

Iceland Wind farms, Landscapes & Wild(erness) Areas Workshop – 12TH August 2019

WLAs in Scotland 2: policy & application

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Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

- 1. Status and policy**
- 2. Assessment methodology – wind farms**
- 3. Some lessons learnt**
- 4. Future policy?**

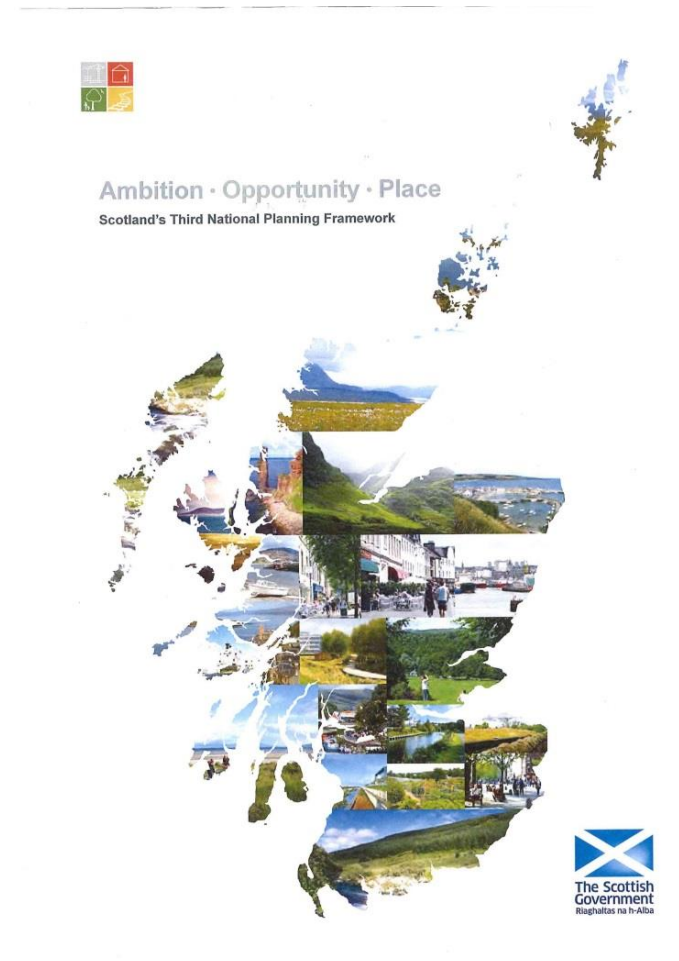


1. Status & Policy

3rd National Planning Framework

We also want to continue our strong protection for our wildest landscapes – wild land is a nationally important asset.” (4.4)

“SPP ... will guide new wind energy development to appropriate locations, taking into account important features including wild land.” (3.23)



Scottish Planning Policy 2014

*200) Wild land character is displayed in some of Scotland's remoter upland, mountain and coastal areas, which are **very sensitive to any form of intrusive human activity and have little or no capacity to accept new development**. Plans should identify and safeguard the character of areas of wild land ...*



Scottish Planning Policy

*215) In areas of wild land **development may be appropriate in some circumstances**. Further consideration will be required to demonstrate that any significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation.*

1) Areas excluded

2) Areas of significant protection

3) Areas with potential

Table 1: Spatial Frameworks

<p>Group 1: Areas where wind farms will not be acceptable:</p> <p>National Parks and National Scenic Areas.</p>		
<p>Group 2: Areas of significant protection:</p> <p>Recognising the need for significant protection, in these areas wind farms may be appropriate in some circumstances. Further consideration will be required to demonstrate that any significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation.</p>		
<p>National and international designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Heritage Sites; • Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites; • Sites of Special Scientific Interest; • National Nature Reserves; • Sites identified in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes; • Sites identified in the Inventory of Historic Battlefields. 	<p>Other nationally important mapped environmental interests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas of wild land as shown on the 2014 SNH map of wild land areas; • carbon rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. 	<p>Community separation for consideration of visual impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an area not exceeding 2km around cities, towns and villages identified on the local development plan with an identified settlement envelope or edge. The extent of the area will be determined by the planning authority based on landform and other features which restrict views out from the settlement.
<p>Group 3: Areas with potential for wind farm development:</p> <p>Beyond groups 1 and 2, wind farms are likely to be acceptable, subject to detailed consideration against identified policy criteria.</p>		



**ASSESSING THE IMPACTS ON WILD LAND
INTERIM GUIDANCE NOTE**
February 2007 (with note below added October 2014)

2. Assessment methodology

This guidance is currently being reviewed in light of SPP 2014 which refers to SNH's **Wild Land Areas 2014**. The Wild Land Areas supersede the Search Areas for Wild Land, and identify the most extensive areas of high wildness. Until revised guidance is published in Spring 2015 this interim guidance note should be applied with reference to the new Wild Land Areas. In addition section 1.1 of the guidance relating to wild land policy has been superseded by the relevant policies within Scottish Planning Policy 2014 and the third National Planning Framework. SNH's Policy Statement 'Wildness in Scotland's Countryside' remains relevant but will be revised to reflect the new Government policy

October 2014

This document sets out general principles for assessing the potential adverse and beneficial impacts on areas where wildness is best expressed (wild land), including an assessment methodology.

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2007 Tabular Approach

Physical Attributes	VP A	VP B	VP C	VP D	VP E	VP F	VP G	VP H
Perceived naturalness	M / H	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
	M/ H	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Lack of constructions or other artefacts	M / L	Medium	Medium	M / H	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Low	M / L	M / L	M/ H	Medium	Medium	Medium	M / L
Little evidence of contemporary land uses	M / L	M / H	M / H	M / H	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Low	Medium	Medium	M/ H	Medium	Medium	Medium	M / L
Rugged or otherwise challenging terrain	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Remoteness and inaccessibility	M / L	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Low	M / L	M / L	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium



2017 Narrative Approach

Table 3: Appraisal of effects on the qualities of WLA 34 Reay – Cassley

Establish the baseline (which qualities are likely to be affected)	Assess the sensitivity of the study area (sensitivity of qualities to type and scale of change proposed)	Assess the effects (effects on qualities and the potential for mitigation)
<i>A range of large, irregular, rocky mountains with steep, arresting slopes and a variety of lochs and lochans, possessing a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary</i>	<p>Low: This quality is sensitive to new tracks which could decrease the challenge of ascending the mountains thus reducing the high sense of risk involved.</p> <p>New features may also detract visitors from the superlative qualities of the mountains within the WLA.</p>	<p>Negligible: The introduction of a network of new access tracks across the wind farm site within the WLA would reduce remoteness across the south western flank however this is not considered to reduce the challenge and risk involved in ascending the mountain range and is therefore not considered to be significant.</p> <p>There are limited locations from within this WLA where the turbines will be seen where views of the mountains are also appreciated therefore the superlative qualities will be maintained.</p>
<i>An awe-inspiring, broad scale expanse of cnocan in which there is a complex pattern of features at a local level that contribute to the sense of naturalness and sanctuary</i>	Negligible: This quality is not expressed to a high degree within the southern part of the WLA which will be most affected by the proposal.	Negligible: There will be no visibility of the proposal from areas of cnocan within this WLA and the effects on this quality are considered to be negligible and not significant.
<i>A variety of spaces created by irregular landforms in which there is perceived naturalness, as well as a strong sense of solitude</i>	Medium: Where it is difficult to judge relative elevation and orientation, this quality is well expressed and moderately sensitive to features which provide a	Medium adverse long term: The layered hills increase in height, frequency and dominance towards the west, where the range of wild land qualities experienced varies. This gradual rise of the land becomes more apparent when viewed from elevated locations where the



Applying the guidance

- Step 1 - Define the study area and scope of the assessment
- Step 2 – Establish the baseline
- Step 3 – Assess the sensitivity of the study area
- Step 4 – Assess the effects
- Step 5 – Judgement of the significance of effect

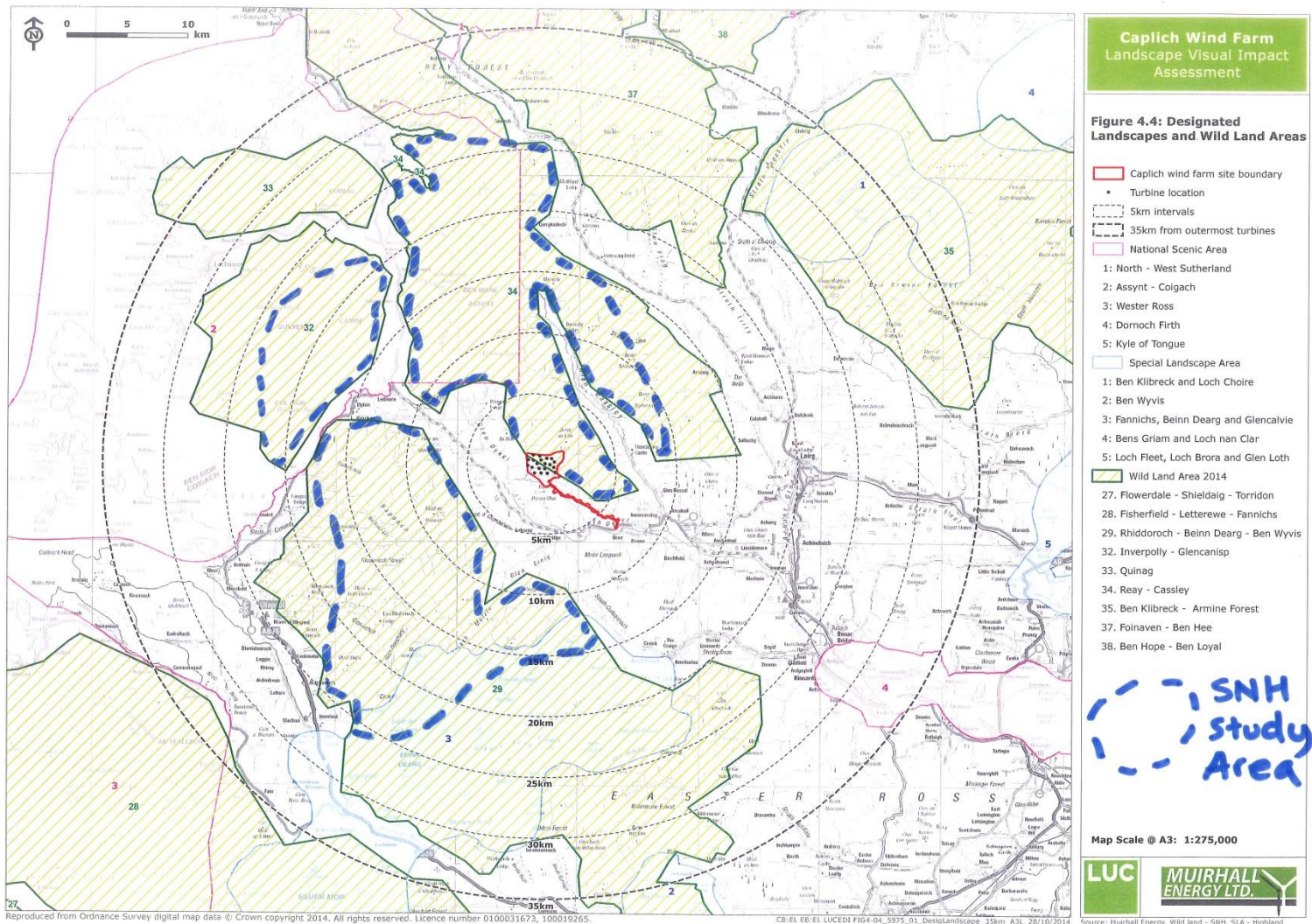


Step 1 - Define the study area and scope of the assessment

- Identify a study area appropriate to the scale of the proposal and extent of likely significant effects on the WLA.
- **Output:** Brief justification and map or description of the area to be assessed



Wind farm study area



SNH study Area

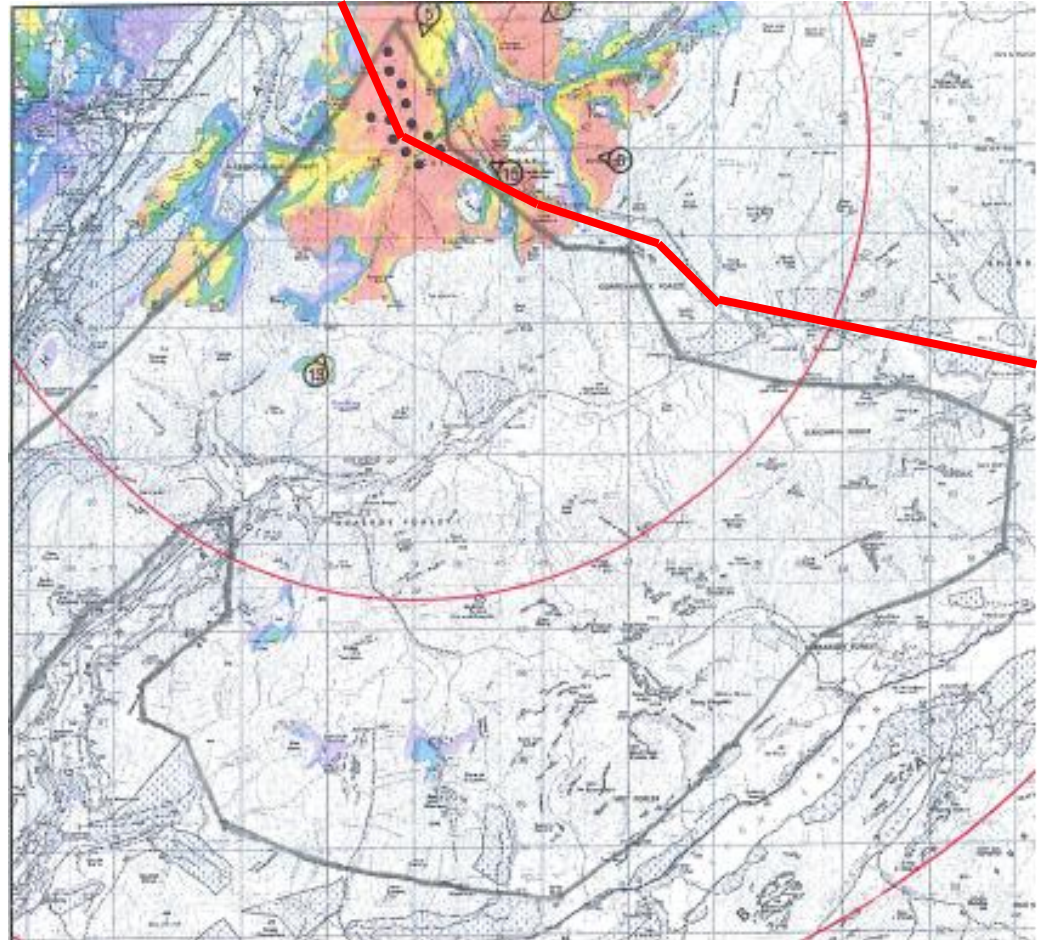
Step 2 – Verify the baseline

- Confirm the wild land qualities (set out in the WLA Description) relevant to the study area (describing any substantial changes since the Description was prepared), and the nature of their contribution to the WLA.
- **Output:** Description of relevant qualities and how post-Description changes have affected them.



New Beauly-Denny transmission power line built post- Description

Powerline and access
tracks adversely
affects strength of
qualities within far
north east of WLA



Step 3 – Assess the sensitivity of the qualities

- Assess the susceptibility of the wild land qualities within the study area to the type and scale of change proposed and to what degree.
- **Output:** A clear and concise narrative explanation describing the susceptibility of individual qualities and / or combinations of qualities, and their overall sensitivity.



Step 4 – Assess the magnitude of the effects

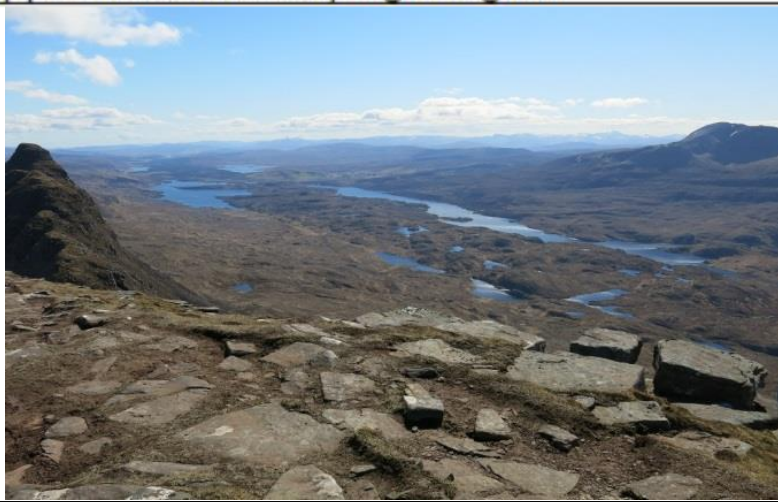
- Given the size or scale of change, extent and duration, assess the effects on individual qualities and / or combinations of qualities, drawing out which physical attributes and perceptual responses will be affected and how, including the potential for mitigation.
- **Output:** A clear and concise narrative explanation describing the effects of the various elements of the proposal on individual qualities and / or combinations of qualities.

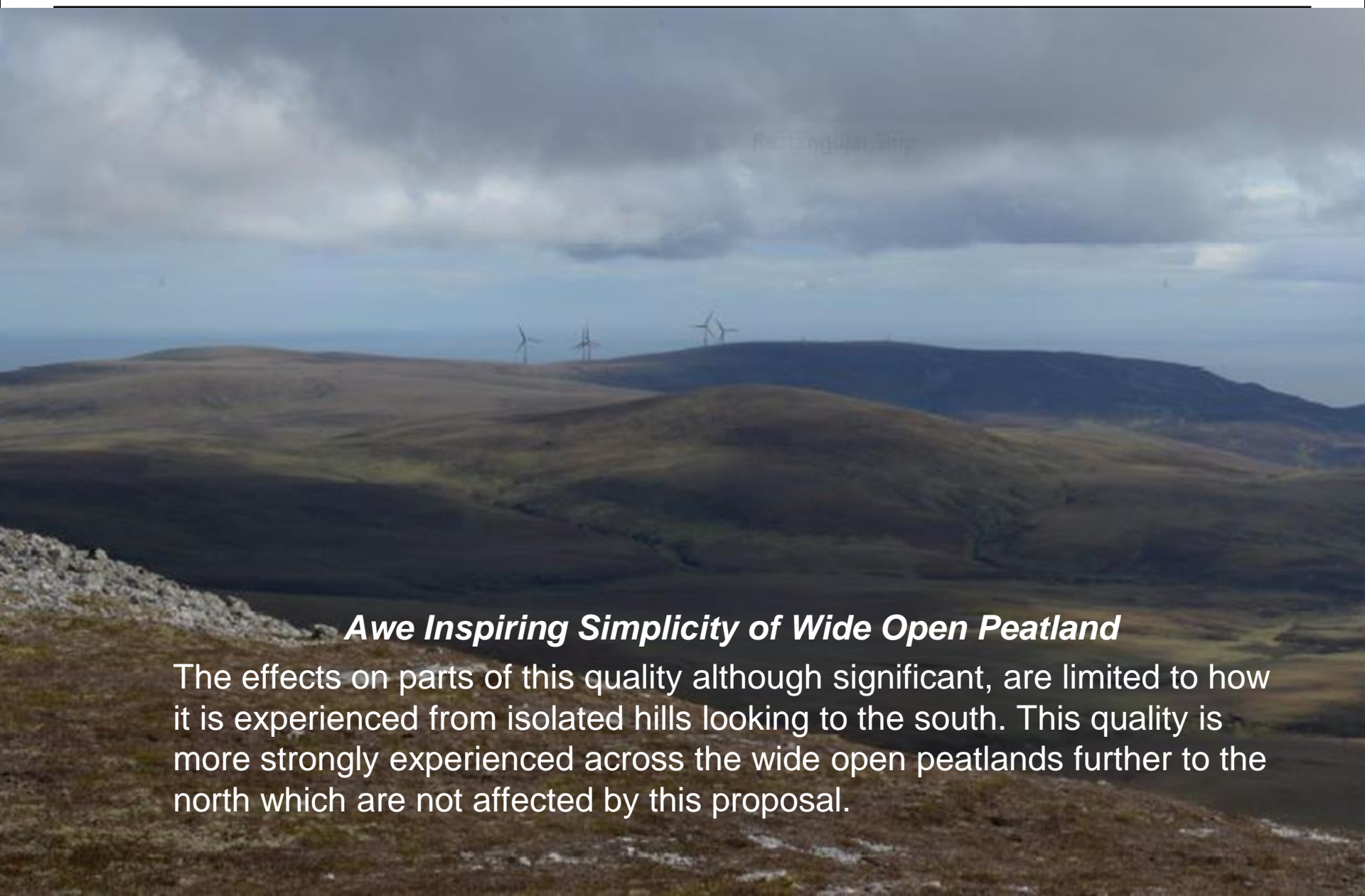


Step 5 – Judge the significance of the effects

Judgment of the significance of effect

Significant: The proposal will have some adverse effects detracting from the awe-inspiring contrast of the mountains to the surrounding expansive peatland, a quality which is highly sensitive due to the contribution of the wider surrounding landscape. In addition there will be substantial effects on views from higher ground which are currently valued for their prevailing absence of human artifacts, such as clearly visible large scale wind farms (CD 5.10 first quality last paragraph). Although the range of wild land qualities within this WLA will continue to be experienced, the effects of this proposal on this WLA are considered to be significant due to the effect on the most sensitive and highly scenic locations where the qualities of this area can be appreciated to a very high degree.





Awe Inspiring Simplicity of Wide Open Peatland

The effects on parts of this quality although significant, are limited to how it is experienced from isolated hills looking to the south. This quality is more strongly experienced across the wide open peatlands further to the north which are not affected by this proposal.

When do SNH consider significant effects warrant an objection?

Is there a 'National Interest'?

- *Where significant effects on the WLA qualities cannot be overcome by siting, design or other mitigation, proposals may merit an objection.*



3) Some lessons from our experience



OS Grid Reference:
Viewpoint Height:
Bearing to Site:

240482, 590704
767m AOD
32°

Approx Distance to Nearest Turbine: 0.86km
Camera Model: Canon SD
Focal Length: 50mm

Camera Height:
Date:
Time:

Approx 1.5m
11/10/2013
10:10

FIGURE 6.3.9d: VIEWPOINT 9 - SHALLOCH OF MINNOCH

When viewed at a comfortable arms length, this image is representative of the maximum field of view of clear vision but is not representative of scale and distance.

Does position of wind farm matter?

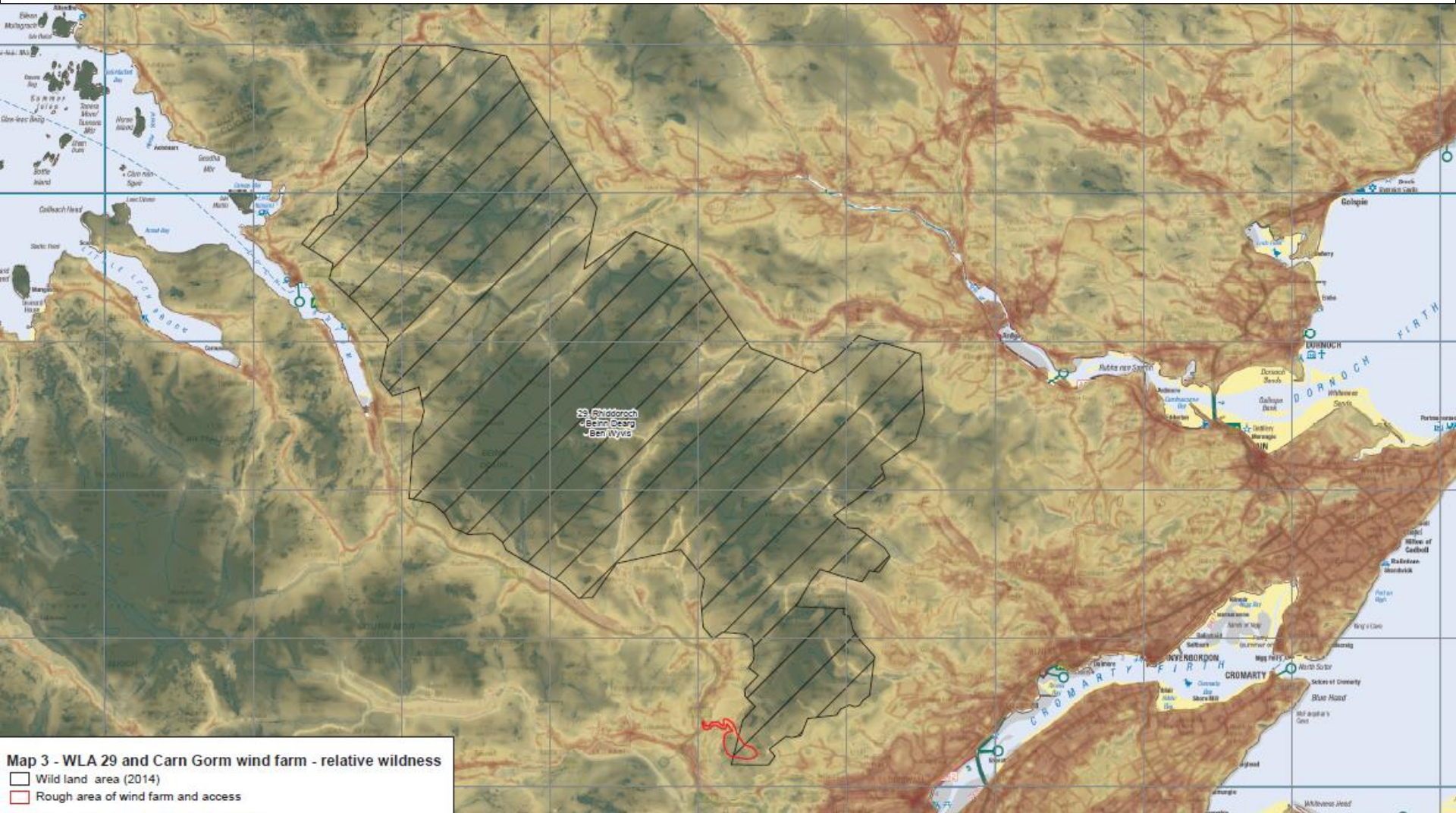
- in terms of assessment?
- in application of policy?



Impact on experience outside of WLA?



Does size of WLA matter?



Does the part impacted matter?

- is the WLA periphery more or less sensitive than the WLA heart?
- destinations and routes?



How far matters?

Proposal	Distance from sensitive VP
Glenmount wind farm	13 km
Talladh a'Bheithe wind farm	18 km
Caplich wind farm	23 km



View C

Single Frame 75mm Photomontage

Photography Information

Date	24th June 2014	Time	19:30	Distance to nearest turbine	13,626 m	Camera type	Nikon D600	Camera height	1.5 m	Focal length	75 mm
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*This image should be viewed at a comfortable arm's length (approx. 500mm)

Figure 4.21.5

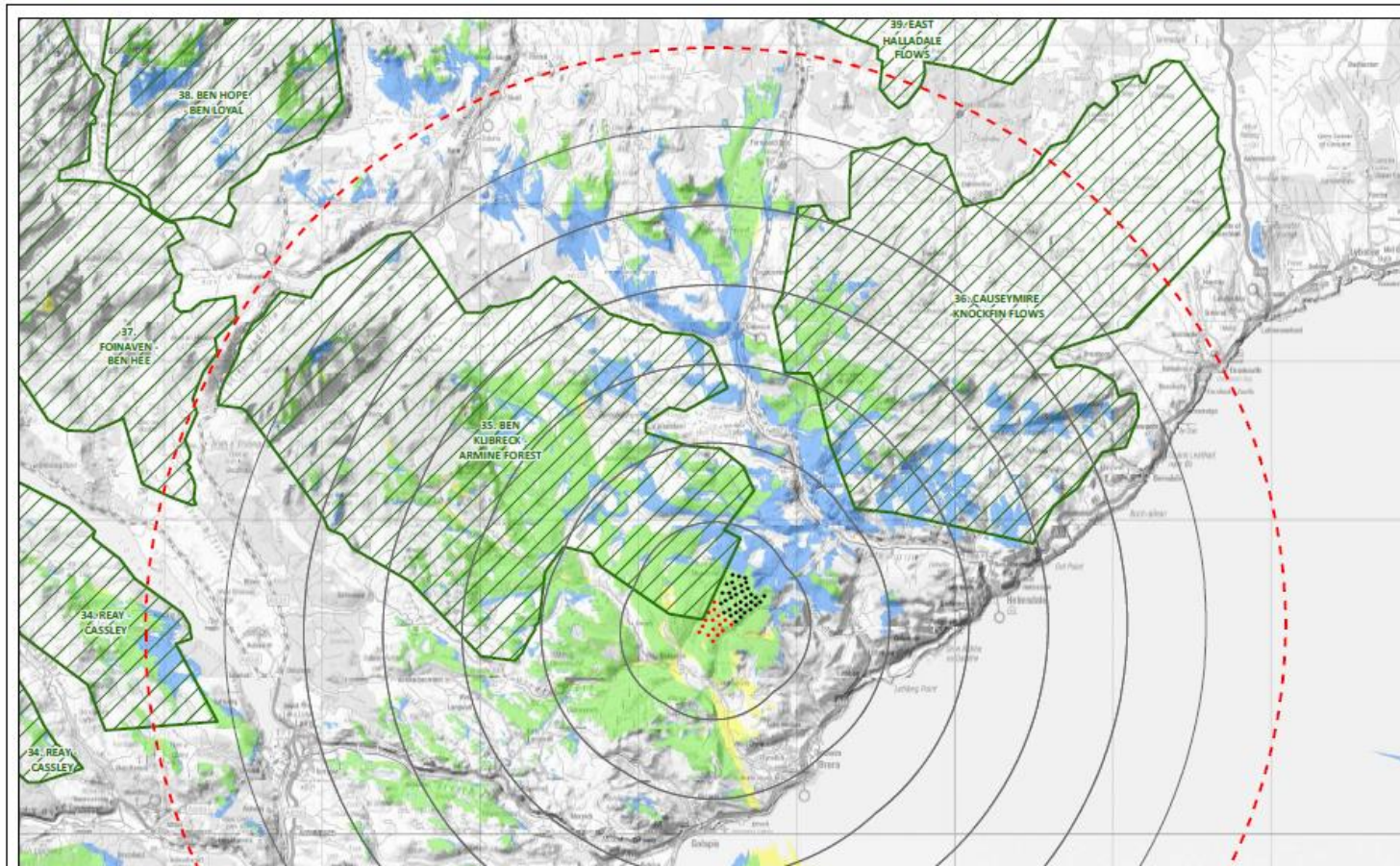
Do cumulative effects matter?

50701 - Gordonbush2 - ES - Figure 7.12b - Wild Land Areas with Gordonbush Comparative ZTV (A1672520).pdf - Adobe Reader

Edit View Window Help

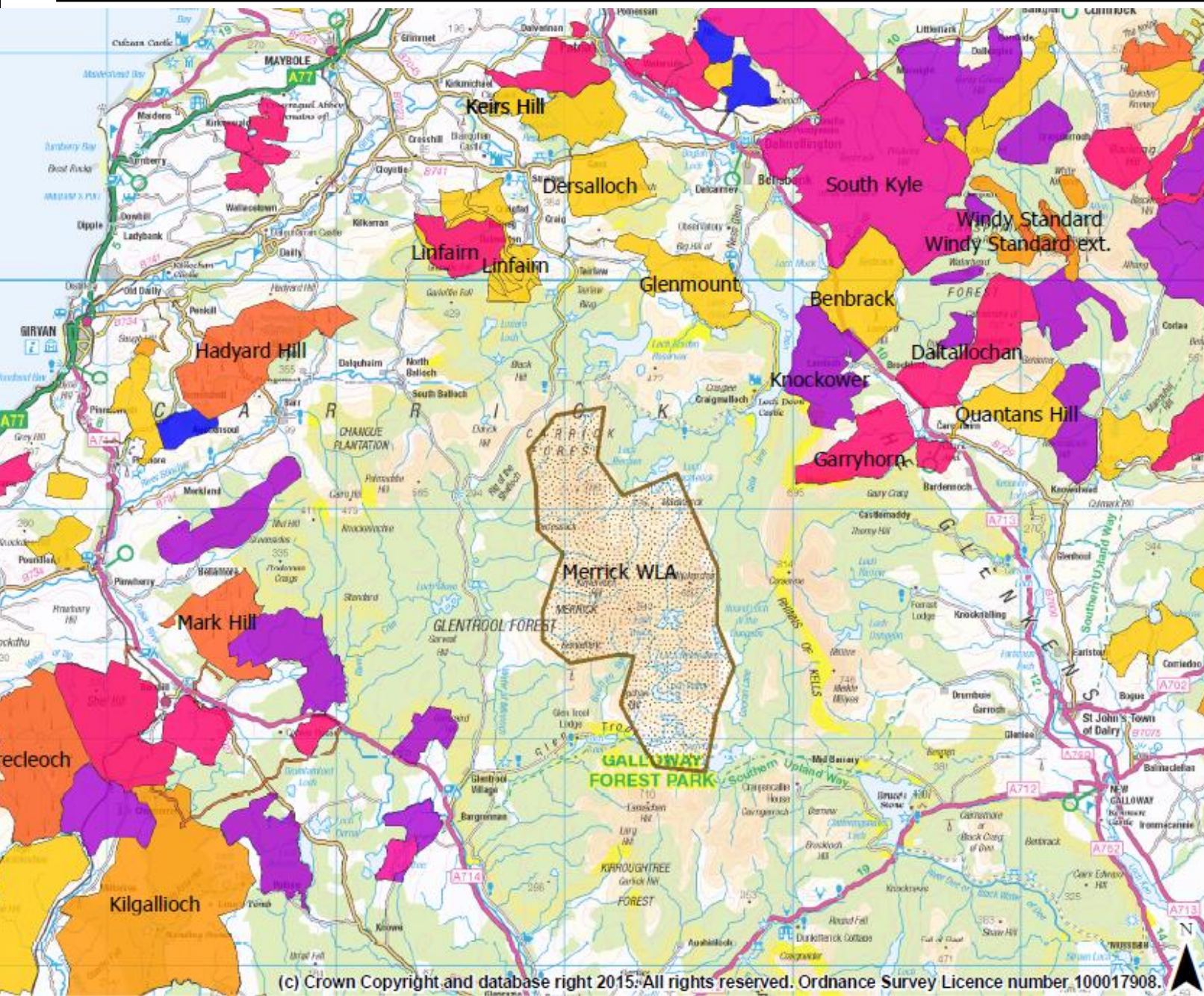


Tools Sign Comment



Key

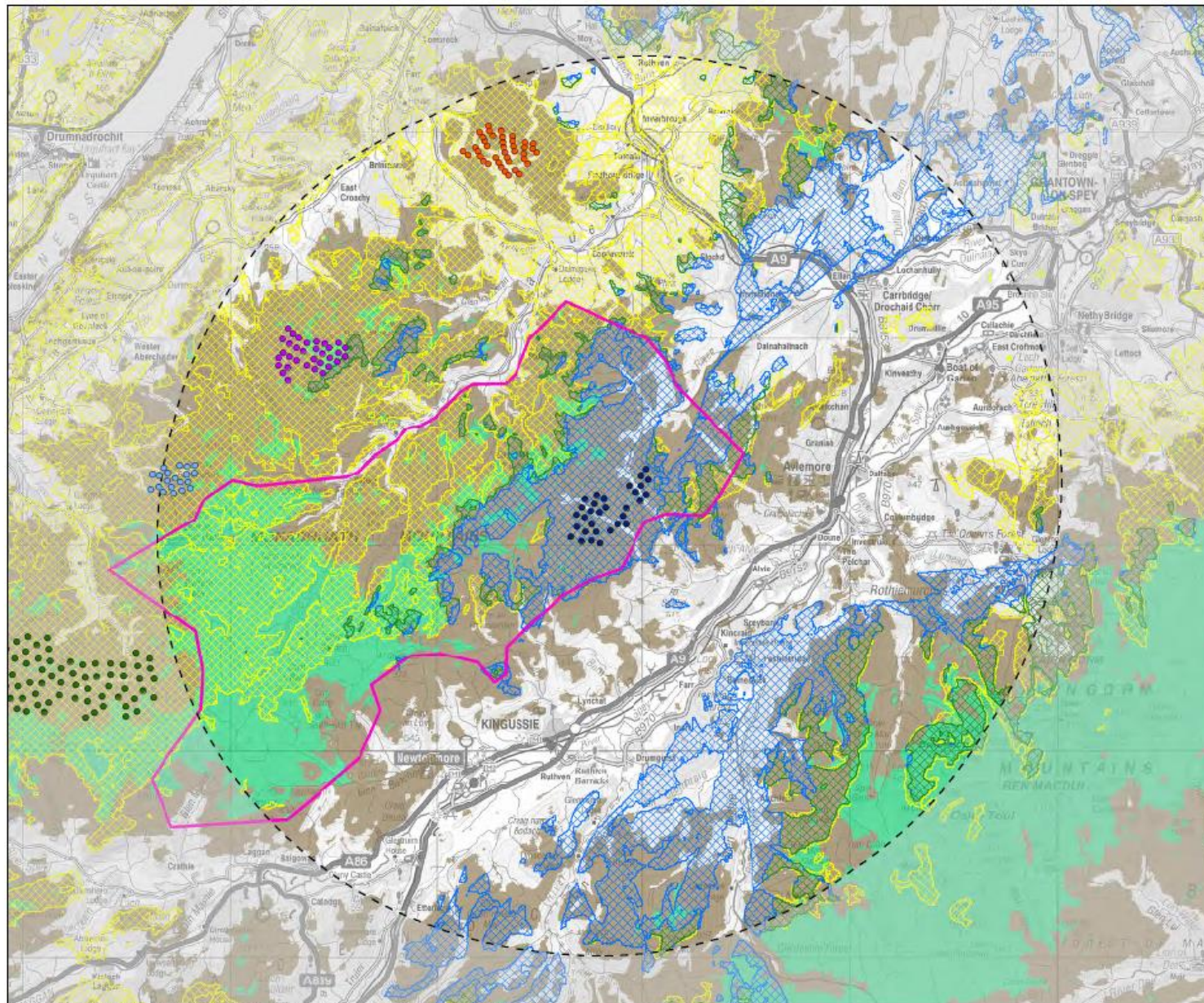
- Gordonbush Operational Turbines
- Gordonbush Extension Turbines
- 5km Radii
- Gordonbush Extension 35km Study Area Boundary
- Wild Land Areas (2014)
- Gordonbush Theoretical Visibility
- Gordonbush Extension Theoretical Visibility
- Combined Theoretical Visibility



Legend

Onshore-Polygo STATUS

- Application
- Approved
- Installed
- Lapsed Pre-app
- Pre-application
- Refused
- Scoping
- Withdrawn
- Wild Land Areas



NOTES

1. WILD LAND DATA SOURCED FROM SNH.

LEGEND

- PROPOSED TURBINE
- 20km BUFFER FROM OUTER ALLT DUINE TURBINE
- STRONELAIRG TURBINE
- FARR TURBINE
- DUNMAGLASS TURBINE
- CORRIEGARTH TURBINE
- WILD LAND AREA 20
- ALLT DUINE 5T VISIBILITY
- DUNMAGLASS, FARR, STRONELAIRG & CORRIEGARTH 5T VISIBILITY
- ALLT DUINE, DUNMAGLASS, FARR, STRONELAIRG & CORRIEGARTH 5T VISIBILITY

WILDNESS COMPOSITE 2014 (NATURAL JENKS)

- 93 - 132 - CLASS 5 & 6
- 132 - 256 - CLASS 7 & 8

RWE
The energy to lead

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**ALLT DUINE WINDFARM
WILD LAND ASSESSMENT**

**BLADE TIP ZTV OF ALLT DUINE, FARR
CORRIEGARTH, STRONELAIRG AND
DUNMAGLASS, WITH WLA 20 AND
JENKS CLASSES 5 - 8**

FIGURE 9

Scale: 1:175,000 @ A3 Date: NOVEMBER 2014

Allt Duine



Refused - the cumulative effect of a further wind farm within and visible from areas where wind farm development is not/will not be readily apparent or a dominant feature.



4) Future Policy

- tensions or opportunities?

- Climate emergency
- Biodiversity challenge
- Forestry targets
- Rural development needs
- Community empowerment and land reform
-



Questions?



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