

EARBA STORAGE

A GILKES ENERGY COMPANY

Earba Pumped Storage Hydro Scheme EIA Report

Appendix 7.3: Assessment of Landscape Character Types

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Appendix 7.3: Assessment of Landscape Character Types

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Fourteen Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are located within the study area (see **Figure 7.5**).

1.1.2 The following eight LCTs within the study area are included in this assessment and are assessed in accordance with criteria outlined in **section 7.5 of Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**:

- LCT 85: Isolated Mountain Plateau;
- LCT 86: Smooth Rounded Hills – Badenoch & Strathspey;
- LCT 87: Small Craggy Knolls and Hills;
- LCT 88: Loch and Glen;
- LCT 89: Broad Loch and Glen;
- LCT 126: Upland Glen – Cairngorms;
- LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges; and
- LCT 238: Rugged Massif – Lochaber

1.1.3 The Proposed Development is situated within LCTs 85, 86, 87 and 89.

1.1.4 Following initial appraisal and site visits, the following six LCTs were scoped out of the assessment due to the limited extent of theoretical visibility and/or predominance of woodland which results in the potential for significant effects being very unlikely:

- LCT 124: Summits and Plateaux – Cairngorms;
- LCT 221: Rolling Uplands – Inverness;
- LCT 231: Upland Glen – Inverness;
- LCT 235: Broad Forested Strath;
- LCT 373: Upper Upland Glens with Lochs; and
- LCT 376: Summits and Plateaux – Tayside.

1.1.5 Assessment of Designated and Protected Landscapes are detailed in **Appendices 7.4 - 7.6**.

1.2 LCT 85: Isolated Mountain Plateau

Table 1: LCT 85: Isolated Mountain Plateau

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT occurs in two sub-sections within the study area, to the north and south of Loch Laggan, encompassing the highest ground within the Ben Alder, Adverikie and Creag Meagaidh area, with mountains which rise to over 1,100 m above sea level. The area to the north of Loch Laggan includes the summits and tops of Creag Meagaidh, while the area to the south of Loch Laggan rises between Lochs Laggan and Ericht and includes the summits of Ben Alder and Aonach Beag. This LCT is characterised by its smooth-topped mountains, which often have an angular appearance where there are rugged features such as rocky outcrops, ridges and scree slopes. These mountains rise above the surrounding moorland and glens which separate them from each other. Landcover consists mainly of montane habitat within the more elevated, exposed areas, with grassland and heather covering lower slopes, and patches of birchwood are found where glens provide some shelter. There are few man-made features in this LCT, with the main land use consisting of estate management for country sports as well as hill walking and climbing. The sparse settlement and difficulty of access gives the area a certain sense of remoteness. The high, angular mountains also result in a distinctive skyline which is often perceived from adjacent areas.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Isolated Mountain Plateau LCT are noted by NatureScot (2019)¹ as follows: • <i>“Plateaux of distinctive massive, smooth topped mountains with square appearance;</i> • <i>Individual mountains with overall curved profile, separated by glens and moorland;</i> • <i>Frequent rugged features such as rock outcrops, pyramidal peaks, ridges, corries and scree slopes;</i> • <i>Rugged and seemingly natural landscape with evidence of natural processes;</i>

¹ NatureScot (2019) *Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions*. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions>. Accessed on 14.9.23

	• <i>Extensive areas of montane habitat, with heather moorland, rough grassland with willow scrub on lower slopes and occasional patches of highland birchwoods;</i> • <i>Low intensity land use, mainly deer grazing;</i> • <i>Limited man-made structures; and</i> • <i>Strong sense of wild character due to openness and exposure, ruggedness and naturalness and lack of structures."</i>
Landscape Value	This LCT forms part of the regionally designated Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor Special Landscape Area (SLA). The LCT area to the north of Loch Laggan also sits within Wild Land Area (WLA) 19: Braeroy - Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh, and the LCT area to the south of Loch Laggan forms part of WLA 14. Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder. It is valued for its sense of remoteness and rugged upland character and is popular for outdoor recreation including hill walking and climbing. Landscape value is therefore considered to be High.
Landscape Assessment	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Rugged and seemingly natural landscape with evidence of natural processes; • Low intensity land use, mainly deer grazing; • Limited man-made structures; and • Strong sense of wild character due to openness and exposure, ruggedness and naturalness and lack of structures.
Landscape Sensitivity	This LCT contains some areas which are highly valued. Its lack of man-made structures, along with its openness and exposure which contribute to its wild character make it sensitive to the introduction of development of the type proposed although the large scale of the landscape is theoretically accommodating of large scale development. Presence of hydro and wind development within adjacent landscapes may reduce sensitivity within some areas, particularly to indirect change. Overall landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be Medium-High.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Direct introduction of the Leamhain Dam, tracks and other built features into this landscape and the modification of the Loch a' Bhealaich Leamhain waterbody to create the upper reservoir may reduce the perceived sense of naturalness and remoteness and resulting wild character within this landscape type.

	• The introduction of the Proposed Development in this and neighbouring landscapes may increase the presence of man-made structures. • The introduction of the Proposed Development may improve accessibility and distract from the rugged and seemingly natural landscape features.
Magnitude of Change	There would be direct change within the LCT sub-section located to the south of Loch Laggan, where the upper reservoir, Leamhain Dam and associated temporary and permanent tracks and other infrastructure would be located. There would also be some indirect change relating to the lower reservoir features within the Lochan na h-Earba valley, theoretically affecting both LCT sub-sections. The ZTV indicates theoretical visibility within the southern sub-section would be concentrated mainly to the west and south of the upper reservoir, affecting elevated areas (up to around 6 km from the Leamhain Dam). The Leamhain Dam would be intervisible with areas to the south of the upper reservoir, within the immediate context of the reservoir and further south along facing slopes of An Lairig and the summit of Carn Dearg (see VL3, Figures V3a-3a-f and V3b-3a-k). Areas west of the upper reservoir (such as Beinn a' Chlachair (see VL5, Figures V3a-5a-f and V3b-5a-k) would feature intervisibility with the Shuas Dam. Less intervisibility is indicated for the Shios Dam (located within adjacent LCTs 86 and 87), focussed around summit areas of Creag Pitridh (see VL4, Figures V3a-4a-g and V3b-4a-n). There would be very few areas of the LCT where more than one dam would be experienced, although other new features, such as tracks, would be experienced simultaneously. The ZTV indicates intervisibility with the Shios Dam within the eastern part of the northern LCT sub-section though, particularly during operation, this feature within the edge of the forest is likely to be a less perceptible feature. Intervisibility with the powerhouse and Leamhain and Shuas Dams would be very limited, experienced from only a few, limited summit areas (such as Càrn Liath, VL 1, see Figures V3a-1a—f and V3b-1a-k). Landscape mitigation planting, particularly around the powerhouse, would be likely to reduce the perceptibility of these features over time. The Proposed Development would also be seen in the context of commercial forestry by Loch Laggan, in adjacent LCTs, and the road and settlement along the valley floor. While this LCT is generally a relatively open and exposed landscape, the complexity of the landform and interplay of mountains and glens would limit views, particularly from areas of lower ground. Magnitude of change would vary throughout the LCT, but within the immediate context of the Proposed Development is considered to be <u>locally</u> High during construction, and <u>locally</u> Medium in year 1 and year 15 of operation. For other parts of the LCT, including the sub-section north of Loch Laggan, magnitude of change would be Low or Negligible during construction and in year 1 and year 15 of operation

Significance of Effects	The Proposed Development would be located within and directly affect an area of this LCT. The introduction of the upper reservoir, Leamhain Dam, other associated infrastructure and access tracks would introduce large scale development within a landscape where there are currently few man-made structures of this scale, although hydro development is a feature within surrounding LCTs. During construction, the increase in movement, noise and activity focussed in the northern part of the southern sub-section would temporarily disrupt its remote character and sense of wildness, as outlined in the WLA assessment for WLA 14 (refer to Appendix 7.6). During operation, the upper reservoir would be relatively contained by the surrounding landform and experienced mainly from higher slopes. The increased size of the loch would not appear incongruous within a landscape where lochs and lochans are common features. However, the linear form of the dam and visible drawdown area would increase the influence of man-made features and contrast with the surrounding hills which may diminish the experience of the rugged and seemingly natural landscape features within the surrounding landscape. The access tracks may increase a sense of accessibility to the landscape which may also contribute to a reduced sense of remoteness in some areas although existing tracks are already present within the wider area. Reduction in widths of tracks during operation would help to reduce their influence in the longer term. There would also be some influence from the lower reservoir and dams around summit areas of Creag Pitridh, Beinn a' Chlachair and its western slopes which lead down towards Lochan na h-Earba. This would lead to a greater sense of activity and human influence during construction, affecting remote qualities, but would appear less influential during operation. The vegetated front face to the Shuas Dam would form a less noticeably man-made feature and the reservoir would continue to contribute as a body of water within the wider landscape context to the LCT, similar to other reservoirs including Loch Laggan and Loch Ericht. Overall, the changes described above would be relatively localised to areas within relatively close proximity to the Proposed Development, largely focussed within an area to the north of Càrn Dearg, within the southern sub-section which is already more closely influenced by surrounding forest and tracks around Loch Laggan and Loch Pattack. Within the northern sub-section, the Proposed Development would be experienced at a relative distance and to a far lesser degree, partially screened by landform and trees and seen in the context of commercial forestry and development around Loch Laggan. The landscape effect is therefore anticipated to be locally Moderate – Major Adverse (significant) during construction (around the Proposed Development site within the northern part of the southern sub-section), reducing to locally Moderate Adverse (significant) in year 1 and year 15 of operation.
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	However, the vast majority of this LCT would not be affected, including the more remote and rugged mountains to the south, and the overall landscape effect is therefore predicted to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction and in year 1 and year 15 of operation due to the localised and focused nature of the effect.
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1.3 LCT 86: Smooth Rounded Hills – Badenoch & Strathspey

Table 2: LCT 86: Smooth Rounded Hills – Badenoch & Strathspey

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT occurs within two sub-sections within the study area: around the lower slopes and foothills of Ben Alder and Meall Cruaidh; and at the south-west end of Lochan na h-Earba. It comprises mountains up to 900 m above sea level, with a rounded appearance and gentle slopes, which contrast with the taller, craggier mountains of adjacent landscape types. In between the mountains, the land descends into wide, U-shaped valleys. Landcover consists of grassland and heather, with peat bog found within low-lying areas. The rectangular shapes of conifer plantations characterise some of the lower slopes. Apart from forestry, land use consists of management for country sports including deer grazing, as well as hill walking. There are no settlements within this area, although there are some paths and tracks. This is generally an open and remote landscape which has a transitional character, leading up to the higher mountains of surrounding LCTs.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Smooth Rounded Hills LCT are noted by NatureScot (2019)¹ as follows: • <i>“Large rounded mountains with gentle slopes and smooth skyline, separated by U-shaped valleys and encircling a wide shallow basin and loch;</i> • <i>Proximity to the higher craggy plateau makes the mountains appear relatively small;</i> • <i>Mainly simple heath grassland vegetation, with a few regular shaped conifer forests at low levels and extensive peatbogs in basin areas;</i> • <i>Homogenous vegetation cover and lack of features such as crags and corries emphasise the simple landform and openness and makes the scale of the mountains and distance difficult to discern;</i> • <i>The enclosed central basin including Loch Pattack is a focal point;</i> • <i>Few man-made structures;</i> • <i>A sense of wildness due to open, remote character, lack of settlement and limited man-made features.”</i>
Landscape Value	Parts of this LCT fall within the regionally designated Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA, and it also forms part of WLA 14. Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder. It has some value for its remote, upland qualities and provides some recreational opportunities although it is

	generally perceived as a transitional landscape type , experienced as a setting to some of the higher mountains of adjacent LCTs. Landscape value is therefore considered to be Medium .
Landscape Assessment	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Large, rounded mountains with gentle slopes and smooth skyline, separated by U-shaped valleys and encircling a wide shallow basin and loch; • Homogenous vegetation cover and lack of features such as crags and corries emphasise the simple landform and openness and makes the scale of the mountains and distance difficult to discern; • The enclosed central basin including Loch Pattack is a focal point; • Few man-made structures; and • A sense of wildness due to open, remote character, lack of settlement and limited man-made features.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a relatively highly valued landscape. Its relatively open character and limited presence of man-made structures makes it susceptible to the type of development proposed. However, its sensitivity is slightly reduced by the influence of forestry, access tracks and the presence of existing small-scale hydro development within this and adjacent LCTs. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential direct and indirect effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • The introduction of the Leamhain and Shuas Dams may alter the perceived slopes and skylines of the valleys and sense of enclosure; • The introduction of the Leamhain and Shuas Dams may stand out against the simple landform and alter or introduce new focal points, which could detract from the existing focus of Loch Pattack; • The introduction of dams, tracks and other built structures within or around the LCT may increase the presence of man-made features and reduce the sense of remoteness and wild character.
Magnitude of Change	The Shuas Dam would be located at the edge the lochan na h-Earba sub-section of this LCT, at the southern end of the loch along with smaller intake / outlet and aqueduct and diversion channel features on its downstream side, resulting in an area of localised, direct change and intervisibility through the majority of this sub-section across the valley floor. The main access track to the lower reservoir would also cross this LCT around the lower slopes of Binnein Shuas and there would be some intervisibility with the access track to the upper reservoir and surge shafts. During construction, the main compound area on the downstream side of Shuas Dam would also form a particular focus of construction activity. However, during operation, the vegetated front face of this dam

	and planting on its downstream side would considerably reduce its prominence. The Leamhain Dam would be similarly located at the edge of the Loch Pattack sub-section of this LCT, where it would be experienced as large and very noticeable feature, within a hanging valley to the west of Loch Pattack. The ZTV indicates relatively extensive intervisibility within this part of the LCT with the dam, mainly on lower ground surrounding Loch Pattack (see VL10, Figures V3a-10a-g and V3b-10a-n), and from facing slopes, reaching up to Meall Beag and Meall Mor to the east of Loch Pattack and the ridgeback of hills to the east of River Pattack. From the valley floor, particularly around Loch Pattack, The Leamhain Dam would form a noticeable man-made feature within the western mountainous context, particularly during construction where construction plant and activity would draw additional attention. Although it would appear focussed within a generally expansive context and would be unlikely to break the skyline other than at very close proximity. Magnitude of change would be locally Medium-High during construction within the areas downstream of the dams, typically within around 3 - 4 km graduating down to Low at greater proximity. This would reduce to locally Medium in year 1 of operation around the Leamhain Dam. Elsewhere the magnitude would be Low-Medium during construction and Low in year 1 and year 15 of operation.
Significance of Effects	There would be direct effects to parts of this LCT close to its boundary but the majority of effects would be indirect, relating to the appearance of the Proposed Development within the wider setting. During construction there would be a temporary increase in movement, noise and activity associated with the construction of the dams, access tracks and other built features. This would notably increase evidence of active land use, and features such as cranes may temporarily draw the eye towards these areas, interrupting the simple landform. This would be likely to be a greater focus within the Lochan na h-Earba sub-section due to its smaller scale and the sweeping valley context where the focus of works would be situated. At the Loch Pattack sub-section, the works would be seen within a more mountainous context with greater scale and backclothing and although prominent, would be more focussed. The permanent elements of the Proposed Development including the Leamhain and Shuas Dams would introduce new man-made features into this landscape, increasing the perceived sense of development and reducing some of its remote and wild qualities, although the presence of forestry and tracks within both sub-sections of this LCT already give a sense of proximity to contemporary land use (refer to Appendix 7.5: WLA Assessment). During operation, the vegetated downstream face of the Shuas Dam would help it to assimilate within the valley setting in the longer term, and the permanent intake and outlet structures would appear relatively small and other areas disturbed for construction would be reinstated. Mitigation woodland planting proposed downstream of the dam would also help to soften the appearance of these features within the context of this LCT. The Dam would reinforce the transition between this and the

	neighbouring LCT 87 (Small Craggy Knolls and Hills) and overall the effect on landscape character would be relatively limited. Further planting proposed for BNG purposes around Binnein Shuas would lead to further change to this sub-section of the LCT but is unlikely to appear as a negative feature within an area where woodland plantation areas are already a feature within the landscape. The Leamhain Dam would introduce a prominent new focus on the edge of the Loch Pattack sub-section although this would appear as a simple, focused feature within the western context of mountains. It would generally sit below the skyline when seen from the valley below, and would be skylined from areas only very close-by. Whilst the dam would be prominent, within the context of Loch Pattack, it would not take away the role of the loch as a focus within the valley, as it would combine with the surrounding landform to create a backdrop. In the longer term, the Proposed Development is not predicted to lead to a significant effect on wildness within the wider area around Loch Pattack because this area is already influenced by human interventions in the form of tracks and forest plantations but it would continue to form a very prominent man-made focal point within an otherwise upland, mountainous context. The landscape effect for the Loch na-h Earba sub-section is therefore anticipated to be Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction reducing to a Minor Adverse (not significant) effect in year 1 and year 15 of operation.. The landscape effect within the Loch Pattack sub-section would also be Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction, affecting areas within the bowl around Loch Pattack up to around 3 – 4 km. During operation, a <u>very localised</u> Moderate Adverse (significant) effect would continue within this sub-section at year 1 and year 15, within areas to the west of Loch Pattack where the Leamhain Dam would be a very prominent new focus. The effect for this sub-section would otherwise be Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant) at both year 1 and year 15 of operation.
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1.4 LCT 87: Small Craggy Knolls and Hills

Table 3: LCT 87: Small Craggy Knolls and Hills

Landscape Baseline	
Description	The Small Craggy Knolls and Hills LCT occurs in two sub-sections in the study area: within the valley containing Lochan na h-Earba and the River Pattack. This LCT comprises a complex, small-scale landscapes consisting of craggy hills and rock outcrops cut through by rocky glens, which contrasts with the large scale of adjacent upland character types. Water is a dominant feature of this landscape, with the river Pattack, Lochan na h-Earba and a number of small lochans and burns occurring on lower ground. Landcover is equally variable, with areas of woodland to the north, often on steep slopes and along watercourses, and rough

	grassland around estates and by Lochan na h-Earba. Extensive areas of peatland occur on lower ground, particularly around the upper River Pattack. Land use consists mainly of deer grazing and hill walking to a lesser extent. This is a largely uninhabited landscape, although tracks and other human made elements such as fences, bridges and hydroelectric dams on River Pattack are present, contributing to the sense of a managed landscape. Overall, the landscape has a small-scale, varied character, with water features such as rivers and lochs forming focal points in the landscape and contributing to some of its scenic qualities.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Small Craggy Knolls and Hills LCT are noted by NatureScot (2019)¹ as follows: • <i>“Craggy hills with frequent outcrops and rocky incised glens with some deep rocky gorges;</i> • <i>Diverse, intricate and small-scale landscape in contrast to the large scale and simplicity of form and texture of surrounding smooth mountains and plateaux;</i> • <i>Water is a key feature, occurring as lochans, waterfalls, meandering rivers and burns;</i> • <i>Variable landcover with woodland and forest as key components particularly in the north, and more open ground of grasslands with scattered trees and peatlands around Lochan na h-Earba and the upper course of River Pattack;</i> • <i>Land use is mainly deer grazing and forestry;</i> • <i>Uninhabited landscape with few human artefacts;</i> • <i>The viewing experience alternates from open distant views of surrounding mountains to those which are enclosed by trees and landform, focusing on local detail;</i> • <i>Rivers and lochs form natural features in views, as do dykes, bridges and metal fences in more managed areas; and</i> • <i>The area in the south around Lochan na h-Earba and the upper River Pattack has a sense of wild character due to rugged and seemingly natural landscape and few human artefacts.”</i> • Within the study area, this LCT is also characterised by various small and medium scale hydroelectric features, including the River Pattack dam and small weirs at the north-east end of Lochan na h-Earba and on River Pattack.
Landscape Value	One area of this LCT forms part of the regionally designated Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA, while both areas overlap with WLA 14. Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder. The LCT is valued for its scenic qualities, associated with its diversity, small-scale character and prevalence of water, which also provides some recreational opportunities. Landscape value is considered to be Medium-High.

Landscape Assessment	
The ZTV indicates that there would be no intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the River Pattack sub-section of this LCT. This has therefore been scoped out of further study and the assessment focusses on the Lochan na h-Earba sub-section.	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Diverse, intricate and small-scale landscape in contrast to the large scale and simplicity of form and texture of surrounding smooth mountains and plateaux • Uninhabited landscape with few human artefacts; and • The area in the south around Lochan na h-Earba and the upper River Pattack has a sense of wild character due to rugged and seemingly natural landscape and few human artefacts; and • Variable landcover with woodland and grasslands with scattered trees and peatlands around Lochan na h-Earba.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a valued landscape, whose small scale, perceived naturalness and limited existing built development, particularly around Lochan na h-Earba makes it sensitive to development of the type proposed. However, sensitivity is somewhat locally reduced by the presence of existing hydro development within small parts of landscape, and also where there is a high degree of tree cover. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be Medium-High.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • The introduction of dams and other built structures may appear out of place within the intricate small-scale landscape pattern; • The introduction of dams, tracks and built structures within this landscape, and appearance of drawdown may alter its seemingly natural character and increase sense of human presence and development; • The creation of a single larger waterbody from the two separate lochs, and inundation of larger parts of the valley floor may lead to a reduced sense of diversity of landcover and changes to the spatial experience; and • Loss of trees within the inundated area, and planting on the valley slopes may change the vegetation pattern and resulting sense of openness and enclosure.
Magnitude of Change	The proposed lower reservoir would occupy the Lochan na h-Earba LCT sub-section and would involve raising the water level of the existing two parts of Lochan na-Earba through the construction of the Shuas (on the boundary of the LCT) and Shios Dams. The powerhouse would also form a new feature towards the south-western end of the loch, involving creation of a new rock cutting and permanent new access tracks would be created around the new reservoir. The modification of Lochan na h-Earba would increase the size of the waterbody and result in the two lochs merging and the loss of some trees. However, the proposed

	promontories which would be constructed would to some extent maintain the visual separation of the lochs, particularly when looking laterally along the valley. The fluctuation in water levels during the operation of the scheme would also result in periodic visible drawdown along the shoreline. There would be a focus of construction activities throughout this subsection of the LCT, including site compounds, borrow pits, works to construct the dams, powerhouse and the upgrading, construction and use of access tracks by construction traffic. All these works would add increased activity and movement on all sides of the lochs. The ZTV indicates extensive intervisibility of both Shios and Shuas dams throughout the Lochan na h-Earba valley. However, this would be largely limited to the upstream faces of the dams, which would be mostly submerged during operation. Whilst the ZTV indicates theoretical visibility of the Shuas Dam to the north, this would be only locally experienced due to extensive tree cover within this area. Theoretical visibility of the powerhouse area is shown to be relatively extensive along the valley floor, and from facing slopes of Binnein Shuas and Binnein Shios to the north (see VL9: Binnein Shuas, Figures V3a-9a-f and V3b-9a-k). However, the setting of the building within a cutting and use of landform would reduce the extent to which it would be seen within lower areas of the valley. New and upgraded tracks would also be present throughout the valley around Lochan na h-Earba, although track widths would be reduced after construction is complete. Mitigation planting is proposed in this LCT along parts of the valley sides, on promontories, and around the powerhouse area, and as this establishes, the built features of the Proposed Development would appear less noticeable by year 15 of operation. Magnitude of change would be High within the Lochan na h-Earba subsection of the LCT during construction. With the reinstatement of disturbed areas, this would reduce to locally Medium around the permanent features of the Proposed Development including the dams and powerhouse in year 1 of operation. Overall, after 15 years, with the growth of new woodland and re-establishment of vegetation, the magnitude of change would be Low – Medium by year 15 of operation.
Significance of Effects	During construction, the large-scale works and vehicular movements occurring throughout the Lochan na h-Earba area would result in a very noticeable increase in activity which would change the character from one of limited human intervention dominated by natural features to a very actively managed landscape. However, this would be a largely temporary effect. Once construction works had ceased and reinstatement undertaken, this large-scale activity and movement would cease. The Shios and Shuas Dams and the powerhouse would introduce permanent built structures into localised parts of the landscape. These large structures may appear slightly out of scale with the local landscape patterns but the larger body of water would help to balance the scale of the dams and would conceal most of them on the upstream side, and the setting of the powerhouse within a cutting, with the establishment of mitigation woodland planting around it would help to accommodate it over time. The new structures

	would introduce new man-made forms into the landscape, which, in addition to fluctuating drawdown around the loch and new and access tracks, would increase the sense of human influence in the landscape and reduce the perceived sense of 'naturalness'. However, the natural qualities of craggy enclosing hills and body of water would remain predominant through most of the valley. The increased inundation area would also alter the proportions of the valley, slightly reducing the sense of depth and enclosure and the separation between lochs. The addition of woodland around the south-western loch may also reduce the diversity of character between the two lochs and the transition into the more open moorland of LCT 86 to the south-west. However, this is not necessarily a negative effect and a diverse pattern of open and planted areas would remain. The introduction of two promontories would help to maintain the visual sense of separation between the two areas of water, particularly when viewed laterally along the valley, which would relate to the existing pattern of the two lochs. Planting on the promontories would also help to establish the existing pattern of trees and small promontories on the shores of the loch which contribute to striking valley views. The downstream face of the Shios Dam would require a section of concrete spillway but otherwise be clad in topsoil and vegetated which would help it assimilate into the surrounding landscape downstream and reduce effects in this area. The landscape effect on the Lochan na h-Earba LCT sub-section is predicted to be Moderate – Major Adverse (significant) during construction. This would reduce to locally Moderate Adverse (significant) in year 1 of operation at the south-western part of the valley around the Powerhouse and Shuas Dam, elsewhere being Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant). After 15 years, with the growth of woodland planting and full re-establishment of vegetation, the overall effect is predicted to be Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant) because the predominant character of a waterbody, set within wooded slopes and craggy hills would be maintained. Additional planting for BNG proposes is proposed throughout this LCT and would potentially lead to noticeable change in character over the longer term, where the loch would become potentially more enclosed by woodland, reducing the visual influence of surrounding crags. This has not been fully considered in the assessment of effects due to being only an outline proposal at this stage with a lack of detailed design. However, although leading to a change in character, this would not necessarily be negative in its effect, as the native woodlands may be expected to lead to positive new characteristics in their own right and would further reduce intervisibility with the Proposed Development.
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1.5 LCT 88: Loch and Glen

Table 4: LCT 88: Loch and Glen

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT lies within the south-eastern part of the study area and is immediately adjacent to the Perth and Kinross Council and Cairngorms National Park boundaries. It covers part of Loch Ericht, which sits within a large, U-shaped valley, surrounded by high mountains with steep, craggy slopes descending into the loch, which are mainly covered by grassland and heather, with occasional coniferous forests and patches of native broadleaf woodland. Land use consists mainly of forestry and deer grazing. Loch Ericht is dammed and is part of the Tummel hydro scheme. Ben Alder Lodge and surrounding estate buildings comprise the main area of settlement, and apart from scattered cottages, the area is otherwise sparsely inhabited. The simple, linear feature of Loch Ericht dominates the landscape, with views funnelled along the glen by surrounding hills. There is a sense of remoteness due to the lack of human artefacts, although active land use consisting of forestry and hydro development contribute to the feel of a managed landscape.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Loch and Glen LCT are noted by NatureScot (2019)¹ as follows: • <i>“Very long, narrow, deep loch in a narrow, steep sided glen channelled between high mountains and uplands;</i> • <i>Steep sides are often of uniform gradient and have a horizontal skyline and appear to sink into the waters, forming a mainly simple shoreline and resulting in little flat land;</i> • <i>Mainly heather and grassland landcover, the lower slopes including conifer plantations and native pinewoods on the northwest shore and open birch wood patches on the southeast shore;</i> • <i>A general lack of settlement, man-made structures and evidence of previous human occupation, which are limited to low ground near the loch;</i> • <i>Ben Alder Lodge and surrounding buildings form the main built focus;</i> • <i>The simple visual composition of the landscape with views funnelled by mountains and slopes along the glen, or focussed on opposite slopes and skylines;</i> • <i>The drama created by the often windy choppy loch aligned with the prevailing winds and the dark shaded north facing slopes;</i> • <i>Limited but often spectacular external views of the loch, glimpsed as a dramatic cleft through the mountains;</i> • <i>The lack of distinct landscape features and scale indicators making distance often difficult to discern; and</i>

	• <i>Wild land character which is strongest in the south, reflecting the lack of signs of human activity and man-made structures."</i>
Landscape Value	This LCT forms part of WLA 14. Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder, and the southernmost section of this LCT lies within the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA. It is appreciated for some of its scenic and remote qualities, although is not a strongly representative part of the WLA. Landscape value is considered to be Medium.
Landscape Assessment	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • The lack of distinct landscape features and scale indicators making distance often difficult to discern; and • Wild land character which is strongest in the south, reflecting the lack of signs of human activity and man-made structures.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a moderately valued landscape with some aspects of remote and wild land which are sensitive to further development. However, the presence of existing hydro development, Ben Alder Estate buildings, and forestry which contribute to a sense of a managed landscape, create some precedent for the type of development proposed, and reduce sensitivity within other parts of this LCT. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential direct and indirect effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • The introduction of the Leamhain Dam and new and upgraded tracks in the adjacent landscape may reduce the sense of wild character ; • The appearance of the Leamhain Dam within the adjacent landscape may introduce a new scale indicators into the landscape and change the perception of distance.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct effects within this LCT. The ZTV indicates some theoretical visibility of the Leamhain Dam from some of the slopes on the eastern side of the loch, up to the summit of Geal-charn (see VL 11, Figure V3s-11a-f and V3b-11a-k) which lies on the eastern edge of this LCT. From these elevated locations, the Leamhain Dam, would form a new feature in the westerly context above Loch Pattack, within a dip in the landform, usually within a context of forest areas and tracks in foreground areas around Loch Ericht and Loch Pattack. Whilst the large scale of the dam would be likely to be perceived, it would affect a relatively small part of the surrounding landscape context and relatively distant. During construction, activity, equipment such as cranes and pieces of machinery and structures around the dam site would also be experienced at relative distance.

	There would be no visibility of the Proposed Development from the northern or southern part of this LCT, and visibility along the western slopes would be limited to a few locations just south of Ben Alder Lodge. Magnitude of change is considered to be Low during construction, in year 1 and year 15 of operation.
Significance of Effects	All effects on this LCT would be indirect, resulting from the appearance of the Leamhain Dam, tracks and inundation area within the westerly landscape context. These effects would only be experienced from the eastern slopes above Loch Ericht and within the vicinity of Geal-charn. Construction activities, where visible, would introduce temporary movement and activity into a relatively focussed part of the wider landscape. This would draw some attention to the area of the dam, resulting in an increased sense of development and activity within this wider context. However, this would be experienced in the context of forest plantation and other human interventions at closer proximity which already reduce the sense of wildness within this LCT. In the long term, the Leamhain Dam, and associated features, would become a new permanent feature within the wider landscape, and may stand out within this context where fewer visible human artefacts are present. However, the focus of this LCT is the long, deep valley containing Loch Ericht and the Proposed Development would be outwith and distant from the valley, mostly only experienced from higher slopes. It would therefore be within a clearly different landscape area and would have little impact on characteristics of the valley and loch. The dam would be seen at a relative distance (mostly over 7 km) and within a broad landscape context. There would be no intervisibility, and therefore no effect to the majority of the LCT within the study area, and particularly no effect on the southern, more remote and sensitive, part of this LCT. Significance of effect is therefore considered to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction and Negligible in year 1 and year 15 of operation.

1.6 LCT 89: Broad Loch and Glen

Table 5: LCT 89: Broad Loch and Glen

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT encompasses Loch Laggan, which is a deep loch that sits within a long U-shaped glen to the south-east of the A86, between Kinloch Laggan and Glen Spean. The glen is enclosed to the north by large mountains and to the south by usually forested slopes, rising into craggy knolls. Loch Laggan forms a reservoir, part of the Lochaber hydroelectric scheme, with the striking Laggan Dam located at its south-western end. The landform and landcover are both diverse within this landscape type, with a high degree of woodland cover, consisting of a variety of native and ancient woodland. On the upper valley slopes, grassland dominates and transitions to alpine flora on higher ground. Conifer plantations are found in the south-east of the LCT and along th

	southern side of Loch Laggan. Land use is varied, ranging from tourism-based activities and outdoor recreation, including hill walking, to forestry and hydro development, estate management and nature conservation. Settlement is concentrated on gentler slopes and near the A86, with estate buildings and Ardverikie House located on the loch shore. Overall, this LCT is characterised by a diversity of colour, pattern and textures, and is relatively accessible in contrast to adjacent landscape types, largely due to the presence of the A86.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Broad Loch and Glen LCT are noted by NatureScot (2019)¹ as follows: • <i>“Very long narrow slightly curved loch, channelled between high mountains to the northwest and lower craggy hills to the southeast;</i> • <i>Mainly steep slopes on the northwest side and some more gently sloping land on the southeast side with flatter land occurring at the junction of occasional side tributaries on both sides of the loch;</i> • <i>A high proportion of tree cover, which is most extensive on the south east side, consisting of stands of native woodland and forest cover on lower slopes close to the loch;</i> • <i>Distinct tiers of landcover on the northwest side, with low-lying stands of native woodlands, open areas of mainly heather and grassland landcover, rising to high alpine cover;</i> • <i>Areas of smaller scale managed fields and woodlands with buildings around estates, contrasting with the large scale of surrounding landcover patterns;</i> • <i>Strong contrast in land use between the opposite shores of the loch, related to the presence and busy nature of the trunk road on the north side and the extent of forest cover on the south side;</i> • <i>Limited settlement of mainly traditional style buildings occurring on lower ground near the loch, usually associated with estates and often occurring where the intersection with a tributary glen creates an area of flatter ground or requires a bridging point;</i> • <i>Variety in texture, patterns and colour associated with the different landcover and varying openness and enclosure of landforms;</i> • <i>Views to distant, distinctive, landmark hills along the loch and in more open areas; and</i> • <i>The dramatic combination of the loch, forests, woodland and peaks with occasional estate buildings.”</i>
Landscape Value	This LCT forms part of the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA and a very small part of WLA 14. Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder and WLA 19. Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creg Meagaidh. It is valued for its scenic qualities resulting from its diverse landform and landcover which are experienced by many due to its accessibility, and for the recreational opportunities it provides. Landscape value is considered to be Medium-High.
Landscape Assessment	

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: Views to distant, distinctive, landmark hills along the loch and in more open areas.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a valued landscape. It currently hosts a variety of different land uses, including existing hydro development, which makes it potentially accommodating of other similar development, although it may be sensitive to an oversaturation of development of this type. Overall landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential direct and indirect effects which may result to this landscape comprise: The introduction of dams and / or tracks within this LCT and the wider landscape context may distract in views to distant landmark hills
Magnitude of Change	There would be a very small area of direct change within this LCT at the site entrance near Moy where a new bridge and some upgraded and re-aligned track would be constructed. A borrow pit and construction compound would also be sited in this area during construction. The ZTV indicates some theoretical visibility of both the Shuas Dam and the powerhouse with an area along the eastern edge of this LCT, near its boundary with LCT 87 at Binnein Shios. There may also be intervisibility with other surrounding features such as tracks or the surge shafts on Creag Pitridh, particularly during construction. The ZTV also suggests that here would be intervisibility with the Shios Dam with areas around the north-east end of Loch Laggan. However, in reality, with the exception of some of the more elevated valley sides, this would be unlikely due to extensive forest cover. As the proposed changes would be very localised, magnitude of change is therefore considered to be Low during construction and Negligible in year 1 and year 15 of operation.
Significance of Effects	The direct changes within this LCT would lead to a small and focussed area of new features and activity near the site entrance during construction. However, this would be a very localised area of impact with landform proposed to minimise its visual appearance within adjacent areas. It would not necessarily be out of place within a landscape where forest activities already take place, and within close proximity to the A86, and would in general only be a temporary effect. Indirect effects relating to the appearance of features at the lower reservoir and the surge shafts would be largely limited to summit areas of Beinnin Shuas and Binnein Shios on the edge of the LCT. These are transitional areas, contributory to the setting of Loch Laggan, and also LCT 87. Therefore, these parts of the Proposed Development, although prominent from these summit areas, particularly during construction, would be associated with the landscape of LCT 87 and would have little effect on the appreciation and setting of Loch Laggan which forms the focus of this LCT.

	There is some potential for construction works at the surge shafts on Creag Pitridh and at the Shios Dam to distract in views to distant hills from a few areas, but this would be very limited and during operation these features would be largely imperceptible and unlikely to influence the landscape character of this LCT. Additional planting for BNG purposes is proposed within this LCT on Binnein Shuas and Binnein Shios above the line of the existing forest. This would be unlikely to lead to any sufficient change to landscape characteristics that would increase the level of effect. Significance of effect is predicted to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction and Negligible during operation.
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1.7 LCT 126: Upland Glen – Cairngorms

Table 6: LCT 126: Upland Glen – Cairngorms

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT is found in two sub-sections within the study area, within a larger area encompassing Strath Mashie and Glen Shirra, and a small area further south-east, encompassing some of the upper slopes of Glen Truim, both located within the Cairngorms National Park boundary. It is characterised by steep-sided glens with a flat glen floor, often containing rivers, with many glacial landforms evident. Vegetation on the glen floors consists mainly of pastoral fields and patches of riparian woodland, with conifer forests on some side slopes, and heather moorland and upland grassland taking over on upper slopes. While this is a relatively sparsely populated landscape, there are small settlement clusters, estate buildings and scattered farmhouses. The landscape is crossed by a number of roads, and human land use in the form of overhead lines is evident. There is often a changing sequence of views when traveling through the glens, resulting from the diversity of landform and landcover. Within the study area, this description is more typical of the Strath Mashie sub-section whilst only a very small part of the Glen Truim sub-section falls within the study area more characterised by steep, open, upland slopes.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Upland Glen - Cairngorms LCT are noted by NatureScot (2019)¹ as follows: • <i>“Strong evidence of glacial processes, including steepened sides and level floors, shattered rock faces on higher slopes, hummocks of resistant rock on some glen floors and terraces of glacial deposits at the edges of the glen floors;</i> • <i>Often form arrival points into the Cairngorms National Park;</i> • <i>Size varies from large open passes to narrower more secluded glens;</i> • <i>Enclosed predominantly by steep slopes;</i>

	<i>Frequently differing land-use on one side of the glen to the other – linked to aspect;</i> <i>Improved grazed fields on glen floors and floodplains;</i> <i>Most settled, some only sparsely, but often extensive evidence of past settlement;</i> <i>Some landmark historic buildings;</i> <i>Access varies from narrow roads, estate and forestry tracks to main routes, but most have some form of road running through them;</i> <i>Varied experience when passing through glens from open and expansive to sheltered and secluded; and</i> <i>Views to adjacent uplands; from which parts of the glens are visible and provide contrast."</i>
Landscape Value	This LCT is located within the Cairngorms National Park (CNP), and the northern part of this LCT which encompasses Strath Mashie and Glen Shirra sub-section forms part of the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA. Small parts, including the full Glen Truim sub-section within the study area, also fall within either WLA 19. Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh to the west and WLA 14. Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder to the south-east. It is valued for its upland character, sense of history and scenic qualities. Landscape value is considered to be High.
Landscape Assessment	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: Views to adjacent uplands; from which parts of the glens are visible and provide contrast.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued landscape, with some qualities which may make it susceptible to the type of development proposed. Susceptibility to change is variable throughout this LCT, but is reduced within the Strath Mashie sub-section due to the relatively actively managed character of the landscape, and the presence of infrastructural features such as the A86 and Beaully-Denny steel lattice overhead line. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be Medium within the Strath Mashie sub-section but High within the Glen Truim sub-section.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: <i>The introduction of new built structures within adjacent landscapes may distract in views to adjacent uplands.</i>
Magnitude of Change	The ZTV indicates patches of theoretical visibility of both the Shuas and Shios Dams, in particular from areas of higher ground in between Strath Mashie and Glenshirra and from the south-western edge of this LCT, as well as the powerhouse, to a lesser extent. In reality, intervening coniferous forest and woodland is likely to conceal the Shios Dam from most parts of Strath Mashie although it may remain perceptible from Glen Shirra area and some taller construction elements such as cranes may be more perceptible in the short term but would be very focussed

	within a wide landscape context. The Shios Dam itself would be likely to largely conceal any potential intervisibility with the Shuas Dam and powerhouse. Only a very small area of theoretical visibility with the Leamhain Dam is indicated in the Glen Truim sub-section along its boundary with LCT 88, just north-east of Geal-chna along the mountain ridge line which would be unlikely to lead to any perceptual landscape change at the distance involved. Magnitude of change would be Negligible during construction and in year 1 and year 15 of operation.
Significance of Effects	There would be no direct effects within this LCT. Whilst there is some potential for construction or permanent features of the Proposed Development, to be perceptible within the wider landscape context from parts of this LCT, these elements would be seen at a relative distance from a very few areas and within the context would be unlikely to form a sufficiently distracting element to affect the intrinsic qualities of this LCT. The significance of effect would therefore be Negligible during construction and in year 1 and year 15 of operation.

1.8 LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges

Table 7: LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT lies within the south-western part of the study area, and comprises a series of low-lying, gently undulating ridges, which are often found at the transition into LCT 238: Rugged Massif – Lochaber. Peat occurs commonly along the flat plateaux, where exposed peat hags are often found. A mix of heather moorland and rough grassland is common on lower slopes, interspersed with blocks of pasture, oak and birch woods and conifer plantations. Settlement is concentrated mainly around the edges of this LCT, but is very limited within the study area. Overall, the large scale and simple landcover give this landscape a relatively uniform character.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Smooth Moorland Ridges LCT are noted by NatureScot (2019)¹ as follows: • <i>“Gently undulating hills with smooth elongated ridge profiles, developing a more undulating landform in transitional areas with Rugged Massif – Lochaber;</i> • <i>Simple large scale landscape pattern dictated by uniform landcover and uncomplicated landform;</i> • <i>Plateau summits generally draped in a mixture of grasses, heather and sedges with exposed peat hags;</i> • <i>Large blocks of conifer forests along the hill sides and lower foothills;</i>

	• <i>Broadleaf woods on lower slopes and along loch edges, often framing crofts;</i> • <i>Scattered croft settlements with stone dykes concentrated on lower slopes, particularly along roads and south-facing slopes;</i> • <i>Roads and transmission lines following the base of the hills” [None within the study area]; and</i> • <i>“Smooth open slopes highly visible.”</i>
Landscape Value	The most southerly part of this LCT within the study area falls within the Glen Banchor, Laggan and Ben Alder SLA. The majority of this LCT, outside of the forested area also sits within WLA 14: Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder. This area is also valued for its upland qualities and recreational opportunities..Landscape value is considered to be Medium – High.
Landscape Assessment	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Gently undulating hills with smooth elongated ridge profiles; • Simple large scale landscape pattern dictated by uniform landcover and uncomplicated landform; and • Smooth open slopes highly visible.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a relatively valued landscape with some qualities in some areas which may make it susceptible to change of the type proposed, such as areas of remoteness and wildness. However, sensitivity is locally reduced within the northern part where there is a high degree of forestry. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • The introduction of new built structures within adjacent landscape types may form new focus within the uniform and uncomplicated landscape pattern; • The introduction of new dams within adjacent landscape types may change the profile of some smooth elongated ridges or gently undulating hills.
Magnitude of Change	The ZTV indicates that there would be some theoretical visibility of the Shios and Shuas Dams and powerhouse from a few north-east facing slopes and elevated areas within this LCT. This would affect relatively limited parts of the LCT and the Proposed Development would usually appear relatively distant in the north-easterly context, mostly over 6 km away, with one smaller area of potential intervisibility near Lùbvan and Meall Còs Chànnan at around 3 – 4 km distance. This would typically involve construction works around the Shuas Dam which would be the closest of the main features, with some other works such as at the surge shafts and construction and use of new tracks leading to the Shuas Dam and the upper reservoir also potentially being perceptible. Any other parts of the Proposed Development would be seen beyond these features.

	Whilst these works would form a perceptible feature within the neighbouring landscape area, the longer term features would be of limited perceptibility as the Shuas Dam would have a vegetated front face. Mitigation planting on the lower side of this dam would also reduce perceptibility over time. Magnitude of change would be Low during construction and Negligible in both year 1 and year 15 of operation.
Significance of Effects	There would be no direct effects within this LCT. During construction, the appearance of works around the Shuas Dam, including site compounds and surrounding tracks would form a noticeable area of activity in the north-easterly landscape context. This may slightly affect the qualities of wildness and remoteness to some extent, although the areas affected would typically be those where other surrounding land use such as forestry is already influential. From most areas potentially affected, the works would appear distant, and the vast majority of the LCT would not be affected at all. During operation, there would be limited perceptibility of the Proposed Development in the context of this LCT. The proposed vegetated front face to the Shuas Dam would help this to assimilate into the surrounding hills, as would other mitigation proposals such as landform adjacent to tracks. Over time, proposed planting would further soften the appearance of permanent features. Overall, it is considered unlikely that the Proposed Development would lead to any perceptible landscape change to the key characteristics that contribute to this LCT. Significance of effect is therefore considered to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during construction and Negligible during both year 1 and year 15 of operation.

1.9 LCT 238: Rugged Massif – Lochaber

Table 8: LCT 238: Rugged Massif – Lochaber

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT, which occurs in several locations in Lochaber, covers an area within the north-west of the study area, north of Glen Spean. It is characterised by a complex landform and is often found as a transitional landscape type between the low, smooth ridges of LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges and the higher mountains of landscape types such as LCT 239: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber. Landcover consists of patchy grassland and heather interspersed by rocky outcrops, and patches of birch and remnants of Caledonian pine wood occur on lower slopes. Settlement is sparse and limited to isolated dwellings on lower ground, and there is a strong sense of remoteness and ruggedness within this landscape type.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Rugged Massif - Lochaber LCT are noted by NatureScot (2019) as follows:

	• <i>“Rugged character, a crinkled skyline and a landform accentuated by rocky outcrops and glacial debris;</i> • <i>Large rocky masses drawing the eye upwards to ice-sourced rounded summits;</i> • <i>Often a transitional landscape with indistinct boundaries with other Landscape Character Types;</i> • <i>Often in remote, unsettled and inaccessible locations, which combined with the rugged relief, accentuates the wild character of these areas;</i> • <i>Thin soils supporting sparse cover of grasses and heather on higher drier slopes;</i> • <i>Birch scrub and some oak woodland cover on lower slopes and within burn gullies and hanging valleys;</i> • <i>Extensive sheep and deer grazing with stalking and hill walking as popular activities; and</i> • <i>Forestry occluding over small areas on flatter, lower slopes.”</i>
Landscape Value	This LCT falls within WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh and it is valued for its remote, upland, wild characteristics, and for its recreational opportunities. Landscape value is considered to be High .
Landscape Assessment	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Often in remote, unsettled and inaccessible locations, which combined with the rugged relief, accentuates the wild character of these areas.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a valued landscape with a remote, upland character and limited development which makes it susceptible to the type of development propose. Presence of hydro and wind development within adjacent landscapes and forestry along its southern edge may reduce sensitivity within some areas, particularly to indirect change. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium - High .
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • The introduction of the Proposed Development into the wider landscape context may increase sense of development and reduce sense of remoteness and wild character
Magnitude of Change	The ZTV shows that theoretical visibility within this LCT would be very limited, occurring only across some higher summit areas including Beinn a' Chaorainn (see VL 2, Figures V3a-2a-f and V3b-2a-k), Coire Buidhe and Meall Bhaideanach, in relation to the Shuas Dam and surrounding tracks and potential very limited perceptibility of the Leamhain Dam from the very top of this ridgeline. The lower reservoir and some construction activities around it would also be perceptible. The dams and reservoirs would be seen to the south-east at a relative distance (approximately 8

	and 13 km respectively), as a small part of the surrounding landscape context and in a context featuring existing forest and woodland cover and tracks around Loch Laggan. Construction works would be more perceptible across a larger area but when considering the very limited area where this would be experienced and the presence of other contemporary land use within this context the magnitude of change to landscape characteristics is considered to be Negligible during construction and operation in year 1 and year 15 of operation.
Significance of Effects	There would be no direct effects within this LCT. The Proposed Development would be experienced from a very small part of this LCT in distant views in the south-easterly landscape context. During construction, the movement and activity would form a perceptible feature within the context likely to give an impression of drawing the more managed characteristics of Loch Laggan area further into the southerly upland landscape. Whilst this may slightly reduce a sense of wider remoteness, it would not affect the more immediate characteristics of wild land within the LCT and would be very localised. During operation, at the distance involved, the built features of the Proposed Development would be much less perceptible, particularly when considering the proposed vegetated front face of the Shuas Dam. However, the appearance of planting may continue to increase the association of the area around the Proposed Development more closely to the Loch Laggan landscape. Nevertheless, these perceptions would be very localised in the context of the LCT and, as the vast majority would not be affected at all, is unlikely to alter the experience of the key landscape characteristics. The significance of effect is predicted to be Negligible (not significant) during construction, and in year 1 and year 15 of operation.