

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**NORTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE
21 May 2013**

Agenda Item	5.2
Report No	PLN/045/13

**11/04718/S36 : WKN Sallachy Ltd
Sallachy Wind Farm, Sallachy and Duchally Estate, Lairg.**

Report by Head of Planning and Building Standards

SUMMARY

Description: - Wind Farm 66MW / 22 turbines with associated infrastructure.

Recommendation: - Raise No Objection

Ward: - 1 North West and Central Sutherland

Development category: - Major development

Pre-determination hearing: - not required.

Reason referred to Committee: - More than 5 objections
Objection from Statutory Consultee - SNH.

1 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.1 The application is for a wind farm on Sallachy and Duchally estates comprising 22 wind turbines (each 3MW max output) offering a potential generating capacity of 66MW. It has been submitted to the Scottish Government as an application under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. Should Ministers approve the development, it will carry deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The Council is a consultee on the proposed development. Should the Council object to the development, Scottish Ministers will be required to hold a Public Local Inquiry to consider the development before determining the application.

1.2 The application comprises: -

- 22 turbines maximum tip height 125m with internal transformers.
- 12 km of new access tracks (4m wide).
- 6 km of improved roadway (widened to 4m).
- Borrow pit - delivering 20,000m² of rock.
- Control and Maintenance Building / Substation.
- Temporary Site Compound.

- 1.3 The scheme has two elements; an extended row of 11 turbines on its north side overlooking Loch Shin and a further eleven turbines in three rows overlooking Glencassley. The turbine rows all run east of Maovally hilltop in an alignment north west to south east running parallel with the main ridge line through the site. The design has sought to take account of the surrounding landscape and existing land uses including substantive hydro-generation.
- 1.4 The operational lifespan of the development is 25 years after which time the turbines will be decommissioned, with above ground facilities being removed and the site restored. Construction of the project is expected to take 12 months, with the bulk of construction taking place in 2015. The potential economic impact of the proposed development during the construction phase could contribute around £13 million to the Highland economy and support 17 full time equivalent jobs. During its 25-year life it could contribute £43 million to the Highland economy and support 16 full time equivalent jobs.
- 1.5 The development is supported by an Environmental Statement (ES) under the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2000 (as amended). The ES, with some subsequent clarification through written dialogue with statutory consultees, is of a standard that has allowed the Council and other consultees to use the information and make a judgement on the application. The Council's assessment also draws upon the ES submitted in support of the Glencassley Wind Farm, which was submitted after the current application and therefore considers the issue of cumulative impact of applications within the wider area.
- 1.6 Whilst not part of this application the wind farm is expected to connect with the substation at Corriekinloch via underground cables (8.4km) adjacent to the existing private track. This was in preference to upgrading the existing overhead line that runs through the area with a larger double circuit line. The project has a grid connection date of 2016.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is set between Sallachy Estate and Duchally Estate on either side of a ridge line that runs from Maovally hilltop in the north to Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche hill top in the south. Sallachy Estate covers the area from the ridge line down to Loch Shin, and Duchally Estate the slope to the other side of the ridgeline down to the River Cassley. The land cover across the application site is a mixture of heather and moorland grasses. The land on which the wind farm is to be located is mainly used for deer stalking.
- 2.2 The site gently slopes from a central plateau towards the north eastern boundary set on the south western slopes above Loch Shin (90m AOD) and towards the south western boundary which partly defined by the River Cassley (110m AOD). The turbines are set out between the 400m and 460m contours. Maovally, which rises to a height of 511m AOD, is located in close proximity to the north western boundary. At the south eastern boundary the summits of Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche (456m AOD) and Cnoc a Bhaid Bhàin (367m AOD) are located. Several minor water systems drain across the north eastern sector of the site into Loch Shin.

Other minor water courses drain across the south western sector of the site towards the River Cassley. Surface water from the water shed is harnessed in part for hydro power, three private water abstractions and watercourses with valued fishing interests.

- 2.3 Duchally Lodge, the principal estate house, is situated close to the south western boundary of the site. It lies over 1km from the nearest turbine. The nearest property outwith control of the applicant is at Carrachan on the north side of Loch Shin, close to the Overscaig Hotel on the A838 road, at over 2.4km from the nearest turbine. Within 5 km of the application site there are a number of single houses, crofts and farmhouses. The nearest settlement is Lairg, approximately 18.5 km to the south east.
- 2.4 On the western boundary of the development area runs a private road that crosses the two estates and connects with the A838 public road. The road is owned by Scottish and Southern Energy which operates two hydropower stations that are located on the River Cassley and at north end of Loch Shin. These hydropower stations are connected by an underground tunnel. Associated hydro infrastructure including the road, a ventilation shaft and a power line are prominent features on the site. The substation for the hydro-scheme is located to the north west near to the A838 road. A telecommunication mast is positioned eastern slopes of Maovally Hill on the north side of the private road.
- 2.5 Construction traffic will principally arrive from the south from Lairg and beyond, with turbine parts arriving from Invergordon via the A9 Trunk Road to the Mound, then Rogart and Lairg via the A839, prior to taking access onto the A836 Lairg - Tongue Road and then the A868. With the exception of the road north of Lairg these roads have already been used, following upgrading, for the delivery of wind turbines to local sites at Achany and Rosehall.
- 2.6 The site is not covered by any nature conservation designation. It does however lie adjacent to peatland with multiple designations including the Strath an Loin SSSI, Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC, Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA and Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Ramsar site. Within 10km radius the following sites are also designated including Ben More Assynt SSSI, Grudie Peatlands SSSI, River Oykel SAC, Strath Duchally SSSI and Cnoc and Alaskie SSSI. The site is also use by a number of animals and birds which are protected. It also contains valued habitat – blanket bog.
- 2.7 The turbine area is not covered by any international, regional or local landscape designations. The eastern boundary of Assynt-Coigach National Scenic Area (NSA) lies 2.5km to the west of the proposal. The NSA is valued as an extensive area of coastline, lochs, mountain and moorland features. Further afield there are other landscape designations including Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire Special Landscape Area (SLA), Dornoch Firth NSA, Kyle of Tongue NSA, Ben Griam and Loch nan Clar SLA, Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA and Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA. The site does however fall within a Search Area for Wild Land (SAWL).

- 2.8 When assessing a wind farm development consideration of similar projects around the site is required. The list below presents the key projects around this development site (65km radius) that are Operational, Approved or have been Submitted but are not yet determined. Annexed to this report is a plan that helps locate these projects along with the site of the current application, including additional projects that have been Scoped as part of on-going Environmental Impact Assessments.

<u>Operational</u>	<u>Approved</u>	<u>Submitted</u>
Achany	Lochluichart I	Glenmorie
Rosehall	Corriemoillie	Dalnessie
Lairg	Lochluichart II	Braemore
Kilbruar	Coire na Cloiche	Glencassley
Kilbruar Extension		
Gordonbush		
Ben Tharsuinn		
Ben nan Oighrean		

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 **13 February 2012** - Temporary Siting of meteorological mast granted planning permission – 22 October 2009 (12/00016/FUL).
18 February 2013 - Dalnessie Wind farm – THC has raised an objection (12/00890/S36).
22 March 2013 - Braemore Wind Farm – THC has raised an objection (10/05102/S36).
13 December 2006 – Invercassley Wind Farm 25 Turbines on Beinn Rosail refused (11/04718/S36).

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 4.1 The proposal was first advertised on 20 December 2011 and again on 16 March 2012 and 8 January 2013 under the Electricity Act 1989 and the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2000. The ES documents and supplementary information was made available locally in Lairg, Bonar Bridge and Golspie allowing 28 days for representations.
- 4.2 The Council has received 270 letters / emails of representation consisting of 228 objections and 39 letters of support. The Energy Consent Unit has logged 221 objectors and 74 supporters.
- 4.3 A number of responses have highlighted their submission was made following an appeal to members by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland which has objected to this application. This included for example a response from Ochils Mountaineering Club representing its 140 members.

4.4 Material considerations raised within the objection are summarised as follows: -

- Conflict with National Planning Framework.
- Conflict with Planning Policy - national and local
- Contrary to the Highland wide Local Development Plan / Supplementary Guidance Onshore Wind Energy
- Visual Impact.
- Scotland's landscape needs protection.
- Impact on landscape character.
- Impact on national scenic area – including Ben More Assynt.
- Impact on special landscape areas.
- Impact on wild land.
- Impact on designated sites
- Impact on Caithness and Sutherland SPA – Peatland / Habitat
- Risk of peat slide / damage to peat resource.
- Impact on wildlife / protected birds.
- Cumulative impact of wind farms in this location.
- Natural beauty of area would be harmed.
- Impact on the “emptiness” of Sutherland.
- Impact on / visibility from several iconic mountains / Munro's.
- Too many of Scotland's Munro's have been affected by turbines.
- Impact on tourism / local economy.
- Impact on areas valued for recreation hillwalking, cycling and angling.
- The development would be out of scale to its surroundings.
- Noise and light pollution.
- Construction impact on water quality.
- Traffic impact.
- Archaeology.
- Economic viability.
- Need for generation is not substantiated.
- Concerns over quality of ES / landscape assessment under estimates impact.

4.5 Considerations raised by supporters are summarised as follows: -

- Good project – well away from Lairg the nearest settlement.
- Good use of natural resources.
- Clean source of energy.
- Area has hydro power and associated infrastructure.
- Helps with climate change.
- Unlikely to affect wildlife.
- No affect on forestry.
- No /limited visual impact.
- No effect on archaeology.
- Good for the economy / jobs.
- This will help sustain estate jobs.
- This is a fragile area in need of meaningful jobs / investment.

4.6 Letters of representation are available for inspection via the Council's eplanning portal which can be accessed through the internet www.wam.highland.gov.uk/wam. Access to computers can be made available via Planning and Development Service offices.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Consultations Undertaken by the Planning and Development Service

5.1 Creich Community Council has not objected to this application.

5.2 Lairg Community Council has not objected to the application.

5.3 Ardgay and District Community Council highlight concerns in respect of cumulative impact on residents and tourists as well as the introduction of aviation lighting.

5.4 TECS – Environmental Health has no objections. Prior to installation the applicant must provide details from the manufacturer as to the warranted sound power level and confirmation as to the absence of any tonal noise. It is requested that the standard simplified condition on noise be included in any consent.

5.5 TECS – Roads has no objection. There will however be significant improvement work required on the local road network to make it suitable for the anticipated construction traffic, particularly on the A838 public road between Dalchork and the site entrance.

5.6 Planning and Development Service - Historic Environment Team has no objections. It agrees the limited impact as presented within the ES. There is no requirement for any further mitigation.

5.7 Planning and Development Service – Access Officer has no objection to the application. There will be a requirement to maintain public access rights across this area during the construction and operation of this development.

Consultation Responses Undertaken by Scottish Government

5.8 Transport Scotland Network Management has no objection to the development in terms of impact on the trunk road network. With regard to the movement of abnormal loads the developer must ensure that the anticipated vehicles can be accommodated on the network and that any mitigation or traffic management is agreed.

5.9 Historic Scotland has no objection to the application. It recognises limited historic interests close to or within a wider area (10km) which would be affected by the development.

5.10 Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) **objects** to the application. The proposal is considered to have an adverse effect on the special qualities of the Assynt – Coigach National Scenic Area and on a Search Area for Wild Land (SAWL). It considers that this raises natural heritage issues of national interest. There are

also a number of other concerns but it is anticipated that these can be managed through appropriate planning conditions particularly embracing a site specific Construction and Environmental Management Document (CEMD) safeguarding the interests of Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussels within the River Oykel SAC and with regard to a number of bird species, bats, water vole, badgers that use the site together with otter management and deer management initiatives. It however currently maintains an objection to the application based on the potential risk to the River Oykel SAC from peat slide.

- 5.11 Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has no objection to the application subject to planning conditions being attached to any consent. Conditions must secure appropriately designed new water crossings and culverts, the requirement for a site specific construction and environmental management document (CEMD), deployment of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), limitations on micro-siting, Peat Management Plan and Habitat Management Plan including impact on peat-lands and groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems, decommission and site restoration. It considers that there is now sufficient confidence in the carbon payback figure for it to be used by Scottish Ministers as a material consideration in their decision making.
- 5.12 Scottish Water has no objection to the application.
- 5.13 National Air Traffic Systems (NATS) has no objections to the application.
- 5.14 Highlands and Islands Airport Ltd (HIAL) has no objections to this development but it would support the case for hub height aviation lighting.
- 5.15 Ministry Of Defence (MOD) has no objections to this application. The MOD has requested that the turbines must not be located any lower to the valley floor, which is used for low flying purposes. This is in addition to its standard conditions addressing the requirement for aviation lighting on turbines, notification on construction commencement and notification on final design / as built turbine locations.
- 5.16 British Telecom has not objected to the application which should not cause problems with its current and planned radio networks.
- 5.17 Joint Radio Company has no objection to the application. It has requested planning conditions to restrict the movement of 5 turbines - T12, T16, T17, T19 and T21 where any micro-siting allowance being limited to 10m.
- 5.18 Airwave Solutions have concerns over the location of turbine 19.
- 5.19 Marine Scotland (Freshwater Lab) has no objections. It raises a number of concerns arising from construction with peat and in close proximity of water courses. It has requested to be consulted over the final site specific CEMP to ensure impacts on downstream fishing interests are protected.

- 5.20 Visit Scotland has concerns over the proliferation of wind farms that may negatively affect tourism in the local area whether visually, environmentally and or economically. It urges that the impact across the whole of central Sutherland is taken into account when considering new developments in the area.
- 5.21 Halcrow Group Ltd has no objection. The ES provides a sufficiently robust assessment of the peatland slide risk at the proposed Sallachy Wind Farm development site. A number of recommendations are offered for further consideration, which should be dealt with as conditions to consent in the iterative detailed design process.
- 5.22 Mountaineering Council for Scotland **objects** to the application based on impacts on the landscape and visual amenity. It suggests that it will not be possible to mitigate the effects of this development to the many hill / mountain - walkers / climbers who enjoy this area for its special qualities. The site lies in a SNH search area for wildness. It will be visible from many of the most iconic mountains of the North West Highlands. There are four other wind farms within 25km which together with this proposal will generate significant cumulative effects.
- 5.23 John Muir Trust **objects** to the application highlighting that the suitability of the site for development has not been adequately proven, with landscape and visual impacts being unwarranted and having significant levels of intrusion occurring in surrounding areas. The proposal is in a large area depicted on Scottish Natural Heritage's 2012 Wildness map as a core area that has a high wildness value and also near several "Search Areas for Wild Land".
- 5.24 Scotways The national catalogue of Rights of Way shows that right of way HS27 runs close to the south-western boundary of the proposed wind farm site. Turbines should be set back from this route.

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

- 6.1 The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application:-

Highland-wide Local Development Plan 2012 (HwLDP)

- 6.2 Policy 28 Sustainable Development
 Policy 31 Developer Contributions
 Policy 26 Wider Countryside
 Policy 53 Minerals
 Policy 55 Peat and Soils
 Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
 Policy 58 Protected Species
 Policy 59 Other Important Species
 Policy 60 Other important Habitats and Article 10 Features
 Policy 61 Landscape
 Policy 67 Renewable Energy including significant effects on: -
- Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
 - Other Species and Habitat Interests
 - Landscape and Visual Impact

- Amenity at Sensitive Locations
- Safety and Amenity of Individuals and Individual Properties
- The Water Environment
- Safety of Airport, Defence and Emergency Service Operations
- The Operational Efficiency of Other Communications
- The Quantity and Quality of Public Access
- Other Tourism and Recreation Interests
- Traffic and Transport Interests

Policy 72 Pollution

Policy 77 Public Access

Policy 78 Long Distance Routes

Sutherland Local Plan (as amended by the HwLDP)

- 6.3 The general policies of the Local Plan that applied to the development site have all been superseded by policies presented in the HwLDP.

Onshore Wind Energy Interim Supplementary Guidance

- 6.4 The application site lies within an Area of Search. Policy 67 of the HwLDP therefore applies, with additional interpretation as provided on the eleven criteria set out within Policy 67 listed above.

7 OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Scottish Planning Policy

- 7.1 Scottish Government Planning Policy and Guidance which include the following main provisions: -

- National Planning Framework (II) June 2009.
- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) February 2010.
- 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy July 2011.

- 7.2 SPP contains a number of subject specific policy statements, also supported by Planning Advice Notes (PANs) which give additional guidance on topics. A number of PAN's are web based documents which are regularly updated to ensure best practice advice can be shared. SPP policies of note to this development include: -

- Rural Development
- Landscape and Natural Heritage
- Transport
- Renewable Energy

Highland Renewable Energy Strategy (HRES)

- 7.3 The Council has an approved Renewable Energy Strategy (HRES) which sets out its vision and policies on a whole raft of potential renewable energy technologies. Relevant policies to the current application include: -

- Policy H1 Education and Training
- Policy K1 Community Benefit
- Policy N1 Local Content of Works

8 PLANNING APPRAISAL

8.1 The Scottish Government will address its assessment of this Section 36 application under the Electricity Act 1989. Should Ministers approve the development, it would carry with it deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The Council in its assessment considers whether the application is in accordance with the Council's Development Plan and then considered all other material considerations.

8.2 The determining issues are:

- Does proposal accord with the development plan?
- If it does, are there compelling reasons for not approving the proposed development?
- If it does not accord, are there any compelling material considerations for approving the proposed development?

Assessment

8.3 To address the determining issues, the Committee must consider the following:-

- Development Plan
- Highland Renewable Energy Strategy
- National Policy
- Roads, Traffic Impacts and Access
- Water & Drainage, including Flooding
- Peat.
- Natural Heritage
- Design, Landscape and Visual Impact including Cumulative Impact
- Wild Land
- Recreation
- Economic Impact and Tourism
- Cultural Heritage
- Noise
- Construction Impacts
- Aviation and Community Infrastructure
- Other Material Considerations.

Development Plan

8.4 The application is located within an "Area of Search" within the above noted Interim Supplementary Guidance Onshore Wind Energy and thereby needs to be determined principally within the terms of Policy 67 Renewable Energy of the Highland wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP). Other policies set out in the HwLDP as highlighted earlier in this report relates to the consideration of key factors many of which are noted within this principal policy on renewable energy.

The Council's Interim Supplementary Guidance also expands on the key factors noted within Policy 67. Where relevant to this application all these matters are addressed within this assessment. This includes for example Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage which takes into account a range of interests and designations including Wild Land.

- 8.5 Under Policy 57 all development proposals require to be assessed taking into account the level of importance and type of heritage features, the form and the scale of the development, and any impact on the feature and its setting, in the context of the policy framework is detailed within Appendix 2 of the HwLDP. This Policy also highlights that it is the Council's intention to adopt the Supplementary Guidance on Wild Areas in due course when national policy on such areas has been suitably developed.
- 8.6 Policy 67 highlights that the Council will consider the contribution of the project towards renewable energy targets, positive and negative effects on the local and national economy and other material considerations including making effective use of existing and proposed infrastructure and facilities. In that context the Council will support proposals where it is satisfied they are located, sited and designed such as they will not be significantly detrimental overall individually or cumulatively with other developments having regard to the 11 specified criteria (as listed). If the Council is satisfied on all these matters then the application will accord with the Development Plan.

Highland Renewable Energy Strategy (HRES)

- 8.7 Policy 67 of the Development Plan also recognises the strategy developed by the Council on a range of Renewable Energy technologies. The additional benefits from such investment also as highlighted in the HRES as noted earlier for example 'Education and Training,' 'Community Benefit' and 'Local Content' also remain as important considerations when assessing individual project proposals – see also later section on economic impact. HRES has also highlighted energy targets that the Highlands might meet using the range of renewable energy technologies. The Scottish Government has targets (see below) but it is important to recognise that these targets are not a cap on development proposals that may emerge in an area.

National Policy

- 8.8 The Scottish Government has a very positive approach on Renewable Energy technologies. This is set out in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) with further advice on renewable energy targets available from its "Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland 2011". There is a Scottish Government target of 100% of Scotland's electricity demand to be generated from renewable resources by 2020. The target is not a cap. There is expectation that the energy targets will be met from a mix of technologies. Representations that argue against investment in renewable energy can only be given limited weight given the very positive stance set by the Scottish Government.

- 8.9 SPP advises that planning authorities should support the development of wind farms in locations where technology can operate efficiently and environmental and cumulative impacts can be satisfactorily addressed. Criteria for the assessment of applications are listed including landscape and visual impact; effects on heritage and historic environment; contribution to renewable energy targets; effect on the local and national economy and tourism and recreation interests; benefits and dis-benefits to communities; aviation and telecommunications; noise and shadow flicker; and cumulative impact. These elements, as relevant to this application, are examined within this assessment.
- 8.10 SPP advises that when considering cumulative impact the factors for planning authorities to consider should be set out in the Development Plan or Supplementary Guidance. Development Plans are expected to have a spatial framework for onshore wind farms over 20MW drawn from the identification of areas requiring significant protection, areas with potential constraints against identified criteria and areas of search where appropriate proposals are likely to be supported, again subject to identified criteria. The spatial approach advanced by this Council is as set out in our Interim Supplementary Guidance.

Roads, Traffic Impact and Public Access

- 8.11 The site generally has good access from an existing private road developed in association with hydro power operations in the area. This road takes access from the A838 Lairg to Laxford Bridge road, which is principally as a single track road, with stretches of twin track. TEC Services anticipate that significant improvement work will be required on the local road network to make it suitable to cater for the anticipated construction traffic, particularly on the A838 public road between Dalchork and the site entrance. This is likely to include verge widening and strengthening, carriageway widening and strengthening, and provision of passing places. The extent and detail of all road improvement and strengthening works need to be agreed with TEC Services and completed prior to windfarm construction commencing, other than where agreed with TEC Services.
- 8.12 An assessment of the capacity of existing bridges and other structures along the construction access route(s) to cater for all construction traffic will be required. Particular attention will be required to the bridges on the A838 and A836 public roads north and west of Lairg which have not previously been used by windfarm traffic, and which have very low normal traffic flows. This work shall be completed prior to windfarm construction commencing, other than where agreed with TEC Services.
- 8.13 A Wear and Tear agreement in accordance with Section 96 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 will be required under which the developer is responsible for the repair of any damage to the Council's road network that can reasonably be attributed to construction related traffic. The Trunk Roads Authority will also require prior notification of the delivery of abnormal loads to the site to ensure vehicles can be accommodated on the network and any specific mitigation or traffic management measures agreed.

- 8.14 The internal private access road to the site becomes impassable during poor winter weather. The expected Traffic Management Plan prior to the commencement of development shall describe how this situation will be managed during construction and operational phases. For the avoidance of doubt, use of the public roads to Duchally Lodge and Sallachy by any type of vehicle will not be permitted in these situations unless significant improvements are made to these local roads. SSE has highlighted concerns over access restriction during planned improvements works to its access road. This would be a matter for interested parties to address which might be expected to follow the Council's own procedures and practices when conducting improvements to local roads.
- 8.15 There is low recreational access use at the site of the development. From a wider perspective the development will be visible from regularly visited hill routes, particularly Ben More Assynt to the west of the site. That said any access infrastructure such as gates / vehicle barriers should allow access for non-motorised public use. Site signage should take note of public access rights and any permanent site signage should by condition be approved by the planning authority.

Water & Drainage Including Flooding

- 8.16 The development falls within two water catchment areas both of which are heavily modified for hydro-electric power. The north-eastern side of the site drains into Loch Shin through 16 identifiable watercourses. The south-western side of the site drains into the River Cassley via 17 small watercourses including Allt Maovally, Allt a Chnoic Ghlais and Duchally Burn. The latter involves collection of the headwater of the River Cassley via a series of intakes and diverted by two aqueducts where it is used to drive two small turbines in a small power station built into Duchally Weir on the River Cassley. Water from the Duchally header pond provides compensation water down the River Cassley, whilst the remainder is diverted via a 4 km (2.5 mile) long tunnel beneath Maovally to the 10 MW Cassley Power Station on the southern shore of Loch Shin. Agreement needs to be secured over any works that might affect the integrity of the below ground tunnel / pipeline.
- 8.17 The surface water is of good quality supporting high quality fishing interests downstream and other nature conservation interests; including freshwater pearl mussels. Duchally Lodge has a private water supply drawn from land adjacent to the north western site boundary, on which there are no significant concerns. The area is recognised as having high rainfall levels which must be taken into account when undertaking significant construction works as proposed within this application. The applicant's ES has highlighted its clear intention to adopt Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) practices on site to help manage hydrological impact / pollution risk from the construction / development.
- 8.18 SEPA has advised that it has no objection to the proposed watercourse crossings in terms of flood risk provided a planning condition is applied requiring that any new watercourses be in the form of bridges or bottomless culverts and that any modifications to existing crossings are designed to maintain the same or greater channel capacity. Existing culverts should be opened whenever possible. Further that if new culverts are unavoidable, they should be designed to maintain or

improve existing flow conditions and aquatic life. New water crossings must as appropriate be designed to cater for a 1 in 200 year design flow, plus 20% for climate change, at each point without causing constriction of flow which would ultimately result in access tracks being at risk of flooding.

- 8.19 To assist with the management of construction works SEPA has requested in line with Council policy that a condition be applied within any approval requiring a site specific Construction Environmental Management Document (CEMD). The CEMD should include mitigation agreed with SNH regarding River Oykel SAC, pollution prevention measures associated with any borrow pits and details as to how Turbines 2 and 7 will be constructed so as to minimise impacts upon Groundwater Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems. Conditions have also been requested by SEPA, now common practice, to ensure the engagement of an Environmental Clerk of Works to assist implement the requirements of the approved CEMD; that limits are placed on micro-siting of development elements +/- 50 m to avoid sensitive receptors; requirements for decommissioning and site restoration; as well as habitat management incorporating peat restoration – see later.
- 8.20 Marine Scotland has concerns regarding the development and potential impact on water quality. The key interests to safeguard relate to fishing interests downstream as well as protected species. It accepts that such matters can be addressed using planning conditions and the adoption of good working practices to ensure the risk of pollution arising from construction activities is minimised, for example through the maintenance of a development buffer / set back from all watercourses.

Peat

- 8.21 The development site comprises saturated peat of varying thickness generally between 0.5m and 0.2m although areas of deeper peat deposits prevail on the gentler slopes and the ridgeline. An assessment of the site for peat slide has been undertaken and the design layout has managed to locate most turbines within areas of low peat slide risk, with 5 turbines within a medium risk category, thus avoiding areas of much higher risk. Access tracks passing through areas of medium risk or areas of deeper peat are to be further assessed to determine what micro-siting can be undertaken to further reduce impact on peat deposits. Significant re-use of excavated peat for habitat restoration is to be undertaken. Water table depths prior to and post construction are expected to be included in the Habitat Management Plan to ensure on site peat and habitat is effectively managed.
- 8.22 Following consideration of the ES additional information on peat storage areas, including volumes and type of peat storage, construction of storage areas and periods of storage, etc. was provided. SEPA has welcomed this information including a Peat Management Plan. This has indicated all phases of peat storage during construction. SEPA has requested planning conditions are attached to any consent to ensure the submission of a detailed CEMD and that within any finalised Peat Management Plan all peat storage areas are micro sited away from existing watercourses and a minimum 50m buffer from any watercourse from a peat storage area is maintained undisturbed. Halcrow, the Government's advisors, has

confirmed that it is generally content with the assessment of peat-slide risk within the ES and has offered suggestions for conditions to be attached to any approval to allow further assessment at the detailed design stage.

- 8.23 SNH has highlighted concerns over the potential development within areas of medium risk for peat slide. The applicant's assessment it highlights medium risk areas are located across the slope above the River Oykel SAC, crossing several watercourses which drain into the SAC. In places, the 'medium risk zone' is less than 1km from the SAC and is never more than 1.5km distant." SNH has raised an objection founded on this risk with respect to the River Oykel SAC. SNH has highlighted that "further investigation and mitigation measures should be provided to reduce the level of risk to the qualifying interests of this SAC." It advises that such information "needs to be presented before the application is determined. See paragraph 8.27 below.
- 8.24 SEPA has provided an audit of the carbon balance assessment. In summary it considers that there can be sufficient confidence in the carbon payback figure for it to be used by Scottish Ministers as a material consideration in their decision making. The ES has advised that "As wind farm electricity generation is inherently CO2 free, compared to fossil fuel power stations, it has been estimated that there will be savings of 0.43 tonnes of CO2/MWh from grid average power generation. Therefore for the proposed Sallachy Wind Farm, a CO2 payback period of approximately 1.3 years has been estimated (with a minimum CO2 payback period of 0.5 years, and a maximum CO2 payback period of 2.4 years)."

Natural Heritage

- 8.25 The applicant's ES has presented information on potential ecological impacts arising from the development addressing designated sites nearby, birds, mammals, reptiles and fish, terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates. Key considerations identified potential impacts on: - protected species and habitat within the site including water vole, otter and blanket bog; indirect impacts on the adjacent habitat and associated interests with the Strath an Loin peatland SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar; the Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl mussels associated with the adjacent River Oykel SAC; ornithological interests including waders, breeding dunlin, golden plover and greenshank, raptors particularly merlin and non-breeding golden eagles, the effects on wider countryside birds, as well as those potentially from the adjacent Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Special Protection Area. No significant impacts were identified within the ES.
- 8.26 SNH is generally content that impacts on the above nature conservations interests, especially those affecting adjacent designated sites, can be managed through planning conditions, especially through the adoption of a Construction and Environmental Management Document (CEMD) approach at the construction stage. This would for example include the development of a Deer Management Plan and Habitat Restoration Plan to mitigate adverse impact of deer being displaced to land within the designated Strath an Loin peatland. SNH has also requested conditions requiring pre-construction survey for breeding birds, water

vole, bats badger and otter to be carried out the year preceding construction. SNH has accepted that the assessed impact on golden eagle would not adversely affect the integrity of the Caithness and Sutherland Peatland SPA.

- 8.27 One exception to the above is that SNH has raised an objection to the application in part on the basis of its potential adverse impact on the qualifying interests of the River Oykel SAC, specifically Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussel interests. SNH has not been assured over the potential risk from peat-slide in and around construction works for turbines 4, 10, 13, 14, 18 and the connecting access tracks. This position has been maintained notwithstanding information as currently provided by the applicant on peat-slide risk or the opinion of Halcrow. Resolution of this matter is perhaps best left to the Energy Consent Unit / Scottish Ministers in the face of conflicting views between two government advisors. The Council's experience in these matters would suggest that with careful construction practice the risk of impact on the interests of the SAC can be minimised. Whilst not trying to diminish the importance of this matter, there was a positive outcome to a similar conflict of views with a Section 36 application west of Dunbeath after some debate.

Design, Landscape and Visual Impact

Design

- 8.28 The applicant advises that the design of the development is founded upon the good wind resource in this location, available infrastructure including the existing grid network / hydro generation, the access road and remoteness from housing and settlements. The design also seeks to take account of particular sensitivities of the area including ecological concerns, peat, landscape and visual impacts. The following main design elements have been advanced: -
- Limited visibility of development from the Coigach –Assynt NSA
 - Contain development to the east of hill top Maovally
 - Limit the view of the site to those who climb Ben More Assynt to its peak, as opposed to the routes up.
 - An evenly spaced turbine development - with no trailing turbines.
 - Contain views of the development from public roads.
 - Ensure development does not greatly extend visibility of wind turbines into areas currently with no views.
 - Locate turbines on areas of less than 1.5m deep peat
 - Avoid telecommunication transmissions.
- 8.29 The submitted design has been presented with a supporting Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map highlighting the extent of the visible impact of the development. This has helped demonstrate the likely visible impact of the development, the key receptors as well as the cumulative impact with other wind farms in the locality. The ZTV map will be circulated with this report. The turbines to blade tip (125m) would be consistent with the Glencassley application (126m), but larger than Rosehall (90m) Achany (100m) and Lairg (99m).

Landscape

- 8.30 The site falls within a Landscape Character Type – Moorland Slope and Hills, which is a principal landscape character type in this locality. Other principal landscape character types in the immediate locality include Rugged Mountain Massif including for example at Ben More Assynt amongst other landscape types including sweeping moorland, strath (Glen Cassley), inland loch (Loch Shin), Lone Mountains (Ben Klibreck). The application has been assessed against these and many other landscape character types that have been identified across central Sutherland, with which Members will be familiar.
- 8.31 The applicant's ES recognises that the development will impact on several of these landscape character types, but the impact lessens with distance. Of note the ES highlights that the development would have significant impact on the following landscape types: -
- Moorland Slopes and Hills - up to 5km
 - Sweeping Moorland - up to 5km
 - Strath - up to 5km
 - Lone Mountain - up to 10km
 - Mountain Massif - up to 10km
- 8.32 Whilst the applicant's assessment is generally acknowledged as fair it has not recognised the impact that would also be experienced from Loch Shin, an inland loch. The impact on this landscape character type, inland loch, is likely to be significant up to a distance from the development of 5km. Regard then has to be given to the cumulative impact of wind farm developments as highlighted within paragraph 2.8 on these landscape types. It is clear that the impact arising from the development will very much overlap with the impact from Achany, Rosehall, Lairg and potentially Glencassley, given that all projects fall generally within the same locality / landscape. The clustering of such development in this general location does help contain impact across the wider landscape resource of Sutherland which demonstrates a large range of landscape character types.
- 8.33 Perhaps of more significance is the impact of the development on particular designated landscapes within the locality. In this regard SNH has founded one of its principal objections to the application. SNH has advised that *"the proposal will result in significant adverse impacts on two of the ten special qualities of the Assynt - Coigach NSA, to the extent that there will be an adverse effect on the integrity of the NSA. Currently this area is free from wind farms..... It considers that the impacts identified could not be mitigated. The proposal therefore fails the first part of the SPP paragraph 137 policy tests (i.e. it will not adversely affect the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been designated)."*
- 8.34 The Assynt-Coigach NSA lies 2.5km to the west of the proposal and is an extensive area of coastline, mountain and moorland of great variety which is reflected in the ten very different special qualities. The zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) illustrates that the Sallachy proposal will be visible at the eastern edge of the NSA, represented by Viewpoint (VP) 1 (Ben More Assynt) and VP 6 (Quinag).

SNH has advised that the two Special Qualities be adversely affected by this proposal are: -

- A landscape of vast open space and exposure - The juxtaposition of moorland, sweeping moorland and pockets of pasture emphasises the extreme openness of Assynt-Coigach.
- Significant tracts of wild land – The absence of modern artefacts, or overt human activity, over much of the landscape emphasises the feelings of openness, remoteness and wildness.

8.35 SNH has in particular highlighted that *“The panoramic view that is obtained from the summit of Ben More Assynt encapsulates the complexities of this quality. It is illustrated well in viewpoint 1 where the views change from that of the surrounding high mountain peaks to the more open moorland landscapes of the wind farm site and on to Loch Shin and beyond will be significantly adversely affected. The turbines and tracks will be highly visible on the opposite side of the glen from the moorland to the flanks of the eastern slopes of Ben More Assynt and up to the summit. The turbines will become the new focus of views detracting from wider more distant views.”* It notes *“The next closest wind farm to the summit of Ben More Assynt is the Achany wind farm 22.4km to the east, whose greater distance and siting means it is of considerably less prominence and impact in views.”*

8.36 What is clear is that the current application falls within a Search Area for Wild Land (SAWL) see later – but outwith the Assynt-Coigach NSA, albeit that the scale of the development is such that it will be seen from within the NSA, and especially from the eastern side and top of Ben More Assynt. Looking at the description of this NSA, this advises that *“the area contains seven well known mountains: Ben More Coigach, Stac Pollaidh, Cul Beag, Cul Mor, Suilven, Canisp and Quinag”*. It advises that *“To the east Ben More Assynt, lying east of the Moine Thrust, has a different character deriving from its different geological history. Its vaster bulk and wild, rugged grandeur form the backdrop to the drama of the peaks of Assynt and Coigach, mirrored as they are in tranquil weather in the lochs as Assynt, Veyatie, Sionascaig and Lurgainn.”* It nevertheless can be considered as one of the lone mountains within the NSA.

8.37 Given that Ben More Assynt provides as eastern backdrop to the NSA, and that this development lies east of Ben More Assynt, it would seem that the impact of the development on the special qualities of the NSA is limited from west of Ben More Assynt. SNH’s assessment makes reference to views from the summit of Ben More Assynt to Loch Shin and beyond - which lie outwith the NSA. It is perhaps the landscape between Coigach and Assynt which is more relevant to the NSA. This experience will not be affected by the development if viewed from the summit of Ben More Assynt. With regard to VP 6 (Quinag), the development would be seen, partially, from a distance of 19 km, in a direction that would not be particularly significant to the enjoyment of the qualities of the NSA which it is argued lie to the south of this mountain top. There are no significant impacts arising from the development on other NSAs within the 35km study area surrounding this application site including North West Sutherland NSA, Kyle of Tongue NSA and the Dornoch Firth NSA.

- 8.38 In addition to the NSAs, the study area for this application site includes a small number of Special Landscape Areas (SLA) designated by the Council. The of the development will principally have impact on one of these designations; namely Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA which lies at its closest point 12km to the north east of the site. At this distance the applicant has assessed that the impact would not be significant. It is true that the impact of the development does reduce with distance the four special qualities of this SLA are unlikely to be impacted by the development. These include: -
- Distinctive Mountains, including Ben Klibreck a popular relatively accessible Munro and Ben Armine one of Scotland's most remote summits.
 - Secluded Glen with networks of Tracks (wildness areas / non vehicular tracks).
 - Extensive Views from Peaks and Summits – particularly to the northern coastline and neighbouring peaks including Ben Hope and Ben Loyal.
 - Historic Landscape - with isolated remains on the southern shore of Loch Choire, east of Ben Klibreck and south of Loch Naver.
- 8.39 In cumulative terms the development of both the Glencassley and Sallachy wind farms would add to the impacts on these landscape designations, but not in a significant manner to affect the special qualities of these designations. The impact of existing wind farms such as Achany, Rosehall, Lairg and Kilbruar have already been absorbed and the addition of these two wind farms is from a landscape perspective not such a significant impact and is therefore acceptable.

Visual Impact

- 8.40 Turning to the visual impact of the development the applicant has presented 18 viewpoints to help assess the impact on key receptors as identified from the ZTV including local properties / settlements, roads / paths, key viewpoints and local hill/ mountain tops. This exercise has demonstrated that the development will have very limited impact on existing settlements in the locality and only one or two individual properties will be impacted to a significant degree. This includes, as shown from Viewpoint 2, property near Carrachan including the Overscaig Hotel on the A838, above the north side of Loch Shin. These properties will be at a distance of 2.6km to the nearest turbine and will be able to see 15 turbines, principally those immediately above the south side of Loch Shin.
- 8.41 From local roads, the development will principally be seen from travellers coming and going on the A836 Lairg – Tongue Road and the A838 Lairg to Laxford Bridge road. The former also serves as part of the National Cycling Route 1. Along these routes the development as viewed on the A838 from VP 2 Carrachan, VP 16 Loch a Ghriama and VP 17 Cnoc an Laoigh and on the A836 at VP12 Crask Inn will be significant. Members will have an opportunity to assess this impact on the agreed site visit to take place on 13 May 2013. There will also be cumulative impact along these routes arising from other operational wind farms and proposed projects. There is considered to be significant effect within 5km – 10km of the current project including significant cumulative effects in association with other similar developments. However journeys along these routes, it is suggested by the applicant, will have a low cumulative, successional impact, that is experience only intermittently on account of local topography, forestry plantings etc.

8.42 Further impact will be experienced of the development from several much valued local mountains (Munros) within the study area around the development site. It is the significant impact as seen from Ben More Assynt that has particularly given rise to objections from the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and many individual representations received on this application. Whilst these representations have also identified concerns from a range of mountain tops including Quinag, Ben Hee, Ben Klibreck, Ben Armine and more distant mountains including Ben Hope and Ben Loyal. The applicant's assessment has suggested that these more distant mountain tops are not significantly impacted by the development on account of the distance. The assessment by the applicant is not contested. The principal consideration in terms of impact on local mountains therefore is the acceptability of the development with regard to impact as experienced from Ben More Assynt. This also has to have regard for the cumulative impact of this development, with several other operational wind farms (Achany, Rosehall, Lairg and Kilbraur and applications such as Invercassley, Braemore and Dalnessie.

Wild Land

- 8.43 The development sits within a Search Area for Wild Land (SAWL). This is a non statutory designation, but has reference within Scottish Planning Policy and the Council's Development Plan. The Council has yet to draft its Supplementary Guidance on Wild Land as highlighted in the HwLDP. Advice from Scottish Government / SNH is awaited to assist this task. Attributes of Wild Land include "a high degree of perceived naturalness in the setting, especially in its vegetation cover and wildlife, in the natural processes affecting the land; the lack of any modern artefacts or structures: little evidence of contemporary human uses of the land: landform which is rugged or otherwise physically challenging: remoteness and / or inaccessibility."
- 8.44 Seven of the current 26 SAWLs in Scotland are located in Sutherland, indicating the extent of this national resource in the locality. SNH has objected to this application advising that it raises natural heritage issues of national interest. This issue has also been present in many of the representations against this application including from the John Muir Trust and Mountaineering Council for Scotland. SNH's assessment of the impact on wild land identifies that this development will result in significant adverse impacts on the qualities of wildness within the SAWL. The mapping of all land in Scotland for "wildness" confirms that the SAWL incorporates land which demonstrates the top classifications under this assessment.
- 8.45 The applicant has undertaken an assessment of the likely impact of the development on wild land within the study areas around the application site. In all six SAWLs have been assessed. The assessment concluded that "*the proposed wind farm corresponds to the quality of the Assynt SAWL, where the most significant affected parts of the SAWL is also the most compromised and lowest qualities in terms of wildness attributes. The highest quality wildness attributes are found in the northern part of the SAWL and this would be unaffected by the proposed wind farm.*"

- 8.46 SNH has advised that the applicant has “undertaken an assessment of impacts on wild land, following the guidance (Assessing the Impacts on Wild Land Interim Guidance Note February 2007, SNH) in a clear and methodical way. In order to confirm the degree of impact assessed within the ES, SNH has undertaken a parallel assessment in the field.
- 8.47 SNH’s assessment considered that the proposal “*will have a significant and adverse impact on the physical attributes that contribute to the southern area of wild land character, and thus the perceptual responses evoked by these physical attributes. The reduction of these attributes diminishes the experience of wildness over a large and diverse area. The conclusion of its wild land assessment is that the south Ben More Assynt area would be significantly adversely impacted by this proposal to such an extent that it would no longer be considered wild land.*” SNH’s assessment draws out three main conclusions: -
1. Within Glencassley (the southern entrance to the SAWL) - Turbines will be seen as the focus of views due to the lack of other significant developments.
 2. On the Moorland slopes of Loch Shin – Turbines and tracks will dominate the experience of this landscape impacting on almost all attributes of wildness.
 3. On the eastern slopes of Ben More Assynt – Due to aspect and focus of views out to the east the turbines will detract from the current expanse of open ground.
- 8.48 Using the SNH wildness qualities map (used for the purposes of consultation during 2012 but not updated with recent developments) together with the ZTV’s of individual wind farms does allow a judgement, albeit subjective, to be made of likely impact on the highest qualities of wild land within the SAWL. This can take into account distance to and from the development and the likely visual impact as illustrated from a number of viewpoints. A judgement then needs to be made on the acceptability of the impact of the development taking into account that significant areas of the SAWL to the west of Ben More Assynt will not be affected by the development.

Recreation / Hill Walking

- 8.49 It is clear from the preceding material considerations and from representations that this area of Sutherland is attractive to hill walkers and mountaineers. Whilst reference has been made to a range of hill tops to the north and west it is the potential impact of the development on Ben More Assynt that is the principal consideration. As noted earlier the applicant has sought to design the development to ensure least impact on walkers / climbers approaching this mountain top but it recognised that no further mitigation could be deployed, other than good design, to those who would view the development from the top. Climbers to this mountain top would have a 360° outlook and would have much to view. The development would be very much set within the landscape of the eastern views from this hill top.

- 8.50 SNH has highlighted the experience of those who would climb the popular western ascent route of the Munro of Ben More Assynt. It comments that – *“This route will be out of sight of the proposal for its entirety until the summit is reached where the entire Sallachy wind farm less than 6km to the east will be highly visible. The visual impact this will have on the recreational users will be significant, as the proposal will be seen as the most obvious form of human development within the full 360 degree panorama from the summit, where other human influences such as forestry and roads are visually less prominent. The next closest wind farm to the summit of Ben More Assynt is the Achany wind farm 22.4km to the east, whose greater distance and siting means it is of considerably less prominence and impact in views.”* Members will also wish to consider the potential impact of Glencassley Wind Farm which is set between the existing Achany / Rosehall wind farm and the Sallachy application.
- 8.51 There is a need to consider the potential impact of Glencassley Wind Farm which is set between the existing Achany / Rosehall wind farm and the Sallachy application. The nearest turbine from Ben More Assynt from the Glencassley scheme would be 12.7km. Within more distant views the development of the Lairg Wind Farm and Kilbraur would be seen, and potentially other developments if subsequently approved and developed.

Economic Impact and Tourism

- 8.52 The applicant has highlighted the benefits of this investment project as noted in paragraph 1.4. The supporting ES has also examined the current drivers of the local economy to assist determine the consequences (benefits and dis-benefits) of this project being developed both at the construction stage and operational stage. The development site is set within a small rural local economy which is heavily reliant on rural businesses. The primary industries including forestry, estate management incorporating fishing, stalking and property lets, which are not anticipated to be affected by this development project. There is a long history of hydro generation in the area and the locality is proving attractive to other renewable energy projects – principally onshore wind.
- 8.53 It is the area’s tourist economy that is highlighted in most representations to be of concern, including within the response from Visit Scotland. The VisitScotland Visitor Experience Survey (2008) highlighted the key factors influencing visitors when choosing Scotland as a holiday location. This included “scenery and the natural environment are not only highly rated, but the most important factors for visitors when choosing Scotland as a holiday location, with 90% of visitors citing scenery as either ‘very important’ or ‘important’ to their choice of Scotland as a holiday destination”. Key issues for consideration with this development are the likely effects on local holiday accommodation, walkers and those journeying through the area on the main tourist routes.
- 8.54 In terms of visitor accommodation and visitor facilities these are principally located within coastal communities to the west or east coast and are unlikely to be affected by the development. There is clear impact on the Overscaig Hotel, but not to the extent that would make any stay at the hotel unacceptable or unpleasant. The caravan camping to the south at Achnairn and facilities in and around Lairg are

unlikely to be affected by the development. The Falls of Shin Visitor centre, 10 miles to the south of the development, and one of the main attractions in the locality will not be impacted.

- 8.55 The principal impact on hill-walkers will be to those who climb to the top of Ben More Assynt. This has been highlighted earlier in this assessment. In the wider area the applicant has presented its case in respect of the potential impact of existing rights of way, local walks and other climbs used by the community and visitors across this area. These will largely be unaffected by the development. There are clearly a number of Corbetts and Munros which lie within the Coigach Assynt NSA and further to the north including Ben Hee and Ben Klibreck. Visitors are not anticipated to be significantly affected by the development from these hill tops. The applicant's conclusions are not contested.
- 8.56 Many visitors pass through the area by cars, motor bikes and cycles on the principal roads. It is the A836 Lairg northwards to Tongue that is most valued as a tourist route, but equally the A838 Lairg to Laxford Bridge is an experience for travellers to enjoy Highland scenery. As can be seen from the applicant's viewpoints 2, 7 and 16 travellers on the A838 road would have the wind farm in view, but the experience is relatively short lived in the journey time between principal communities. The view from the A836 as illustrated from VP 12 north of the Crask Inn is one where the wind farm is seen in the foreground of Ben More Assynt, albeit at a distance of 10km. As travellers travel southwards from this location they would also be impacted by existing developments Achany and Rosehall and potentially Glencassley, although as they approach Lairg, the turbines are increasingly lost from sight as the road descends to Loch Shin.

Cultural Heritage

- 8.57 The applicant's ES has identified the cultural resources within the 35km study around the development site. There are no known heritage sites within the development site. Both Historic Scotland and the Council's own Historic Environment Team has acknowledged the very limited historic interests within the development site and its immediate surroundings and do not object to the development.

Noise

- 8.58 The applicant's assessment of operational noise has used a candidate Siemens 101 3.0 turbine with a "maximum" sound power level of 108dB. The report also assumes that the turbines are free from tonal noise. The calculations indicate that cumulative levels at all properties will meet the Council's 35dB L90 simplified standard although with no margin for error at Duchally Lodge. The assessment highlights that these premises are "within the control of the applicant."

Construction Impacts

- 8.59 The construction of the development is expected to take 12 months involving at the first stage the improvement and provision of road access, including the opening and working of the borrow pit. This would be followed by the construction of the

turbine bases prior to erection of turbines / Maintenance Building substation. The latter process will involve the delivery of abnormal loads / turbine parts to site from Invergordon. Such deliveries are expected to be preceded by community consultation to ensure that any traffic restrictions are planned to take account of local events and avoid periods when school transport is in operation, where relevant.

- 8.60 The development site is relatively remote from occupied properties, with the nearest neighbours being at VP 2 by Carrachan and the Overscaig Hotel, some 2.6km away from the nearest turbine. There are no particular concerns over potential impact on these properties but good construction practices will be highlighted to the developer in respect of working hours, night time lighting and minimise the use of tonal reversing alarms. These are details which are expected to be presented within a Construction and Environmental Management Document the approval of which must be set as a requirement of any consent. There must also be a condition requiring a Decommissioning and Restoration Plan to be submitted and approved prior to the end of the design life of the development based on the best practice current at the time of submission. This is in addition to the temporary restoration of the borrow pit, during the operation phase of the wind farm.
- 8.61 SSE has highlighted its resource interests in this site to the applicant including the access road to its hydro-schemes and the underground tunnel / pipeline linking the River Cassley in-take link with to Loch Shin, etc. It remains a matter for final negotiation between the applicant and SSE to ensure that the construction activities do not impact on these assets and the general management and maintenance of all hydro facilities. Prior to any determination of this application Scottish Ministers will want to be satisfied that the design as presented will remain un-affected by any safeguards arising from current SSE assets, such as the tunnel the route of which remains to be confirmed by either party. The wind farm design has already taken account of the radio communication links that are currently used by SSE in this locality.

Aviation and Community Infrastructure

- 8.62 There are no adverse impacts anticipated from the construction and operation of this proposal from aviation interests, other radio and TV networks. To ensure air safety and amenity interests it is appropriate to ensure planning conditions are attached to require infra red aviation lighting only on turbines and to ensure information on construction is supplied to aviation interests in advance of development.

Other Material Considerations

- 8.63 There are no other relevant material factors highlighted within representations for consideration of this application by the committee.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Scottish Government gives considerable commitment to renewable energy and encourages planning authorities to support the development of wind farms where they can operate successfully and where concerns can be satisfactorily addressed. As with all applications the benefits of the proposal must be weighed against potential drawbacks and then considered in the round. This recognises of course that this application will be determined by Scottish Ministers, within the framework of the Electricity Act 1989.
- 9.2 The design iterations developed in consultation with the community has resulted in a relatively simple layout on open moorland, which to some viewers will be both acceptable and of interest. The design is deliberately set on both on the southern shores of Loch Shin and the north slopes of Glen Cassley. Whilst visible, particularly within a 5 -10 km distance, it is set apart from the main local settlement Lairg and falls outwith any specific landscape or natural heritage designation. Subject to a final understanding of the hydro-pipeline beneath this development and of peat slide there would seem to be no technical issues which suggest the development could not be successfully engineered, subject to standard conditions.
- 9.3 The project has received a number of supportive representations. The site falls within the “Area of Search” within the Council’s Supplementary Guidance for onshore wind farms, the default position set out in the guidance once national and local constraints are identified as required by Scottish Planning Policy. Some weight also has to be given in favour of the development with the potential to deliver over 66MW and thereby making a useful contribution to the Scottish Government’s Renewable Energy targets. The development is expected to bring forward positive economic impact in terms of jobs and some longer term infrastructural improvements for example in the local road network and land management including some positive habitat and deer management. The impact of the project is also reversible in that permission is being sought for a period of 25 years after which time the infrastructure can be removed and the site largely restored.
- 9.4 However the application has drawn a large number of objections including some from statutory consultees. SNH has raised three objections in particular highlighting the significant and adverse impacts on the Coigach – Assynt NSA, the Search Area for Wild Land (SAWL) within which the site is located and the risk from peat-slide to the qualifying interests of River Oykel SAC – Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussels. These include the principal issues reflected within the objections from the John Muir Trust and many other individual representations. The Mountaineering Council for Scotland has similarly highlighted its concerns on these three matters noting the particular interests of walkers, climbers and visitors generally who value the iconic mountains in this locality, the wildness and general quality of scenery of Sutherland.
- 9.5 With regard to the objections founded on the Coigach and Assynt NSA it is important to recognise that the site of the application lies outwith this designation and its visual impact on the NSA is limited by virtue of the containment provided by Ben More Assynt. The principal features of this NSA it is argued lie to the west of

this hill top and are very much appreciated by those who drive through the NSA using the A835, A837 and A894 roads, use the coastline, live within the communities contained by the NSA boundaries, etc. The comments expressed by SNH regarding the views from the summit of Ben More Assynt in an eastward direction to "*the open moorland landscapes of the wind farm site and on Loch Shin and beyond*" would seem to be subsequently adding to the original premise of the NSA designation which was focused on the area more to the west of this hill top. The eastern boundary of the NSA is so unnaturally drawn in straight lines that it makes interpretation of the designation in this area difficult. Given all these factors it is felt that the adverse impact on the NSA needs to be recognised but not necessarily given significant weight.

- 9.6 It is clear from SNH, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and many others that the wind farm would be seen from the summit of Ben More Assynt, but not on its popular western approach. Visibility of the wind farm is not sufficient reason to suggest that the application be refused, even if there is a relatively short distance between the site and the mountain summit. A simple well designed development, which sits with the local terrain, is something which can be considered acceptable. It is the vastness of the landscape with many features of interest including lochs, moorland and mountains that help accommodate renewable energy projects. Ultimately this is a matter of judgement to the decision maker. This area has already accommodated hydro electricity and wind farm development. The addition of both Sallachy Wind Farm and potentially Glencassley Wind farm would provide a cluster of turbines within Glen Cassley. This would not be significantly adverse to the landscape in this locality as experienced both local hill tops and local route-ways.
- 9.7 The objection founded on the impact on the SAWL is also a significant concern. Sutherland has substantial areas of land highlighted as a SAWL, much of which is already safeguarded under other policy initiatives. The applicant and SNH have undertaken useful assessment of the impact on the SAWL within which the development is located. Significant areas of some of the highest quality wild land will remain unaffected by the development to the west of Ben More Assynt, but the SAWL south and west of this mountain would be affected by the development.
- 9.8 Both SPP and the Council's HwLDP recognise the importance that needs to be given to safeguarding areas of wild land from development, particularly land that possesses the highest qualities of wildness. The very recent consultation by the Scottish Government on its National Planning Framework 3 Main Issues Report and draft Scottish Planning Policy (30 April 2013) continues the debate. However it in the final planning balance given that land within the SAWL east of Ben More Assynt has: -
- already been impacted by existing hydro generation, public and private roads, electricity lines and telecommunication masts;
 - is of lesser wildness quality than substantive areas west of Ben More Assynt;
 - been impact by onshore wind farms from the south but outwith the SAWL; and
 - the potential to offer further renewable energy for example the Glencassley wind farm application;
 - a final policy position has not been adopted.

9.9 It is anticipated that SNH's objection in respect of the peat slide risk will be overcome with further dialogue advancing appropriate engineering solutions and design management to minimise the risk. Both SEPA and Halcrow are confident that the risk is manageable. It is not suggested that the Council should give weight to this objection, notwithstanding that it is a legitimate concern.

9.10 The Council's response to the application should be considered principally within the policies of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and other material considerations. Policy 67 of the Highland Wide Local Development Plan requires consideration of likely impacts of the development on a number criteria and then consider if the development as presented is significantly detrimental overall individually or cumulatively with other developments. In respect of the eleven criteria set out in the policy the impact is deemed to be: -

No	Policy 67 Criteria	Significance
1	Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage	Acceptable
2	Other Species and Habitat Interests	Acceptable
3	Landscape and Visual Impact	Adverse impact
4	Amenity at Sensitive Locations	Adverse impact
5	Safety and Amenity of Individuals / Properties	Acceptable
6	Airport, Defence and Emergency Services	Acceptable
7	The Water Environment	Acceptable
8	Operational / Efficiency of Communications	Acceptable
9	The Quantity and Quality of Public Access	Acceptable
10	Tourism and Recreation Interests	Acceptable
11	Traffic and Transport Interests	Acceptable

9.11 The development is considered to be acceptable on many of the specific criteria set out in the Development Plan. On the two criteria where there is adverse impact the extent of the impacted as noted above is not seen as so significant to merit particular weight in the final planning balance. Therefore the application is one that can be seen as a development which can be located and sited such that it will not be significantly detrimental overall, either individually or cumulatively with other operational developments. The application is therefore one which is seen to accord with the policies of the Council's Development Plan. The application is therefore one which on balance should be supported.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1** It is recommended that the Council raise no objection to the application with conditions being attached to any approval by Scottish Ministers. A list of draft conditions will be presented to the North Planning Committee on 21 May 2013 for consideration by the Energy Consent Unit.

Signature: Malcolm MacLeod

Designation: Head of Planning and Building Standards

Author: Ken McCorquodale Principal Planner (01463 702256)

Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file 11/04718/S36

LIST OF REPRESENTATIONS ON APPLICATION 11/04718/S36

TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A 22 TURBINE WIND FARM AT LAND NORTH OF DUCHALLY LODGE, SALLACHY AND DUCHALLY ESTATES, LAIRG

OBJECTORS

1. Dr DM Lindsay, 2 Whinfield Gardens, Kinross, , KY13 8BF, Scotland, ,
2. Mr Will Barnett, ,
3. Mr Dominic Von Bohlen, ,
4. Mr Colin McKenzie, ,
5. Mr Alexander Fellowes, ,
6. Ms Catherine Phillips, ,
7. Tamarisk Leeming, ,
8. Mr Hugo Palmer, ,
9. Ms Sophie Ballard, ,
10. Mr Roger Broughton, ,
11. Mr Ged Rhynd, JTC Furniture Group,
12. Kirsten Paterson, 33 Glengarry Road, Perth, PH2 0AQ,
13. Miss Julie Spittle, ,
14. Samantha Toner, ,
15. Mr Graham Pye, ,
16. Mr David Gibson, North Cottage, Carmichael Farm, Invergowrie, Dundee, DD2 5HW,
17. Mr M Byrne, Clwyd Mountaineering Club, North Wales,
18. Mr Andrew Bluefield, 18A Braes, Ullapool, IV26 2SZ,
19. Mr Paul Sammonds, ,
20. Mr David Medcalf, Delfryn, Borth-y-Gest, Wales, LL49 9TW,
21. Mr David Reid, ,
22. Mr Graeme Wallace, ,
23. Mr Alan Bell, 67 Braemar Avenue, Dunblane, Perthshire, FK15 9EB,
24. Mr Andy Davidson, 4 Nevispark Apartments, Belford Road, Fort William,
25. Mr Tony Kinghorn, Edinburgh,
26. Dr David Pinney, ,
27. Padear Deviney, ,
28. Nathalie Franck, ,
29. Mr John Allen, 8A Irvine Place, Stirling, FK8 1BZ,
30. Mr Dave Crawford, ,
31. Mr Robert Dundas, ,
32. Mr Joe McElholm, 38 Circus Drive, Glasgow, G31 2JE,
33. Mary M Johnstone And Bill Mockridge, ,
34. Mr James Corrigan, ,
35. Mr Tom Mullan, ,
36. Mr Dave Thompson, ,
37. Mr Alan Wilson, 15 Lubnaig Drive, Callander, Perthshire,
38. Mr Neil Davidson, ,
39. Mr David Albon, ,
40. Mr Andrew Walker, ,
41. Mr Richard Cowen, Rose Cottage, Old Quarrington, Durham, DH6 5NN,
42. Mr Dave Blyth, ,
43. Sandy Millar, ,
44. Mr Dan Bailey, 39 Main Street, Aberdour, Fife, KY3 0UG,
45. Dr Gail M Addis, ,
46. Jinty Smart, ,
47. Mr Alan Slowman, 2 Anthony Wall, Warfield, Bracknell, RG42 3UL,
48. Mrs Brenda Herrick, Sandmill, Harbour Road, Castletown, Thurso, KW14 8TG,

49. Mr Gordon Glennie, 19 Bevan Drive, Alva, Clackmannanshire , FK12 5PD, ,
50. Mr And Ms Matthew And Monica Shaw, Wickham House, Kitleyknowe, Carlops, Penicuik, EH26 9NJ,
51. Ms Katy Wallis, ,
52. Ms A Martin Ochils Mountaineering Club, Tower Hotel, Alloa Road, Clackmannan, FK10 4HH,
53. Dr Anthony Owens, ,
54. Mr Alan R McCaffery, 7 Turmeric Close, , Earley, , Reading , RG6 5GU,
55. Professor Andrew Blaikie, ,
56. Ms Lesley A Bryce, The Wirral, Old Hall, Dunlop, KA3 4BL,
57. Mr Richard Clarkson, 7 Jameson Place, Edinburgh, EH6 8NZ,
58. Mr John Finlay, The Barn House., Lentrans., By Inverness , IV3 8RN,
59. Mr A Wilson, ,
60. Mr Andrew Doughty, ,
61. Mr Ivor Coleman, 23 Lockstile Way, Goring, Reading, RG8 0AL , ,
62. Alex Aikman, ,
63. Elke Braun, 35 Weavers Way, Tillicoultry, FK13 6BD , ,
64. Bloomberg Finance LP (EMEA), Jonty Graham, City Gate House , 39-45 Finsbury Square , London., EC2A 1PQ, ,
65. Mr Jonathan Warburton, Global Financial Advisory, Rothschild, New Court, , St Swithin's Lane, , London , EC4P 4DU,
66. Mr Mark Chisholm, ,
67. Mr Patrick Valentine, Dexion Capital Plc , 1 Tudor Street, , London, , EC4Y 0AH,
68. Andy Cloquet, ,
69. Dorothy Waterworth, Greenhill, Ringford, Castle Douglas, DG7 2AS,
70. Mr Douglas Strathie, 49 Cunningham Gardens, Falkirk, FK2 9BE,
71. Mr Richard Maxey, ,
72. Lucy Wormald, ,
73. Mr Scott Bamford, Tower Hotel, Alloa Road, Clackmannan, FK10 4HH,
74. Mr Trevor Collins, Woodlaw, Markle Road, East Linton, EH40 3EB,
75. Mountaineering Council Of Scotland, Per Ron Payne, Conifers, Lambourn, Wolfhill, Perth, PH2 6TQ,
76. Dr Nigel Pexton, ,
77. Mr Graham Lang, Westermost, Coaltown Of Callange, Ceres, Cupar, Fife, KW15 5LD,
78. Rebecca Ellen, ,
79. Peter C G Graham, 3 Glenciarn Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 5BS,
80. Mr David Snodgrass, McLaren Wing, Tynninghame House, Dunbar, EH42 1XW,
81. Mr John Verulam, Gorhambury, , St. Albans, , Herts , AL3 6AH, ,
82. D D MacAulay, ,
83. Mr Anthony Bonsor, Little Stocks, Aldbury, Near Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 5RX,
84. Florence Partridge, ,
85. Mr Christopher Hodgson, Pingle House, Priors Hardwick, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 7SL,
86. Harriet McCalmont, ,
87. Mr Hugo Grimston, Darrowfield, St Michael's St, St Albans, AL3 4SW,
88. Mr R. E. Cusante, ,
89. Annabel Rudebeck, 80 Westbourne Park Road, London, W2 5PL,
90. Mr Hugh Chisholm, ,
91. Graham Sibbald, Per Ian Kelly, 3 Charlotte Street, Perth, PH1 5LW,
92. Mr Thomas Gilchrist, Huntly, 8 Winnock Court, Drymen, Glasgow, G63 0BA,
93. Clifford Towers, Per S.G.C. Towers, 1st Floor Suites, Units 8-9, Webb Ellis Business Park, Woodside Park, Rugby, CV21 2NP,
94. Michael Wentworth-Stanley, Great Munden, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG11 1JW,
95. Michael Loyd, ,
96. Carl Isaksson, Global Market Strategies Group, BlackRock, 12 Throgmorton Avenue, London, EC2N 2DL,
97. Mr Allan G Marshall, 26 Burnside Avenue, Brookfield, Renfrewshire, PA5 8UT,
98. Mr Daniel J Lean, 95 Comiston Drive, Edinburgh, EH10 5QT,
99. Mr Douglas Graham, Ordhill, By Clunas, Nairnshire, IV12,
100. F. M. MacLeod, 24 Craigmillar Avenue, Milngavie, G62 8AX,
101. G. H. Crombie, 2J Gillsland Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5BW,
102. G McNorr, Duart, Strathtay, Pitlochry, PH9 0PJ,
103. Mr John Crabbie, 1 Westpark Gate, Saline, Fife, KY12,
104. W. D. Blair, Fairhaven, 11 Heathfield Drive, Milngavie, Glasgow, G62 8AZ,
105. Paddy And Maggie Lawrence, ,
106. Major J.M.N. Powell, ,

107. Mr Stephen Pay, ,
108. Mr Chris Nevile, Principal Investment Management Limited , 10 King William Street, London, EC4N 7TW,
109. Mr Alasdair Tindal, ,
110. Mr Jim Smith, 4 Princes' Gardens,, Downahill,, Glasgow,, G12 9HP, ,
111. Mr Sam Grimston, ,
112. Ms Charlotte Partridge, ,
113. Ms Amanda Pelham Green, 14 Nansen Road, London , SW11 5NT, , ,
114. Ms Rachel Benson, ,
115. Mr John T. Cargil, ,
116. Mr David Forrest, ,
117. Sir James Burnell-Nugent, ,
118. Mr Steve Queen, 6 Tay Street, Chopwell, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE17 7DG, ,
119. Mr George Woods, 8 Philbeach Gardens, SW5 9DY,
120. Mr And Mrs Robert And Anne MacClelland, Share Farm, Wardour, Tisbury, Wiltshire , SP3 6PL,
121. Mr Robin Garton, The Glacier Trust, North Wing, , Roundway House, Devizes, GB-Wiltshire , SN10 2EG, ,
122. Mr George Herraghty, Lothlorien , Lhanbryde , Moray , IV30 8LD,
123. Mr John Burnell, Southampton, ,
124. Mr Mike Dales, Beautyfield, Aberargie, Perth, PH2 9NF,
125. The Hon Peter M Benson LVO, 2 King's Quay , Chelsea Harbour, London , SW10 0UX, ,
126. Mr Stephen Codrington, ,
127. Mr Andrew Ritchie, ,
128. Mrs A M Houston, ,
129. Mr Simon Hart, SA67 8 UE,
130. Mr Nicholas Bankes, ,
131. Mr Martin Slater, 23 Birch Drive, Maryburgh, Dingwall, IV7 8ES, ,
132. Mr Dougie Johnston, The Bower, Fountainhall, Galashiels , TD1 2TD, , , ,
133. Ms Clare Dundas, 20A Turneville Road, London, , W14 9PS, ,
134. Mr Jonathan Edmunds, 63 Melody Road, , London, , SW18 2QW, , ,
135. Mr Jamie Dundas, 16 Norland Square, London , W11 4PX , ,
136. Mr Roger Wilson, Parks Farm, , Sudeley,, Winchcombe, , Glos , GL54 5JB,
137. Mr Edward Foster, ,
138. Ms Jennifer Martin Smith, Ringstead Bury, Hunstanton, PE36 5JZ, ,
139. Mrs J A Dundas, Brocas, Alton, Hampshire , GU34 4NA,
140. Mr And Mrs Melanie And Graham Nicoll, Cranstackie, St Marys Road, Birnam, Dunkeld, Perthshire, PH8 0BJ, ,
141. Charlie Benson, ,
142. Mr Donald Rice, Dundonnell House, Dundonnell, By Garve, Ross-Shire, IV23 2QW,
143. George Woods, Loch Merkland, By Lairg, IV27 4NZ,
144. Stephen Akrill, ,
145. Mr Ronald G Graham, Carse Of South Coldoch, Gurgunnoch, Stirling, FK8 3DF,
146. Dr Thomas Gough, Parkhead Farmhouse, Ballindalloch, Moray, AB37 9BJ,
147. Jane Garton, 9 Eustace Road, London, SW6 1JB,
148. Mr Toby Woods, 24 Chesterton Road, London, W10 5LX,
149. Mrs Olivia Lance, ,
150. Mr Thomas Methuen-Campbell, ,
151. Frances Bonsor, ,
152. Mr Stephen Phillips, Knights Hill Farm, Buttons Green, Bury St Edmunds,
153. John Muir Trust, Per Steven Turnbull, Tower House, Station Road, Pitlochry, PH16 5AN,
154. Gabrielle Hodgson, ,
155. Robin Woods, ,
156. Mr Richard Cowen, Rose Cottage, Old Quarrington, Durham, DH6 5NN,
157. Mrs Cath Whittles, Roseleigh House Latheronwheel Harbour Road, Latheronwheel, Latheron, Highland, KW5 6DW,
158. Emily Hewlett, 22 Sherbrooke Road, London, SW6 7HU,
159. Diana Reeves, ,
160. Mr Arthur McCourt, Westcroft, Lentrán, Inverness, IV3 8RN, ,
161. Morten Hansen, Portree,
162. Mountain Wilderness, Per Jordi Quera,
163. Mr Alastair Robertson, Drumblade House, By Huntly, Aberdeenshire, AB54 6ER,
164. Mr Charles Boscawen, ,
165. Jan Szczuka, ,

166. Anne Campbell, 59 South Bragar, Isle Of Lewis, HS2 9DD,
167. Mr George Biddulph, ,
168. Mr Graham Young, ,
169. Mr Thomas Smith, Coulin Lodge, Kinlochewe, Achnasheen, IV22 2ES,
170. Mr Alastair J Smellie, Barn Close Cottage, Yattendon, Berkshire, RG18 0UU,
171. Victoria Woods, ,
172. Georgiana Woods, ,
173. Mr Brian Wright, ,
174. Mr Mark Burnell, ,
175. Mr Charlie MacClelland, ,
176. Mr Dugald M. Barr, 1 Canning Place, London, W8 5AD,
177. Mr George Palmer, ,
178. Mr Thomas Crangle, 4 Pump Court, Temple, London, EC47 7AN,
179. Mr Nicholas Charrington, Layer Marney Tower, Colchester, Essex, CO5 9US,
180. Mr Allan Liddle, ,
181. Anna Wright, ,
182. Mr Adrian Lodge, 39 Braid Road, Edinburgh, EH10 6AW,
183. Mr Derek Sime, 44 Archers Avenue, Stirling, FK7 7RJ,
184. Mr Terry Collinson, 29 The Cloisters, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE7 7LS,
185. Felicity Nicol, ,
186. Mr Charles Worsley, Fiag Estate, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4DG,
187. Mr Ben Harper, ,
188. Mr Crispin Holborow, Savills, Landsowne House, 57 Berkeley Square, London, W1J 6ER,
189. Mr Robert Inglis, South View, Daviot West, Inverness, IV2 5XL,
190. Stephanie Inglis, South View, Daviot West, Inverness, IV2 5XL,
191. Mr Tom Burnell-Nugent, ,
192. Mr Gerry O'Brien, 12 Sinclair Terrace, Wick, Highland, KW1 5AD,
193. Ms Janet Donnelly, the kennels, aberlour, ab387aq,
194. Mr Chris Townsend, Auchnarrow Schoolhouse, Grantown-On-Spey, Highland, PH26 3PL,
195. Hector MacLennan, 26 Kenilworth Road, Bridge Of Allan, Stirlingshire, FK9 4DU,
196. Mr Adam Broke, The Old Stables, Gracious Street, Selborne, , Alton, Hampshire, , GU34 3JQ, ,
197. Prof. P.A. Bullough, 1 The Stables, Calver Mill, Calver, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S32 3YY,
198. Charles Fussell _ Co LLP, 8 Buckingham Street, Strand, London , WC2N 6BX, ,
199. Mr Harry Nourse, 29 Waterford Road, , London, SW6, ,
200. Mr Frederick Powles, ,
201. Mr Alexander Slee, London SW1, ,
202. Mr Edward Buxton, 90 Long Acre , London , WC2E 9RA,
203. Mr Richard Rae, 3 Dover Park Drive, London, SW15 5BT,
204. Mr Simon Dessain, Lawton House, Arbroath, DD11 4RU,
205. Mr. Peter Moore, 4 Hallow Park, Golspie, Sutherland, KW10 6RQ,
206. Mrs Geve Pherson, Oxford Terrace, Edinburgh, EH3,
207. Mr P Schnider, Northumberland Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8**,
208. Mr David T, Lairg, Lairg, IV27,
209. Ms Fi Jones, 12--, --, Lochinver, IV27---,
210. Mrs Barbara Long, Old Edinburgh Road, Inverness, IV,
211. Mrs Hannah Jones, North Kessock, B9161, IV1,
212. Mrs P Buchan, Fettes Row, +, EDINBURGH, EH3,
213. MR ROBERT JENKINS, CHARLOTTE SQUARE, CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINBURGH, EH2 4--,
214. Mr James Hilder, ,
215. Mr Simon McDonald, High Street, Aberdeen, AB24,
216. Mr Alec Best, Matheson Rd, Stornoway, HS1 ***,
217. Rt Hon Mrs Theresa Villiers MP, 163 High Street, Barnet, Herts, EN5 5SU,
218. Mrs Shelia M, Plockton, Plockton, Plockton,
219. Mr Donald Jamieson, Nr Ardgay, on A836, Ardgay, IV24,
220. Mr Grant Thornton, George Street, Edinburgh, EH3,
221. Mrs Ethel McPherson, ==private==, LAIRG, IV27,
222. Mrs Jane Craig, Garve Road, Ullapool, IV26,
223. Mrs Margaret William, Morefield, Ullapool, IV26,
224. Mr Miles Podron, Willard Springs, NW PROVINCE, Toronto, 603,
225. Mrs Una Guest, Lairg Rd, Bonar Bridge, IV24,

226. Mr Jack R, High Street, Ullapool, IV26,
227. Mr Peter Stevens, Centre, Inverness, IV1,
228. Ms Ethel McPherson, NA, Nr Lairg, IV27,
229. Mr Sean Paterson, Off Morefield Quarry, Ullapool, IV26 2XQ,

SUPPORTERS

1. Mr Iain Thomson, Ross Cottage Sallachy Sallachy Road, Lairg, Highland, IV27 4EF
2. Louise Malcolm,
3. Mr Rob Parkes,
4. Mr John Watson,
5. Mr Andy Collins,
6. Mr Arnoud Roele,
7. Mr John Scott,
8. Mr R S Brown,
9. Karsten Teske, Land & Forestry Management Ltd, Lanfine House, Newmilns, Ayrshire, KA16 9JR
10. Fiona Fraser, Ross Cottage, Sallachy Estate, Lairg, IV27 4EF
11. Mrs Diana Thurston Smith,
12. Mr Gordon Paterson,
13. Victoria Adams,
14. Shilpa Palan, Units 4-10, The Quadrant, Barton Lane, Abingdon, OX14 3YS
15. Mr Graeme Blackwood, Teacher Of Technological Studies, Graeme High School, Falkirk Council
16. Mr Fraser Stott,
17. Mr Iain Morrison, Balnagowan Castle Properties Ltd, Balnagowan Estate Office, Kildary, Invergordon, IV18 0NU
18. Eileen Crawford,
19. Ashley Duncan, Land & Forestry Management Ltd, Lanfine House, Newmilns, Ayrshire, KA16 9JR
20. Mr Gary Holmes,
21. Mr Andrew MacDonald,
22. Mr Steven Haswell,
23. Mr David Halliday,
24. Jay Comella,
25. Janette Stuart,
26. Mr David McArthur,
27. Mrs Margaret Amin, The Oast Barn, Blackboys, East Sussex, TN22 5HE
28. K Thomas,
29. Mr Roger Dowsett, Dalgheal, Novar Estate, Evanton, IV16 9XH
30. Mr Alexander M. A Apponyi, 76 Park Hill, London, SW4 9PB
31. Mr Alan Grieve,
32. Dr Christine Sasse,
33. Mr Nicholas Mellish, Estate Factor, Balnagowan Estates
34. Anna Hosp,
35. Mr Peter Holmes,
36. Anne McMillan Holmes,
37. Mr Alasdair Blackwood,
38. Energy North, Morrish House, 20 Davidson Drive, Invergordon, Ross Shire, IV18 0SA
39. Irene Liebl,

- 1.3 The scheme has two elements; an extended row of 11 turbines on its north side overlooking Loch Shin and a further eleven turbines in three rows overlooking Glencassley. The turbine rows all run east of Maovally hilltop in an alignment north west to south east running parallel with the main ridge line through the site. The design has sought to take account of the surrounding landscape and existing land uses including substantive hydro-generation.
- 1.4 The operational lifespan of the development is 25 years after which time the turbines will be decommissioned, with above ground facilities being removed and the site restored. Construction of the project is expected to take 12 months, with the bulk of construction taking place in 2015. The potential economic impact of the proposed development during the construction phase could contribute around £13 million to the Highland economy and support 17 full time equivalent jobs. During its 25-year life it could contribute £43 million to the Highland economy and support 16 full time equivalent jobs.
- 1.5 The development is supported by an Environmental Statement (ES) under the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2000 (as amended). The ES, with some subsequent clarification through written dialogue with statutory consultees, is of a standard that has allowed the Council and other consultees to use the information and make a judgement on the application. The Council's assessment also draws upon the ES submitted in support of the Glencassley Wind Farm, which was submitted after the current application and therefore considers the issue of cumulative impact of applications within the wider area.
- 1.6 Whilst not part of this application the wind farm is expected to connect with the substation at Corriekinloch via underground cables (8.4km) adjacent to the existing private track. This was in preference to upgrading the existing overhead line that runs through the area with a larger double circuit line. The project has a grid connection date of 2016.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is set between Sallachy Estate and Duchally Estate on either side of a ridge line that runs from Maovally hilltop in the north to Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche hill top in the south. Sallachy Estate covers the area from the ridge line down to Loch Shin, and Duchally Estate the slope to the other side of the ridgeline down to the River Cassley. The land cover across the application site is a mixture of heather and moorland grasses. The land on which the wind farm is to be located is mainly used for deer stalking.
- 2.2 The site gently slopes from a central plateau towards the north eastern boundary set on the south western slopes above Loch Shin (90m AOD) and towards the south western boundary which partly defined by the River Cassley (110m AOD). The turbines are set out between the 400m and 460m contours. Maovally, which rises to a height of 511m AOD, is located in close proximity to the north western boundary. At the south eastern boundary the summits of Cnoc Glas na Crionaiche (456m AOD) and Cnoc a Bhaid Bhàin (367m AOD) are located. Several minor water systems drain across the north eastern sector of the site into Loch Shin.

Other minor water courses drain across the south western sector of the site towards the River Cassley. Surface water from the water shed is harnessed in part for hydro power, three private water abstractions and watercourses with valued fishing interests.

- 2.3 Duchally Lodge, the principal estate house, is situated close to the south western boundary of the site. It lies over 1km from the nearest turbine. The nearest property outwith control of the applicant is at Carrachan on the north side of Loch Shin, close to the Overscaig Hotel on the A838 road, at over 2.4km from the nearest turbine. Within 5 km of the application site there are a number of single houses, crofts and farmhouses. The nearest settlement is Lairg, approximately 18.5 km to the south east.
- 2.4 On the western boundary of the development area runs a private road that crosses the two estates and connects with the A838 public road. The road is owned by Scottish and Southern Energy which operates two hydropower stations that are located on the River Cassley and at north end of Loch Shin. These hydropower stations are connected by an underground tunnel. Associated hydro infrastructure including the road, a ventilation shaft and a power line are prominent features on the site. The substation for the hydro-scheme is located to the north west near to the A838 road. A telecommunication mast is positioned eastern slopes of Maovally Hill on the north side of the private road.
- 2.5 Construction traffic will principally arrive from the south from Lairg and beyond, with turbine parts arriving from Invergordon via the A9 Trunk Road to the Mound, then Rogart and Lairg via the A839, prior to taking access onto the A836 Lairg - Tongue Road and then the A868. With the exception of the road north of Lairg these roads have already been used, following upgrading, for the delivery of wind turbines to local sites at Achany and Rosehall.
- 2.6 The site is not covered by any nature conservation designation. It does however lie adjacent to peatland with multiple designations including the Strath an Loin SSSI, Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC, Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA and Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Ramsar site. Within 10km radius the following sites are also designated including Ben More Assynt SSSI, Grudie Peatlands SSSI, River Oykel SAC, Strath Duchally SSSI and Cnoc and Alaskie SSSI. The site is also use by a number of animals and birds which are protected. It also contains valued habitat – blanket bog.
- 2.7 The turbine area is not covered by any international, regional or local landscape designations. The eastern boundary of Assynt-Coigach National Scenic Area (NSA) lies 2.5km to the west of the proposal. The NSA is valued as an extensive area of coastline, lochs, mountain and moorland features. Further afield there are other landscape designations including Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire Special Landscape Area (SLA), Dornoch Firth NSA, Kyle of Tongue NSA, Ben Griam and Loch nan Clar SLA, Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA and Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA. The site does however fall within a Search Area for Wild Land (SAWL).

- 2.8 When assessing a wind farm development consideration of similar projects around the site is required. The list below presents the key projects around this development site (65km radius) that are Operational, Approved or have been Submitted but are not yet determined. Annexed to this report is a plan that helps locate these projects along with the site of the current application, including additional projects that have been Scoped as part of on-going Environmental Impact Assessments.

<u>Operational</u>	<u>Approved</u>	<u>Submitted</u>
Achany	Lochluichart I	Glenmorie
Rosehall	Corriemoillie	Dalnessie
Lairg	Lochluichart II	Braemore
Kilbruar	Coire na Cloiche	Glencassley
Kilbruar Extension		
Gordonbush		
Ben Tharsuinn		
Ben nan Oighrean		

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 **13 February 2012** - Temporary Siting of meteorological mast granted planning permission – 22 October 2009 (12/00016/FUL).
18 February 2013 - Dalnessie Wind farm – THC has raised an objection (12/00890/S36).
22 March 2013 - Braemore Wind Farm – THC has raised an objection (10/05102/S36).
13 December 2006 – Invercassley Wind Farm 25 Turbines on Beinn Rosail refused (11/04718/S36).

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 4.1 The proposal was first advertised on 20 December 2011 and again on 16 March 2012 and 8 January 2013 under the Electricity Act 1989 and the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2000. The ES documents and supplementary information was made available locally in Lairg, Bonar Bridge and Golspie allowing 28 days for representations.
- 4.2 The Council has received 270 letters / emails of representation consisting of 228 objections and 39 letters of support. The Energy Consent Unit has logged 221 objectors and 74 supporters.
- 4.3 A number of responses have highlighted their submission was made following an appeal to members by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland which has objected to this application. This included for example a response from Ochils Mountaineering Club representing its 140 members.

4.4 Material considerations raised within the objection are summarised as follows: -

- Conflict with National Planning Framework.
- Conflict with Planning Policy - national and local
- Contrary to the Highland wide Local Development Plan / Supplementary Guidance Onshore Wind Energy
- Visual Impact.
- Scotland's landscape needs protection.
- Impact on landscape character.
- Impact on national scenic area – including Ben More Assynt.
- Impact on special landscape areas.
- Impact on wild land.
- Impact on designated sites
- Impact on Caithness and Sutherland SPA – Peatland / Habitat
- Risk of peat slide / damage to peat resource.
- Impact on wildlife / protected birds.
- Cumulative impact of wind farms in this location.
- Natural beauty of area would be harmed.
- Impact on the “emptiness” of Sutherland.
- Impact on / visibility from several iconic mountains / Munro's.
- Too many of Scotland's Munro's have been affected by turbines.
- Impact on tourism / local economy.
- Impact on areas valued for recreation hillwalking, cycling and angling.
- The development would be out of scale to its surroundings.
- Noise and light pollution.
- Construction impact on water quality.
- Traffic impact.
- Archaeology.
- Economic viability.
- Need for generation is not substantiated.
- Concerns over quality of ES / landscape assessment under estimates impact.

4.5 Considerations raised by supporters are summarised as follows: -

- Good project – well away from Lairg the nearest settlement.
- Good use of natural resources.
- Clean source of energy.
- Area has hydro power and associated infrastructure.
- Helps with climate change.
- Unlikely to affect wildlife.
- No affect on forestry.
- No /limited visual impact.
- No effect on archaeology.
- Good for the economy / jobs.
- This will help sustain estate jobs.
- This is a fragile area in need of meaningful jobs / investment.

4.6 Letters of representation are available for inspection via the Council's eplanning portal which can be accessed through the internet www.wam.highland.gov.uk/wam. Access to computers can be made available via Planning and Development Service offices.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Consultations Undertaken by the Planning and Development Service

5.1 Creich Community Council has not objected to this application.

5.2 Lairg Community Council has not objected to the application.

5.3 Ardgay and District Community Council highlight concerns in respect of cumulative impact on residents and tourists as well as the introduction of aviation lighting.

5.4 TECS – Environmental Health has no objections. Prior to installation the applicant must provide details from the manufacturer as to the warranted sound power level and confirmation as to the absence of any tonal noise. It is requested that the standard simplified condition on noise be included in any consent.

5.5 TECS – Roads has no objection. There will however be significant improvement work required on the local road network to make it suitable for the anticipated construction traffic, particularly on the A838 public road between Dalchork and the site entrance.

5.6 Planning and Development Service - Historic Environment Team has no objections. It agrees the limited impact as presented within the ES. There is no requirement for any further mitigation.

5.7 Planning and Development Service – Access Officer has no objection to the application. There will be a requirement to maintain public access rights across this area during the construction and operation of this development.

Consultation Responses Undertaken by Scottish Government

5.8 Transport Scotland Network Management has no objection to the development in terms of impact on the trunk road network. With regard to the movement of abnormal loads the developer must ensure that the anticipated vehicles can be accommodated on the network and that any mitigation or traffic management is agreed.

5.9 Historic Scotland has no objection to the application. It recognises limited historic interests close to or within a wider area (10km) which would be affected by the development.

5.10 Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) **objects** to the application. The proposal is considered to have an adverse effect on the special qualities of the Assynt – Coigach National Scenic Area and on a Search Area for Wild Land (SAWL). It considers that this raises natural heritage issues of national interest. There are

also a number of other concerns but it is anticipated that these can be managed through appropriate planning conditions particularly embracing a site specific Construction and Environmental Management Document (CEMD) safeguarding the interests of Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussels within the River Oykel SAC and with regard to a number of bird species, bats, water vole, badgers that use the site together with otter management and deer management initiatives. It however currently maintains an objection to the application based on the potential risk to the River Oykel SAC from peat slide.

- 5.11 Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has no objection to the application subject to planning conditions being attached to any consent. Conditions must secure appropriately designed new water crossings and culverts, the requirement for a site specific construction and environmental management document (CEMD), deployment of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), limitations on micro-siting, Peat Management Plan and Habitat Management Plan including impact on peat-lands and groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems, decommission and site restoration. It considers that there is now sufficient confidence in the carbon payback figure for it to be used by Scottish Ministers as a material consideration in their decision making.
- 5.12 Scottish Water has no objection to the application.
- 5.13 National Air Traffic Systems (NATS) has no objections to the application.
- 5.14 Highlands and Islands Airport Ltd (HIAL) has no objections to this development but it would support the case for hub height aviation lighting.
- 5.15 Ministry Of Defence (MOD) has no objections to this application. The MOD has requested that the turbines must not be located any lower to the valley floor, which is used for low flying purposes. This is in addition to its standard conditions addressing the requirement for aviation lighting on turbines, notification on construction commencement and notification on final design / as built turbine locations.
- 5.16 British Telecom has not objected to the application which should not cause problems with its current and planned radio networks.
- 5.17 Joint Radio Company has no objection to the application. It has requested planning conditions to restrict the movement of 5 turbines - T12, T16, T17, T19 and T21 where any micro-siting allowance being limited to 10m.
- 5.18 Airwave Solutions have concerns over the location of turbine 19.
- 5.19 Marine Scotland (Freshwater Lab) has no objections. It raises a number of concerns arising from construction with peat and in close proximity of water courses. It has requested to be consulted over the final site specific CEMP to ensure impacts on downstream fishing interests are protected.

- 5.20 Visit Scotland has concerns over the proliferation of wind farms that may negatively affect tourism in the local area whether visually, environmentally and or economically. It urges that the impact across the whole of central Sutherland is taken into account when considering new developments in the area.
- 5.21 Halcrow Group Ltd has no objection. The ES provides a sufficiently robust assessment of the peatland slide risk at the proposed Sallachy Wind Farm development site. A number of recommendations are offered for further consideration, which should be dealt with as conditions to consent in the iterative detailed design process.
- 5.22 Mountaineering Council for Scotland **objects** to the application based on impacts on the landscape and visual amenity. It suggests that it will not be possible to mitigate the effects of this development to the many hill / mountain - walkers / climbers who enjoy this area for its special qualities. The site lies in a SNH search area for wildness. It will be visible from many of the most iconic mountains of the North West Highlands. There are four other wind farms within 25km which together with this proposal will generate significant cumulative effects.
- 5.23 John Muir Trust **objects** to the application highlighting that the suitability of the site for development has not been adequately proven, with landscape and visual impacts being unwarranted and having significant levels of intrusion occurring in surrounding areas. The proposal is in a large area depicted on Scottish Natural Heritage's 2012 Wildness map as a core area that has a high wildness value and also near several "Search Areas for Wild Land".
- 5.24 Scotways The national catalogue of Rights of Way shows that right of way HS27 runs close to the south-western boundary of the proposed wind farm site. Turbines should be set back from this route.

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

- 6.1 The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application:-

Highland-wide Local Development Plan 2012 (HwLDP)

- 6.2 Policy 28 Sustainable Development
 Policy 31 Developer Contributions
 Policy 26 Wider Countryside
 Policy 53 Minerals
 Policy 55 Peat and Soils
 Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
 Policy 58 Protected Species
 Policy 59 Other Important Species
 Policy 60 Other important Habitats and Article 10 Features
 Policy 61 Landscape
 Policy 67 Renewable Energy including significant effects on: -
- Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
 - Other Species and Habitat Interests
 - Landscape and Visual Impact

- Amenity at Sensitive Locations
- Safety and Amenity of Individuals and Individual Properties
- The Water Environment
- Safety of Airport, Defence and Emergency Service Operations
- The Operational Efficiency of Other Communications
- The Quantity and Quality of Public Access
- Other Tourism and Recreation Interests
- Traffic and Transport Interests

Policy 72 Pollution

Policy 77 Public Access

Policy 78 Long Distance Routes

Sutherland Local Plan (as amended by the HwLDP)

- 6.3 The general policies of the Local Plan that applied to the development site have all been superseded by policies presented in the HwLDP.

Onshore Wind Energy Interim Supplementary Guidance

- 6.4 The application site lies within an Area of Search. Policy 67 of the HwLDP therefore applies, with additional interpretation as provided on the eleven criteria set out within Policy 67 listed above.

7 OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Scottish Planning Policy

- 7.1 Scottish Government Planning Policy and Guidance which include the following main provisions: -

- National Planning Framework (II) June 2009.
- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) February 2010.
- 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy July 2011.

- 7.2 SPP contains a number of subject specific policy statements, also supported by Planning Advice Notes (PANs) which give additional guidance on topics. A number of PAN's are web based documents which are regularly updated to ensure best practice advice can be shared. SPP policies of note to this development include: -

- Rural Development
- Landscape and Natural Heritage
- Transport
- Renewable Energy

Highland Renewable Energy Strategy (HRES)

- 7.3 The Council has an approved Renewable Energy Strategy (HRES) which sets out its vision and policies on a whole raft of potential renewable energy technologies. Relevant policies to the current application include: -

- Policy H1 Education and Training
- Policy K1 Community Benefit
- Policy N1 Local Content of Works

8 PLANNING APPRAISAL

8.1 The Scottish Government will address its assessment of this Section 36 application under the Electricity Act 1989. Should Ministers approve the development, it would carry with it deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The Council in its assessment considers whether the application is in accordance with the Council's Development Plan and then considered all other material considerations.

8.2 The determining issues are:

- Does proposal accord with the development plan?
- If it does, are there compelling reasons for not approving the proposed development?
- If it does not accord, are there any compelling material considerations for approving the proposed development?

Assessment

8.3 To address the determining issues, the Committee must consider the following:-

- a) Development Plan
- b) Highland Renewable Energy Strategy
- c) National Policy
- d) Roads, Traffic Impacts and Access
- e) Water & Drainage, including Flooding
- f) Peat.
- g) Natural Heritage
- h) Design, Landscape and Visual Impact including Cumulative Impact
- i) Wild Land
- j) Recreation
- k) Economic Impact and Tourism
- l) Cultural Heritage
- m) Noise
- n) Construction Impacts
- o) Aviation and Community Infrastructure
- p) Other Material Considerations.

Development Plan

8.4 The application is located within an "Area of Search" within the above noted Interim Supplementary Guidance Onshore Wind Energy and thereby needs to be determined principally within the terms of Policy 67 Renewable Energy of the Highland wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP). Other policies set out in the HwLDP as highlighted earlier in this report relates to the consideration of key factors many of which are noted within this principal policy on renewable energy.

The Council's Interim Supplementary Guidance also expands on the key factors noted within Policy 67. Where relevant to this application all these matters are addressed within this assessment. This includes for example Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage which takes into account a range of interests and designations including Wild Land.

- 8.5 Under Policy 57 all development proposals require to be assessed taking into account the level of importance and type of heritage features, the form and the scale of the development, and any impact on the feature and its setting, in the context of the policy framework is detailed within Appendix 2 of the HwLDP. This Policy also highlights that it is the Council's intention to adopt the Supplementary Guidance on Wild Areas in due course when national policy on such areas has been suitably developed.
- 8.6 Policy 67 highlights that the Council will consider the contribution of the project towards renewable energy targets, positive and negative effects on the local and national economy and other material considerations including making effective use of existing and proposed infrastructure and facilities. In that context the Council will support proposals where it is satisfied they are located, sited and designed such as they will not be significantly detrimental overall individually or cumulatively with other developments having regard to the 11 specified criteria (as listed). If the Council is satisfied on all these matters then the application will accord with the Development Plan.

Highland Renewable Energy Strategy (HRES)

- 8.7 Policy 67 of the Development Plan also recognises the strategy developed by the Council on a range of Renewable Energy technologies. The additional benefits from such investment also as highlighted in the HRES as noted earlier for example 'Education and Training,' 'Community Benefit' and 'Local Content' also remain as important considerations when assessing individual project proposals – see also later section on economic impact. HRES has also highlighted energy targets that the Highlands might meet using the range of renewable energy technologies. The Scottish Government has targets (see below) but it is important to recognise that these targets are not a cap on development proposals that may emerge in an area.

National Policy

- 8.8 The Scottish Government has a very positive approach on Renewable Energy technologies. This is set out in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) with further advice on renewable energy targets available from its "Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland 2011". There is a Scottish Government target of 100% of Scotland's electricity demand to be generated from renewable resources by 2020. The target is not a cap. There is expectation that the energy targets will be met from a mix of technologies. Representations that argue against investment in renewable energy can only be given limited weight given the very positive stance set by the Scottish Government.

- 8.9 SPP advises that planning authorities should support the development of wind farms in locations where technology can operate efficiently and environmental and cumulative impacts can be satisfactorily addressed. Criteria for the assessment of applications are listed including landscape and visual impact; effects on heritage and historic environment; contribution to renewable energy targets; effect on the local and national economy and tourism and recreation interests; benefits and dis-benefits to communities; aviation and telecommunications; noise and shadow flicker; and cumulative impact. These elements, as relevant to this application, are examined within this assessment.
- 8.10 SPP advises that when considering cumulative impact the factors for planning authorities to consider should be set out in the Development Plan or Supplementary Guidance. Development Plans are expected to have a spatial framework for onshore wind farms over 20MW drawn from the identification of areas requiring significant protection, areas with potential constraints against identified criteria and areas of search where appropriate proposals are likely to be supported, again subject to identified criteria. The spatial approach advanced by this Council is as set out in our Interim Supplementary Guidance.

Roads, Traffic Impact and Public Access

- 8.11 The site generally has good access from an existing private road developed in association with hydro power operations in the area. This road takes access from the A838 Lairg to Laxford Bridge road, which is principally as a single track road, with stretches of twin track. TEC Services anticipate that significant improvement work will be required on the local road network to make it suitable to cater for the anticipated construction traffic, particularly on the A838 public road between Dalchork and the site entrance. This is likely to include verge widening and strengthening, carriageway widening and strengthening, and provision of passing places. The extent and detail of all road improvement and strengthening works need to be agreed with TEC Services and completed prior to windfarm construction commencing, other than where agreed with TEC Services.
- 8.12 An assessment of the capacity of existing bridges and other structures along the construction access route(s) to cater for all construction traffic will be required. Particular attention will be required to the bridges on the A838 and A836 public roads north and west of Lairg which have not previously been used by windfarm traffic, and which have very low normal traffic flows. This work shall be completed prior to windfarm construction commencing, other than where agreed with TEC Services.
- 8.13 A Wear and Tear agreement in accordance with Section 96 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 will be required under which the developer is responsible for the repair of any damage to the Council's road network that can reasonably be attributed to construction related traffic. The Trunk Roads Authority will also require prior notification of the delivery of abnormal loads to the site to ensure vehicles can be accommodated on the network and any specific mitigation or traffic management measures agreed.

- 8.14 The internal private access road to the site becomes impassable during poor winter weather. The expected Traffic Management Plan prior to the commencement of development shall describe how this situation will be managed during construction and operational phases. For the avoidance of doubt, use of the public roads to Duchally Lodge and Sallachy by any type of vehicle will not be permitted in these situations unless significant improvements are made to these local roads. SSE has highlighted concerns over access restriction during planned improvements works to its access road. This would be a matter for interested parties to address which might be expected to follow the Council's own procedures and practices when conducting improvements to local roads.
- 8.15 There is low recreational access use at the site of the development. From a wider perspective the development will be visible from regularly visited hill routes, particularly Ben More Assynt to the west of the site. That said any access infrastructure such as gates / vehicle barriers should allow access for non-motorised public use. Site signage should take note of public access rights and any permanent site signage should by condition be approved by the planning authority.

Water & Drainage Including Flooding

- 8.16 The development falls within two water catchment areas both of which are heavily modified for hydro-electric power. The north-eastern side of the site drains into Loch Shin through 16 identifiable watercourses. The south-western side of the site drains into the River Cassley via 17 small watercourses including Allt Maovally, Allt a Chnoic Ghlais and Duchally Burn. The latter involves collection of the headwater of the River Cassley via a series of intakes and diverted by two aqueducts where it is used to drive two small turbines in a small power station built into Duchally Weir on the River Cassley. Water from the Duchally header pond provides compensation water down the River Cassley, whilst the remainder is diverted via a 4 km (2.5 mile) long tunnel beneath Maovally to the 10 MW Cassley Power Station on the southern shore of Loch Shin. Agreement needs to be secured over any works that might affect the integrity of the below ground tunnel / pipeline.
- 8.17 The surface water is of good quality supporting high quality fishing interests downstream and other nature conservation interests; including freshwater pearl mussels. Duchally Lodge has a private water supply drawn from land adjacent to the north western site boundary, on which there are no significant concerns. The area is recognised as having high rainfall levels which must be taken into account when undertaking significant construction works as proposed within this application. The applicant's ES has highlighted its clear intention to adopt Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) practices on site to help manage hydrological impact / pollution risk from the construction / development.
- 8.18 SEPA has advised that it has no objection to the proposed watercourse crossings in terms of flood risk provided a planning condition is applied requiring that any new watercourses be in the form of bridges or bottomless culverts and that any modifications to existing crossings are designed to maintain the same or greater channel capacity. Existing culverts should be opened whenever possible. Further that if new culverts are unavoidable, they should be designed to maintain or

improve existing flow conditions and aquatic life. New water crossings must as appropriate be designed to cater for a 1 in 200 year design flow, plus 20% for climate change, at each point without causing constriction of flow which would ultimately result in access tracks being at risk of flooding.

- 8.19 To assist with the management of construction works SEPA has requested in line with Council policy that a condition be applied within any approval requiring a site specific Construction Environmental Management Document (CEMD). The CEMD should include mitigation agreed with SNH regarding River Oykel SAC, pollution prevention measures associated with any borrow pits and details as to how Turbines 2 and 7 will be constructed so as to minimise impacts upon Groundwater Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems. Conditions have also been requested by SEPA, now common practice, to ensure the engagement of an Environmental Clerk of Works to assist implement the requirements of the approved CEMD; that limits are placed on micro-siting of development elements +/- 50 m to avoid sensitive receptors; requirements for decommissioning and site restoration; as well as habitat management incorporating peat restoration – see later.
- 8.20 Marine Scotland has concerns regarding the development and potential impact on water quality. The key interests to safeguard relate to fishing interests downstream as well as protected species. It accepts that such matters can be addressed using planning conditions and the adoption of good working practices to ensure the risk of pollution arising from construction activities is minimised, for example through the maintenance of a development buffer / set back from all watercourses.

Peat

- 8.21 The development site comprises saturated peat of varying thickness generally between 0.5m and 0.2m although areas of deeper peat deposits prevail on the gentler slopes and the ridgeline. An assessment of the site for peat slide has been undertaken and the design layout has managed to locate most turbines within areas of low peat slide risk, with 5 turbines within a medium risk category, thus avoiding areas of much higher risk. Access tracks passing through areas of medium risk or areas of deeper peat are to be further assessed to determine what micro-siting can be undertaken to further reduce impact on peat deposits. Significant re-use of excavated peat for habitat restoration is to be undertaken. Water table depths prior to and post construction are expected to be included in the Habitat Management Plan to ensure on site peat and habitat is effectively managed.
- 8.22 Following consideration of the ES additional information on peat storage areas, including volumes and type of peat storage, construction of storage areas and periods of storage, etc. was provided. SEPA has welcomed this information including a Peat Management Plan. This has indicated all phases of peat storage during construction. SEPA has requested planning conditions are attached to any consent to ensure the submission of a detailed CEMD and that within any finalised Peat Management Plan all peat storage areas are micro sited away from existing watercourses and a minimum 50m buffer from any watercourse from a peat storage area is maintained undisturbed. Halcrow, the Government's advisors, has

confirmed that it is generally content with the assessment of peat-slide risk within the ES and has offered suggestions for conditions to be attached to any approval to allow further assessment at the detailed design stage.

- 8.23 SNH has highlighted concerns over the potential development within areas of medium risk for peat slide. The applicant's assessment it highlights medium risk areas are located across the slope above the River Oykel SAC, crossing several watercourses which drain into the SAC. In places, the 'medium risk zone' is less than 1km from the SAC and is never more than 1.5km distant." SNH has raised an objection founded on this risk with respect to the River Oykel SAC. SNH has highlighted that "further investigation and mitigation measures should be provided to reduce the level of risk to the qualifying interests of this SAC." It advises that such information "needs to be presented before the application is determined. See paragraph 8.27 below.
- 8.24 SEPA has provided an audit of the carbon balance assessment. In summary it considers that there can be sufficient confidence in the carbon payback figure for it to be used by Scottish Ministers as a material consideration in their decision making. The ES has advised that "As wind farm electricity generation is inherently CO2 free, compared to fossil fuel power stations, it has been estimated that there will be savings of 0.43 tonnes of CO2/MWh from grid average power generation. Therefore for the proposed Sallachy Wind Farm, a CO2 payback period of approximately 1.3 years has been estimated (with a minimum CO2 payback period of 0.5 years, and a maximum CO2 payback period of 2.4 years)."

Natural Heritage

- 8.25 The applicant's ES has presented information on potential ecological impacts arising from the development addressing designated sites nearby, birds, mammals, reptiles and fish, terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates. Key considerations identified potential impacts on: - protected species and habitat within the site including water vole, otter and blanket bog; indirect impacts on the adjacent habitat and associated interests with the Strath an Loin peatland SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar; the Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl mussels associated with the adjacent River Oykel SAC; ornithological interests including waders, breeding dunlin, golden plover and greenshank, raptors particularly merlin and non-breeding golden eagles, the effects on wider countryside birds, as well as those potentially from the adjacent Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Special Protection Area. No significant impacts were identified within the ES.
- 8.26 SNH is generally content that impacts on the above nature conservations interests, especially those affecting adjacent designated sites, can be managed through planning conditions, especially through the adoption of a Construction and Environmental Management Document (CEMD) approach at the construction stage. This would for example include the development of a Deer Management Plan and Habitat Restoration Plan to mitigate adverse impact of deer being displaced to land within the designated Strath an Loin peatland. SNH has also requested conditions requiring pre-construction survey for breeding birds, water

vole, bats badger and otter to be carried out the year preceding construction. SNH has accepted that the assessed impact on golden eagle would not adversely affect the integrity of the Caithness and Sutherland Peatland SPA.

- 8.27 One exception to the above is that SNH has raised an objection to the application in part on the basis of its potential adverse impact on the qualifying interests of the River Oykel SAC, specifically Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussel interests. SNH has not been assured over the potential risk from peat-slide in and around construction works for turbines 4, 10, 13, 14, 18 and the connecting access tracks. This position has been maintained notwithstanding information as currently provided by the applicant on peat-slide risk or the opinion of Halcrow. Resolution of this matter is perhaps best left to the Energy Consent Unit / Scottish Ministers in the face of conflicting views between two government advisors. The Council's experience in these matters would suggest that with careful construction practice the risk of impact on the interests of the SAC can be minimised. Whilst not trying to diminish the importance of this matter, there was a positive outcome to a similar conflict of views with a Section 36 application west of Dunbeath after some debate.

Design, Landscape and Visual Impact

Design

- 8.28 The applicant advises that the design of the development is founded upon the good wind resource in this location, available infrastructure including the existing grid network / hydro generation, the access road and remoteness from housing and settlements. The design also seeks to take account of particular sensitivities of the area including ecological concerns, peat, landscape and visual impacts. The following main design elements have been advanced: -
- Limited visibility of development from the Coigach –Assynt NSA
 - Contain development to the east of hill top Maovally
 - Limit the view of the site to those who climb Ben More Assynt to its peak, as opposed to the routes up.
 - An evenly spaced turbine development - with no trailing turbines.
 - Contain views of the development from public roads.
 - Ensure development does not greatly extend visibility of wind turbines into areas currently with no views.
 - Locate turbines on areas of less than 1.5m deep peat
 - Avoid telecommunication transmissions.
- 8.29 The submitted design has been presented with a supporting Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map highlighting the extent of the visible impact of the development. This has helped demonstrate the likely visible impact of the development, the key receptors as well as the cumulative impact with other wind farms in the locality. The ZTV map will be circulated with this report. The turbines to blade tip (125m) would be consistent with the Glencassley application (126m), but larger than Rosehall (90m) Achany (100m) and Lairg (99m).

Landscape

- 8.30 The site falls within a Landscape Character Type – Moorland Slope and Hills, which is a principal landscape character type in this locality. Other principal landscape character types in the immediate locality include Rugged Mountain Massif including for example at Ben More Assynt amongst other landscape types including sweeping moorland, strath (Glen Cassley), inland loch (Loch Shin), Lone Mountains (Ben Klibreck). The application has been assessed against these and many other landscape character types that have been identified across central Sutherland, with which Members will be familiar.
- 8.31 The applicant's ES recognises that the development will impact on several of these landscape character types, but the impact lessens with distance. Of note the ES highlights that the development would have significant impact on the following landscape types: -
- Moorland Slopes and Hills - up to 5km
 - Sweeping Moorland - up to 5km
 - Strath - up to 5km
 - Lone Mountain - up to 10km
 - Mountain Massif - up to 10km
- 8.32 Whilst the applicant's assessment is generally acknowledged as fair it has not recognised the impact that would also be experienced from Loch Shin, an inland loch. The impact on this landscape character type, inland loch, is likely to be significant up to a distance from the development of 5km. Regard then has to be given to the cumulative impact of wind farm developments as highlighted within paragraph 2.8 on these landscape types. It is clear that the impact arising from the development will very much overlap with the impact from Achany, Rosehall, Lairg and potentially Glencassley, given that all projects fall generally within the same locality / landscape. The clustering of such development in this general location does help contain impact across the wider landscape resource of Sutherland which demonstrates a large range of landscape character types.
- 8.33 Perhaps of more significance is the impact of the development on particular designated landscapes within the locality. In this regard SNH has founded one of its principal objections to the application. SNH has advised that *"the proposal will result in significant adverse impacts on two of the ten special qualities of the Assynt - Coigach NSA, to the extent that there will be an adverse effect on the integrity of the NSA. Currently this area is free from wind farms..... It considers that the impacts identified could not be mitigated. The proposal therefore fails the first part of the SPP paragraph 137 policy tests (i.e. it will not adversely affect the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been designated)."*
- 8.34 The Assynt-Coigach NSA lies 2.5km to the west of the proposal and is an extensive area of coastline, mountain and moorland of great variety which is reflected in the ten very different special qualities. The zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) illustrates that the Sallachy proposal will be visible at the eastern edge of the NSA, represented by Viewpoint (VP) 1 (Ben More Assynt) and VP 6 (Quinag).

SNH has advised that the two Special Qualities be adversely affected by this proposal are: -

- A landscape of vast open space and exposure - The juxtaposition of moorland, sweeping moorland and pockets of pasture emphasises the extreme openness of Assynt-Coigach.
- Significant tracts of wild land – The absence of modern artefacts, or overt human activity, over much of the landscape emphasises the feelings of openness, remoteness and wildness.

8.35 SNH has in particular highlighted that *“The panoramic view that is obtained from the summit of Ben More Assynt encapsulates the complexities of this quality. It is illustrated well in viewpoint 1 where the views change from that of the surrounding high mountain peaks to the more open moorland landscapes of the wind farm site and on to Loch Shin and beyond will be significantly adversely affected. The turbines and tracks will be highly visible on the opposite side of the glen from the moorland to the flanks of the eastern slopes of Ben More Assynt and up to the summit. The turbines will become the new focus of views detracting from wider more distant views.”* It notes *“The next closest wind farm to the summit of Ben More Assynt is the Achany wind farm 22.4km to the east, whose greater distance and siting means it is of considerably less prominence and impact in views.”*

8.36 What is clear is that the current application falls within a Search Area for Wild Land (SAWL) see later – but outwith the Assynt-Coigach NSA, albeit that the scale of the development is such that it will be seen from within the NSA, and especially from the eastern side and top of Ben More Assynt. Looking at the description of this NSA, this advises that *“the area contains seven well known mountains: Ben More Coigach, Stac Pollaidh, Cul Beag, Cul Mor, Suilven, Canisp and Quinag”*. It advises that *“To the east Ben More Assynt, lying east of the Moine Thrust, has a different character deriving from its different geological history. Its vaster bulk and wild, rugged grandeur form the backdrop to the drama of the peaks of Assynt and Coigach, mirrored as they are in tranquil weather in the lochs as Assynt, Veyatie, Sionascaig and Lurgainn.”* It nevertheless can be considered as one of the lone mountains within the NSA.

8.37 Given that Ben More Assynt provides as eastern backdrop to the NSA, and that this development lies east of Ben More Assynt, it would seem that the impact of the development on the special qualities of the NSA is limited from west of Ben More Assynt. SNH’s assessment makes reference to views from the summit of Ben More Assynt to Loch Shin and beyond - which lie outwith the NSA. It is perhaps the landscape between Coigach and Assynt which is more relevant to the NSA. This experience will not be affected by the development if viewed from the summit of Ben More Assynt. With regard to VP 6 (Quinag), the development would be seen, partially, from a distance of 19 km, in a direction that would not be particularly significant to the enjoyment of the qualities of the NSA which it is argued lie to the south of this mountain top. There are no significant impacts arising from the development on other NSAs within the 35km study area surrounding this application site including North West Sutherland NSA, Kyle of Tongue NSA and the Dornoch Firth NSA.

- 8.38 In addition to the NSAs, the study area for this application site includes a small number of Special Landscape Areas (SLA) designated by the Council. The of the development will principally have impact on one of these designations; namely Ben Klibreck and Loch Choire SLA which lies at its closest point 12km to the north east of the site. At this distance the applicant has assessed that the impact would not be significant. It is true that the impact of the development does reduce with distance the four special qualities of this SLA are unlikely to be impacted by the development. These include: -
- Distinctive Mountains, including Ben Klibreck a popular relatively accessible Munro and Ben Armine one of Scotland's most remote summits.
 - Secluded Glen with networks of Tracks (wildness areas / non vehicular tracks).
 - Extensive Views from Peaks and Summits – particularly to the northern coastline and neighbouring peaks including Ben Hope and Ben Loyal.
 - Historic Landscape - with isolated remains on the southern shore of Loch Choire, east of Ben Klibreck and south of Loch Naver.
- 8.39 In cumulative terms the development of both the Glencassley and Sallachy wind farms would add to the impacts on these landscape designations, but not in a significant manner to affect the special qualities of these designations. The impact of existing wind farms such as Achany, Rosehall, Lairg and Kilbruar have already been absorbed and the addition of these two wind farms is from a landscape perspective not such a significant impact and is therefore acceptable.

Visual Impact

- 8.40 Turning to the visual impact of the development the applicant has presented 18 viewpoints to help assess the impact on key receptors as identified from the ZTV including local properties / settlements, roads / paths, key viewpoints and local hill/ mountain tops. This exercise has demonstrated that the development will have very limited impact on existing settlements in the locality and only one or two individual properties will be impacted to a significant degree. This includes, as shown from Viewpoint 2, property near Carrachan including the Overscaig Hotel on the A838, above the north side of Loch Shin. These properties will be at a distance of 2.6km to the nearest turbine and will be able to see 15 turbines, principally those immediately above the south side of Loch Shin.
- 8.41 From local roads, the development will principally be seen from travellers coming and going on the A836 Lairg – Tongue Road and the A838 Lairg to Laxford Bridge road. The former also serves as part of the National Cycling Route 1. Along these routes the development as viewed on the A838 from VP 2 Carrachan, VP 16 Loch a Ghriama and VP 17 Cnoc an Laoigh and on the A836 at VP12 Crask Inn will be significant. Members will have an opportunity to assess this impact on the agreed site visit to take place on 13 May 2013. There will also be cumulative impact along these routes arising from other operational wind farms and proposed projects. There is considered to be significant effect within 5km – 10km of the current project including significant cumulative effects in association with other similar developments. However journeys along these routes, it is suggested by the applicant, will have a low cumulative, successional impact, that is experience only intermittently on account of local topography, forestry plantings etc.

8.42 Further impact will be experienced of the development from several much valued local mountains (Munros) within the study area around the development site. It is the significant impact as seen from Ben More Assynt that has particularly given rise to objections from the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and many individual representations received on this application. Whilst these representations have also identified concerns from a range of mountain tops including Quinag, Ben Hee, Ben Klibreck, Ben Armine and more distant mountains including Ben Hope and Ben Loyal. The applicant's assessment has suggested that these more distant mountain tops are not significantly impacted by the development on account of the distance. The assessment by the applicant is not contested. The principal consideration in terms of impact on local mountains therefore is the acceptability of the development with regard to impact as experienced from Ben More Assynt. This also has to have regard for the cumulative impact of this development, with several other operational wind farms (Achany, Rosehall, Lairg and Kilbraur and applications such as Invercassley, Braemore and Dalnessie.

Wild Land

- 8.43 The development sits within a Search Area for Wild Land (SAWL). This is a non statutory designation, but has reference within Scottish Planning Policy and the Council's Development Plan. The Council has yet to draft its Supplementary Guidance on Wild Land as highlighted in the HwLDP. Advice from Scottish Government / SNH is awaited to assist this task. Attributes of Wild Land include "a high degree of perceived naturalness in the setting, especially in its vegetation cover and wildlife, in the natural processes affecting the land; the lack of any modern artefacts or structures: little evidence of contemporary human uses of the land: landform which is rugged or otherwise physically challenging: remoteness and / or inaccessibility."
- 8.44 Seven of the current 26 SAWLs in Scotland are located in Sutherland, indicating the extent of this national resource in the locality. SNH has objected to this application advising that it raises natural heritage issues of national interest. This issue has also been present in many of the representations against this application including from the John Muir Trust and Mountaineering Council for Scotland. SNH's assessment of the impact on wild land identifies that this development will result in significant adverse impacts on the qualities of wildness within the SAWL. The mapping of all land in Scotland for "wildness" confirms that the SAWL incorporates land which demonstrates the top classifications under this assessment.
- 8.45 The applicant has undertaken an assessment of the likely impact of the development on wild land within the study areas around the application site. In all six SAWLs have been assessed. The assessment concluded that "*the proposed wind farm corresponds to the quality of the Assynt SAWL, where the most significant affected parts of the SAWL is also the most compromised and lowest qualities in terms of wildness attributes. The highest quality wildness attributes are found in the northern part of the SAWL and this would be unaffected by the proposed wind farm.*"

- 8.46 SNH has advised that the applicant has “undertaken an assessment of impacts on wild land, following the guidance (Assessing the Impacts on Wild Land Interim Guidance Note February 2007, SNH) in a clear and methodical way. In order to confirm the degree of impact assessed within the ES, SNH has undertaken a parallel assessment in the field.
- 8.47 SNH’s assessment considered that the proposal “*will have a significant and adverse impact on the physical attributes that contribute to the southern area of wild land character, and thus the perceptual responses evoked by these physical attributes. The reduction of these attributes diminishes the experience of wildness over a large and diverse area. The conclusion of its wild land assessment is that the south Ben More Assynt area would be significantly adversely impacted by this proposal to such an extent that it would no longer be considered wild land.*” SNH’s assessment draws out three main conclusions: -
1. Within Glencassley (the southern entrance to the SAWL) - Turbines will be seen as the focus of views due to the lack of other significant developments.
 2. On the Moorland slopes of Loch Shin – Turbines and tracks will dominate the experience of this landscape impacting on almost all attributes of wildness.
 3. On the eastern slopes of Ben More Assynt – Due to aspect and focus of views out to the east the turbines will detract from the current expanse of open ground.
- 8.48 Using the SNH wildness qualities map (used for the purposes of consultation during 2012 but not updated with recent developments) together with the ZTV’s of individual wind farms does allow a judgement, albeit subjective, to be made of likely impact on the highest qualities of wild land within the SAWL. This can take into account distance to and from the development and the likely visual impact as illustrated from a number of viewpoints. A judgement then needs to be made on the acceptability of the impact of the development taking into account that significant areas of the SAWL to the west of Ben More Assynt will not be affected by the development.

Recreation / Hill Walking

- 8.49 It is clear from the preceding material considerations and from representations that this area of Sutherland is attractive to hill walkers and mountaineers. Whilst reference has been made to a range of hill tops to the north and west it is the potential impact of the development on Ben More Assynt that is the principal consideration. As noted earlier the applicant has sought to design the development to ensure least impact on walkers / climbers approaching this mountain top but it recognised that no further mitigation could be deployed, other than good design, to those who would view the development from the top. Climbers to this mountain top would have a 360° outlook and would have much to view. The development would be very much set within the landscape of the eastern views from this hill top.

- 8.50 SNH has highlighted the experience of those who would climb the popular western ascent route of the Munro of Ben More Assynt. It comments that – *“This route will be out of sight of the proposal for its entirety until the summit is reached where the entire Sallachy wind farm less than 6km to the east will be highly visible. The visual impact this will have on the recreational users will be significant, as the proposal will be seen as the most obvious form of human development within the full 360 degree panorama from the summit, where other human influences such as forestry and roads are visually less prominent. The next closest wind farm to the summit of Ben More Assynt is the Achany wind farm 22.4km to the east, whose greater distance and siting means it is of considerably less prominence and impact in views.”* Members will also wish to consider the potential impact of Glencassley Wind Farm which is set between the existing Achany / Rosehall wind farm and the Sallachy application.
- 8.51 There is a need to consider the potential impact of Glencassley Wind Farm which is set between the existing Achany / Rosehall wind farm and the Sallachy application. The nearest turbine from Ben More Assynt from the Glencassley scheme would be 12.7km. Within more distant views the development of the Lairg Wind Farm and Kilbraur would be seen, and potentially other developments if subsequently approved and developed.

Economic Impact and Tourism

- 8.52 The applicant has highlighted the benefits of this investment project as noted in paragraph 1.4. The supporting ES has also examined the current drivers of the local economy to assist determine the consequences (benefits and dis-benefits) of this project being developed both at the construction stage and operational stage. The development site is set within a small rural local economy which is heavily reliant on rural businesses. The primary industries including forestry, estate management incorporating fishing, stalking and property lets, which are not anticipated to be affected by this development project. There is a long history of hydro generation in the area and the locality is proving attractive to other renewable energy projects – principally onshore wind.
- 8.53 It is the area’s tourist economy that is highlighted in most representations to be of concern, including within the response from Visit Scotland. The VisitScotland Visitor Experience Survey (2008) highlighted the key factors influencing visitors when choosing Scotland as a holiday location. This included “scenery and the natural environment are not only highly rated, but the most important factors for visitors when choosing Scotland as a holiday location, with 90% of visitors citing scenery as either ‘very important’ or ‘important’ to their choice of Scotland as a holiday destination”. Key issues for consideration with this development are the likely effects on local holiday accommodation, walkers and those journeying through the area on the main tourist routes.
- 8.54 In terms of visitor accommodation and visitor facilities these are principally located within coastal communities to the west or east coast and are unlikely to be affected by the development. There is clear impact on the Overscaig Hotel, but not to the extent that would make any stay at the hotel unacceptable or unpleasant. The caravan camping to the south at Achnairn and facilities in and around Lairg are

unlikely to be affected by the development. The Falls of Shin Visitor centre, 10 miles to the south of the development, and one of the main attractions in the locality will not be impacted.

- 8.55 The principal impact on hill-walkers will be to those who climb to the top of Ben More Assynt. This has been highlighted earlier in this assessment. In the wider area the applicant has presented its case in respect of the potential impact of existing rights of way, local walks and other climbs used by the community and visitors across this area. These will largely be unaffected by the development. There are clearly a number of Corbetts and Munros which lie within the Coigach Assynt NSA and further to the north including Ben Hee and Ben Klibreck. Visitors are not anticipated to be significantly affected by the development from these hill tops. The applicant's conclusions are not contested.
- 8.56 Many visitors pass through the area by cars, motor bikes and cycles on the principal roads. It is the A836 Lairg northwards to Tongue that is most valued as a tourist route, but equally the A838 Lairg to Laxford Bridge is an experience for travellers to enjoy Highland scenery. As can be seen from the applicant's viewpoints 2, 7 and 16 travellers on the A838 road would have the wind farm in view, but the experience is relatively short lived in the journey time between principal communities. The view from the A836 as illustrated from VP 12 north of the Crask Inn is one where the wind farm is seen in the foreground of Ben More Assynt, albeit at a distance of 10km. As travellers travel southwards from this location they would also be impacted by existing developments Achany and Rosehall and potentially Glencassley, although as they approach Lairg, the turbines are increasingly lost from sight as the road descends to Loch Shin.

Cultural Heritage

- 8.57 The applicant's ES has identified the cultural resources within the 35km study around the development site. There are no known heritage sites within the development site. Both Historic Scotland and the Council's own Historic Environment Team has acknowledged the very limited historic interests within the development site and its immediate surroundings and do not object to the development.

Noise

- 8.58 The applicant's assessment of operational noise has used a candidate Siemens 101 3.0 turbine with a "maximum" sound power level of 108dB. The report also assumes that the turbines are free from tonal noise. The calculations indicate that cumulative levels at all properties will meet the Council's 35dB L90 simplified standard although with no margin for error at Duchally Lodge. The assessment highlights that these premises are "within the control of the applicant."

Construction Impacts

- 8.59 The construction of the development is expected to take 12 months involving at the first stage the improvement and provision of road access, including the opening and working of the borrow pit. This would be followed by the construction of the

turbine bases prior to erection of turbines / Maintenance Building substation. The latter process will involve the delivery of abnormal loads / turbine parts to site from Invergordon. Such deliveries are expected to be preceded by community consultation to ensure that any traffic restrictions are planned to take account of local events and avoid periods when school transport is in operation, where relevant.

- 8.60 The development site is relatively remote from occupied properties, with the nearest neighbours being at VP 2 by Carrachan and the Overscaig Hotel, some 2.6km away from the nearest turbine. There are no particular concerns over potential impact on these properties but good construction practices will be highlighted to the developer in respect of working hours, night time lighting and minimise the use of tonal reversing alarms. These are details which are expected to be presented within a Construction and Environmental Management Document the approval of which must be set as a requirement of any consent. There must also be a condition requiring a Decommissioning and Restoration Plan to be submitted and approved prior to the end of the design life of the development based on the best practice current at the time of submission. This is in addition to the temporary restoration of the borrow pit, during the operation phase of the wind farm.
- 8.61 SSE has highlighted its resource interests in this site to the applicant including the access road to its hydro-schemes and the underground tunnel / pipeline linking the River Cassley in-take link with to Loch Shin, etc. It remains a matter for final negotiation between the applicant and SSE to ensure that the construction activities do not impact on these assets and the general management and maintenance of all hydro facilities. Prior to any determination of this application Scottish Ministers will want to be satisfied that the design as presented will remain un-affected by any safeguards arising from current SSE assets, such as the tunnel the route of which remains to be confirmed by either party. The wind farm design has already taken account of the radio communication links that are currently used by SSE in this locality.

Aviation and Community Infrastructure

- 8.62 There are no adverse impacts anticipated from the construction and operation of this proposal from aviation interests, other radio and TV networks. To ensure air safety and amenity interests it is appropriate to ensure planning conditions are attached to require infra red aviation lighting only on turbines and to ensure information on construction is supplied to aviation interests in advance of development.

Other Material Considerations

- 8.63 There are no other relevant material factors highlighted within representations for consideration of this application by the committee.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Scottish Government gives considerable commitment to renewable energy and encourages planning authorities to support the development of wind farms where they can operate successfully and where concerns can be satisfactorily addressed. As with all applications the benefits of the proposal must be weighed against potential drawbacks and then considered in the round. This recognises of course that this application will be determined by Scottish Ministers, within the framework of the Electricity Act 1989.
- 9.2 The design iterations developed in consultation with the community has resulted in a relatively simple layout on open moorland, which to some viewers will be both acceptable and of interest. The design is deliberately set on both on the southern shores of Loch Shin and the north slopes of Glen Cassley. Whilst visible, particularly within a 5 -10 km distance, it is set apart from the main local settlement Lairg and falls outwith any specific landscape or natural heritage designation. Subject to a final understanding of the hydro-pipeline beneath this development and of peat slide there would seem to be no technical issues which suggest the development could not be successfully engineered, subject to standard conditions.
- 9.3 The project has received a number of supportive representations. The site falls within the “Area of Search” within the Council’s Supplementary Guidance for onshore wind farms, the default position set out in the guidance once national and local constraints are identified as required by Scottish Planning Policy. Some weight also has to be given in favour of the development with the potential to deliver over 66MW and thereby making a useful contribution to the Scottish Government’s Renewable Energy targets. The development is expected to bring forward positive economic impact in terms of jobs and some longer term infrastructural improvements for example in the local road network and land management including some positive habitat and deer management. The impact of the project is also reversible in that permission is being sought for a period of 25 years after which time the infrastructure can be removed and the site largely restored.
- 9.4 However the application has drawn a large number of objections including some from statutory consultees. SNH has raised three objections in particular highlighting the significant and adverse impacts on the Coigach – Assynt NSA, the Search Area for Wild Land (SAWL) within which the site is located and the risk from peat-slide to the qualifying interests of River Oykel SAC – Atlantic Salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussels. These include the principal issues reflected within the objections from the John Muir Trust and many other individual representations. The Mountaineering Council for Scotland has similarly highlighted its concerns on these three matters noting the particular interests of walkers, climbers and visitors generally who value the iconic mountains in this locality, the wildness and general quality of scenery of Sutherland.
- 9.5 With regard to the objections founded on the Coigach and Assynt NSA it is important to recognise that the site of the application lies outwith this designation and its visual impact on the NSA is limited by virtue of the containment provided by Ben More Assynt. The principal features of this NSA it is argued lie to the west of

this hill top and are very much appreciated by those who drive through the NSA using the A835, A837 and A894 roads, use the coastline, live within the communities contained by the NSA boundaries, etc. The comments expressed by SNH regarding the views from the summit of Ben More Assynt in an eastward direction to "*the open moorland landscapes of the wind farm site and on Loch Shin and beyond*" would seem to be subsequently adding to the original premise of the NSA designation which was focused on the area more to the west of this hill top. The eastern boundary of the NSA is so unnaturally drawn in straight lines that it makes interpretation of the designation in this area difficult. Given all these factors it is felt that the adverse impact on the NSA needs to be recognised but not necessarily given significant weight.

- 9.6 It is clear from SNH, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and many others that the wind farm would be seen from the summit of Ben More Assynt, but not on its popular western approach. Visibility of the wind farm is not sufficient reason to suggest that the application be refused, even if there is a relatively short distance between the site and the mountain summit. A simple well designed development, which sits with the local terrain, is something which can be considered acceptable. It is the vastness of the landscape with many features of interest including lochs, moorland and mountains that help accommodate renewable energy projects. Ultimately this is a matter of judgement to the decision maker. This area has already accommodated hydro electricity and wind farm development. The addition of both Sallachy Wind Farm and potentially Glencassley Wind farm would provide a cluster of turbines within Glen Cassley. This would not be significantly adverse to the landscape in this locality as experienced both local hill tops and local route-ways.
- 9.7 The objection founded on the impact on the SAWL is also a significant concern. Sutherland has substantial areas of land highlighted as a SAWL, much of which is already safeguarded under other policy initiatives. The applicant and SNH have undertaken useful assessment of the impact on the SAWL within which the development is located. Significant areas of some of the highest quality wild land will remain unaffected by the development to the west of Ben More Assynt, but the SAWL south and west of this mountain would be affected by the development.
- 9.8 Both SPP and the Council's HwLDP recognise the importance that needs to be given to safeguarding areas of wild land from development, particularly land that possesses the highest qualities of wildness. The very recent consultation by the Scottish Government on its National Planning Framework 3 Main Issues Report and draft Scottish Planning Policy (30 April 2013) continues the debate. However it in the final planning balance given that land within the SAWL east of Ben More Assynt has: -
- already been impacted by existing hydro generation, public and private roads, electricity lines and telecommunication masts;
 - is of lesser wildness quality than substantive areas west of Ben More Assynt;
 - been impact by onshore wind farms from the south but outwith the SAWL; and
 - the potential to offer further renewable energy for example the Glencassley wind farm application;
 - a final policy position has not been adopted.

9.9 It is anticipated that SNH's objection in respect of the peat slide risk will be overcome with further dialogue advancing appropriate engineering solutions and design management to minimise the risk. Both SEPA and Halcrow are confident that the risk is manageable. It is not suggested that the Council should give weight to this objection, notwithstanding that it is a legitimate concern.

9.10 The Council's response to the application should be considered principally within the policies of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan and other material considerations. Policy 67 of the Highland Wide Local Development Plan requires consideration of likely impacts of the development on a number criteria and then consider if the development as presented is significantly detrimental overall individually or cumulatively with other developments. In respect of the eleven criteria set out in the policy the impact is deemed to be: -

No	Policy 67 Criteria	Significance
1	Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage	Acceptable
2	Other Species and Habitat Interests	Acceptable
3	Landscape and Visual Impact	Adverse impact
4	Amenity at Sensitive Locations	Adverse impact
5	Safety and Amenity of Individuals / Properties	Acceptable
6	Airport, Defence and Emergency Services	Acceptable
7	The Water Environment	Acceptable
8	Operational / Efficiency of Communications	Acceptable
9	The Quantity and Quality of Public Access	Acceptable
10	Tourism and Recreation Interests	Acceptable
11	Traffic and Transport Interests	Acceptable

9.11 The development is considered to be acceptable on many of the specific criteria set out in the Development Plan. On the two criteria where there is adverse impact the extent of the impacted as noted above is not seen as so significant to merit particular weight in the final planning balance. Therefore the application is one that can be seen as a development which can be located and sited such that it will not be significantly detrimental overall, either individually or cumulatively with other operational developments. The application is therefore one which is seen to accord with the policies of the Council's Development Plan. The application is therefore one which on balance should be supported.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1** It is recommended that the Council raise no objection to the application with conditions being attached to any approval by Scottish Ministers. A list of draft conditions will be presented to the North Planning Committee on 21 May 2013 for consideration by the Energy Consent Unit.

Signature: Malcolm MacLeod

Designation: Head of Planning and Building Standards

Author: Ken McCorquodale Principal Planner (01463 702256)

Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file 11/04718/S36

LIST OF REPRESENTATIONS ON APPLICATION 11/04718/S36

TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A 22 TURBINE WIND FARM AT LAND NORTH OF DUCHALLY LODGE, SALLACHY AND DUCHALLY ESTATES, LAIRG

OBJECTORS

1. Dr DM Lindsay, 2 Whinfield Gardens, Kinross, , KY13 8BF, Scotland, ,
2. Mr Will Barnett, ,
3. Mr Dominic Von Bohlen, ,
4. Mr Colin McKenzie, ,
5. Mr Alexander Fellowes, ,
6. Ms Catherine Phillips, ,
7. Tamarisk Leeming, ,
8. Mr Hugo Palmer, ,
9. Ms Sophie Ballard, ,
10. Mr Roger Broughton, ,
11. Mr Ged Rhynd, JTC Furniture Group,
12. Kirsten Paterson, 33 Glengarry Road, Perth, PH2 0AQ,
13. Miss Julie Spittle, ,
14. Samantha Toner, ,
15. Mr Graham Pye, ,
16. Mr David Gibson, North Cottage, Carmichael Farm, Invergowrie, Dundee, DD2 5HW,
17. Mr M Byrne, Clwyd Mountaineering Club, North Wales,
18. Mr Andrew Bluefield, 18A Braes, Ullapool, IV26 2SZ,
19. Mr Paul Sammonds, ,
20. Mr David Medcalf, Delfryn, Borth-y-Gest, Wales, LL49 9TW,
21. Mr David Reid, ,
22. Mr Graeme Wallace, ,
23. Mr Alan Bell, 67 Braemar Avenue, Dunblane, Perthshire, FK15 9EB,
24. Mr Andy Davidson, 4 Nevispark Apartments, Belford Road, Fort William,
25. Mr Tony Kinghorn, Edinburgh,
26. Dr David Pinney, ,
27. Padear Deviney, ,
28. Nathalie Franck, ,
29. Mr John Allen, 8A Irvine Place, Stirling, FK8 1BZ,
30. Mr Dave Crawford, ,
31. Mr Robert Dundas, ,
32. Mr Joe McElholm, 38 Circus Drive, Glasgow, G31 2JE,
33. Mary M Johnstone And Bill Mockridge, ,
34. Mr James Corrigan, ,
35. Mr Tom Mullan, ,
36. Mr Dave Thompson, ,
37. Mr Alan Wilson, 15 Lubnaig Drive, Callander, Perthshire,
38. Mr Neil Davidson, ,
39. Mr David Albon, ,
40. Mr Andrew Walker, ,
41. Mr Richard Cowen, Rose Cottage, Old Quarrington, Durham, DH6 5NN,
42. Mr Dave Blyth, ,
43. Sandy Millar, ,
44. Mr Dan Bailey, 39 Main Street, Aberdour, Fife, KY3 0UG,
45. Dr Gail M Addis, ,
46. Jinty Smart, ,
47. Mr Alan Slowman, 2 Anthony Wall, Warfield, Bracknell, RG42 3UL,
48. Mrs Brenda Herrick, Sandmill, Harbour Road, Castletown, Thurso, KW14 8TG,

49. Mr Gordon Glennie, 19 Bevan Drive, Alva, Clackmannanshire , FK12 5PD, ,
50. Mr And Ms Matthew And Monica Shaw, Wickham House, Kitleyknowe, Carlops, Penicuik, EH26 9NJ,
51. Ms Katy Wallis, ,
52. Ms A Martin Ochils Mountaineering Club, Tower Hotel, Alloa Road, Clackmannan, FK10 4HH,
53. Dr Anthony Owens, ,
54. Mr Alan R McCaffery, 7 Turmeric Close, , Earley, , Reading , RG6 5GU,
55. Professor Andrew Blaikie, ,
56. Ms Lesley A Bryce, The Wirral, Old Hall, Dunlop, KA3 4BL,
57. Mr Richard Clarkson, 7 Jameson Place, Edinburgh, EH6 8NZ,
58. Mr John Finlay, The Barn House., Lentrans., By Inverness , IV3 8RN,
59. Mr A Wilson, ,
60. Mr Andrew Doughty, ,
61. Mr Ivor Coleman, 23 Lockstile Way, Goring, Reading, RG8 0AL , ,
62. Alex Aikman, ,
63. Elke Braun, 35 Weavers Way, Tillicoultry, FK13 6BD , ,
64. Bloomberg Finance LP (EMEA), Jonty Graham, City Gate House , 39-45 Finsbury Square , London., EC2A 1PQ, ,
65. Mr Jonathan Warburton, Global Financial Advisory, Rothschild, New Court, , St Swithin's Lane, , London , EC4P 4DU,
66. Mr Mark Chisholm, ,
67. Mr Patrick Valentine, Dexion Capital Plc , 1 Tudor Street, , London, , EC4Y 0AH,
68. Andy Cloquet, ,
69. Dorothy Waterworth, Greenhill, Ringford, Castle Douglas, DG7 2AS,
70. Mr Douglas Strathie, 49 Cunningham Gardens, Falkirk, FK2 9BE,
71. Mr Richard Maxey, ,
72. Lucy Wormald, ,
73. Mr Scott Bamford, Tower Hotel, Alloa Road, Clackmannan, FK10 4HH,
74. Mr Trevor Collins, Woodlaw, Markle Road, East Linton, EH40 3EB,
75. Mountaineering Council Of Scotland, Per Ron Payne, Conifers, Lambourn, Wolfhill, Perth, PH2 6TQ,
76. Dr Nigel Pexton, ,
77. Mr Graham Lang, Westermost, Coaltown Of Callange, Ceres, Cupar, Fife, KW15 5LD,
78. Rebecca Ellen, ,
79. Peter C G Graham, 3 Glenciarn Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 5BS,
80. Mr David Snodgrass, McLaren Wing, Tynninghame House, Dunbar, EH42 1XW,
81. Mr John Verulam, Gorhambury, , St. Albans, , Herts , AL3 6AH, ,
82. D D MacAulay, ,
83. Mr Anthony Bonsor, Little Stocks, Aldbury, Near Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 5RX,
84. Florence Partridge, ,
85. Mr Christopher Hodgson, Pingle House, Priors Hardwick, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 7SL,
86. Harriet McCalmont, ,
87. Mr Hugo Grimston, Darrowfield, St Michael's St, St Albans, AL3 4SW,
88. Mr R. E. Cusante, ,
89. Annabel Rudebeck, 80 Westbourne Park Road, London, W2 5PL,
90. Mr Hugh Chisholm, ,
91. Graham Sibbald, Per Ian Kelly, 3 Charlotte Street, Perth, PH1 5LW,
92. Mr Thomas Gilchrist, Huntly, 8 Winnock Court, Drymen, Glasgow, G63 0BA,
93. Clifford Towers, Per S.G.C. Towers, 1st Floor Suites, Units 8-9, Webb Ellis Business Park, Woodside Park, Rugby, CV21 2NP,
94. Michael Wentworth-Stanley, Great Munden, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG11 1JW,
95. Michael Loyd, ,
96. Carl Isaksson, Global Market Strategies Group, BlackRock, 12 Throgmorton Avenue, London, EC2N 2DL,
97. Mr Allan G Marshall, 26 Burnside Avenue, Brookfield, Renfrewshire, PA5 8UT,
98. Mr Daniel J Lean, 95 Comiston Drive, Edinburgh, EH10 5QT,
99. Mr Douglas Graham, Ordhill, By Clunas, Nairnshire, IV12,
100. F. M. MacLeod, 24 Craigmillar Avenue, Milngavie, G62 8AX,
101. G. H. Crombie, 2J Gillsland Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5BW,
102. G McNorr, Duart, Strathhtay, Pitlochry, PH9 0PJ,
103. Mr John Crabbie, 1 Westpark Gate, Saline, Fife, KY12,
104. W. D. Blair, Fairhaven, 11 Heathfield Drive, Milngavie, Glasgow, G62 8AZ,
105. Paddy And Maggie Lawrence, ,
106. Major J.M.N. Powell, ,

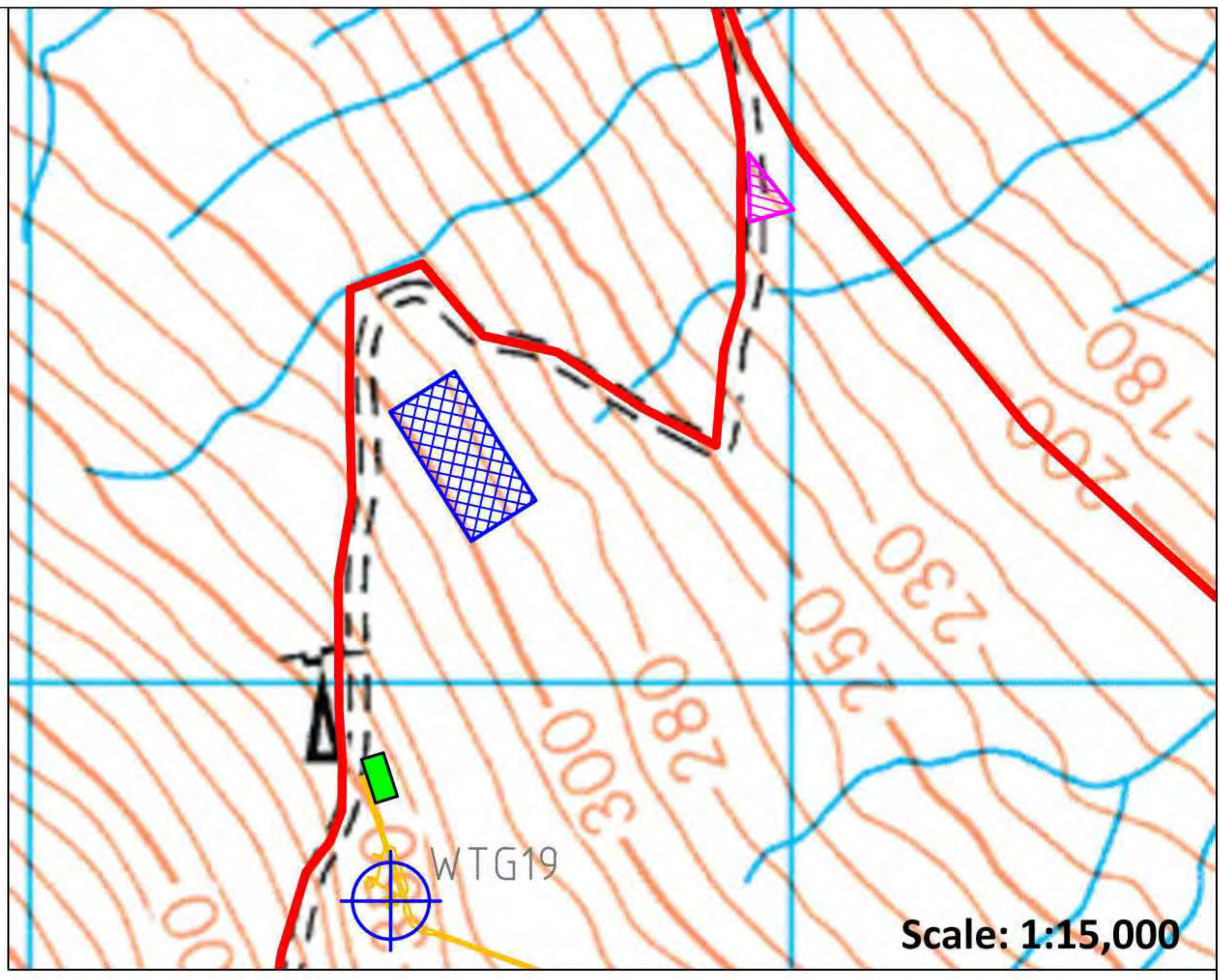
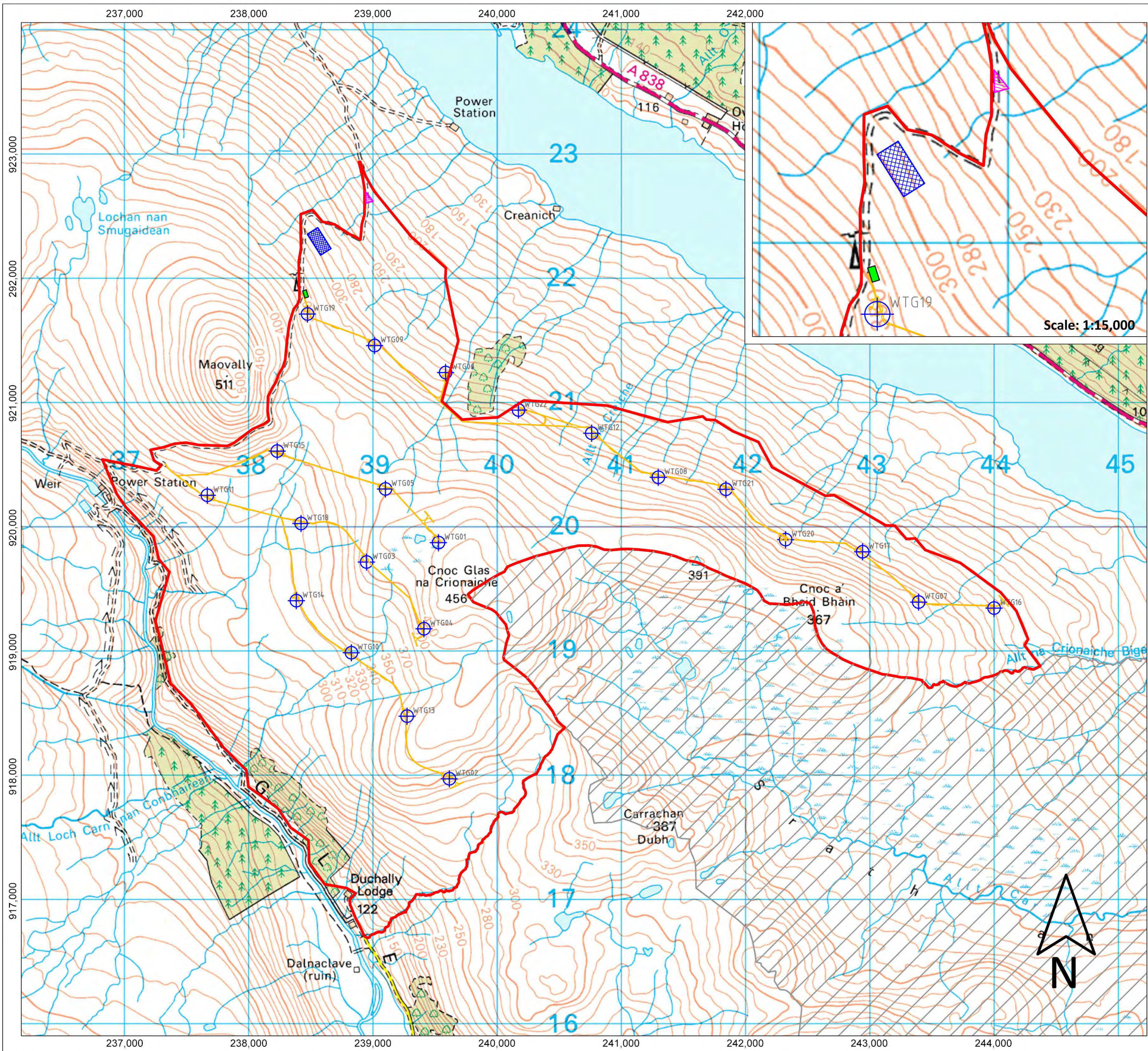
107. Mr Stephen Pay, ,
108. Mr Chris Nevile, Principal Investment Management Limited , 10 King William Street, London, EC4N 7TW,
109. Mr Alasdair Tindal, ,
110. Mr Jim Smith, 4 Princes' Gardens,, Downahill,, Glasgow,, G12 9HP, ,
111. Mr Sam Grimston, ,
112. Ms Charlotte Partridge, ,
113. Ms Amanda Pelham Green, 14 Nansen Road, London , SW11 5NT, , ,
114. Ms Rachel Benson, ,
115. Mr John T. Cargil, ,
116. Mr David Forrest, ,
117. Sir James Burnell-Nugent, ,
118. Mr Steve Queen, 6 Tay Street, Chopwell, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE17 7DG, ,
119. Mr George Woods, 8 Philbeach Gardens, SW5 9DY,
120. Mr And Mrs Robert And Anne MacClelland, Share Farm, Wardour, Tisbury, Wiltshire , SP3 6PL,
121. Mr Robin Garton, The Glacier Trust, North Wing, , Roundway House, Devizes, GB-Wiltshire , SN10 2EG, ,
122. Mr George Herraghty, Lothlorien , Lhanbryde , Moray , IV30 8LD,
123. Mr John Burnell, Southampton, ,
124. Mr Mike Dales, Beautyfield, Aberargie, Perth, PH2 9NF,
125. The Hon Peter M Benson LVO, 2 King's Quay , Chelsea Harbour, London , SW10 0UX, ,
126. Mr Stephen Codrington, ,
127. Mr Andrew Ritchie, ,
128. Mrs A M Houston, ,
129. Mr Simon Hart, SA67 8 UE,
130. Mr Nicholas Bankes, ,
131. Mr Martin Slater, 23 Birch Drive, Maryburgh, Dingwall, IV7 8ES, ,
132. Mr Dougie Johnston, The Bower, Fountainhall, Galashiels , TD1 2TD, , , ,
133. Ms Clare Dundas, 20A Turneville Road, London, , W14 9PS, ,
134. Mr Jonathan Edmunds, 63 Melody Road, , London, , SW18 2QW, , ,
135. Mr Jamie Dundas, 16 Norland Square, London , W11 4PX , ,
136. Mr Roger Wilson, Parks Farm, , Sudeley,, Winchcombe, , Glos , GL54 5JB,
137. Mr Edward Foster, ,
138. Ms Jennifer Martin Smith, Ringstead Bury, Hunstanton, PE36 5JZ, ,
139. Mrs J A Dundas, Brocas, Alton, Hampshire , GU34 4NA,
140. Mr And Mrs Melanie And Graham Nicoll, Cranstackie, St Marys Road, Birnam, Dunkeld, Perthshire, PH8 0BJ, ,
141. Charlie Benson, ,
142. Mr Donald Rice, Dundonnell House, Dundonnell, By Garve, Ross-Shire, IV23 2QW,
143. George Woods, Loch Merkland, By Lairg, IV27 4NZ,
144. Stephen Akrill, ,
145. Mr Ronald G Graham, Carse Of South Coldoch, Gurgunnoch, Stirling, FK8 3DF,
146. Dr Thomas Gough, Parkhead Farmhouse, Ballindalloch, Moray, AB37 9BJ,
147. Jane Garton, 9 Eustace Road, London, SW6 1JB,
148. Mr Toby Woods, 24 Chesterton Road, London, W10 5LX,
149. Mrs Olivia Lance, ,
150. Mr Thomas Methuen-Campbell, ,
151. Frances Bonsor, ,
152. Mr Stephen Phillips, Knights Hill Farm, Buttons Green, Bury St Edmunds,
153. John Muir Trust, Per Steven Turnbull, Tower House, Station Road, Pitlochry, PH16 5AN,
154. Gabrielle Hodgson, ,
155. Robin Woods, ,
156. Mr Richard Cowen, Rose Cottage, Old Quarrington, Durham, DH6 5NN,
157. Mrs Cath Whittles, Roseleigh House Latheronwheel Harbour Road, Latheronwheel, Latheron, Highland, KW5 6DW,
158. Emily Hewlett, 22 Sherbrooke Road, London, SW6 7HU,
159. Diana Reeves, ,
160. Mr Arthur McCourt, Westcroft, Lentrane, Inverness, IV3 8RN, ,
161. Morten Hansen, Portree,
162. Mountain Wilderness, Per Jordi Quera,
163. Mr Alastair Robertson, Drumblade House, By Huntly, Aberdeenshire, AB54 6ER,
164. Mr Charles Boscawen, ,
165. Jan Szczuka, ,








166. Anne Campbell, 59 South Bragar, Isle Of Lewis, HS2 9DD,
167. Mr George Biddulph, ,
168. Mr Graham Young, ,
169. Mr Thomas Smith, Coulin Lodge, Kinlochewe, Achnasheen, IV22 2ES,
170. Mr Alastair J Smellie, Barn Close Cottage, Yattendon, Berkshire, RG18 0UU,
171. Victoria Woods, ,
172. Georgiana Woods, ,
173. Mr Brian Wright, ,
174. Mr Mark Burnell, ,
175. Mr Charlie MacClelland, ,
176. Mr Dugald M. Barr, 1 Canning Place, London, W8 5AD,
177. Mr George Palmer, ,
178. Mr Thomas Crangle, 4 Pump Court, Temple, London, EC47 7AN,
179. Mr Nicholas Charrington, Layer Marney Tower, Colchester, Essex, CO5 9US,
180. Mr Allan Liddle, ,
181. Anna Wright, ,
182. Mr Adrian Lodge, 39 Braid Road, Edinburgh, EH10 6AW,
183. Mr Derek Sime, 44 Archers Avenue, Stirling, FK7 7RJ,
184. Mr Terry Collinson, 29 The Cloisters, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE7 7LS,
185. Felicity Nicol, ,
186. Mr Charles Worsley, Fiag Estate, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4DG,
187. Mr Ben Harper, ,
188. Mr Crispin Holborow, Savills, Landsowne House, 57 Berkeley Square, London, W1J 6ER,
189. Mr Robert Inglis, South View, Daviot West, Inverness, IV2 5XL,
190. Stephanie Inglis, South View, Daviot West, Inverness, IV2 5XL,
191. Mr Tom Burnell-Nugent, ,
192. Mr Gerry O'Brien, 12 Sinclair Terrace, Wick, Highland, KW1 5AD,
193. Ms Janet Donnelly, the kennels, aberlour, ab387aq,
194. Mr Chris Townsend, Auchnarrow Schoolhouse, Grantown-On-Spey, Highland, PH26 3PL,
195. Hector MacLennan, 26 Kenilworth Road, Bridge Of Allan, Stirlingshire, FK9 4DU,
196. Mr Adam Broke, The Old Stables, Gracious Street, Selborne, , Alton, Hampshire, , GU34 3JQ, ,
197. Prof. P.A. Bullough, 1 The Stables, Calver Mill, Calver, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S32 3YY,
198. Charles Fussell _ Co LLP, 8 Buckingham Street, Strand, London , WC2N 6BX, ,
199. Mr Harry Nourse, 29 Waterford Road, , London, SW6, ,
200. Mr Frederick Powles, ,
201. Mr Alexander Slee, London SW1, ,
202. Mr Edward Buxton, 90 Long Acre , London , WC2E 9RA,
203. Mr Richard Rae, 3 Dover Park Drive, London, SW15 5BT,
204. Mr Simon Dessain, Lawton House, Arbroath, DD11 4RU,
205. Mr. Peter Moore, 4 Hallow Park, Golspie, Sutherland, KW10 6RQ,
206. Mrs Geve Pherson, Oxford Terrace, Edinburgh, EH3,
207. Mr P Schnider, Northumberland Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8**,
208. Mr David T, Lairg, Lairg, IV27,
209. Ms Fi Jones, 12--, --, Lochinver, IV27---,
210. Mrs Barbara Long, Old Edinburgh Road, Inverness, IV,
211. Mrs Hannah Jones, North Kessock, B9161, IV1,
212. Mrs P Buchan, Fettes Row, +, EDINBURGH, EH3,
213. MR ROBERT JENKINS, CHARLOTTE SQUARE, CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINBURGH, EH2 4--,
214. Mr James Hilder, ,
215. Mr Simon McDonald, High Street, Aberdeen, AB24,
216. Mr Alec Best, Matheson Rd, Stornoway, HS1 ***,
217. Rt Hon Mrs Theresa Villiers MP, 163 High Street, Barnet, Herts, EN5 5SU,
218. Mrs Shelia M, Plockton, Plockton, Plockton,
219. Mr Donald Jamieson, Nr Ardgay, on A836, Ardgay, IV24,
220. Mr Grant Thornton, George Street, Edinburgh, EH3,
221. Mrs Ethel McPherson, ==private==, LAIRG, IV27,
222. Mrs Jane Craig, Garve Road, Ullapool, IV26,
223. Mrs Margaret William, Morefield, Ullapool, IV26,
224. Mr Miles Podron, Willard Springs, NW PROVINCE, Toronto, 603,
225. Mrs Una Guest, Lairg Rd, Bonar Bridge, IV24,

226. Mr Jack R, High Street, Ullapool, IV26,
227. Mr Peter Stevens, Centre, Inverness, IV1,
228. Ms Ethel McPherson, NA, Nr Lairg, IV27,
229. Mr Sean Paterson, Off Morefield Quarry, Ullapool, IV26 2XQ,

SUPPORTERS

1. Mr Iain Thomson, Ross Cottage Sallachy Sallachy Road, Lairg, Highland, IV27 4EF
2. Louise Malcolm,
3. Mr Rob Parkes,
4. Mr John Watson,
5. Mr Andy Collins,
6. Mr Arnoud Roele,
7. Mr John Scott,
8. Mr R S Brown,
9. Karsten Teske, Land & Forestry Management Ltd, Lanfine House, Newmilns, Ayrshire, KA16 9JR
10. Fiona Fraser, Ross Cottage, Sallachy Estate, Lairg, IV27 4EF
11. Mrs Diana Thurston Smith,
12. Mr Gordon Paterson,
13. Victoria Adams,
14. Shilpa Palan, Units 4-10, The Quadrant, Barton Lane, Abingdon, OX14 3YS
15. Mr Graeme Blackwood, Teacher Of Technological Studies, Graeme High School, Falkirk Council
16. Mr Fraser Stott,
17. Mr Iain Morrison, Balnagowan Castle Properties Ltd, Balnagowan Estate Office, Kildary, Invergordon, IV18 0NU
18. Eileen Crawford,
19. Ashley Duncan, Land & Forestry Management Ltd, Lanfine House, Newmilns, Ayrshire, KA16 9JR
20. Mr Gary Holmes,
21. Mr Andrew MacDonald,
22. Mr Steven Haswell,
23. Mr David Halliday,
24. Jay Comella,
25. Janette Stuart,
26. Mr David McArthur,
27. Mrs Margaret Amin, The Oast Barn, Blackboys, East Sussex, TN22 5HE
28. K Thomas,
29. Mr Roger Dowsett, Dalgheal, Novar Estate, Evanton, IV16 9XH
30. Mr Alexander M. A Apponyi, 76 Park Hill, London, SW4 9PB
31. Mr Alan Grieve,
32. Dr Christine Sasse,
33. Mr Nicholas Mellish, Estate Factor, Balnagowan Estates
34. Anna Hosp,
35. Mr Peter Holmes,
36. Anne McMillan Holmes,
37. Mr Alasdair Blackwood,
38. Energy North, Morrish House, 20 Davidson Drive, Invergordon, Ross Shire, IV18 0SA
39. Irene Liebl,



- ### Legend
-  WTG Location
 -  Wind Farm Boundary
 -  Substation (not to scale)
 -  Crane Pad and Access Road
 -  Site Compound
 -  Borrow Pit
 -  Caithness & Sutherland Peatlands SPA and SAC (incl. Strath an Loin SSSI)

225,000 / 925,000
Coordinates in BNG (AIRY)

Date: 21.11.2011

0 0,5 1 1,5km

Scale: 1:30,000 @ DIN A3

Wind Farm Layout

Figure 3-02



This product includes mapping data licensed from Ordnance Survey digital map data© Crown copyright 2011. All rights reserved. License number 0100031673.