

# Landscape and Visual

## Relevant Policy and Guidance

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will be undertaken with reference to published assessment guidance including:

- Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2017) Visual Representation of Wind Farms: Version 2.2.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2012) Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments.
- Landscape Institute (2019) Technical Guidance Note 6/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals.
- Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment.
- Natural England (2019) An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.
- Landscape Institute (2019) Technical Guidance Note 2/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2015) Spatial Planning for Onshore Wind Turbines – Natural Heritage Considerations.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2017) Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape. Version 3.
- Forestry Commission (2017) The UK Forestry Standard.
- Dumfries and Galloway Council (2018) Draft Dumfries and Galloway Wind Farm Landscape Capacity Study.

## Baseline

The Site is not covered by any international, national, regional or local landscape related planning designations, but does lie on the boundary with the Thornhill Uplands Regional Scenic Area (RSA) to the east and a Sensitive Landscape Area within East Ayrshire to the west. The Galloway Hills RSA also extends within 15 km of the Site.

The Site lies within the Southern Uplands with Forest landscape character type (LCT) as originally defined in the Dumfries and Galloway Landscape Assessment (1998) but also incorporated into the latest SNH online publication of the National Landscape Character Assessment in 2019, which will be used as a baseline document. The key characteristics of the Southern Uplands with Forest LCT were identified to be its 'large, smooth dome-shaped hills with large scale dark green plantations on slopes and over lower summits' and its 'expansive scale'. It is also identified that 'wind farms are a key characteristic in some areas'.

The draft Dumfries and Galloway Wind Farm Landscape Capacity Study Supplementary Planning Guidance (2018) provides analysis of the landscape character baseline. The study identifies that the Site falls within the Ken character unit, which is identified as having a high/medium sensitivity for the Very Large Turbine typology (defined as turbines of 150 metres plus to blade tip) with a medium/low value.

## Potentially Significant Effects

The construction and operation of the proposed Development has the potential for significant effects upon:

- landscape fabric, caused by changes to the physical form of landscape elements and landscape character, caused by changes in the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape as a result of the proposed Development;
- visual amenity, caused by changes in the appearance of the landscape as a result of the proposed Development, considering receptors in settlements, motorists and other road users, core paths and other recreational receptors; and
- designated areas caused by changes to its special qualities as a result of the proposed Development.

### Proposed Assessment Methodology and Approach

An LVIA will be undertaken to establish potential significant effects of the proposed Development on the landscape resource and visual amenity. An initial study area equivalent to a 45 km radius from the outermost turbines of the proposed Development would be used based on the height of the turbines, in line with SNH Guidance 'Visual Representation of Wind Farms Version 2.2, (SNH, 2017). For the purpose of identifying, mapping and assessing the likely significant effects of the proposed Development on the landscape of the Site and its immediate surroundings, a 'detailed study area' from the outer turbines will be defined. This detailed study area will be informed through on-going assessment work but is likely to be between 15 km and 20 km from the outermost turbines of the proposed Development.

The key sensitivities that will be considered in the LVIA and cumulatively will include:

- Thornhill Uplands Regional Scenic Area;
- Galloway Hills Regional Scenic Area;
- East Ayrshire Sensitive Landscape Area;
- Southern Upland Way;
- Striding Arches Sculpture Trail; and
- Sanquhar and Kirkconnel.

The assessment will be supported by a series of photomontages and wireframes from the agreed viewpoint locations. Visualisations will be prepared in accordance with SNH, Visual Representation of Windfarms: Version 2.2, 2017. Photomontages will be prepared for viewpoints with a 20 km radius. Forestry felling and ancillary elements will only be shown from close viewpoints where necessary, as it is considered that from most viewpoints the forestry felling and ancillary elements would form only a minor element of the entire development.

The list of viewpoint locations proposed to be used in the assessment of the proposed Development are detailed in the table below and illustrated on the enclosed figure. Consultation regarding viewpoints from the previous Scoping exercise on the Euchanhead Site in 2013 and those consultation responses has formed the basis for the choice of viewpoints.

Some viewpoints, particularly those more distant summits, may be illustrated with wireframes only (no baseline photography). Not all viewpoints have been 'ground truthed', so grid references are approximate, and locations may be microsituated to obtain the most representative view or greatest extent of visibility.

Table 1: Proposed Candidate Viewpoints

Vp no.	Name	Grid Ref Approx	Distance from Nearest Turbine	Reason for inclusion
1	Colt Hill (Striding Arches sculpture)	269833, 599000	0.5 km	Tourist destination with access off Southern Upland Way (SUW)
2	Benbrack, Southern Upland Way (Striding Arches sculpture)	268050, 597060	2.6 km	Sequential on SUW Long Distance Route and tourist destination
3	Blackcraig Hill (East Ayrshire)	264818, 606484	2.8 km	East Ayrshire Sensitive Landscape Walking destination
4	Southern Upland Way along Scar Water	E272226 N604117	4.0 km	SNH requested in 2013 - Sequential on SUW east of Site on Long Distance Route
5	Minor road in upper Shinnel Water, near Auchenbrack	276584, 596570	5.4 km	Thornhill Uplands RSA and scattered properties
6	Kelloholm or Kirkconnel	274058, 611135	7.2 km	Settlement – Visibility is similar from both settlements

7	Cairnsmore of Cairnsphairn	259443, 597958	8.3 km	Popular summit as walking destination and on the edge of the Galloway Hills RSA
8	Southern Upland Way crossing B729 near Stroanfreggan Bridge	263961, 591608	9.4 km	SNH requested in 2013 - lower level views along the Ken valley and sequential on Southern Upland Way
9	Auchengibbert Hill	280617, 594454	10.0 km	Upland view within Thornhill Uplands RSA
10	Sanquhar High School/Station	277855, 610230	10.0 km	SNH requested in 2013
11	Southern Upland way, above Sanquhar	278734, 610338	10.9 km	Sequential on SUW long distance route
12	A76, Mennock	279762, 608523	11.4 km	Road and edge of Thornhill Uplands RSA
13	East Mount Lowther Hill, just off the Southern Upland Way	287808, 610018	19.5 km	Specific Viewpoint near SUW, Walking destination and within Thornhill Uplands RSA
14	Corserine, Rhinn of Kells (wireframe only)	249757, 587051	22.7 km	SNH requested in 2013 - Galloway Hills RSA and walking destination
15	Queensberry (wireframe only)	298907, 599741	27.2 km	Thornhill Uplands RSA and walking destination

In line with SNH guidance 'Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments' (SNH, 2012) the assessment will consider surrounding windfarms within the LVIA study area including those which are operational, consented and those for which a valid application has been submitted but which are yet to be determined. Schemes in scoping will only be included by exception where there is specific justification for doing so.

An initial cumulative search area of 15 km from the proposed Development will be undertaken and all other cumulative windfarm developments identified. Wind turbines below 50 m and single turbine developments will only be considered within a 5 km radius of the proposed Development and will be scoped out of the initial assessment and cumulative assessment beyond this distance.

The precise scope of the cumulative assessment would be agreed with consultees nearer the time of the submission, usually within 12 weeks prior to submission. The proposed scope of the cumulative assessment would focus on where there may be likely significant effects which may influence the outcome of the consenting process.

A Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) will be included as a separate technical appendix. This will assess the potential effects of the proposed Development on the visual amenity of residential properties. A 2 km study area from the outermost turbines is proposed for this assessment.

As the turbines proposed are over 150m to tip, they would require visible aviation lighting. We are currently developing a Lighting Strategy with an Aviation specialist in consultation with the CAA for this proposed development. It is expected that the directional intensity / shielding of lights and reduced intensity of lights in clear conditions (from 2000cd to 200cd) would be included as mitigation. In addition to this, there is emerging acceptance of cardinal or perimeter lighting schemes on suitable sites. If this is acceptable on this site, this could reduce the overall number of turbines which require lighting and will likely form the basis of the Lighting Strategy on site. We will also be investigating other forms of mitigation such as radar activated lighting and siting/design considerations. This will be documented within the EIAR.

The agreed Lighting Strategy will form the basis of the assessment and visual material presented. An assessment of night-time impacts on landscape and visual receptors will be carried out and presented as a separate appendix in the

LVIA. We propose a 15km study area for this assessment. Whilst we appreciate that even with the mitigation mentioned above the lights would be visible beyond 15km, the effect is unlikely to be significant.

To assess the effects on visual receptors in the study area we propose to include dusk/dawn visualisations from the following proposed viewpoints. These locations are within 15km of the proposal, safe to obtain the night time photography and would represent the potential effect on visual receptors who would be sensitive to views at night.

- VP 5 Minor road in upper Shinnel Water, near Auchenbrack; and
- VP 10 Sanquhar High School/Station

To assess the effects on landscape receptors in the study area, we propose to include wireline diagrams with the lights indicated at the following proposed viewpoints. From our experience, this area is very dark at night. As a result, the baseline photography is likely to add very little additional information to our understanding of the baseline. These locations are within 15km of the proposal and would represent the potential effect on the local landscapes and designated landscapes which are most sensitive to change.

- VP 3 Blackcraig Hill - East Ayrshire Sensitive Landscape;
- VP 7 Cairnsmore of Carsphairn – Galloway Hills RSA;
- VP 9 Auchengibbert Hill – Thornhills Uplandss RSA;

The photomontage visuals would include a night time baseline photograph and photomontage for comparative purposes. The photomontage and wireline diagrams would illustrate the visible Lighting Strategy adopted for this proposal. We also propose to include two figures:

- Landscape character and existing lighting environment; and
- ZTV out to a 15km radius illustrating potential visibility of the hub and tower lights in the visible Lighting Strategy.

### **Matters to be Scoped Out**

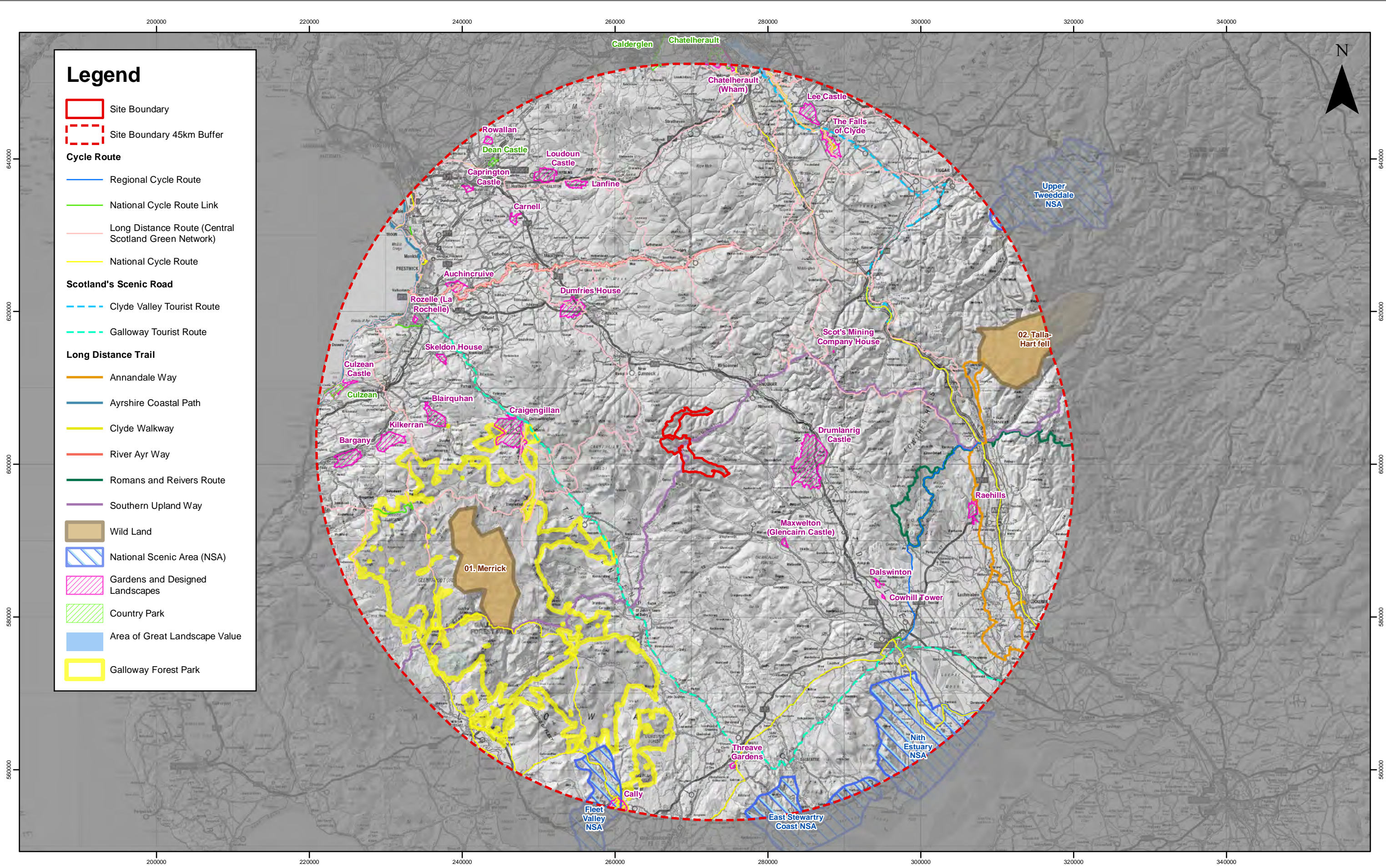
It is considered that a wild land assessment should not be required, due to the separation distance.

It is also proposed to scope out of the LVIA further specific landscape and visual receptors and landscape designations in consultation with Dumfries and Galloway Council, East Ayrshire and SNH when the design of the proposed Development is closer to finalisation and more is known regarding the potential impacts.

### **Consultee Questions**

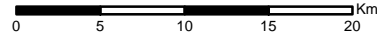
- Do consultees agree that the proposed study areas are acceptable?
- Are the proposed candidate viewpoints acceptable?
- Do consultees agree that a wild land assessment is not required?
- Please confirm any additional requirements that you consider should be included in this element of the EIA, that have not been covered in this fact sheet.
- Is the scope of night time assessment and graphic material adequate for the EIAR?





A	14/02/20	LM	First Issue.
Rev	Date	By	Comment

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Scale @ A3

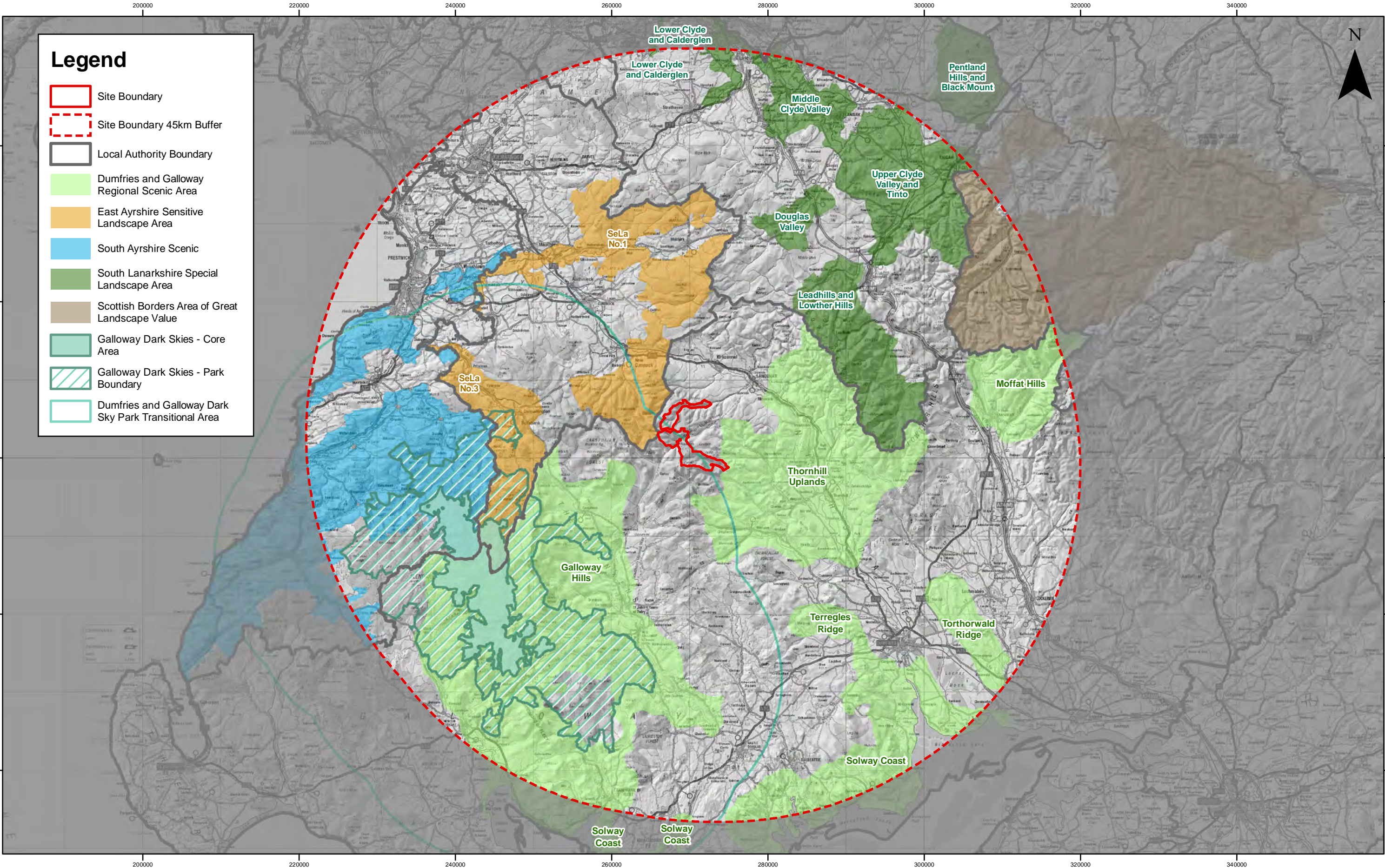


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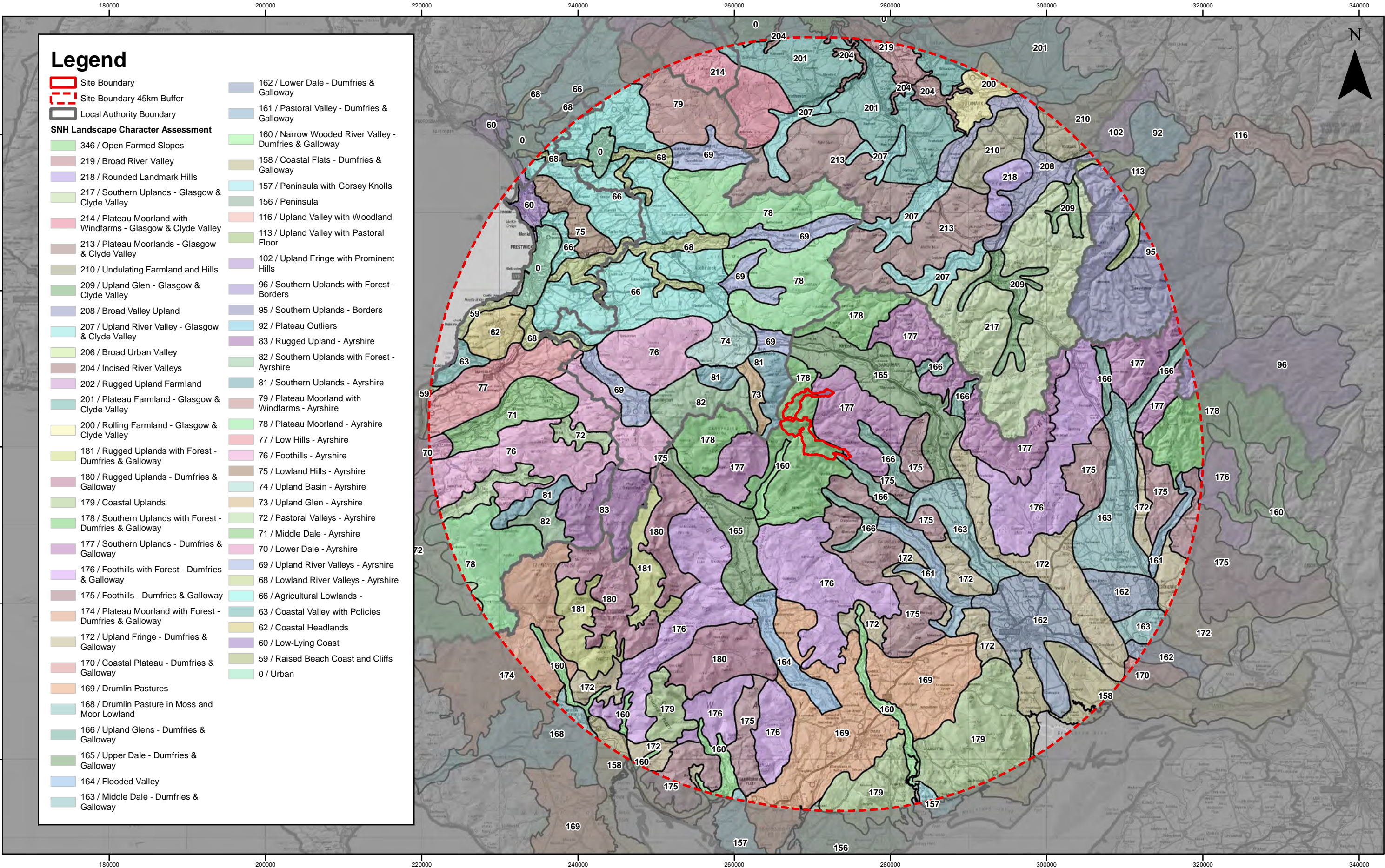
**Eucharhead Renewable Energy Development**  
Scoping Report  
Landscape and Visual Context: National Datasets

Drg No	00481.00052.0100.0		
Rev	A	Datum: OSGB36	
Date	14/02/20	Projection: TM	
Figure	1		

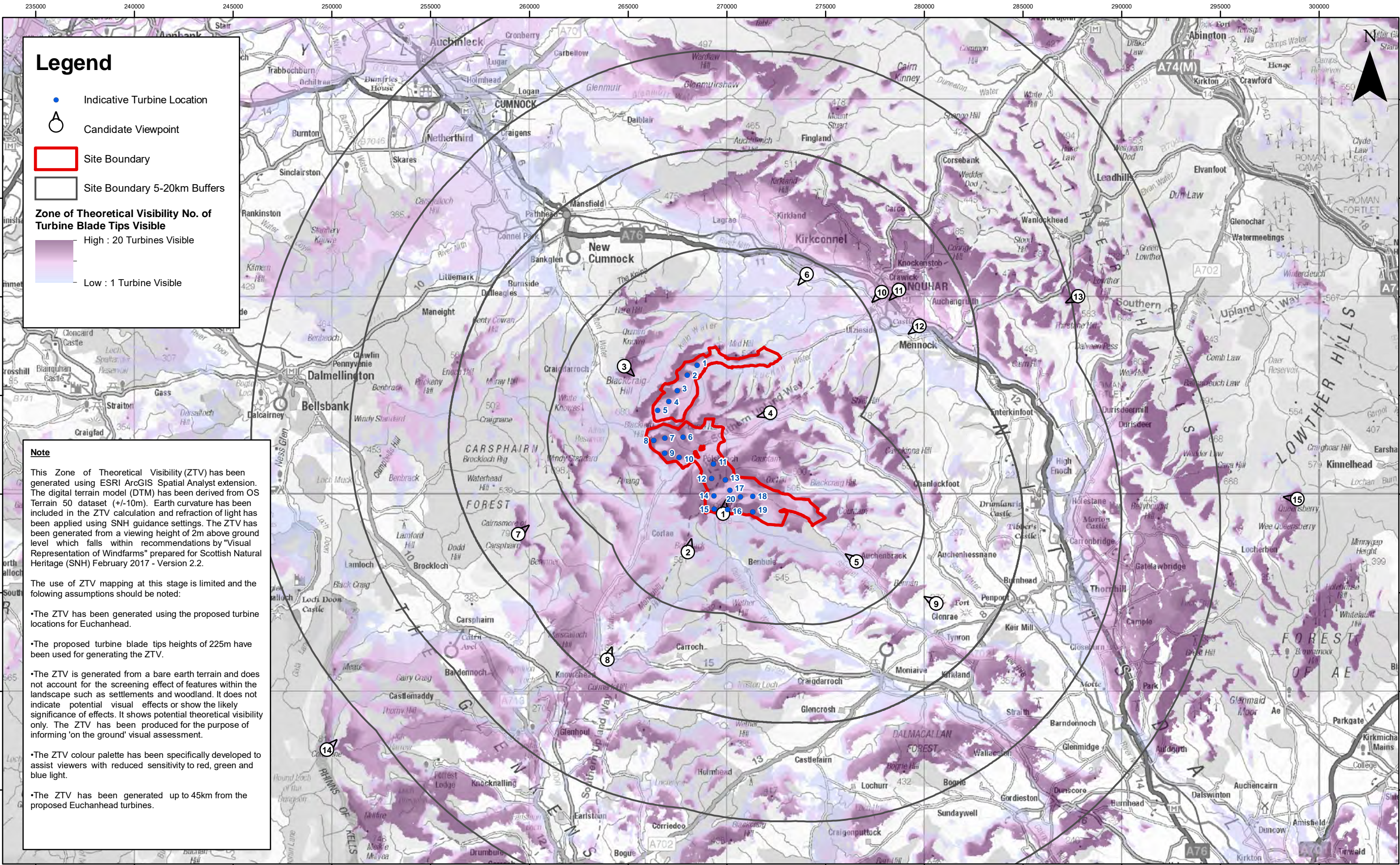













				1:180,000 Scale @ A3	© Crown Copyright 2019. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence 0100031673.	<b>Eucharhead Renewable Energy Development</b> Scoping Candidate Viewpoints		Drg No	00481.00052.0088.1	
B	14/02/20	JRS	Amendments following comments					Rev	B	Datum:
A	15/01/20	JRS	First Issue.					Date	14/02/20	OSGB36
Rev	Date	By	Comment					Figure	4	Projection: TM



