

Chapter 19: Land Use and Recreation

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Figure 19.1: Land Use and Recreation

Glossary of Terms

Baseline	The current, pre-construction condition against which a development proposal is assessed.
Effect	The change resulting from the action taking place.
FCS (Forestry Commission Scotland)	Management and advisory body responsible for Scotland's national forest resource and tasked with the production of forest policy and guidance.
Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)	Forms the basis for spatial planning within the Highland Council area as a whole.
Impact	The action being taken which may lead to an effect.
Indirect effect	A secondary effect which may occur as a result of a physical change elsewhere: for example, where there are visual effects to a route but no physical restrictions.
Land take	Land which would be required either for the construction of The Proposed Development (temporary land take) or the operation of The Proposed Development (operational land take).
Landscape Assessment	The assessment of the degree and significance of potential changes to landscape character and value resulting from a development.
Lochaber District Salmon Fishing Board (DSFB)	Statutory body with responsibility for salmon and sea-trout fishery protection and enhancement in the Lochaber region.
Magnitude of effect	The degree of change which would be expected to take place to existing land use resources or recreational activities.
Recreational Amenity	The ability of members of the public to undertake particular activities for personal achievement or enjoyment.
Scoping Opinion	The written opinion of the determining authority as to the scope and level of detail of information to be provided in an EIA report.
Scottish Canals	The British Waterways Board, operating as Scottish Canals – Public body with statutory duty for the operation and maintenance of waterways in Scotland.
Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)	Sets out national planning policies which reflect Scottish Ministers' priorities for operation of the planning system and for the development and use of land.
Scotways (The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society)	Voluntary organisation promoting the use of rights of way in Scotland.
SW (Scottish Water)	Publicly-owned company responsible for water supply and treatment of waste water in Scotland.
Sensitivity	The potential for land use resources or recreational activities to be affected by The Proposed Development.
Significant Effects	Effects deemed to be significant in relation to the EIA Regulations.
SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage)	The body responsible for promoting, caring for and improving natural heritage in Scotland, and advising Government on natural heritage issues.
Study Area	A defined area within which the assessment has been undertaken.
Third National Planning Framework for Scotland (NPF3)	Sets the context for development planning in Scotland and provides a framework for the spatial development of Scotland as a whole.
Visual Assessment	The assessment of the degree and significance of potential changes within views obtained by members of the public.
West Highland and Islands Proposed Local Development Plan (proposed WestPlan)	More detailed Local Development Plan for the West Highlands and Islands area which focuses on where development should and should not occur in the West Highland and Islands area over the next 20 years. As yet un-adopted.
The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WHILP), 2012	Detailed Local Development Plan for the West Highlands and Islands. Superseded by the HwLDP but remains in force in some areas, primarily spatial planning within settlement boundaries. Will be superseded by the proposed WestPlan once adopted.

19 Land Use and Recreation

19.1 Executive Summary

- 19.1.1 An assessment of potential effects on land use and recreation has been undertaken for The Proposed Development. The assessment considers existing land uses which may be physically or indirectly affected by the construction and operation of The Proposed Development except those which are detailed specifically in other Chapters such as Socio-economics, Traffic and Transport and Forestry. It also considers the potential to which recreational activities which currently take place may be deterred.
- 19.1.2 The assessment has concluded that The Proposed Development would result in temporary effects to some land uses and recreational activities within the study area. However, for the majority of activities the employment of mitigation measures would ensure that significant effects would not occur. Potentially significant effects have been identified during construction for the amenity of settlements along the minor road between North Laggan and Kilfinnan and the amenity of walking routes including the Great Glen Way and mountain ascents. These effects are anticipated to be Moderate and temporary, reducing to non-significant levels during the operation of The Proposed Development.
- 19.1.3 All other effects are anticipated to be not significant and no long term significant effects to land use and recreation are predicted.

19.2 Introduction

- 19.2.1 This Chapter provides a general description of land use and recreation within the study area and presents an assessment of the potential impacts of The Proposed Development on land use and recreational amenity. The Chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 9: Visual Amenity, Chapter 13: Fish, Chapter 14: Geology and Water Environment, Chapter 16: Traffic and Transport, Chapter 20: Socio-economics, Chapter 21: Forestry and Appendix 3.3: Draft Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- 19.2.2 The assessment has been undertaken by ASH design + assessment Ltd.

19.3 Scope of Assessment

- 19.3.1 The assessment considers existing land uses which may be physically or indirectly affected by the construction and operation of The Proposed Development excepting those which are detailed specifically in other Chapters (Chapter 16: Traffic and Transport, Chapter 20: Socio-economics and Chapter 21: Forestry). It also considers the potential to which recreational activities which currently take place may be deterred.

Study Area

- 19.3.2 In order to cover all areas potentially physically affected by The Proposed Development in addition to their land use context, a study area extending approximately 5 km to the north-west of the Great Glen and 1.5 km to the south-east has been established between Letterfinlay and Invergarry, as shown on Figure 19.1.

Land Take Assumptions

- 19.3.3 The assessment is based on the following construction and operational land take assumptions for the various components of The Proposed Development.

Land Take Required for Construction

Upper Reservoir Works

- 19.3.4 The land take required for the construction activities associated with the various parts of the upper reservoir works would include the dam, site establishment, new access tracks and space for working areas, mostly located within the reservoir footprint. Space to accommodate potential borrow pits and bridge works may also be required. Working areas within Glengarry forest (Invergarry) would also include space for the upgrading of the existing forestry tracks, construction of new sections of track and areas for site establishment and potential borrow pits.

Surge and Ventilation shafts

- 19.3.5 It is assumed that temporary land use at the surge and ventilation shafts would include the areas accommodated by the working areas and space for temporary welfare facilities.

Lower Reservoir Works

- 19.3.6 Land take required for the construction activities associated with the lower reservoir works would include areas for site establishment, space for tunnel portals, and construction areas for the lower control works, a large jetty area and construction corridors to accommodate the proposed temporary access track to the upper reservoir area. Existing tracks and roads to be used for access would also be upgraded and widened as required.

Operational Land Take Requirements

- 19.3.7 During operation, all temporary access tracks and construction areas, as outlined above, would be reinstated.

Upper Reservoir Works

- 19.3.8 Permanent land take at the upper reservoir works is assumed to include the footprint of the dam, spillway and reservoir and a small area for the valve house. The width of the main access track is assumed to be reduced to around 6 m.

Surge and Ventilation Shafts

- 19.3.9 Permanent land take at the surge and ventilation shafts is anticipated to be limited to the footprint of the two shafts with a small buffer for any safety / protection measures and a small area for vehicle parking and turning. The width of the access track to the shafts is assumed to be reduced to a width suitable for a land rover (approximately 3 m in width with passing places).

Lower Reservoir Works

19.3.10 For the lower reservoir works, the existing road through North Laggan to Kilfinnan (Kilfinnan Road), and the forestry track from Kilfinnan to the lower reservoir works would be reduced slightly in width during operation. Long term operational land take would include the footprint areas of the lower control works, administration building and reduced jetty, and emergency access tunnel portal (all areas contained below rock cuttings).

Scoping and Consultation

19.3.11 The Scoping Opinion and other pre-application consultation for The Proposed Development has identified key issues to be considered within the assessment. Issues of relevance to Land Use and Recreation are outlined in Table 19.1.

Table 19.1: Scoping and Consultation Responses Relevant to Land Use and Recreation

Consultee	Summary Response	Comment/Action Taken
The Highland Council	Rural amenity and amenity of properties and tourism interests on the approach to the lower reservoir works must be considered.	Consideration of the amenity of properties is discussed in paragraphs 19.7.12 to 19.7.15.
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	In line with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, the applicant should have due regard to potential use of area for recreation by the public when designing and planning the development, including the proposed access routes which may increase the perceived recreational value of the area.	Effects on recreation are discussed in Section 19.7.
Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS)	Consideration to be given to effect on woodland and forestry including social, economic and environment values of the forest and woodland habitat.	The effects of The Proposed Development on these aspects of Forestry are considered in Chapter 21: Forestry. The detail in this chapter is limited to the potential effects on amenity woodland outwith forest areas.
Lochaber District Salmon Fishery Board	The effects of water fluctuations on a salmon farm and other fishing interests downstream should be considered.	This is described in paragraphs 19.7.10 to 19.7.11 and paragraphs 19.7.26 to 19.7.28.
Scottish Water	Consideration of Scottish Water assets and drinking water abstraction sources.	This is detailed in Chapter 14: Geology and Water Environment.
Visit Scotland	Consideration of effects on tourism (visually, environmentally and economically) should be identified and considered in full.	This is considered in Chapter 20: Socio-economics. Effects on individual attractions are discussed in Section 19.7.

Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (Scotways)	Consideration of the Great Glen Canoe Trail.	This is considered in paragraphs 19.7.30 to 19.7.33.
Scottish Canals	The ES should have full consideration of safe boat navigation in Loch Lochy, Caledonian Canal and land access to the Great Glen Way and operational sites (Gairloch and Laggan) during and post-construction.	The potential use of the Caledonian Canal is discussed in Chapter 7: Spoil Management and Chapter 16: Traffic and Transport. Effects on the Great Glen Way are discussed in paragraphs 19.7.21 to 19.7.23.
West Highland Sailing Club	Consideration is needed as to the potential effects on the boat hire business at the north end of Loch Lochy due to moving water levels.	This is discussed in paragraph 19.7.35.

19.3.12 It is recognised that Scoping comments from consultees relate to The Proposed Development and that previous comments which were made in relation to The Consented Development are also relevant. This assessment therefore considers all relevant aspects which were taken into account within the Land Use and Recreation chapter of the 2012 Environmental Statement for The Consented Development.

19.4 Policy, Legislation & Guidance

19.4.1 The assessment has taken account of national, regional and local policy and guidance relating to land use and recreational amenity relevant to the proposal. Detailed information on planning policy is contained within the Planning Statement accompanying the planning application for The Proposed Development and Chapter 5: Planning Policy. The following provides a summary with respect to Land Use and Recreation.

National

- The Third National Planning Framework for Scotland (NPF3) (2014);
- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (2014);
- Scottish Land Use Strategy 2016 – 2021 (LUS2); and
- Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006.

Regional

- The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), 2012;
- The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WHILP), 2012; and
- The West Highland and Islands Proposed Local Development Plan (proposed WestPlan), 2017.

19.4.2 The HwLDP forms the key element of spatial planning policy for The Proposed Development. The key policy of relevance to the land use and recreation within the study area comprises Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage which classifies various features within the study area as of local / regional importance, national importance and international importance and attributes policy constraints to each level. Within the study

area identified features of relevance to land use and recreation are anticipated to be of local importance, although it is recognised that there may be some areas of cultural heritage or recreation interest which are of national importance.

19.4.3 For areas of local importance the policy states:

“...we will allow developments if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource.”

19.4.4 For areas of national importance the policy states:

“...we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services”.

19.5 Methodology

19.5.1 The assessment has involved the following key tasks:

- Consultation with statutory agencies and landowners concerned with recreational interests in the area;
- Site survey and recording;
- Reference to relevant Local Development Plans and other literature to obtain baseline information;
- Liaison with SSE Renewables and project engineers Stantec UK; and
- Evaluation of impacts based on land take, severance and disruption during construction.

Assessment of Land Use and Recreational effects

19.5.2 The establishment of the degree of effect is based on the evaluation of sensitivity of the land use or activity which may be affected, and the potential magnitude of change which may occur as a result of The Proposed Development.

Sensitivity

19.5.3 Sensitivity concerns the potential for land use resources or recreational activities to be affected by The Proposed Development. Land use or recreational activities have been evaluated for their sensitivity based on a four point scale as follows:

- High:
 - Land used for a unique purpose, important in the local context, which would be very difficult to relocate; or
 - Important recreational routes or resources within the area of The Proposed Development.
- Medium:
 - Land important to its current use which would be possible, but difficult to maintain elsewhere; or

- Less frequently used recreation routes or resources which represent a common resource locally within or adjacent to the area of The Proposed Development; or more important routes or resources within the nearby context.
- Low:
 - A relatively common land use within the local context which is not closely linked to the location and would be able to relocate within the local area; or
 - Less frequently used recreation routes or resources within the nearby context; or more important routes or resources within the broader wider context.
- Negligible:
 - A common land use type in the local area which is not directly linked to the location and could easily be maintained elsewhere; or
 - Less important or infrequently used recreation routes or resources within the broader wider context.

19.5.4 Magnitude of effect concerns the degree of change which would be expected to take place to existing land use resources or recreational activities. Magnitude has been measured on a four point scale as follows:

- High:
 - Land take resulting in complete loss of an area of land which relates to a single land use; or
 - Complete loss or obstruction to a route or amenity resource.
- Medium:
 - Land take leading to notable loss of an area of land which is important for a particular land use; or
 - Partial loss or direct disruption to a route or amenity resource, compromising but not preventing the ability of an activity to take place; or, indirect (visual) effects which may compromise enjoyment of a recreational activity.
- Low:
 - Land take leading to a small scale loss of an area of land used for a particular land use; or
 - Minimal disruption to a route or amenity resource which does not affect the ability of an activity to take place; or, indirect (visual) effects but which are unlikely to reduce enjoyment of a recreational activity.
- Negligible:
 - Land take does not affect the ability of existing land use to continue; or
 - Minimal indirect (visual) effects which are very unlikely to affect enjoyment of a recreational activity.

Significance of Effect

19.5.5 The degree of effect significance is calculated by comparison of the magnitude of impact to the land use or recreational resource in relation to its sensitivity. Effect significance is assessed using the following criteria:

- **Major**– Where The Proposed Development would prevent an existing land use or activity from continuing, or the loss of amenity would result in that land use or activity being deterred;

- **Moderate**– Where The Proposed Development would lead to a notable disruption to an existing land use, preclude its continuation for a protracted period of time, or would lead to a notable loss of recreational amenity or enjoyment, but would not prevent the activities from continuing to take place in the longer term;
- **Minor**– Where The Proposed Development may compromise an existing land use or recreational activity but would not affect its ability to continue to take place or would have a small but recognisable influence on the recreational amenity or enjoyment; and
- **Neutral** – Where The Proposed Development would have no discernible influence on existing or intended land use activities and there is no discernible loss of recreational amenity or enjoyment.

19.5.6 For the purposes of this assessment impacts of Moderate or Major are considered to be significant.

19.5.7 The assessment considers the potential effects of The Proposed Development on land use and recreational activities during both the construction phase and the longer term operation.

19.6 Baseline Conditions

19.6.1 The principle areas of land use within the study area are two settled and low lying glens: the Great Glen and Glen Garry, which accommodate large open water lochs and provide transport corridors for major trunk roads, electrical infrastructure and recreational routes. These glens are the major focus of land use within the study area and settlement, agriculture and tourism features are focused within them. Beyond the glens, the land is upland and remote, predominantly moorland and used mainly for recreational activities. Large swathes of forestry cloth sides of the glens and provide linkage between the more intensive activities of the glens and the remote upland landscapes.

19.6.2 The major land uses throughout the study area are shown on Figure 19.1, and described further as follows.

Land Use

Forestry and Woodland

19.6.3 The core components of The Proposed Development are located on land owned by Forestry Commission (Scotland) although only some of this land is actively used for forest activities.

19.6.4 Woodland and forest within the study area is generally found along the lower slopes of the valley sides and consists primarily of coniferous plantation forestry. Areas of native broadleaf woodland are generally limited to narrow strips along the edges of lochs and watercourses, although there are some larger areas along the slopes of Glengarry and around Loch Oich and in Kilfinnan Glen. There are also some areas of ancient Caledonian Pine woodland in Glengarry Forest.

19.6.5 Detailed description of the woodland and forest resource within the study area is provided in Chapter 21: Forestry.

Moorland

- 19.6.6 Above the forest margins most other land is steeply sloping or at a higher elevation and as such is predominantly moorland. Most of the moorland areas found within the study area are owned by Forestry Commission (Scotland) and as these are often too elevated to be viable for forestry production, there is no current active land use, although sheep grazing occurred in these areas up until the mid-1990's. The mountains within this area (which include the Munros of Meall Teanga and Sron a Choire Ghairbh and the Corbett of Ben Tee) are popular with walkers. There are some small areas within the study area that are outwith the ownership of Forestry Commission (Scotland), such as around Faichem north of Glengarry. These areas include parts of larger sporting estates, managed for stalking and shooting but are outwith the area directly affected by The Proposed Development.

Agriculture

- 19.6.7 Land along the flat bases of the two glens is predominantly under small scale agricultural use within the study area. This includes the area around Kilfinnan, the land between Loch Lochy and Loch Oich, and a strip of land to the south of River Garry at Invergarry. These areas tend to be used largely for improved pasture for sheep and cattle or for silage and hay, with a small number of fields used for arable crops.

Water Bodies and Watercourses

- 19.6.8 The principle water bodies within the study area include Loch Lochy and Loch Oich, large water bodies orientated southwest to northeast within the Great Glen which are interlinked by the Caledonian Canal, and Loch Garry orientated roughly east to west and located within Glengarry. Loch Garry forms part of a hydroelectric scheme with a dam at its eastern extent. Smaller water bodies in the upland areas include Loch a' Choire Ghlais within Coire Glas and Loch Diota in the moorland area to the east.
- 19.6.9 The River Garry is the largest watercourse within the study area and flows eastwards from Loch Garry, via the hydroelectric dam, and down to Loch Oich. It has two main tributaries; Allt na Cailliche flowing from the northern slopes of Ben Tee to meet the River Garry to the south of White Bridge, and Aldernaig Burn which flows southwards from Loch Lundie and joins the River Garry to the west of Invergarry.
- 19.6.10 Smaller watercourses comprise the Allt a' Choire Ghlais / Kilfinnan Burn and Allt Glas-Dhoire. The Allt a' Choire Ghlais, which becomes the Kilfinnan Burn lower down, flows in a north-easterly direction from Coire Glas before reaching Kilfinnan Fall where it turns to the southeast and drops down to join Loch Lochy. The Allt Glas-Dhoire flows northeast down Cam Bhealach, in the southwest of the study area and joins Loch Lochy at Glas-dhoire

Water Supplies

- 19.6.11 There are a number of Scottish Water facilities and private water supplies within the study area. These are discussed in detail within Chapter 14: Geology and Water Environment and therefore consideration of these is not included within this Chapter.

Fish Farming

- 19.6.12 An Atlantic salmon fish farm in the ownership of Marine Harvest operates at the southern end of Loch Lochy. Although outside the study area, this has the potential to be affected by changing water levels within Loch Lochy.

Settlement

- 19.6.13 Settlement within the study area is primarily comprised of scattered individual and small groups of properties and farms along the floor of the Great Glen and Glengarry with the small strung-out village of Invergarry being the principal village centre. Outwith the village the main groupings of properties are at North and South Laggan, and Laggan, between Loch Lochy and Loch Oich. There are also a small number of properties along the shore of Loch Lochy and along Glengarry, at Mandally and Faichem.

Infrastructure

- 19.6.14 The main transport routes through the study area are the A82 (which runs southwest to northeast along the Great Glen between Fort William and Inverness) and the A87 (which initially runs east to west along Glengarry and connects the A82 at Invergarry to Kyle of Lochalsh and the Isle of Skye). The Caledonian Canal is also well used by people travelling by boat along the Great Glen between Fort William and Inverness.
- 19.6.15 There are frequent overhead lines in the area, most being low level woodpole lines connecting to the settlements and scattered properties. There is also a larger overhead line crossing the study area from the north of Invergarry, to Laggan Locks and down the side of Loch Lochy.
- 19.6.16 A small number of telecommunications masts are present within the study area. These include two masts close to Kilfinnan, one within forest and one near to Kilfinnan Burn.

Tourism

- 19.6.17 There is a notable degree of tourist accommodation within the study area including several small chalet areas on the shore of Loch Lochy and at the southern end of Loch Oich. A caravan site is located at Faichem in Glen Garry and there are a number of hotels throughout the study area including at Letterfinlay, Corriegour and Invergarry.
- 19.6.18 More detailed information on tourism as a socio-economic activity is provided in Chapter 20: Socio-economics.

Recreation

- 19.6.19 The study area is popular for recreation reflecting Lochaber's recognised status as 'Outdoor Capital of the UK'.

Walking

- 19.6.20 Walking is a popular activity within the study area and there are a number of popular trails and routes, most notably, the Great Glen Way (a long distance route from Fort William to Inverness). This follows a route along the west side of Loch Lochy which then follows the Canal towpath from Laggan Locks to the Laggan Swing Bridge before taking a route along

the east side of Loch Oich. An alternative route via forestry to Invergarry is also signposted. Users of the Great Glen Way may also potentially use the 'Trailblazer Rest' wild camp site at Glas-dhoire, although this has been established as part of the Great Glen Canoe Trail (see paragraph 19.6.27).

- 19.6.21 Walking routes up mountains in the study area include routes up the Corbett Ben Tee, from Glengarry and Kilfinnan and routes up the adjacent Munros Sròn a' Choire Ghairbh and Meall na Teanga from Kilfinnan via Càrn Bhealach. Sròn a' Choire Ghairbh is often walked as a circular route either ascending or descending along the southern ridge to Sean Mheall.
- 19.6.22 In addition, the book 'Scottish Hill Tracks', published by Scotways indicates parts of three longer cross country walking routes within the study area:
- Route 238 from Loch Arkaig to Invergarry to Loch Garry which passes to the west of Sròn a Choire Ghairbh and through forestry on the south side of Glengarry to either Loch Garry or Invergarry;
 - Route 239 from Loch Garry to Laggan Locks which follows a route between Meall a' Choire Ghlais and Ben Tee and descends to Kilfinnan; and
 - Route 240 from Loch Arkaig to Laggan Locks which passes through the Càrn Bhealach and through the forest on the western side of Loch Lochy.
- 19.6.23 Under direction of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, The Highland Council has produced Core Path Plans with the aim of creating a framework of paths linking with other access provision. Core Paths identified within the study area are mostly centred around Invergarry and include the Caledonian Canal towpath and routes around Loch Oich (some of which also form part of the Great Glen Way).

Cycling

- 19.6.24 As with walking, cycling is popular within the study area and well used routes include the Great Glen Way and Great Glen Cycle Route (National Cycle Route 78) which follows the same route as the Great Glen Way through the study area. Mountain biking is also popular, particularly in Glengarry Forest and other forestry areas.

Fishing

- 19.6.25 Fishing is a popular pursuit in the area and takes place on the River Garry, Loch Garry, River Lochy, Loch Lochy and Loch Oich. There is a fishing cabin located at the mouth of River Garry and a number of companies offer fishing on the lochs.

Canoeing and Rafting

- 19.6.26 Within the study area, white water canoeing, kayaking and rafting take place on the River Garry. These activities are generally concentrated on a 4 km stretch between the dam at the edge of Loch Garry and White Bridge but are also undertaken on the stretch beyond White Bridge, towards Loch Oich. SSE operate weekly freshet compensation flows from the dam during the summer months and this leads to a concentration of recreational activity. This river includes a series of Grade 3 rapids and 'Scottish White Water', the Scottish Canoe Association guide (2nd Edition), identifies this river as being suitable for intermediate paddlers and playboaters. The main take-out location is at White Bridge and as such the

car park and forestry tracks in this area are busy in the summer months when freshets are being released.

- 19.6.27 Along the Caledonian Canal the Great Glen Canoe Trail has been established. This includes the production of mapped guides and a number of 'Trailblazer Rest' sites have been established where canoes can be pulled out of the water and wild camping takes place. One of these sites has been established on the Glas-dhoire peninsula adjacent to the proposed lower reservoir works where the beach allows canoes to be easily hauled out onto the shore. A timber shelter, fire pits and a composting toilet have been established at this site. This is the only promoted rest stop along the shore of Loch Lochy between Clunes and Laggan Locks. The rest point is also used by walkers on the Great Glen Way (see paragraph 19.6.20).

Boating

- 19.6.28 In addition to canoeing and rafting, the lochs, particularly Loch Lochy and Loch Oich, and the Caledonian Canal are popular with cruisers and other boats travelling along the Great Glen between Fort William and Inverness. There is a concentration of boating activity taking place at Laggan Locks where the West Highland Sailing club is based and a boat hire business operates 34 cruisers.

Other Attractions and Activities

- 19.6.29 The major attraction in this area is the Great Glen. There are numerous parking, viewpoint and picnic areas along the A82 as it runs along the shore of Loch Lochy and Loch Oich and these are popular tourist stopping points. The largest parking area is located approximately 400 m north of Letterfinlay and regularly includes a mobile catering van.
- 19.6.30 Laggan Locks provides a focus for visitors with a car park and picnic tables and a floating pub on the canal.
- 19.6.31 This area is within the Lochaber Geopark, which despite losing its UNESCO Geopark status in November 2011, is renowned for its combined areas of outstanding geology and geomorphology. The purpose of the Geopark is to raise awareness and promote the geological heritage of the area to local residents and to visitors. The Lochaber Geopark Association has created a series of Geotrail leaflets which provide details of viewpoints and short walks throughout the Geopark area. The Geotrail leaflets do not identify any walks or stopping points within the study area.
- 19.6.32 There is a shinty field on the outskirts of Invergarry which is home to the Glengarry Shinty Club and is also the venue for the annual Glengarry Highland Games.

19.7 Assessment of Effects

- 19.7.1 The Proposed Development objectives, with respect to land use, are to undertake methods of construction for access tracks, the upper reservoir works and lower reservoir works that would minimise land take and land use change, where possible.
- 19.7.2 Impacts arising from construction and operation of The Proposed Development would comprise a combination of long term impacts related to permanent loss of existing land and temporary impacts related to disruption of existing activity during construction.

Land Use

Forestry and Woodland

- 19.7.3 During construction of The Proposed Development there would be a requirement to remove some areas of forestry and woodland. However, the majority of areas affected are likely to be returned to forestry and woodland following the completion of construction works for future management, in line with existing Forest Design Plans. A detailed description and assessment of temporary and permanent forest removal and the effects on forest viability is provided in Chapter 21: Forestry. This aspect of land use is therefore not considered here.
- 19.7.4 In terms of woodland removal there may be some other small areas where amenity trees would need to be removed, such as alongside the public road to be upgraded to the lower reservoir works. Where these areas are accommodating a particular purpose, such as shelter or screening to properties, it is assumed that some replanting would occur to reinstate these objectives.
- 19.7.5 The sensitivity amenity woodland (excluding forestry areas) as a resource within the study area is considered to be Low and the magnitude of effect Low during construction and Negligible during operation. The resultant significance of effect is therefore anticipated to be **Minor** during construction and **Neutral** during operation. These effects are not considered to be significant.

Moorland

- 19.7.6 There would be temporary loss of a number of areas of moorland during the construction of The Proposed Development associated with construction at the upper reservoir works and surge / ventilation shaft area. This would include land take for access tracks, site establishment and borrow pits. During operation, the new dam, upper reservoir and permanent new access tracks would lead to a permanent loss of moorland areas. These comprise relatively small areas within this very expansive resource and as described in paragraph 19.6.6 this moorland currently has no active land use. As such, sensitivity and magnitude during construction and operation are considered to be Negligible. The anticipated effect to moorland as a land use within the study area is therefore considered to be **Neutral** during construction and operation.

Agriculture

- 19.7.7 The Proposed Development would result in both temporary and permanent loss of small areas of land used for agriculture resulting from the upgrading works to the public road and existing forestry track to the lower reservoir works. There is also the potential that construction activities would result in some disruption to agricultural activities which currently take place, although it is not considered that this would preclude agricultural activities. During operation, the public road is anticipated to be narrowed slightly to around 6 m and these small areas may be able to return to agricultural use. The reduction in traffic and activity would also result in limited disturbance to these activities.
- 19.7.8 Sensitivity of agricultural land use is considered to be Medium. Magnitude during construction is anticipated to be Low reducing to Negligible during operation. The effect on

agricultural land use is therefore predicted to be **Minor** during construction of The Proposed Development and **Neutral** during operation.

Water Bodies and Watercourses

- 19.7.9 Detailed descriptions of the effects on water bodies and watercourses, including water supplies within the study area are provided in Chapter 6: Water Management, Chapter 12: Aquatic Ecology, Chapter 13: Fish and Chapter 14: Geology and Water Environment. This subject is therefore not considered within this Chapter with the exception of fish farming. Recreational use of the water environment is considered in 19.7.26 to 19.7.36 below.

Fish Farming

- 19.7.10 The fluctuation of water levels in Loch Lochy would be within the existing level range, although more frequent. Discussions have been undertaken with Marine Harvest and it has been confirmed that the operation of the fish farm would not be affected by these more frequent water fluctuations. There is the potential for pollution of Loch Lochy to affect the fish farm and the intended aim of Marine Harvest to achieve Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), accreditation. Best practice measures would be undertaken during the construction and operation of The Proposed Development to minimise the potential for pollution. Details of measures which would be undertaken are included within the proposed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), a draft of which is included in Appendix 3.3.
- 19.7.11 Sensitivity of fish farming is considered to be Medium. However, magnitude is considered to be Negligible for both the construction and operational phases of The Proposed Development. The resultant effect is therefore anticipated to be **Neutral**.

Settlement

- 19.7.12 There is likely to be some disturbance to amenity of properties on the north side of the Caledonian Canal from North Laggan to Kilfinnan and the holiday properties beyond as a result of upgrading works to the existing public road and construction vehicle movements to site establishment and lower reservoir works. This would include a potentially large number of heavy loads transporting spoil from tunnel excavations.
- 19.7.13 In addition, one property within the forest near White Bridge would be adjacent to the existing forestry track proposed to be upgraded and there may be some disruption to the amenity of this property due to increased construction traffic, although existing forest traffic will already lead to some level of effect.
- 19.7.14 The visual amenity assessment identified potential significant effects to thirty-five properties or property groups during construction of The Proposed Development. These effects may also potentially have some indirect effect on the amenity of properties.
- 19.7.15 The sensitivity of settlement within the study area is considered to be Medium. Magnitude of effect during construction is anticipated to be Medium, reducing to Negligible during operation. The significance of effect is therefore predicted to be **Moderate** (and significant) during the construction of The Proposed Development and **Neutral** during operation.

Infrastructure

- 19.7.16 The presence of construction related traffic has the potential to increase journey times locally during the construction period. A detailed assessment of traffic movements on the road network and the operational aspects of the Caledonian Canal has been undertaken and is included in Chapter 16: Traffic and Transport. These issues are therefore not considered within this Chapter which is limited to potential effects on other infrastructural elements. Recreational and amenity use of the canal is included in paragraph 19.7.33 below.
- 19.7.17 During construction, there is the potential to affect some existing infrastructural features to accommodate the works such as low voltage electricity lines and telecommunications masts. Wherever possible, these features would be avoided and protected throughout the works. Where interaction is unavoidable, measures would be agreed to relocate these to another suitable location in association with the owner or relevant organisation. The viability of these structures would not be compromised.
- 19.7.18 Sensitivity of infrastructural land use is considered to be Low. Magnitude would be Low during construction and Negligible during operation. The resultant effect is anticipated to be **Minor** during construction and **Neutral** during operation. These effects are not considered to be significant.

Tourism

- 19.7.19 Assessment of potential effects to the tourism industry is contained within Chapter 20: Socio-economics. Effects on individual attractions are detailed in the following section on recreation.

Recreation

- 19.7.20 This section considers the potential effect of The Proposed Development on recreational amenity in the area. Chapter 9: Visual Amenity details the anticipated visual effects associated with recreational routes and sites which have been referred to in this assessment.

Walking and Cycling

The Great Glen Way

- 19.7.21 It is proposed that, where required for safety, alternative provision may be made for users of the Great Glen Way to separate them from the works. Any such provisions would be agreed with the local Access Officer in the form of an Outdoor Access Management Plan, and constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 where this does not conflict with the health and safety requirements of the construction site.
- 19.7.22 The route would be required to cross some access tracks which could cause brief interruption to walkers and cyclists using the route but, where the route was shared with construction access, a safe, separate route for walkers and cyclists would be maintained. Therefore there would be limited direct disruption. The visual assessment (see Chapter 9) has identified potential significant effects for those using the section of this route past the

lower reservoir works and access road near Kilfinnan. It is likely that this would lead to some reduction in amenity value and enjoyment to this part of the route. Long term, the visual effect is not anticipated to be significant and walker / cyclists would be able to pass by uninterrupted, other than by occasional maintenance traffic.

- 19.7.23 Sensitivity for the Great Glen Way is considered to be High, magnitude of change would be Medium during construction and Negligible during operation. The amenity effect on the Great Glen Way is therefore considered to be **Moderate** (and significant) during construction for this short section, and **Neutral** during operation.

Other Walking Routes

- 19.7.24 There would be potential disruption to a number of other walking routes which would either share access with The Proposed Development or require to cross access tracks. These include routes in Glengarry Forest, ascent routes up Ben Tee and Sròn a' Choire Ghairbh. As for the Great Glen Way, where recreational routes follow the same routes as construction traffic, safe alternatives would be provided. Therefore, whilst there may be some disruption to walkers, they would not be prevented from using these routes. Significant visual effects (see Chapter 9: Visual Amenity) identifies potential significant effects to several of these routes and it is likely that these indirect effects as well as potential interruptions would lead to some level of reduced amenity value and enjoyment. During operation, a significant but more localised visual effect has been identified for some of the mountain routes although there would be no direct interruption to walkers. The presence of new access tracks may be of some benefit to walkers by providing easier routes into the hills.
- 19.7.25 Sensitivity for walking as a recreational activity is considered to be Medium and High. Magnitude would be Medium during construction and Negligible during operation. The amenity effect on walking generally is therefore considered to be **Moderate** (and significant) during construction, but **Neutral** during operation.

Fishing

- 19.7.26 There is the potential for pollution from The Proposed Development to affect fishing interests in nearby water bodies and watercourses. However, best practice measures would be undertaken during the construction and operation of The Proposed Development to minimise the potential for pollution. Details of measures which would be undertaken are included within the proposed CEMP which is included in draft in Appendix 3.3. Fishing on the majority of watercourses is therefore anticipated to be largely unaffected during construction of The Proposed Development although there may be some temporary disturbance to amenity from construction traffic on anglers wishing to access the River Garry close to White Bridge.
- 19.7.27 During operation, there is the potential for fluctuating water levels to affect fishing interests in the River Lochy. This issue is discussed in Chapter 6: Water Management and would require the modification of Mucomir Power Station to allow more control of water level in Loch Lochy. Detailed water level and discharge predictions are not possible at this time as the operation of The Proposed Development would be in response to future electricity markets. As such, a Condition of Consent is requested to submit further details on the proposed modifications to Mucomir, and the means of regulating flows into the River Lochy.

19.7.28 Sensitivity of fishing as an amenity within the study area is considered to be Medium. Magnitude during construction would be Low and during operation would be Negligible. The effect on fishing as a recreational activity is therefore anticipated to be locally **Minor** during construction, generally **Neutral** and **Neutral** in the long term. This is not considered to be significant.

Canoeing and Rafting

19.7.29 The existing forestry track and car park at White Bridge (Invergarry) in Glengarry Forest are well used by canoeists and rafters as this is the main take-out area. These areas can become very busy with rafting related vehicle movements particularly when the weekly freshet compensation flow from the dam further upstream is being released. The existing bridge at the entrance to the forest at White Bridge would be used to gain access to the upper reservoir works and so recreational users also using the bridge to gain access to the adjacent car park are likely to be affected during construction of The Proposed Development. However, there would be scope to reduce potential impacts during construction through traffic management measures which would be discussed and agreed with The Highland Council and Scottish Canoe Association in advance of construction commencing.

19.7.30 The construction and operation of the lower reservoir works is likely to result in the existing Trailblazer Rest location at Glas-dhoire becoming unusable, for health and safety reasons. It is therefore proposed that this would be relocated to a suitable nearby location which would allow canoeists a rest opportunity after a similar stretch of paddling along the loch. This would include the provision of appropriate infrastructure to enable canoes to be taken out of the water if necessary.

19.7.31 The visual assessment (Chapter 9) identifies potential significant visual effects for users of Loch Lochy. This has the potential to lead to a small reduction in amenity value to those parts of the Great Glen Canoe Trail.

19.7.32 Sensitivity of canoeing as an activity within the study area is considered to be High. Magnitude during construction would be Low assuming the implementation of mitigation measures (see Section 19.8).

19.7.33 Impacts on canoeists and rafters are therefore considered to be **Minor** during construction, reducing to **Neutral** in the longer term, and therefore would not be significant.

Boating

19.7.34 The potential effects on use and viability of the Caledonian Canal are discussed in Chapter 16: Traffic and Transport. This confirms that significant effects on users of the canal would be unlikely although there is the potential that waiting times at locks may be increased at times when barges were travelling through. Chapter 9: Visual Amenity identifies localised significant effects for boat users on Loch Lochy but non-significant effects for other stretches. This may lead to a small, localised reduction in amenity value or enjoyment within these areas.

19.7.35 At Laggan Locks, there is the potential that, during operation, increased fluctuating water levels could affect berthing areas for cruisers. However, measures would be undertaken in

discussion with West Highland Sailing Club and The Highland Council to ensure that this did not occur, including provision of alternative berthing methods if necessary.

- 19.7.36 Sensitivity of boating is considered to be Medium. Magnitude is anticipated to be Low during construction and operation. The effect on the amenity of boating is therefore anticipated to be **Minor** during construction and operation. This is not considered to be significant.

Other Attractions

Parking Areas, Picnic Sites and Viewpoints

- 19.7.37 There is unlikely to be any direct effect on the amenity of parking areas, picnic sites or viewpoints along the A82 and at Laggan Locks. However, traffic management measures may be required at White Bridge to relieve the potential bottleneck at the bridge. Mitigation measures would be discussed as necessary (see paragraph 19.7.299). Nevertheless, there is the potential for indirect effects to the amenity value of these locations due to visual effects. Chapter 9: Visual Amenity identifies potential significant effects to views from laybys on the A82 and at Laggan Locks. It is considered that these effects would be likely to reduce the enjoyment and amenity of these areas to some degree, although their use would not be compromised.
- 19.7.38 Recreational sensitivity for these areas is considered to be Medium. Magnitude is anticipated to be Low during construction and Negligible during operation. The effect on the amenity of stopping, parking and picnic areas and viewpoints is therefore anticipated to be **Minor** during construction and **Neutral** during operation and not significant.
- 19.7.39 It is anticipated that there would be no noticeable effect on use and enjoyment of the shinty field and Glengarry Highland Games ground and as such, impacts are predicted to be **Neutral** both during construction and in the longer term.

Planning Applications

- 19.7.40 A search was undertaken to identify any planning applications made within the last 2 years which have the potential to be affected by The Proposed Development. This search identified two applications:
- 16/04349/FUL: Land 225 m SE of 7 Kilfinnan Holiday Lodges North Laggan (Upgrade of existing telecommunications base station: removal of existing 4 no. antennas, extension of the mast to a height of 25.0 m, installation of 2 no. replacement antennas, the addition of 2 no. 900 mm diameter dish antennas and 1 no. 600 mm diameter dish antenna and ancillary works); and
 - 16/04708/FUL: Land At Balmaglaster North Laggan (*Erection of house (renewal of 13/04319/FUL)*).
- 19.7.41 16/04349/FUL concerns the upgrade of the existing telecommunications mast close to the proposed site establishment area near the lower reservoir works. This development has been granted Planning Permission. It is not known if it has been constructed. As this is in the same location as an existing mast, mitigation measures to either avoid or arrange relocation would also apply. No additional effect to infrastructure is therefore anticipated.

19.7.42 16/04708/FUL originally relates to a planning application made in 2008 for a house on the existing minor road to Kilfinnan. This development has been granted Planning Permission but has not been constructed. Should this property be built it would be affected in a similar way to other properties along this route.

19.8 Mitigation

19.8.1 Mitigation measures identified in the preceding section are proposed to ensure the minimal degree of effects to existing and proposed land uses. These are summarised as follows:

- Where amenity woodland which currently contributes to a particular purpose needs to be removed, replacement planting should be undertaken to ensure that purpose is continued;
- Safe, alternative walking routes should be provided for all walking routes where there is the potential for walker and construction traffic to share routes;
- Best practice measures for pollution prevention must be in place to prevent effects on fishing within the surrounding area and fish farming within Loch Lochy;
- Parking and access provision should be discussed with The Highland Council and Scottish Canoe Association in advance of construction at White Bridge to ensure continued access for canoeing and rafting on River Garry;
- The Trailblazer Rest at Glas-dhoire should be relocated to a suitable nearby location with provision of appropriate infrastructure to enable canoes to be taken out of the water if necessary;
- Measures should be undertaken in discussion with West Highland Sailing Club and The Highland Council to ensure that water fluctuations do not affect docking areas for boats at Laggan Locks;
- Implications for operation of the Caledonian Canal should be discussed with Scottish Canals in advance of construction to agree mitigation associated with Laggan Locks; and
- Further details on the implications of fluctuating water levels on users of Loch Lochy should be provided once detailed water level and discharge predictions are known (see Chapter 6: Water Management).

19.9 Conclusions

19.9.1 As detailed above The Proposed Development would result in temporary effects to some land uses and recreational activities within the study area. However, for the majority of activities the employment of mitigation measures would ensure that significant effects did not occur. Potentially significant effects have been identified during construction for the amenity of settlements along the minor public road between North Laggan and Kilfinnan and the amenity of walking routes including the Great Glen Way and mountain ascents. These effects are anticipated to be Moderate and temporary, reducing to non-significant levels during the operation of The Proposed Development.

19.9.2 All other effects are anticipated to be not significant and no long term significant effects to land use and recreation are predicted.

19.10 References

Scottish Canoe Association Guide (2nd Edition)

Scottish Right of Way and Access Society (2011). Scottish Hill Tracks (5th Edition)

Scottish Government (2014). Scottish Planning Policy

The Highland Council. Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012)

The Highland Council. The West Highlands and Islands Proposed Local Development Plan (WestPlan) (2017)

UK Hydrographic Office North Coast of Scotland Pilot (Admiralty Sailing Directions)

Websites Used:

Bing Mapping aerial photography - <https://www.bing.com/maps/?FORM=EXIPRV>

Forestry Commission (Scotland) website - <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/>

Great Glen Canoe Trail website - <http://greatglencanoetrail.info/>

Official Great Glen Way website - <https://www.highland.gov.uk/ggw/>

Sustrans - <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

The Highland Council Core Path Plan - https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/198/core_paths_in_lochaber

Walk Highlands website - <https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/>