residential receptors within Kinghorn include Viewpoint 14, as shown within **Volume 3: Visualisations**.

Individual properties and farmsteads

Individual properties and farmsteads are scattered around the study area between settlements, including to the east of Ballingry and Lochore and the rolling agricultural landscape to the south of the A92. Views experienced vary depending on the containment provided by landform, built form and vegetation. Views experienced from residential receptors from individual properties and farmsteads include Viewpoints 1, 10, 12 and 13, as shown within **Volume 3: Visualisations**.

Recreational

Core paths, long distance recreational routes and the National Cycle Network are shown on **Figure 6.4 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Representative Viewpoints** and are described below.

Recreational routes

There are three recreational routes within the study area, including short sections of the Fife Coastal Path and National Cycle Network in the eastern part of the study area and the Fife Pilgrim Way within the central part. The Fife Coastal Path broadly follows the coastline and passes on the edge of coastal settlement areas including Kirkcaldy and Kinghorn. The views are typically focused on the sea due to landform typically screening views inland. The short section of the National Cycle Network lies slightly further inland and predominantly passes through rolling agricultural land with some open views curtailed in part by the undulating landform and vegetation cover. The Fife Pilgrim Way lies further inland and passes through settlements including Kinglassie and Lochore as well as the agricultural land between. Outward views from this route vary dependent on proximity to landform, built form and vegetation but are generally focused on the wider lowland landscape with hill sides as a backdrop. Views experienced from recreational routes are represented by Viewpoints 1, 4, 13 and 14, as shown within **Volume 3: Visualisations**.

Core paths

There are numerous core paths within the study area connecting recreational routes and settlements. The majority are located within the central part of the study area connecting various settlements and also in the southern part of the study area extending from the coastline. Many of the core paths pass through areas of mature native vegetation and forestry plantation which restricts outward views in places. In other places, there are more open views across the wider landscape typically comprising agricultural land. Views experienced from core paths are represented by Viewpoints 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13, as shown within **Volume 3: Visualisations**.

Road Users

There are a number of roads which pass through the study area who experience a range of views that have the potential to be affected by the Scottish Onshore Scheme.

B9097

The B9097 lies within the central part of the study area. The route passes through relatively low-lying land and is on the edge of steeply rising land associated with Navitie Hill and Benarty Hill and near to Hare Law. The route typically lies adjacent to agricultural land and also passes through the edge of Ballingry. The western part of the route through the study area has relatively open views of the surrounding landscape, whereas the eastern part to the east of Ballingry has more restricted views due to vegetation alongside the road corridor and energy infrastructure in close proximity, including Westfield Substation, Westfield Biomass Plant and overhead towers and lines. Views experienced from the B9097 are represented by Viewpoint 2, as shown within **Volume 3: Visualisations**.

B921

The B921 lies within the central part of the study area. The route extends from the northern edge of Auchterderran through Kinglassie and then extends eastwards. The route typically lies adjacent to agricultural land with intermittent views to the wider landscape due to some foreground vegetation alongside the road and surrounding landform. Outward views include energy infrastructure such as wind turbines and overhead towers and lines as well as industrial built form including a concrete plant to the north of Auchterderran. Views experienced from the B921 are represented by Viewpoint 4, as shown within **Volume 3: Visualisations**.

B981

The B981 lies within the central part of the study area. The route extends through Lochgelly and Auchterderran and then further east towards Kirkcaldy. The route therefore varies between within built-up settlement areas and adjacent to agricultural land. Long distance views are often curtailed due to intervening vegetation, landform and built form and outward views often contain infrastructure such as overhead towers and lines. Views experienced from the B981 are represented by Viewpoints 8 and 9, as shown within **Volume 3: Visualisations**.

Unnamed roads

There is a network of local roads traversing the landscape linking settlement areas and isolated farmsteads to the main transport corridors. These minor roads tend to be narrower and integrate with the landform and settlement pattern. Views experienced from unnamed roads are represented by Viewpoints 10, 12 and 13, as shown within **Volume 3: Visualisations**.

Viewpoints

Table 6-5 Representative Viewpoint Locations Table 6-5 below, provides a list of the 14 representative viewpoints that have been selected for assessment within the LVIA as the most likely to be significantly affected by the construction and operation of the Scottish Onshore Scheme. These viewpoints have been selected based on a desktop study, analysis of the ZTVs, targeted site work and consultation with Fife Council. They have been selected to provide a range of viewing distance and viewing experience of the different scheme components (during construction and permanent structures in operation). These viewpoints are shown on **Figure 6.4 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Representative Viewpoints**.

It is acknowledged that part of the landscape within the study area is comprised of plantation forestry at different stages of felling. It is assumed that this would remain to some degree as expressed within the baseline description and value judgements for each viewpoint below. Where any planned felling would affect views, this has been considered at the assessment phase.

Table 6-5 Representative Viewpoint Locations

ID	Name	Type	Viewpoint Type	Receptor – Reason for selection	Easting	Northing
1	Fife Pilgrim Way and core path network	Type 1	Representative	Representative of residential receptors along Torres Loan and recreational receptors on the Fife Pilgrim Way and the local core path network (P817/04).	318717	696379
2	B9097 east of Lochore	Type 1 and 3	Representative	Representative of users on the local road network (B9097).	320338	697315
3	Core path network east of Lochore	Type 1 and 3	Representative	Representative of residential receptors on the edge of Lochore and Ballingry and recreational receptors along the local core path network (P580/02).	318688	697384
4	Northern edge of Auchterderran	Type 1 and 3	Representative	Representative of residential receptors on the northern edge of Auchterderran, recreational receptors on the local core path network (P452/03) and the Fife Pilgrim Way and road users on the local road network (B921).	320971	696517
5	Northern edge of Dunmore Fort	Type 1 and 3	Representative	Representative of recreational receptors at Dunmore Hill Fort and users of the local core path network (P828/01).	317064	698346
6	Southern edge of Kinglassie	Type 1 and 3	Representative	Representative of residential receptors on the southern edge of Kinglassie and recreational receptors along the local core path network (P444/03).	322958	698122

ID	Name	Type	Viewpoint Type	Receptor – Reason for selection	Easting	Northing
7	Local core path network north of Scotlandwell	Type 1 and 3	Representative	Representative of recreational receptors along the local core path network (PTMK/120/2).	318654	702116
8	B981 east of Cardenden	Type 1 and 3	Representative	Representative of residential receptors on the eastern edge of Cardenden, recreational receptors on the local core path network (P439/01) and road users on the local road network (B981).	322890	695184
9	B981 west of Auchterderran	Type 1	Representative	Representative of residential receptors on the western edge of Auchterderran and road users on the local road network (B981).	320634	695586
10	Unnamed road south of A92 near Cardenden	Type 1	Representative	Representative of residential receptors in scattered residential properties, recreational receptors along the local core path network (P491/05) and road users along the local road network (unnamed road).	322016	693155
11	Core path network to north of Auchtertool	Type 1	Representative	Representative of recreational receptors along the local core path network (P491/03).	322184	692058
12	Core path network to southeast of Auchtertool	Type 1	Representative	Representative of residential receptors from scattered properties and farmsteads, recreational receptors on the local core path network (P569/02) and road users on the local road network (unnamed road).	323574	689554
13	Core path network to	Type 1	Representative	Representative of residential receptors from scattered properties and	325896	688718

ID	Name	Type	Viewpoint Type	Receptor – Reason for selection	Easting	Northing
	the north of Kinghorn			farmsteads, recreational receptors on the local core path network (P468/04) and National Cycle Network route 76 and road users on the local road network (unnamed road).		
14	Fife Coastal Path, Kinghorn	Type 1	Representative	Representative of recreational receptors along the Fife Coastal Path and residential receptors on the edge of Kinghorn.	327445	687304

Viewpoint 1 – Fife Pilgrim Way and core path network

This representative viewpoint is experienced by residential receptors on the eastern edge of Crosshill and recreational receptors on the local core path network (route P817/04) and Fife Pilgrim Way. The viewpoint is located within the central part of the study area.

The foreground includes open grassland enclosed by field boundary vegetation and a post-and-wire fence, with low-level scrub and hedgerow vegetation visible alongside the core path. This provides partial filtering with intermittent open views emerging along the route as the land falls away from the viewpoint location. It also contains a tower and overhead line which is a dominant part of the view due to the land falling away so the majority of other features are located further from the receptor due to landform screening.

The middle ground comprises overhead towers and lines, wood pole lines, wind turbines, and blocks of mature plantation forestry. The upper extents of the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility and Westfield Biomass Plant are also visible. These elements are situated within an agricultural landscape and the lower extents are partially screened by rolling landform and intervening vegetation. Scattered settlement and farmsteads are also visible. The background features rising landform and further blocks of mature vegetation, partially on the skyline.

The view comprises features which reduce the scenic qualities including the presence of energy-related development including turbines, Westfield Biomass Plant, Westfield Energy Recovery Facility and overhead line with towers. The views of the wider landscape are largely curtailed by intervening landform, built form and vegetation. The view is likely to contain part of the Lomond Hills Local Landscape Area in the background but within the context of detracting features in the foreground and middle ground. As such, the value of the view is considered to be **low**.

Viewpoint 2 – B9097 east of Lochore

This representative viewpoint is experienced by road users on the local road network along the B9097. The viewpoint is located within the central part of the study area.

The foreground comprises an agricultural field enclosure bound by fencing and vegetation within varying degrees of maturity. Mature vegetation is located to the north-east and a hedgerow in good condition on the western edge which screens agricultural land beyond

apart from in a gap for a field gate. The foreground also contains wood pole lines and an existing 132 kV overhead line routed through the agricultural land that creates a view with many different types and sizes of towers visible and a mixture of those set against rising landform and those set against the skyline, which increases wirescape.

The middle ground comprises further layered vegetation in the surrounding landscape and a residential property and farmstead off Torres Loan. The upper extents of Westfield Substation are also visible in the middle ground but are partially screened by intervening hedgerow vegetation. The rising landform and plantation forestry at Hare Law to the south-west of the receptor in the middle ground screens views of the background of the view in this direction.

Rising landform to the west of Ballingry is visible in the background of the view to the west of the receptor which comprises a mixture of mature vegetation, clusters of built form on the edge of Ballingry, open agricultural land and overhead towers and lines against the skyline.

The view comprises some scenic qualities relating to the rising topography in the background of the view. However, the composition of the view is dominated largely by vertical energy infrastructure. The views of the wider landscape are largely curtailed by intervening landform, built form and vegetation. There are views towards the Loch Ore and Benarty Local Landscape Area within the context of the detracting features. As such, the value of the view is considered to be **low**.

Viewpoint 3 – Core path network east of Lochore

This representative viewpoint is experienced by residential receptors on the eastern edge of Lochore and Ballingry and recreational receptors on the local core path network (route P580/02). The viewpoint is located within the central part of the study area.

The foreground of the view includes open grassland with a double wood pole line crossing. Occasional mature trees and scrub vegetation are located along the edges of the core path. Overhead towers and wires are visible to the immediate east of the receptor, forming part of the foreground and extending into the middle ground of the view.

The middle ground contains a concentration of energy-related infrastructure, including overhead towers and lines, Westfield Substation and Westfield Energy Recovery Facility. Views of this infrastructure is broken up by mature trees and hedgerow vegetation along field boundaries also in the middle ground but is typically visible between and above such vegetation and remains a prominent feature in the view. The B9097 road is present to the north-east and is intermittently visible, with vehicular movement. The geometric plantation forestry on Hare Law is also visible and, in combination with landform, largely obscures longer-distance views to the south-east.

The background features rising landform, blocks of mature vegetation, and wind turbines with moving blades, which partially break the skyline, along with scattered farmsteads and distant views to upland hills.

The view contains features that reduce its scenic qualities, including the presence of energy-related infrastructure, such as the wood pole line, turbines, substation and overhead towers and lines, as well as the geometric pattern of plantation forestry on Hare Law. The overall view is visually dominated by energy infrastructure in the foreground and middle ground. The Views towards designated landscapes are limited but due to intervening landform, built form

and vegetation in the view but there may be partial views to the Lomond Hills Local Landscape Area on higher ground. The value of the view is considered to be **low**.

Viewpoint 4 – Northern edge of Auchterderran

This representative viewpoint is experienced by residential receptors on the northern edge of Auchterderran, recreational receptors on the local core path network (route P452/03) and the Fife Pilgrim Way and road users on the local road network (B921). The viewpoint is located within the central part of the study area.

The foreground of the view contains the route of an unnamed road and core path network (route P452/03) which is bound by lower-level scrub and mature hedgerow and trees on the western edge. Existing residential properties off the unnamed road and Pilgrims Way Avenue are visible which restrict longer distance views to the east, south and south-west of the view. Views to the middle and longer distance are available to the north-west through a gap between the mature roadside vegetation and residential properties as well as to the north-east.

The middle ground comprises open agricultural field enclosures on the northern edge of Auchterderran with a farmstead partially visible to the north. In the longer distance to the north-east, hubs and blade tips of wind turbines are visible as well as agricultural land with blocks of mature vegetation and overhead lines with towers. The lower extents of the turbines and pylons are screened as the landform falls and intervening field boundary vegetation in the middle ground. In the longer distance to the north-west, blocks of plantation vegetation and intervening vegetation in the middle ground largely screen views. However, there are views towards the taller elements of the Westfield Biomass Plant and the upper extent of Benarty Hill.

The view has features which reduce the scenic qualities including built form on the edge of Auchterderran, industrial and energy-related development, including turbines and overhead lines with towers. The wider landscape views are largely curtailed by intervening landform, built form and vegetation. The view comprises a very small part of the Loch Ore and Benarty LLA but does not comprise all the special qualities due to the majority being screened by intervening landform and vegetation and distance. The value of the view is considered to be **low**.

Viewpoint 5 – Northern edge of Dunmore Fort

This representative viewpoint is experienced by recreational receptors on the local core path network (route P828/01). The viewpoint is located within the western part of the study area to the north of Ballingry.

The foreground comprises agricultural land and scattered farmsteads with large-scale agricultural sheds. Dry stone walling with barbed wire fencing is present along sections adjacent to the route of the core path, with linear blocks of mature vegetation interspersed throughout the fields in the foreground. The landform of Navitie Hill screens views beyond the foreground therefore longer distance views are focused towards the south.

The middle ground contains low-lying settlement located within the lowland, interspersed with agricultural buildings, tree cover and blocks of mature vegetation. Wind turbines and overhead towers and lines are visible as vertical structures, which are largely set against

landform due to the elevated position of the viewpoint location. The geometric plantation forestry on Hare Law is also visible. The background contains areas of rising landform, pockets of mature woodland and upland hills forming the outer extent of the view.

The view contains features that reduce its scenic qualities, including the presence of energy-related infrastructure such as wind turbines and the geometric plantation forestry on Hare Law. The wider landscape views are largely curtailed by intervening landform, built form and vegetation. While the view falls within the Loch Ore and Benarty LLA, it does not express the full range of special qualities due to visual interruption and built features. The view also contains some cultural associations with Dunmore Fort. The value of the view is considered to be **medium**.

Viewpoint 6 – Southern edge of Kinglassie

This representative viewpoint is experienced by residential receptors on the southern edge of Kinglassie and recreational receptors on the local core path network (route P444/03). The viewpoint is located within the eastern part of the study area.

The foreground includes a disused railway corridor running through open grassland, enclosed by field boundary vegetation and post-and-wire fencing. A wood pole line is visible to the west of the receptor and forms a prominent feature across both the foreground and middle ground of the view.

The middle ground contains blocks of mature vegetation and scattered tree groups situated across gently rising landform. The edge of the nearby settlement of Kinglassie is partially visible to the northwest of the receptor, with residential properties and agricultural buildings present. Wind turbines are a prominent feature in this part of the view, with moving blades that break the skyline. Overhead towers and lines are visible to the southwest, while the B921 road is visible to the northwest with intermittent vehicular movement. The lower extents of the turbines and towers are often screened by the rolling landform and intervening field boundary vegetation in the middle ground.

The background is defined by higher ground with woodland blocks and intervening vegetation. Intervening topography and mature vegetation in the middle ground largely obscure longer-distance views to the west and southwest.

The view contains features which reduce its scenic qualities, including the presence of built form on the southern edge of Kinglassie, the disused railway corridor, wood pole line, wind turbines, and overhead towers and wires. Wider landscape views are largely curtailed by intervening landform and vegetation. The view does not include any designated landscapes. The value of the view is considered to be **low**.

Viewpoint 7 – Local core path network north of Scotlandwell

This representative viewpoint is experienced by recreational receptors on the local core path network (PTMK/120/2). The viewpoint is located within the northern part of the study area.

The foreground comprises the core path corridor, with scrub vegetation and occasional mature trees along its edge. The viewpoint lies at the edge of plantation forestry cover, positioned on elevated ground with views across the lowland landscape to the south.

The middle ground features a lowland agricultural landscape characterised by open regular-shaped field enclosures, with a mix of non-vegetated boundaries, hedgerows, linear tree

belts and small woodland blocks. The settlement of Scotlandwell, scattered residential properties, interspersed farmsteads, and a network of local roads with intermittent vehicular movement are also present across the view.

The background includes rising landform and more distant areas of higher ground and hills, such as Vane Hill and Navitie Hill, with a small part of Loch Leven visible to the southwest. Energy infrastructure is visible to the south, including the Westfield Biomass Plant, Westfield Energy Recovery Facility and overhead towers and lines across the view, both of which are largely set against landform. Distant wind turbines with rotating blades are present and partially break the skyline. The geometric plantation forestry on Hare Law is visible and forms part of the background. Long-distance visibility is present across most of the panoramic view, with small sections curtailed due to intervening landform.

The view contains features which reduce its scenic qualities, including energy infrastructure such as the Westfield Biomass Plant, Westfield Energy Recovery Facility, wind turbines, and overhead towers and lines. However, due to the panoramic views from this elevated location, there does remain to be scenic qualities associated with the wider agricultural views which lessens the influence of the detracting features on the panoramic view. Views of the majority of the land within the LLAs within the study area are typically screened by intervening landform. The value of the view is considered to be **medium**.

Viewpoint 8 – B981 east of Cardenden

This representative viewpoint is experienced by residential receptors on the eastern edge of Cardenden, recreational receptors on the local core path network (route P439/01) and road users on the local road network (B981). The viewpoint is located within the central part of the study area.

The foreground of the view includes the route of the road corridor, with mature individual trees adjacent to the road and visible vehicle movement. Residential properties and large-scale agricultural buildings are also present.

The middle ground features sloping agricultural land that falls away from the viewpoint location, partially screening parts of the middle ground and background, including part of the settlement of Auchterderran which is also visible in the middle ground. The mature vegetation cover visible within the middle ground also screens part of the settlement. The middle ground also contains the elevated landform of Hare Law with geometric patterns of plantation forestry.

The majority of the background of the view is screened by intervening mature vegetation cover and landform in the middle ground. There are pockets of higher land visible in the background which rise above such intervening features. Wind turbine blades are visible in motion, with tips and hubs beyond intervening landform and set against the rising landform. Overhead towers and lines are also present, partially set against the rising landform and partially breaking the skyline.

The view contains features which reduce its scenic qualities, including the presence of built form, large scale agricultural buildings, wind turbines, overhead towers and lines and geometric forestry plantation cover. Wider landscape views are largely curtailed by intervening landform and vegetation. Whilst the view includes a small part of the Lomond Hills LLA and Loch Ore and Benarty LLA, it does not encompass all of its special qualities due

to screening by intervening landform, vegetation and distance but still forms part of the background of the view. The value of the view is considered to be **medium**.

Viewpoint 9 – B981 west of Auchterderran

This representative viewpoint is experienced by residential receptors on the western edge of Auchterderran and road users on the B981 Jamphlars Road. The viewpoint is located within the central part of the study area.

The foreground of the view includes Jamphlars Road, which is bordered by low-level scrub and mature hedgerows and trees along its northern edge. Overhead lines and towers are also visible to the immediate south and east of the receptor, forming part of the foreground and middle ground of the view. Existing residential properties off Jamphlars Road are visible and restrict longer-distance views to the east and northeast. Views to the middle distance are available to the north, north-east and north-west through a gap between the mature roadside vegetation and residential properties.

The middle ground consists of open agricultural fields on the western edge of Auchterderran. A farmstead is partially visible to the northwest, with its lower sections screened by the landform and surrounding vegetation. Intervening topography and geometric pattern of coniferous plantation forestry on Hare Law in the middle ground which largely obscures longer-distance views to the north, northwest, and northeast. Several wood pole lines are also visible in the middle ground of the view passing through the agricultural fields and partially screened by intervening vegetation.

The view has features which reduce the scenic qualities including built form on the western edge of Auchterderran, the presence of overhead lines and towers, and the geometric pattern of forestry plantation on Hare Law. The wider landscape views are largely curtailed by intervening landform, built form and vegetation. There are no views of designated landscapes in the view. As such, the value of the view is considered to be **low**.

Viewpoint 10 – Unnamed road south of A92 near Cardenden

This representative viewpoint is experienced by residential receptors in scattered residential properties, recreational receptors along the local core path network (P491/05) and road users along the local road network (unnamed road). The viewpoint is located within the central part of the study area.

The foreground comprises an open, sloping agricultural field enclosed by low scrub and grassland vegetation. The core path crosses through the view, with intermittent patches of scrub and hedgerow vegetation present along its route.

The middle ground features a gently undulating lowland landscape with extensive open fields and vegetation such as occasional hedgerows, small field margins and shrubs. A block of mature woodland is located to the south of the receptor and restricts longer-distance views in that direction. Wind turbines are visible in both the middle ground and background, with moving blades extending above the skyline. Overhead towers and lines are also present and break the skyline. The lower extents of both elements are typically partially screened by undulating landform and intervening vegetation.

The background of the view comprises blocks of mature woodland, scattered properties and farmsteads and vertical features including the Mossmorran Natural Gas Liquids (NGL) Plant,

overhead towers and lines and wind turbines which break the skyline. Long-distance visibility is generally typically curtailed due to landform in the background of the view.

The view contains features that reduce its scenic qualities, including the presence of infrastructure such as wind turbines, overhead towers and lines and the Mossmorran Natural Gas Liquids Plant. The view comprises a small part of the Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA but does not comprise all the special qualities due to the majority being screened by intervening landform and vegetation and distance. The value of the view is considered to be **low**.

Viewpoint 11 – Core path network to north of Auchtertool

This representative viewpoint is experienced by recreational receptors along the local core path network (P491/03). The viewpoint is located within the central part of the study area.

The foreground of the view contains rolling agricultural land with areas of low scrub and mature vegetation. The middle ground is largely screened or with heavily filtered views. Where visible, the middle ground is characterised by a rural agricultural landscape comprising large blocks of woodland. A wood pole line is visible at close range, forming a prominent vertical element within the immediate view. The combination of woodland and undulating landform limits long-range views. Wind turbines are present within the middle ground, with moving blades that extend above the skyline. The lower elements of the turbines are partially screened by intervening landform and vegetation. There are also views of overhead towers and lines in the background of the view.

The view contains features which reduce its scenic qualities, including energy infrastructure such as wood pole lines, wind turbines, and overhead towers and lines. The view comprises a very small part of the Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA but does not comprise all the special qualities due to the majority being screened by intervening landform and vegetation and distance. The value of the view is considered to be **low**.

Viewpoint 12 – Core path network to southeast of Auchtertool

This representative viewpoint is experienced by residential receptors from scattered properties and farmsteads, recreational receptors on the local core path network (P569/02) and road users on the local road network (unnamed road). The viewpoint is located within the central part of the study area.

The foreground consists of a section of the core path and road corridor, which is bound on either side by hedgerows and scrub vegetation, which partially filter views across the ground plane of the wider landscape. A wood pole line also extends into the middle ground.

The middle ground features a gently rolling rural landscape comprising large-scale agricultural fields, interspersed with scattered farmsteads and mature woodland blocks. The presence of woodland and the undulating topography largely restrict longer-distance views. Wind turbines are visible in the middle ground, with rotating blades extending above the skyline. The lower sections of these structures are partially screened by intervening landform and vegetation.

The background includes elevated landform and mature vegetation. While most long-distance visibility is curtailed by the surrounding topography and woodland blocks, the upper parts of distant wind turbines are visible on the skyline to the northwest, though partially screened by intervening landform and vegetation.

The view is across the Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA. Although the view contains features that reduce its scenic qualities, including the presence of energy-related infrastructure such as wind turbines and wood pole lines, the composition of the view is largely of a rural agricultural landscape with scenic qualities such as mature woodland cover and rolling landform. The value of the view is considered to be **high**.

Viewpoint 13 – Core path network to the north of Kinghorn

This representative viewpoint is experienced by residential receptors from scattered properties and farmsteads, recreational receptors on the local core path network (P468/04) and National Cycle Network route 76 and road users on the local road network (unnamed road). The viewpoint is located within the southern part of the study area.

The foreground of the view comprises open agricultural land, bound by a combination of short hedgerows including gaps, stone wall and individual trees. The route of the local road network is also visible as it extends into the middle ground. A wood pole line is also visible in the foreground, introducing a vertical element within an open rural setting.

The middle ground is characterised by gently rolling farmland with scattered farmsteads and large-scale field enclosures. Due to the rolling landform, limited built form and pattern of vegetation, there are largely open views across the surrounding landscape. The background extends toward the coastline to the east, where the sea is visible along with occasional large vessels and distant settlement. To the northeast, wind turbines and wood pole lines are also visible along the coastline, appearing in the far distance.

The view is across the Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA. The view contains scenic qualities including the open rolling agricultural land and coastal views. The view also contains the Piteadie Castle Scheduled Monument to the north as a cultural association. Features that reduce its scenic qualities include the presence of vertical infrastructure such as the wood pole line and wind turbines, albeit in the background of the view. The value of the view is considered to be **high**.

Viewpoint 14 – Fife Coastal Path, Kinghorn

This representative viewpoint is experienced by recreational receptors along the Fife Coastal Path and residential receptors on the edge of Kinghorn. The viewpoint is located within the southern part of the study area.

The foreground of the view comprises a narrow section of the coastal path and adjacent rocky shoreline, with areas of scrub vegetation and irregular outcrops present. The steep and uneven coastal landform restricts views inland. The middle ground includes the lower coastal slopes and foreshore, where the landform rises sharply inland. Intervening landform and established scrub vegetation limit visibility beyond the immediate setting.

The background consists of expansive views across the sea, where large vessels are visible on the water. To the southwest, distant settlement is partially visible along the coastline. However, longer-distance views inland and along the coast are curtailed by intervening vegetation and topography.

The view is across the Cullaloe Hills and Coast LLA. The view is characterised by a strong sense of natural and coastal character, including rugged shoreline features, varied vegetation and open sea views. The absence of built form and infrastructure in the immediate setting

reinforces the undeveloped and scenic qualities of the view. The value of the view is considered to be **high**.

Table 6-6 Summary of Landscape and Coastal Character Type (LCT/CCT) Value and **Table 6-7 Summary of Visual Receptor Value** below provides a summary of the values for the landscape and visual receptor which form the basis of the assessment.

Table 6-6 Summary of Landscape and Coastal Character Type (LCT/CCT) Value

Landscape/ Coastal Character Types (LCT/ CCT)	Landscape Value
LCT 185 - Pronounced Hills and Craggs	High
LCT 186 - Lowland Hills and Valleys	Medium
LCT 192 - Coastal Hills - Fife	Medium
LCT 182 - Upland Hills	High
LCT 183 - Hill Slopes	High
LCT 191 - Lowland Loch Basins – Fife	High
LCT 383 - Rugged Lowland Hills	High
LCT 390 - Lowland Basins	High
CCT 5: Developed Inner Firths	Medium

Table 6-7 Summary of Visual Receptor Value

Viewpoint	Visual Value
Viewpoint 1 – Fife Pilgrim Way and core path network	Low
Viewpoint 2 – B9097 east of Lochore	Low
Viewpoint 3 – Core path network east of Lochore	Low
Viewpoint 4 – Northern edge of Auchterderran	Low
Viewpoint 5 – Northern edge of Dunmore Fort	Medium
Viewpoint 6 – Southern edge of Kinglassie	Low
Viewpoint 7 – Local core path network north of Scotlandwell	Medium
Viewpoint 8 – B981 east of Cardenden	Medium

Viewpoint	Visual Value
Viewpoint 9 – B981 west of Auchterderran	Low
Viewpoint 10 – Unnamed road south of A92 near Cardenden	Low
Viewpoint 11 – Core path network to north of Auchtertool	Low
Viewpoint 12 – Core path network to southeast of Auchtertool	High
Viewpoint 13 – Core path network to the north of Kinghorn	High
Viewpoint 14 – Fife Coastal Path, Kinghorn	High

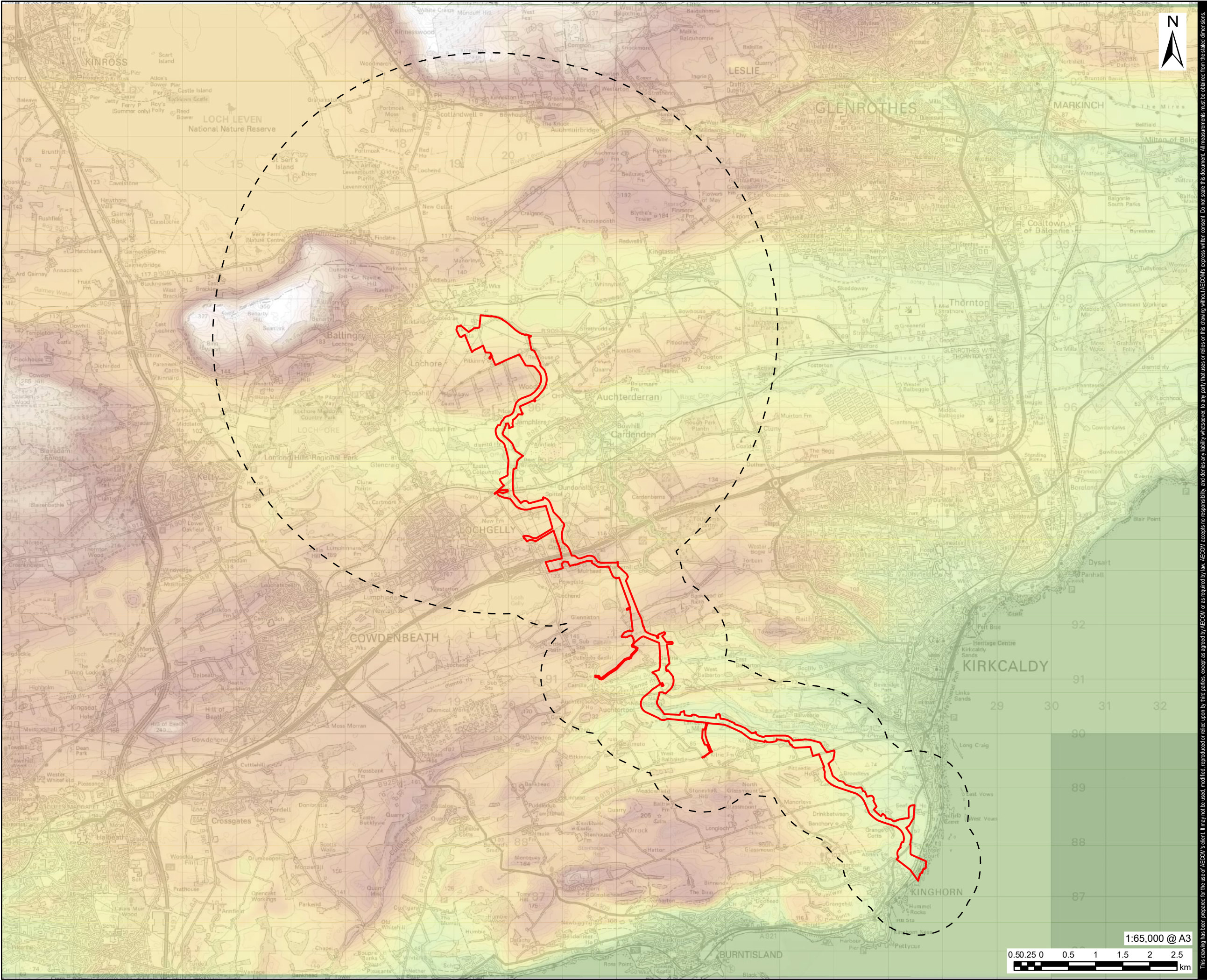
Future Baseline

Predicting the future baseline involves a degree of speculation and uncertainty as acknowledged at paragraph 5.33 in GLVIA3⁶. It requires projecting forward any trends in change and considering how they may affect the landscape over time. The nature of the future baseline is influenced by a combination of natural and human processes, including climate change. Scoping and consented development proposals are able to influence the future baseline and are discussed in relation to the cumulative schemes (refer to **Chapter 5: Environmental Impact Assessment Methodology** and **Chapter 14 Cumulative and In-Combination Effects (Volume 2: Main Report)**).

The landscape within the study area is variable and includes lowland and hills. The vegetation across the study area, including linear strips of mature tree in parts and blocks of native woodland, will continue to mature but the inherent character and contrast between the more open large-scale agricultural fields and vegetated patterns is unlikely to substantially change. The forestry operations across the study area, which involves different stages of felling and re-growth and are apparent across the landscape are considered to continue and there is unlikely to be changes to this management practice of felling.

As highlighted by the number of schemes included within the cumulative assessment, the rise of energy infrastructure schemes is likely to increase. It is therefore likely that energy related infrastructure has the potential to expand in this area. Some impact of climate change could occur though it is difficult to predict the change on habitats.

In summary, the future baseline in the absence of the Scottish Onshore Scheme is likely to be similar to the current baseline.



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LEGEND

Planning Application Boundary

Study Area

Topography (OS Terrain 5) - m

High: 454.49

Low: -2.08

NOTES

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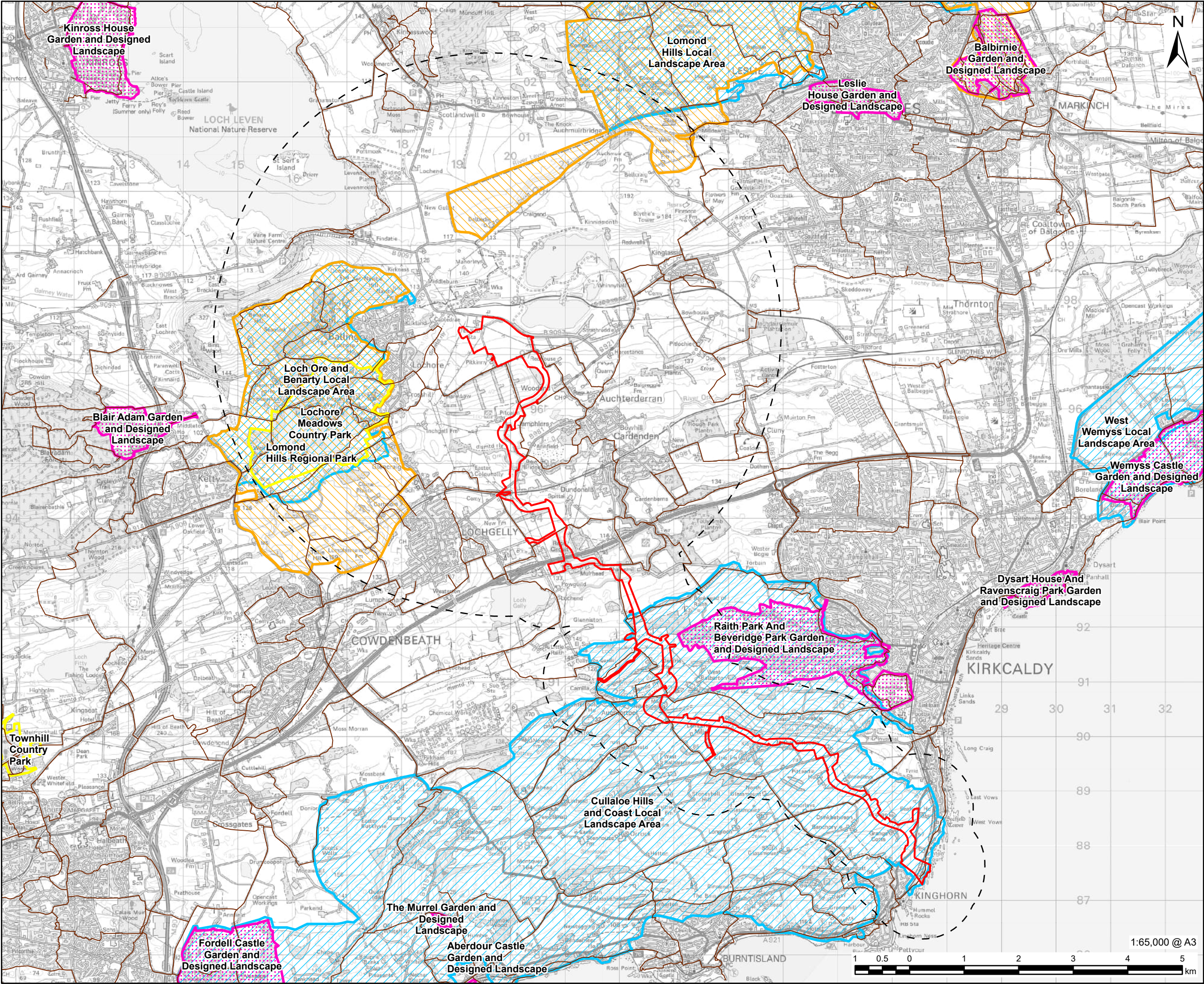
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FIGURE TITLE

Topography

FIGURE NUMBER

Figure 6.1



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- Planning Application Boundary
- Study Area
- Core Paths
- Regional Parks
- Country Park
- Gardens and Designed Landscape
- Local Landscape Areas

NOTES

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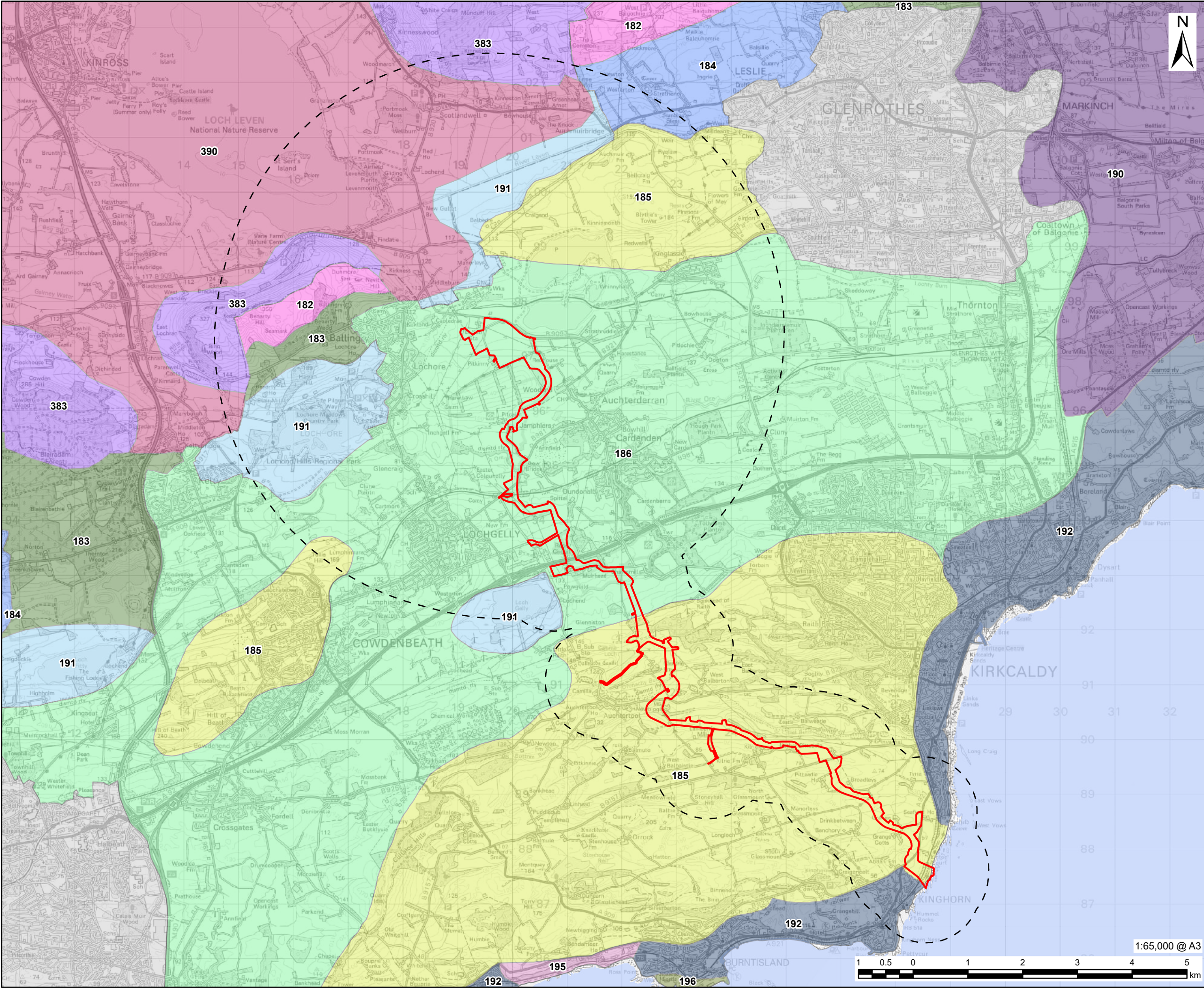
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FIGURE TITLE

Landscape Designations

FIGURE NUMBER

Figure 6.2



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LEGEND

Planning Application Boundary

Study Area

Landscape Character Type

- Urban
- 182 - Upland Hills
- 183 - Hill Slopes
- 184 - Foothills - Fife
- 185 - Pronounced Hills and Crags
- 186 - Lowland Hills and Valleys
- 190 - Lowland River Basins
- 191 - Lowland Loch Basins - Fife
- 192 - Coastal Hills - Fife
- 195 - Coastal Braes
- 196 - Coastal Flats - Fife
- 383 - Rugged Lowland Hills
- 390 - Lowland Basins

Coastal Character Type

- 5 - Developed Inner Firths

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FIGURE TITLE

Landscape Character Types and
Seascape Character Types

FIGURE NUMBER

Figure 6.3