

## 8 Landscape and Visual

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter of the EIA Report discusses the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) undertaken for the Proposed Development and identifies the likely significant effects from the Proposed Development on landscape and visual amenity. The assessment is based on the characteristics of the site and surrounding area and the key parameters of the Proposed Development detailed in [Chapter 2 – Site and Surrounding Area](#) and [Chapter 3 – The Proposed Development](#) respectively.

This chapter has been prepared by ASH Design + Assessment (ASH), in line with best practice. A statement outlining the relevant expertise and qualifications of competent experts appointed to prepare this EIA Report is provided in [Appendix 1.1](#).

The aims of this chapter are to establish likely significant effects to views obtained by those present and travelling through the landscape, landscape designations or otherwise protected landscapes and the wider landscape character of the study area.

This chapter is supported by the following figures and technical reports provided in [Volume 2](#):

- [Appendix 8.1 – Figures](#) includes:
  - Figure 8.1 (a and b): Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Operational Stages 1 and 2);
  - Figure 8.2: Designated and Protected Landscapes;
  - Figure 8.3: Landscape Character;
  - Figure 8.4: Visual Receptors;
  - Figure 8.5: Indicative Mitigation Proposals;
- [Appendix 8.1 – Descriptions and Key Characteristics of Landscape Character Types](#) includes summary excerpts of the National Landscape Character Types which fall within the LVIA study area; and,
- [Appendix 8.2 – Visual Receptor Assessment](#) includes detailed assessment of individual visual receptor locations.

### 8.2 Policy Context, Legislation, Guidance and Standards

#### Legislation

The overarching legislative framework applicable to this EIA for the Proposed Development is outlined in [Chapter 4 – Legislative and Policy Context](#). Over and above this there are no statutory provisions of specific relevance to this assessment.

#### Policy

The planning policy framework applicable to this EIA for the Proposed Development is outlined in [Chapter 4 – Legislative and Policy Context](#). National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is the principal piece of planning policy relevant to the Proposed Development. With respect to landscape and visual issues, the key policies of NPF4 include Policy 4 which relates to the protection of the Natural Environment, including designated and protected landscape areas and Policy 14, which promotes the design of successful, attractive, and distinctive placemaking.

In addition to National Planning Framework 4, the statutory Development Plan applicable to the site presently comprises:

- Highland-wide Local Development Plan (adopted April 2012) and its adopted supplementary guidance; and,

- West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan (adopted September 2019)

Planning policy considerations from the Highland-wide Local Development Plan of specific relevance to this assessment are identified below:

- Policy 29: Design Quality and Place-Making;
- Policy 51: Trees and Development;
- Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage;
- Policy 61: Landscape; and,
- Policy 78: Long Distance Routes.

## 8.3 Methodology

### Assessment Scope

#### EIA Screening and Scoping

An EIA Screening request was submitted in June 2022 and a response was issued on 26 July 2022.

An EIA Scoping Request for the Proposed Development was submitted in November 2022 and the response was issued on 18 January 2023 (reference: 22/05277/SCOP).

**Table 8.1** provides a summary of the key responses from consultees which are relevant to the subject areas of landscape and visual amenity and provides comment as to how these have been addressed.

Table 8.1: Relevant Scoping Responses

Organisation	Response	Comment
The Highland Council (THC)	Landscape and visual impacts should be assessed separately.	Landscape and visual effects are separately considered in Sections 8.7 and 8.8 respectively.
	Visualisations should be carried out in accordance with THC Guidance: Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments (THC, 2016)	No visualisations have been requested to support the LVIA for the Proposed Development. However, illustrations have been provided showing how potential mitigation measures would be incorporated (see Figure 9.5)
	The LVIA should include the expected impact of on-site construction compounds and any temporary access roads.	These elements have been fully considered in the assessment of effects during construction.
	The LVIA should be completed in full across the entire study area. Receptors should not be screened out based upon distance.	All landscape and visual receptors within the study area have been considered within the assessment.
	Regularly spaced Long sections and cross-sections of the road must be provided with the application to aid the assessment of landscape and visual effects.	These drawings are included in Figure 5 of the EIA Report.
	A drawing showing where the road will be in cut and where it will be level with the surface or raised above the existing ground levels should be included and should be accompanied by construction details of the road at these particularly points to allow for an	These drawings are included as Figure 2 and Figure 3 of the EIA Report.

Organisation	Response	Comment
	understanding of the visual impact of the road.	
	Criteria to be provided for sensitivity and magnitude of change and threshold at which a significant effect is reached.	These elements are included in Section 8.3: Methodology
	A clear matrix approach supported by descriptive text should be provided to show how conclusions of effect are reached.	Conclusions on significance of effect are made using professional judgement in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013)
	When assessing the impact on recreational routes all core paths, the national cycle network and long distance trails should be assessed.	These elements are included in the visual assessment Section 8.8 and Appendix 9.3.
	Content with the rest of the scope outlined in the Scoping Report.	N/A
NatureScot (NS)	Defer to comments provided by THC.	N/A

### **Study Area**

The study area comprises the area where any potentially significant effects resulting from the Proposed Development would be likely to occur and has been established through consideration of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), and professional judgement. In agreement with THC, a study area of 2 km from the Proposed Development has been adopted for the LVIA.

### **Zone of Theoretical Visibility**

As an aid to establishing the scope for the LVIA, a ZTV has been produced for the Proposed Development and is presented in Figure 8.1 (a and b). The ZTV is a computer-generated diagram which uses a terrain model to indicate areas from which the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible. The ZTV for the Proposed Development has been generated using ESRI ArcGIS software based on a terrain modelled using Ordnance Survey (OS) T5 DTM data, modified to accommodate the earthworks for the Proposed Development.

The ZTV has been produced using points at intervals of 50 m along the proposed road. The following height parameters have been used:

- During Operational Stage 1: 4 m above road level, representative of the types of vehicles likely to be associated with the Coire Glas construction; and,
- During Operational Stage 2: 2 m above road level, representative of typical traffic types accessing the road during the Coire Glas operation.

The ZTV takes account of earth curvature and light refractivity, set to 0.075 in accordance with NatureScot guidance, SNH (2017).

Whilst the ZTV is a useful tool for the identification of potential effects, it is not indicative of an effect in itself. The ZTV does not take into account the potential screening effects of woodland and other localised features such as buildings, trees or local landform which are not captured by the OST5 data. Nor does it give indication of the way in which a development may relate to its broader landscape context and the receding scale and visibility of features with distance. However, consideration of these aspects is taken into account during the assessment including through professional judgement.

### **Assessment Guidance**

The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with best practice guidance, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management, 2013). Reference has also been made to the following guidance documents:

- Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), The Countryside Agency, 2002);
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) (Section LA 107: Landscape and Visual Effects); and,
- Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (Working Draft 11) (SNH) and Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), 2018).

### **Professional Judgement**

GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. As part of this assessment, professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate landscape value and landscape and visual sensitivity, magnitude and significance of effect. The assessment has been undertaken and verified by two Landscape Professionals (Chartered Landscape Architects) to provide a robust and consistent approach.

### **Key Stages of the Assessment**

GLVIA3 advises that landscape and visual effects should be assessed from a clear understanding of the development proposed and any mitigation measures which are being adopted.

The GLVIA3 methodology for landscape assessment involves an appreciation of the existing landscape resource, the susceptibility of its key components to accept the change proposed, and an understanding of the potential effects which could occur and how these could affect these key components.

Familiarity with the site and the extent, nature and expectation of existing views by visual receptors is a key factor in establishing the visual sensitivity in terms of the development proposed. The guidelines require evaluation of magnitude of change to views experienced by sensitive receptors, comprising individuals living, working, travelling and carrying out other activities within the landscape, and the subsequent evaluation of the significance of effects.

The potential to mitigate adverse effects should also be considered for both landscape and visual assessment.

There are five key stages to the assessment:

- Establishment of the baseline;
- Appreciation of the development proposed;
- Identification of key landscape and visual receptors;
- Identification of potential effects; and,
- Assessment of significance of effect.

### **Establishment of the Baseline**

Establishment of the baseline conditions has been undertaken through a combination of desk study and site appraisal. The desk review has involved review the following general documents and sources:

- National and Regional Planning Policy and Guidance as outlined in Section 8.2;
- The Scoping Opinion for the Proposed Development (reference: 22/05277/SCOP);

- Online mapping and aerial photography resources from Ordnance Survey, Google, Bing and National Library of Scotland;
- The ZTV for the Proposed Development (see Figure 9.1 (a and b));
- The Revised Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme EIA Report (SSE, 2018), and,
- Site survey undertaken in April 2023.

In addition, the following specific baseline activities were undertaken for the two differing assessments of landscape and visual effects:

### Landscape Assessment Baseline Tasks

The desk review for the landscape assessment has included review of the following additional documents and resources:

- Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (Horner + MacLennan and Wood, 2011); and,
- NatureScot Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Descriptions (SNH, 2019).

### Identification of Baseline Landscape Value

The value of the landscape is an important consideration in informing later judgement of the significance of effects. Landscape value concerns the perceived importance of the landscape when considered as a whole, and within the context of the study area and is established through consideration of the following factors:

- Presence of landscape designations, other inventory or registered landscapes / landscape features or identified planning constraints;
- The scenic quality of the landscape;
- Perceptual aspects, such as wildness or tranquillity;
- Conservation interests such as cultural heritage features or associations, or if the landscape supports notable habitats or species;
- Recreational value; and,
- Rarity, either in the national or local context, or if it is considered to be a particularly important example of a specific landscape type.

Criteria for the allocation of perceived landscape value are outlined in Table 8.2 below:

Table 8.2: Landscape Value Criteria

Landscape Value	Criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landscape is closely associated with features of international or national importance which are rare within the wider context;</li> <li>• The landscape is of high scenic quality and forms a key part of an important designated landscape or planning constraint; and/or,</li> <li>• The landscape is an example of a scarce resource within the local context and is of considerable local importance for its, scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.</li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landscape is associated with features of national or regional importance which are relatively common within the wider context;</li> <li>• The landscape forms part of a designated landscape or is associated with other features of importance but is not rare or distinctive within the local context; and/or,</li> <li>• The landscape is one of a number within the local context appreciated for its scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.</li> </ul>

Landscape Value	Criteria
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The landscape characteristics are common within the local and regional context and the landscape is not associated with any particular features or attributes considered to be important; and/or,</li> <li>The landscape is of poor scenic quality and is not appreciated for any recreational or cultural associations.</li> </ul>

### Visual Assessment Baseline Tasks

A combination of desk and field survey was used to establish the range and distribution of potential visual receptors within the study area. Visual receptors can be defined as individuals occupying and using the study area with the potential to obtain views of the Proposed Development. Potential visual receptors included in the assessment have included those experiencing views from locations such as buildings, recognised routes and popular viewpoints used by the public.

The following additional resources were used to enhance understanding of the use of the study area by potential visual receptors:

- THC Core Paths Interactive Map [Online];
- THC Great Glen Way website [Online];
- Scottish Hill Tracks (Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (Scotways, 2011); and,
- Other web based and published sources providing information on local resources and activities within the study area (see the list of references in Section 7.14).

Site visits were undertaken in March and April 2023 to verify the visual receptors identified through desk study, identify any further potential receptors which had been missed and collate information on baseline visual amenity, including information on the types and activities of visual receptors likely to be present, and the nature of the existing views which are obtained. Site recording involved the completion of standardised recording forms and annotation of 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey plans, supported by a photographic record of views from key receptor locations.

### Appreciation of the Development Proposed

Appreciation of the Proposed Development involves the accumulation of a thorough knowledge of the proposal, its nature, scale and location within the baseline landscape, and any peripheral or ancillary features proposed. Analysis of the proposed activities and changes which would take place leads to an understanding of the potential effects that may occur to the landscape and visual resource.

This stage has included review of all available desk-based information relating to the Proposed Development in terms of its physical appearance at different stages of operation, and requirements for construction.

### Identification of Key Landscape and Visual Receptors

The identification of key landscape and visual receptors with the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development is the first step in the analysis of the potential for significant effects to occur. Landscape and visual receptors can be described as follows:

- Landscape receptors** comprise key characteristics or individual features which contribute to the value of the landscape and have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. Landscape receptors are identified through analysis of baseline characteristics when considered in relation to the impacts which might result from a development of the type proposed; and,

- **Visual receptors** comprise individuals experiencing views from locations such as buildings, recognised routes and popular viewpoints used by the public. Potential visual receptors are identified through analysis of desk resources, mapping and field survey, as described under ‘Establishment of the Baseline’ above. A review of the ZTV in the context of site survey is used to identify the potential for visual receptors to be affected by the Proposed Development.

### Identification of Potential Effects

The second step in the assessment process involves the identification of potential effects which may occur as a result of the interaction of the Proposed Development with the identified landscape and visual receptors.

The assessment takes into account direct effects upon existing views, landscape elements, features and key characteristics and, also, indirect effects which may occur secondarily to changes affecting another landscape component or area. The identification of potential effects is a two-fold process, giving consideration as to how these effects may arise from aspects of the Proposed Development and how they may be accommodated by the existing baseline features.

Where it is established that potential effects could be limited by mitigation measures, these are also given consideration.

Potential effects are evaluated through the allocation of criteria for sensitivity and magnitude.

### Landscape and Visual Sensitivity

Sensitivity concerns the nature of the baseline landscape or visual receptor, and the ability to accommodate development of the type proposed without compromising the key characteristics and / or composition.

There are two aspects which contribute to the evaluation of landscape and visual sensitivity: value and susceptibility to change. The consideration of these two separate aspects in the differing assessments for landscape and visual amenity are outlined below:

- **Landscape:**
  - **Value:** The baseline value of the landscape and the contributory value of individual landscape receptors to the landscape as a whole; and,
  - **Susceptibility:** The ability of landscape receptors to accommodate development of the type proposed without changing the intrinsic qualities of the landscape as a whole.
- **Visual Amenity:**
  - **Value:** The baseline value of a particular view to the visual receptor, including the perceived; and,
  - **Susceptibility:** The susceptibility of the viewer to changes to the view, giving consideration to the particular activity they may be involved in and also the composition of the baseline view and importance of the proposed area of change as a part of the view.

Criteria for the evaluation of sensitivity to change are presented in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3: Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Criteria

Sensitivity Rating	Landscape Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity
High	A highly valued landscape of particularly distinctive character susceptible to relatively small changes of the type proposed.	Visual receptors obtaining views from: dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and



Sensitivity Rating	Landscape Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity
		recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present.
Medium	A reasonably valued landscape with a composition and characteristics tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed.	Visual receptors obtaining views from: dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and workplaces where the changed aspect is an important element of the view and there are no detracting features present.
Low	A relatively unimportant landscape which is potentially tolerant of a large degree of change of the type proposed.	Visual receptors obtaining views from: dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or numerous detracting features are present; recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or where numerous detracting features are present; roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; and workplaces where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present.

### **Landscape and Visual Magnitude**

Magnitude of change concerns the extent to which the existing landscape character or view would be altered by the Proposed Development. Elements specific to the evaluation of magnitude of change for the differing assessments of landscape and visual amenity are detailed below:

- Landscape:
  - The degree to which features or characteristics may be removed, altered or added within the landscape;
  - The geographical extent of proposed changes;
  - Whether changes would be direct or indirect; and,



- The potential duration and reversibility of proposed changes (taking into consideration proposed mitigation measures where relevant).
- Visual Amenity:
  - The scale or extent of proposed changes within the view;
  - The location of proposed changes within the view, relevant to other existing features;
  - The extent to which this may alter the composition or focus of the view; and,
  - The duration and reversibility of proposed changes (taking into consideration proposed mitigation measures where relevant).

Criteria for the evaluation of magnitude of change are presented in Table 8.4. In recognition of the differing changes that would occur over time, three ratings for magnitude of change have been included:

- During the construction of Kilfinnan Road (the Proposed Development);
- During the interim stage when the widened road is used for the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme construction (Operational Stage 1); and,
- After the completion of Coire Glas construction, when the road has been narrowed to 3.3 m with passing places, and proposed mitigation planting has established (assumed to be approximately 15 years after initial construction) (Operational Stage 2).

Table 8.4: Landscape and Visual Magnitude of Change Criteria

Magnitude Rating	Landscape	Visual
High	Notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to a very intensive change over a more limited area.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a very noticeable change in the existing view.
Medium	Perceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to notable change in a localised area.	Perceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to notable change in a localised area.
Low	Virtually imperceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area or perceptible change in a localised area.	Virtually imperceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area or perceptible change in a localised area.
Negligible	No discernible change in any landscape characteristics or components.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view.

### Assessment of Significance of Effects

Evaluation of the predicted significance of effect has been carried out through the analysis of the anticipated magnitude of change in relation to the landscape or visual sensitivity, taking into account any proposed mitigation measures, and is established using professional judgement.

In recognition of the potential for effects to vary over time, the assessment has been undertaken at three different stages, as described under landscape and visual magnitude .

The significance of effect for landscape and visual elements is considered as follows:

- Landscape Effects:
  - The assessment takes into account identified effects upon existing landscape receptors and assesses the extent to which these would be lost or modified in the context of their importance in determining the existing baseline character.
- Visual Effects:

- The assessment takes into account likely changes to the visual composition, including the extent to which new features would distract or screen existing elements in the view or disrupt the scale, structure or focus of the existing view.

The assessment takes into consideration the potential for effects to be adverse, where changes such as the addition of new distracting features, or the removal of existing positive features, are anticipated to negatively affect the landscape or view; or beneficial, where changes, such as the removal of existing distracting features or the addition of associated planting or other mitigation measures are anticipated to positively influence the landscape or view.

Criteria used for the assessment of effects are presented in Table 8.5. For the purposes of the LVIA, effects with a rating of Moderate or greater are considered to be significant in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Table 8.5: Landscape and Visual Significance of Effect Criteria

Significance of Effect Rating	Landscape	Visual
Major Adverse	The Proposed Development is at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and would be a dominant feature, resulting in considerable reduction in scenic quality and large scale change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would become a prominent and very detracting feature and would result in a very noticeable deterioration to an existing highly valued and well composed view.
Moderate Adverse	The Proposed Development is out of scale with the landscape, or inconsistent with the local pattern and landform and may be locally dominant and/or result in a noticeable reduction in scenic quality and a degree of change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would introduce some detracting features to an existing highly valued view or would be more prominent within a pleasing or less well composed view, resulting in a noticeable deterioration of the quality of view.
Minor Adverse	The Proposed Development does not quite fit with the scale, landform or local pattern of the landscape and may be locally intrusive but would result in an inappreciable reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would form a perceptible but not detracting feature within a pleasing or valued view or would be a prominent feature within a poorly composed view of limited value, resulting in a small deterioration to the existing view.
Negligible	The Proposed Development sits well within the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and would not result in any discernible reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would form a barely perceptible feature within the existing view and would not result in any discernible deterioration or improvement to the view.
Minor Beneficial	The Proposed Development would add / remove landscape features or alter the composition of landscape components which would result in a small or localised improvement to the landscape	The Proposed Development would form a fairly attractive feature and / or remove a fairly detracting feature from an existing less well
Moderate Beneficial	The Proposed Development would add / remove landscape features or alter the composition of landscape components which would result in a noticeable improvement to the landscape characteristics and scenic quality of the landscape.	The Proposed Development would become a new attractive feature within, or result in the removal or partial removal of an existing detracting feature from, a poorly composed or less well composed view leading to a noticeable improvement to the attractiveness, composition and value of the existing view.
Major Beneficial	The Proposed Development would add / remove landscape features or alter the	The Proposed Development would form a prominent new attractive

Significance of Effect Rating	Landscape	Visual
	composition of landscape components which would result in a very noticeable improvement to the landscape characteristics and scenic quality of the landscape.	feature within, or result in the removal of an existing very detracting feature from, a poorly composed view leading to a very noticeable improvement to the attractiveness, composition and value of the existing view.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

The LVIA is subject to the following limitations and assumptions:

- The prominence of the Proposed Development in the landscape and views will vary according to the prevailing weather conditions. The LVIA has been carried out, as is best practice, by assuming the 'worst case' scenario i.e. on a clear, bright day in winter, when neither foreground deciduous foliage nor haze can interfere with the clarity of the view obtained;
- The assessment of operational effects assumes that all cut slopes and embankments created to accommodate the Proposed Development would be revegetated (with the exception of rock cuttings);
- The assessment of operational effects assumes that disturbed areas not required for the operation of the Proposed Development (temporary tracks, laydown and working areas etc.) would be successfully reinstated to reflect, as far as possible, similar vegetation types and appearance to that present prior to construction;
- ZTVs are used to inform the assessment. The limitations and technical specifications for production of ZTVs are included in section 8.3.
- The field assessment of visual effects has been undertaken from public roads, footpaths or open spaces. For residential receptors, assumptions have been made about the types of rooms in buildings and about the types and importance of views from these rooms. For there to be a visual effect, there is the need for a viewer and therefore only buildings that are in use have been considered in the visual assessment;
- The assessment of effects on visual receptors occupying buildings such as residences and public buildings includes consideration of potential for views from exterior areas associated with the building including gardens where appropriate. These effects are referenced where relevant; and,
- The assessment reflects the baseline situation at the time of site survey (April 2023) and therefore does not take account of any changes to the landscape fabric which have taken place after this date.

## **8.4 Baseline Conditions: Landscape**

### **Context**

The Proposed Development would comprise the upgrade of a narrow single-track road, along the western edge of the Great Glen, between Loch Oich and Loch Lochy. This comprises an area of flat, or slightly undulating valley floor, characterised by a small-scale patchwork mosaic of small agricultural fields, woodland and scrub which forms an interruption and contrast to the typical large scale pattern of expansive linear waterbodies which occupy the floor of the glen. The glen-floor is contained by long and continuous, steep valley-sides clothed by a covering of rough grassland and moorland, with forest plantation and occasional native woodland occupying some of the lower slopes. Above the glen lies a plateau area of rounded moorland slopes with the more distinctive mountain summits of Ben Tee, Sron a Coire-Ghairbh, Meall Dubh and Meall na Teanga to the south-west.

The Great Glen in this area forms a focus for residential and tourism development and an important communications corridor, accommodating the A82 trunk road, Caledonian Canal, Great Glen way walking and cycling routes and steel lattice and wood pole overhead transmission lines.

### **Designated and Protected Landscapes**

Landscapes can be ascribed an international, national, regional or local designation that recognises the importance of the landscape for its scenic interest or attractiveness. Areas of landscape may also be protected by planning policy at either a national or regional level.

### **National Context**

There are no landscapes, designated or protected at the national level within the study area. Wild Land Area (WLA) 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh, lies approximately 0.5 km outwith the edge of the study area. However, wild land assessment of the WLA has been scoped out of the LVIA because there would be unlikely to be any shared intervisibility of the Proposed Development with the WLA.

### **Regional Context**

The Proposed Development site is entirely located within the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich Special Landscape Area, a non-statutory designation identified by THC and given protection through the Local Development Plan and NPF4. The SLA covers the area of the Great Glen from around 1.5 km to the south of Loch Lochy to the head of Loch Oich, and the mountainous area to the west of Loch Lochy. The Highland Council has published citations of SLAs with identified Special Qualities (Horner + MacIennan and Wood, 2011). Special Qualities for the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA are described as follows:

- “The Great Glen – Scale, striking linearity, long narrow lochs,” including the following highlighted elements:
  - One link in a chain of lochs linked by stretches of canal, lying in a large and imposing steep, v-shaped glen;
  - Consistently steep slopes which contain and channel views, with an eye-catching group of peaks to the west of Loch Lochy, and parallel lying ridges to the east, giving the impression of a remarkably corrugated landscape, particularly when seen from the high peaks;
  - The experience of the landscape from the Great Glen Way long-distance walking route;
  - Distinctly interior landscape with landmark features including the old railway line, the Glengarry Castle Hotel and the Well of the Seven Heads; and,
  - The experience of the landscape from the A82, especially at points where traffic is slowed at bridging points, junctions and stopping places.
- “Classic Highland Scenery, distinctive mountain-top views,” including the following highlighted elements:
  - Views from low lying areas featuring agricultural areas, lochs, steep wooded slopes and rolling hills, and along the linear-shaped valley, especially across reflective loch surfaces, experienced differently in changing weather conditions; and,
  - Outstanding views from higher elevation, most notably from Meall Dubh and Meall na Teanga.
- “Intimate Drama,” including the following highlighted elements:

- Sense of comfort and shelter from intimate scale of features close to the loch shores including pastures and settlement, emphasised by the grandeur and drama of the wider glen;
- The double waterfall at the mouth of Gleann Cia-Aig; and,
- Càrn Bhealach on the west side of Loch Lochy, a classic hanging valley, seen from the A82.

### **Landscape Character**

NatureScot has undertaken detailed review and classification of various landscape areas and types of Scotland in their National Landscape Character Assessment (SNH, 2019 [online]<sup>2</sup>). Three individual Landscape Character Types (LCTs) from this study are identified within the 2 km study area for the Proposed Development as follows (see **Figure 8.3**):

- LCT 235: Broad Forested Strath;
- LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges; and
- LCT 239: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber.

Descriptions of these LCTs including their identified key characteristics are included in **Technical Appendix 9.1**.

As the LCTs from the National Landscape Character Assessment have been identified at a very broad scale, a more detailed classification of landscape character has been adopted for this LVIA which bears a closer relationship to the scale and character of the study area. The LVIA undertaken for the Revised Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme in 2018 (the 2018 LVIA), of which the Proposed Development forms a part, identified ten Local Character Zones (LCZs) as a basis for the landscape assessment. Seven of these areas fall within the LVIA study area as follows:

- LCZ 1: Steep-sided Valley with Loch;
- LCZ 2: Settled Valley Floor;
- LCZ 3: Mountain;
- LCZ 4: Corrie;
- LCZ 6: Wooded Glen;
- LCZ 7: Rolling Moorland: and,
- LCZ 9: Rounded Moorland Hills.

Of the above LCZs, LCZ 4 and LCZ 7 would have no, or very little, theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development, as illustrated by the ZTV (see Figure 9.1) and have therefore been scoped out of further assessment.

The Proposed Development would be entirely located within LCZ 2. Given the linear nature of the Proposed Development this LCZ has been sub-divided into three individual sub-areas, as follows:

- Sub-LCZ 2a: Laggan Locks;
- Sub-LCZ 2b: A82 Corridor; and,
- Sub-LCZ 2c: North Laggan – Balmaglaster.

The above LCZs and sub-LCZs are illustrated on Figure 8.3 and described in Table 8.6 to 8.10:-  
LCZ 1 – Steep-sided Valley with Loch: Baseline.

---

<sup>2</sup> NatureScot: (2019): Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions [ONLINE] <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions> [accessed April 2023].



Table 8.6: LCZ 1 – Steep-sided Valley with Loch: Baseline



**Photograph 8.1: Looking south along Loch Lochy from Kilfinnan Farm**

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>This LCZ comprises the distinctive, long, fjord-like valley of the Great Glen. It includes parts of LCTs 235 (Broad Forested Strath), 236 (Smooth Moorland Ridges) and 239 (Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber). It is a large scale landscape of simple structure, defined by very steep, regularly sloped valley-sides which rise directly from the banks of large linear lochs and are almost continuously clothed to around half their height in coniferous forestry plantation. Tracks contour along the valley-side causing noticeable lines through the trees and combine with patchwork areas of clearfell and windblow to contribute to the sense of a managed landscape. This is further accentuated by the abrupt line where the forest ends and the distinct contrast of the dark green trees with the open mountain slopes above. Occasional deep gorges and small streams break the valley sides, cutting vertical gouges in the otherwise even, forested slopes. These are sometimes colonised with native deciduous woodland, more visible in autumn, which also fringes the lochs providing small areas of interest and diversity to the landscape. This LCZ accommodates a variety of recreational and tourist activity and provides a transport corridor through the surrounding mountainous landscape for the A82 trunk road, overhead transmission lines and the linear lochs which form part of the Caledonian Canal. These linear routes are punctuated by very few properties scattered along the shores of the lochs. This contrasts with areas of undeveloped shore where access is made difficult by the lochs and steep slopes. There are a variety of experiences within this LCZ with long, funnelled views of lochs and the mountain backdrop contrasting with the enclosing qualities of the steep valley slopes. From higher areas more expansive views can be obtained of the surrounding landscape.</p>
<p><b>Key Characteristics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinct, large scale, strong linear structure of the steep-sided glen;</li> <li>• Forested valley slopes with distinct edges, compartments and areas of clearfell contributing to a managed character;</li> <li>• Occasional woodland along steep side streams and gorges, and fringes of lochs adds variety;</li> <li>• Impressive views funnelled down valley of loch and mountain backdrop and expansive views from higher slopes;</li> <li>• Range of experiences of enclosure resulting from imposing glen slopes combined with extensive open views across lochs; and,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructural features such as the A82 trunk road and steel lattice overhead lines contribute to the linear quality of a transport corridor.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	<p>The LCZ falls almost entirely within the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA of which it is an important contributory part. The LCZ is popular with tourists and visitors passing along the A82 and travelling along the loch sections of the Caledonian Canal and the larger scale, distinctive, linear glen also has value in its own right. Landscape Value is therefore <b>High</b>.</p>

Table 8.7: LCZ 2 – Settled Valley Floor: Baseline


<b>Description</b>	<p>This LCZ is comprised of the flat, low lying valley floor located between Loch Lochy and Loch Oich, situated mostly within LCT 235 (Broad Forested Strath), and partially within LCT 239 (Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber). It has a settled and domestic feel, characterised by a patchwork mosaic of small areas of native and plantation woodland, fields grazed by cattle and sheep, river and canal, and small groups of properties. There is a noticeable linearity to the LCZ, emphasised by the enclosing landform of the containing valley-sides and the use of the area as a transport corridor, with the A82, existing Kilfinnan Road, Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Way walking route all passing through it resulting in a regular movement of traffic, people and boats. Settlement is scattered evenly throughout the valley floor and is comprised of a variety of farms, 19th century properties and individual and small clusters of more modern developments, often set into the edges of woodland, but just as frequently located in open areas or alongside the road. The human scale of this LCZ gives it a personal feel which is accentuated by the contrast with the surrounding scale of the mountains and lochs. Although the LCZ feels largely enclosed by the woodland and landform the mountainous backdrop is constantly present, resulting in impressive views, framed by the trees, properties and other features of the valley floor. This LCZ has been divided into three sub-LCZs described below.</p>
--------------------	--



Photograph 8.2: LCZ 2a - Looking towards Kilfinnan Farm from Laggan Locks

<b>LCZ 2a: Laggan Locks</b>	<p>Around the north-eastern end of Loch Lochy, this area is characterised by open flat fields and scattered groups and individual trees. There is extensive tourist development including holiday chalets and boating activities around the locks and loch-edge with a diverse and intimate character. Kilfinnan Farm at the south of the LCZ has some buildings in poor repair but this has only a very localised influence.</p>
-----------------------------	---



<p><b>Key Characteristics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic, settled landscape, in contrast to the wider large-scale mountains and lochs;</li> <li>• Diverse juxtaposition of open, flat fields, areas of native and coniferous woodland and tourism development with the open waters of Loch Lochy;</li> <li>• Tourist routes such as the Caledonian Canal and the Great Glen Way enable many people to experience this landscape at a slow pace;</li> <li>• The patchwork combination of woodland, open fields and loch shore creates a variety of experiences ranging from the enclosed and intimate to expansive feelings of space; and,</li> <li>• Contrasting scale of mountain backdrop with small scale features such as buildings, trees and boats around the loch shore.</li> </ul>
	
<p><b>Photograph 8.3: LCZ 2b looking north along the A82 through Laggan</b></p>	
<p><b>LCZ 2b: A82 Corridor</b></p>	<p>This is a narrow, linear area to the east of the Caledonian Canal, contained by coniferous shelterbelts which enclose the canal and the steep coniferous forested valley slopes to the west. It is characterised by a patchwork of pastoral fields and small woodlands, interspersed with scattered residential settlement. The busy A82 road which cuts through the area emphasises the linearity and existing steel lattice and wood pole OHLs cross the LCZ contributing to the influence of infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>Key Characteristics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse, small-scale character of open fields, properties and woodland, contained by coniferous forest plantation;</li> <li>• Often experienced from the A82 leading to a transitional experience with movement of traffic through the area emphasising it's linearity;</li> <li>• Contrast of small, domestic scale features with the wider steep glen-sides and mountain backdrop; and,</li> <li>• Existing overhead lines and A82 indicate the use of the area as a corridor for infrastructure.</li> </ul>

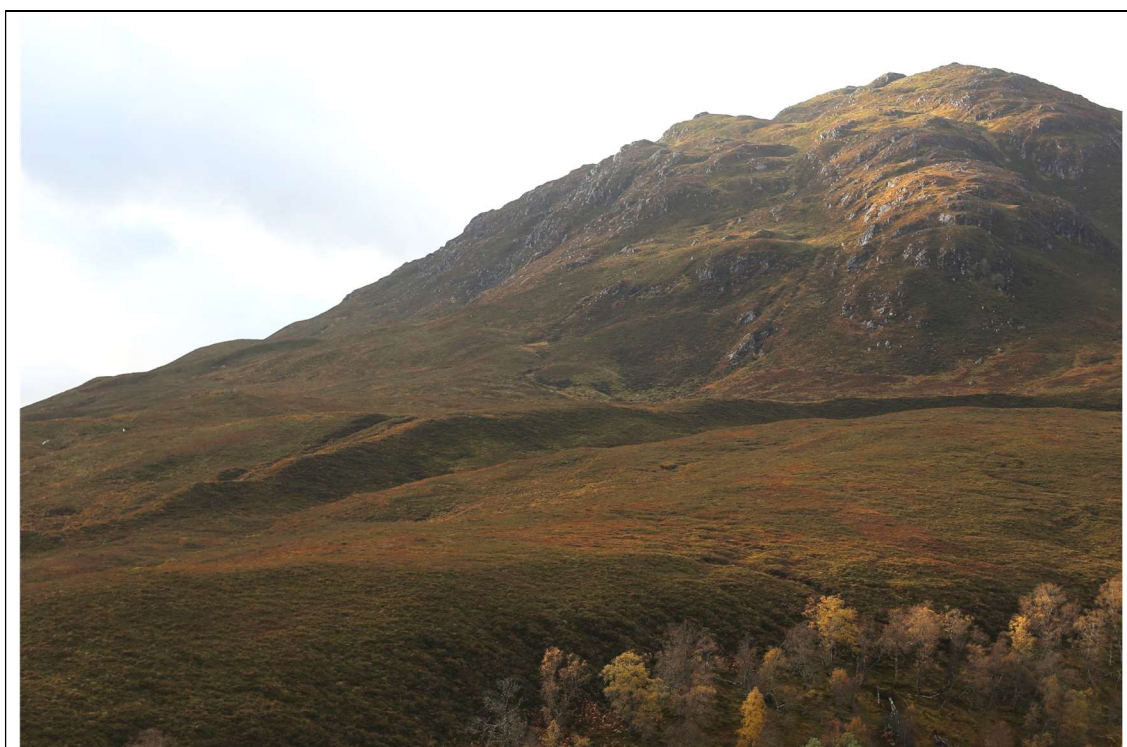


**Photograph 8.4: Looking north along Kilfinnan Road from Near Balmaglaister**

<p><b>LCZ 2c:                  North Laggan –                  Balmaglaister</b></p>	<p>A linear area enclosing the Kilfinnan Road, with steep valley slopes to the west and coniferous forest that encloses the Caledonian Canal to the east. This area is characterised by a narrow and enclosed character with the road providing a transitional feel, containing small fields on its lower side. Properties are dotted along the road, often surrounded by groups of mature trees. This area becomes more open at its northern end with larger fields.</p>
<p><b>Key                  Characteristics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrow, enclosed, linear structure, with a consistent pattern of steep, sometimes forested slopes rising directly to the west with the road, and a narrow line of flat green fields between the road and forest shelterbelts which enclose the canal to the east;</li> <li>• Occasional properties strung along the road, following the linear pattern, mostly situated on the lower side;</li> <li>• Groups of mature trees are situated intermittently alongside the road and typically surrounding properties, providing a buffer between buildings and the road;</li> <li>• Small wood pole overhead lines link properties along parts of the road and a steel lattice OHL crosses the LCZ at its narrowest point.</li> <li>• LCZ experienced by travellers at a slower pace due to narrow and winding road construction; and,</li> <li>• Typically small, domestic scale character, more focussed on near-ground features with less influence of surrounding hills and mountains.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape                  Value</b></p>	<p>This LCZ falls within the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA and the area around Laggan Locks is considered to be a contributory element to its appeal. It is also popular for recreational users and tourists. Landscape value is considered to be <b>High</b> in sub-area 2a, and <b>Medium</b> in sub-areas 2b and 2c.</p>



Table 8.8: LCZ 3 – Mountain: Baseline



Photograph 8.5: Meall na Dearcag

<b>Description</b>	This LCZ comprises the high level mountain slopes and summits to the west of Loch Lochy, which, within the study area, comprises Meall na Dearcag, within LCT 239 (Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber). This is an elevated exposed landscape of, rugged, rocky summit areas and steep crags which forms an eye-catching feature when seen from within the Great Glen. In general, vegetation consists of a uniform mix of rough grasses and heather, broken occasionally by areas of bare rock and usually grazed by sheep and deer. This is a vast scale landscape with impressive panoramic views of surrounding mountains and glens from higher areas and feelings of height and space. It is highly exposed to the climate and has a windswept feel with the summits of the mountains often lost in low cloud and mist, or snow in winter. Although development is evident in the wider surrounding landscape it is generally reduced to a scale at which it has reduced influence. As such, the landscape engenders localised impressions of remoteness and wildness.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rough, rocky summits and crags with sense of elevation and exposure to the elements;</li> <li>• Landcover and vegetation generally comprised of rough grasses, heather and bare rock with trees virtually absent;</li> <li>• Impressive panoramic views of surrounding mountains and across the Great Glen;</li> <li>• Mountains form an eye-catching landmark and backdrop for lower lying areas; and,</li> <li>• Surrounding development in the landscape appears diminished in scale giving localised sense of remoteness and wildness.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Value</b>	This LCZ is valued for its impressive topography and recreational opportunities, and for its undeveloped qualities and sense of remoteness. This is recognised by its inclusion within the Lochy Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, of which it is considered to form an important part. Landscape value is considered to be <b>High</b> .

Table 8.9: LCZ 6 – Wooded Glen: Baseline



Photograph 8.6: LCZ 6 Looking up Kilfinnan Glen

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>This LCZ is comprised of the deep, narrow glen and gorge enclosing the Kilfinnan Burn, comprising part of LCT 239 (Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber). It is composed of high, steep side slopes, colonised by copses and larger areas of self-generated woodland, more dense within the deeper parts of the glen and along the stream. Higher slopes are clothed with a patchwork mosaic of grassland, heather and bracken with occasional small patches of scrubby woodland and individual trees reaching up. In steeper areas, the continuity of the slope is frequently broken into small crags and areas of bare rock which become more frequent as the glen narrows, forming sections of rocky gorge. The burn flows swiftly through the glen with a boulder strewn bed forming numerous series of pools and rapids with frequent areas of white water. In some places sections of cliff are present and waterfalls drop into deep pools. This is an intimate scale character area with many secluded spaces formed within the woodland and gorge, and attractive views formed of combinations of moving water and woodland, framed by the sides of the glen. The woodland emphasises the steepness of the slopes and the sense of enclosure, contributing to a shady, dark atmosphere within the deeper gorge although more open elevated views towards Loch Lochy and across the great glen from higher slopes provide a diversity of experience.</p>
<p><b>Key Characteristics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steep, rushing stream with varying rapids, pools and waterfalls;</li> <li>• Very naturalised areas of deciduous woodland create distinct character and emphasise steepness of glen-sides;</li> <li>• Intimate sense of enclosure with secluded spaces formed within woodland and gorge, and attractive views composed of woodland and stream; and,</li> <li>• Contrasting sense of space from higher areas with elevated views over the Great Glen towards Loch Lochy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape Value</b></p>	<p>This area is considered likely to be locally valued for its distinctive features lack of development and perceived scenic quality, as recognised through its inclusion in the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, although it is not an individually recognised feature of the SLA. Landscape value is considered to be <b>Medium</b>.</p>



Table 8.10: LCZ 9 – Rounded Moorland Hills: Baseline



Photograph 8.7: Looking towards the rounded moorland hills of LCZ 9 from the Great Glen

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>This LCZ consists of an extensive area of large, rounded hills to the east of the Great Glen. It forms part of the LCT 236 (Smooth Moorland Ridges). The large masses of rounded hills are separated by smooth sweeping valleys containing large burns or small rivers, with smaller tributaries cutting down their side slopes, sometimes within gullies and small ravines. Occasionally higher and steeper slopes are broken into rough, rocky escarpments. Vegetation consists of a mostly uniform covering of heather and moorland grasses, usually grazed by sheep and deer. Infrequently there are scattered patches of semi-natural woodland alongside streams and within gullies on the lower slopes. There are also some larger forestry plantations in some glens which influence the landscape locally. This is a vast area, very open, elevated and windswept in character, with extensive panoramic views, particularly from higher areas although, localised more intimate scale spaces are sometimes within valleys and hollows, particularly around streams. There is limited obvious sign of human influence on much of this landscape, usually limited to a few stalkers' paths or cairns, giving impressions of remoteness and wildness. However, this is reduced in areas where forestry is more influential.</p>
<p><b>Key Characteristics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large scale mass of rounded hills separated by smooth, sweeping valley with burns and rivers and tributaries cutting downhill slopes;</li> <li>• Mostly uniform coverage of heather and rough grasses;</li> <li>• Some forest plantations within glens and native woodland in gullies on the lower slopes;</li> <li>• Vast sense of scale with expansive views;</li> <li>• Limited obvious human intervention gives impressions of remoteness and wildness away from forest plantation areas; and,</li> <li>• Localised smaller scale spaces with more intimate scale within valleys and hollows.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape Value</b></p>	<p>The LCZ is valued for the characteristics or remoteness and wildness in some areas and is partly included within the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA where it provides a setting to the Great Glen. The area also contains some features such as Parallel Roads which are designated for their geology. However, overall this is a generally unremarkable landscape type which is relatively common within the wider area. Landscape value is considered to be <b>Medium</b>.</p>

## 8.5 Baseline Conditions: Visual

### Interpretation of the ZTV

ZTVs (see Figure 8.1 (a and b)) indicate that theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development would be relatively focussed, across parts of the glen floor, and opposite valley side. Whilst some visibility of traffic is suggested along Loch Oich and Loch Lochy areas, when considering the scale of the features proposed, it is unlikely that this would be very noticeable within the context.

Across the majority of the valley floor, the ZTV shows that potential visibility of vehicles using the road would be limited to stretches of below 500 m and up to 1.5 km, particularly close to the road and from residential areas where the Proposed Development would appear larger and more focussed within the view. Across more open parts of the glen floor, open water areas of Ceann Loch at the north end of Loch Lochy and Laggan Locks, stretches of up to 2.5 km of the route are shown as being potentially visible. More extensive visibility of the route as a whole would only be obtained from the more elevated facing slopes of the glen, but in reality, this area is heavily forested and visibility of this type would be dependent on the programme of felling and replanting. This is not a heavily visited part of the study area.

The separate ZTVs for Operational Stage 1 and Operational Stage 2 indicate that there would be little difference in overall visibility between the two stages, but typically less extent of the route is shown as theoretically visible during operational Stage 2 when smaller vehicles are considered. This also suggests that during Operational Stage 1, it would be only higher parts of vehicles which would be seen using the additional sections of the route theoretically visible, It should also be noted that vehicles would be substantially less frequent during Operational Stage 2 which would also reduce visibility as the potential to see vehicles using different parts of the road at the same time would be reduced.

### Visual Receptors

Visual receptors within the study area comprise residents and or others present in and around buildings and settlement areas, including tourists, those using routes (including transport and recreational routes) through the study area, and those obtaining views from outdoor locations where enjoyment of the view is one of the principal reasons for being at the location.

### **Visual Receptors Occupying Settlements and Other Built Development**

Buildings within the study area can be broadly grouped into four different area as follows:

- Properties around the shore of Loch Lochy, including Laggan Locks and Kilfinnan;
- Properties along the existing Kilfinnan Road, including North Laggan and Balmaglaister;
- Properties around the shore of Loch Oich including the Great Glen Water Park; and,
- Properties alongside the A82, between Loch Oich and Loch Lochy.

Visual Receptor Locations within these areas are shown on Figure 8.4 and described below:

### **Properties Around the Shore of Loch Lochy**

Receptor Locations **B1 to B4** comprise residents and visitors to a range of residential and holiday properties around the northern end of Loch Lochy, including a number of small holiday lodge establishment at Kilfinnan (Receptor B1) and Great Glen Lodges (Receptor B3). This group also includes a variety of boat users and tourists at Laggan Locks (Receptor Location B4) where there are holiday pods, mooring points, boat hire and pontoons. Views from all these locations are principally overlooking the loch, often with some degree of filtering by lochside trees and scrub.

### **Properties Along the Existing Kilfinnan Road**

Receptor Locations **B5 to B11** comprise residents and visitors to a number of scattered individual properties along the existing Kilfinnan Road, including at North Laggan and

Balmaglaster. Properties are typically situated close to the road on its lower side but with the orientation of views being more focussed across and along the glen, away from the road. Two properties at North Laggan Farm (Receptor Location B10) are situated on the upper side of the road, with a view overlooking the road and farm buildings, filtered by garden trees.

### Properties Around the Shore of Loch Oich

Receptor Locations **B12 to B14** include residents and visitors to a range of houses and holiday properties including Great Glen Water Park, a holiday lodge park on the east side of Loch Oich, various cottages around the Laggan Swing Bridge and a house, shop and tourist car-parking and picnic sites around the Well of the Seven Heads on the west side of the loch. Views from these properties are typically orientated across Loch Oich with some filtering by lochside woodland and groups of trees.

### Properties Alongside the A82

Receptor Locations **B15 to B17** comprise a number of scattered residential and holiday properties in Laggan and South Laggan, situated to either side of the A82 and east of the Caledonian Canal. These properties have a typically low vantage point with views across small grassy fields, often limited by small groups of trees. Some more extensive views are obtained along the Great Glen to north and south.

### Visual Receptors Using Routes

Potential route-based visual receptors within the study area include those using public roads, recreational users of paths and tracks and boat users on Loch Lochy, Loch Oich and the Caledonian Canal. The following routes within the study area have been included in the LVIA (see Figure 8.4):

- Public Roads:
  - Route R1: A82 – The main trunk road through the study area. Travellers on this route are typically moving fast, with changing views varying between open views across Loch Lochy, more localised and contained views through South Laggan and Laggan, and glimpsed views across Loch Oich through trees;
  - Route R2: Kilfinnan Road – This is a local single track road and comprises the existing road to be upgraded. It is also noted as an alternative route for the Great Glen Way and may be used by walkers and cyclists as well as vehicles. Views are contained by steep slopes to the west and therefore more focussed to the east, across small fields. A forest shelterbelt alongside the Caledonian Canal restricts the easterly view for much of the route, with more open and slightly elevated views obtained to the north of this, and particularly to the south over Laggan Locks and down Loch Lochy;
- Recreational Routes:
  - Route R3: Caledonian Canal – This includes boat users travelling on the canal and Loch Lochy and Loch Oich, and canoeists following Great Glen Canoe Trail, both routes being identified on a list of Scotland's Great Trails. Views are typically from low vantage, particularly from canoes, open across Loch Lochy and to some extent around Laggan Locks and the Laggan Swing Bridge, but very contained as the route passes through the Laggan Avenue, where embankments and shelterbelt woodlands contain it to both sides;
  - Route R4: Great Glen Way and Cycle Route – Following a range of tracks and the canal towpath through the study area. Users experience a variety of mixed views when passing through the study area, including slightly elevated and open views across Loch Lochy from the southern end of the route, and very enclosed views when passing along the avenue section of towpath. Mixed views with a more localised focus are experienced from the northern and southern sections of canal;



- Route R5: Walking route from Kilfinnan to Ben Tee – Walkers ascending a rough footpath route alongside the Kilfinnan Burn with increasingly open views experienced across the Great Glen and to other surrounding hills and plateau as greater height is gained; and,
- Route R6: Core Path LO11.04 (Great Glen Way Alternative Route) – This route combines with Kilfinnan Road, also forming part of the alternative High Route for the Great Glen Way. It follows a track through forestry on the western side of the A82 and Loch Oich, with generally contained views, occasionally elevated across Loch Oich through clearings.

## 8.6 Mitigation

Mitigation measures are proposed in order to minimise or offset significant and other landscape and visual effects and aid the assimilation of the Proposed Development into the landscape setting. Planting and reinstatement proposals are also intended to improve the biodiversity of the site where possible.

### Construction and Operational Stage 1

Given the temporary nature of effects relating to construction of both the road, and Coire Glas Pumped Storage scheme, no specific mitigation has been identified. However, where visual receptor locations are close to construction works or construction traffic, there may be opportunities to install temporary fencing to provide a buffer between visual receptors and the works, depending on the site-specific nature of construction works. This could reduce the level of individual effects, although has the potential to form a visual effect in itself. Due to the uncertainty of this proposal, this has not been taken into account within the assessment.

Where practicable, there may be opportunities for planting proposed as mitigation for Operational stage 2 to be implemented early in Operational stage 1 which would begin to provide some mitigating effects as it established. Revegetation of cuttings and embankments would also occur during this stage of development as described in section 8.6.

#### Protection of Trees

The retention of existing trees would be important in minimising the short and longer term landscape and visual effects, particularly trees close to the existing roadside on its lower side, and between properties and the road. Protection of these trees, including the root zone, would therefore be essential during construction. Tree protection measures should be in accordance with BS 5837: 2012.

There would be a requirement for pruning to some existing trees to accommodate construction works. Pruning works should be carried out following a detailed tree survey and by a suitably qualified person to minimise damage to trees and retain their future integrity.

### Operational Stage 2

The following measures are proposed to help reduce landscape and visual effects in the longer term:

#### Narrowing of the Road Corridor

Following the construction of Coire Glas, the road would be narrowed to 3.3 m with passing places which would help to restore the character of the original road and small scale diversity of the landscape. It is recommended that the road be intermittently narrowed at either side, rather than uniformly to help establish some curves and winding pattern to reflect the landform patterns. This would also help to slow traffic and maintain the quiet and domestic character in the longer term. Irregular establishment of verges, such as localised mounding or hummocks,

and smooth transitions into cuttings would also help to disguise the appearance of a wider road corridor, and discourage vehicles driving onto the verges and causing damage.

### **Revegetation of Embankments and Cuttings**

The re-establishment of vegetation on embankments and cuttings would be important in limiting operational landscape and visual effects, in particular, the visual prominence of the road construction from areas at greater distances. With the exception of rock cuttings, gradients would be established where possible to enable replacement of soils and minimise potential for erosion. Where this is unlikely to be possible (typically gradients steeper than 1:2) the use of a suitable proprietary green retention system would be employed to enable revegetation. Vegetation would be re-established through natural regeneration, supplemented where necessary by a suitable native seed mix, containing grasses and flowering species reflective of those present within the local landscape.

### **Planting**

Suitable locations for the replanting of trees would be identified along the road to compensate for trees removed during construction, to help retain the small scale diversity of character along the route, and where relevant, to help mitigate visual effects. Key areas, with the potential for planting including the following:

- Between the new active travel path and the road alignment: In places where the road has been pulled away from the existing road alignment which would become the active travel path, there may be space to establish land form and tree or scrub planting. This would help to mitigate views of the road for path users, may help to enhance the recreational experience and may also provide some mitigation for views of the road from areas further to the east, such as Laggan Locks; and,
- To the rear of properties: In some areas, the new road alignment would be slightly further from properties at the rear and may be slightly in cut. This may give the opportunity to add some additional landform and planting on the alignment of the existing road, to further enhance the buffer effect of existing trees between properties and the road or potentially add new buffers of trees between the road and properties creating greater separation from the road. These measures would be subject to agreement with property owners.

Illustrative examples of these proposals are shown on Figure 8.5.

### **Re-establishment of Other Cultural Features**

The road construction would lead to the disruption or removal of some other features including fences, walls, gates and culverts. Where possible the use of original materials would be used in the re-establishment of some features to help assimilate the Proposed Development into the existing landscape patterns. This would include the re-construction of stone walls at North Laggan farm, to reflect the change to the road alignment in this area. Other actions may include the re-establishment of gateways and signage, particularly those used by recreational users.

## **8.7 Assessment of Likely Effects: Landscape**

This section provides an assessment of the effects that the Proposed Development would have on landscape character and the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, during three phases of the Proposed Development: during construction of Kilfinnan Road; during operation as a two-way road whilst the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme is being constructed (Operational Stage 1); and after completion of the Pumped Storage Scheme, when the road has been narrowed to 3.3 m with passing places (Operational Phase 2). The findings are presented in accordance with the effects criteria outlined Section 8.3. The assessment of landscape character is presented first, as this is used to feed into the assessment of effects on the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA.

**Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character Types**

Detailed assessment of the LCTs identified for inclusion in the assessment provided in Table 8.11 to 8.15 below:

Table 8.11: LCZ 1 – Steep-sided Valley with Loch: Assessment of Effects

<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinct, large scale, strong linear structure of the steep-sided glen;</li> <li>• Occasional woodland along steep side streams and gorges, and fringes of lochs adds variety;</li> <li>• Impressive views funnelled down valley of loch and mountain backdrop and expansive views from higher slopes; and,</li> <li>• Range of experiences of enclosure resulting from imposing glen slopes combined with extensive open views across lochs.</li> </ul>		
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a highly valued landscape due to its distinctive structure and popularity. The large scale patterns and forest cover give some opportunity to accommodate development of the type proposed although the open vistas and steep glen sides are more susceptible, particularly where cuttings would be required.</p> <p>Sensitivity to development of the type Proposed is considered to be Medium – High.</p>		
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linear road development and cuttings could lead to distracting scarring on the steep sides of the valley;</li> <li>• Tree or woodland removal could reduce diversity within the landscape;</li> <li>• Construction works or new features could interrupt within important views; and,</li> <li>• Tree removal and development of a wider road could lead to spatial changes that affect the range of experiences.</li> </ul>		
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>A short section of the Proposed Development of approximately 400 m would be within this LCZ to the south-west of Kilfinnan Farm and would involve the localised removal of some trees at the edge of an area of native woodland.. Further indirect change would occur due to the appearance of the Proposed Development within the context of the LCZ. Construction works would be perceptible in views across the northern part of Loch Lochy and from upper glen slopes, including areas of cut and localised removal of some trees. These activities would be relatively small scale and localised in the context of the scale of the glen. Revegetation of cut slopes and compensatory planting of trees following construction would reduce the perceptibility of the Proposed Development within the landscape, although temporary retention of the wider road construction, and ongoing use of the road by construction traffic during the construction of Coire Glas would may lead to it appearing as a more perceptible feature during this period. However, overall this would be unlikely to lead to a change in landscape characteristics in the longer term.</p>		
<b>Magnitude rating</b>	<p>Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low</li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low</li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negligible</li> </ul>
<b>Significance of Effects</b>	<p>There would be only very localised direct effects to this LCZ. Although there would be some tree removal within a very localised area, this would be unlikely to noticeably change the spatial experience as other existing trees surrounding the route would remain and there would be opportunity for compensatory replanting in the longer term.</p> <p>Indirect effects may occur where the Proposed Development, during construction or operation, appears within valued views across Loch Lochy or from the elevated glen sides forming a new distraction or focus from some areas. However, there would be relatively limited intervisibility with areas around Loch Lochy, due to the low vantage and intervening woodland across the glen floor. The appearance of cuttings, particularly during construction, may form some scarring along the base of the glen-side but there would be limited intervisibility of this from the wider LCZ. The cuttings would be situated at the base of the slope and would therefore give the appearance of anchoring it. This would be less likely to affect appreciation of the scale and enclosure afforded by the high, consistent slope, rather than traversing the slope higher up. Once construction works were complete and cuttings revegetated, it is</p>		

	unlikely that the new road construction would be very noticeable within this LCZ. Overall, there would be limited effect on the character of the LCZ during construction and no perceptible effect during operational stages. Although construction traffic for Coire Glas may lead to the road being more perceptible in the landscape, this would not lead to any effect on the character and appreciation of the LCZ.		
Significance	Construction	Operation Stage 1	Operation Stage 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minor Adverse</b> (not significant)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Negligible</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Negligible</b></li> </ul>

Table 8.12: LCZ 2 – Settled Valley Floor: Assessment of Effects

<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<p>Sub-LCZ 2a (Laggan Locks):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contrast of domestic, settled character and small-scale features, in comparison to the wider large-scale landscape mountains and lochs;</li> <li>• Diverse combinations of open field, woodland, tourism development and loch shore, and variety of experiences this provides; and,</li> <li>• The experience of the landscape at different paces by users of the Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Way.</li> </ul> <p>Sub-LCZ 2b (A82 Corridor):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse, small-scale character of open fields, properties and woodland, contained by coniferous forest plantation; and,</li> <li>• Contrast of small, domestic scale features with the wider steep glen-sides and mountain backdrop.</li> </ul> <p>Sub-LCZ 2c (North Laggan – Balmaglaister):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrow, enclosed, linear structure;</li> <li>• Groups of mature trees, particularly providing a buffer between properties and the road;</li> <li>• Small, domestic scale character, more focussed on near-ground features; and,</li> <li>• Quiet, rural character.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a generally valued landscape, populated by residents, visitors and tourists. However, its existing diversity and semi-developed character reduce susceptibility to change for proportionate, well-designed development. Sensitivity is considered to be Medium.</p>
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger, wider road construction could lead to changes in experience and balance of open and enclosed spaces;</li> <li>• Tree removal could reduce diversity within the landscape;</li> <li>• Tree removal could reduce sense of enclosure within sub-LCZ 2b;</li> <li>• The slow pace at which the landscape is experienced on the Kilfinnan Road and Great Glen way through sub-LCZs 2a and 2c may be altered by a wider, straighter road construction which speeds up the pace of traffic;</li> <li>• The addition of construction activities, cuttings or noticeably engineered design solutions may draw attention away from local, small-scale features; and,</li> <li>• Construction activities or traffic may disrupt the quiet, rural character.</li> </ul>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>The Proposed Development would be entirely within this LCZ, comprising around 1.4 km of the route within sub-LCZ 2a, 2.2 km in sub-LCZ 2c and the junction with the A82 in sub-LCZ 2b. Construction works would lead to a noticeable change, particularly within sub-LCZ 2c where the narrow linear corridor would become busy with construction activities including vehicle movements and earth-moving, and compound areas. This would also be noticeable within parts of sub-LCZ 2a along the existing Kilfinnan Road and base of the valley slope, and perceptible throughout other areas. There would also be some selective tree removal within these areas, although largely limited to trees on the upper side of the road, and not generally affecting those between the road and properties (not including forest works around the Proposed Development which are being undertaken separately by others). Works would be less perceptible within sub-LCZ 2b where scrub</p>

	<p>and forest shelterbelts along the canal would conceal most of the works. The junction would affect a very localised area and elsewhere there would be a clear separation between this sub-LCZ and the Proposed Development area. After construction of the road, but during construction of the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme, the areas directly affected would continue to be busier than normal with heavy construction traffic and a wider, straighter road would be in place with fewer dips, hollows and corners than the existing route leading to wider, more open spaces being present. However, revegetation of cut slopes would take place during this period and the changes would be more localised. In the longer operational term, the road would be narrowed to 3.3 m and revegetation including replacement tree planting would be more established. Although straighter and more level it is likely that the road would appear more similar to the existing.</p>		
<p>Magnitude Rating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-LCZ 2a</li> <li>• Sub-LCZ 2b</li> <li>• Sub-LCZ 2c</li> </ul>	<p>Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium</li> <li>• Low</li> <li>• High</li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low</li> <li>• Negligible</li> <li>• Low – Medium</li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negligible</li> <li>• Negligible</li> <li>• Negligible</li> </ul>
<p><b>Significance of Effects</b></p>	<p>Direct effects within the LCZ would be focussed within sub-LCA 2c and partly within sub-LCZ 2a. Beyond these areas, effects would be limited to the influence of construction activities and appearance of traffic and cut slopes within the setting. However, this would be concealed by woodland and trees from most areas. It is predicted that there would be no real perceptible effect on sub-LCZ 2b at any stage due to the limited intervisibility with this area. Although junction works would be present within this sub-LCZ, this would take place in an area already busy with traffic and would be only very locally influential.</p> <p>In sub-LCZ 2c construction activities would be relatively dominating because of the confined linear nature of this area. The works would reflect this linear pattern, but would be disruptive to the quiet and rural character, particularly earth moving and creation of cuttings. There would be a similar effect to sub-LCZ 2a but this would be more localised, along the road corridor. Whilst there would be visual and possible noise influence from this work across other parts of sub-LCZ 2a, such as the loch shore, canal and locks areas, it would be less influential on the local characteristics of these areas which are more defined by the association with the canal and loch.</p> <p>At operational Stage 1, the road would be wider and more spacious, and used by larger volumes of traffic, particularly heavy vehicles. This would be less consistent with the small-scale, rural patterns and quiet domestic character of the landscape, and would form a more prominent feature. The wider route and more regular use of traffic may also reduce the slow-paced experience in sub-LCA 2a where recreational users on the Great Glen Way follow the route. The removal of a farm building, and some trees along the route would further emphasise the wider road corridor, although it is expected that cut slopes would be revegetated and would be reflective of other, similar slopes within the area. Trees on the lower side of the road, which form a buffer between the road and properties would be retained as far as possible. This would help to preserve the diverse, wooded character and would also reduce the influence of the road, and associated cuttings on some other parts of the LCZ.</p> <p>After completion of Coire Glas, the road would be narrowed to 3.3 m and traffic use would be similar to existing levels. This would help to restore the slow pace, quiet domestic character and sense of spatial enclosure to some degree although there would be fewer bends and hollows on the route. The establishment of vegetation including compensatory trees would also help to soften the route and overall, it is predicted that it would have a similar influence on the landscape character to the existing road in the longer term.</p>		
<p>Significance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-LCZ 2a</li> <li>• Sub-LCZ 2b</li> </ul>	<p>Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Moderate Adverse</b> (significant)</li> <li>• <b>Negligible</b></li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minor Adverse</b> (not significant)</li> <li>• <b>Negligible</b></li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Negligible</b></li> <li>• <b>Negligible</b></li> </ul>

• Sub-LCZ 2c	• <b>Major Adverse</b> (significant)	• <b>Minor – Moderate Adverse</b> (not significant)	• <b>Negligible</b>
--------------	---	--	---------------------

Table 8.1: LCZ 3 – Mountain: Assessment of Effects

<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panoramic views of surrounding mountains and across the Great Glen;</li> <li>• Role of mountains as a focus and backdrop for lower lying areas; and,</li> <li>• Localised sense of remoteness and wildness due to diminished scale of surrounding development.</li> </ul>		
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a highly valued landscape although the most notably valued areas lie outwith the study area. Its remote qualities, open character and extensive views limit its potential for additional development without this becoming prominent and eye catching. Sensitivity to development of the type Proposed is High.</p>		
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for construction activities or permanent features to appear distracting within elevated, panoramic views.</li> <li>• Potential for the appearance of construction activities or permanent features to interrupt the appearance of the mountains as a backdrop to other areas and diminish their appreciation; and,</li> <li>• Potential for activities or new features to reduce perception of remoteness or wildness.</li> </ul>		
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>There would be very little intervisibility of the Proposed Development with this LCZ, mostly limited to the most southern stretch of the route of around 800 m and associated areas of construction compound and laydown. This would affect a relatively limited part of the LCZ around the summit of Meall na Dearcaig where the Proposed Development would be seen as a relatively focussed area of construction disturbance within the context of a wide panoramic view. On completion of construction works, with revegetation of disturbed areas and cuttings, it is likely that the road would appear relatively unremarkable within the wider landscape setting, particularly after completion of Coire Glas when it would be reduced in width.</p>		
Magnitude rating	<p>Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low</li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negligible</li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negligible</li> </ul>
<b>Significance of Effects</b>	<p>There would be no direct effects to this LCZ. Indirect effects would be limited to the appearance of the Proposed Development within expansive panoramic views from high elevation. In these views, construction activities around Kilfinnan would form a small focus of activity which may be distracting, but, set at the base of the slope, would not interrupt the wider expansive vistas over the Great Glen and easterly hills. Given the already developed character of this part of the Great Glen and the similarity in scale of the Proposed Development to other features, it is unlikely that the qualities of remoteness and wildness would be noticeably affected. There are relatively view places where the works would be seen with the setting of the mountain backdrop, and given the difference in elevation and scale between the mountains and the Proposed Development it is unlikely that this role would be adversely affected once construction is complete, it is predicted that the Proposed Development would appear consistent with other features in the setting and would not lead to any adverse effect on the experience of the LCZ.</p>		
Significance	<p>Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minor Adverse</b> (not significant)</li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Negligible</b></li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Negligible</b></li> </ul>



Table 8.14: LCZ 6 – Wooded Glen: Assessment of Effects

<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naturalised areas of deciduous woodland;</li> <li>• Intimate sense of enclosure within secluded spaces formed within woodland and gorge; and,</li> <li>• Contrasting sense of space from higher areas with elevated views over the Great Glen towards Loch Lochy</li> </ul>		
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<p>This is a moderately valued landscape for its distinctive features and perceived scenic quality. It is considered very susceptible to change due to its inaccessibility and small and intimate scale, which could be easily overpowered. Sensitivity to development of the type Proposed is High.</p>		
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential loss of trees or woodland may affect distinctiveness and sense of enclosure;</li> <li>• Potential for construction activities or traffic to interrupt secluded qualities; and,</li> <li>• Potential appearance of construction activities or permanent features to distract in views from higher areas.</li> </ul>		
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>There would be limited intervisibility of the Proposed Development from the lowest parts of the glen, where a new bridge would be constructed and other construction areas would be situated in the surrounding area. These works would be just on the transitional edge of the LCZ. From some higher areas of the glen, these activities would be theoretically visible, although tree cover would limit their perceptibility. However, it is likely that these activities would feature within some funnelled views down the glen. In the longer term, the new bridge would be very slightly further up the burn and may be slightly larger than the exiting bridge although would otherwise appear very similar. Use of the bridge by Coire Glas construction traffic may lead to slightly more movement and noise being perceptible within the lower part of the glen. It is not anticipated that there would be any requirement for tree removal around the Kilfinnan Burn, within or around the LCZ.</p>		
Magnitude rating	<p>Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low</li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low</li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negligible</li> </ul>
<b>Significance of Effects</b>	<p>Construction works would be very close to this LCZ at the base of the glen, but the effect would be localised with the wooded qualities of the glen limiting the likely influence to other parts of the LCZ. Although intervisibility would theoretically be obtained from higher areas, this would be limited and generally would occur on the high glen sides where the experience is much more expansive. The area of impact would be very small within this context. From the deeper parts of the glen, the screening effects of the woodland and sounds of falling water would help to maintain the sense of seclusion and this is predicted to remain unaltered, other than within the areas closest to the construction works. However, as no trees would be removed, the sense of enclosure would not be altered. A very localised sense of disruption may continue during the use of the new bridge by Coire Glas construction traffic, but this would be so localised it is not considered that the overriding characteristics of the LCZ would be altered. The new position and slightly larger scale of the bridge would not lead to any perceptible change to landscape character.</p>		
Significance	<p>Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Minor Adverse</b> (not significant)</li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Negligible</b></li> </ul>	<p>Operation Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Negligible</b></li> </ul>



Table 8.15: LCZ 9 – Rounded Moorland Hills: Assessment of Effects

<b>Landscape Receptors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vast sense of scale with expansive views; and,</li> <li>Limited obvious human intervention gives impressions of remoteness and wildness.</li> </ul>		
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	This is a moderately valued landscape with large scale which gives opportunity for some level of well-placed and small scale development. However, it has greater susceptibility to larger or poorly located development which could become prominent due to the low lying vegetation and lack of existing development. Sensitivity to development of the type Proposed is Medium.		
<b>Potential Effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appearance of construction activities or permanent features within the wider landscape could form new or distracting focus in expansive views or reduce sense of remoteness and wildness.</li> </ul>		
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	There would be no direct change to this LCZ. There would be some intervisibility with the Proposed Development construction activities, the finished road, and traffic using it from parts of the LCZ on the edge of the Great Glen. These features would appear small within the context although construction may be slightly more noticeable. However, this would be seen in the context of other development and activity which is already present within the Great Glen.		
Magnitude rating	Construction ▪ Negligible	Operation Stage 1 ▪ Negligible	Operation Stage 2 ▪ Negligible
<b>Significance of Effects</b>	Whilst there would be some intervisibility of this LCZ with the Proposed Development within the Great Glen, this would be within a context where human scale activities are already taking place, and therefore would be very unlikely to affect the unique characteristics of the LCZ which are more in relation to extensive landscape to the east. Therefore, although construction works, and potentially traffic using the new road may be a perceptible feature within expansive views over the Great Glen, as human activities are already occurring within this context, this is not predicted to lead to any effect on the LCZ.		
Significance	Construction ▪ <b>Negligible</b>	Operation Stage 1 ▪ <b>Negligible</b>	Operation Stage 2 ▪ <b>Negligible</b>

### Summary of Effects on Landscape Character

A summary of the effects on LCZs at the three stages of the Proposed Development is provided in Table 8.16 Significant effects are those identified as being Moderate or greater.

Table 8.16: Summary of Landscape Effects

LCZ	Construction						Operation Stage 1						Operation Stage 2					
	Major	Moderate – Major	Moderate	Minor - Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Major	Moderate – Major	Moderate	Minor - Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Major	Moderate – Major	Moderate	Minor - Moderate	Minor	Negligible
<b>LCZ 1 Steep-sided Valley with</b>				•							•							•

LCZ	Construction						Operation Stage 1						Operation Stage 2					
	Major	Moderate – Major	Moderate	Minor - Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Major	Moderate – Major	Moderate	Minor - Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Major	Moderate – Major	Moderate	Minor - Moderate	Minor	Negligible
<b>LCZ 2 Settled Valley Floor</b>	L		L			L				L	L	L						•
<b>LCZ 3 Mountain</b>					•							•						•
<b>LCZ 6 Wooded Glen</b>					•							•						•
<b>LCZ 9: Rounded Moorland Hills</b>					•							•						•

Notes:

- All effects are adverse.
- L denotes effects which are localised to one sub-unit of the LCZ.

As illustrated by the table above, temporary significant effects are predicted during construction for the Proposed Development within LCZ 2 within which the majority of the Proposed Development would be located. These effects would be largely localised within sub-LCZ 2c where the construction works would be locally dominating within a narrow, contained space, and to a less extent, sub-area 2a where works would be disruptive to the quiet rural character. However, it is predicted that these effects would reduce to levels which would be not significant during the operational stage of the Proposed Development. During operational Stage 1, the road would remain busier with the wider construction being somewhat out of scale with the rural landscape character. However, it is expected that cut slopes would be revegetated and the vast majority of trees on the lower side of the road which provide a buffer between the road and nearby residential properties would help to minimise the influence of the wider road on the surrounding landscape. The effect would further reduce once the construction of Coire Glas was complete when the road would be narrowed to a width of 3.3 m with passing places. Although this would present a change to the existing road, with fewer bends and hollows, the fuller establishment of vegetation around the road including compensatory tree planting would help to soften the route and it is predicted to have a similar influence on landscape character to the existing road and a negligible effect.

For other surrounding LCZs, some non-significant effects are predicted during construction, and during the first operational stage whilst Coire Glas construction traffic is using the widened road, whereby the construction activities and traffic may form a new distracting focus in the landscape. However, these effects are all predicted to reduce to a negligible value during operation, when the road is predicted to appear very similar to the existing road.

### **Assessment of Effects on the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA**

Within the study area, the SLA covers virtually all of the LCZs which have been assessed in in Table 8.11 to 8.15 above. The effects identified for these LCZs is therefore indicative of the distribution of effects which are likely to occur on the landscape character of the SLA. During construction localised significant effects would occur within parts of the valley floor close to the Proposed Development. However, effects on the wider valley floor and surrounding slopes

where elevated views over the Great Glen are an important experiential characteristic of the landscape would be not significant, because the works would appear as a relatively small and localised area of disturbance within the context. When considering the contribution of these effects on LCZs to the SLA as a whole, the effect during construction would be **Moderate Adverse** (significant) but localised to the Great Glen area around northern Loch Lochy and along the proposed road corridor between Loch Lochy and Lochy Oich.

During operational stage 1, whilst the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme is being constructed, there would continue to be recognisable changes to landscape character within a very localised area close to the route, but it is unlikely that this would lead to a significant effect following the revegetation of disturbed areas including cut slopes, and with the retention of most trees around the route, and particularly those on its lower side. Although busier and somewhat out of scale within the domestic scale landscape, the road would be relatively well accommodated within the surrounding landscape setting of retained trees and revegetated slopes. The overall effect on the landscape character of the SLA is therefore predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant).

During operational stage 2, after the road has been narrowed to 3.3 m with passing places and traffic has reduced to operational levels, it is considered that the road would have a similar influence on the landscape to the existing road. The further growth of vegetation and planting associated with the Proposed Development would help the route to assimilate into the landscape setting and the effect on the landscape character of the SLA would be **Negligible**.

### **Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs)**

A review of the Proposed Development in relation to the SLQs of the SLA is provided in Table 8.17 below:

Table 8.17: Review of Effects on SLQs of the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA

SLQ	Likely Effects
The Great Glen – Scale, striking linearity, long narrow lochs	The Proposed Development would be sited within the Great Glen, and during construction is predicted to lead to localised significant landscape effects in the area between Loch Oich and Loch Lochy. There would also be significant visual effects for users of this part of the Great Glen Way (see Section 8.8), likely to affect their experience of this localised section of the landscape. However, during the operational stages of the Proposed Development these effects are not predicted to be significant.
Classic Highland Scenery, distinctive mountain-top views	The assessment of LCZs has established that the appearance of the Proposed Development in longer views across open water and from elevated areas would be unlikely to lead to any significant effects to the appreciation of the landscape during construction or operation. The visual assessment (Section 8.8) has identified some significant visual effects, but these would be focused on receptors close the route and, with the possible exception of views from Laggan Locks across northern Loch Lochy, are generally not representative of Classic Highland Scenery. No significant effects to visual amenity are predicted during the operational stages of the Proposed Development.
Intimate Drama	There would be some effects to intimate scale areas of the landscape, particularly during construction, and to some extent during stage 1 of operation when the road is wider and busier. However, these effects would mostly be focused within LCZ 2c where there is less appreciation of the more dramatic elements of the glen. Around Laggan Locks and northern Loch Lochy, there is some potential for localised significant effects on this quality during construction but no significant effects are predicted during operation.

In summary, it is predicted that there would be temporary localised significant effects to the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA within the area around northern Loch Lochy and between Loch Lochy and Loch Oich, close to the Proposed Development. This would lead to some temporary and localised significant effects to the SLQs: ‘The Great Glen’, ‘Classic Highland Scenery’ and ‘Intimate Drama’, but these would be localised, short-term effects which would reduce to non-significant levels during operation. In the longer term, once the Coire Glas construction works are complete and the road has been reduced in width, the effect on the SLA would be Negligible.

## 8.8 Assessment of Likely Effects: Visual Amenity

This Section of the LVIA discusses the findings of the detailed visual assessment undertaken for three stages of the Proposed Development: during construction; during operation whilst the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme is being constructed (Operational Stage 1); and after completion of the Pumped Storage Scheme, when the road has been narrowed to 3.3 m with passing places (Operational Stage 2). It evaluates and describes the likely changes to existing views from residential and tourist areas, and from transport and recreational routes during the construction and operational stages of the Proposed Development, and the extent to which these changes would affect the visual amenity of residents, visitors and other users of the landscape in accordance with the effects criteria outlined in Section 8.3.

### **Building-Based Visual Receptors**

The detailed assessment of effects on the visual amenity of building-based receptors is presented in Appendix 8.2. Predicted effects are summarised below with an emphasis on potential significant effects. Referenced receptor locations are shown on Figure 8.4.

#### **Properties Around the Shore of Loch Lochy**

A temporary significant visual effect is predicted for visitors, workers and occupants of buildings at Receptor Location B4 (Laggan Locks) where road construction works including cuttings, and likely compound areas would feature within direct views across the northern part of Loch Lochy. There would also be secondary views of some works in oblique and rear northerly views. This effect is predicted to be **Moderate Adverse** (significant) during construction. During operational stage 1, construction traffic using the road would continue to be very visible but this is predicted to lead to a **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect. In the longer term, the road would be indistinguishable in the view from the existing road and the effect would be **Negligible**.

All other receptors in this grouping are predicted to experience visual effects which would be not significant. The road construction would be very close to the rear of some properties in Receptors Location B1 but would be outwith the main focus of the view and filtered by existing trees. It would be concealed from most properties in the group situated lower down the slope. Views would therefore be limited to partly concealed rear views from a few buildings in more elevated positions next to the road, and some similarly located garden areas. This is predicted to lead to a **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) effect during construction, and a **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect during operational stage 1. In the longer term, the road is likely to form an unexceptional feature in these rear views and a barely perceptible change to the existing situation. The effect during operational stage 2 would therefore be **Negligible**.

Views from Receptor Location B2 (Kilfinnan Farm) would be very limited, likely to occur only during construction when a **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect may be experienced. A **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect is also predicted during construction for Receptor Location R3 (Glengarry Lodges). Although the Proposed Development is immediately to the rear of these holiday lodge properties, this would not affect the more valued views across Loch Lochy and once constructed, the upgraded road would be further from these properties and in a slight cut which would lead to any effects of the new, wider route and higher cuttings being offset. The effects for Receptor Locations R2 and R3 would therefore be **Negligible** for both operational stages.

#### **Properties Along the Existing Kilfinnan Road**

Temporary, significant visual effects were identified for receptors at four locations within this group during construction.

Oblique and rear filtered views of construction activities at close proximity from Receptor Locations B8 (Stoneyfield) and B9 (Mogwy Cottage) obtained from interior and garden areas are predicted to lead to **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effects to visual amenity in the short term. These effects would reduce to **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during Operational Stage 1 when there would be a noticeable increase in heavy construction traffic. However, this would

reduce to **Negligible** in the longer term, when the new road would be situated slightly further from the properties and is predicted to have a similar visual effect to the existing road.

A **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect during construction is also predicted for Receptor Location B10 (North Laggan Farmhouse) where the work, including the demolition of an existing farm building, would be within the main, front view of the property but filtered by a garden hedgerow. This would reduce to **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during Operational Stage 1 where the increase in heavy vehicle traffic would form a perceptible change within the view and would further reduce to **Negligible** during Operational Stage 2 when the road width is reduced, and vehicle numbers and types would be closer to existing levels.

From Receptor Location B11, a group of around 10 former council properties, the Proposed Development would feature in generally open, rear views across gardens where construction works including cuttings and a temporary access road would be visible, particularly from upper storeys. The effect is predicted to be **Moderate Adverse** (significant) reducing to **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) during Operational Stage 1 due to the more open outlook in comparison to other Receptor Locations in this group but would also be **Negligible** during Operational Stage 2 due to the predicted similarity of the proposed road in its narrowed form to the existing.

For other receptors in this group, comprising those at Receptor Locations B5 (Kelly's View), B6 (Balmaglaster) and B7 (Linden Tree Cottage), the effect during construction is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant). Although very close to these properties, the Proposed Development would be situated to their rear and, on a high bank above, and would be filtered by a fairly dense buffer of mature trees which would be retained. The main, south-easterly views would be unaffected. Once constructed, the Proposed Development would be situated at a slightly higher level than the existing road. During Operational Stage 1, a **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect is predicted to continue for Receptor Locations B5 and B6, but this would be **Negligible** for Receptor Location B7 (Linden Tree Cottage) because the new alignment would be slightly within cut to the rear of this property. In the longer term, once the road was narrowed and construction works at Coire Glas were complete, the visual effect would be **Negligible** for receptors at all three locations.

### Properties Around the Shore of Loch Oich

There would be no significant effects for visual receptors at any of the Receptor Locations in this group. A temporary **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect is predicted at Receptor Locations B13 (Laggan Swing Bridge) and B14 (Great Glen Water Park) where there would be filtered views of construction activities such as creation of cuttings, through trees. These effects are predicted to be **Negligible** during operation because view would be seen in the context of existing traffic on the A82. The effect for Receptor Location B12 would be **Negligible** for all stages of the Proposed Development because of screening by trees and landform.

### Properties Alongside the A82

There would be no significant effects for visual receptors at any of the Receptor Locations in this group. A **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect is predicted during construction for Receptor Location B16 (South Laggan), a small group of properties on the eastern side of the A82, where some construction activity is likely to be perceptible in views across the glen but this is predicted to be **Negligible** during both stages of operation once revegetation has occurred. The effect would be **Negligible** for Receptor Locations B15 (Laggan) and B17 (South Laggan Cottages) for all stages because intervening woodland would conceal the Proposed Development.

### Route-Based Visual Receptors

The detailed assessment of effects on the visual amenity of visual receptors using routes is presented in Appendix 8.3. Predicted effects are summarised below with an emphasis on potential significant effects. Referenced receptor locations are shown on Figure 8.4.

### Public Roads



Two public road routes were included in the assessment: Route R1 (A82) and Route R2 (Kilfinnan Road) which comprises the road to be upgraded (also noted as an alternative route for the Great Glen Way).

Given the direct changes occurring along the length of Route R2 which would be likely to lead to construction activities forming a visual focus throughout the route, the effect during construction is predicted to be **Major Adverse** (significant). However, this would reduce once construction activities were complete and cut slopes and verges re-vegetated. During operational stage 1, the road would be wider and would appear more robust and busy, which would be likely to draw away focus from surrounding views of the landscape somewhat making the experience of the route less visually appealing. There would also be loss of some of the existing more elevated views with the smoothing out of peaks and hollows. However, it is not considered that this would lead to a significant visual effect and the effect is therefore predicted to be **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant). During operational stage 2, when the route would be narrowed to 3.3m with passing places, the visual experience of the route is likely to be similar to that of the existing road and the effect would be **Negligible**.

For travellers on the A82 there would be occasional brief passing views of construction works from some sections, predicted to lead to a **Minor Adverse** (not significant) visual effect. This is expected to reduce to **Negligible** during both operational stages.

### Recreational Routes

Significant visual effects were identified for users of one recreational route: Route R4 (Great Glen Way and Cycle Route). A section of this route follows the Proposed Development alignment for around 1.7 km between the forest gate at Kilfinnan and Glengarry Lodges. There would also be less prominent views from sections around Laggan Locks and approaching Laggan Swing Bridge although other sections of the route along the Caledonian Canal would be screened. This is predicted to lead to a **Moderate – Major Adverse** (significant) visual effect during construction for recreational users of this route. However, this would reduce during operational stages when a separated dedicated route would be established for the directly affected section. Although there would still be short sections close to the new road and construction traffic using the wider road would appear prominent, other parts would be separated with potential for mitigation measures to reduce views of traffic. The visual effect during this period is predicted to be **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant). In the longer term, with the separated route, mitigation measures, and the road reduced in width, the visual effect is predicted to be similar to the existing situation with a **Negligible** level of effect.

Visual effects for users of all other recreational routes assessed are predicted to be not significant. A temporary **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) effect is predicted during construction for users of Route R3 (The Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Canoe Trail) where views of construction activities would be seen around the shore at the northern end of Loch Lochy and from sections of Canal around Laggan Locks and potentially near the Laggan Swing Bridge. This would reduce to **Minor Adverse** during stage 1 of operation when some views of heavy construction traffic, particularly around the northern end of Loch Lochy, would still be obtained and may be distracting, and **Negligible** during stage 2.

A **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect during construction is also predicted during construction for users of Route R5 (Walking route from Kilfinnan to Ben Tee) where the works would be locally prominent from a very short section of the route close to Kilfinnan but would be screened from the majority of the route. The **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect would continue through stage 1 of operation, but would reduce to Negligible during Stage 2 when the route would be narrowed and traffic returned to similar to current levels.

The Proposed Development would be barely noticeable from Route R6 (Core Path LO11.04 (Great Glen Way Alternative Route)) and therefore the effect would be **Negligible** for all stages.

### Summary of Effects on Visual Receptors

A summary of the effects on visual receptors at the three stages of the Proposed Development is provided in Table 8.18. Significant effects are those identified as being Moderate or greater.

Table 8.18: Summary of Visual Effects

LCZ	Construction						Operation Stage 1						Operation Stage 2					
	Major	Moderate – Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Major	Moderate – Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Major	Moderate – Major	Moderate	Minor – Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Building-Based Visual Receptors	-	-	5	1	8	3	-	-	-	1	7	9	-	-	-	-	-	17
Route-Based Visual Receptors	1	1	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	6
All Visual Receptor	1	1	5	2	10	4	-	-	-	3	9	11	-	-	-	-	-	23

Note:

- All effects are adverse.

As illustrated by the above summary table, significant effects are predicted for a number of building-based and route based visual receptors during the construction of the Proposed Development. However, there would be no significant visual effects during the operation of the Proposed Development at either Operational Stage 1 (during the construction of Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme) or Operational Stage 2 (when construction has been completed and the road is reduced in width). Significant effects would be confined to receptors at relatively close proximity to the Proposed Development, largely those occupying residential or tourist properties which lie directly adjacent to the route to be upgraded, or using routes which would be directly affected by the construction activities. One exception would be visual receptors at Laggan Locks where the construction works for the Proposed Development would be viewed across open water or across open fields and would appear prominent within a valued aspect of the view.

During operation, visual effects for all receptors would reduce to levels that would be not significant. Although the route would appear wider and would be busier with traffic, the revegetation of cut slopes and disturbed areas would reduce the prominence of the route within views. For a number of adjacent properties along the existing Kilfinnan Road and forest track, the retention of trees on the lower side of the road which provide a visual buffer, and the movement of the road alignment slightly further from properties, and occasionally into a cutting, would help to ensure that these effects would not be significant. Similarly, the establishment of a separated route for pedestrians on the Great Glen Way between Kilfinnan and Glengarry Lodges would help to decrease the visual effect, with potential for mitigation to be provided to further reduce the visual influence of traffic on walkers. In the longer term, once the construction activities for the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme were complete, the road would be narrowed to 3.3 m width with passing places. This would be only slightly wider than the existing road and with the further establishment of vegetation by this period, including some compensatory or mitigatory tree planting, the visual effect of the road on all receptors is predicted to be very similar to that of the existing road. There may be slightly fewer elevated views, due to the flattening out of peaks and hollows but this is unlikely to be notable. The visual effect for all receptors during stage 2 of operation is therefore predicted to be Negligible.

## 8.9 Further Mitigation and Enhancement

Mitigation measures would be integral to the design of the Proposed Development and are outlined in Section 8.6.

## 8.10 Residual Effects



The assessment of operational landscape and visual effects takes into account the proposed mitigation measures and the effects identified should therefore be considered as residual effects.

## 8.11 Monitoring

Five-year monitoring of mitigation planting and vegetation reinstatement which forms part of the Proposed Development is proposed to ensure successful establishment with remedial planting or seeding taking place within this period where necessary.

## 8.12 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative landscape and visual effects may occur when the effects of more than one development combine to create a greater level of effect. As the Proposed Development is associated with the consented Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme, this has been given consideration in an appraisal of potential cumulative effects.

Cumulative effects are considered from a baseline where the Proposed Development forms an addition to the other cumulative developments. The cumulative baseline is therefore an assumed baseline where Coire Glas, either during construction or operation, is already present. The purpose of the Proposed Development is to facilitate construction access for Coire Glas and it is therefore expected that it would be in place before the major part of construction for Coire Glas would commence, with an expected 6 months of crossover for enabling works only. Therefore, potential cumulative effects have been considered during the two operational stages of the Proposed Development as follows:

- Operation Stage 1, when the Proposed Development would be used by construction traffic for the Coire Glas, and construction of Coire Glas would be ongoing; and,
- Operation Stage 2, after the Proposed Development is narrowed and Coire Glas is operational.

As the use of the Proposed Development by Coire Glas traffic has been considered in the main assessment, this is not taken into account as part of Coire Glas cumulative baseline.

The LVIA undertaken by ASH for the Revised Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme (the 2018 LVIA) has been used to help evaluate cumulative landscape and visual effects.

### **Cumulative Landscape Effects - Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character**

The 2018 LVIA concluded that there would be likely significant effects during construction which would affect parts of the study area for the Proposed Development, around Loch Lochy and Kilfinnan Road, including LCZ 1 (Steep-sided Valley with Loch), LCZ 2 (Settled Valley Floor) and LCZ 3 (Mountain). However, it should be noted that the 2018 LVIA included the Kilfinnan Road upgrade which is the subject of the current LVIA and some of the effects of the Proposed Development are therefore already taken into account. Other key features which are contributory to these effects include works at the lower reservoir inlet / outlet area, site establishment and likely forest operations on the glenside areas alongside Loch Lochy, and a temporary haul road around the shoulder of Meall na Dearcaig. When the Kilfinnan Road is excluded from the proposed works associated with Coire Glas, it is considered that significant effects would be likely to be limited to LCZ 1 and LCZ 2.

No significant effects within the study area of the Proposed Development are identified during the operation of Coire Glas in the 2018 LVIA.

During the operational stages of the Proposed Development, there are no significant effects predicted for the Proposed Development alone.

During Operation Stage 1, the road would form a larger, more robust feature and would add additional heavier traffic movement than the current situation. When this is added to the other activities associated with Coire Glas, it would have the effect of extending the perceived area of construction activities somewhat, but this would be a relatively localised effect, limited to areas

around the northern end of Loch Lochy and close to the proposed road corridor. Given the scale of the Coire Glas works already ongoing, it is considered unlikely that the addition of the Proposed Development would lead to any increase in significant effects.

During Operation Stage 2, all effects of the Proposed Development would be Negligible. As such, no perceptible cumulative effects would occur.

### Cumulative Effects on Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA

The above effects are not predicted to result in any significant cumulative effects to the SLQs of the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA during operation stage 1 or operation stage 2.

### Summary of Cumulative Landscape Effects

Predicted cumulative landscape effects are detailed in Table 8.19.

Table 8.19: Cumulative Landscape Effects

LCZ or Designated / Protected Landscape	Cumulative Effect Operation Stage 1	Cumulative Effect Operation Stage 2
LCZ 1 Steep-sided Valley with Loch	Negligible	Negligible
LCZ 2 Settled Valley Floor	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Negligible
LCZ 3 Mountain	Negligible	Negligible
LCZ 6 Wooded Glen	Negligible	Negligible
LCZ 9: Rounded Moorland Hills	Negligible	Negligible
Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Negligible

### Cumulative Visual Effects

The 2018 LVIA identified significant effects for five building based Receptor Locations, two road routes and two footpath routes which are included in this LVIA as follows:

- Building-based Receptors:
  - B4 – Laggan Locks;
  - B8 – Stoneyfield;
  - B10 – North Laggan Farmhouse;
  - B11 – North Laggan; and,
  - B16 – South Laggan.
- Routes:
  - R1 – A82;
  - R2 – Kilfinnan Road;
  - R4 – Great Glen Way and Cycle Route; and,
  - R5 – Walking route from Kilfinnan to Ben Tee.

However, of the above Receptor Locations and Routes, these significant effects relate directly to the Kilfinnan Road for B8, B10 and B11. For these Receptor Locations, there would be unlikely to be any views of any other Coire Glas Pumped elements during construction or operation and therefore there would not be any cumulative effects resulting from the Proposed Development.

The significant effects identified in the 2018 LVIA also related partly to visibility of Kilfinnan Road for Receptor Locations B4 and B16, and Routes R2, R4 and R5. Of these locations, the addition of the Proposed Development to other parts of Coire Glas is unlikely to lead to any noticeably increased effect for Receptor Location B16, and Routes R1 and R5, because the operational effects of the Proposed Development for these receptors would be Negligible at both stages. However, there would be some increase in effect for Receptor Location B4 (Laggan Locks), and Routes R2 (Kilfinnan Road) and R4 (the Great Glen Way and Cycle Route). Both Routes R2 and R4 would be directly affected by the Proposed Development, whilst there would be perceptible changes to the view from Receptor Location B4.

For receptors at these locations / using these routes, the key visible element associated with Coire Glas would be a high level access construction track around the shoulder of Meall na Dearcaig. This would have a very limited effect on Route R2, but would be more noticeable in the view from Receptor Location B4 and in views from Route R4 (the Great Glen Way) which would also share part of the route.

The addition of the Proposed Development to views from Receptor Location B4 would be relatively limited during both operational stages and is unlikely to lead to a very noticeable additional level of effect. The additional effect for Routes R2 and R4 would be more noticeable, with a greater length of route being directly affected for both routes. However, for Route R4 (Great Glen Way), the additional visual effects of the Proposed Development would be less notable than the effects already resulting from Coire Glas, because a fully constructed, separate path would be present and this would allow views to the south-east to remain uninterrupted by traffic using the road. Users of the route traveling north would also be desensitised to the development somewhat after passing the Coire Glas construction works. This is therefore not predicted to lead to a significant effect during Operational Stage 1. For Route R2 (Kilfinnan Road), given the limited effect of Coire Glas on this route, the cumulative visual effect during Operation Stage 1 is not predicted to be greater than would occur from the Proposed Development alone.

Receptors on one other route: Route R3 (Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Canoe Trail) would also potentially obtain views of both developments. The developments would generally be experienced sequentially and the additional effects of the Proposed Development would be relatively small due to the low vantage point of receptors and the distance at, and setting within which views would be experienced. This is considered unlikely to lead to any significant additional effect.

All of the visual effects of the Proposed Development are predicted to be Negligible during operation stage 2 and therefore there would be no perceptible cumulative visual effects.

Predicted cumulative visual effects are detailed in Table 8.20. Receptors where a Negligible effect is predicted for either development alone have not been included, as a Negligible effect is not likely to contribute to a significant cumulative effect.

Table 8.20: Cumulative Visual Effects

Receptor	Cumulative Effect Operation Stage 1	Cumulative Effect Operation Stage 2
B4: Laggan Locks	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Negligible
R2: Kilfinnan Road	Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant)	Negligible
R3: Caledonian Canal	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Negligible
R4: Great Glen Way and Cycle Route	Minor Adverse (not significant)	Negligible

### 8.13 Summary

The LVIA has identified that there would be a number of significant landscape and visual effects arising from the construction of the Proposed Development. However, there would be no significant effects occurring during the operation of the Proposed Development, including

cumulative effects with the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme, either during the interim phase when Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme is being constructed, or in the longer term when the Pumped Storage Scheme is operational.

Significant landscape and visual effects would occur within a very localised area, affecting the landscape character of areas around a small section of shoreline at the northern end of Loch Lochy between Kilfinnan Farm and Laggan Locks, and a relatively enclosed area close to the road corridor, between Loch Lochy and Lochy Oich. This would affect some visual receptors within the area, including residents and visitors to a small number of properties, set along the existing road, and at Laggan Locks, and users of the existing Kilfinnan Road and the Great Glen Way cycling and walking routes. Landform and existing woodland and scrub, in particular trees to be retained along the lower side of the existing road, and a shelterbelt which encloses the Caledonian Canal, would limit the range and extent of effects.

The above significant landscape and visual effects are also predicted to lead to some localised, temporary significant effects to the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA during construction of the Proposed Development.

All significant effects would be temporary, during the construction stage only, and in the longer term, after construction of the Pumped Storage Scheme when the road would be narrowed to 3.3 m with passing places, all effects are predicted to be Negligible, because the upgraded road is expected to appear similar within the landscape to the existing road.

Mitigation including the revegetation of cut slopes, embankments and verges, and strategic compensatory planting would assist in ensuring that all long-term effects would be negligible.

## 8.14 References

Bing Mapping aerial photography [online]. Available at: <https://www.bing.com/maps/> [accessed September 2023].

Google mapping aerial photography [online]. Available at: <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/> [accessed September 2023].

Great Glen Way website [online]. Available at: <https://www.highland.gov.uk/greatglenway/> [accessed September 2023].

Horner + MacLennan and Wood, M. (2011). Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas. Commissioned by The Highland Council in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage. June 2011.

Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition.

NatureScot Data Services [online]. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/information-hub/naturescot-data-services> [accessed August 2023].

NatureScot (2019) Scottish Landscape Character Types – Map and Descriptions [online]. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions> [accessed August 2023]

NatureScot (2020) Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas: Technical Guidance.

Scotland's Great Trails [online]. Available at: <https://www.scotlandsgreattrails.com> [accessed August 2023]

Scottish Government (2023) Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4).

Scottish Natural Heritage (2002). Wildness in Scotland's Countryside – Policy Statement No. 02/03.

Scottish Natural Heritage and The Countryside Agency. (2002). Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland.

Scottish Natural Heritage (2010). The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 374.

Scottish Natural Heritage (2017). Wild Land Areas Map and Descriptions [online]. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/wild-land-areas-map-and-descriptions-2014> [accessed August 2023]

Scottish Natural Heritage (2017) Visual Representation of Wind Farms. Version 2.2. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/visual-representation-wind-farms-guidance>

Scottish Natural Heritage and Cairngorms National Park Authority (2018) Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (Working Draft 11)

Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (2011). Scottish Hill Tracks. 5th edition. Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

The Highland Council, Core Paths Interactive Map [online]. Available at: <https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2fd3fc9c72d545f7bcf1b43bf5c8445f> [accessed August 2023].

The Highland Council, Outdoor Highlands [online]. Available at: <https://www.highland.gov.uk/outdoorhighlands/> [accessed August 2023]

The Highland Council (2012) Highland-wide Local Development Plan. Available at: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local\\_and\\_statutory\\_development\\_plans/199/highland-wide\\_local\\_development\\_plan](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan)

The Highland Council (2016) Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments. Available at: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12880/visualisation\\_standards\\_for\\_wind\\_energy\\_developments](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12880/visualisation_standards_for_wind_energy_developments)

The Highland Council (2019) West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan. Available at: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local\\_and\\_statutory\\_development\\_plans/582/west\\_highland\\_and\\_islands\\_local\\_development\\_plan](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/582/west_highland_and_islands_local_development_plan)

Transport Scotland (2014) Fitting Roads: Securing More Sustainable Landscapes.

Walk Highlands [online]. Available at: <https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/> [accessed August 2023]



