Holm Hill Substation

Environmental Appraisal

Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual

November 25

Land & Planning

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6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) outlines the potential effects on identified landscape and visual receptors as a consequence of the Holm Hill Substation (hereby referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). Landscape and visual are separate although linked processes, describing closely related but distinct sets of effects.

6.1.2 Landscape effects are direct physical changes to the landscape caused by the Proposed Development, or indirect changes to landscape character and how the landscape is perceived at the Operational Phase, once the Proposed Development is constructed. Landscape impact appraisal considers these effects both in terms of the individual components of the landscape and on the structure, coherence and character of the landscape as a whole.

6.1.3 Visual effects are changes in the composition and character of views available in the area affected by the Proposed Development. Visual impact appraisal considers the response of the people who experience these effects, who may be living or working in the area, enjoying recreational activities, or simply passing through. The appraisal considers the overall consequence of the effects on the visual amenity - the pleasantness of the view or outlook – that the potential visual receptors, such as residents, public right of way and road users, enjoy.

6.2 Project Overview

6.2.1 As outlined within **Chapter 2: Proposed Development**, the Proposed Development infrastructure would comprise:

- a 132 Kilovolt (kV) substation platform (including a control building, earth switch, disconnectors, Capacitive Voltage Transformer (CVT), and four car parking spaces);
- Sealing End Compound;
- emergency back-up generator;
- ancillary works (lighting, Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), security fencing);
- a proposed access route and bellmouth junction to the A713 (**Figure 2.1: Proposed Development**);
- an area for landscape planting (**Figure 6.1: Landscape Planting Plan**);
- Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) including two ponds, two culverts and a soakaway; and
- stone access roads.

6.2.2 The Proposed Development would comprise a substation platform featuring earth switches, disconnectors, Capacitive Voltage Transformers (CVTs), associated plant, and ancillary systems, along with a Sealing End Compound, located approximately 85 metres (m) to the south-east of the proposed substation platform. The Proposed Development would also include two temporary contractor compounds, stone access roads, four car parking spaces, Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), and landscape planting.

6.2.3 The appraisal has been carried out by assuming the worst case of greatest visibility i.e. on a clear bright winter's day with no screening from deciduous foliage.

6.2.4 The appraisal of visual effects on residential receptors has been undertaken from publicly accessible locations only. Assumptions have therefore been made on the main outlooks and important views from properties.

6.2.5 Where The Site is referenced, this refers to the land within the Red Line Boundary (RLB) within which the Proposed Development would be constructed.

6.3 Relevant Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF 4) 2023[1]

6.3.1 The Scottish Government's Local Government issued the fourth iteration of the National Planning Framework in February 2023, which sets out the spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy for Scotland.

6.3.2 Policies contained under the Sustainable Places heading note the requirement to tackle issues resulting from the current climate change crisis, addressing the need for climate adaptive measures. Under the policy heading Energy, the NPF4 notes the intent to 'encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore.' This is further elaborated upon under Policy 11, which outlines the support for grid transmission and distribution infrastructure (a)(ii). It is noted that where potentially landscape and visual impacts associated with Proposed Developments are likely to occur, these are to be assessed against Policy 4 of the NPF 4, which address Natural Places and the protection of the environment and outlines the requirements for impact assessments where significant impacts may be experienced.

6.3.3 Specific to landscape and visual effects, Policy 11 (e) states that '*In addition, project design and mitigation will demonstrate how the following impacts are addressed:*

> ii. *significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/ or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable.'*

Local Planning Policy

6.3.4 The Dumfries and Galloway Council Local Development Plan[2] (LDP2) was adopted in October 2019 and supersedes the previously published LDP published in September 2014. There are a number of policies within the LDP2 which apply to this development which are summarised as follows:

- OP1: Development Considerations
- HE6: Gardens and Designed Landscapes
- NE2: Regional Scenic Areas
- NE7: Forestry and Woodland
- NE8: Trees and Development
- CF4: Access Routes
- IN2: Wind Energy

6.3.5 Policies that are considered to be of particular relevance to the Proposed Development have been set out below in full for ease of reference.

6.3.6 Policy NE2 Regional Scenic Areas states:

> *"The siting and design of development within a Regional Scenic Area (RSAs) should respect the special qualities of the area. Development within, or which affects Regional Scenic Areas, may be supported where the Council is satisfied that:*
>
> *the factors taken into account in designating the area would not be significantly adversely affected;*
>
> *or*
>
> *there is a specific need for the development at that location."*

[1] Scottish Government (2023) *National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)* Scottish Government

[2] Dumfries and Galloway Council. (2019). *Local Development Plan (LDP2)* Dumfries and Galloway Council.

6.3.7 Policy NE7 Forestry and Woodland states:

"The Council will support the creation and protection of sensitively designed and managed forests and woodlands.

Proposals should seek to ensure that ancient and semi-natural woodlands and other woodlands with high nature conservation value are protected and enhanced.

In determining its response to individual forestry felling, planting and replanting consultations where Forestry Commission Scotland are the determining authority, the Council will:

- *take into account environmental and other interests identified in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy including biodiversity, water (including flood risk management), soil and air, landscape setting, historic environment and land restoration;*
- *consider the scheme's location as set out in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy;*
- *seek to ensure an appropriate balance between both afforested and un-afforested areas in the locality;*
- *encourage planting of a type, scale, design, age, composition and species mix that is appropriate to the locality;*
- *actively encourage proposals to have a positive effect on nature conservation and/or natural and historic environment interest;*
- *encourage proposals to take account of possible recreational use in the design of any planting schemes and indicate how such recreational uses have been investigated; and*
- *ensure that proposals do not have an adverse impact on the road network."*

6.3.8 Policy NE8 Trees and Development states:

"In assessing development proposals, the Council will support proposals that:

- *promote additional tree planting;*
- *protect and enhance ancient woodland sites;*
- *maintain trees, woodlands (in particular ancient and semi-natural woodlands), and hedgerows (thereafter referred to as the 'woodland resource') and require developers to incorporate, wherever feasible, the existing woodland resource into their schemes;*
- *encourage planting of a type, scale, design, composition and species mix that is appropriate to its locality and appropriately incorporates the woodland resource into the overall design of the scheme;*

  and

- *show how existing trees will be appropriately protected during the construction period.*

In submitting development proposals, details should be provided of the arrangements to be made for the long-term maintenance of both the existing woodland resource and any proposed new planting, including providing adequate room for further growth.

If it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that it is not possible to retain the woodland resource, then an appropriate replacement planting scheme will be required to be agreed by the Council. Any such replacement planting scheme should normally be located within The Site.

The processes and recommendations contained in BS 5837:2012, and any subsequent revised or amended document, should be taken into account in designing and implementing development proposals.

Where the works to a protected tree or trees forms part of a development proposal, the applicant should also demonstrate that:

- *the benefits of the development, including any replacement planting, will outweigh the loss of or potential harm caused by the works to the tree or trees; and*
- *the development has been designed and located in order to minimise potential adverse impacts on the protected tree or trees.*

Supplementary guidance provides further advice and guidance in respect of survey work, designing around trees, new planting, protection during construction, maintenance and removing existing trees."

6.3.9 In addition to the LDP2, a number of additional supplementary guidance documents have been identified as likely to be of relevance to the Proposed Development. These guidance documents are listed below:

- Trees and Development - Supplementary Guidance (February 2020).

6.3.10 The Dumfries and Galloway Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2014 (Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2014), which was submitted to support the previous LDP 2014, is currently under the process of review before it is able to be readopted in light of the new LDP.

6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 Consultation has been undertaken as part of the consideration of the emerging proposal. Pre-application consultation for the Holm Hill Substation was undertaken during August - September 2024, with a second consultation event conducted on the 13 November 2024. A complete list of consultees and information regarding the pre-application consultation is provided within the **Pre-Application Consultation Report.**

6.4.2 **Table 6.1** provides a summary of consultation responses in relation to landscape and visual.

Table 6.1 Consultation Summary

Topic	Nature of comments received (including no. of comments each)	Total no. of comments	SPT response
Visual	Request for visualisations (5 comments) Concern about visual impact (4 comments) Suggestion for landscaping to reduce visual impact (4 comments) Concern about light pollution (4 comments)	17	Following the first consultation event, SPT created a set of visualisations to provide an indicative view of what the proposed substation could look like when operational. SPT also developed a proposed landscape scheme including additional planting around The Site to help reduce the visibility of the proposed substation from the road and surrounding area. These were presented at the second consultation event. Lighting shall be required during construction hours, particularly in winter months. Measures to control lighting would be included in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), including keeping lighting at a low level and directional, pointing to The Site. Only in the case of an emergency would lighting be required outside of working hours. Usual construction hours are 8:00 – 17:00. These measures are outlined in the submitted Outline CEMP and would be further developed in the Detailed CEMP, which the Principal Contractor would prepare following consent of the Proposed Development.

6.5 Assessment Methodology

Scope of the Assessment

6.5.1 The scope of the assessment has been established through the design development of the Proposed Development. Further information with regard to the assessment methodology and Study Area is outlined within the report below.

The Study Area

6.5.2 Following a desktop review of the Proposed Development's RLB, including basemap data and Google Viewshed information, the initial Study Area for landscape and visual effects has been set at 5 km from the RLB to account for likely visibility, as shown in **Figure 6.2**: **Landscape Character and Designations.**

Method of Baseline Data Collation

6.5.3 Baseline information has been gathered through desk study research and Site surveys.

6.5.4 Along with planning policy documents and evidence-based studies and reports, relevant publications that have been taken into consideration include:

- Guidelines for Landscape Character Assessment[3];
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance (Methodology)[4];
- Dumfries and Galloway Landscape Character Assessment[5]; and
- Online mapping including Ordnance Survey maps, GIS data, Google Earth Pro and Google Street View.

6.5.5 A Site visit in relation to this landscape and visual appraisal was carried out in September 2024. Conditions during the visit varied between moderate to good levels of visibility. The Site visit was undertaken to corroborate the desk-based study and to capture photography from selected representative viewpoints.

Assessment Methodology

6.5.6 This landscape and visual appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) 3rd edition[6].

6.5.7 In accordance with GLVIA3, the level of effect will be assessed based on the sensitivity of the affected receptor and the magnitude of change. Assigning values for sensitivity and magnitude for this topic has used the methodology as outlined within **Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology**. For the purposes of this appraisal all effects are anticipated to be of an adverse nature unless otherwise expressly stated.

6.5.8 The landscape and visual appraisal have included:

- an illustrated statement on the impact of the Proposed Development on the landscape character and value of the area. The statement will include a description of the methodology used to assess character and the criteria to determine value; and

[3] The Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage . (2002). Landscape Character Assessment - Guidance for England and Scotland .

[4] NatureScot. (Accessed 2024). Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance (Methodology). Retrieved from NatureScot: https://www.nature.scot/doc/landscape-sensitivity-assessment-guidance-methodology

[5] Dumfries and Galloway Council. (2014). Local Development Plan - Dumfries and Galloway Forestry and Woodland Strategy. Dumfries and Galloway Council

[6] Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA now ISEP). (2013). *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (GLVIA)3rd Addition.*

- an illustrated description of the visual impact of the Proposed Development on properties and locations that have public access.

6.5.9 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) will consider effects on landscape and visual receptors within the Study Area during Construction and Operational Phases.

6.6 Baseline Conditions

6.6.1 This section sets out the current landscape and visual conditions of The Site and the Study Area. The baseline study assists in identifying the important landscape components and key characteristics.

6.6.2 The baseline study establishes the scope of the assessment and the key landscape and visual receptors, which would be potentially affected by the Proposed Development.

6.6.3 Refer to **Chapter 1: Introduction** for an explanation of the term Site.

Landscape Designations

6.6.4 The following text refers to designations that affect the landscape character of the Proposed Development and its wider setting. Designations associated with the Proposed Development are shown in **Figure 6.2: Landscape Character and Designations**.

6.6.5 Features beyond the 5 km Study Area are considered unlikely to be impacted as a result of the Proposed Development and, as such, have not been included for further assessment. There are no international or national landscape designations within 5 km of the Proposed Development. However, there are two regional designations.

6.6.6 Regional designations identified within the 5 km Study Area are noted below:

- The Proposed Development is located within the Galloway Hills Regional Scenic Area (RSA).
- The Site is located, at its nearest point, approximately 4.5 km from the Ayrshire Sensitive Landscape Area, which lies to the west of the Proposed Development. It is therefore unlikely that the Proposed Development would have any material effect on the reasons for designation, and as such is not considered further in this appraisal.

Landscape Character

6.6.7 The main source for the landscape character baseline to inform judgements within the Study Area are NatureScot's digital map-based national Landscape Character Types (LCTs)[7].

6.6.8 There are three LCTs within the Study Area:

- Upper Dale (the broad valley of the Glenkens, Upper Glenkens, LCT 165);
- Southern Uplands (the open hillsides above the valleys, LCT 177); and
- Southern Uplands with Forest (the lower slopes of Brockloch Craig, Carsphairn, LCT 178).

[7] NatureScot. (Published 2019). *Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland.* Retrieved from www.nature.scot: https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/landscape-character-assessment-scotland

Visual receptors

6.6.9 Visual receptors are "*the different groups of people who may experience views of the development*" (GLVIA3, para 6.3). Whilst it is the people living, working, passing through or enjoying recreational activities in the area who actually see the view and enjoy the visual amenity, it is the places they may occupy that are mapped and described as the 'receptors' of the views. In order to identify those receptors who may be affected, baseline desk study, field-based observations and consultation with stakeholders have been carried out. Based on a review of this information, the following visual receptors that could potentially be affected as a result of the Proposed Development are listed below.

6.6.10 Visual receptors within 5 km of the Proposed Development, which could potentially be affected by the Proposed Development, include:

- Residents of Brockloch Tower;
- Residents at Brockloch Farm and Brockloch Cottage; and
- Users of the A713 (Galloway Tourist Route).

6.6.11 Viewpoint locations are identified on **Plate 6.1** below.

6.6.12 Other potential receptors were scoped out of the appraisal due to intervening landform, vegetation, built form and/or appreciable distance from The Site.

Baseline description and visibility of Site

Residents at Brockloch Tower

6.6.13 The landscape at this point is predominantly characterised by the undulating landform associated with the valleys of Carsphairn Lane to the south and the Water of Deugh to the north and east, as it curves around Holm Hill. These valleys give rise to a varied topography with predominantly open moorland characterising the landscape towards Cairnsmore of Carsphairn to the north, before transitioning towards plantation woodland further westwards towards the rising land at Dodd Hill and Knockengorroch.

Residents at Brockloch Farm and Brockloch Cottage

6.6.14 The landscape is rural and characterised by coniferous plantations. Views from Brockloch Farm are predominantly open with views directed southwards across the valley of Carsphairn Lane. Views of the surrounding landscape from Brockloch Cottage are imperceptible as a result of enclosing coniferous woodland associated with Carsphairn Forest, predominantly concentrated to the west of the cottage.

Road Users of Galloway Tourist Route (A713)

6.6.15 The landscape is predominantly rural in character, with elevated landform to the north and the open valley to the south directing views southwards towards the Glenkens where the landscape opens up. The A713 road corridor forms a primary infrastructure route throughout this landscape, forming part of the Dumfries and Galloway National Tourist Route extending from Gretna to Ayr.

6.6.16 Existing electricity pylons run parallel to the road corridor within this section of the landscape, introducing an industrial influence within the predominantly more rural landscape.

Representative Viewpoints

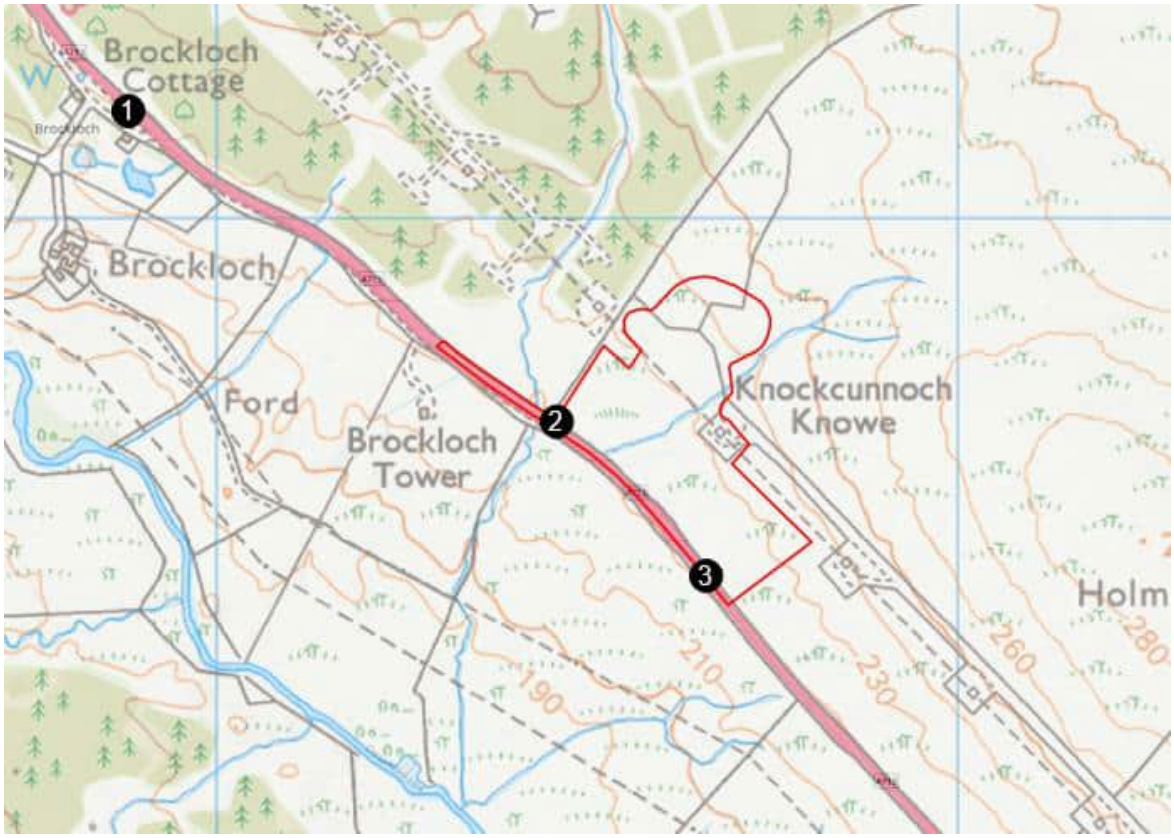
6.6.17 In line with guidance (GLVIA3) representative viewpoints have been identified to inform the assessment. The representative viewpoints are used as 'samples' on which to base judgments of landscape and visual effects. In general, the representative viewpoints have been selected in locations where effects would be anticipated; though some may be selected outside of that zone – either to demonstrate the reduction of effects with distance; or to specifically ensure the representation of a particularly sensitive receptor.

6.6.18 Representative viewpoint locations identified for this assessment are listed below and shown on **Plate 6.1**. Photographs from each of the viewpoints are provided in **Appendix 6.2 Illustrative Visualisations.**

1. View from the track adjacent to Brockloch Cottage;
2. View from the A713 near Brockloch Tower; and

3. View from A713 looking north-west.

Plate 6.1 Representative Viewpoint Locations



6.7 Mitigation

6.7.1 This section describes the various mitigation proposals associated with the Proposed Development, which aim to avoid or minimise adverse landscape and visual effects on the surrounding area, through the adoption of an integrated approach to the siting, layout and design of the Proposed Development. It outlines the various mitigation measures included within the design proposal, as well as those related to the operation of the Proposed Development.

Embedded mitigation

6.7.2 The Proposed Development was determined in consideration of environmental, technical, and economic factors following consultation. The location of the Proposed Development has sought to reduce potential visual effects by positioning it at the lower western slope of Holm Hill. Whilst it is noted that the location is within proximity of residential properties, the Proposed Development would be viewed against a backcloth of existing landform and commercial and establishing forestry the lies to the north and west, limiting its visual impact.

Secondary mitigation

6.7.3 In order to reduce potential visual effects of the Proposed Development, an area of planting is proposed at the lower levels of Holm Hill, in-between the A713 and the Proposed Development. The planting would serve to obscure the proposed structures and mitigate the impact on scenic views by using locally appropriate species to blend with the existing landscape. The planting comprises large swathes of native woodland species with trees scattered throughout. This planting style creates a varied ground layer that in turn, forms a strong visual barrier. The 'understorey' shrub planting includes species such as Holly, Hazel and Wild Privet, and the interspersing trees include species such as Alder, Birch and Wild Cherry. Illustrative photomontages of the proposed planting are provided in **Appendix 6.2: Illustrative Visualisations.**

6.8 Appraisal of Landscape Effects

Susceptibility, Value and Sensitivity

Galloway Hills Regional Scenic Area (RSA)

6.8.1 The landscape within the Galloway Hills RSA is characterised by a diverse combination of rugged uplands, valleys, and coastal features, all centred around the Galloway Hills, in central Galloway. The landscape is predominantly open, particularly within the uplands and coastal areas. The valleys and forested regions feature intimate landscapes that are enclosed by extensive areas of commercial woodland. Across the RSA, areas of settlement are limited and largely disconnected. The central area of the RSA is largely uninhabited, and accessible only by forestry roads or footpaths. The overall susceptibility of Galloway Hills RSA is recorded as **medium.**

6.8.2 The RSA is rural and largely free of detracting features, although it continues to attract interest from Wind Farm developers. Open areas are limited to upper levels, and the scale of the landscape is difficult to gauge. The overall value of the landscape is therefore recorded as **medium.**

6.8.3 Based on the susceptibility and value, the Sensitivity of this receptor is considered to be **medium**.

LCT 165: Upper Dale (host LCT)

6.8.4 The landscape within this LCT is broadly characterised by the trough-like valley associated with the Water of Ken that runs north to south from the rising land towards Lorg and Altry Hill that lie just beyond the boundaries of this character area, extending into LCT178 to the north and east. This character area is well enclosed within the landscape with wooded slopes comprised of a mixture of native deciduous and commercial forestry defining the lower valley slopes, creating an intimate landscape towards the valley floor. At the base of the valley, the Water of Ken weaves through open pasture, traversed by a number of arched stone bridges along Lorg Road, which forms the primary access route throughout the LCT, connecting to a number of isolated settlements that sit within the valley. The overall susceptibility of this LCT is therefore recorded as **medium**.

6.8.5 The LCT is an undesignated landscape. The LCT is predominantly rural in character with few detracting features, representing an enclosed and intimate landscape. The overall value of the landscape is therefore recorded as **medium**.

6.8.6 Based on the susceptibility and value, the Sensitivity of this receptor is considered to be **medium**.

LCT 177: Southern Uplands

6.8.7 The Southern Uplands LCT is broadly characterised by the undulating landscape associated with Cairnsmore of Carsphairn and the surrounding hills and valleys. Woodland is sparse throughout the LCT, limited to small woodland parcels towards Markbrack and Knockgrey to the south, however, with some larger plantation woodland evident to the north around the base of Moorbrock Hill. The remainder of the landscape is principally characterised by moorland. This is an expansive landscape with dramatic hills and valleys associated with the numerous burns and watercourses that travel southwards from the higher ground to the north. The susceptibility of this landscape is recorded as **medium**.

6.8.8 The majority of this LCT is located within the Dumfries and Galloway RSA, with the southern section denoting the scenic quality of the landscape. The LCT contains few detracting features with an open character, allowing for expansive views. The overall value of the landscape is therefore recorded as **high**.

6.8.9 Based on the susceptibility and value, the Sensitivity of this receptor is considered to be **high**.

LCT 178: Southern Uplands with Forest

6.8.10 The Southern Uplands with Forest LCT is principally characterised by undulating landform intersected by a number of tough-like valleys. Commercial forestry is a key characteristic of this LCT, with plantation woodland evident throughout the landscape, predominantly situated towards the lower valley slopes with the upland areas opening out to exposed moorland. The LCT is sparsely populated, set largely away from settlements and road corridors. Due the presence of extensive commercial forestry across this LCT the landscape is changeable in character, with the cyclical nature of forestry works altering parts of the landscape. The susceptibility of this landscape is therefore recorded as **low**.

6.8.11 This LCT is not located within any local or regional designations. The are few detracting features within the landscape, albeit with Wind Farms present within the south-eastern corner of the LCT, detracting from the more scenic quality to some degree. Commercial forestry also forms a key characteristic feature within this landscape, introducing a more managed character to the landscape. The overall value of the landscape is therefore recorded as **low**.

6.8.12 Based on the susceptibility and value, the Sensitivity of this receptor is considered to be **low**.

Effects during Construction

Galloway Hills Regional Scenic Area (RSA)

6.8.13 Construction activities associated with the Proposed Development would be located within the northernmost part of the Galloway Hills RSA. The construction phase would involve vehicle movement along the A713, and the introduction of industrial features into a predominantly rural landscape. The Proposed Development and associated construction activities are located within the Glenkens and would be contained by surrounding upper elevations, particularly from the south-west by the Rhinns of Kells hill range. The degree of change resulting from the Proposed Development would be highly localised, and the scale of change is therefore recorded as **negligible**. Construction activity would occupy a small area within the overall RSA and therefore the geographical extent of change is recorded as **negligible**. The construction phase is considered to be short term, and the duration of change is therefore assessed as **low**. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be **negligible**.

6.8.14 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be **negligible**.

LCT 165: Upper Dale (host LCT)

6.8.15 Construction activities associated with the Proposed Development would occupy a small area at the north-eastern border of LCT 165. Construction activity would involve the delivery of materials and components to The Site via the A713. This road is the primary transport corridor within LCT 165 and therefore an increase in vehicle movement is anticipated to result in a degree of change within the landscape. Effects on the wider landscape would be limited to the base of Holm Hill and contained by commercial forestry to the north-west and upper elevations to the east. The degree of change resulting from the Proposed Development would be largely localised, and the scale of change is therefore recorded as **low**. Construction activity would occupy a small area within the overall LCT and therefore the geographical extent of change is recorded as **negligible**. The construction phase of the Proposed Development is considered to be short term, and the duration of change is therefore assessed as **low**. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be **low**.

6.8.16 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be **minor**.

LCT 177: Southern Uplands

6.8.17 The Proposed Development is not located within LCT 177. Construction activities would be contained by surrounding elevations associated with Cairnsmore of Carsphairn, which defines the western edge of the LCT. The scale of change resulting from the Proposed Development is therefore recorded as **negligible**. Associated construction activities would take place approximately 180 m to the south-west of LCT 177 and would therefore not directly impact the landscape elements within the area. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as **negligible**. The construction phase is considered to be short term, and the duration of change is therefore assessed as **low**. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be **negligible**.

6.8.18 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be **negligible**.

LCT 178: Southern Uplands with Forest

6.8.19 The Proposed Development and associated construction activities are not located within LCT 178. They would, however be located immediately adjacent to the south-western boundary of the LCT. Construction activities would be contained from the north by Carsphairn Forest, which characterises the landscape and extends across much of LCT 178. The scale of change resulting from the Proposed Development is therefore recorded as **negligible**. Associated construction activities would not directly impact the landscape elements of LCT 178. Potential impacts on the perceptual quality of the surrounding landscape, as a result of construction activity, would be contained by extensive woodland to the north. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as **negligible**. The construction phase is considered to be short term, and the duration of change is therefore assessed as **low**. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be **negligible**.

6.8.20 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be **negligible**.

Likely Effects during Operation

Galloway Hills Regional Scenic Area (RSA)

6.8.21 At the Operational Phase, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development would have further integrated into the landscape setting and as such, changes to the landscape would appear reduced. This is because the Operational Phase is confined to the Proposed Development, which is sufficiently contained by the surrounding landscape. Proposed mitigation planting as shown in **Figure. 6.1: Landscape Planting Plan**, would further serve to contain the Proposed Development with the use of locally native species that would integrate into the existing landscape. Effects at the Operational Phase are therefore considered to be **negligible** and, as such, no further assessment of this receptor has been undertaken.

LCT 165: Upper Dale (host LCT)

6.8.22 At the Operational Phase, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development would result in a degree of change due to the introduction of industrial features within a rural landscape. The degree of change is determined to be localised due to the position of the Proposed Development, which serves to contain effects on the wider LCT. This is due to The Site's location beyond existing vegetation and between the valley and lower elevations of Cairnsmore of Carsphairn. The Proposed Development would be further contained by the proposed mitigation planting located between the A713 and the Proposed Development. Changes to the landscape are therefore not anticipated to detract from the open character or the scenic quality of LCT 165. The scale of change is therefore assessed as **negligible**. Effects resulting from the Proposed Development are anticipated to remain localised; therefore, the majority of LCT 165 would remain unchanged. The geographical extent of change is therefore considered to be **negligible**. The operational stage comprises the life of the Proposed Development and is therefore assessed as long term. The magnitude of the effect is assessed to be **negligible**.

6.8.23 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be **negligible**.

LCT 177: Southern Uplands

6.8.24 At the Operational Phase, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development would have further integrated into the landscape setting, and as such, changes to the landscape would appear reduced. This is because the Operational Phase is confined to The Site, which is sufficiently contained by the surrounding landscape. Proposed mitigation planting would further serve to contain the development. Effects at the Operational Phase are therefore considered to remain negligible, and as such, no further assessment of this LCT has been undertaken.

LCT 178: Southern Uplands with Forest

6.8.25 At the Operational Phase, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development would have further integrated into the landscape setting, and as such, changes to the landscape would appear reduced. This is because the Operational Phase is confined to the Proposed Development, which is sufficiently contained by the surrounding landscape. Proposed mitigation planting would further integrate the development into the wider landscape. Effects at the Operational Phase are therefore considered to remain **negligible,** and as such, no further assessment of this LCT has been undertaken.

6.9 Appraisal of Visual Effects

Susceptibility, Value and Sensitivity

Residents at Brockloch Tower

6.9.1 Receptors include residents of Brockloch Tower who are likely to have an appreciation for the surrounding landscape and are generally regarded as highly susceptible to change. The susceptibility of this receptor is therefore recorded as **high.** The landscape at this point lies within the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Scenic Area and is intersected by the A713 road corridor, which forms a part of the National Tourist route that runs from Gretna to Ayr. The value of the view is therefore recorded as **high.**

6.9.2 Based on the susceptibility and value, the Sensitivity of this receptor is considered to be **high.**

Residents at Brockloch Farm and Brockloch Cottage

6.9.3 Receptors include residents of Brockloch Farm and Brockloch Cottage who are likely to have an appreciation for the surrounding landscape and are generally regarded as highly susceptible to change. The susceptibility of this receptor is therefore recorded as **high.** The landscape at this point lies within the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Scenic Area and is intersected by the A713 road corridor, which forms a part of the National Tourist route that runs from Gretna to Ayr. The value of the view is therefore recorded as **high.**

6.9.4 Based on the susceptibility and value, the Sensitivity of this receptor is considered to be **high.**

Road Users of Galloway Tourist Route (A713)

6.9.5 Most road users of the A713 are likely to be travelling along the route and are focused on the road ahead, with limited appreciation for views towards the wider landscape. However, this road is a part of the Galloway Tourist Route and so is also used by those seeking to enjoy the view. The susceptibility of this receptor is therefore recorded as **medium**. The landscape at this point lies within the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Scenic Area and is intersected by the A713 road corridor, which is a part of the Dumfries and Galloway National Tourist route that runs from Gretna to Ayr. The value of the view is therefore recorded as **high.**

6.9.6 Based on the susceptibility and value, the Sensitivity of this receptor is considered to be **high.**

Effects during Construction

Residents at Brockloch Tower

6.9.7 For residential receptors at Brockloch Tower, construction activity associated with the Proposed Development would be partially visible. Available views of construction activity would be limited to the A713, where associated plant would travel towards the Proposed Development Site, increasing movement within the area, alongside the proposed bellmouth junction and access route into the Proposed Development. Construction activity would be carried out beyond the northern edge of the A713, beyond an area of intervening deciduous woodland that lies to the west of the access track beyond The Site boundary, limiting views towards the Proposed Development. Views towards The Site would be backclothed by Holm Hill and therefore construction elements would not form the tallest structures within views. The combination of intervening vegetation and construction activity that is set back into the hill serves to contain views of The Site. The scale of change is therefore recorded as **medium**. Views of construction activity travelling along the A713 and at the Proposed Development are likely to be limited to a degree from residential receptors at Brockloch Tower. This is due to the orientation of the property, which directs open views southwards across the valley. Although construction activity at The Site would largely be contained by intervening vegetation, receptors at Brockloch Tower are likely to experience views of associated plant travelling along the A713 and towards the proposed bellmouth junction. The geographical extent of the view is therefore recorded as **medium**. The operational stage comprises the life of the project and therefore the duration is long term. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be **medium**.

6.9.8 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be Moderate for the duration of construction.

Residents at Brockloch Farm and Brockloch Cottage

6.9.9 Construction works associated with the Proposed Development are not anticipated to be perceptible within views experienced by residential receptors at Brockloch Farm or Brockloch Cottage. Views towards The Site from Brockloch Farm, and subsequent views of local construction activity, would be intervened by a belt of coniferous woodland that runs parallel with and to the north of the A713. Furthermore, views of associated plant travelling along the A713 would be interrupted by upward sloping topography and existing shrubs along the southern periphery of the road. Views of the immediate surrounding landscape from Brockloch Cottage are contained in every direction by coniferous forestry. Although Brockloch Cottage is situated in proximity to the A713, it is set back from the road and views to the north are intervened by a belt of large deciduous shrubs and coniferous trees. An access track runs parallel to the road on the south side, providing entrance to the cottage. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as **low**. The operational stage comprises the life of the project and therefore the duration is long term. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be **low**.

6.9.10 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be **minor** during construction.

Road Users of Galloway Tourist Route (A713)

6.9.11 Plant travelling on the A713 towards The Site is anticipated to be visible within the views experienced by receptors travelling along the route. Views of construction activity at The Site are expected to become available through gaps in vegetation along the northern periphery of the A713. However, any views of construction activity would be transient and experienced against existing overhead lines that traverse the mid elevations of Holm Hill, in a south-eastern direction. The scale of change is therefore recorded as **medium**. Although views of plant travelling along the A713 would be experienced by receptors, construction activities at The Site would be located perpendicular to the route, and views are therefore limited to a small portion of the view. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as **low**. The operational stage comprises the life of the Proposed Development and therefore the duration is long term. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be **low**.

6.9.12 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be Moderate to **minor** during construction.

Effects during Operation

Residents at Brockloch Tower

6.9.13 During the Operational Phase construction activity would have ceased, and the construction compounds would have been removed. The Proposed Development is anticipated to be barely perceptible within views experienced by this receptor, as a result of intervening vegetation. On completion of the Proposed Development the proposed mitigation planting would not yet be established, and therefore the development would be available within views experienced by the receptor. However, by Year 5 it is anticipated that the planting would be established sufficiently to screen most of the Proposed Development (Refer to **Appendix 6.2**). By Year 15 views of the Proposed Development would be fully screened. Furthermore, any views of the Proposed Development would be experienced in conjunction with existing overhead lines beyond The Site. The scale of change is therefore recorded as **low**. The Proposed Development would be set back from the A713 and would represent a minor component within views towards the north-east, filtered by intervening vegetation and backclothed by Holm Hill. The geographical extent of the view is therefore recorded as **low**. The Operational Phase comprises the life of the project and therefore the duration is long term. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be **low**.

6.9.14 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be Moderate during operation.

Residents at Brockloch Farm and Brockloch Cottage

6.9.15 During the Operational Phase, construction activity would have ceased, and the construction compounds would have been removed. The Proposed Development is not anticipated to be perceptible within views experienced by these receptors. This is due to a combination of upward sloping topography towards The Site and intervening coniferous woodland that extends parallel to the A713, fully screening views from both properties. The development would be further contained by proposed mitigation planting between The Site and A713. The scale of change is therefore recorded as **negligible**. The Proposed Development would not be visible within views experienced by the receptor, therefore, the geographical extent of change is recorded as **negligible**. The operational stage comprises the life of the Proposed Development and therefore the duration is long-term. The magnitude of the effect is assessed to be **negligible**.

6.9.16 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be **negligible** during operation.

Road Users of Galloway Tourist Route (A713)

6.9.17 During the Operational Phase, construction activity would have ceased. The Proposed Development would be set back from the A713 and contained in both directions by the surrounding landscape. Receptors travelling north-west are not anticipated to experience views of the Proposed Development. This is due to The Site's position within the hillside that is further contained by the surrounding topographic enclosure. On completion of the development, the proposed mitigation planting would not yet be established and therefore the Proposed Development would be available within the views experienced by receptors travelling along the A713. By Year 5, the planting would be established sufficiently to screen most of the Proposed Development (Refer to **Appendix 6.2 Illustrative Visualisations**). By Year 15, views of the Proposed Development are anticipated to be fully screened. Receptors travelling south-east are more likely to experience views of the Proposed Development as a result of lower elevations, which provide more open views across the area. However, any views of the Proposed Development would be glimpsed due to intermittent intervening vegetation along the A713. The scale of change is therefore recorded as **low**. The Proposed Development would form the background of views experienced by the receptor, and any visibility from the A713 would be limited to a short stretch within the immediate locality of the Proposed Development. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as **low**. The operational stage comprises the life of the project and therefore the duration is long term. The magnitude of effect is assessed to be **low**.

6.9.18 Based on the combination of sensitivity and magnitude, the overall effect of the Proposed Development on this receptor is assessed to be **minor** during operation.

6.10 Summary and Conclusions

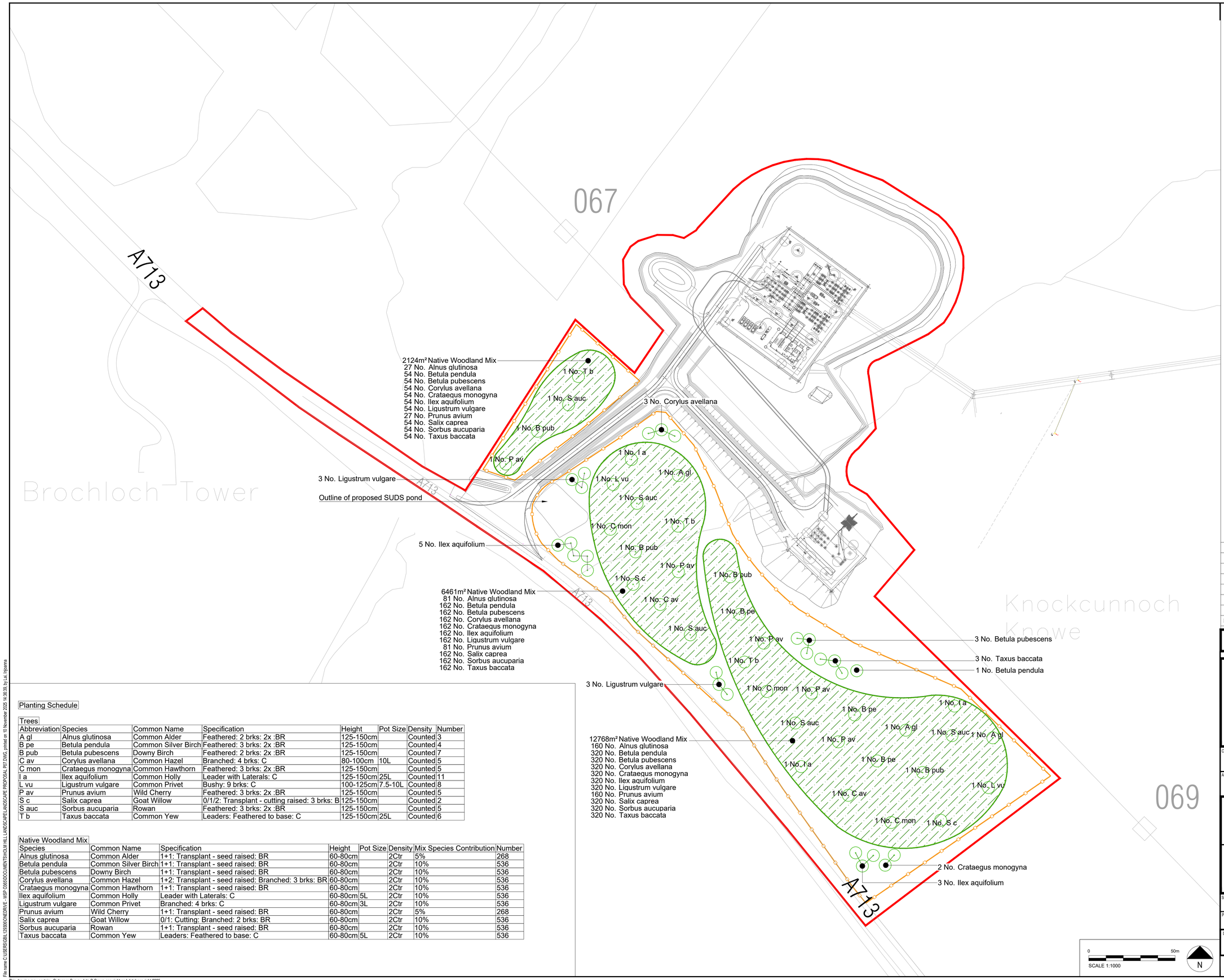
6.10.1 During the Construction Phase, the Proposed Development is anticipated to result in **minor** effects on LCT 165: Upper Dale (host LCT), due to proximity to the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is anticipated to result in **negligible** effects on receptors, including the Galloway Hills Regional Scenic Area (RSA), LCT 177: Southern Uplands and LCT 178: Southern Uplands with Forest.

6.10.2 During the Operational Phase, effects of the Proposed Development are anticipated to remain at **minor** on LCT 165: Upper Dale (the host Landscape Character Type). Due to the spatial extent of the other receptors, any effects introduced by the Proposed Development would be visually absorbed within the existing landscape character, and therefore the receptors were not assessed further.

6.10.3 In terms of the visual assessment, the Proposed Development would result in Moderate effects during the Construction Phase on residents at Brockloch Tower. Residents at Brockloch Farm and Brockloch Cottages, and road users of Galloway Tourist Route (A713), are anticipated to experience **minor** effects as a result of the Proposed Development.

6.10.4 During the Operational Phase the effects on residents at Brockloch Tower would remain at Moderate, and effects on users of the Galloway Tourist Route would remain at **minor**. Effects resulting from the Proposed Development on residents at Brockloch Farm and Brockloch Cottage would be reduced to **negligible**.

DO NOT SCALE



Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Proposed Deer Fencing
- Proposed Native Woodland Planting
- Proposed Feathered Tree

Areas to be planted in species drifts of 5,7 and 11.

Smaller species to be planted at the perimeter of the areas. Species including (ultimate height):

- Corylus avellana (12m)
- Crataegus monogyna (15m)
- Salix caprea (10m)
- Sorbus aucuparia (15m)
- Ilex aquifolium (15m)
- Ligustrum vulgare (4m)

Taller species to be planted toward the centre. Species including (ultimate height):

- Alnus glutinosa (28m)
- Betula pendula (30m)
- Betula pubescens (30m)
- Prunus avium (30m)
- Taxus baccata (20m)

Riparian planting (e.g. Alnus glutinosa, Betula pubescens, Betula pendula, Salix caprea) to be provided adjacent to watercourses to assist in strengthening the bank, reducing the risk of bank erosion and providing habitats for different native species.

Planting to be protected by biodegradable tree shelters.

Planting Schedule

Trees

Abbreviation	Species	Common Name	Specification	Height	Pot Size	Density	Number
A gl	Alnus glutinosa	Common Alder	Feathered: 2 brks: 2x :BR	125-150cm		Counted	3
B pe	Betula pendula	Common Silver Birch	Feathered: 3 brks: 2x :BR	125-150cm		Counted	4
B pub	Betula pubescens	Downy Birch	Feathered: 2 brks: 2x :BR	125-150cm		Counted	7
C av	Corylus avellana	Common Hazel	Branched: 4 brks: C	80-100cm	10L	Counted	5
C mon	Crataegus monogyna	Common Hawthorn	Feathered: 3 brks: 2x :BR	125-150cm		Counted	5
I a	Ilex aquifolium	Common Holly	Leader with Laterals: C	125-150cm	25L	Counted	11
L vu	Ligustrum vulgare	Common Privet	Bushy: 9 brks: C	100-125cm	7.5-10L	Counted	8
P av	Prunus avium	Wild Cherry	Feathered: 3 brks: 2x :BR	125-150cm		Counted	5
S c	Salix caprea	Goat Willow	0/1/2: Transplant - cutting raised: 3 brks: B	125-150cm		Counted	2
S auc	Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	Feathered: 3 brks: 2x :BR	125-150cm		Counted	5
T b	Taxus baccata	Common Yew	Leaders: Feathered to base: C	125-150cm	25L	Counted	6

Native Woodland Mix

Species	Common Name	Specification	Height	Pot Size	Density	Mix Species Contribution	Number
Alnus glutinosa	Common Alder	1+1: Transplant - seed raised: BR	60-80cm		2Ctr	5%	268
Betula pendula	Common Silver Birch	1+1: Transplant - seed raised: BR	60-80cm		2Ctr	10%	536
Betula pubescens	Downy Birch	1+1: Transplant - seed raised: BR	60-80cm		2Ctr	10%	536
Corylus avellana	Common Hazel	1+2: Transplant - seed raised: Branched: 3 brks: BR	60-80cm		2Ctr	10%	536
Crataegus monogyna	Common Hawthorn	1+1: Transplant - seed raised: BR	60-80cm		2Ctr	10%	536
Ilex aquifolium	Common Holly	Leader with Laterals: C	60-80cm	5L	2Ctr	10%	536
Ligustrum vulgare	Common Privet	Branched: 4 brks: C	60-80cm	3L	2Ctr	10%	536
Prunus avium	Wild Cherry	1+1: Transplant - seed raised: BR	60-80cm		2Ctr	5%	268
Salix caprea	Goat Willow	0/1: Cutting: Branched: 2 brks: BR	60-80cm		2Ctr	10%	536
Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	1+1: Transplant - seed raised: BR	60-80cm		2Ctr	10%	536
Taxus baccata	Common Yew	Leaders: Feathered to base: C	60-80cm	5L	2Ctr	10%	536

REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APP
P07	10/11/25	IL	Updates to RLB, substation & Planting	SL	
P06	02/04/25	IL	Sixth Issue - updates to planting & RLB	NS	RS
P05	25/11/24	CL	Fifth Issue	NS	RS
P04	11/11/24	CL	Forth Issue - updates to planting	NS	RS
P03	23/10/24	IL	Third Issue - notes added	NS	RS
P02	03/10/24	IL	Second Issue	NS	RS
P01	27/09/24	IL	First Issue	NS	RS

DRAWING STATUS: S2 - FOR INFORMATION

wsp
7 Lochside View, Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh, EH12 9DH, UK
T+ 44 (0) 131 344 2300, F+ 44 (0) 131 344 2301
wsp.com

CLIENT: SP Energy Networks

ARCHITECT:

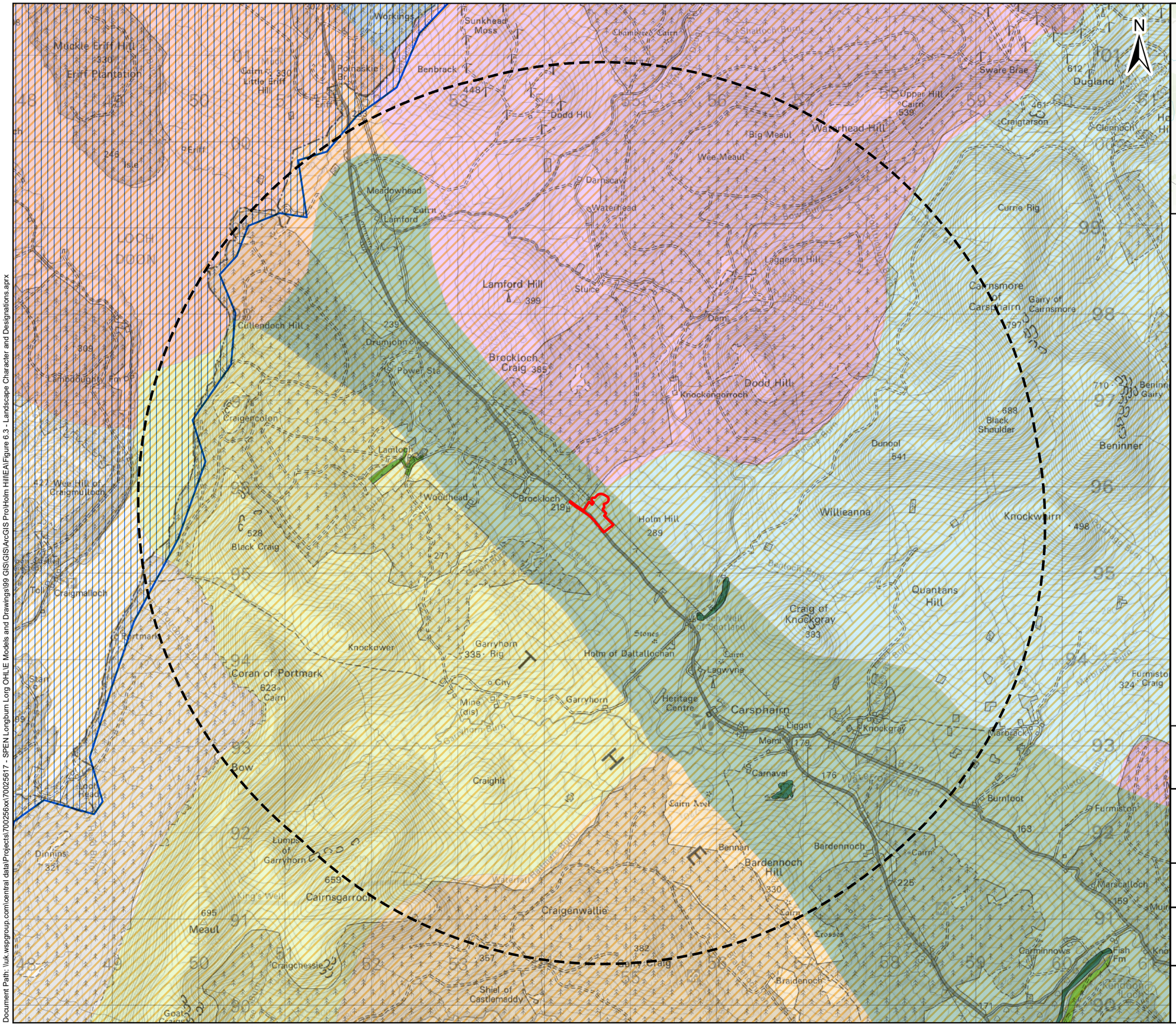
SITE/PROJECT: Holm Hill Substation

TITLE: Landscape Planting Plan

SCALE @ A1:	CHECKED:	APPROVED:
1:1000	NS	RS

PROJECT NO:	DESIGNED:	DRAWN:	DATE:
70025617	IL	IL	27/09/2024

DRAWING No: 70025617-WSP-XX-XX-DR-L-0001 REV: P07



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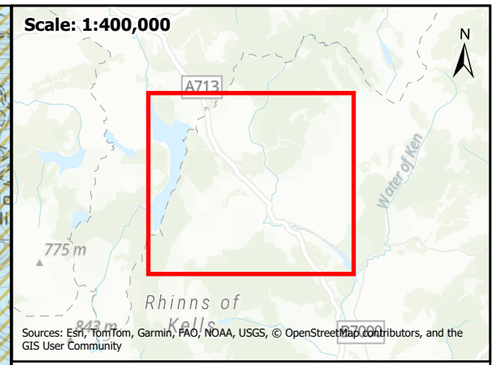


Key

- Holm Hill Red Line Boundary
- 5km Buffer

Designations

- Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve
- Ayrshire Sensitive Landscape Area
- Ancient (of semi-natural origin)
- Long-Established (of plantation origin)
- Other (on Roy map)

Landscape Character Area

- Foothills - Ayrshire
- Foothills - Dumfries & Galloway
- Foothills with Forest - Dumfries & Galloway
- Rugged Uplands - Dumfries & Galloway
- Southern Uplands - Dumfries & Galloway
- Southern Uplands with Forest - Ayrshire
- Southern Uplands with Forest - Dumfries & Galloway
- Upper Dale - Dumfries & Galloway

0 1 2 km

Client: SP Energy Networks

Project: Lorg Wind Farm Grid Connection

Title: Figure 6.2 - Landscape Character and Designations

Date: 11/11/2025 Scale: 1:42,000 @ A3
Drawn: AS Checked: IM Approved: AF
Drawing Number: 70025617-WSP-HOLM-010

Document Path: \\uk.wspgroup.com\central data\Projects\700256xx\700256617 - SPEN Longburn Long OHLE Models and Drawings\99 GIS\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\Holm Hill\E\Figure 6.3 - Landscape Character and Designations.aprx

Holm Hill Substation

Environmental Appraisal

Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology

November 25

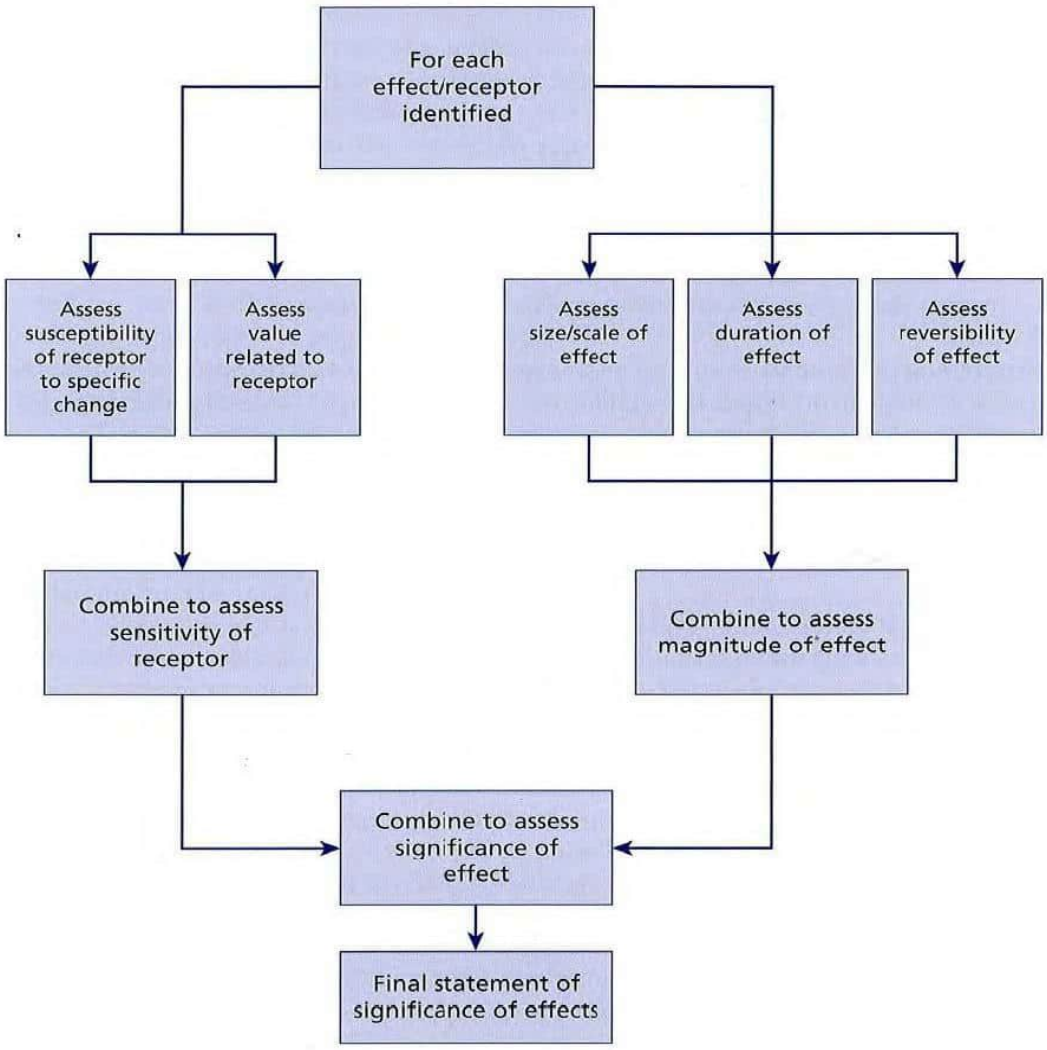
Land & Planning

Contents

1 ASSESSMENT APPROACH AND PROCESS

1.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) was carried out broadly in accordance with best practice guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition, 2013) (GLVIA3)[1]. The approach and process are summarised in the flow diagram below from GLVIA3.

Figure 1.1 - Assessing the significance of effects



1.1.2 In the chapters below, there are tables setting out the decision-making framework for assessing sensitivity and magnitude and how these are considered together to reach a conclusion regarding significance. In all cases, these ta

1.1.3 bles are guidelines, not hard and fast rules.

[1] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition).

1.1.4 Conclusions regarding receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of impacts are based on professional judgment. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, all effects referenced in this LVA are considered adverse.

2 ASSIGNING VALUE AND SENSITIVITY

2.1 Landscape Receptors

2.1.1 Landscape effects can be defined as the changes in the character and quality of the landscape as a result of a development, through:

- the impact on the landscape fabric (changes the development may cause to specific features and elements that make up the landscape);
- the impact on the overall patterns of elements and on the perceptual and aesthetic aspects that give rise to landscape character and regional and local distinctiveness; and
- the impact on valued landscapes such as public open space, designated landscapes or otherwise valued landscapes, including wild land.

2.1.2 The sensitivity of the landscape receptors has been arrived at by considering the landscape receptor value and the susceptibility of the landscape receptor to the change proposed, generally in accordance with **Table 2.1** and **Table 2.2**, below.

Table 2.1 - Landscape receptor value

Value	Recognition	Features	Quality / Condition
High	Typically a landscape or feature of international or national recognition: National Scenic Areas, National Parks, World Heritage Sites (where designated for landscape reasons), designed landscapes on the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Register.	Typically, a strong sense of place with landscape / features worthy of conservation; no or few detracting features.	A very high quality landscape / feature; attractive landscape / feature; exceptional / distinctive.
Medium	Regional recognition or undesignated, but locally valued landscape / features: Local Landscape Areas, Regional Scenic Areas, locally listed designed landscapes and Regional Parks.	Typically, contains distinguishing features worthy of conservation; evidence of some degradation and / or some detracting elements.	Ordinary to good quality landscape / feature with some potential for substitution; a reasonably attractive landscape / feature; fairly typical and commonplace.
Low	Typically, an undesignated landscape / feature.	Few landscape features worthy of conservation, evidence of degradation with many detracting features.	Ordinary landscape / feature with high potential for substitution; quality that is typically commonplace and unremarkable; limited variety or distinctiveness.
Negligible	Typically, an undesignated landscape / feature.	No landscape features worthy of conservation; evidence of degradation with many detracting features.	Low quality landscape / feature with very high potential for substitution; limited variety or distinctiveness; commonplace.

Table 2.2 Susceptibility of the landscape receptor to change

Susceptibility to proposed change	
High	Low ability to accommodate the specific proposed change; undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (receptor value) and / or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies.
Medium	Moderate ability to accommodate the specific proposed change; some undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (receptor value) and / or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies.
Low	High ability to accommodate the specific proposed change; little or no undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (receptor value) and / or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies.
Negligible	Very high ability to accommodate the specific proposed change; no undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (receptor value) and/or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies.

2.2 Landscape Sensitivity

2.2.1 Susceptibility and value can be combined in different ways although it is generally accepted that a combination of high susceptibility and high value is likely to result in the highest sensitivity, whereas a low susceptibility and low value is likely to result in the lowest level of sensitivity. As noted in GLVIA3 there can be complex relationships between the value attributed to a landscape and its susceptibility to change, which can be particularly important when considering change in or close to designated landscapes.

2.2.2 Landscapes considered highly susceptible to the proposed change are normally considered to be of high sensitivity unless there are particularly strong reasons associated with the landscape value that led to a reduction in sensitivity.

2.2.3 Similarly, receptors considered of low or medium susceptibility are usually in the same category of sensitivity, unless there are reasons associated with the landscape value that led to an increase in sensitivity.

2.2.4 **Table 2.3** summarises typical characteristics of the different levels of sensitivity. It should be noted that the levels are indicative, and the levels shown are arbitrary divisions of a continuum. Professional judgement is always used to determine the overall level.

Table 2.3: Landscape sensitivity

Level of sensitivity	Typical characteristics
High	• areas of landscape character that are highly valued for their scenic quality (including most statutorily designated landscapes); • elements/features that could be described as unique or are nationally scarce; • mature vegetation with provenance such as ancient woodland or mature parkland trees; • mature landscape features which are characteristic of and contribute to a sense of place and illustrates time-depth in a landscape and if replaceable, could not be replaced other than in the long term; and/or • no or limited scope for substitution or positive enhancement.

Level of sensitivity	Typical characteristics
Medium	• areas that have a positive landscape character but include some areas of alteration/degradation/or erosion of features; • perceptual/aesthetic aspects have some vulnerability to unsympathetic development; and/or features/elements that are locally commonplace; unusual locally but in moderate/poor condition; or mature vegetation that is in moderate/poor condition or readily replicated; and • some scope for substitution or positive enhancement.
Low	• damaged or substantially modified landscapes with few characteristic features of value; • capable of absorbing major change; • landscape elements/features that might be considered to detract from landscape character such as obtrusive man-made artefacts (e.g. power lines, large scale developments, etc.); and • scope for substitution or positive enhancement.
Negligible	• areas that are relatively bland or neutral in character with few/no notable features; • a landscape that includes areas of alteration/degradation or erosion of features; • landscape elements/features that are common place or make little contribution to local distinctiveness; and/or • opportunities for the restoration of landscape through mitigation measures associated with the proposal.

2.3 Visual Receptors

2.3.1 Visual effects relate to changes in available views of the landscape and the effect of those changes on people, including:

- the immediate impact of the Proposed Development on the content and character of views (e.g. through intrusion or obstruction and / or the change or loss of existing elements in a specific view); and
- the broader impact, considering the overall change in visual amenity enjoyed by receptors in the area.

2.3.2 The sensitivity of a visual receptor reflects their susceptibility to change and any values which may be associated with the specific view. It varies depending on a number of factors such as the activity of the viewer, their reasons for being there and their expectations and the duration of view.

2.3.3 Certain views are highly valued for either their cultural or historical associations, which can increase the sensitivity of the viewer. However, whilst a valued view may serve to increase the overall visual receptor sensitivity, a low value will not necessarily reduce sensitivity.

2.3.4 GLVIA3 advises that it is helpful to consider (but not restricted to) the following:

- nature of the view (full, partial or glimpsed);
- proportion of the Proposed Development visible (full, most, part or none);
- distance of the viewpoint from the Proposed Development and whether it would be the focus of the view or only a small element;
- whether the view is stationary, transient or sequential; and
- the nature of the changes to the view.

2.3.5 Additionally, the seasonal effects of vegetation are considered, in particular the varying degree of screening and filtering of views.

2.3.6 The sensitivity of the visual receptors has been arrived at by considering the susceptibility of the visual receptor to the change proposed (guided by **Table 2.4**, below) and any values associated with the particular view (guided by **Table 2.5**, below).

Table 2.4: Susceptibility of visual receptor to change

Susceptibility to proposed change	
High	• residents at home; • walkers on long distance trails and mountain access routes, • users of footpaths where the attractive nature of the countryside is a significant factor in the enjoyment of the walk, • cyclists on national and local cycle routes designed to provide an attractive experience; • road users on recognised tourist routes; and • visitors to landscape and heritage resources and other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to appreciation, experience and/or enjoyment.
Medium	• general road users; • passengers on rail lines where the trains run at low or moderate speeds; • users of public open space and footpaths where the nature of the surroundings is not a significant factor in the enjoyment of the activity; and • visitors to landscape and heritage resources and other attractions where views of the surroundings are a **minor** contributor to appreciation, experience and/or enjoyment.
Low	• people at their place of work or shopping; • users of high speed roads and passengers in trains running at high speed; • people engaged in recreational activities where the view of the surroundings is secondary to the enjoyment of the activity (such as playing or spectating at outdoor sports facilities); and • users of public open space and footpaths where the nature of the surroundings is irrelevant to the enjoyment of the activity
Negligible	• users of indoor facilities where the view is irrelevant to their activity

Table 2.5: Values associated with views (which may raise the receptor sensitivity)

Value	Recognition	Indicators of value
High	Recognised views from nationally or internationally important landscape or heritage resources, Scheduled Monuments; may be identified in planning policies or statutory documents.	High value / celebrated view; referred to in national or international guide books, tourist guides etc.; literary and art references; presence of interpretive facilities (e.g. visitor centre).

Value	Recognition	Indicators of value
Medium	Recognised views from local or regionally important landscape or heritage resource, such as Local Landscape Areas or Conservation Areas; may be identified in local planning policies or supplementary planning documents.	Moderately valued view; referred to in local or regional guide books, tourist maps etc.; local literary and art references; presence of some interpretive facilities (e.g. parking places or sign boards)
Low	Locally recognised views, usually informal.	Valued view but no formal references, may include informal footpaths that indicate well used routes by locals. Likely to be common where views are typical of the location with little distinctiveness, lacking in attractors or detractors.
Negligible	Little to no recognition	Not known locally for its views, places that lack evidence of people actively seeking use and therefore any associated views.

Visual Sensitivity

2.3.7 As with landscape, susceptibility and value can be combined in different ways to form a judgement about the sensitivity of a given receptor. It is generally accepted that a combination of **high** susceptibility and **high** value is likely to result in the highest sensitivity, whereas a **low** susceptibility and **low** value is likely to result in the lowest level of sensitivity.

2.3.8 However, whilst a valued view may serve to increase the overall sensitivity of the visual receptor, a **low** value will not necessarily reduce sensitivity. Visual receptors considered highly susceptible to the proposed change are normally considered to be of **high** sensitivity unless there are particularly strong reasons associated with the value of the view that led to a reduction in sensitivity.

2.3.9 Similarly, receptors considered of **low** or **medium** susceptibility are usually in the same category of sensitivity, unless there are reasons associated with the value of the view that led to an increase in sensitivity

2.3.10 **Table 2.6**, below, summarises typical characteristics of the different levels of sensitivity. It should be noted that the levels are indicative, and the levels shown are arbitrary divisions of a continuum

Table 2.6: Visual sensitivity criteria

Level of sensitivity	Typical characteristics
High	• A view or overall visual amenity which is an important reason for receptors being there (and therefore most views or overall visual amenity for highly susceptible receptors). • A well balanced view containing attractive features and notable for its scenic quality. • A view which is experienced by a large number of people and/ or recognised for its scenic qualities
Medium	• A view or overall visual amenity which plays a relatively small part in the reason why a receptor would be there (and therefore most views or overall visual amenity for receptors of medium susceptibility).

Level of sensitivity	Typical characteristics
	• An otherwise attractive view that includes noticeable discordant features or overall visual amenity where there are noticeable visual detractors.
Low	• A view or overall visual amenity which is unlikely to be part of the receptor's experience or reasons for being there (and therefore most views or overall visual amenity for receptors of low susceptibility). • An unattractive view or overall visual amenity where there are many visual detractors.
Negligible	• A view or overall visual amenity which is irrelevant to the receptor's experience or reasons for being there.

2.4 Assessing Magnitude of Change

2.4.1 The magnitude of landscape and visual change depends upon a combination of factors, including the size, scale and nature of change in relation to the context; the geographical extent of the area influenced; and its duration and reversibility. Typical criteria are given in **Table 2.7**, below.

Table 2.7: Magnitude of landscape and visual change

Value	Size, Scale and Nature	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility
High	• Occupies much of the view. • Obstructs a significant portion of the view. • Forms a large or very noticeable or discordant element in the view. • Considerable change to key features or many existing elements of the landscape. • Introduces elements considered totally uncharacteristic to the existing landscape. • A very noticeable change to the character of the landscape.	Ranging from notable change over extensive area to intensive change over a more limited area.	Long term; permanent / non-reversible or partially reversible.
Medium	• Occupies a noticeable portion of the view • Obstructs a significant portion of the view. • Forms a large or very noticeable or discordant element in the view. • Some considerable change to existing landscape elements and /or landscape character; discernibly changes the surroundings of a receptor, such that its baseline is partly altered. • Readily noticeable.	Moderate changes in a localised area.	Medium term; semi-permanent or partially reversible.
Low	• Occupies a small portion of the view; • Small change to existing landscape elements and / or landscape character;	Minor changes in a localised area.	Short term / temporary; partially reversible or reversible.

Value	Size, Scale and Nature	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility
	• Slight, but detectable impacts that do not alter the baseline of the receptor materially. • Not readily noticeable		
Negligible	• Occupies little or no portion of the view; • Hardly noticeable. • Limited or no change in existing landscape elements and / or landscape character; • Barely distinguishable change from baseline conditions.	No change discernible.	Short term / temporary reversible.

2.5 Level of effect and significance

2.5.1 Professional judgment is applied to integrate sensitivity and magnitude, determining the overall level of effect of the Proposed Development on the identified receptor.

2.5.2 The gradations of magnitude of change and level of effect represent a continuum, which are described in on a four-point scale: **major; moderate; minor; and negligible**. Where appropriate, this appraisal uses intermediate descriptors, such as minor to **negligible, minor** to **moderate** or **moderate** to **major**, where the assessor considers that the effect falls between these.

2.5.3 As a general rule:

- receptors of high sensitivity subject to a high magnitude of change are considered to be subject to a **major** effect;
- receptors of medium sensitivity subject to a medium magnitude of change considered to be subject to a **moderate** effect; and
- receptors of low sensitivity subject to a low magnitude of change are considered to be subject to a **minor** effect.

2.5.4 Where the change is so small as to be considered negligible, the resulting effect is considered negligible.

2.5.5 **Table 2.8** gives typical descriptors of the levels of landscape and visual effects.

2.5.6 Effects can be either beneficial or adverse and, in some cases, neutral (neither beneficial nor adverse). Effects assessed as moderate or greater are considered to be significant: "*significant*" here used in its ordinary English meaning of 'of importance' or 'worthy of attention' to highlight any changes to landscape character or visual amenity of particular note.

Table 2.8: Level of landscape and visual effect

Level of Effect	Landscape effect	Visual effect
Major	Considerable change over an extensive area of a highly sensitive landscape, fundamentally affecting the key characteristics and the overall impression of its character.	The development would be a prominent feature or a noticeably discordant or enhancing feature substantially affecting overall visual amenity or would result in a clearly noticeable change to a highly sensitive and well composed existing view.

Level of Effect	Landscape effect	Visual effect
		A clearly noticeable or substantial improvement or deterioration of the existing view.
Moderate	Small or noticeable change to a highly sensitive landscape or more intensive change to a landscape of medium or low sensitivity, affecting some key characteristics and the overall impression of its character	The development would be a noticeable feature or a somewhat discordant or enhancing feature affecting overall visual amenity or would result in a noticeable change to a highly sensitive and well composed existing view, or would be prominent within a less well composed and less sensitivity view. A noticeable improvement or deterioration of the existing view.
Minor	Small change to a limited area of landscape of high or medium sensitivity or a more widespread area of a less sensitive landscape, affecting few characteristics without altering the overall impression of its character.	The development would be a visible but not particularly noticeable feature or a slightly discordant or enhancing feature affecting overall visual amenity or would result in a small change to a highly sensitive and well composed existing view, or would be noticeable within a less well composed and less sensitivity view. A small improvement or deterioration of the existing view.
Negligible	No discernible improvement or deterioration to the existing landscape character.	No discernible improvement or deterioration in the existing view.

Holm Hill Substation

Environmental Appraisal

Appendix 6.2: Illustrative Visualisations

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Land & Planning

		SP Energy Networks	**Appendix 6.2** **Representative Viewpoint 1** **Track adjacent to Brockloch Cottage** November 2025	wsp

SP Energy Networks

Appendix 6.2
Representative Viewpoint 2
A713 near Brockloch Tower

November 2025

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