ScottishPower Renewables

# Hare Hill Windfarm Repowering and Extension

## Environmental Impact Assessment Report

## Volume 1

## Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Assessment

November 2025

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## Glossary of Terms

| Term | Description |
|---|---|
| **Baseline studies** | Work done to determine and describe the existing environmental conditions against which any future changes can be measured or predicted and assessed |
| **Cumulative effects** | The additional changes caused by a proposed Development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together. |
| **Dark adaptation** | The process by which our eyes switch from photopic (cone mediated) vision to scotopic (rod mediated) vision after moving from a lit area to a dark one. |
| **Designated Landscape** | Areas of landscape identified as being of importance at international, national or local levels, either defined by statute or identified in development plans or other documents |
| **Direct effects** | Effects directly attributable to the proposed Development. |
| **Environmental Impact Assessment** | Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a means of carrying out, in a systematic way, an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects from a development. |
| **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations** | The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regulations) |
| **Indirect effects** | Effects resulting indirectly from the Proposed Development as a consequence of the direct effects. Indirect effects often occur away from the Site, or as a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway. They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects. |
| **Key Characteristics** | Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place. |
| **Landscape character** | The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. |
| **Landscape receptors** | Aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by the proposed Development. |

| Term | Description |
|---|---|
| **Landscape value** | The relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a variety of reasons (often as a basis for designation or recognition), because of its quality, special features (including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty), tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations, or other conservation issues. |
| **Magnitude (of change)** | The combination of judgements about the size and scale of the predicted effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration. |
| **NatureScot** | Scottish Natural Heritage rebranded to 'NatureScot' in August 2020. |
| **proposed Development** | The proposed Hare Hill Windfarm Repowering and Extension. |
| **Photomontage** | A visualisation which superimposes an image of a proposed development upon a photograph or series of photographs. |
| **Residential Visual Amenity Threshold** | Where visual effects would result in serious harm to living conditions or residential amenity |
| **Residual effects** | Effects attributable to the proposed Development following consideration of any proposed design mitigation and/or enhancements. |
| **Scenarios** | Combinations of potential future wind farm developments, currently at different stages in the planning system, used in the cumulative assessment. |
| **Scoping Report** | Consultation report which described the Project and identified the potential impacts from the proposed Development, and the proposed scope of the assessment. |
| **Sensitivity** | The specific receptors' (landscape or visual) vulnerability to change. Sensitivity is assessed by combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor. Viewpoint sensitivity depends on the context of the viewpoint; its importance; the current occupation and viewing opportunity of the groups of people being considered; and the number of people affected. |

| Term | Description |
|---|---|
| **Significance of effect** | A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect as defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic. |
| **Site** | Area within the application boundary within which the proposed Development lies. |
| **Study area** | The area included in the LVIA. |
| **The Applicant** | ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Limited |
| **Visual amenity** | The overall pleasantness of views enjoyed by people of their surroundings or to the visual setting or backdrop to the activities they enjoy whilst: living; working; recreating; visiting or travelling through an area. |
| **Visual receptors** | Individuals and/or groups of people who have the potential to be affected by the proposed Development. |
| **Wireline** | A 2D visualisation which lays a grid over the 3D terrain model to illustrate landform. |
| **Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)** | A map showing areas of land within which a development is theoretically visible. |

## Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Description |
|---|---|
| **AOD** | Above Ordnance Data |
| **CMLI** | Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute |
| **EIA Regulations** | Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations |
| **EIA Report** | Environmental Impact Assessment Report |
| **EU** | European Union |
| **HH** | Hare Hill |
| **HHE** | Hare Hill Extension |
| **HHR1** | Hare Hill Repowering Phase 1 |
| **HHR2** | Hare Hill Repowering Phase 2 |
| **LCTs** | Landscape Character Types |
| **LLA** | Local Landscape Area |
| **LVIA** | Landscape and visual Impact Assessment |
| **Natural Power** | Natural Power Consultants |
| **NPF4** | National Planning Framework 4 |
| **SUW** | Southern Upland Way |
| **TAs** | Technical Appendices |
| **WLA** | Wild Landscape Area |
| **ZTVs** | Zone of Theoretical Visibility |

# 6. Landscape and Visual

## 6.1 Statement of Competence

1. This Chapter and associated Technical Appendices have been prepared by Beatrice Dower BSc MSc MLA CMLI, a Director of MVGLA Ltd, a firm of landscape architects based in Perthshire, Scotland. Beatrice is a chartered member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with 25 years' experience of landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) in the wind energy sector. She also has experience in LVIA of other types of development, landscape character assessment, and conservation planning, and has been involved in all stages from feasibility, layout design, evaluation, assessment, post application consultation and appeals. The chapter is supported by graphics prepared by MVGLA's team of mapping and visualisation experts.

## 6.2 Introduction

2. This Chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report) identifies and reports on the assessment the potential significant effects that the proposed Hare Hill Extension and Repowering (hereafter referred to as the 'proposed Development') would have on the landscape, views and visual amenity of the local environment.

3. Landscape and visual assessments are separate, though related processes. Effects on the landscape as a resource may be caused by changes to the constituent elements of the landscape, its aesthetic or perceptual qualities and character. Visual effects as experienced by people may be caused by changes in the appearance of the landscape (views) resulting from the proposed Development.

4. This Chapter sets out the baseline for the LVIA but assesses landscape and visual effects separately. The reporting of assessments focuses on 'Likely' significant effects that may arise from the proposed Development, and those that are informative to the decision maker.

5. This Chapter is supported by the Figures and Technical Appendices provided in Volumes 2a and 2b EIA Report Figures and Volume 3: Technical Appendices respectively, as listed below:

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    - Figure 6.2: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (to hub height, proposed Development (Phases 1 & 2);
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    - Figure 6.3b: Zone of Theoretical Visibility to tip height, Phase 1 & 2 (1:100,000);
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- Figure 6.36: Property 9 Laigh Cairn;
- Figure 6.37: Property 11 High Cairn (group of 2 properties); and
- Figure 6.38: Property 12 Hillend;
- Technical Appendix 6.1: Methodology for the Landscape and Visual and Cumulative Assessments;
- Technical Appendix 6.2: Landscape Character Assessment;
- Technical Appendix 6.3: Visual Effects Assessment;
- Technical Appendix 6.4: Aviation Lighting Assessment; and
- Technical Appendix 6.5: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment.

## 6.3 Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

6. Relevant planning policy and how the proposed Development relates to it is set out in in the **Planning and Renewable Energy Policy Statement** accompanying the proposed Development Planning Application.

## 6.4 Methodology of Assessment

### 6.4.1 Phasing, Scenarios and Scope of Assessment

7. This section sets out the proposed approach to considering assessment scenarios and baselines for the proposed Development. Given the complexities arising from phasing of

construction, this document seeks to set out the logical and proportionate approach to assessment to be taken in the LVIA.

8. There are two proposed construction phases for the proposed Development:

   - Phase 1 – Hare Hill 1 (HH) would be removed (decommissioned) and the first phase of the proposed Development (HHR1) would be constructed. Hare Hill Extension (HHE) would be retained. This would be an intermediate stage; and
   - Phase 2 – HHE would be decommissioned, and the second repowering stage (HHR2) would be constructed.

9. The intermediate stage would have a maximum duration of up to eight years, on completion of Phase 1 but before commencement of Phase 2. Given the juxtaposition between the smaller HHE and larger HHR1 turbines during that time, it is considered that there would be higher visual effects at that intermediate stage than at the end of Phase 2. The intermediate stage therefore represents the 'worst case scenario' and is considered to be of medium-term rather than short-term duration. This means that assessment of the intermediate stage would be needed to consider the 'worst case' effects, as well as the final fully constructed proposed Development.

*Guidance*

10. Current NatureScot guidance for repowering schemes draws heavily on the LVIA for Windy Standard 1 Repowering Windfarm, which included two baselines, the existing and a 'decommissioned' baseline (with old turbines removed). The guidance states that Windy Standard 1 took "*a very helpful approach*".

11. Given the complexity of the phasing of the proposed Development set out above, with NatureScot advice on doing two baselines, that leads to *four* assessments using different baselines or stages, or *six* if the change between the intermediate stage and the final proposed Development is to be included also. When considering cumulative scenarios, the number of assessments increases further. This approach is not practical, proportional, or useful to the decision maker and would be confusing for readers.

12. The authors are of the opinion that the 'decommissioned' baseline is not a useful baseline, as it would not exist if the proposed Development goes ahead. There would be no 'bare ground' phase, as removal and replacement of the turbines would be part of the same construction phase (either 1 or 2), and if it occurs during construction, it would be so brief as to not warrant assessment except as part of the short-term construction phase. It is recognised that the use of the 'bare ground' or 'decommissioned' baseline is another way of identifying the differences between repowering and not. However, the bare ground does not exist at present, would not exist if the proposed Development goes ahead.

*Timeline of Development*

13. Set out below is a discussion of the potential timeline for the proposed Development that seeks to identify logical key stages to select for assessment.

14. The current views (in 2025) along Nithsdale are looking across or along valley towards a hillside (on the south side) that has numerous turbines on the slopes and hills, distinguishable as several groups by location and to some degree by size. The existing HH and HHE are part of this scene, being some of the smallest, on hills furthest to the

northwest (south of New Cumnock). Sandy Knowe Windfarm turbines are those in front of HHE on lower ground when seen from the east, e.g. from around Sanquhar.

15. If the proposed Development does not go ahead, the smallest turbines of HH, followed later by HHE will be removed and the hill they are on (Hare Hill) will become open. Some sections of access track may be retained and may remain visible. This will then be an open hill to the west and north of turbine groups that would continue to exist for longer (e.g. the more recent Sandy Knowe or Sanquhar Windfarms). This change does not need to be assessed as it is not part of the proposed Development.

16. If the proposed Development goes ahead, construction of the first phase (Phase 1) would see the removal of HH (the smallest turbines to the northwest) and replacement by fewer larger turbines of HHR1. The decommissioning of HH would occur as part of the Phase 1 construction stage, such that the HH Site would only briefly be open and free of turbines before the introduction of HHR1 turbines (assuming that the removal and introduction operations are discrete). This change (from 'decommissioned' to HHR1) would be of very brief duration as a sub-phase of construction. It may not occur if the last HH turbine is not removed prior to construction of the first HHR1 turbine. It does not therefore require more assessment than would be undertaken for the construction phase of any windfarm development.

17. During operation of the, up to eight-year intermediate phase, the change from HH and HHE (the current baseline) to HHE and HHR1 (Phase 1) would have significant effects as although the turbines on Site would be replaced (like for like in character), they would be larger and would introduce noticeable size, scale, and rotation speed contrast that is not there at present. Additional turbines of HHR1 would be seen beyond and to the south of HHE, forming the extension to the south. The new turbines (HHR1) would be noticeably larger than the retained HHE turbines and contrasting sizes would cause visual effects. The perceived change would be from the existing baseline to Phase 1 (putting aside the short-term construction phase). It is considered that, as a medium-term change with juxtaposition of contrasting turbine sizes, that this requires assessment as a 'worst case' scenario for visual effects.

18. During construction of Phase 2, HHE will be removed and for a brief period during construction, may form an open decommissioned area within the arc of the HHR1 layout. As with Phase 1, the duration of the open site will be a sub-phase of the construction period prior to being infilled with HHR2 turbines.

19. During operation of Phase 2, when compared with the Phase 1 stage, the HHR2 turbines would be larger than HHE but of a scale matching HHR1, thus reducing the size contrast and visual effect of juxtaposition and improving the visual composition compared with the Phase 1. It is considered that, as a long-term change this requires assessment.

20. The change from HH and HHE to HHR1 and HHR2 (existing straight to Phase 2) would not happen directly as there would be up to an eight year intermediate phase. The intermediate phase would have the worst-case visual effect (due to the contrasting adjacent turbine sizes) over a medium-term duration and is therefore of relevance to EIA. However, the change from existing to Phase 2 is needed to provide information regarding the longer term picture.

21. 'Decommissioned' baselines can be considered as above, as part of the flow of possible stages, i.e. brief periods during construction (if all old turbines are taken down before new ones are put up). If repowering is delayed so long that both HH and HHE are fully decommissioned before construction of the proposed Development starts (scheduled for 2036), the change from open hillside to both HHR1 and HHR2 would introduce large turbines to open hillside that previously had small turbines. As viewers are likely to remember the smaller turbines, there will remain a need for comparison with what was before. However, looking so far into the future, there is little certainty about how other aspects such as cumulative development would have evolved, and little certainty that the proposed Development would be the same as is currently proposed. It is therefore not considered practical to assess this highly speculative future scenario.

22. It is noted that assessment of effects (or impacts) is underpinned by change. If effects are considered by means of assessing sensitivity to *change* and magnitude of *change*, there must be *change* for there to be an effect. It is therefore not possible to identify the '*effect*' of something that exists, unless one tries to compare it to a situation prior to its existence – which raises the question of how far back one would turn time, given other cumulative, natural, man-made and other changes that have accrued since then. It is essential therefore, to take the current baseline as the existing landscape that is status quo with no effect, and assess changes going forwards, and not backwards. The 'decommissioned baseline' would therefore need be treated as a speculative future scenario in the same way as cumulative scenarios – indeed by the time HH and HHE are decommissioned, several other windfarms may have been constructed. As set out above, it is not considered practical to assess this highly speculative future scenario, although some observations can be made.

*Stages of Development to be Assessed*

23. Given the complexity of the phasing of the proposed Development together with the cumulative picture, and the uncertainty of timescales for each windfarm, the following scenarios are used, as some assumptions about timescale of regional development must be made to reduce the plethora of possible future scenarios to a number that are practical and proportionate for assessment:

    - Phase 1: the replacement of HH with HHR1 (whilst retaining HHE), in the context of existing windfarms and the existing baseline (for up to eight years);
    - Phase 1 + consented: the replacement of HH with HHR1 (whilst retaining HHE), in the context of existing and consented windfarms which may be built by the end of the eight year period);
    - Phase 2 + consented: the replacement of Phase 1 (HHE and HHR1) with Phase 2 (HHR1 and HHR2), in the context of existing and consented windfarms, with the assumption that at least some consented schemes may be built by then;
    - Phase 2 + in planning: the replacement of Phase 1 (HHE and HHR1) with Phase 2 (HHR1 and HHR2), in the context of existing, consented and proposed windfarms currently in planning, with the assumption that at least some of those schemes may be built by the time HHR2 is under construction or operational; and
    - Full Proposed Development: the longer term picture of the replacement of the existing HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (HHR1 and HHR2). This

change is considered in the context of existing windfarms and those under construction only.

24. Construction stages between existing and Phase 1 and between Phase 1 and Phase 2 are also considered.

25. As set out above, a distant future scenario in which HH and HHE are fully decommissioned prior to construction of either or both of HHR1 or HHR2 is considered too speculative to assess.

### 6.4.2 Assessment Methodology

26. The methodology for assessment of landscape and visual effects is set out in **Technical Appendix 6.1**.

27. It should be noted that:

- The methodology follows guidance set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013, 3rd edition, known as GLVIA3) and other guidance documents listed in the Appendix;
- Mitigation of landscape and visual effects has been undertaken through design modifications and input to the design process. The design evolution is set out in **Chapter 4: Site Selection and Design Evolution** and the accompanying **Design and Access Statement.** As all mitigation is embedded within the final design for the proposed Development, all effects identified are residual effects;
- Effects considered to be significant for the purposes of the EIA Regulations are those classified as being 'Major' or 'Moderate'.
- Using a precautionary approach, and although people may consider the appearance of windfarms to be positive for a variety of reasons, all 'likely' landscape and visual effects identified are judged to be adverse unless otherwise specified.

28. As stated in **Technical Appendix 6.1** and discussed above, for various phased scenarios, the LVIA considers effects during construction and operational effects, on landscape character and views, cumulative effects (additional and combined) with potential future windfarms, and the implications of these landscape and visual effects on designated landscapes. The LVIA also considers dusk views of aviation lighting, and effects on visual aspects of residential amenity.

29. **Technical Appendix 6.1** also sets out that the assessment considers potential effects across the wider study area, but that reporting is focussed on effects that are significant or pertinent to the meaningful discussion of landscape and visual effects of the proposed Development. The initial study area of 45 km radius from the outermost turbines in all directions (see **Figure 6.1**) was considered during an initial review and then reduced to enable a more focussed assessment. The detailed study area was reduced to approximately 15 km from the proposed Development for landscape effects, and approximately 25 km from the proposed Development for visual effects.

30. The LVIA is receptor-focussed, meaning that rather than focussing on viewpoints, the assessment considers the experience of travelling through the study area, followed by the experiences of settlements or visitor locations, with reference to viewpoints (set apart in **Technical Appendix 6.3**) as they apply.

## 6.5 Consultation

31. Through the scoping exercise, and subsequently during the ongoing EIA process, relevant organisations were contacted with regards to the proposed Development. Consultation specific to the LVIA included the selection of viewpoints for inclusion in the visual assessment, identification of baselines to be considered, and the identification of cumulative wind farms for the CLVIA. **Table 6.1** outlines the consultation responses received in relation to landscape and visual matters.

*Table 6.1: Consultation*

| CONSULTEE | SUMMARY OF CONSULTEE RESPONSE | WHERE ADDRESSED IN THIS REPORT |
|---|---|---|
| East Ayrshire Council<br>24 April 2024<br>Post-scoping | In relation to phasing of development | Noted. Effects of Phases 1 and 2 considered separately in the LVIA |
| NatureScot<br>9 February 2024 Scoping Response | • Notes that the proposed Development is 'Unlikely' to raise issues of national interest, 'Unlikely' to provide landscape advice at application stage.<br>• Guidance referenced in Scoping report is superseded, noting guidance on repowering.<br>• Extension should be acknowledged and discussed.<br>No comment on scope of LVIA | • Noted<br>• Noted see methodology sections with respect to approach to baselines<br>• Extension and repowering aspects assessed<br>Noted |
| NatureScot<br>3 May 2024<br>Post-scoping | Advice in relation to phasing of development | Noted |

## 6.6 Baseline

### 6.6.1 The Proposed Development Site

32. The Site of the proposed Development (**Figure 5.1**) is located on rolling moorland hills which are part of the Southern Uplands hill range that crosses southern Scotland. The Site lies to the south of upper Nithsdale, approximately 3 km southeast of New Cumnock, on the boundary between East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway.

33. The Southern Upland hills tend to be of broad rounded tops with incised valleys. Nithsdale is a broad U-shaped valley, the upper reaches of which are to the north of the Site. The Site lies to the east of Glen Afton, and north of the upper Kello Water valley which are V shaped valleys with steep sides and narrow valley floors. The existing turbines of HH and HHE are spread over the broad top of Hare Hill (601 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)) and McCrierick's Cairn (556 m AOD), and extend over three parallel ridges to the south, west of Laglass Hill. The Site is of open moorland, with existing turbines and tracks.

34. The proposed turbine area (shown on **Figure 1.1**) includes the whole of the existing windfarm site, plus additional areas to the south, to the east of Blackcraig Hill (700 m AOD) and on the eastern side of the Kello Water Valley below Magheuchan Rig (559 m AOD); and to the northeast, including a forest area below McCrierick's Cairn.

### 6.6.2 The Surrounding Study Area

35. The initial study area of 45 km radius from the outermost turbines in all directions (see **Figure 6.1**) extends from the coast to Moffat and Biggar, and from Hamilton to Dumfries and Newton Stewart. The more focussed area of approximately 25 km extends from Patna to Douglas and Thornhill, and from Mauchline to St John's Town of Dalry. The area includes part of the Southern Upland hill range and the main valleys of Nithsdale, the Glenkens and the Clyde Valley, as well as part of the Ayrshire Basin. Landscapes therefore range from high hill summits and plateaux to broad and narrow valleys, and agricultural lowlands towards the coast.

*Existing Wind Farms*

36. There are numerous existing windfarms across the 45 km wider study area as there is an established pattern of development in the Southern Upland hills. Windfarms within 25 km are set out in **Table 6.2** below and shown on **Figure 6.8a**.

*Table 6.2: Existing Windfarms within 25km*

| NAME | STATUS (September 2025) | APPROXIMATE DISTANCE (km) | NUMBER OF TURBINES | TURBINE TIP HEIGHT (m) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sanquhar | existing | 2 | 9 | 130 |
| Sandy Knowe | existing | 2 | 24 | 125 |
| High Park Farm | existing | 2 | 1 | 75 |
| Afton | existing | 3 | 25 | 120 |
| Whiteside | existing | 4 | 10 | 121.2 |
| Windy Standard-Phase 1[1] | existing | 5 | 36 | 57.5 |
| Windy Standard-Phase 2 | existing | 6 | 30 | 120 |
| Windy Rig | existing | 6.5 | 12 | 115 |
| Enoch Hill (variation) | existing | 7.5 | 15 | 149.9 |
| South Kyle | existing | 8 | 50 | 149.5 |
| Sunnyside | existing | 9 | 2 | 62 |
| North Kyle | existing | 10 | 49 | 149.9 |

[1] *Windy Standard has previously been referred to in some documents as Brockloch Rig*

| NAME | STATUS (September 2025) | APPROXIMATE DISTANCE (km) | NUMBER OF TURBINES | TURBINE TIP HEIGHT (m) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Twenty Shilling Hill | existing | 11 | 9 | 125 |
| Wether Hill | existing | 12 | 14 | 91 |
| Kennoxhead | existing | 15 | 13 | 180 |
| Benbrack | existing | 13 | 18 | 149.9 |
| Galawhistle | existing | 21 | 22 | 120 |
| Andershaw | existing | 22 | 11 | 125 |
| Bankend Rig | existing | 22 | 11 | 76 |
| Blackcraig Hill | existing | 22 | 23 | 110 |
| Dersalloch | existing | 22 | 23 | 125 |
| Hagshaw Hill Phase2 | existing | 22 | 20 | 80 |
| Middle Muir | existing | 22 | 15 | 152 |
| Cumberhead | existing | 22 | 12 | 180 |
| Dungeval | existing | 24 | 13 | 100 |
| Nutberry | existing | 24 | 6 | 125 |
| Dalquhandy | existing | 24 | 10 | 131 |
| Sanquhar Phase 2 | construction | 1 | 44 | 200 |
| Pencloe (variation) | construction | 3 | 19 | 149.9 |
| Windy Standard-Phase 3[2] | construction | 8 | 20 | 180 |
| Hagshaw Hill Repowering | construction | 22 | 14 | 200 |
| Cumberhead West | construction | 23 | 21 | 200 |
| Douglas West Extension | construction | 24 | 13 | 200 |
| Mill Rig | construction | 24 | 6 | 250 |

*Source: ECU, East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway planning portals*

37. These windfarms create a cluster along the southern side of Nithsdale, and westwards towards Dalmellington. The proposed Development lies within this cluster. Twenty Shilling Hill, Wether Hill and Dersalloch are somewhat separate from this cluster but are seen in context of it from some locations. Further north, a cluster occurs around Hagshaw Hill to Andershaw and Middlemuir west of the M74 corridor, with Kennoxhead further south.

### 6.6.3 Landscape Baseline

38. The Study Area includes a range of landscapes from high hills to broad and narrow valleys.

39. Landscape character is defined as a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one tract of land different from another. Landscape character types (LCTs) refer to distinct tracts of land that are relatively homogenous in character. LCTs are generic in nature and can occur more than once in different parts of the country.

[2] *It is noted that Windy Standard III construction commenced in March 2025.*

40. The LCTs across the Study Area are identified in the Scottish Landscape Character data (NatureScot[3] 2019), as shown on **Figure 6.5**. The proposed Development would be located within an area of open moorland with the existing windfarms and some coniferous plantations, and is covered by LCTs that are typical of the Southern Uplands, including:

    - Southern Uplands – Ayrshire (LCT 81) over the western part of the Site;
    - Southern Uplands with Forest – Dumfries and Galloway (LCT 178) over the central part of the Site;
    - Upper Dale – Dumfries and Galloway (LCT 165) over the slopes into upper Nithsdale, the northern part of the Site; and
    - Southern Uplands – Dumfries and Galloway (LCT 177) a very small part of the eastern Site.

41. Other LCTs that cover the 15 km study area for the assessment are shown on **Figure 6.5**. Upland and valley LCTs interlink along the Southern Uplands Hill range, with lower plateaux and lowlands further to the northwest.

42. The baseline descriptions for each of these LCTs are summarised in **Technical Appendix 6.2.**

### 6.6.4 Designated Areas in the Surrounding Landscape

43. An East Ayrshire Local Landscape Area (LLA) (LLA2 Uplands and Moorlands) covers part of the proposed Development Site and several upland LCTs in this part of East Ayrshire. It includes areas with turbines. The areas immediately over the border into Dumfries and Galloway are not designated. There are no National Scenic Areas within 25 km of the proposed Development. Other designated landscapes within approximately 25 km include:

    - LLA1 River Ayr Valley – approximately 15 km to the northwest at its closest point;
    - LLA3 Doon Valley – approximately 13 km to the west at its closest point;
    - Thornhill Uplands Regional Scenic Area – approximately 5 km southeast; and
    - Galloway Hills RSA – approximately 7 km to the southwest.

44. The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis on **Figure 6.6** indicates that the proposed Development would be visible from the Uplands and Moorlands LLA within which it would partly be located. It would also be visible from other designated landscapes within 25 km listed above.

45. There are no Wild Land Areas (WLA) within 25 km of the proposed Development.

[3] NatureScot was known as Scottish Natural Heritage at that time.

### 6.6.5 Visual Amenity Baseline

46. The landscape around the Study Area changes from settled valley to upland open moorland with forest and existing windfarms. Visibility around the study area is reflective of the topography and woodland cover, with views from within valleys limited or framed by adjacent slopes and woodlands, and views from hill tops are panoramic and long-ranging. There are therefore differing viewing experiences from different parts of the study area:

    - Views from valleys seen by road users, residents, visitors, travellers – views are mainly seen from along roads which tend to follow valley floors or lower slopes (with the exception of a few passes) and from roadside settlements. These views are strongly influenced by local topography and valley slopes as well as roadside and local woodland cover, but can include more distant views along linear valleys; and
    - Views from high ground seen by walkers – walkers tend to be on better known routes, such as the Southern Upland Way, or routes up popular hills and marked paths.

47. For the Study Area therefore, the key visual sensitivities include:

    - Views from the main transport corridors (road or rail) and settlements used by local people and visitors to the area;
    - Views from the Southern Upland Way; and
    - Views from other popular hills.

48. Not all instances of these locations are within the ZTV. The assessment of change to the visual amenity of the Study Area considers these key groups of receptors and uses selected viewpoints to represent them.

### 6.6.6 Cumulative Baseline

49. As set out above, the scenarios considered in the assessment of effects of the phased proposed Development include cumulative development of windfarms.

50. Cumulative windfarms considered in the consented and in-planning scenarios are listed in **Table 6.3** below and shown on **Figures 6.8b** and **6.8c**.

*Table 6.3: Cumulative Windfarms (consented and in-planning) within 25km*

| NAME | STATUS (March 2025) | APPROXIMATE DISTANCE (km) | NUMBER OF TURBINES | TURBINE TIP HEIGHT (m) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sandy Knowe Extension | consented | 1 | 6 | 149.9 |
| Windy Standard 1 Repower | consented | 4 | 8 | 200 |
| Lethans | consented | 5 | 22 | 220 |
| Enoch Hill 2 | consented | 7 | 2 | 149.9 |
| Lethans Extension | consented | 8 | 10 | 251 |
| Greenburn | consented | 9 | 16 | 149.9 |
| Manquhill | consented | 9 | 8 | 200 |

| NAME | STATUS (March 2025) | APPROXIMATE DISTANCE (km) | NUMBER OF TURBINES | TURBINE TIP HEIGHT (m) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shepherds Rig | consented | 11 | 17 | 149.9 |
| Cornharrow (variation) | consented | 11 | 7 | 180 |
| Overhill | consented | 11 | 10 | 180 |
| Kennoxhead Extension | consented | 12 | 8 | 220 |
| Kennoxhead Extension II (Penbreck) | consented | 15 | 14 | 180 |
| Troston Loch | consented | 15 | 14 | 149.9 |
| Glenshimmeroch | consented | 16 | 10 | 200 |
| Margree | consented | 18 | 9 | 200 |
| Divot Hill | consented | 19 | 9 | 200 |
| Knockkippen | consented | 19 | 12 | 180 |
| Hare Craig | consented | 21 | 8 | 230 |
| Knockshinnoch | consented | 21 | 2 | 126.5 |
| Fell | consented | 22 | 9 | 200 |
| Bankend Rig Extension | consented | 23 | 3 | 126.5 |
| Knockman Hill | consented | 22 | 5 | 81 |
| Euchanhead | application | 2 | 21 | 230 |
| Rowancraig | application | 4 | 6 | 180 |
| Herds Hill | application | 4 | 3 | 149 |
| Lorg | application | 5 | 10 | 200 |
| Cloud Hill | application | 5 | 11 | 180 |
| Pencloe Extension | application | 5 | 5 | 149.9 |
| **Appin** | application | 7 | 9 | 200 |
| Greenburn Variation | application | 9 | 14 | 180 |
| Drum | application | 11 | 8 | 220 |
| **South Kyle II** | application | 11 | 11 | 200 |
| Quantans Hill | application | 13 | 14 | 200 |
| **Breezy Hill** | application | 16 | 20 | 149.9 |
| Sclenteuch | application | 22 | 9 | 200 |
| Bankend Rig III | application | 22 | 10 | 250 |
| **Hagshaw West A** | application | 23 | 18 | 230 |
| Overhill Variation | appealed | 12 | 10 | 180 |

*Source: ECU, East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway planning portals*

51. In the consented scenario, Sandy Knowe Extension, Enoch Hill 2 and Windy Standard 1 Repower will be associated with existing clusters close to the Site. There will be larger clusters to the west with Greenburn, Overhill, Knockshinnoch and Knockkippen around North Kyle, and southwards towards the Glenkens (Shepherd's Rig, Cornharrow and those further south). Lethans and its Extension will be located on the north side of Nithsdale. The cluster further north, will be expanded by Kennoxhead Extensions.

52. In the in-planning scenario, these clusters would be further expanded including Pencloes and Euchanhead close to the Site, and Herds Hill and Cloud Hill eastwards along the south side of Nithsdale.

53. There are also a number of windfarms are at scoping stage across the study area, which would further expand the clustering, as illustrated on **Figure 6.8d**. There is one scoping site within 5 km of the proposed Development: Blackwood II, of 7 turbines at 200 m to blade tip, proposed for the hill slopes north of Hare Hill. The scoping scenario is considered briefly below.

## 6.7 Assessment of Potential Effects

### 6.7.1 The Proposed Development

54. The proposed Development is described in full in **Chapter 5: Development Description**, but the elements that have the potential to create landscape and visual effects include:

- Phased development:
  - Phase 1: of 15 turbines of 150 m up to 200 m blade tips; and
  - Phase 2: of 8 turbines of 150 m up to 200 m blade tips.
- Ground level infrastructure including access tracks, crane pads;
- Substation upgrades/extension;
- Battery storage equipment (battery energy storage solutions (BESS));
- Temporary borrow pits;
- Temporary construction and storage compounds and ancillary infrastructure; and
- Planting and works as part of the habitat management plan.

55. Given the size of the proposed turbines, aviation safety lighting would be required, comprising:

- A 2000 candela fixed red light on top of the nacelle of all turbines (with back-up lights on each that would not be lit at the same time);
- These would be of horizontal beam design which would be screened below about -4 degrees from the horizontal, and visible through 360 degrees;
- No tower lights are proposed; and
- The nacelle lights would be operated at 200cd (10%) in conditions of clear visibility beyond 5km (a standard mitigation measure that has been approved by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

56. It is noted that a reduced lighting scheme has been proposed to the CAA, but in advance of a response from the CAA, this assessment considers the worst case scenario in which all turbines are to be lit.

57. The proposed Development would have construction, operation and decommissioning phases. The operational life of the turbines would be 50 years, and effects of the intermediate (Phase 1) stage are considered to be medium term being up to eight years, thereafter, Phase 2 would be considered to be long term, and although ultimately reversible, the proposed Development has been assessed as if it is to be permanent.

### 6.7.2 Construction Effects and Effects on the Site

58. The proposed Development Site is currently a windfarm site hosting HH and HHE turbines. The southern part of the Site is undeveloped and is located within *Southern Uplands* and *Southern Uplands with Forest* LCTs, as described above (see **Figure 6.5**). The host landscape is typical of the wider LCT in this part of the East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway border: being open or forested rounded hills with steep sided narrow valleys. It is generally a large scale landscape, and the landcover of the proposed Development Site is open grass moorland with existing turbines and infrastructure, described further in **Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity**.

59. Given the presence of existing windfarms both on and around the Site, the susceptibility to change by windfarm development is judged to be low. The value of this area is increased further west as the Site is partly within the East Ayrshire Uplands and Moorlands LLA. Overall, the sensitivity of the Site, given the presence of existing turbines, is judged to be low.

### 6.7.3 Effects during Construction

60. During the construction of Phase 1, parts of the proposed Development Site including the HH site and the extension area would become active with the presence of vehicles and decommissioning and construction activities. Deconstruction activities would be associated with the removal of existing turbines and redundant sections of track and infrastructure from the HH site; and construction activities related to construction of new sections of tracks, compounds and laydown areas, import of materials and parts, borrow pit works, crane works associated with putting up the new turbines, establishment of the ground level elements, substation facilities, and reinstatement works at the end of the construction phase. In the extension area further south, similar construction activities would occur. There would be lights on the proposed Development Site during construction, and on moving vehicles. The construction works would be of short term duration and would be reversible, in that construction activities would cease, and Phase 1 operational effects would take over. The extent of physical effects of the works within the proposed Development Site would constitute a small proportion of the proposed Development Site as a whole, the larger part of which would be physically unaffected by either construction works or operation. The magnitude of change to the character and fabric of the Site during construction would be '**Medium**' for the extension area and low for the HH site. Overall, the effect of construction works on the proposed Development Site and its fabric is judged to be **''Not-Significant' ('Minor')** for the short-term duration of the construction period.

61. Effects of activities during the construction phase on the landscape character of areas around the Site would decrease rapidly with distance from the proposed Development and would not constitute 'Significant' effects.

62. During the construction of Phase 2, the HHE site would become active with the presence of vehicles and deconstruction and construction activities. Deconstruction activities would be associated with the removal of existing turbines and redundant sections of track and infrastructure; and construction activities related to construction of new sections of tracks, compounds and laydown areas, import of materials and parts, borrow pit works, crane works associated with putting up the new turbines, and reinstatement works at the end of the construction phase. There would be lights on the Site during construction, and on moving vehicles. The construction works would be of short term duration and would be reversible, in that construction activities would cease, and Phase 2 operational effects would take over. The extent of physical effects of the works would constitute a small proportion of the proposed Development Site as whole. The magnitude of change to the character and fabric of the Site during construction would be **'low'**. Overall, the effect of construction works on the proposed Development Site, and its fabric is judged to be **"Not-Significant' ('Negligible')** for the short-term duration of the Phase 2 construction period.

### 6.7.4 Effects during Decommissioning

63. The decommissioning phase at the end of the operational phase for HHR1 and HHR2 would involve vehicular movements and activity on the Site similar to those during construction, but for the removal of the turbines and reinstatement of ground level features. During this phase the magnitude of change would be **'high'** initially but decreasing as works progress, to 'Negligible' when the Site restoration is complete. Overall, the effects during decommissioning on the Site and its landscape fabric would be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')** reducing to **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible')** upon completion of the short-term works.

### 6.7.5 Landscape Assessment

64. The landscape assessment considered the changes to the character of the surrounding area that would result from the proposed Development during the phased construction and operation. The assessment of effects on landscape character of the study area is set out in **Technical Appendix 6.2**, key findings are set out below.

65. The enlargement of turbines visible on the horizon above Nithsdale and Glen Afton would create significant effects at Phase 1 and if the full proposed Development were to be introduced unphased. Phase 2, introducing additional large turbines and removing HHE would see the reduction in contrasting turbine sizes, but without significant effects. Significant effects identified include:

- LCT 69 Upland River Valleys – Ayrshire: **'Significant' ('Moderate'),** for Nithsdale area in the scenarios Phase 1 +existing; Phase 1+consented; and full proposed Development +existing;
- LCT 73 Upland Glen – Ayrshire: **'Significant' ('Moderate')** for Glen Afton in the scenarios Phase 1 +existing; Phase 1+consented; and full proposed Development +existing; and
- LCT 81 Southern Uplands – Ayrshire: **'Significant' ('Moderate')** for host area in the scenarios Phase 1 +existing; and Phase 1+consented.

66. For other LCTs around the study area, 'Significant' effects would not occur, due largely to the existing presence of wind energy development on the hills of and around the Site.

### 6.7.6 Visual Assessment

67. The visual assessment considers the effects of changes to the views that people would see from the surrounding area as a result of the introduction of the proposed Development to the existing landscape. The assessment was carried out using the methodology set out in **Technical Appendix 6.1**, and considers the scenarios identified above. Accompanying graphics include baseline figures and the ZTVs (**Figures 6.1** to **6.4**) and visualisations (**Figures 6.11** to **6.27**). The assessment of viewpoints is set out in **Technical Appendix 6.3**.

68. Visual receptors are people. The assessment of visual effects considers the changes that people would see in views from various locations around the Study Area, from settlements and from along routes, as well as considering views from representative viewpoints.

69. The visual receptors in the study area for the proposed Development include both local people and visitors. Local people tend to stay on the road network, including all minor roads, and can become recreational users of paths and local trails; visitors tend to keep to main roads or routes such as the Southern Upland Way, and go to honeypot locations and may follow paths up hills.

70. The methodology for the identification of sensitivity of visual receptors is set out in **Technical Appendix 6.1**. It is noted that the viewpoints selected for inclusion in the assessment are almost all selected to represent key or main views. Viewpoints are used as snapshots for representing views seen by receptors on routes, in settlements or at visitor locations, and are not the primary focus of the visual assessment.

### 6.7.7 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

71. ZTV analyses are calculated for Phases 1 and 2, as shown on **Figures 6.1** to **6.3** (and subsequent figures). These figures indicate the maximum theoretical visibility of the turbines of the proposed Development to blade tip height. They are calculated using a bare-ground model that does not take into account local screening by vegetation, buildings or forest. In addition, the ZTV does not indicate how much of any turbine may be seen, i.e. whether visibility at any given point is of blade tips only or full turbines. Despite these caveats, ZTVs are a useful tool to identify areas from which the proposed Development may be visible.

72. The ZTV analyses on **Figures 6.1** to **6.3** indicate that the proposed Development would theoretically be visible from:

- All parts of the Site;
- Nithsdale between Mennock and west of New Cumnock;
- Surrounding hills but few incised valleys except for the Afton Water and Euchan Water valleys;
- Parts of the Ayrshire lowlands around Cumnock, Auchinleck and Mauchline to the northwest; and
- More distant hills and higher slopes that face towards the Site.

73. The ZTVs of Phases 1 and 2 (comparing **Figures 6.3a** with **6.3b**) indicate that the extent of visibility would be similar for both phases, and that Phase 2 would introduce additional turbines rather than extend the ZTV established by HHR1. There would effectively be no locations that have visibility of HHR2 but not HHR1.

74. A comparison of the ZTV for the proposed Development with the existing HH and HHE turbines (**Figure 6.4a**) indicates that there would be some increase in the ZTV (areas with visibility of the proposed Development where existing HH and HHE are not visible). These areas include the Euchan Water valley, small sections of the Afton Water valley, and lower sections of hills facing the Site in other parts of the study area. **Figure 6.4b** is a comparison of visibility between HHR1 and HHE, indicating these parts would be visible together, and where only HHR1 would be visible. A section of Nithsdale between Kirkconnel and Cumnock and much of Glen Afton would have visibility of HHR1 but not HHE.

75. It is noted that the existing HH and HHE are set amongst other existing windfarms and those under construction, which form the current context for the Site. Analysis of combined visibility of the proposed Development with existing windfarms is set out on **Figure 6.9a**, and indicates that for much of the ZTV, there is visibility of existing windfarms other than HH and HHE. Areas of visibility of proposed turbines where there is no visibility of other existing (or construction) windfarms are very limited.

### 6.7.8 Hub height ZTV

76. The ZTV calculated to turbine hub height on **Figure 6.2** illustrates that the hubs of the turbines would theoretically be visible from much of the area covered by the tip ZTV (**Figure 6.1**). The main differences from the tip ZTV (representing areas where some or all turbines would be seen as blades only) would be the number of turbines visible across Nithsdale an the Ayrshire lowlands to the northwest of the Site, from hill tops in the southern part of the study area from which only tips would be visible, and from the slightly lower slopes of hills around the edges of the ZTV in all directions.

77. The hub ZTV can also be used as a proxy for visibility of aviation safety lighting on the hubs of the peripheral turbines, when read in conjunction with **Figure 6.10a** and **6.10b** (see **Technical Appendix 6.6**).

78. It is noted that there are forest plantations in many parts of the study area, and woodlands and vegetation along roadsides and around properties and settlements. Actual visibility of the proposed Development would therefore be more limited than indicated by the ZTV and is explored through the visual assessment.

### 6.7.9 Visual Receptors

79. The assessment considers potential effects on views and visual amenity out to 45 km, with receptors considered for more detailed analysis within approximately 25 km, which is considered to be an appropriate range to include all 'likely' 'significant' effects. Using the ZTV and wireline images as indicators of likely visibility, fieldwork, and an initial assessment of potential effects, the tables below set out the overview of potential visual effects. Some receptor locations are discussed in more detail where effects are considered to be potentially 'Significant' or useful for context, as per the methodology set out in **Technical Appendix 6.1.**

80. Routes are the main way in which people experience the landscape. People at settlements or at static locations (e.g. viewpoints) will have travelled to get there. The experience of routes around the study area are therefore considered first, followed by settlements (everyone passes through or stops at settlements), followed by less frequented routes and paths to specific places such as visitor honeypots. The viewpoints, assessed in **Technical Appendix 6.3**, were selected to represent views from routes, settlements and other places where people go, and are referred to as appropriate.

81. It should be noted that effects should not be double-counted if, for example, a viewpoint lies on a route or is in a settlement for which a separate judgement is made: viewpoints are snapshots selected to be representative of views seen from those routes or settlements.

*Table 6.4: Visual Receptors in the Study Area: Scope of the LVIA*

| RECEPTORS | LOCATION | DISCUSSION |
|---|---|---|
| Road users on main routes | • A76 and the railway along Nithsdale and NW to Cumnock and Kilmarnock (with parallel minor roads);<br>• A713 through Carsphairn and Dalmellington;<br>• M74 corridor;<br>• A701 St John's Town of Dalry to Abington; and<br>• A70 Ayr to Lanark via Cumnock. | • Theoretical visibility from A76 and the railway between Mauchline and Mennock and south of Thornhill;<br>• Theoretical visibility from the A70 Cumnock to Drogan is reduced by roadside vegetation to the section from Drogan to Ochiltree only. This section of the route is over 17 km from the Site, with North Kyle Windfarm close to the route (approximately 6km away). 'Significant' effects for either phase of the proposed Development are therefore unlikely to occur;<br>• Little or no theoretical visibility from other main routes; and<br>• The A76 and the railway corridor are discussed further below. |
| Road users on other routes | • B741 New Cumnock to Dalmellington and Straiton;<br>• B740 and B797 from Sanquhar to Abington;<br>• B729 Carsphairn to Moniaive; and<br>• Minor road along Glen Afton. | • Theoretical visibility from the B741 from New Cumnock to Knockburnie and west of Dalmellington;<br>• Theoretical visibility from within Glen Afton;<br>• Little or no visibility from other routes; and<br>• The B741 and along Glen Afton are discussed further below. |
| Residents of and visitors to larger settlements | • Cumnock and Auchinleck;<br>• New Cumnock; | • Theoretical visibility from Cumnock and Auchinleck, |

| RECEPTORS | LOCATION | DISCUSSION |
|---|---|---|
| | • Sanquhar;<br>• Ayr; and<br>• Kilmarnock. | New Cumnock, and Sanquhar;<br>• From Auchinleck and Cumnock, alterations to distant windfarms over 10 km from the settlements is unlikely to alter the experience of views from within each; and<br>• New Cumnock, and Sanquhar settlements are discussed further below. |
| Residents of and visitors to smaller settlements | • Kirkconnel and Kelloholm;<br>• Catrine and Mauchline;<br>• Dalmellington; and<br>• Thornhill. | • Theoretical visibility from Kirkconnel and Kelloholm, and Catrine and Mauchline<br>• From Catrine and Mauchline, alterations to distant windfarms at around 20 km from the settlements is unlikely to alter the experience of views from within each; and<br>• Kirkconnel and Kelloholm settlements are discussed further below. |
| Residents in private properties within 2-2.5km | • Properties in Nithsdale; and<br>• Properties in Glen Afton. | • Visual effects on the private amenity of local properties are considered in the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment is in **Technical Appendix 6.5**. |
| Recreational walkers in the Southern Uplands | • Southern Upland Way (SUW);<br>• Hills in Dumfries and Galloway; and<br>• Hills in East Ayrshire. | • Theoretical visibility from the SUW including from several hills such as Benbrack, Whing Head, and Lowther Hill;<br>• Theoretical visibility from hills in Dumfries and Galloway, including those on the SUW. Views of existing windfarms from hills are noted[4];<br>• Theoretical visibility from hills in East Ayrshire, including Blackcraig Hill and Cairn Table, and further |

[4] Numerous hills have windfarms in panoramic views, and closer windfarms reduce the visual prominence of those in the distance. These can be represented by Cairnsmore of Carsphairn which has Windy Rig and Windy Standard windfarms in the view in front of HH and HHE. Cairnkinna Hill south of Sanquhar was listed in the Scoping Report as a potential viewpoint but is not used in the assessment as there is no likelihood of significant effects given intervening windfarms.

| RECEPTORS | LOCATION | DISCUSSION |
|---|---|---|
| | | north beyond the Ayr valley; and<br>• The SUW and the other representative hills are considered further below |
| Recreational walkers on local routes and core paths | • Core paths and local routes within 5 km. | • Local paths considered further below. |
| Visitors/tourists at honeypot destinations | • Crawick Multiverse Park;<br>• Dumfries House, Cumnock; and<br>• Drumlanrig Castle. | • Theoretical visibility from Dumfries House but it has a well wooded landscape that contains views;<br>• No theoretical visibility from Drumlanrig Castle.<br>• Theoretical visibility from the Crawick Multiverse Park; and<br>• Crawick Multiverse Park is considered further below. |

### 6.7.10 Routes

*A76 corridor, including the Railway*

Baseline

82. The A76 runs from the Ayrshire lowlands around Kilmarnock and Cumnock, over to Nithsdale at New Cumnock and along the Nithsdale valley to Kirkconnel, Sanquhar, Mennock and south to Thornhill. A railway route also follows this route, and minor roads run parallel to the east and west of the route between Auchinleck and New Cumnock, on the north side of the valley from New Cumnock to Merkland and south of the valley from Kirkconnel to Mennock. These routes are used by local people, visitors and people passing through the area by car or by train. They are considered to be key routes by which the area is experienced by visitors and local people, and sensitivity is judged to be **'Medium'** to take account of potential use by visitors to the area. It is noted that the route corridor passes through LLAs briefly south of Mauchline, between New Cumnock and Corsencon, and south of Mennock (**see Figure 6.6**).

83. Parts of these routes are contained within woodland or with roadside screening:

- From the A76, there are brief distant views of the hills of the Site from south of Crosshands (for approximately 1 km); briefly from Kilmarnock Road at the north edge of Mauchline (approximately 500 m past the National Burns Memorial) and emerging from Mauchline to the south; from the River Ayr crossing to the edge of Auchinleck; past Auchinleck and Cumnock there are no views as the bypass is contained within trees; views open out again south of the Skerrington roundabout, and are generally open till New Cumnock. Views through New Cumnock are intermittently contained by buildings. Between New Cumnock and Kirkconnel, the road runs on the south flank of the valley and views up the south slopes are short and sometimes contained by roadside vegetation. Through Kirkconnel there is some containment by buildings and trees, but between Kirkconnel and Sanquhar, views tend to be open. Through

Sanquhar views are once more contained, before opening out until Mennock, after which the valley narrows and roadsides become wooded;

- From the railway, views are often contained by vegetation along the banks and by cuttings, views of the hills around the Site oblique to the direction of travel (and therefore visible to passengers) are possible from east of New Cumnock to Kirkconnel except around Glen Hall to Netherton (where there are cuttings and woodlands); briefly between Kelloholm and Crawick; east of Sanquhar the angle of view becomes too oblique for many views of the hills around the Site, and the railway turns south into a narrower section of Nithsdale;
- The minor road south of Cumnock to White Knowe and Connel Park is generally open although it passes a number of plantations which screen views of the hills around the Site;
- Open views are possible from sections of the Mansfield to Corsencon minor road east of New Cumnock, except where plantations occur around Mansfield House Merkland; and
- The minor road south of Kirkconnel has views along the valley side towards the Site from around Kelloside and Drumbuie.

84. The current open views when travelling south towards or along Nithsdale are looking across or along a valley towards hillsides (on the south side) that have several groups of turbines that can be distinguished by location and to some degree by size. Some sections of access track for Sanquhar and Whiteside are just visible where they catch the light, e.g. on wet days. The existing HH and HHE are part of these views, on hills south of New Cumnock as a grouping of relatively small turbines that are closer together than the turbines of some of the more recent windfarms. Sandy Knowe turbines are on lower ground to the east, in front of HH and HHE when viewed from around Kelloholm and Sanquhar. Enoch Hill, Afton, Pencloe, Windy Standard (Phases 1 & 2) and South Kyle are visible further west from sections of the routes north of New Cumnock. Sanquhar Windfarm, Sanquhar II (under construction), and Whiteside are further southeast, with Twenty Shilling Hill further east.

85. Representative viewpoints from northwest to southeast include (assessments are summarised in **Technical Appendix 6.3**):

- VP1 Auchinleck
- VP2 Glaisnock Road
- VP3 A76 New Cumnock
- VP4 Merkland
- VP5 A76 Kirkconnel; and
- VP6 Crawick Multiverse Park.

Phase 1:

86. The replacement of HH with HHR1 (whilst retaining HHE), in the context of existing windfarms and those under construction would introduce a number of large turbines on

the northern edge of the hills that form the south side of Nithsdale, on a hill that had small turbines. The extension area turbines would not be as noticeable from this route corridor, being set further south away from the hill edge. The large turbines would be seen at the front (north edge) of the cluster of windfarms in views from the A76 corridor when travelling southbound from around Cumnock to New Cumnock, forming larger and more prominent turbines than those of HH, yet similar to those of Enoch Hill, Pencloe and Sanquhar II. From this direction HHE turbines are set back from the horizon, and there would be little visibility of the contrast in turbine sizes.

87. Travelling westbound from around Sanquhar, HHR1 would be seen beyond the turbines of Sandy Knowe, and of a similar size to them (perspective would mean that size differences may go unnoticed). However, the HHR1 turbines would be seen adjacent to the retained HHE, with which there would be a contrast in turbine sizes unresolvable by perspective but already present in the relationship of Sandy Knowe to HHE.

88. From the section of this route corridor directly north of and closest to the Site, HHR1 would introduce large turbines in place of small ones, on the skyline above the valley. The layout of HHR1 would appear fragmented from locations such as VP4 Merkland, where large turbines would be either side of HHE, but HHE is not visible (or tips only). This would form a gap, with turbines either side of the hill (Hare Hill), between turbines T3 and T6. This interrupted arrangement would contrast with groupings seen in other windfarms.

89. As set out in **Technical Appendix 6.3**, visual effects relating to the relationship between HHR1 and HHE and other existing windfarms and consented would have **'significant'** visual effects on views from the route corridor at VP2, VP3 and VP4. The viewpoint locations are representative of views along different parts of the route corridor, such that it is judged that '**Significant' (moderate)**' effects would occur for the A76 and minor roads south of Cumnock to west of Kirkconnel; and from the railway within the corridor between New Cumnock and Kirkconnel (taking account of screening vegetation and direction of passenger views). This section of the route corridor lies within 10 km of the Site and extends for approximately 18 km; the section of railway affected lies within 4 km of the Site, and extends for approximately 10 km. From Cumnock and further north, views to the Site are distant; and from Kirkconnel and further east, HHR1 would be seen beyond Sandy Knowe and in the context of Sanquhar II and other existing windfarms. Effects for these sections are found to be '**Not Significant ('minor' to 'Negligible')**'.

Phase 1 + Consented:

90. The replacement of HH with HHR1 in the context of existing, construction, and consented windfarms which may be built by the end of the eight year Phase 1 period would Sandy Knowe Extension close to the route west of Sandy Knowe, Lethans and its Extension to the north of Nithsdale, plus Greenburn and Overhill to the west of the route corridor. With this baseline, there would be more turbines present in the wider landscape. HHR1 would relate to Sandy Knowe, its extension, Sanquhar and Sanquhar II, and Enoch Hill, Enoch Hill 2, Afton and Pencloe in most views. However, the changes relating to replacing HH turbines with the large HHR1 turbines in the northern part of the Site would remain as identified for the previous scenario (Phase 1 + existing) and would be '**Significant' (moderate)**' effects for the A76 and minor roads south of Cumnock to west of Kirkconnel; and from the railway within the corridor between New Cumnock and Kirkconnel.

Phase 2 + Consented:

91. The replacement of HHE with HHR2 (assuming that HHR1 would be present), in the context of existing, construction, and consented windfarms, would not be very noticeable in views from the northwest north of New Cumnock, as HHE is not visible, and HHR2 would be a few additional turbines within the array of HHR1 and Sanquhar II. **'Not-Significant' ('Minor' to 'Negligible')** effects are identified for this section of the route corridor.

92. From westbound sections of the route corridor, the removal of HHE and replacement with turbines of a size more similar to HHR1, Sandy Knowe and its extension, and Sanquhar and Sanquhar II would simplify the visual image by removing the contrast in turbine sizes. As identified for VP4 and VP5, this would be a beneficial change, but effects are considered to be '**Not-Significant' ('Minor')** overall.

93. From the section of Nithsdale to the north of the Site, as represented by VP4 Merkland, the replacement of HHE turbines which are not readily visible from this location with the larger turbines of HHR2 would resolve the unbalanced nature of the HHR1 layout by introducing visible turbine hubs between turbines T3 and T6. Although more turbines would be visible, the overall composition would be improved. As such, **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')** beneficial effects would occur for the area between New Cumnock and Corsencon, seen from the railway, minor road past Merkland, and to a lesser extent from the A76 which is on the south side of Nithsdale at this point. This section of the route corridor lies within 4 km of the Site and extends approximately for 6 km east to west.

Phase 2 + In Planning:

94. The replacement of HHE with HHR2, in the context of HHR1, existing, construction, consented and proposed windfarms currently in planning, would not have so different a baseline that effects identified in the previous scenario would be altered: '**Not-Significant (minor)**' beneficial effect.

Full proposed Development:

95. The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (as if un-phased) would be similar to Phase 1 but without the contrasts with smaller turbines of HHE as they would all have been replaced. This would effectively be Phase 1 partly mitigated by Phase 2.

96. When travelling southbound from around Cumnock to New Cumnock, as HHE turbines are set back from the horizon, there would be little difference between this scenario and the effect identified for Phase 1 above: **'Not-Significant' ('Minor' to 'Negligible').**

97. From east of Kelloholm, the proposed turbines of HHR1 and HHR2 would be seen beyond Sandy Knowe and Sanquhar and Sanquhar II, as fewer larger turbines than at present. They would form a more continuous array with a smaller gap between turbines than there is between Sanquhar and HHE. Whilst more turbines would be larger, there would be fewer in total, and the overall balance of the combined array would be better without the contrasts in turbine sizes seen at present. Overall, the magnitude of change is judged to be **'Low'**: **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

98. For the closest section of the route corridor within Nithsdale between New Cumnock and Kelloholm, the proposed Development would introduce large turbines in place of small ones, on the skyline above the valley. These would be noticeably larger than the existing turbines of HH and HHE but would not form an unbalanced array as for Phase 1. The

turbines would be larger and more prominent on the skyline of Hare Hill but would be fewer in number. '**Significant' ('Moderate')** would occur for the area between New Cumnock and Corsencon, seen from the railway, minor road past Merkland, and to a lesser extent from the A76 which is on the south side of Nithsdale at this point. This section of the route corridor lies within 4 km of the Site and extends approximately for 6 km east to west.

*B741 New Cumnock to Dalmellington and Straiton*

Baseline

99. The route runs from New Cumnock south-westwards up the upper Nith valley before passing over into the River Doon Valley at Dalmellington and on to Straiton passing close to Dersalloch Windfarm. It is a relatively well used B road, used by local people and visitors. It runs along the edge of a Special Landscape Area (SLA) between New Cumnock and Maneight and crosses the Doon Valley SLA passing Craigengillan Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL). The susceptibility of change to the experience of the route by additional windfarm development is judged to be reduced by the proximity of Enoch Hill, South Kyle, Pencloe, North Kyle and Dersalloch windfarms, and the sensitivity is judged to be **'Medium'**.

100. The ZTV indicates theoretical visibility of the proposed Development (both phases) would occur briefly west of Dalmellington and between Maneight and New Cumnock. Woodland or roadside screening reduces some open views, but the road is generally open and is within 4 to 9 km of the Site.

101. For the section west of Dalmellington, South Kyle and other windfarms east of Dalmellington are located between the route and the proposed Development Site, such that significant effects arising from the proposed Development (either phase) are 'Unlikely' to occur.

102. A representative viewpoint from the section from Maneight to New Cumnock is VP7 at Knockburnie, with VP3 New Cumnock representing easternmost sections.

Phase 1

103. HHE is visible from this route around VP7, and the replacement of HH with HHR1 either side of HHE would introduce turbines noticeably larger, and of contrasting size. At around VP7, there would be a gap in the HHR1 layout (where HHE is) which would appear somewhat unbalanced. From further east down the route, the view would change as HHR1 turbines would be in front of HHE, before HHE turbines are no longer visible such as at VP7 within New Cumnock. From the eastern part of the route therefore, the contrast in turbine sizes would not be perceptible. Overall, given the visibility of windfarms from this route (including North Kyle to the west and Enoch Hill to the south), the effect of fewer but larger turbines either side of HHE is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')** between Maneight and New Cumnock, a section of approximately 7.5 km.

Phase 1 + Consented

104. The replacement of HH with HHR1 in the context of Overhill and Greenburn adjacent to North Kyle to the north of the route, and Lethans and its Extension and Kennoxhead Extension (1&2) on the north side of Nithsdale would be similar to the effects identified in the previous scenario, although the presence of wind energy development in the wider landscape would have increased. No change in effect: **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

### Phase 2 + Consented

105. The replacement of HHE with HHR2 (assuming that HHR1, existing, construction, and consented windfarms would be present), would remove the contrasts between different turbine sizes, and resolve the balance of the array by infilling the gap left in HHR1 (for HHE). Although more turbines would be visible, the overall appearance of the proposed Development would be improved. **'Not Significant' ('Minor')** beneficial effect.

### Phase 2 + In Planning

106. Whilst other windfarms in planning would be present in the wider landscape, the closest to the route being South Kyle II, the alteration to the experience of the route as a result of the replacement of HHE with HHR2 would not be altered from the previous scenario. '**Not-Significant' ('Minor')** beneficial effect.

### Full proposed Development

107. The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (as if un-phased) would be similar to Phase 1 but without the contrasts with smaller turbines of HHE or the gap in the array (some of the effects of Phase 1 would be partly mitigated by Phase 2). Overall, and given the presence of existing and under construction windfarms close to the route, the magnitude of change to the experience of route and views from it is judged to be low. **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

*Minor road along Glen Afton*

### Baseline

108. This route runs up Glen Afton New Cumnock to the Afton Reservoir, along the narrow valley floor. As a no-through road, it is used by local residents, workers and people accessing the reservoir for recreational purposes. This route up Glen Afton is within a SLA, and the C10 Coalfield Cycle Route runs along it. HH and HHE are visible from this route to the east, Sanquhar II turbines are visible to the southeast. Afton and Pencloe Windfarms are seen from and accessed via this route (southwest). The sensitivity of the route is judged to be '**Medium**'.

109. The ZTVs indicate that theoretical visibility of HHR1 would occur all along this route, and that one turbine of HHR2 would be visible from most of it also. Much of the route has open views of the steep sided valley, although views are contained by woodland or with roadside screening from lower sections around Laight.

110. Viewpoint VP8 Glen Afton, near Craigdarroch is representative.

### Phase 1

111. The replacement of HH with HHR1 (whilst retaining HHE), in the context of existing windfarms and those under construction would introduce 3 to 4 tall turbines on the horizon to the east above the valley, where currently there are numerous smaller turbines. HHE would remain as one turbine blade visible from around Lochingerroch, but there would be no perceived contrasts in scale. This would mean that larger but fewer turbines would be seen on the east side of the valley. In locations with views of Sanquhar II, Afton/Pencloe and HHR1, there would be a similarity of scale and differences would be read as perspective. The magnitude of change to the views within the valley would be 'low' to '**Medium**' as existing turbines are located on the horizons to the valley, albeit that the proposed turbines would be larger. Overall, the effect of the route as a whole is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')**.

### Phase 1 + Consented

112. Enoch Hill 2 would be present on the hill ridges west of Glen Afton and visible from some sections of the minor road. The replacement of HH with HHR1 in the context of existing, construction, and consented windfarms would be similar to the previous scenario: '**Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

### Phase 2 + Consented

113. The replacement of HH with HHR2 in the context of existing, construction, and consented windfarms, would be the replacement of one blade of HHE with an additional large and readily visible turbine of HHR2. T18 would be seen from most of the route on the horizon to the east amongst the turbines of HHR1. T16 would be visible from a short section further up the glen. HHR2 would increase the presence of large turbines close to the glen but would have a low magnitude of change overall. **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

### Phase 2 + In Planning

114. Pencloe Extension would be to the west of the valley, but other windfarms in planning would be located further away. The effects of the proposed Development would be similar to those identified above. '**Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

### Full proposed Development

115. The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (un-phased) would be similar to Phase 1 but with 1 to 2 more turbines visible (those of HHR2). Overall, and given the presence of existing and under construction windfarms around the glen and visible from the minor road, the magnitude of change to the experience of route and views from it is judged to be **'Low'**. **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

## 6.7.11 Settlements

*New Cumnock*

### Baseline

116. New Cumnock is located on the Nith valley floor, with most of the settlement on the south side of the river, but the Pathhead/Mansfield area to the north. The railway runs through New Cumnock north of the river. Buildings and vegetation of the settlements screen many views, but views to hills to the southeast are generally possible.

117. Windfarms on the hills to the south include HH, High Park Farm, Afton, Enoch Hill and Sandy Knowe, with North Kyle to the west. Pencloe, and Sanquhar II are under construction, and other windfarms are visible southwest. HHE is visible as a few tips only.

118. A representative viewpoint is VP3 A76 New Cumnock.

### Phase 1

119. The replacement of HH with HHR1 (whilst retaining HHE), in the context of existing windfarms and those under construction would see the small turbines visible on the horizon to the southeast replaced by larger turbines. These would be fewer in number than for HH and would form an irregular array. They would be noticeably closer than Sandy Knowe or Pencloe, and larger in the view than High Park Farm. As HHE is not readily visible, there would not be noticeable contrasts in scale.

120. Windfarms exist on the hills to the southeast of the settlement and the change would be replacing smaller with larger turbines rather than introducing new features. It is noted that

a significant visual effect is identified for VP3 on the railway bridge. However, the overall experience of the settlement, with some views outwards to hills with windfarms, would be altered with a **'Low'** magnitude of change. Overall, the effect is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

### Phase 1 + Consented

121. With consented windfarms present, Sandy Knowe Extension turbines would be seen in front of Sandy Knowe, with Greenburn and Overhill around North Kyle, and Lethans and its Extension on the hills north of Nithsdale. The change to the views southeast would remain similar to previous scenario: **'Low'** magnitude of change, '**Not-Significant' ('Minor')** effect.

### Phase 2 + Consented

122. The replacement of HHE with HHR2 would be seen as between one and three additional blade tips beyond HHR1, without altering the view noticeably: **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible')** effect.

### Phase 2 + In Planning

123. Additional windfarms in the wider landscape would not alter the effects of HHR2: **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible').**

### Full proposed Development

124. The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (un-phased) would be similar to Phase 1, but with a few additional tips (of HHR2). The overall experience of the settlement, with some views outwards to hills with windfarms, would be altered with a **'Low'** magnitude of change. Overall, the effect is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

*Sanquhar*

### Baseline

125. Sanquhar is located in Nithsdale, on the northeast side of the river. Views westwards to hills with windfarms are possible from some places within the settlement, although buildings and vegetation screen many views.

126. Windfarms on the hills to the south include Sanquhar, Whiteside and Twenty Shilling Hill, with Sanquhar II (under construction) beyond and Sandy Knowe on the lower slopes of the valley further west and HH and HHE above.

127. A representative viewpoint is VP6 Crawick Multiverse Park.

### Phase 1

128. The replacement of HH with HHR1 (whilst retaining HHE), would replace some of the smaller turbines beyond Sandy Knowe with fewer larger turbines, of a more similar scale to Sandy Knowe and Sanquhar II. The juxtaposition of different turbine sizes would be somewhat more noticeable with the HHR1 turbines on the hilltop. Given the distance to the Site (over 10 km), the presence of existing and intervening windfarms in the view, and the screening within the settlement, the magnitude of change to views and the experience of the settlement is judged to be **'low'**: '**Not-Significant' ('Negligible'**).

### Phase 1 + Consented

129. Sandy Knowe Extension, Lethans and its Extension would increase the presence of turbines in the hills around Nithsdale. The magnitude of changes in the experience of the settlement due to HHR1 would remain **'Low'**: **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible').**

### Phase 2 + Consented

130. The replacement of HHE with HHR2 would resolve contrasts in turbine sizes between HHE and HHR1 and create a more coherent array over the horizon of Hare Hill. This simplification of the image of multiple windfarms on the hills to the south of the valley would be an improvement but would remain a **'Low'** magnitude of change: **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible')** positive effect.

### Phase 2 + In Planning

131. Rowancraig, Herds Hill, and Cloud Hill would be in front of Sanquhar and Whiteside, and Euchanhead, Lorg and Appin would be seen beyond. In this situation, there would be a similar resolution of contrasts in turbine size, but a smaller overall magnitude of change to the view compared to the previous scenario and would be **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible')** positive effect.

### Full proposed Development

132. The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (un-phased) would be similar to Phase 1, but with additional large turbines (of HHR2), and removal of contrasting turbine sizes. The overall experience of the settlement, with some views outwards to hills with windfarms, would be altered with a 'low' magnitude of change. Overall, the effect is judged to be '**Not-Significant' ('Negligible').**

*Kirkconnel and Kelloholm*

### Baseline

133. Kirkconnel and Kelloholm are located in Nithsdale, either side of the river. Although buildings and vegetation screen many views, views south and south-westwards to hill slopes with windfarms are possible from some places within the settlement.

134. Windfarms on the hills to the south include Sanquhar, Whiteside and Twenty Shilling Hill, with Sanquhar II (under construction) beyond and Sandy Knowe on the slopes of the valley further west and HH and HHE above.

135. Representative viewpoints include:

- VP5 A76 Kirkconnel; and;
- VP9 Kelloholm Cemetery.

### Phase 1

136. The replacement of HH with HHR1 would replace some of the smaller turbines beyond Sandy Knowe with fewer larger turbines, of a more similar scale in the view to Sandy Knowe and Sanquhar II. The juxtaposition of different turbine sizes would be similar to existing contrasts between Sandy Knowe and HH/HHE. Given the presence of existing and intervening windfarms in the view and screening within the settlement, the magnitude of change to views and the experience of the settlement is judged to be ''**low: 'Not-Significant' ('Negligible')**.

Phase 1 + Consented

137. Sandy Knowe Extension would be beyond Sandy Knowe, and Lethans and its Extension would be to the north of Nithsdale. The magnitude of changes in the experience of the settlement due to HHR1 would remain **'Low'**: **'Not Significant' ('Negligible').**

Phase 2 + Consented

138. The replacement of HHE with HHR2 would resolve contrasts in turbine sizes between HHE and HHR1 and create a simpler visual image of multiple windfarms on the hills to the south of the valley. **'Low'** magnitude of change: **'Not Significant' ('Negligible').**

Phase 2 + In Planning

139. Rowancraig, Herds Hill, and Cloud Hill would be in front of Sanquhar and Whiteside. In this situation, there would be a similar resolution of contrasts in turbine size, but a smaller overall magnitude of change to the view compared to the previous scenario. These effects would be **'Not Significant' ('Negligible').**

Full proposed Development

140. The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (un-phased) would be similar to Phase 1, but with additional large turbines (of HHR2), and removal of contrasting turbine sizes. The overall experience of the settlement, with some views outwards to hills with windfarms, would be altered with a **'Low'** magnitude of change. Overall, the effect is judged to be **'Not Significant' ('Negligible').**

### 6.7.12 Recreational Routes and Hills

*Southern Upland Way and Hills in Dumfries & Galloway*

Southern Upland Way

141. **Baseline** It is understood that the SUW is generally walked from west to east, though not exclusively. The experience of the route in an eastbound direction is therefore considered first.

142. **Eastbound walkers:** North of St John's Town of Dalry, the SUW runs over relatively low undulating hills to Stroanfreggan, before climbing to higher hills over Manquill Hill and Benbrack, then down to Polskeoch, before climbing over the Cloud Hill – Whing Head ridge to Nithsdale. It crosses Nithsdale at Sanquhar, climbing to Conrig Hill and Glengaber Hill on the way to Wanlockhead, Lowther Hill, and eastwards to Dear Reservoir, Hod's Hill and Moffat.

143. The route passes several existing windfarms, the closest being Whiteside Hill and Clyde Windfarm, with Twentyshilling Hill, Wether Hill and Sanquhar windfarms also being close to the route. Sanquhar II, under construction, will straddle the route. Views from hill tops include multiple windfarms.

144. HH and HHE are visible from the route as being between Windy Standard and Sandy Knowe, the closest point of the route is at Polskeoch, but the closest section with visibility of these windfarms is over Cloud Hill and Whing Head approximately 4.5 km away.

145. Representative viewpoints are assessed in **Technical Appendix 6.3** and include:

- VP10 SUW Benbrack;
- VP11 Whing Head;

- VP6 Crawick Multiverse Park;
- VP12 SUW below Conrig Hill; and
- VP13 Lowther Hill.

146. The SUW is a popular long distance recreational route and is considered to be of **'High'** sensitivity.

147. **Phase 1: Figure 6.3a** indicates that HHR1 would be visible over Manquhill Hill to the descent to Polskeoch; between Whing Head and Conrig Hill across Nithsdale, and then briefly over Lowther Hill and Hod's Hill.

148. The replacement of HH with HHR1 (whilst retaining HH), in the context of existing windfarms and those under construction would introduce larger turbines around the group of HHE. From the section from Manquhill Hill to Polskeoch, HHR1 would enlarge the group of turbines to the northwest, albeit beyond Sanquhar II, and introduce a contrast in turbine sizes amongst those relatively distant from the route as illustrated by VP10 Benbrack, for which a '**Not Significant' ('minor')** effect is identified in **Technical Appendix 6.3.**

149. From Whing Head to the climb up to Conrig Hill north of Sanquahar, HHR1 would be seen as additional large turbines beyond existing windfarms, and although contrasts in turbine size would be evident, it would not create significant effects (see VP11 Whing Head, VP12 below Conrig Hill, identified as having **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')** effects).

150. From over Lowther Hill and Hod's Hill, HHR1 would be more distant: VP13 on Lowther Hill was identified as having **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')** effects.

151. Overall, at no section would the proposed Development be closer to the SUW than other existing or under construction windfarms, and although differences in turbine sizes would be visible and turbines of HHR1 would be larger than some of the existing turbines visible, the magnitude of change to the experience of the SUW would not be altered, and the effect is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')**

152. **Phase 1 + consented:** The replacement of HH with HHR1 in the context of existing, construction, and consented windfarms including Manquill, Cornharrow and Shepherds Rig south of Benbrack, would be seen as extending the range of large turbines into the distance, but not closer to the route. The effect would be **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible').**

153. **Phase 2 + consented:** The replacement of HHE with HHR2 (assuming that HHR1 would be present), in the context of existing, construction, and consented windfarms, would introduce more large turbines beyond western turbines of Sanquhar II, but would also simplify the arrays as the smaller turbines with denser spacing would be removed. Although improved slightly, overall, the effect would be **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible').**

154. **Phase 2 + in planning:** In this scenario, the SUW would run through the Lorg site as well as through Sanquhar II. The replacement of HHE with HHR2, in the context of HHR1, existing, construction, consented and proposed windfarms currently in planning, would be beyond Sanquhar II and Lorg turbines for the Benbrack section, and beyond Cloud Hill, Herds Hill and Rowancraig from the Wether Hill section. The effect would be **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible').**

155. **Full proposed Development**: The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (as if un-phased) would be similar to Phase 1 but without the contrasts with smaller turbines of HHE. Overall, and given the presence of existing and under construction windfarms close to the route, the magnitude of change to the experience of route and views from it is judged to be **'Not-Significant' (minor).**

*Hills in East Ayrshire*

*Blackcraig Hill*

156. **Baseline:** Blackcraig Hill is located to the east of Glen Afton, and at 700 m AOD is one of the higher hills in the Southern Uplands, and the highest point in the local area. it has views over the hills, as well as northwards over Upper Nithsdale and to the Ayrshire lowlands. Windfarms are visible nearby, including HH and HHE on lower slopes below the hill to the north (the closest turbine is approximately 2.1 km away); and Afton Windfarm to the southwest across the steep sided Glen Afton (the closest turbine is approximately 2.8 km away). The closest turbine of Sanquhar II, under construction, will be approximately 1.3 km away to the south.

157. VP14 is at the cairn on the summit of Blackcraig Hill, to the north of the trig point.

158. Blackcraig Hill is accessed via a track up from Blackcraig Farm in Glen Afton to the ridge at Quintin Knowe. There are worn paths to the summit indicating that it is visited by walkers. The susceptibility of change to the view, given the presence of existing windfarms in several directions, is judged to be **'Low'**, but it is valued as being a hill within the East Ayrshire LLA Uplands and Moorlands. Overall, the sensitivity is judged to be **'Medium'** sensitivity.

159. **Phase 1:** The replacement of HH with HHR1 would introduce larger turbines closer to the hill to the northeast (the repowering turbines) and east (the southwards extension). T11 would be approximately 1.2 km from the summit to the southeast, with T10 approximately 1.4 km away to the east. The base of T11 would be on Earlseat Hill at approximately 540 m AOD, such that the hub height would be lower than the hill, but the tip height (of up to 180 m) would be approximately 720 m AOD. Tip heights of the other closest turbines, T10, T12, and T9 would also be at around 700 m AOD. The view from the summit would therefore be looking down at the turbine hubs, with the blade tips passing at roughly horizontal. Sanquhar II turbines, under construction to the south, will be on higher elevations over Blacklorg Hill, and several will therefore be higher than the turbines of HHR1. The turbines would be larger and closer than the existing HHE, and ground level infrastructure would also extend across the slopes below the hill summit, around the head of the Kello Water valley. Retained sections of HH tracks may also be visible over Hare Hill but beyond HHE.

160. The retained HHE would contrast with the new turbines of HHR1, and the difference in size would be obvious to viewers. The magnitude of change to the view, with turbines as additional and larger features spreading further to the southeast and closer to the viewpoint, would be **'Medium'** given the proximity to the turbines. Overall, the effects is judged to be **'Significant' ('Moderate).**

161. **Phase 1 + consented:** Sandy Knowe extension, Enoch Hill 2 and Windy Standard 1 Repower will be further from this viewpoint than the turbines of Sanquhar II and HHE. In this context, the key relationship will be with Sanquhar II, and the northern HHR1 turbines would contrast with HHE in the same way as for the previous scenario, albeit with Lethans and its

Extension visible beyond. Other consented windfarms would be present in the wider panorama further from the viewpoint. Overall, the magnitude of change to the view would be similar Phase 1, and would be '**Medium**', and the effect would be '**Significant' ('Moderate').**

162. **Phase 2 + consented:** The replacement of HHE with HHR2 (assuming that HHR1 would be present), in the context of existing, construction, and consented windfarms, would resolve the size contrasts between HHR1 and HHE nearby to the northeast, and create a more balanced layout of turbines (albeit all larger). The closest turbines to the viewpoint, of HHR1, would remain unchanged, although HHR2 would also be within approximately 1.8 to 3 km. From this elevated viewpoint the remaining HHE infrastructure (in particular tracks) would remain visible within the HHR2 layout. Overall, the magnitude of change would be **'Low'** and the effect would be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')**, but it would be an improvement to the arrays of turbines visible.

163. **Phase 2 + in planning:** The closest windfarm currently in planning would be Euchanhead (amongst Sanquhar II), with other windfarms further away. In this context, the replacement of HHE with HHR2 would resolve the contrasts in turbine size on the hill slopes to the northeast but would not alter the relationship between HHR1 and Sanquhar II and other cumulative windfarms identified in the previous scenario. **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')** positive effect.

164. **Full proposed Development**: The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (as if un-phased) would be similar to Phase 1 but without the contrasts with the smaller turbines of HHE. Development would replace the dense grouping of small turbines northeast of the viewpoint with an array of larger, more widely spaced turbines. These would extend southwards and form the closest turbines to the viewpoint. Overall, and given the presence of existing and under construction windfarms around the panorama, the magnitude of change to the view would be similar Phase 1. The magnitude of change is judged to be '**medium'**, and the visual effect would be '**Significant' ('Moderate').**

*Cairn Table*

165. **Baseline:** Cairn Table is located on the East Ayrshire – South Lanarkshire Council boundary, and at 593 m AOD is the highest point in the hills between Nithsdale and the Ayr valley. 360° panoramic views from the summit in the Southern Uplands include open moorland hills with extensive areas of forest and existing windfarms in several directions. The closest windfarm to Cairn Table is Kennoxhead Phase 1 at approximately 2.5 km to the east. To the south beyond Nithsdale, multiple windfarms include HH and HHE as small turbines between Sandy Knowe and Afton. Sanquhar II is under construction beyond.

166. VP15 is at the summit of Cairn Table, at the trig point. It is a hill visited by walkers and is accessed from Muirkirk via a track up the northwest facing flanks of the hill. The susceptibility of change to the view, given the presence of existing windfarms in several directions, is judged to be low, and it is valued as a summit within the East Ayrshire LLA Uplands and Moorlands. Overall, the sensitivity is judged to be **'Medium'**.

167. **Phase 1:** The replacement of HH with HHR1 (whilst retaining HHE), in the context of existing windfarms and those under construction would introduce large turbines around the small turbines of HHE on hills to the south. The juxtaposition of different turbine sizes, between

HHR1 and HHE, Sandy Knowe and Sanquhar II, would be legible from this elevated location, with contrasts between adjacent turbine groups.

168. Whilst the change to HHR1 would not alter the character of the view (replacing turbines amongst turbines), it would increase the contrasts in turbine sizes between windfarms to the southwest. Given the distance to the Site, and the presence of multiple groups of turbines in the wider panorama, the magnitude of change is judged to be **'Low'** overall, **'Not-Significant' ('negligible).**

169. **Phase 1 + consented:** In this scenario, Kennoxhead Extension and Extension II would be the closest windfarm to the viewpoint, approximately 2.2 km to the southeast. Lethans and its Extension would be beyond, in front of Nithsdale. Sandy Knowe Extension would be beyond Nithsdale, merging with turbine groups present. HHE would remain as small turbines in front of Sanquhar II.

170. With more turbines present, the role of HHR1 in the panorama would be diminished. It would be of similar contrast with the small size of HHE as with Sanquhar II.

171. The magnitude of change would be reduced with other windfarms present, and the effect would be **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible').**

172. **Phase 2 + consented**: In this scenario, HHR2 would replace the small turbines of HHE with fewer turbines of a size and spacing more in keeping with HHR1, Sanquhar II, and Sandy Knowe and its extension. This would simplify the image of multiple windfarms in this direction as they would all be of a similar scale.

173. Overall, the magnitude of change would be '**low'** and the effect would be '**Not-Significant' ('Negligible')**, but it would be an improvement to the arrays of turbines visible.

174. **Phase 2 + in planning:** In this scenario, Drum windfarm would be approximately 8 km to the west, and the number of windfarms to the south of Nithsdale would also be increased.

175. There would be a similar resolution of contrasts in turbine size around Hare Hill to the previous scenario, but a smaller overall magnitude of change as a result of HHR2 amongst more windfarms. Overall, the magnitude of change would be **'Low'** and the effect would be **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible')**, but it would be an improvement to the arrays of turbines visible.

176. **Full proposed Development:** The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (as if un-phased) would be similar to Phase 1 but without the contrasts with the smaller turbines of HHE. HHR1 and HHR2 would replace the smaller HH and HHE turbines with fewer larger turbines beyond Nithsdale and beyond Sandy Knowe. Turbine sizes would be more in keeping with other windfarms, reducing the contrasts that occur at present.

177. Overall, and given the presence of existing and under construction windfarms around the panorama, the magnitude of change to the view would be less than for Phase 1, the magnitude of change is judged to be **'Low'**, and the visual effect would be **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible').**

## Local Paths

178. There are various public footpaths, including Core Paths, Rights of Way and long distance paths within the study area as well as established routes to popular hill summits.

179. The SUW is considered above, as are the summits of Blackcraig Hill (see VP14) and Cairn Table (see VP15).

180. Within approximately 5 km, there are paths that have theoretical visibility of the proposed Development:

- Path from Blackcraig – Quintin Knowe – Kello Water Valley;
- CP 84 Kirkconnel to Mynwhirn Hill via Corserig and Hillend (Dumfries & Galloway);
- CP 443 Bank Hill to Graystone Hill (Dumfries & Galloway), up the Euchan Water valley;
- C10 Coalfield Cycle Route (East Ayrshire), along Glen Afton to Jedburgh Knees west of Afton Reservoir;
- C11 Knockshinnoch Lagoons, C12 New Cumnock Circular, west of New Cumnock around Knockshinnoch Lagoons and around Bankglen and Lanemark);
- C13 Castle path (East Ayrshire) along the river within New Cumnock; and
- C14 Glen Afton (East Ayrshire), along the lower Afton Water from New Cumnock to Dalhanna.

### *Path from Blackcraig – Quintin Knowe – Kello Water Valley*

181. **Baseline**: This route runs over Quintin Knowe from Blackcraig Farm in Glen Afton to the Kello Water valley upstream of Hillend, entirely within 2 km of the proposed Development. The path is a track up the Glen Afton sides, but in the Kello Water it is less clearly marked. From the eastern half, views from the west-facing slopes of Glen Afton include views of that valley and forested hills beyond with windfarms including Pencloe, Afton and the Windy Standard group to the southwest, and North Kyle under construction in the distance to the northwest. From the eastern half descending into the Kello Water valley past HHE, views are across than narrow valley with views of Sanquhar II, Sanquhar and Sandy Knowe windfarms reducing as the path descends. From the top of the path on Quintin Knowe, views are possible in both directions, and northwards over the HHE and HH sites. Southwards is up the slopes to the top of Blackcraig Hill. The route crosses open moorland. The closest turbines to the route are those of HHE, the descent into the Kello Water valley passes approximately 180 m from the nearest turbine.

182. The susceptibility to change with existing windfarms close to the route is judged to be low. It is a local path and is considered to be of '**Low**' sensitivity.

183. **Phase 1**: HHR1 turbines would be seen both north and south of the route from the high section over Quintin Knowe. The access track for the southern (extension) turbines would cross the route just east of the ridge at Quintin Knowe. The closest turbine, T9, would be approximately 80 m from the route at its closest point. Redundant sections of access track between HH turbine locations would be visible from high parts of the route.

184. Although this route passes a windfarm, it would change to a route passing through a windfarm, and the differences in turbine sizes and spacing between HHE and HHR1 would be very noticeable from the high section of the route. The magnitude of change as a result of direct effects (at the track crossing) and views of larger turbines both south and north is judged to be 'high' and the effect is judged to be '**Significant' ('Major').**

185. **Phase 1 + consented:** In this scenario, Sandy Knowe Extension would be visible from the eastern half of the route, on the hills north of the route (the closest turbine approximately 1.9 km from the route).

186. HHR1 would be the closest turbines to the route, as for the previous scenario. The magnitude of change would remain 'high' and the effect is judged to remain '**Significant' ('Major')**.

187. **Phase 2 + consented:** Phase 2 would see the removal of HHE adjacent to the route to the north, and its replacement by the fewer, larger turbines of HHR2. The tracks of HHE would be reused in sections, but redundant sections would be visible from the route at its highest point. The closest turbine to the route would be T22, at approximately 45 m from the path. The contrasts in turbine size would be removed with the removal of HHE, but the turbines of HHR2 would be larger and more widely spaced. With HHR1 present, the magnitude of change to the experience of the route would be 'Medium' and the effect is judged to be **'Significant' ('Moderate').**

188. **Phase 2 + in planning:** In this scenario, windfarms in planning would be further from the route than existing, under construction or consented windfarms and would not alter the effect of HHR2 on the path. The magnitude of change to the experience of the route would remain 'Medium' and the effect '**Significant' ('Moderate').**

189. **Full proposed Development:** The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (as if un-phased) would see the replacement of all smaller turbines of HHE and HH on the north side of the route with the fewer larger turbines of the proposed Development, over Hare Hill and around the upper Kello Water valley, to the north and south of the route. The access track would cross the path east of Quintin Knowe, and the old tracks of HH and HHE would be seen amongst the new turbines and their new sections of access track. Although this route passes a windfarm, it would change to a route passing through a windfarm with large turbines close to the path. The magnitude of change as a result of direct effects (at the track crossing) and views of larger turbines both south and north is judged to be, and the effect is judged to be '**Significant' ('Major')**.

*Core Path CP 84 Kirkconnel to Mynwhirn Hill*

190. **Baseline**: This route runs up the south side of Nithsdale from the western edge of Kikconnel, via Corserig and Coresrig Hill, before crossing the Kello Water valley onto Carcarse and Well Hill before dropping down to the Euchan Water valley (where it joins CP443). A spur off the route runs up the Kello Water valley to beyond Hillend (linking with the path over Quintin Knowe).

191. The route passes through several coniferous plantations (at varying stages of growth/felling), and forms part of the access to Sandy Knowe Windfarm. It therefore has views of existing windfarms, the closest being Sandy Knowe, with turbines approximately 210 m from the route across the Polbroc Burn below Corserig Hill, and Sanquhar turbines also being close to the route over Well Hill (approximately 230 m from the route).

Sanquhar II (under construction) will be close the route south of Euchanhead (approximately 260 m from the path). The closest HHE turbine is approximately 330 m from the route southwest of Hillend. The route does not go over hill tops but follows tracks though forested plantations below the hill tops.

192. The susceptibility to change with existing windfarms close to the route is judged to be low. It is valued as a core path and is considered to be of **'Medium'** sensitivity.

193. **Phase 1:** In this scenario, HHR1 turbines would be seen from open sections of the route past Corserig where they would be larger turbines beyond Sandy Knowe. Descending into the Kello Water valley the turbines of the Extension would be visible to the north and south of the turbines of HHE with sizes more similar to Sandy Knowe and Sanquhar than to HHE. The rotor of T9 would be visible beyond turbines of HHE. From the slopes on the south side of the Kello Water, there would be views of northern turbines of HHR1 to the north of HHE, with some visibility of southern (extension) turbines once on the Well Hill ridge (where the route is closer to Sanquhar and Sanquhar II turbines).

194. Overall, there are no sections of the path would the proposed Development where be the closest turbines. Differences in turbine sizes would be visible from various sections of the route. Overall, the experience of the path through forest plantations with views of turbines close to the route would not be greatly altered, although the number of large turbines visible would be increased (the total number of turbines would be reduced with the removal of multiple turbines of HH). The magnitude of change is judged to be **'Low',** and the effect is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

195. **Phase 1 + consented:** Sandy Knowe Extension, Lethans and its extension would be visible northwards from route up the south side of Nithsdale, and southern parts of the route would have views southwards to Manquhill, Cornharrow and Shepherds Rig Windfarms in the distance.

196. With consented windfarms also present, the magnitude of change would be reduced but is judged to remain **'Low'** and the effect is judged to remain **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

197. **Phase 2 + consented:** Phase 2 would see the removal of HHE, and its replacement by the fewer, larger turbines of HHR2. These would be most visible from the descent northwards into the Kello Water Valley. The larger turbines would seem closer than the more numerous small turbines and may affect the sense of scale of the hills immediately around the route. Size contrasts would be removed with removal of HHE. The magnitude of change to the experience of the route would be **'Low'** and the effect is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

198. **Phase 2 + in planning:** In this scenario, Herds Hill, Rowancraig and Cloud Hill would be east of Sanquhar (further from the route), and Euchanhead would be close to the Well Hill end of the route (approximately 220 m from the path south of Well Hill). Lorg and Appin would increase the number of turbines south of the route. The replacement of HHE with HHR2, in the context of these windfarms would be similar to the previous scenario except that there would be more turbines present, and the role of HHR2 would be diminished in the experience of the whole route. The effect would remain **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

199. **Full proposed Development:** The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (as if un-phased) would see the replacement of all smaller turbines of HHE

and HH with the fewer larger turbines of the proposed Development, over Hare Hill and around the upper Kello Water valley, beyond Sanquhar II. Although larger, all of the turbines would seem of a similar scale without the contrasts that would be seen with Phase 1. Overall, the magnitude of change to the experience of route and views from it is judged to be **'Low'**, and the effect is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

*Core Path CP 443: Bank Hill to Greystone Hill*

200. **Baseline**: This route runs up the Euchan Water valley from Bank Cottage below Bank Hill to Ryegrain Rig south of Graystone Hill. The route runs through forest plantations and is low in the valley for much of its length. Views of Sanquhar and Whiteside Hill Windfarms are possible from more open sections. Sanquhar II is under construction either side of the route south of Euchanhead, with one turbine adjacent to the route on Black Shoulder.

201. The susceptibility to change with existing and under construction windfarms close to the route and passing through forest is judged to be low. It is valued as a core path, and is considered to be of **'Medium'** sensitivity.

202. **Phase 1:** In this scenario, HHR1 turbines would be seen from open sections of the route as it runs west from Bank Cottage, with blades visible over the Magheuchan Rig ridge. Forest plantations along the route and on hill slopes would provide some screening if trees are present. HHR1 turbines would also be visible as the route climbs out of the Euchan Water valley in the southern part of the route, as tips only for the lower sections, but with greater visibility from higher ground. HHE is only visible from the highest section at the south end of the route, such that contrasts in turbine size with HHR1 would not be greatly evident from the route.

203. With existing and under construction windfarms close to and visible from the route, turbines are not new features on the route. At a distance from the route beyond the top of the Magheuchan Rig ridge, the proposed turbines would be set back from the route and not the closest. Overall, the change to the experience of the route is judged to be **'Low'**, and the effect would be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

204. **Phase 1 + consented:** No consented windfarms would be close to the route, the magnitude of change as a result of HHR1 would be as identified for the previous scenario: **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

205. **Phase 2 + consented:** HHR2 turbines would be seen as additional turbines at a distance from the route, from its southernmost section over Ryegrain Rig only. From that section, the removal of HHE would be a reduction in the number of turbines on the hills to the north. Size contrasts would be removed with removal of HHE. The magnitude of change to the experience of the route would be **'Low'** and the effect is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

206. **Phase 2 + in planning:** In this scenario, Euchanhead would be above the route to the west, and Herds Hill, Rowancraig and Cloud Hill would be seen to the east from lower sections of it. On high ground at Ryegrain Hill, other windfarms including Lorg and Appin to the south would be visible in the wider landscape. In the context of these windfarms there would be more turbines present on the Magheuchan Rig ridge, and HHR2 would be seen beyond Euchanhead, Sanquhar II and HHR1 turbines. In this context the effect would be **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible').**

207. **Full proposed Development:** The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (as if un-phased) would be similar to Phase I except that there would be no scale contrasts relating to HHE from the upper section at Ryegrain Rig. Overall, the magnitude of change to the experience of route and views from it is judged to be **'Low'**, and the effect is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

*C10 Coalfield Cycle Route*

208. This route runs along the minor road through Glen Afton, assessed above under Routes. South of Craigdarroch, the path climbs the access track to Afton Windfarm at Jedburgh Knees. While the proposed Development would be visible across Glen Afton from this section of the route, significant effects are **'Unlikely'** given the presence of Glen Afton turbines. The route is not considered further.

*C11 Knockshinnoch Lagoons and C12 New Cumnock Circular*

209. **Baseline**: These routes run across lowland to the west of New Cumnock, the closest sections about 4.5 km from the proposed Development. C11 runs from the west side of New Cumnock around the lagoon's nature reserve and C12 runs from the B741 at Connel Park, around Faulds Moss west of Bankglen to Lanemark. While there are wooded sections of C11, these routes afford open views of the surrounding hills from gently undulating lowlands.

210. Representative viewpoints include:

- VP2 Glaisnock Road; and
- VP3 A76 New Cumnock.

211. Windfarms are present on the hills around the basin in which these routes are located. The High Mark Farm turbine is located on the slopes above New Cumnock, but Sandy Knowe, Afton, Pencloe, Enoch Hill, South Kyle and North Kyle are visible on the hills east, south and west. HH turbines are visible over Hare Hill to the southeast, HHE turbines are not visible.

212. With windfarms present on the hills around the routes, the susceptibility to change with additional windfarms on the hills is judged to be low. These are valued as local core paths and are considered to be of **'Medium'** sensitivity.

213. **Phase 1:** HHR1 would introduce a number of large turbines on the horizon to the southeast, on a hill that had small turbines. The turbines would be the largest turbines visible, although of similar distances from the routes to other windfarms further west. As HHE turbines are not visible, there would no contrast in turbine sizes. The array of large turbines of HHR1 would be irregular, as identified for VP2 and VP3, with T6 rather alone on the top of Hare Hill, and other turbines on either side. Although it would not alter the experience of walking in a valley landscape with windfarms in the hills, the introduction of HHR1 of an increased turbine size would increase the presence of windfarms on the hills around the routes. The magnitude of change is judged to be '**Medium'** overall, and the effect is judged to be **'Significant' ('Moderate')**.

214. **Phase 1 + consented:** In this scenario, Greenburn and Overhill would extend the North Kyle group to the west of the paths, and Lethans and its extension would be seen in the hills to the north of Nithsdale.

215. HHR1 would be a similar distance from the routes to the turbines of Greenburn, but on high ground to the southeast, with an irregular layout as described above. HHR1 would be an enlargement of turbines on a hill that had smaller turbines (HH) but would not extend the spread of turbines around the panorama of hills seen from these routes. With consented windfarms present, the role of HHR1 in the experience of these paths would be diminished relative to the previous scenario, and the magnitude of change would be **'Low'** and the effect is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

216. **Phase 2 + consented:** HHE turbines are not visible, so Phase 2 would see the introduction of the turbines of HHR2, as a few turbines beyond the horizon of Hare Hill to the southeast. These turbines would be seen in the gaps of the HHR1 layout and would create a more balanced array than in Phase 1. They would not alter the experience of the routes as valley walks with windfarms in the hills around. The magnitude of change would be **'Low'** and the effect is judged to be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor').**

217. **Phase 2 + in planning**: In this scenario, Greenburn turbines would be increased in size to the west, Pencloe Extension and South Kyle II would be to the south, and other changes would increase the number of windfarms in the hills around these walks. As for the previous scenario, HHR2 would resolve some of the imbalance of the HHR1 layout but would not alter the experience of the routes. The magnitude of change to the experience of the route would remain 'low' and the effect **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')**

218. **Full proposed Development**: The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (as if un-phased) would see the replacement of all smaller turbines of HH on Hare Hill with larger turbines of a relatively balanced array. Although it would not alter the experience of walking in a valley landscape with windfarms in the hills, the introduction of larger turbines would increase the presence of windfarms on the hills around the routes. The magnitude of change is judged to be **'Medium'** overall, and the effect is judged to be **'Significant' ('Moderate').**

*C13 Castle Path*

219. This route runs along the west side of the river to the confluence of the River Nith with the Afton Water, around playing fields and along the wooded river bank. Views up to the hills are possible from the northern section of the route, but it is judged that the experience of the short route would be **'Unlikely'** to be altered by changes to windfarms visible on the hills to the level of significant effects. The route is not considered further.

*C14 Glen Afton*

220. This route runs along the eastern banks of the River Afton around the foot of Dalhanna Hill. The ZTV (**Figure 6.3b**) indicates that there would be limited visibility of the proposed Development, and the route runs through wooded sections. It is therefore considered that is **'Unlikely'** that there would be no significant effects on the experience of this route, and the route is not considered further.

### 6.7.13 Visitor Honeypots

*Crawick Multiverse Park*

221. **Baseline**: This is a designed landscape located to the north of Sanquhar, on the Site of a former quarry. It has a vista aligned due south as part of the design. The park is designed with open spaces and landform and stonework features. At the top of the park there is a

viewpoint belvedere from which visitors can look down the axis of the park, but also to view the wider landscape. VP6 is at this location. There are panoramic views across Nithsdale include arrays of turbines on the hills to the south: Twenty Shilling Hill, Whiteside, Sanquhar, Sanquhar II (under construction) Sandy Knowe, HH and HHE. The two Sunnyside turbines are seen along the slopes of the north side of Nithsdale (westwards), and North Kyle is visible in the distance to the west.

222. The susceptibility to additional wind energy development on the hills to the southwest beyond the valley is judged to be low, but this location is valued as visitor location. The sensitivity is judged to be **'High'**.

223. **Phase 1:** As set out for VP6 at the belvedere, Phase 1 would introduce larger turbines beyond Sandy Knowe, and around HHE (retained). There would be fewer turbines but contrasting in size in that part of the view. The proposed Development would not lie on the north-south axis of the park. The distance from the park and presence of other turbines in the wider landscape would mean that the magnitude of change to the experience of the park would be **'Low'**, with **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')** effect.

224. **Phase 1 + consented:** As set out for VP6 from the belvedere, Phase 1 in the context of Sandy Knowe Extension, Lethans and its Extension would be larger turbines beyond Sandy Knowe Extension, and around HHE (retained), but with more windfarms in the panorama the magnitude of change to the experience of the park would be reduced, with **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')** effect related to HHR1.

225. **Phase 2 + consented:** As set out for VP6 at the belvedere, Phase 2 would see the replacement of the small turbines of HHE with HHR2 which would be more in keeping with the size of HHR1, Sandy Knowe and its extension, and Sanquhar II. The magnitude of change to the experience of the park would be reduced, with **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')** effect, although an improvement on the previous scenario.

226. **Phase 2 + in planning:** As set out for VP6, the replacement of HHE with HHR2, in the context of HHR1, existing, construction, consented and proposed windfarms currently in planning, would reduce the contrasts with HHE, as identified for the previous scenario. The magnitude of change to the experience of the park would be **'Low'**, with **'Not-Significant' ('Negligible')** effect.

227. **Full proposed Development:** The replacement of HH and HHE with the full proposed Development (as if un-phased) would be similar to Phase 1 but without the contrasts with the smaller turbines of HHE seen across Nithsdale to the west. The proposed Development would not lie on the north-south axis of the park. Overall, and given the presence of existing windfarms in the landscape visible from the park, the magnitude of change would be **'low'**, and the visual effect on the experience of the park would be **'Not-Significant' ('Minor')**.

### 6.7.14 Summary of Visual Effects

228. Visual effects on receptors listed in **Table 6.4** above have been assessed, with reference to selected viewpoints (assessed in **Technical Appendix 6.3**). Significant effects have been identified where receptors are very close to the Site, or where the increase in turbine size would be on the horizon across the closest part of Nithsdale or Glen Afton. Phase 1 would also create visual effects though the contrasts in turbine size between HHR1 and the

retained HHE. Phase 2 would remove those contrasts, mitigating that aspect of visual effect.

229. Of the receptors listed in **Table 6.4**, four were identified as having likely **'Significant'** effects:

- A76 and the railway (with parallel minor roads): for Phase 1 (both cumulative scenarios considered), and the full proposed Development but not for Phase 2: south of Cumnock to west of Kirkconnel within 10km of the Site and extending for approximately 18 km; and from the railway within the corridor between New Cumnock and Kirkconnel within 4 km of the Site and extending for approximately 10 km.
- Blackcraig Hill: significant for Phase 1 (both cumulative scenarios considered), and the full proposed Development but not for Phase 2;
- The local path from Blackcraig – Quintin Knowe – Kello Water valley across and within 2 km of the Site: all phases/scenarios considered; and
- Core paths C11 and C12 to the west of New Cumnock approximately 4.5 km from the Site: significant for Phase 1 with existing baseline and the full proposed Development, but not in the consented scenario or for Phase 2;

230. For selected viewpoints considered in **Technical Appendix 6.3**, viewpoints for which likely **'Significant'** effects were identified occur in the same geographical areas as the receptors above (and indeed are used as representative locations):

- VP2 Glaisnock Road;
- VP3 New Cumnock;
- VP4 Merkland;
- VP8 Glen Afton; and
- VP14 Blackcraig Hill.

231. It is noted that the introduction of HHR2 would, for several receptor locations or viewpoints improve the appearance of the proposed Development by resolving conflicts in turbine size between HHR1 and HHE, and infilling gaps in the array of large turbines seen from some locations.

### 6.7.15 Aviation Lighting Assessment

232. A proposed reduced lighting scheme has been submitted for approval to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and specifies:

- Medium intensity steady red (2000 cd) lights on the hubs of fifteen turbines (T1, T5, T6, T7, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T21, and T22);
- A second 2000 cd light on the hubs of the above turbines to act as alternative lights in the event of a failure of the main light; and
- Infra-red lights to Ministry of Defence (MoD) specification installed on the hubs of the lit turbines.

233. However, as the assessment has been carried out in advance of a response from the CAA, a 'worst case' has been assessed: assuming that all of the turbines of the Proposed Development would be lit. Infra-red lights are not visible to the naked eye, so the Proposed Development would appear to be lit with a 2000 cd steady red light on the hub of each turbine which would be reduced to 200 cd in clear conditions where visibility extends beyond 5 km. The assessment of the effects of the lighting on views after dark in **Technical Appendix 6.4** considered the appearance of the proposed lighting relative to existing lights in the views, lighting on Sanquhar II turbines (currently under construction), and the change to the nighttime viewing experience along key routes through the study area.

234. The existing HH and HHE Windfarms are unlit, although Sanquhar II Windfarm will have aviation lighting, and nearby properties within Nithsdale and Glen Afton have lights on and within buildings. Moving lights are common on roads, with vehicle headlights and rear lights.

235. Closer locations would experience the lights at a greater downward angle and therefore at reduced brightness. More distant locations would experience the lights with greater attenuation by distance, and locations on higher ground are less 'Likely' to be visited during dark hours. Viewers at most locations are 'Unlikely' to have eyes that are dark adapted, and the proposed lights would be seen in the context of other lights in the landscape. Off-road or hilltop locations are 'Unlikely' to have viewers at night, although there may be a few people on the SUW or on local paths at dusk. People out in dark places at night carry lights with them, which would affect dark adaptation.

236. No **'Significant'** effects would occur as a result of aviation lighting. During times of poor weather conditions, when visibility is reduced to 5 km, the lights would be operated at 2000cd. Readily accessible viewpoints within 5 km tend to be at notably lower elevation than the Site, with strong downward mitigation of brightness because of the use of a horizontal beam light design. At no locations would there be **'Significant'** effects as a result of aviation lighting during times of lower visibility.

## 6.8 Cumulative Effects

237. The assessment of effects at different phases of the proposed Development in preceding sections and Technical Appendices included consideration of different potential cumulative scenarios, including:

- Phase 1 + existing windfarms – this includes those under construction;
- Phase 1 + existing and consented windfarms;
- Phase 2 + existing and consented windfarms;
- Phase 2 + existing, consented; and in-planning windfarms; and
- Full Proposed Development + existing (as if un-phased).

238. As discussed in the methodology section above (**Section 6.4**), these are considered to be potential future scenarios that are meaningful to assess, whilst avoiding considering all potential future scenarios.

239. Existing and under construction windfarms are listed in **Table 6.2** above; cumulative windfarms are listed in **Table 6.3**. These are shown on **Figures 6.8a-6.8d**. In particular, Sanquhar II (under construction) will introduce large turbines close to the Site and extending to the southeast, and would be of a similar size to the turbines proposed. Lethans and its Extension (both consented) would introduce turbines on the north side of Nithsdale. Sandy Knowe Extension (consented) would introduce additional turbines between the proposed Development and receptors in parts of Nithsdale around Kirkconnel and Sanquhar.

240. Future scenarios involve windfarms that have larger turbines than HH and HHE. The trend therefore is for larger turbines. Sanquhar II is to have turbines of 200 m close to the proposed Development site, and as can be seen from the assessment of visual receptors (above) and viewpoints (see **Appendix 6.3**), the proposed Development would relate to it in terms of turbine size from many locations.

241. The proposed Development as a repowering exercise does not alter the geographical pattern of wind energy development in the study area. The southern turbines extend the proposed Development but do not alter the pattern of wind energy development. The larger turbines, as noted above, follow a trend of increasing turbine size, and do not alter the pattern of wind energy development in the study area (extending upwards).

### 6.8.1 Scoping Scenario

242. The scenario in which existing, consented, in-planning and sites currently at scoping stage may exist is a highly speculative. Due to the speculative nature of the scenario in which all of these schemes are present, it is considered only briefly. The closest known scoping schemes in September 2025 include:

- Blackwood II would be seven turbines of 200 m to blade tip on the Nithsdale slopes south of the A76 and immediately north of the proposed Development, the closest turbine approximately 1.2 km from the turbines of HHR1;
- Glenmuckloch Hill, six turbines of 250 m to blade tip north of Nithsdale adjacent to Lethans Windfarm, the closest turbine approximately 5.1 km away; and
- Airds Hill, eight turbines of 250m to blade tip north of New Cumnock, the closest approximately 6.7 km away.

243. With these schemes present, there would be additional large scale turbines on the slope and hills around Nithsdale. The turbines proposed in these three scheme are larger than proposed for HHR1 and HHR2.

## 6.9 Implications for Designated Areas

244. The proposed Development Site lies within an East Ayrshire SLA. Other designated landscapes within approximately 25 km of the proposed Development are shown on **Figure 6.6** and set out in **Table 6.5**, with observations on theoretical visibility and whether further detailed consideration is required.

*Table 6.5: Designated Landscapes within 25km*

| Designated Landscape Name | Approximate Distance and Direction from Proposed Development | Notes on ZTV Coverage |
|---|---|---|
| East Ayrshire Uplands and Moorlands LLA2 | Proposed Development would be located within the LLA | • Theoretical visibility is predicted within and beyond the proposed Development site.<br>• Considered further below. |
| River Ayr Valley LLA1 | 15 km northwest | • Theoretical visibility limited across well-wooded landscape at over 15 km away. Significant effects are considered unlikely, not considered further. |
| Doon Valley LLA3 | 14 km, west | • Theoretical visibility limited to a few elevated areas on high ground. Significant effects are considered unlikely, not considered further |
| Thornhill Uplands Regional Scenic Area (RSA) | 7 km, south east | • Theoretical visibility limited to summits and high west facing slopes. Twentyshilling Hill and other windfarms lie between the RSA and the proposed Development, significant effects are considered unlikely, not considered further. |
| Galloway Hills RSA | 7 km, south | • Theoretical visibility limited to summits, ridgelines and high north facing slopes. Windy Rig, Windy Standard and Afton Windfarms lie between the RSA and the proposed Development, significant effects are considered unlikely, not considered further. |
| Dumfries House Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL) | 12 km, northwest | • Theoretical visibility limited across well-wooded landscape. Proposed Development would not be visible along main avenue from house. Significant effects are considered unlikely, not considered further. |
| Drumlanrig Castle GDL | 17 km, southeast | • Theoretical visibility limited to outer parts of the GDL and not from the Castle and immediate setting. Significant effects are considered unlikely, not considered further. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Craigengillan GDL | 17 km, west. | • Theoretical visibility limited to the western fringe of the policies, from which Dersalloch Windfarm is nearby to the west. Significant effects are considered unlikely, not considered further. |
| Maxwelton House (Glencairn Castle) GDL | 22 km, south east. | • No theoretical visibility. Not considered further. |

245. It is noted that there are no National Scenic Areas within 25 km of the proposed Development. There are no WLAs within 25 km of the proposed Development.

### 6.9.1 East Ayrshire LLA2 Uplands and Moorlands

246. This designation covers the uplands of the eastern fringe of East Ayrshire, from hills around Afton Glen, northwards across Nithsdale to include much of the plateau moorlands south and north of the River Ayr valley. The East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 – Local Landscape Areas Supplementary Guidance (2024) states: "*Summary of Character and Qualities: In the main a bold and large-scale but simple, rolling landscape of open, rounded top hills that form the backdrop to the eastern parts of East Ayrshire, the yellow and ochre colours of the moorland areas contrast with the dark greens of the coniferous and plantation woodlands. The combination of natural features and the lack of roads and access gives an impression of landscapes that are more extensive, remote and higher than is actually the case. The boundary encapsulates the Southern Upland LCT and Plateau Moorland LCT and also takes in the majority of the area designated as Sites of National Nature Conservation Interest*".

247. It is noted that the Supplementary Guidance states in respect of key design principles: "*Development should take account of views to and from landmark hills contained within the LLA, including (but not limited to) Cairn Table, Blackside, Wardlaw Hill and Blackcraig Hill. The Council will seek to retain the integrity and setting of these prominent hills, as seen in panoramic views from settled lowland areas; Developments proposed within the Uplands and Moorlands LLA should seek to avoid impacting on adjacent, more sensitive, smaller-scaled landscapes by setting development further into the upland interior*."

248. The LVIA identifies the following effects on sensitivities noted for the LLA:

- 'Southern Upland LCT': LCT 81 Southern Uplands – Ayrshire: '**Significant' ('Moderate')** for host area in the scenarios Phase 1+existing; and Phase 1+consented;
- 'Plateau Moorland LCT': LCT 78 Plateau Moorlands – Ayrshire: no likelihood of 'Significant' effects (see **TA 6.2**);
- 'Adjacent, more sensitive, smaller-scaled landscapes': Afton Valley: LCT 73 Upland Glen – Ayrshire: '**Significant' ('Moderate')** for Glen Afton in the scenarios Phase 1+existing; Phase 1+consented; and Full proposed Development +existing;
- Cairn Table (see VP15): '**Not-Significant**' in all scenarios considered;

- Blackcraig Hill (see VP14): '**Significant' ('Moderate')** in the scenarios Phase 1 +existing; Phase 1+consented; and Full proposed Development +existing;
- A76 and the railway (with parallel minor roads): all phases/scenarios considered; **'Significant' ('Moderate')** between Cumnock and Kirkconnel (between New Cumnock and Kirkconnel for the railway); and

249. Viewpoints:

- VP4 Merkland: 'Significant' for Phase 1 (both cumulative scenarios considered), and the full proposed Development but not for Phase 2; and
- VP8 Glen Afton: 'Significant' for Phase 1 (both cumulative scenarios considered), and the full proposed Development, but not for Phase 2.

250. From this it can be seen that **'Significant'** effects would occur within the LLA, within approximately 5 km of the proposed Development, including for Glen Afton, Nithsdale (east of New Cumnock) and Blackcraig Hill which is close to and overlooking the Site. These relate to the increased size in turbines, which would be larger relative to hill horizons then the existing HH and HHE turbines and would be more prominent as features on the hills from within Nithsdale and the smaller scale valley of Glen Afton.

251. It is judged that the character of the LLA would not be altered by the proposed Development as windfarms are present and established on the Site and in the southern part of the LLA, which hosts Afton and Pencloe Windfarms. However, **'Significant'** effects are identified relative to the local smaller scale valley landscape of Glen Afton as a result of HHR1 turbines to the northwest and west of the existing HHE. Glen Afton has visibility of existing windfarms of HH, HHE, Afton, and Pencloe windfarms, and Sanquhar II turbines that are under construction, such that turbines are present in views from within this valley. Overall, it is judged that the LLA would not be altered to a degree that would alter its designation.

## 6.10 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

252. The effects of the proposed Development on visual aspects of Residential visual amenity are assessed in **Technical Appendix 6.5.** There are 20 properties within 2.5 km of the proposed Development, which have been considered in 12 groups or individual properties. Most properties are located in Annandale and the Afton valley, to the north and west of the Site respectively, and most properties look across the respective valleys. Grouped properties have similarity of location, outlook and screening. The property at Pencloe was included (at 2.7 km away) because of open views across Glen Afton.

253. The assessment found that whilst there would be **'Medium'** to **'High'** magnitude of change to the views from most properties considered, these would generally not translate into effects on visual aspects of residential amenity such that the properties would reach what in current guidance is called a 'Residential Visual Amenity Threshold (LI, 2019).

254. The closest property is Hillend (Property 12, **Figure 6.38**), which lies to the east of the proposed turbine locations and would be 1.0 km from the nearest turbine of Phase 2 of the proposed Development (HHR2). The proposed turbines would be larger than those of HH and HHE that are close to the property (the closest HHE turbine is approximately 800 m

away). The turbines of HHR1 south of the Kello Water valley would be in front of Sanquhar II turbines and would relate to the Sanquhar turbines in terms of scale. It is judged however that the **RVAA threshold would not be reached** at the property, as it is currently set in what can be described as a forested windfarm landscape, in a valley between four different windfarms. It has views of existing windfarms so that the proposed turbines would not be new elements to the view. The proposed Development would not be in primary or front views from the property.

## 6.11 Conclusions

255. A summary of significant effects identified is set out in Table 6.6.

*Table 6.6: Significant Landscape and Visual Effects*

| Receptor | Phase 1 + existing | Phase 1 + consented | Phase 2 + Consented | Phase 2 + in-planning | Full proposed Development + existing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LCT 69 Upland River Valleys - Ayrshire | **'Significant'** (moderate) for Nithsdale area | **'Significant'** (moderate) for Nithsdale area | - | - | **'Significant'** (moderate) for Nithsdale area |
| LCT 73 Upland Glen - Ayrshire | **'Significant'** (moderate) | **'Significant'** (moderate) | - | - | **'Significant'** (moderate) |
| LCT 81 Southern Uplands - Ayrshire | **'Significant'** (moderate) for host area | **'Significant'** (moderate) for host area | - | - | - |
| A76 corridor including the railway along Nithsdale and parallel minor roads | **'Significant'** (moderate) between New Cumnock and Kirkconnel (within 10km for the A76, within 4km for the railway) | **'Significant'** (moderate) between New Cumnock and Kirkconnel (within 10km for the A76, within 4km for the railway) | - | - | '**Significant'** (moderate) between New Cumnock and Corsencon (within 4 km) |
| Hills in East Ayrshire: Blackcraig Hill (VP14) | **'Significant'** (moderate) | **'Significant'** (moderate) | - | - | **'Significant'** (moderate) |
| Path from Blackcraig – Quintin Knowe – Kello Water Valley | **'Significant'** (major) | **'Significant'** (major) | **'Significant'** (moderate) | **'Significant'** (moderate) | **'Significant'** (major) |
| Core paths C11 Knockshinnoch Lagoons and C12 New Cumnock Circular | '**Significant**' (moderate) | - | - | - | '**Significant**' (moderate) |
| **VP2 Glaisnock Road** | '**Significant**' (moderate) | '**Significant**' (moderate) | - | - | '**Significant**' (moderate) |
| **VP3 A76 New Cumnock** | '**Significant**' (moderate) | '**Significant**' (moderate) | - | - | '**Significant**' (moderate) |
| **VP4 Merkland** | '**Significant**' (moderate) | '**Significant**' (moderate) | - | - | '**Significant**' (moderate) |
| VP8 Glen Afton | '**Significant**' (moderate) | '**Significant**' (moderate) | - | - | '**Significant**' (moderate) |

256. Analysis of views and composition of the phases of the proposed Development (provided through the ZTVs and the viewpoint visualisations in **Figures 6.11** onwards) indicates that as HHR2 would be within the envelope of HHR1 and of larger turbine sizes than HHE, there would be improvements to the appearance of the array of windfarms on the hills on and around the Site without increase in spread of development across a greater area. Improvements would occur because of the removal of HHE which would contrast with the larger turbines around it, and its replacement with turbines of a size more in keeping with the pattern of development that has emerged since its construction and would continue through consented windfarms.

257. **'Significant'** effects would occur within approximately 10 km of the proposed Development, from Nithsdale, Glen Afton, and from the immediate surroundings of the Site such as from Blackcraig Hill. These effects relate to the increased size in turbines, which would be larger relative to hill horizons than the existing HH and HHE turbines and would be more prominent as features on the hills from within Nithsdale and the smaller scale valley of Glen Afton.

## 6.12 Mitigation and Residual Effects

258. As stated in **Technical Appendix 6.1**, all proposed mitigation for landscape and visual matters are incorporated into the design of the proposed Development. All effects identified are therefore residual effects.

259. Of note, the implementation of Phase 2 of the proposed Development would remove the contrasts between HHR1 and HHE and resolve some of the irregularities of the design of HHR1 by infilling gaps in the array with HHR2 turbines (e.g. when viewed from with Nithsdale east of New Cumnock). Completion of Phase 2 therefore mitigates these effects of HHR1 to a degree.

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