

Lorg Wind Farm Grid Connection

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Appendix 7.2: Landscape Assessment

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1 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Table 1.1: Landscape Assessment

Landscape Character Area	Baseline description (Key characteristics)	Susceptibility, value and overall sensitivity	Construction magnitude and effect	Operation Year 1 magnitude and effect	Operation Year 15 magnitude and effect
LCT (Landscape Character Type) 160 (Narrow Wooded River Valley (Water of Ken Valley))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> narrow incised valleys with wooded slopes enclosing pasture floors; small pastures and arable fields enclosed by hedges/fences in lower reaches and drystone dykes in upper reaches; dominant broadleaf (semi-natural) woodland character with conifers on higher slope; lush trough-shaped river valleys with pasture/arable floors enclosed by deciduous wooded slopes; riparian trees and woodlands following meandering river courses in lower reaches; narrow lanes following valleys and linking isolated houses, occasional settlements and providing access to higher moorland; numerous arched stone bridges over the rivers; and intimate unspoilt landscape focussing on river views with some adjacent policy landscape. 	<p>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, crossed 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Overall sensitivity: medium</p>	<p>The Proposed Development route would extend the majority of the length of the LCT, however, only occupying a narrow stretch along the eastern valley side, with the exception of the southern section, before which the route crosses over the Water of Ken and extends westwards to the adjacent Southern Uplands with Forest LCT. At the Construction Phase, it is noted that construction activity associated with the Proposed Development would introduce increased movement and new industrial features within a more rural landscape, with associated plant likely to be travelling along the rural road corridors. In addition, vegetation removal required for the Operational Corridor within the northern part of the LCT would result in a small degree of change to the landscape, with commercial forestry identified as a key characteristic of the landscape. It is noted however, that the nature of commercial forestry is changeable with ongoing felling and restocking activities likely to result in changes to the woodland structure over time. In addition, development has been limited to the lower ground towards the base of the valley, limiting effects upon the wider landscape across the valley floor. The scale of change is recorded as high. During the Construction Phase, effects associated with the Proposed Development are likely to be experienced across the majority of the LCT, with associated plant and construction activity introducing increased movement and impacting upon the tranquillity of the landscape within the enclosed valley. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as high. The construction phase is considered to be short term, and the duration of change is therefore assessed as low.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: high</p> <p>Table 4.4 within Chapter 4: EIA Process and Methodology denotes that for high sensitivity and medium magnitude, effects of Major adverse are anticipated, however, this does not account for specific landscape and visual considerations. In line with Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology, it is noted that an effect of Major significance is identified as a 'considerable change over an extensive area of a highly sensitive landscape, fundamentally affecting the key characteristics and the overall impression of its character.' Whilst of reasonable quality, LCT160 is</p>	<p>At Operation Year 1, it is considered that changes to the existing landscape character would, due to the more intimate nature of the landscape, be perceptible. The introduction of new overhead line (OHL) features in addition to the vegetation removal required for the Operational Corridor would introduce a degree of change within the landscape. The Proposed Development would therefore, extend the visual influence of OHL within the landscape, and while an adverse change would not appear wholly incongruous within the landscape Mitigation through micro-siting of the proposed OHL, coupled with the backcloth of existing woodland and forestry on the wider valley slopes would therefore serve to ensure that the Proposed Development, whilst visible, would not appear as a highly noticeable change within the landscape. The scale of change is therefore recorded as low. The Proposed Development would extend across the majority of the LCT, set low within the valley to the east of the Water of Ken. For the most part proposed features are to be set within the open ground, with vegetation cover to be retained as far as possible, limited to the removal of short sections of commercial forestry within the northern part of the LCT. The landscape therefore would remain for the most part unchanged, with only localised changes resulting from the removal commercial forestry and introduction of new features within the landscape. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as low. The operational phase comprises the life of the project and is therefore assessed as long term. The duration of change is recorded as high.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: low</p> <p>Overall effect: minor adverse (not significant)</p>	<p>At Operation Year 15, the Proposed Development would appear visible within the landscape however it is anticipated that by Year 15 the Proposed Development would have better integrated within the landscape and would appear softened through weathering. In addition, whilst the vegetation removal required for the Operational Corridor would likely remain as a visible change, intersecting the forestry within the northern section of the LCT, it is noted that at Year 15, the existing baseline is likely to have altered resulting from commercial forestry operations associated with felling and restocking. The scale of change is therefore recorded as negligible. At Year 15, the Proposed Development would remain as a visible new feature across the majority of the LCT, albeit set low within the valley, with vegetation cover retained as far as reasonably practicable. It is therefore considered that landscape effects associated with the Proposed Development would appear within highly localised areas within the valley and would have further softened at Year 15, so as to not appear as notable features within the landscape. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as negligible. The operational phase comprises the life of the project and is therefore assessed as long term. The duration of change is recorded as high.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: negligible</p> <p>Overall effect: negligible neutral (not significant)</p>

Landscape Character Area	Baseline description (Key characteristics)	Susceptibility, value and overall sensitivity	Construction magnitude and effect	Operation Year 1 magnitude and effect	Operation Year 15 magnitude and effect
			<p>not noted to be a highly sensitive landscape. Using professional judgement to assess the likely significance of effect it is considered that an effect of moderate adverse significance is likely. Noted in the Methodology at Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology as a '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 overall effect has therefore been reduced to moderate adverse (significant) to reflect the likely landscape impacts at Construction Phase.</p> <p>Overall effect: moderate adverse (significant)</p>		
LCT165 Upper Dale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wide valleys, enclosed by high peaks and moorland; • open with long views; • improved valley pastures, becoming rougher up the valley sides; • medium to large scale enclosures with dry stone dykes; • riparian woodlands along the main river and up tributary channels; • medium to large scale forests on the valley sides and extending over horizons from higher ground; • large scale Wind Farm development characteristic of some adjacent upland fringes and backdrop skylines; and • mining settlements and remnants of industrial activity such as mine ruins and bings. 	<p>The landscape within this LCT is characterised by a wide valley associated with the Carsphairn Lane, Water of Deugh and Water of Ken watercourses, with intermittent lochs located within the eastern section of the LCT. The LCT is intersected by key infrastructure routes, namely the A713, which forms the primary route between Ayr and Castle Douglas and the B729 and B7000, which connect Carsphairn to St John's Town of Dalry to the south-east. Commercial forestry is visible across the LCT upon lower valley slopes as the landscape rises away from the valley floor to the north and south. Settlement throughout this LCT is principally located off the primary road corridors. Power lines, communication routes and Wind Farm developments are noted to be characteristic features within this landscape, with pylons and linear OHL features running within relatively proximity to the A713 across the LCT. The overall susceptibility of the LCT is therefore recorded as low.</p> <p>The majority of this LCT is located within the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Scenic Area, with the southern section denoting the scenic quality of the landscape. The LCT is intersected by the Galloway National Tourist Route that extends along the route of the A713. The landscape does contain a number of detracting features associated with a number of</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would comprise a small section within the northern part of the LCT. While it is noted that construction activity associated with the Proposed Development would result in a degree of change within the landscape this would appear highly localised, limited to the area by Holm Hill within the northern part of the LCT close to the primary infrastructure route associated with the A713 and the existing OHL route that lies parallel to the road corridor at this point. The scale of change is therefore recorded as negligible. The proposals occupy a small section of the overall LCT with the majority of the LCT remaining unchanged. 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.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: negligible</p> <p>Overall effect: negligible neutral (not significant)</p>	<p>At Operation Year 1, all construction activity would have ceased. The Proposed Development would appear as a change to the landscape within a highly localised section of the LCT with the majority of the LCT to remain unchanged and as per baseline. The scale of change is recorded as negligible. The proposals occupy a small section of the overall LCT with the majority of the LCT remaining unchanged. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as negligible. The operational phase comprises the life of the project and is therefore assessed as long term. The duration of change is recorded as high.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: negligible</p> <p>Overall effect: negligible neutral (not significant)</p>	<p>At Operation Year 15, effects would remain similar to those experienced at Operation Year 1, albeit with the proposed OHL likely to have softened over time due to weathering. The Proposed Development would appear as a change to the landscape within a highly localised section of the LCT with the majority of the LCT to remain unchanged and as per baseline. The scale of change is recorded as negligible. The proposals occupy a small section of the overall LCT with the majority of the LCT remaining unchanged. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as negligible. The operational phase comprises the life of the project and is therefore assessed as long term. The duration of change is recorded as high.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: negligible</p> <p>Overall effect: negligible neutral (not significant)</p>

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		<p>Wind Farm developments visible on upper valley slopes and large-scale OHL infrastructure and pylons extending throughout the LCT. The overall value of the landscape is therefore recorded as high.</p> <p>Overall Sensitivity: medium</p>			
LCT177 Southern Uplands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> large, smooth dome/conical shaped hills, predominantly grass covered; open and exposed character except within incised valleys; dramatically sculpted landforms and awe-inspiring scale; distinctive dark brown/purple colour of heather on some of the higher areas; pockets of woodland in incised valleys; stone dykes occasionally define the lower limit; and Wind Farms locally characteristic, away from the more dramatic, scenic and sculptural slopes and skylines. 	<p>The Southern Uplands LCT is broadly characterised by the undulating landscape associated with Cairnmore of Carsphairn and the surrounding hills and valleys. Woodland is sparse throughout the LCT, limited to small woodland parcels towards Marbrack 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, however. 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.</p> <p>The majority of this LCT is located within the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Scenic Area, 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.</p> <p>Overall Sensitivity: high</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would extend across the southern section of this LCT, stretching from Holm Hill towards the Water of Ken to the east. Construction activity associated with the Proposed Development would introduce increased movement throughout the southern section of the LCT, disrupting tranquillity and introducing industrial features into the principally rural landscape. Despite this, however, the siting of the proposed route within the lower parts of the landscape would serve to limit skylining and ensure that impacts are localised to the southern parts of the LCT, with the northern section of the LCT beyond Quantans Hill to remain unchanged. The scale of change is therefore recorded as low. With regard to the geographical extent of change, while extending across the LCT to the south, the siting of the proposed route within the lower sections of the existing valley landscape would ensure that changes to the landscape would be localised. With the northern part of the LCT to remain unchanged. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as low. The construction phase is considered to be short term and the duration of change is therefore assessed as low.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: low</p> <p>Overall effect: moderate adverse (significant)</p>	<p>At Operation Year 1, it is considered that changes to the landscape would result in a degree of change within localised sections of this LCT to the south, introducing new OHL/urbanising features within the predominantly rural landscape. While this is noted, however, it is also noted that these new features would be situated within the lower ground within the valleys to the south, ensuring that changes are unlikely to detract from the open character of the landscape nor the scenic quality of the landscape. The scale of change is therefore assessed as negligible. At Operation Year 1, it is noted that whilst the Proposed Development would result in localised impacts across the southern section of the LCT the majority of the landscape would remain unchanged. The geographical extent of change is therefore considered to be negligible. The operational phase comprises the life of the project and is therefore assessed as long term. The duration of change is recorded as high.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: negligible</p> <p>Overall effect: negligible neutral (not significant)</p>	<p>At Operation Year 15, effects would remain similar to those experienced at Operation Year 1, albeit with the proposed OHL likely to have softened over time due to weathering. The Proposed Development would appear as a change across localised sections of the southern part of the LCT, with the majority of the LCT to remain unchanged and as per baseline. The scale of change is recorded as negligible. The proposals occupy a small section of the overall LCT, with the majority of the LCT remaining unchanged. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as negligible. The operational phase comprises the life of the project and is therefore assessed as long term. The duration of change is recorded as high.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: negligible</p> <p>Overall effect: negligible neutral (not significant)</p>
LCT178 Southern Uplands with Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> large, smooth dome-shaped hills with large scale dark green forests on slopes and over lower summits; predominantly simple, gently rolling landform; 	<p>The Southern Uplands with Forest LCT is principally characterised by undulating landform intersected by a number of trough-like valleys. Commercial forestry is a key characteristic of this LCT, with plantation woodland evident throughout the landscape, predominantly situated towards the</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would extend across a small section of this LCT to the south-west where it lies between the Southern Uplands and Narrow Wooded River Valley's LCT and further north as the route extends towards Altry Hill. Construction activity associated with the proposed route would result in a degree of change within the landscape, however due to the more managed character of the landscape associated with ongoing forestry works it is</p>	<p>At Operation Year 1 it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a degree of change to the landscape, introducing industrial/urbanising features within a predominantly rural landscape setting. These changes would however appear highly localised, limited to a short section of new OHL within the south-eastern and central section of the LCT. The</p>	<p>At Operation Year 15 effects would remain similar to those experienced at Operation Year 1 albeit with the proposed OHL likely to have softened over time due to weathering. The Proposed Development would appear as a change to the landscape within highly localised sections to the south-east and central section of the LCT with the majority of the LCT to remain unchanged and as per baseline. The scale of change is recorded as negligible. The proposals occupy small sections of the</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some areas of more complex and smaller-scale landscapes, with steep slopes enclosing heads of valleys and/or where uplands remain open; changing landscapes with large scale forestry operations and Wind Farm development; forested areas dominated by Sitka Spruce, interspersed with mixed conifers and broadleaf planting, and undergoing felling and replanting in large coupes; Wind Farms are a key characteristic in some areas; and expansive scale. 	<p>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 to 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.</p> <p>This LCT is not located within any local or regional designations. There are few detracting features within the landscape, albeit with Wind Farms present within the south-east 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.</p> <p>Overall Sensitivity: low</p>	<p>considered that this increase of activity in the landscape would not appear wholly incongruous. The scale of change is therefore recorded as low. The Proposed Development comprises a small section of the LCT, with the majority of this landscape remaining unchanged. 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.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: low</p> <p>Overall effect: Minor adverse (not significant)</p>	<p>scale of change is therefore recorded as negligible. The Proposed Development would comprise a small section of this LCT, resulting in highly localised changes within the landscape, with the majority of the LCT to remain unchanged. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as negligible. The operational phase comprises the life of the project and is therefore assessed as long term. The duration of change is recorded as high.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: negligible</p> <p>Overall effect: negligible neutral (not significant)</p>	<p>overall LCT with the majority of the LCT remaining unchanged. The geographical extent of change is therefore recorded as negligible. The operational phase comprises the life of the project and is therefore assessed as long term. The duration of change is recorded as high.</p> <p>Overall magnitude: negligible</p> <p>Overall effect: negligible neutral (not significant)</p>