

APPENDIX 5: FACTORS AFFECTING THE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS OF WIND TURBINES

5.1 Introduction

There are a number of overlapping and interacting factors which affect the potential landscape and visual effects of wind turbines. The four main turbine factors are:

- Size of turbine
- Turbine design (shape/ blades/ tower /colour)
- Numbers of turbines (within groups and/ or single turbines spread across an area)
- Distribution of turbine groupings (spacing between groups and/or single turbines)

The effects of these factors will in turn differ depending on the character of the landscape in which the turbines are located.

5.1.1 Turbine Size

Turbine size is the first factor to consider in assessing the impacts of wind turbines. In particular, smaller turbines are considered to be more appropriate in lowland landscapes, which are usually more complex and varied than uplands, and where there are generally smaller scale features such as trees and buildings that provide a 'scale reference' against a turbine. Conversely, upland landscapes are generally simpler in character, larger in scale and there are fewer human scale reference features, meaning that larger turbines are more easily accommodated (see SNH guidance, 2009).

Turbine size for installed or consented commercial windfarms in Scotland varies from ca. 55m to blade tip at the original Hagshaw Hill to a current maximum of 147m. However, considerably smaller turbines are now commonly installed for the non-commercial scale proposals typical of Feed in Tariff (FiT) schemes. Current consents within Aberdeenshire vary from many turbines of under 15m height on various domestic FiT schemes to 125m at Mid Hill, with further turbines up to 195m height in the wider 30km buffer zone.

In this study we have classified six blade tip height categories from 'small' to 'very large' which would have differing relationships with the scale and character of the landscape and with one another. These are listed in Table 5.1 below.

There is a significant range of available commercial turbines sizes. However even the smaller commercial turbines are very much larger than any other common vertical object in the landscape, such as a house or trees, with only electricity pylons (typically 25-50m tall) coming close in size. Even the medium size of turbine falls within this height bracket and is therefore significantly taller than most trees and buildings. Furthermore, by being kinetic structures, the visual prominence of turbines is increased relative to existing static features. In this respect smaller turbines may be more noticeable as their blades rotate more rapidly than those of large turbines.

The small domestic scale turbines (<15m) are however closer to the heights of common visual references such as houses and trees and their landscape and visual impacts tend to be much more localised due to localised screening and backclothing by landforms and trees.

Table 5.1. Turbine Size Categories in This Study

Size Category	Blade Tip Height	Typical Use
Small	Turbines less than 15m in height	Typically used for domestic FiT schemes
Small-Medium	Turbines 15m to <30m in height	Typically used for domestic and farm FiT schemes
Medium	Turbines 30m to <50m in height	Typically used for farm and industrial FiT schemes
Medium/Large	Turbines 50m to <80m in height	Single turbine FiT schemes and smaller turbines used in commercial schemes
Large	Turbines 80m in height and greater.	Typical turbines used in commercial windfarms but also on some single turbine schemes
Very Large	Turbines 125m in height and greater.	Used in commercial onshore windfarms, as well as offshore (up to ca. 200m in the latter)

SNH considers that smaller turbines can be used to mitigate landscape impacts in a lowland situation with a smaller scale landscape pattern and scale indicators. As it has to be balanced against losses in output, size reduction should be used in specific cases where a clearly identified benefit can be achieved. The following are criteria by which this may be judged:

- mitigating significant landscape or visual impacts on a highly valued or sensitive receptor;
- avoiding an adverse scale relationship with a landform or other key landscape element or feature;
- allowing an intervening landform and/or forest to screen views of turbines from certain receptors; or
- achieving a significant reduction in overall visibility by virtue of relationship to surrounding landform and trees.

Where reduction in impact would be a matter of degree rather than a clear quantitative change the benefits are less clear cut.

SNH guidance also recommends that where two or more developments are in close proximity to one another, turbines of a similar size should be used. The use of significantly different turbine sizes within a single windfarm or between two windfarms or turbine developments in close proximity can otherwise lead to adverse visual and scale effects which increase the appearance of clutter, or create odd perspectives when seen from certain viewpoints.

5.1.2 Turbine Design

Variations in size aside, the design of wind turbines can vary considerably. This is particularly the case with smaller turbines under ca. 50m in height. The main variations affecting appearance of wind turbines are:

- two or three bladed
- solid or lattice tower
- shape/ size of nacelle
- proportion of blade length to tower height
- hub faces into or away from the wind direction
- colour

Other factors such as tower and blade shape tend to be more subtle but in combination can lead to a significant difference in appearance, as the difference between the two turbines below demonstrates:



Enercon and Siemens turbines have different nacelles, blades and towers leading to significant differences in appearance

Colour is an issue that is a more important variable in smaller turbines. Colour choice for larger commercial turbines has settled on a neutral light grey with slight variations in lighter or darker shade between developments. It is generally agreed that this colour range is

most likely to reduce the prominence of turbines when seen under the most prevalent atmospheric conditions.

In the case of smaller turbines there is more variation in colour and more likelihood of being seen against land rather than sky. In particular many small turbines are white, which increases their prominence when seen from a distance, particularly seen against land.



A 47m high turbine seen from several kilometres distance reflects the evening light, contrasting with the dark backdrop of trees and grassland

Choices of turbine design, including colour, are of potential significance when considering the effects of individual turbines or wider cumulative effects on the landscape.

5.1.3 Windfarm Size

There is no current 'accepted' classification of commercial windfarm sizes in Scotland. Existing and proposed wind energy developments vary in turbine numbers and turbine sizes; from single small turbines to over 200 large turbines. Individual turbines vary in size from below 15m to more than 140m, with maximum outputs from a few kW to greater than 3MW.

To place Aberdeenshire within context, it is worth considering the wider Scottish context of wind energy development. The table below refers to small, medium, large etc. size wind energy developments. For clarity we have adopted wind energy development size categories related wherever possible to published guidance or planning application procedures. The 20MW size above which SPG and SPP currently applies is shown in the Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2. Wind Energy Development Size Categories

Size Category	Size Criteria	Planning Criteria/ Illustrative Examples
Small	A development of 3 or fewer turbines.	As defined by SNH guidance on assessment of small scale wind energy development (<i>SNH 2012</i>)
Small/Medium	A windfarm of more than 3 turbines up to 20MW output	Current SPP recommends windfarms above 20MW are to be covered by SPG. <i>Eg. Between 4 turbines over 50m and 10x2MW turbines or 6x3MW turbines</i>
SPP 2010 'Cutoff' 20MW		
Medium	A windfarm between 20MW and 50MW output	Windfarms up to 50MW are dealt with as local planning authority applications. <i>Eg. Between 7x3MW and 16x3MW turbines</i>
Large	Windfarms greater than 50MW output	Windfarms over 50MW are section 36 Applications dealt with by Scottish Ministers. <i>A minimum size of 20x2.5MW or 17x3MW turbines</i>
Very Large	Windfarms greater than 100MW output	<i>A minimum size of 50 turbines over 125m tall</i>

5.1.4 Turbine Numbers and Landscape Impacts

Wind turbines considered out of their landscape context are usually simple, aerodynamic and functional structures that many consider to have a clear aesthetic of 'form following function' in their design. Landscape and visual impact issues relate primarily to their scale and potential incongruity in a landscape rather than to the aesthetics of the turbine design. In this case, the number of turbines in a wind energy development has a bearing on the visual image of the development that extends well beyond the landscape area that it physically covers:

- Small clusters of turbines still express the aesthetics of the individual turbines and the blade movement of each turbine is discernible. The cluster is seen as a discrete item within a landscape, becoming a significant feature but generally not dominating or changing the character of a large area.

- In large groupings of turbines there is area coverage of the landscape, rather than a discrete grouping. The individual turbines usually become lost in a mass, blade movements are perceived across the whole area and there is a more 'cluttered' appearance.
- As turbine numbers increase it is increasingly difficult to design a wind energy development such that overlap and clustered alignments are avoided when seen from surrounding viewpoints. Design mitigation becomes a matter of avoiding excessive clutter, skylining and proximity to sensitive receptors rather than creating aesthetically balanced groupings

It is recognised that these qualities grade into one another depending on the exact size of development (eg. 3, 6, 12, 20, 50, 100+ turbines) and on how the turbines are grouped (eg. in mass groupings or in lines along ridges). Nevertheless, to the extent that they are more easily contained and definable, single turbines and smaller windfarms would have a disproportionately lesser influence on the landscape than large windfarms and are less likely to dominate areas and blur boundaries between landscape types.

In small groupings, odd numbers of turbines (ie 1, 3 or 5) usually present a more balanced composition than even numbers, unless there is a strong regular pattern or line in the landscape to which the turbines can be related.

5.2 Turbine Layout

The layout of turbines within a windfarm is a critical consideration. Whilst the optimum layout, including turbine separation distances and position in relation to the prevailing wind will relate to maximising output, there will be other practicalities. Thus turbine layout may vary according to turbine numbers, land ownership, topography, access and numerous environmental constraints. These factors are taken into consideration during the windfarm design development process in which the overall aesthetic of the windfarm is considered.

Layouts should relate to landforms and patterns in the landscape and present a coherent image from the surrounding viewpoints. Thus in lowland landscapes with a strong geometric pattern the turbines may be organised in lines of a grid, whereas in the case of a distinct landform such as a ridge or coastline they may be arranged in a curved line following the landform. In upland landscapes turbines may be arranged in a more organic pattern, following ridgelines or clustered around rounded hilltops. Attention should be paid to the relationship of outer turbines in large groups ensuring that there are no 'outliers' creating an unbalanced or disorganised appearance, giving rise to greater visual spread.

When two or more developments are in close proximity or a windfarm is being expanded there can be cumulative issues relating to site layout if these are clearly contrasting (eg. a geometric layout adjacent to an organic layout). Such developments should be designed to achieve a harmonious layout and relationship.

5.3 Windfarm Distribution

5.3.1 Pattern of Windfarm Development

When considering cumulative impacts of turbines and windfarms it is not just the number of turbines in the landscape that affects impacts but also the development pattern. This has an effect on the ability of the landscape to absorb change and on visual receptors. The dispersal of the turbines in small groups has some advantages in that each grouping is less dominant within the landscape and presents a less cluttered visual image. There is also less likelihood of 'swamping' landscapes and blurring the boundaries between different landscape types and features if there are distinct gaps between clusters of wind turbines. However, the increased number of windfarms or turbine clusters also means that there is an increased likelihood of seeing a windfarm or turbine and at closer proximity than if the turbines were concentrated into fewer locations.

The trend in Scotland is for the concentration of wind turbines into fewer, larger, windfarms. This arises initially via large windfarm proposals and then through the later extension of many existing windfarms. The pattern may also play out on a wider regional scale or 'clusters and spaces' where groups of windfarms lie within large areas separated by significant areas without turbines.

However the pattern of existing and proposed development in Aberdeenshire does not reflect the national trend for larger windfarms that is prevalent in areas such as South Lanarkshire or the Scottish Borders. The greatest numbers of turbines in Aberdeenshire are located in lowland areas and particularly in agricultural areas.

There is a diffuse distribution of turbines, typical of farm scale FIT projects and linked to the structure of land ownership in Aberdeenshire. Where there are many farmer owner occupiers rather than a few larger landownerships typical of other parts of Scotland. Added to this is the entrepreneurial spirit of farmers in the North East, where on farms wind power generation is seen as a major opportunity to counterbalance reductions in agricultural support under CAP reform (Bell & Booth SAC Consulting 2010).

Therefore the pattern of existing wind energy in Aberdeenshire relates more to the location of smaller scale producers rather than to regional landscapes. It is this type of piecemeal development, small groups or single turbines (97% of consented turbines), that makes it possible to draw only broad conclusions about the pattern of development at a regional scale. This means that greater consideration of design of turbine and separation distances between developments is required when planning future development.

5.3.2 Separation Distances between Turbines and Windfarms

Separation distance between turbines and windfarms has a bearing on how they are perceived together and within the landscape, particularly in relation to defining the limits of cumulative development. A clear visual separation between two or more windfarms can be achieved by a certain physical distance. This distance would depend on the size and number of the turbines or windfarms, the type of landscape(s) in which they are located and the degree to which they affect the character of the landscape.

Considering this in simple terms, turbines have both a direct effect on the landscape in which they lie and an indirect effect on the surrounding area. Therefore, although two turbines or windfarms may be separated by some distance and seen as clearly separate, the landscape in which they lie may be considered to be dominated by turbines. Only beyond a certain distance would the intervening landscape be considered to retain its original character, separating the two turbine dominated landscapes areas.

Table 2.1 develops this concept further by considering the effects of multiple wind energy developments and describes cumulative development thresholds. Further to a capacity assessment, an acceptable limit to development within a landscape area may be agreed (eg. *Landscape with Occasional Wind Turbines* or *Wind Turbine Landscape*). The accepted level of development would then be achieved by consenting a combination of turbine sizes, windfarm sizes and separation distances between groupings, relating to the scale and character of the landscape (ie its capacity for that degree of development).

As an example a large scale upland plateau landscape accommodating a number of windfarms would be considered a *Wind Turbine Landscape* if the windfarms are large or very large, the topography is subordinate in scale to the turbines and the windfarms are separated by distances less than their typical extents. If the topography has a relief that is clearly greater than the turbine heights, and/or the windfarms are smaller and the separation between the windfarms is clearly greater than their extents, the landscape may be considered a *Landscape with Wind Turbines*. Finally a lowland landscape which is small in scale, with many small scale reference features, may easily be dominated by wind turbines. In this case the objective may be to limit development to a *Landscape with Occasional Windfarms* by allowing only small clusters of smaller turbines separated by substantial distances and with cumulative visibility reduced by localised tree or landform screening.

In each case different scales and patterns of landscape and development would require different turbine sizes, groupings and separation distances to lead to a particular windfarm landscape type. Such an approach has been adopted in this study and sizes and separation distances are recommended and explained in Chapter 6.

5.3.3 Distribution in Relation to Landscape Type

As discussed above, some landscape types have less capacity for development than others. In this case it would be appropriate to consider the relative merits of guiding development to the areas most capable of accommodating development, or to directing different types and scales of development to the areas most suited to each. Subject to the specific impacts of any particular proposal, this would reduce the potential for the most significant and adverse landscape impacts. It would also restrict the more developed wind turbine landscape types to a more clearly defined range of landscapes, thereby reducing the perception of unplanned proliferation of wind farms throughout a local authority area.

In strategic terms the established and evolving pattern of development should be taken into consideration as it reflects a clear rationale driven partly by landscape, visual and amenity issues (sensitive or valuable landscapes, proximity to settlements and recreational areas) and partly by technical issues (available land, available grid capacity, wind speed). This suggests that the number, size and distribution of further development should be

considered very carefully in order to maintain differences in character between the uplands, the coast and the lowlands.

Also, in accordance with the guidance *Designing Windfarms in the Landscape* (SNH, 2009), consideration should be given to preserving areas in which no development is yet located or consented. These can provide significant gaps between clusters of wind turbines in which their visual influence is minimal. This again will reinforce distinctiveness between landscapes.

APPENDIX 6: WIND TURBINES IN ABERDEENSHIRE AND SURROUNDING AREA

Wind Turbine Database as at Spring 2013 (Permitted) Showing Turbine Height Bands (grey=very large; pink=large; orange=medium; yellow=small/medium) (see Figs. 5.1 and 5.2 for locations)

TURBINE NAME	LOCALITY	TOWN	NO of TURBINES	HEIGHT	HEIGHT CAT
Aberdeenshire – Permitted Wind Turbines - Operational/ Under Construction/Consented					
European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre			11	195.00	Cat 6: 125m+
Mid Hill	Fetteresso	Stonehaven	25	125.00	Cat 6: 125m+
Clashindarroch Forest		Huntly	18	110.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Hill of Fiddes	Udny	Ellon	3	102.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Boyndie Airfield	Boyndie	Banff	7	100.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Strath of Brydock	Alvah	Banff	2	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
The Shiels		Laurencekirk	3	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
St Fergus Moss	St Fergus	Peterhead	3	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Tullo Farm		Laurencekirk	3	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Tullo Farm		Laurencekirk	3	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Gordonstown Hill	Auchterless	Turriff	5	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Tullo Farm		Laurencekirk	8	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
St Johns Hill		Stonehaven	9	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Muirake	Cornhill	Banff	2	99.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Backhill Of Yonderton	Craigston	Turriff	2	99.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Milton Of Fisherie	King Edward	Banff	2	99.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Overside and Greenwellheads Farms	Crimond	Fraserburgh	4	99.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Greenhill Croft	New Pitsligo	Fraserburgh	2	98.14	Cat 5: 80 m+
Haddo	Methlick	Ellon	2	93.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Newton Of Fortrie	Fortrie	Turriff	3	93.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Kildrummy Windfarm	Kildrummy	Alford	8	93.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Cloffrickford, Skilmafilly and Denmore	Auchnagatt	Ellon	3	92.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Hillhead of Auquhirie		Stonehaven	3	92.50	Cat 5: 80 m+

TURBINE NAME	LOCALITY	TOWN	NO of TURBINES	HEIGHT	HEIGHT CAT
Clochnahill		Stonehaven	4	81.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Upper Wheedlemont Farm	Rhynie	Huntly	2	80.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Little Byth	New Byth	Turriff	3	80.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Land at Cairnmore	Rhynie	Huntly	4	80.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Gowanfold Farm	Rathen	Fraserburgh	2	79.60	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Ednie Farms	St Fergus	Peterhead	2	79.60	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
St Johns Wells	Fyvie	Turriff	3	79.60	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
West Knock Farm	Stuartfield	Peterhead	3	79.60	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
House O Hill	Memsie	Fraserburgh	3	79.60	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Mains Of Auchinderran	Aberchirder	Huntly	3	79.60	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Upper Ardgrain		Ellon	3	79.60	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
St Johns Wells	Fyvie	Turriff	3	79.60	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Redbog	Strichen	Fraserburgh	2	79.50	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Easter Melrose	Gamrie	Banff	3	79.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Glens of Foudland			21	78.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Skelmonae	Methlick	Ellon	4	77.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Cairnhill Farm		Turriff	3	76.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Hillhead of Auquhirie		Stonehaven	3	76.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Mains of Hatton	Kirktown of Auchterless	Turriff	3	76.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Clochnahill		Stonehaven	4	76.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Clochnahill		Stonehaven	4	76.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Mains of Dummuie	Drumblade	Huntly	7	76.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Hill of Balquhindachy	Methlick	Ellon	2	75.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Hill of Easterton	Rothienorman	Inverurie	2	75.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Meikle Carewe	Netherley	Stonehaven	12	70.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
East Leylodge	Kintore	Inverurie	2	46.90	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Denmoss	Largue	Huntly	2	46.90	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Upper Sinsharnie	Cairnie	Huntly	2	46.90	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Burnside	Fortrie	Turriff	2	46.90	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Hospital Shields Farm	St Cyrus	Montrose	2	46.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Cairnandrew	Longmanhill	Banff	2	46.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Townhead	Arbuthnott	Laurencekirk	2	46.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Gariochsburn	Forgue	Huntly	2	45.70	Cat 3: 30 to <50m

TURBINE NAME	LOCALITY	TOWN	NO of TURBINES	HEIGHT	HEIGHT CAT
North Croft Quarry	Mintlaw	Peterhead	2	45.70	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Braco	Hatton	Peterhead	2	45.70	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Minnonie	Gamrie	Banff	2	45.70	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Greenmoss	Castle Fraser	Kemnay	2	45.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Auchmore	Midmar	Inverurie	2	45.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Upper Dagie	Torphins	Banchory	2	45.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Mains Of Tertowie	Kinellar	Blackburn	2	45.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Upper Knox Farm	Inverbervie		2	45.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Auchorie Farm	Midmar	Inverurie	2	45.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Mains Of Buthlaw	Glendaveny	Peterhead	2	45.45	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
South Nittanshead	New Pitsligo	Fraserburgh	2	45.45	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Home Farm Leith Hall	Kennethmont	Huntly	2	45.00	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Mahon Farm		Turriff	2	40.40	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Mount Pleasant	Ardallie	Peterhead	2	39.60	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Strocherie	King Edward	Banff	2	34.60	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Wester Pettymarcus	Clola	Peterhead	2	34.20	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Angus – Permitted Wind Turbines - Operational/ Under Construction/Consented					
Former Tealing Airfield			1	93.5	Cat 5: 80 m+
East Memus, by Forfar			1	86.6	Cat 5: 80 m+
Ark Hill, Glamis by Forfar			8	81.0	Cat 5: 80 m+
Land at Scotston Hill, Auchterhouse			1	80.0	Cat 5: 80 m+
Hill of Stracathro, Brechin			1	79.6	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
630m SE of Pickerton, Guthrie			1	77.0	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
1200M W Of Dunswood, Menmuir, Brechin			1	77.0	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
350M SW Of Whitefield of Dun Farm, Montrose			1	67.0	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
350m SW of Whitefield of Dun Farm, Montrose			1	67.0	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
North Mains of Cononsyth, Arbroath			1	66.7	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
510m NE of West Mains Farmhouse, Auchterhouse			1	61.0	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
West Adamston Farm, Muirhead			1	47.5	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Balhall Lodge, Menmuir			1	47.1	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
N of East Pitforthie Farm, Brechin			1	47.0	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
W of Lochlair Farm, Carmyllie			1	47.0	Cat 3: 30 to <50m

TURBINE NAME	LOCALITY	TOWN	NO of TURBINES	HEIGHT	HEIGHT CAT
350m NE Of Newton of Idvies Farm, Letham			1	47.0	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Glen Trusta Estate, Fern, By Brechin			2	46.9	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Afflochie Farm, by Brechin			2	46.9	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Reedie Farm Kirriemuir			2	46.9	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Balkemback Farm, by Tealing			1	46.5	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
1100m NE of Arrat Farm, Brechin			2	46.5	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
760m SW of Balkemback Farm, Tealing			2	46.5	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Weater Meathie Farm, Inverarity			2	46.5	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
700m E of Balrownie Farm, Menmuir			2	46.5	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
400m N of Greenhillock, Kirkbuddo			1	46.0	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
975M W of North Leoch Farm, Strathmartine			1	46.0	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
1020m W of Auchenreoch Farm, Inchbare, Edzell			1	46.0	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
300M N Of North Tarbrax Farm, Kincaldrum			1	45.7	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Cottertown, Kilry			1	45.5	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
350m SW of Old Montrose Farm, Montrose			1	39.0	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
470m E of Crainathro Farm, Forfar			1	35.0	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
250M SW Of Genty, Airlie			1	34.5	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Craignathro Farm, Forfar			2	33.0	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Moray– Permitted Wind Turbines - Operational/ Under Construction/Consented					
Dorenell Glenfiddich Estate South East Of Dufftown			59	126.000	Cat 6: 125m+
Extension to wind farm Rothes Wind Farm Dallas			18	125.000	Cat 6: 125m+
Edintore Keith			6	125.000	Cat 6: 125m+
Cairn Uish Rothes Estate Rothes Aberlour			28	100.000	Cat 5: 80 m+
Drummuir Estate			21	100.000	Cat 5: 80 m+
Paul's Hill Ballindalloch			28	100.000	Cat 5: 80 m+
Nethererton Of Windyhills Grange Crossroads Keith			2	92.500	Cat 5: 80 m+
Myreton Crossroads Keith			2	89.000	Cat 5: 80 m+
Myreton Crossroads Keith			1	79.600	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Followsters Newmill Keith			1	78.000	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Balnamoon Crossroads Keith			1	70.000	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Hunthill Rothes			3	66.700	Cat 4: 50 to <80m

TURBINE NAME	LOCALITY	TOWN	NO of TURBINES	HEIGHT	HEIGHT CAT
Ardoch Farm Mulben Keith			1	66.620	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Langlanburn Deskford Buckie			1	51.000	Cat 4: 50 to <80m

Wind Turbine Database as at Spring 2013 (Proposed) Showing Turbine Height Bands (grey=very large; pink=large; orange=medium; yellow=small/medium) (see Figs. 5.1 and 5.2 for locations)

TURBINE NAME	LOCALITY	TOWN	NO of TURBINES	HEIGHT	HEIGHT CAT
Aberdeenshire – Proposed Wind Turbines (Application/Scoping)					
Cairnborrow & Norry Hill		Huntly	9	110.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Tibberchindy		Alford	6	115.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Meikleton of Ardonald	Cairnie	Huntly	4	110.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Droop Hill		Stonehaven	2	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Hill of Tillymorgan	Culsalmond	Insch	3	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Deuchries	Aberchirder	Huntly	3	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Jacksbank	Drumlithie	Stonehaven	3	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Brownieleys	Fordoun	Laurencekirk	3	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Hill of Fishrie	Crudie	Banff	5	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Hill Of Braco	Hatton	Peterhead	8	100.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Peterhead Harbour		Peterhead	2	99.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Holm and Hollymill	King Edward	Banff	2	99.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Floors Farm	Auchterless Fortrie	Turriff	3	99.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Hassiewells	Rothienorman	Inverurie	3	99.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Lodge Hill	Boyndie	Banff	3	99.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Mormond Hill	Memsie	Fraserburgh	12	99.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Denside, Glenfarquhar	Auchenblae	Laurencekirk	3	92.50	Cat 5: 80 m+
Land at Cairnmore	Rhynie	Huntly	5	81.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Herscha Hill	Auchenblae	Laurencekirk	3	80.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Hill of Tillymorgan	Culsalmond	Insch	3	80.00	Cat 5: 80 m+
Droop Hill		Stonehaven	3	80.00	Cat 5: 80 m+

TURBINE NAME	LOCALITY	TOWN	NO of TURBINES	HEIGHT	HEIGHT CAT
Inverquhomery	Longside	Peterhead	2	79.60	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Little Hilton Farm		Turriff	2	79.60	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Newton Of Foulzie	Keilhill	Banff	2	79.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Stonieley	Alvah	Banff	2	79.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Fraserburgh Harbour		Fraserburgh	2	77.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Ardlawhill Wood	New Aberdour	Fraserburgh	2	75.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Bogmuir Farm	Fettercairn	Laurencekirk	2	66.00	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Balchers Wood	King Edward	Banff	2	55.44	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Drumdelgie House	Cairnie	Huntly	2	55.40	Cat 4: 50 to <80m
Thornton Home Farm Cottage		Laurencekirk	2	46.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Moss Side Farm	Sandhaven	Fraserburgh	2	47.44	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Boghead Hill	Inverkeithny	Huntly	2	46.90	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Home Farm Nether Aucharnie	Largue	Huntly	2	46.90	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
North Balnoon	Littlefogue	Huntly	2	46.90	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
North Auchininna	Fortrie	Turriff	2	46.90	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Newton of Auchindoir	Rhynie	Huntly	2	46.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Home Farm Lynturk		Alford	2	46.00	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Hill of Melrose	Gamrie	Banff	2	45.70	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Hillocks	Keig	Alford	3	45.70	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Criggie Farmhouse	St Cyrus	Montrose	2	45.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Mains Of Grantown	Aberchirder	Huntly	2	45.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Little Brownhill Farm	Greeness	Turriff	2	45.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Mains of Auchreddie		Ellon	2	45.45	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Bogairdy	Gartly	Huntly	2	45.00	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Upper Mains Farm		Turriff	2	45.00	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Dykelands		Laurencekirk	2	40.20	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Ardinn		Turriff	2	40.00	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Coachford	Cairnie	Huntly	2	35.00	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Roundhome	Corse	Huntly	2	34.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Smiddybank Farm	Millbex Fyvie	Turriff	2	34.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Aulton		Insch	2	34.50	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Daies		Insch	2	34.20	Cat 3: 30 to <50m
Angus – Proposed Wind Turbines (Application/Scoping)					
Firth of Forth and Tay			150	209.7	Cat 6: 125m+
Glaxo Smith Kline, Cobden Street, Montrose			2	132.0	Cat 6: 125m+

TURBINE NAME	LOCALITY	TOWN	NO of TURBINES	HEIGHT	HEIGHT CAT
Nathro Hill, by Edzell			17	125	Cat 6: 125m+
Frawney Windfarm, 1020m n of Over Finlarg Farm, Lumleyden			5	107.0	Cat 5: 80 m+
NW of Govals Farm, Kincaldrum			6	87.0	Cat 5: 80 m+
720m N of East Memus Farm, Memus			1	86.5	Cat 5: 80 m+
500m NW of Renmure farm, Inverkeilor			1	77.0	50 to <80m
530m NE of Hatton Mill Farm			1	77.0	50 to <80m
600m W of Witton Farm, Lethnot, Edzell			2	74.0	50 to <80m
400M SW Of Newmill Of Balgavies Farm, Forfar			1	66.5	50 to <80m
Henderston Quarry, Newtyle			1	66.0	50 to <80m
800m SW of Gilchorn Farm, Inverkeilor			1	62.0	50 to <80m
400m N of Davidston Farm, Newtyle			1	62.0	50 to <80m
500m SW of New Downie Farm, Carnoustie			1	54.0	50 to <80m
650m N of Broom Farm, Tannacice			1	49.5	30 to <50m
189m NW of Kalulu House, East Murthill, Firth			2	49.0	30 to <50m
Land At Stracathro Service Area, Brechin			1	47.1	30 to <50m
Gallow Hill, Cortachy			1	46.5	30 to <50m
Drowndubbs Farm, Kikbuddo			2	46.5	30 to <50m
1057m SW of Chapelton of Menmuir farm, Brechin			1	46.0	30 to <50m
150m NW of Balrennie Farm, Edzell			1	46.0	30 to <50m
500m N of Boysack Farm, Friockheim			1	46.0	30 to <50m
300m W of Parkconnon Farm, Colliston, Arbroath			1	41.5	30 to <50m
280M SW Of North Mains Of Turin, Forfar			1	40.5	30 to <50m
580M SE Of Carsegownie, Carsegownie, Forfar			1	34.6	30 to <50m
Moray– Proposed Wind Turbines (Application/Scoping)					
Brown Muir Hill Rothes			19	126.000	Cat 6: 125m+
			6	110.000	Cat 5: 80 m+
Aultmore Forest Drybridge Buckie			13	110.000	Cat 5: 80 m+
Netherton Of Windyhills Keith			1	99.500	Cat 5: 80 m+
Ardioch Kei			1	87.000	Cat 5: 80 m+
Backmuir Keith			2	86.450	Cat 5: 80 m+
Broomhill Farm Newmill Keith			1	79.000	50 to <80m
Drodland Newmill Keith			1	79.000	50 to <80m
Garrelhill Newmill Keith			1	74.000	50 to <80m
Hunthill Rothes			1	66.700	50 to <80m
Fearndearn Craigellachie			1	66.600	50 to <80m
Shougle Farm Birnie Elgin			1	60.980	50 to <80m
Alton Carron Aberlour			1	49.500	30 to <50m

TURBINE NAME	LOCALITY	TOWN	NO of TURBINES	HEIGHT	HEIGHT CAT
Berryleys Farm Keith			1	46.500	30 to <50m
Burnside Road Garmouth Fochabers			1	27.130	30 to <50m
Forgie Hill Pathside Keith			3	27.130	30 to <50m

**APPENDIX 7: ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE CAPACITY FOR
ABERDEENSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS**

REGIONAL LCT COASTAL - The Coast**26(i). Cliffs of the North and South-East Coasts**

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	An open, medium to large scale landscape with panoramic views over wide expanses of sea. The type is limited extent and rare. Medium/High
Landform	Sloping farmland leading to high headlands, sheer cliffs, occasional narrow inlets and sheltered bays along this rocky coastline. The northern coast has a well-defined edge the south-eastern section is more fractured. Medium/High
Pattern	Very simple patterns of fields with cultivation running to the cliff edge, and areas of uncultivated ground limited to inaccessible areas. Trees are scarce and field boundaries limited to low gorse hedges, post and wire fences or ditches. Medium/Low
Development	Settlements located next to harbours or on mouths of rivers, with Peterhead and Fraserburgh and tiny traditional fishing villages such as Crovie and Pennan. Simple network of local roads running parallel to the shore and farmsteads stand out in the almost tree-less landscape. Medium
Quality	A high quality landscape with significant proportion designated for nature conservation and traditional villages protected by Conservation Areas. The area is highly valued for its scenic qualities. High
Elements and Features	Extensive seaward views from slopes, prominent geological features of interest along cliffs, very limited tree cover in sheltered inlets and distinctive coastal settlements crammed at the base of cliffs. High
Context	Backdrop to small traditional settlements such as such as Crovie and Pennan, and in the separation of settlements. Overlooks the Moray Firth. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Low number residential receptors and low numbers of travellers. High number of visitors with areas of formal and informal recreation. Medium
Internal Visibility	Wide open views along the coastline in which larger structures would be prominent. High
External Visibility	Widely visible from surroundings and at a distance. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Almost entire coastal edge classified as SSSI, SPA at Troup Head and south of Peterhead, important castles and houses such as at Slains, Pitsligo and Dundarg, some listed as SAM, many villages and towns listed as Conservation Areas, Duff House HGDL. High
Community value	Areas popular with visitors for formal/informal recreation, also used by local residential population. RSPB reserve at Troup Head, core paths including Aberdeen Coastal Path, rock climbing on cliffs, Coastal Tourist Route, Castle Trail and part of the North Sea Cycle Route. High
Cultural value	Many locations of interest, including the film location for Local Hero at Pennan, many ruined castles and dramatic natural features such as the Bullers of Buchan Blowhole and Hells Lum. High
Perceptual	Windswept and open with panoramic views of the uninterrupted horizon. Medium/ High
OVERALL RATING	High

26(ii). Dunes and Beaches from Fraserburgh to Peterhead

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	An open, medium to large scale landscape with panoramic views over wide expanses of sea. The type is limited extent and rare in the north east of Scotland and forms one of the longest stretches of beach in Europe. Medium/High
Landform	Huge expanses of sand, a smooth, flat landscape with beaches. A complex landform in the rolling grey and active dunes. Medium/High
Pattern	Regular horizontal bands of rolling dunes, but complex within the duneland itself. Medium/High
Development	Almost devoid of development part from the massive St Fergus Gas Terminal, the high chimneys dominate the flat landscape and are visible for miles. The Ron lighthouse acts as a focal point as do the radio masts at Blackhill. Medium/High
Quality	A high quality landscape with significant proportion designated for nature conservation and landscape value in the past. The area is highly valued for its scenic qualities. High
Elements and Features	The large extent of beach, dynamic dune system, the Loch of Strathbeg the largest dune lake in Britain, the absence of tree cover, manmade vertical elements acting as focii. Medium/High
Context	The coast acts as the setting for the settlements of Peterhead and Fraserburgh, it also acts as the setting to the wider seascape High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Low number residential receptors but higher adjacent to these areas. Large travelling population adjacent to southern section with the A90. Areas of formal and informal recreation. High
Internal Visibility	Extensive views possible along the open, flat expanse of coast. Dunes not of a scale to screen turbines. High
External Visibility	Highly visible from surroundings and at a distance. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Almost entire coastal edge classified as SSSI, Loch Strathbeg and its surroundings is an SPA, SAMs at St Mary's Chapel, villages and towns listed as Conservation Area. Contains Valued Views. High
Community value	Areas popular with visitors for formal/informal recreation, also used by local residential population. Visitors to the RSPB reserve at Loch Strathbeg, Buchan & Formantine & Buchan Way, core paths including Aberdeen Coastal Path and Coastal Tourist Route. High
Cultural value	Some locations of archaeological/ historic interest. Medium
Perceptual	Windswept and open with panoramic views of the uninterrupted horizon. Medium/ High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/ High

REGIONAL LCT COASTAL - Coastal Strip

9(i). Kincardine Cliffs

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	An open, medium to large scale landscape with panoramic views over wide expanses of sea. The type is limited extent and rare in the north east of Scotland. Medium/High
Landform	Steep rugged slopes and cliffs, with stacks and arches. Raised braches are a common feature and give a stepped profile to the coastline. Cliffs slacken and vegetate south of Stonehaven. Flat farmland above the coast Medium/High
Pattern	Very simple patterns of fields with cultivation running to the cliff edge, and areas of uncultivated ground limited to inaccessible areas. Trees are scarce and field boundaries limited to low gorse hedges, post and wire fences or ditches. Medium/Low
Development	Settlements cluster on clifftops with older villages and harbours on raised beaches at the base of cliffs. Extensive new development at the edge of coastal settlements such as Aberdeen and Stonehaven. Busy with the A90 and main rail line Medium/Low
Quality	A high quality landscape with significant proportion designated for nature conservation and traditional villages protected by Conservation Areas. The area is highly valued for its scenic qualities. High
Elements and Features	Extensive seaward views from slopes, prominent geological features of interest along cliffs, very limited tree cover and distinctive coastal settlements crammed at the base of cliffs. High
Context	Backdrop to small traditional settlements such as such as Findon, Muchalls and Catterline, and large towns such as Aberdeen and Stonehaven. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	High number residential receptors and high numbers of travellers. High number of visitors with areas of formal and informal recreation. High
Internal Visibility	Wide open views along the coastline in which larger structures would be prominent. High
External Visibility	Widely visible from surroundings and at a distance. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Large sections of the coastal edge classified as SSSI, important clifftop castles such as at Dunottar, churches and archaeological remains, some listed as SAM, many villages and towns listed as Conservation Areas. High
Community value	Areas popular with visitors for formal/informal recreation, also used by local residential population. Visitors to the RSPB reserve at Fowlsheugh, core paths such as the Aberdeen Coastal Path, Coastal Tourist Route, Castle Trail and part of the North Sea Cycle Route, Rock Climbing on cliffs. High
Cultural value	Many locations of interest, including ruined castles such as Dunottar and ruined Chapel of St. Mary and St. Nathalan. Medium/High
Perceptual	Windswept and open with panoramic views of the uninterrupted horizon. Medium/ High
OVERALL RATING	High

9(ii). Formantine Links and Dunes

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	An open, medium to large scale landscape with panoramic views over wide expanses of sea. The type is limited extent and rare in the north east of Scotland. Medium/High
Landform	Flat hinterland with low raised beaches, low extensive beaches and dunes contrasting with rocky shores to the north. Medium/High
Pattern	Simple with large fields running to the shore in the north, tree cover limited to around estate policies at Menie and Foveran, few field boundaries, wilder areas of uncultivated land at Forvie and Balmedie. Medium/Low
Development	Settlements limited to Newburgh and Balmedie, elements such as the quarries, firing ranges and golf courses. Medium
Quality	Areas of high quality landscape with significant proportion designated for nature conservation; and landscape value in the past. The area has elements that are in poor condition. Medium/High
Elements and Features	The large extent of beach, dynamic dune system, the estuary of the River Ythan, the absence of tree cover, undeveloped area of natural coast at Forvie. Medium/High
Context	The coast acts as the setting for the settlements of Newburgh and Balmedie, it also acts as the wider setting to Aberdeen and is designated as greenbelt. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Medium number residential receptors but higher to the south in adjacent areas. Large travelling population along A90 in the south. Areas of formal and informal recreation. High
Internal Visibility	Extensive views possible along the open, flat expanse of coast. Dunes and landform not of a scale to screen turbines. High
External Visibility	Highly visible from surroundings and at a distance. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	The coast around the mouth of the Ythan Estuary is highly designated with SSSI, SPA and SAC. It is also a NNR with a Country Park at Balmedie. SAM at the ruined Slains Castle and Forvie Church, villages and towns listed as Conservation Area. High
Community value	Areas popular with visitors for formal/informal recreation, also used by local residential population. Visitors to the RSPB reserve at Forvie, Country Park, Core paths such as the Aberdeen Coastal Path, Coastal Tourist Route and golf course. High
Cultural value	Some locations of archaeological/ historic interest. Medium
Perceptual	Windswept and open with panoramic views of the uninterrupted horizon. Medium/ High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/ High

9(iii). Kincardine Links

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	An open, medium to large scale landscape with panoramic views over wide expanses of sea. The type is limited extent and rare in the north east of Scotland. Medium/High
Landform	Gently sloping with wide (50-600m wide), low, raised beaches, backed by sloping cliffs, with steeper volcanic cliffs south of St Cyrus. Medium/High
Pattern	Simple with large fields running to the step of a raised beach, tree cover limited, few field boundaries, areas of marsh and reed bed. Medium
Development	Villages perched on set back from cliff tops, farms and caravan sites. The A92 bounds the southern part of the area. Medium
Quality	Area of high quality landscape in the south with significant proportion designated for nature conservation. High
Elements and Features	The raised beach landform, dynamic dune system, the estuary of the North Esk, the absence of tree cover, traditional settlements. Medium
Context	The coast acts as the setting for the settlements of Inverbervie and St Cyrus and the wider setting for Montrose. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Medium number residential receptors but higher to the south in adjacent areas. Some travelling population along A92 in the south. Areas of formal and informal recreation. Medium/High
Internal Visibility	Extensive views possible along the open, flat expanse of coast. High
External Visibility	Highly visible from surroundings and at a distance. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	South sections of the coastal strip classified as SSSI, NNR, SPA, some villages and towns listed as Conservation Areas. High
Community value	Areas popular with visitors for formal/informal recreation, also used by local residential population. Core paths such as the Aberdeen Coastal Path, Coastal Tourist Route and part of the North Sea Cycle Route, High
Cultural value	Locations of archaeological/ historic interest. High
Perceptual	Windswept and open with panoramic views of the uninterrupted horizon. Medium/ High
OVERALL RATING	High

REGIONAL LCT COASTAL FARMLAND

7(i). Eastern Coastal Agricultural Plain

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, the type is large in extent, this is the second most common landscape character type. Medium/Low
Landform	Gently undulating between the coastal cliffs to the rising ground to the west, an open landscape, with Mormond Hill a local landmark. Low
Pattern	Very large arable fields, sparsely wooded and few field boundaries, gives a landscape with few vertical features and combined with landform create a simple pattern. This is interspersed with boggy lands around various mosses, these are frequently planted with medium-sized conifer plantations. Low
Development	The undulating landform has a regular pattern of settlements and farmsteadings, together with main roads, pylon lines, transmission masts, old airfields, wind turbines and the gas terminal at St Fergus. Low
Quality	Intensively managed farmland. Low
Elements and Features	Very large fields, few trees, no field boundaries, regularly spaced farms and mosses. Medium/Low
Context	Contributes to the setting of Peterhead, Fraserburgh and villages such as Cruden Bay, Longside and Hatton. Backdrop to the coast. Clear views available along the coastal strip. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Low

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	High population of residential receptors adjacent/ near. Large travelling population on the A952 & A90 and visitors walking the Formantine & Buchan Way. Medium/High
Internal Visibility	Open views throughout the area. Medium/High
External Visibility	Visible from areas of population and transport corridors. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	SSSIs at Rora Moss, Moss of Cruden and Philorth Valley, SPA at Loch Strathbeg, HGDL at Cairness House, Crimonmogate (which is also listed as a conservation area) and SAMs. Medium/High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors to historic landscapes, the Coastal Trail and walking the Formantine & Buchan Way Medium
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including historic buildings, SAMs and HGDL. Medium/Low
Perceptual	There are views of the sea nearby, and the area feels open and windswept. It acts as a backdrop to coastal areas. Medium/Low
OVERALL RATING	Medium/Low

7(ii). Western Coastal Farmland

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, and this is the second most common landscape character type. Medium/Low
Landform	Vast shallow basins, which create a broad sweeping plain, with infrequent, rounded hills such as Durn Hill and Hill of Culburnie forming subtle local landmarks. Medium/Low
Pattern	A grid of large, simple, predominantly arable fields, large blocks of coniferous woodland which sometimes fail to follow the existing landform. Medium
Development	Settlements limited to the villages of Fordyce and Cornhill, frequent farmsteadings with large scale buildings, the old airfield at Boyndie, a small section of the A98 and a network of small roads. Development lessens in the western part of the area. Medium
Quality	Generally well-maintained farmland, some areas of poorer quality. Medium
Elements and Features	Plantation woodland, lack of hedges and deciduous trees and low prominent hills. Medium
Context	Contributes to the setting of towns such as Banff and Portsoy and villages and the valley of the Deveron. Low hills limit the extent of inter-visibility from the wider area. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Low population of residential receptors. Visible from larger settlements and main transport route. Medium
Internal Visibility	Good views from higher points such as Knock Hill, Black Law and Durn Hill, but restricted in some areas by landform and woodland. Screening not large enough scale to contain views of large structures. Medium
External Visibility	Some views from external areas but low hills limit external visibility Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	A SSSI at Heildside Moss, a small part of HGDL, conservation area at Fordyce and ancient woodland. Medium
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for formal/informal recreation, core paths, visitors on the Castle Trail. Medium/Low
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including historic buildings and the attractive ancient village and castle of Fordyce. Medium
Perceptual	There is an awareness of the sea nearby, particularly in the north, but its influence is lessened by blocks of coniferous woodland. It is a Landscape of variable interest with some areas attractive, well maintained, diverse and mature. Forming backdrop to valley and coastal areas. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

7(iii). North-Eastern Coastal Farmland

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, this is the second most common landscape character type. Medium/Low
Landform	High open plateau that is uniformly and gently undulating. Low
Pattern	Close to the coast are large-scale arable fields but as the coast gives way to higher ground there are areas of moss and moorland due to poorer soil. Here small blocks of coniferous woodland, small fields of rough pasture and occasional broadleaved trees create a more fragmented landscape of different textures. Medium
Development	The edge of Fraserburgh, main roads, farmsteadings and gravel pits. Medium/Low
Quality	Areas of well managed farmland at the coast and poorer quality moorland inland where blocks of coniferous woodland have eroded the character. Derelict farmsteads and drystone dykes together with unrestored gravel pits give an air of dereliction in some locations. Medium/Low
Elements and Features	Larger fields, few deciduous trees, field boundaries limited to small drystone dykes and gorse, regularly spaced farms and small blocks of coniferous woodland. Medium/Low
Context	A transition between the high sandstone ridges above the Tore of Troup and the flatter coastal plain. Contributes to the setting of the towns of Fraserburgh and neighbouring landscape areas. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/Low

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	High population of residential receptors adjacent/ near. Medium/Large travelling population. Medium/High
Internal Visibility	Open views throughout the area. Medium
External Visibility	Quite visible from areas of population and transport corridors. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	SAC and SSSI at Turclossie Moss, SAMs, small areas of Ancient woodland. Medium
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors on the Coastal Trail. Medium/Low
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including listed buildings. Low
Perceptual	There is an awareness of the sea nearby, and the area feels bleak and windswept. It acts as a backdrop to coastal areas. Low
OVERALL RATING	Low

7(iv). Sandstone Ridges and Valleys South of Troup

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium, locally rare. Medium/High
Landform	Distinctively mounded saddle landform of open hill tops and incised broad valleys, which are oversized for their watercourses such as at the Tore of Troup. Medium/High
Pattern	Dictated by the strong landform with open moorland covered hilltops and on lower slopes native woodlands. Small fields of rough grazing run to the tops of steep slopes and irregular blocks of coniferous woodland dot the landscape Medium/High
Development	Development limited to the periphery of the valley with farms and steadings, main roads, telecommunication masts and the small planned village of New Aberdour. Medium/High
Quality	An area of moorland and close to the sea with areas of native woodland maintained well with a high degree of integrity. Medium/High
Elements and Features	Locally rare area of open moorland and steep-sided wooded dens in a lowland landscape, distinctive landform of rolling hills above the surrounding farmland, dropping to the valley floor of Tore Burn. Medium/High
Context	Protruding above the surrounding farmland so defining the edge of other landscape types and the coast. Setting for some towns and villages and roads. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Low to moderate population of residential receptors adjacent/ near. Medium travelling population and high number of visitors to coastal settlements such as Gardenstown and Pennan and the Troup itself. Medium/High
Internal Visibility	Views across the moorland hilltops but constrained by landform in the valley below. Medium
External Visibility	The hills are visible from areas of population such as Rosehearty and transport corridors. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	A large part of the area including the native woodland in the Troup and moorland is listed as SSSI, with some SAMS and listed buildings. High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population and visitors for formal/informal recreation, core paths and visitors on the Coastal Trail. Medium
Cultural value	Some locations of archaeological/ historic interest WWII camp, Cairns, Hillforts and Planned Village of New Aberdour. Medium/High
Perceptual	Distinctive and locally rare landscape of moorland and den close to the sea. Distinctive backdrop seen from some settlements. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

7(v). Coastal Farmland East of Macduff

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, this is the second most common landscape character type. Medium/Low
Landform	Undulating between the coastal cliffs to the rising ground to the south, an open landscape. Low
Pattern	Very large arable fields with almost no tree cover and few field boundaries, gives a landscape pattern with few vertical features and combined with landform create a simple, subtle pattern. Low
Development	Development limited to farms and steadings, main road (A98) and caravan parks. Medium/Low
Quality	Intensively managed farmland. Medium/Low
Elements and Features	Very large fields, few trees, no field boundaries, regularly spaced farms. Medium/Low
Context	Contributes to the setting of the towns of Macduff and Banff, the village of Gardenstown, and neighbouring areas such as the valley of the Deveron and coast. Clear views available along the coastal strip. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/Low

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors adjacent/ near. Medium/Large travelling population. Medium
Internal Visibility	Open views throughout the area. Medium
External Visibility	Quite visible from areas of population and transport corridors. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Ancient woodland. Low
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors on the Castle Trail and Coastal Trail. Medium/Low
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including historic buildings. Low
Perceptual	There is an awareness of the sea nearby, and the area feels bleak and windswept. It acts as a backdrop to coastal areas. Low
OVERALL RATING	Low

REGIONAL LCT AGRICULTURAL HEARTLAND

1(i). Knock Hill and Aberchirder

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. The area itself is small in size. Medium
Landform	Low rolling hills, long ridges create a smooth undulating landform. Knock Hill dominates the west of the area. Medium/Low
Pattern	Large arable fields with post and wire fences or gorse hedges with broadleaved shelterbelts. Clumps of mature trees frame settlements. Long avenues of trees run along roads and fields in the east of the region. More of a moorland character in the west. Medium
Development	Infrequently scattered farms and steadings and the planned village of Aberchirder. Some telecommunication masts, wind turbines and a network of minor roads. Medium
Quality	Generally well-managed farmland. Medium
Elements and Features	Rolling hills, large fields, and avenues of trees, planned village and Knock Hill. Medium/High
Context	It provides a setting for the shallow valley of the Deveron and a backdrop to Turriff. Setting for the village of Aberchirder. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors and moderate travelling population. Medium
Internal Visibility	Views constrained by the smoothly undulating landform at lower levels but more open from higher areas and panoramic from Knock Hill. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from transport corridors, the town of Turriff and nearby high ground. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	SSSI at Moss of Crombie and AWI. Low
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors on the Castle Trail. Medium/low
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including historic buildings. Medium/Low
Perceptual	A highly modified farmed landscape with limited areas of naturalness. Medium/Low
OVERALL RATING	Medium/Low

1(ii). Agricultural Heartland

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Medium/ Low
Landform	Gently rolling landform, but with steeper ground in some places mainly along river valleys. It forms a broad plain with open views. Medium/Low
Pattern	Large arable fields with post and wire fences, with scattered broadleaved shelterbelts running along hill ridges and around farms. There are smaller scale fields with tumble down drystone dykes in some areas. Moorland is occurs in pockets around Pitsligo. Large conifer plantations occur more frequently in the north of the area. There are remnants of estate policies such as at Brocklay, Delgately and Craigston Castles. Medium
Development	No large towns, but the area is well settled with a number of villages such as New Deer, Strichen and Cumiestown, together with a large number of Farms and steadings. Some pylon lines and telecommunication masts and a network of minor roads. Medium
Quality	Generally well-managed farmland however some field boundaries are poorly maintained as are the remnants of estate policies. Medium
Elements and Features	Broad plain, large fields, occasional drystone dykes, planned villages and regular farmsteads. Medium
Context	A vast plain rising above coastal areas, it provides a setting for the shallow valley of the Deveron and a distant backdrop to the coastal plain. Setting for villages such as Strichen, New Deer and Cumiestown. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors. Low travelling population and visitors walking the Formantine & Buchan Way and using the national cycle route (North Sea Cycle Route). Medium
Internal Visibility	Open views throughout the area, views towards Mormond Hill in the east and down towards Bennachie. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from transport corridors, but broadness of the plain and lack of surrounding high ground limits its external visibility. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	SSSIs along the south-western boundary of this area at Gight Woods and Windy Hills, part of the HGDL at Hatton Castle, Strichen a conservation area. Medium
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors to historic landscapes, Castle Trail and walking the Formantine & Buchan Way and cycle the National Cycle Network (North Sea Cycle Route). Medium
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including historic buildings and HGDL. Medium/Low
Perceptual	A highly modified farmed landscape with limited areas of naturalness. Medium/Low
OVERALL RATING	Medium/Low

1(iii). Wooded Estates Around Old Deer

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium, The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. The area itself is small in size. Medium/ Low
Landform	Undulating with a more open landform in the south. The river valley of the South Ugie Water is at its centre but the river is not more than a stream and is visually insignificant Medium/High
Pattern	Woodland unusually for this part of the district is the dominant feature. The old policy woodland around the estates of Aden and Pitfour create an enclosed sheltered character, with coniferous and broadleaved woodland well laid out along ridge lines, valley bottoms and on slopes. Hedges and avenue planting create a strong pattern around the large fields. High
Development	A well-settled area with a number of planned villages such as Stuartfield, Mintlaw and Fetterangus, numerous farmsteads and manses. A pylon line, main roads and a network of minor roads. Medium
Quality	Generally well-managed woodland and farmland, of high integrity in places, but some areas where field boundaries and woodland have not been maintained. Medium/High
Elements and Features	Woodland, hedges, avenue trees, planned villages and regular farmsteads. High
Context	It provides a setting for Deer Abbey and a distant backdrop to the coastal plain. Setting for villages such as Maud, Mintlaw and Fetterangus. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors. Low travelling population and high number visitors, walking the Formantine & Buchan Way, visiting the Aden Country Park and travelling the national cycle route (North Sea Cycle Route). Medium/High
Internal Visibility	Views enclosed by woodland in many areas, but views open out in the south. Very limited local screening by landform and trees but not large enough to screen large structures. Medium/High
External Visibility	Visible from transport corridors, and from the coastal farmland but lack of surrounding high ground limits its wider external visibility. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Country Park and Conservation Area at Old Deer, SAMs and AWI. Medium/High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors to country park and walking the Formantine & Buchan Way and cycle the National Cycle Network (North Sea Cycle Route). Medium/High
Cultural value	Locations of interest including the Old Kirk, Deer Abbey, historic buildings, planned villages, railway museum, conservation areas and observatory. Medium/High
Perceptual	An attractive mix of policy woodlands/estates and farmland creating a pastoral landscape. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

1(iv). Upland Ridges South of Deveron

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Medium/ Low
Landform	Convex slopes and broad ridges above the river valleys of the Deveron, Ythan and their tributaries. The rounded hills are all of a similar height, divided by occasional, insignificant streams. Medium
Pattern	Medium-large scale fields with cultivation carried to edge of minor water bodies found throughout the area. Tree-cover is sparse but there are occasional broadleaved trees running along skyline and around farms. Medium
Development	Scattered and infrequent farms and steadings nestled against hill slopes and dips in valleys. There are no settlements of any size in the area. Some pylon lines, wind turbines and telecommunication masts and a network of minor roads. Medium
Quality	Generally well-managed farmland. Medium
Elements and Features	Broad hill-tops and convex slopes, sparse tree-cover, large fields, few field boundaries. Medium
Context	Its edges provides a setting for the shallow valley of the Deveron and Ythan and Turriff, it edge also part the broader setting of Fyvie Castle HGDL. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Low population of residential receptors, fairly high number adjacent at Turriff. Low travelling population but main roads adjacent. Medium
Internal Visibility	Open views throughout the area. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from transport corridors, but broadness of the ridge landforms and lack of surrounding high ground limits its external visibility. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	SSSI on boundary of area at Wartle Moss and SAM. Medium/Low
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths to Rothienorman. Medium/Low
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including historic buildings and SAM. Medium/Low
Perceptual	A highly modified farmed landscape with limited areas of naturalness. Medium/Low
OVERALL RATING	Medium/Low

1(v). Northern Rolling Lowlands

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Large, open views. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Low
Landform	Simple, large, smooth, rounded hills forming a rolling landform. Low
Pattern	Simple land cover pattern of large geometric fields, thick bold woodlands and shelterbelts. Low
Development	Development along the A96 corridor, farms, steadings, A-roads, minor roads, pylons, wind farms and telecommunications masts. Medium/Low
Quality	Well ordered and managed farmland with some pockets of poorer quality. Medium/Low
Elements and Features	Large smooth hills, large geometric fields, open views, large blocks of coniferous forestry. Medium/Low
Context	Backdrop to the settlements of Huntly, Inch and Oldmeldrum, foreground to parts of the Grampian outliers, backdrop to the Deveron and Upper Ythan valley. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/Low

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Low population of residential receptors, but higher number adjoining. High travelling population and moderate number of visitors. Medium
Internal Visibility	Open views from higher points at lower levels varied. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from surrounding areas of high land. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Small parts of HGDL (Arbuthnott & Glenbervie), SSSIs, SAMs and AWI. Medium
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors to historic landscapes and following the Castle Trail. Medium/Low
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including historic buildings, SAMs and HGDL. Medium/Low
Perceptual	A managed, farmed landscape. Medium/Low
OVERALL RATING	Medium/Low

1(vi). Ythan Strath Farmland

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Medium/ Low
Landform	Lowland, undulating landform centred on the shallow strath of the River Ythan, rocky outcrops are a feature. Open hills, sheltered boggy hollows with pockets of more intensively farmed land. Medium
Pattern	Small to medium scale with a traditional unimproved field pattern. A diverse vegetation pattern, with gorse and broom field boundaries and birch scrub. Drystane dykes rocky outcrops and stone cottages create an upland character contrasting with the extensive policies surrounding Haddo House. Medium/High
Development	Sparse settlement although more widespread in the strath with the small village of Methlick. Small scale mineral workings, wind turbines and a network of minor roads. Medium
Quality	Traditional farmland and attractive HGDL at Haddo, however some field boundaries are poorly maintained and mineral workings. Medium/High
Elements and Features	Open rocky outcrops, drystane dykes, traditional pattern, policy woodland at Haddo. Medium/High
Context	The wider setting for Haddo House HGDL. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Low population of residential receptors. Low travelling population and high number of visitors to Haddo Country Park and the national cycle route. Medium
Internal Visibility	Open views from higher ground but limited in lower levels. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from some transport corridors, but lack of surrounding higher ground limits its external visibility. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	One of the largest HGDL in the inventory, Haddo House (views extend across the wider Banff and Buchan plain, and to the south towards the distinctive landmark monument of the Hill of Ythsie), Country park, SAMs and AWI. High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors to historic landscapes, Country Park, using the Castle Trail and cycling the National Cycle Network (North Sea Cycle Route).. Medium/High
Cultural value	Locations of interest including historic buildings and HGDL. Medium
Perceptual	A traditional upland farmed landscape with some areas of naturalness and attractive policies around Haddo. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

1(vii). Insch Basin

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, open. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Medium/ Low
Landform	Flat and gently rolling farmland, with a chain of small conical hills (Dunnideer, Hill of Flinder, Hill of Christ's Kirk, Gallow Hill) extending across its centre. Open views to north and south to Bennachie and the Ridge of Foudland (Grampian outliers). Medium
Pattern	Large geometric fields, forming a colourful patchwork of arable and pastureland, enhanced by small broadleaf copses and farms. Field boundaries mainly post and wire. Trees limited to shelterbelts, hilltop clumps and beech avenues. Medium/Low
Development	A well developed landscape, with the settlements of Rhynie, Insch and Oldmeldrum. Farms are studded evenly across the area. It is crossed by the A96, the main Inverness to Aberdeen Railway line, pylon lines and a network of minor roads. There is a distillery at Kennethmont. Medium/Low
Quality	Generally well-managed farmland, with small areas of poorer quality. Three HGDL in the basin. Medium/Low
Elements and Features	Basin landform, conical hills, intensively managed fields, beech avenues and open views to the Grampian outliers. Medium
Context	Provides a foreground to the surrounding Grampian outliers and the HGDLs. Setting for numerous towns and villages, Oldmeldrum, Inverurie, Insch and Rhynie. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/Low

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	High population of residential receptors. high travelling population and high number of visitors, in particular to the HGDL and walkers on Bennachie. Medium/High
Internal Visibility	Views open from higher points (conical hills) at lower levels varied. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from surrounding areas of high land and the Grampians. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Three HGDL, SSSI, AWI and SAMs (three Hillforts on the conical hills above Insch, circles, carved stones and stone circles). High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors using the Castle Trail. Medium/High
Cultural value	Area of interest including a large number of archaeological remains, historic buildings and three HGDL. Medium/High
Perceptual	A managed, farmed landscape but contrasting attractively with the surrounding moorland ridges behind. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

1(viii). Formartine Lowlands

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Large, and open. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Low
Landform	Gently undulating lowland plateau. Low lying hollows rising to higher ground in the west. Low
Pattern	Open farmland and large scale geometric fields with post and wire fencing. Large farms and prominent lines of trees and estates. Low
Development	Relatively large compact settlements such as Ellon, Pitmiddon, Newmachar and Oldmeldrum together with a high number of large farms with modern storage buildings. Numerous highly visible pylon lines and main roads such as the A90, telecommunication masts, wind turbines and roads. Low
Quality	Intensively managed farmland, some estates. Medium/Low
Elements and Features	Sweeping landform, large open fields and few field boundaries. Medium/low
Context	An undulating plateau rising above coastal areas, it provides a setting for the coast. Setting for towns such as Ellon, Pitmiddon, Newmachar and Oldmeldrum. Part of the wider setting for Aberdeen. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Low

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	High population of residential receptors. High travelling population and high number of visitors walking the Formartine & Buchan Way, visiting HGDL and cycling the national cycle route. Medium/High
Internal Visibility	Open views throughout the area. Medium/High
External Visibility	Visible from transport corridors and the city of Aberdeen, but broadness of the plain and lack of surrounding high ground limits its external visibility. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	HGDL at Pitmedden (There are views along the Bronie Burn valley to the north-east), Straloch and Keith Hall, Aberdeen Green Belt along southern edge, conservation areas at Oldmeldrum and Kingseat. SPA and SSSI. SAMs. High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths. Visitors to historic landscapes, walking the Formartine & Buchan Way, the Castle and Coastal Trails and cycling the National Cycle Network (North Sea Cycle Route). Medium
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including historic buildings, conservation areas and HGDL. Medium/Low
Perceptual	A highly modified farmed landscape with limited areas of naturalness. Medium/Low
OVERALL RATING	Medium

1(ix). Central Wooded Estates

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, occasionally open views. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Medium/ Low
Landform	A rolling landform with low hills and wide valleys. Pockets of small-scale relief. Open views in some areas. Medium/Low
Pattern	Pattern responds to landform, with large open arable fields and small areas with drystone dykes in steeper areas. Dense woodland is a consistent feature, strong woodland structure associated with numerous estate policies. Medium
Development	A well settled landscape, with the larger towns of Inverurie, Kintore and Westhill (development associated with the A96 and Aberdeen), Monymusk and Kernay. It is crossed by the A96, the main Inverness to Aberdeen Railway line, pylon lines and a network of roads. There are telecommunications masts. Medium/Low
Quality	Generally well-managed farmland and extensive areas of estate woodland and a large number of HGDLs. Medium/High
Elements and Features	Extensive areas of woodland, features associated with estates such as walls and beech avenues. Occasional open views. Medium
Context	In the west it provides a foreground to the Grampian outliers and the setting for numerous HGDLs. Setting for Aberdeen, numerous towns and villages. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	High population of residential receptors. high travelling population and high number of visitors, in particular to the HGDLs and walkers on Deeside Way. Medium/High
Internal Visibility	Views open from higher points at lower levels varied. Varied visibility due to landform and trees but not large enough to screen large structure. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from adjacent areas of high land in the west, Grampian outliers and Aberdeen. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Eight HGDLs these are Monymusk (views towards Bennachie and Cairn William), Keith Hall (views out across the River Urie to Inverurie), Crabbies Castle (long views south-east across the River Dee to the Durris Forest and south towards Mongour Hill), Castle Fraser (Magnificent views can be gained from the northern edges of the site across the valley of the River Don to the Bennachie Hills in the north), Cluny Castle (views to Mither Tap from the designed landscape), Dunecht House (long view south across the Leuchars Moss to the Durris Forest), Drum castle (glimpses of the hills to the north and magnificent panoramic views from the top of the Castle tower) and Park House. Green Belt, SAC, SSSI, AWI and SAMs. Medium/High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors to HGDLs, including those using the Castle & Victorian Trails and walking the Deeside Way. Medium/High
Cultural value	Area of interest including a large number of archaeological remains, historic buildings and eight HGDL. Medium/High
Perceptual	A managed, farmed landscape and extensive policy woodland. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

1(x). Howe of Alford

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, open. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Medium/ Low
Landform	Expansive basin, flat at its centre next to the River Don, slopes gently rising to an imposing amphitheatre of dark moorland ridges Medium/Low
Pattern	Patchwork of large, intensively farmed, open fields interspersed by sparse lines of broadleaved trees and hedges. Policy woodland around Castle Forbes together with avenues of mature beech trees and broadleaved shelterbelts Medium/Low
Development	Small village of Alford and running along the Don. Scattered settlement across area, crossed by A-roads and a network of minor roads. There is a small tourist railway line. Medium
Quality	Generally well-managed farmland, with some policy woodland, small areas of poorer quality. Medium
Elements and Features	Basin landform, intensively managed fields, beech avenues, policy woodland and River Don. Medium
Context	A distinct hollow provides a foreground to the surrounding Grampian outliers and the HGDL around Castle Forbes. Setting for the village of Alford. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors. Moderate travelling population and number of visitors. Medium
Internal Visibility	Open views throughout the area, clearer from the upper slopes of the Howe. Medium/High
External Visibility	Visible from the surrounding areas of high land (Grampian outliers) used for recreation, such as Cairn William, Black Hill at Bennachie and Lord Arthurs Seat. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	HGDL, AWI, Country Park and SAMs. Medium/High
Community value	Country Park and areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors, including national routes. Medium/High
Cultural value	Area of interest including archaeological remains, historic battlefield, historic buildings and HGDL. Medium
Perceptual	A managed, farmed landscape but contrasting attractively with the surrounding ring of moorland ridges. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

1(xi). The Cromar Farmlands

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, open. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. The area itself is small in size. Medium
Landform	Low lying hills and broad undulating valleys on the long lower slopes of Morven. Gentle undulations interrupted by small glacial mounds. Encircled by an imposing backdrop of moorland ridges Medium
Pattern	Predominantly pastoral with large improved pasture wrapped around the glacial hummocks. There is a strong geometric pattern, emphasised by shelterbelts and conifer plantations. Birch woodland extends on the lower slopes of Morven and along the burns that run down its slopes. Medium/High
Development	Small villages such as Logie Coldstone and Migvie. Scattered steadings. A-roads, network of minor roads, pylons and telecommunications masts. Medium
Quality	Generally well-managed farmland, which has a high degree of integrity. Medium/High
Elements and Features	Sloping, broad undulating landform, geometric fields, occasional geometric blocks of woodland and birch woodland. Medium
Context	These lower farmed slopes provides a foreground to the Cairngorm massif rising behind, a setting for the Cairngorm National Park. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors. Low travelling population and high number of highly sensitive visitors looking down from Morven and within Cairngorm National Park. High
Internal Visibility	Open views throughout the area, clearer from the upper slopes. Medium/High
External Visibility	Visible from surrounding areas of high land, including iconic Queens View, and the Cairngorm National Park. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	HGDL (Tillypronie), SAC, AWI and SAMs. High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors accessing the CNP. Medium/High
Cultural value	Area of interest including, historic buildings and landscape valued for its scenic qualities. Medium/High
Perceptual	A farmed landscape but contrasting attractively with the heather covered bulk of the Cairngorm massif behind. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

1(xii). Howe of Cromar

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, open. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Medium/ Low
Landform	A wide sweeping basin, its rising slopes contrast with the flat to gently rolling relief at the heart of the area. Encircled by an imposing backdrop of moorland ridges Medium
Pattern	Large-scale patchwork of rectilinear fields emboldened by crop patterns and thick shelterbelts and conifer plantations create a robust field pattern. Policy woodland around Tarland. Medium
Development	Small village of Tarland, Scattered settlement but concentrated below slopes. A pylon line and telecommunication mast and a network of minor roads. Medium/High
Quality	Generally well-managed farmland, which has a high degree of integrity. Medium/High
Elements and Features	Basin landform, rectilinear fields, occasional geometric blocks of plantation woodland and settlement below slopes. Medium
Context	A distinct hollow provides a foreground to the surrounding Grampian outliers and the Cairngorm massif rising behind, setting for the Cairngorm National Park. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors. Low travelling population and high number of highly sensitive visitors looking down from iconic viewpoint the 'Queens View'. High
Internal Visibility	Open views throughout the area, clearer from the upper slopes of the Howe. Medium/High
External Visibility	Visible from surrounding areas of high land, including iconic Queens View, and the Cairngorm National Park. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	AWI and SAMs. Medium/Low
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors using both the Castle and Victorian Trails. Medium/High
Cultural value	Area of interest including Tomnaverie Stone Circle, Culsh Earth House, historic buildings and landscape valued for its scenic qualities. Medium/High
Perceptual	A managed, farmed landscape but contrasting attractively with the surrounding ring of moorland ridges and the bulk of the Cairngorm massif behind. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

1(xiii). Kincardine Plateau

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, open. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Medium
Landform	Undulating, falling gently towards the coast, long distance views and influence of the sea on this area. Low
Pattern	Transition between moorland to coast lacks coherent pattern but is overall of medium scale. Marginal farmland, rocky outcrops and regenerating birch woodland. Exposed mounds and hills with wind blown trees. Medium
Development	Development along the A90 corridor, farms, steadings and developments due to the proximity of Aberdeen. M90, A-roads, minor roads and telecommunications masts. Medium
Quality	Moorland and farmland showing signs of neglect. Medium
Elements and Features	Sloping landform, transition from moorland to coast, sea views. Medium/Low
Context	Distant backdrop to the wider settlement of Aberdeen, foreground to the edge of the Grampian outliers. Setting for coastal villages and satellite settlements of Portlethen and Newtonhill. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate to low population of residential receptors, but higher number adjoining. High travelling population and visitors using the National Cycle Route. Medium/High
Internal Visibility	Views open from higher points down towards the coast. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from adjoining areas of high land and Aberdeen. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Aberdeen Greenbelt, SSSI, SAM, AWI and Muchals conservation area. Medium
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors cycling the National Cycle Network (North Sea Cycle Route) and travelling on the Coastal Trail. Medium
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including historic buildings. Medium/Low
Perceptual	A farmed landscape. Medium/Low
OVERALL RATING	Medium/Low

1(xiv). Garvock and Glenberrie

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Large, with long distance views. The type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Medium/ Low
Landform	Smooth, sweeping, rolling landform that draw the eye up and down the terrain. Areas of higher ground at Hill of Garvock and the higher ground at the base of the Mounth at Glenberrie Medium/Low
Pattern	A bold geometric pattern of large, intensively farmed open fields, in an array of colours. Few field boundaries, and the few coniferous plantations located on hilltops are a minor element. Broadleaf woods and shelterbelts enhance the pattern in particular along the Bervie Water. Medium/Low
Development	A well settled landscape, villages such as Glenberrie and Arbutnott. Numerous farms with large outbuildings, the A90, a network of minor roads, electricity lines and railways. Telecommunications masts and wind farms. Medium/Low
Quality	Generally well-maintained farmland, with some distinctive high quality areas in particular at Drumlithie and Auchenblae with its attractive woodland, and at Catterline. Medium
Elements and Features	Smooth rolling landform, extensive views, intensively managed fields, lack of field boundaries, broadleaved woodland and hedges at Glenberrie, rising slopes of the Mounth. Medium
Context	The foreground to the Highland Boundary fault and backdrop to the coastal area. Setting for numerous coastal towns such as Stonehaven, Catterline, Inverbervie, Gordon, Johnshaven, St Cyrus and Montrose. Also backdrop to Laurencekirk. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors, high number in adjoining areas such as Stonehaven. High travelling population and visitors on the national cycle route and visiting the Grassic Gibbon Centre. High
Internal Visibility	Generally open views throughout the area, but in some places landform limits views locally but not large enough to screen larger structures. Medium/High
External Visibility	Visible from areas of higher ground and the coast, but rolling landform limits its external visibility. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	HGDL (Arbutnott & Glenberrie), SSSIs, Catterline conservation area. Medium/High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths such as the Aberdeen Coastal Trail and visitors to historic landscapes, cycling the National Cycle Network (North Sea Cycle Route) and using the Coastal Trail. Medium
Cultural value	Some locations of interest including historic buildings and HGDL including the landscape of 'the Mearns' associated with writings of Grassic Gibbon Medium/High
Perceptual	A managed, farmed landscape. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium

1(xv). Howe of Mearns

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to large, open. This type is large in extent and the most common character type in the north east of Scotland. Medium/ Low
Landform	The north-eastern extent of the Vale of Strathmore that runs from Perth & Kinross, through Angus and terminates in southern Aberdeenshire. Expansive flat basin sloping up to the dramatic steep moorland slopes of the Mounth behind this change in slope is the distinctive line of the Highland Boundary Fault. Medium/Low
Pattern	A distinctive patchwork of large, intensively farmed open fields, in an array of colours. Interspersed with small coniferous plantations, policy woodlands at the base of slopes, and pockets of scrubby birch along watercourses. There are avenues of beech trees associated with estate walls. Medium
Development	Small villages such as Laurencekirk, Fettercairn and Edzell Woods, numerous farms with large outbuildings, the A90, a network of minor roads, electricity lines and railways. Disused airfields. Medium/Low
Quality	Generally well maintained farmland, with some distinctive high quality areas of policy woodland along the base of slopes close to Fettercairn, but frequent large agricultural sheds detract from the overall character. Medium
Elements and Features	Basin landform, intensively managed fields, beech avenues, policy woodland and rising slopes of the Mounth. Medium
Context	A distinct hollow provides a foreground to the Grampian outliers and the Highland Boundary fault. Setting for the villages of Laurencekirk, Fettercairn and Edzell Woods. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors. High travelling population and moderate number of visitors. Medium
Internal Visibility	Open views throughout the area, clearer from the upper slopes of the Howe. Medium/High
External Visibility	Visible from surrounding areas of high land. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	HGDL (Fasque & The Burn), Conservation Area at Fettercairn, AWI, SSSI and SAM. Medium/High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors using Castle Trail and visiting HGDL. Medium
Cultural value	Area of interest including archaeological remains, historic buildings and HGDL. Medium
Perceptual	A managed, farmed landscape but contrasting attractively with the rising ground of the Mounth above. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

REGIONAL LCT MOORLAND - Farmed Moorland Edge

11(i). The Cromar Uplands

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Generally small-scale but some areas with open views. Rare within the wider region. High/Medium
Landform	Surrounded by the distinctive landforms of the grampian outliers, which form an imposing backdrop, the area itself has variable relief, including compact landform of small valleys and mounds as well as wide-open basins. Medium
Pattern	A diverse patchwork of farmland with a strong field structure sub-divided by drystone dykes. The pasturelands, small woodlands and scattered grey steadings create overall a small-scale landscape pattern. High
Development	Settlements at Torphins, Muir of Fowlis and Lumphannan. Large farms spread evenly through area, main roads and a network of minor roads. Pylon lines and telecommunication masts. Medium
Quality	Some areas well maintained farmland with a high degree of integrity but others where there are signs of neglect with derelict drystone dykes and encroaching gorse. Medium
Elements and Features	Variable landform, diverse small scale patchwork of farmland, small woodland blocks associated with steadings, pockets of small hills and valleys, wide views in some areas. Medium/High
Context	A transition landscape surrounded on most sides by the higher ground of the Grampian outliers (Pressendye & Benaquhallie). Dropping to the intensively managed farmland in the east, it is the mid-ground in views up towards the hills. Its also the setting for smaller villages such as Torphins and Lumphannan. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors within and moderate travelling population. Visitors to NTS Craigievar Castle (which has extensive views of the Grampians in the south-west and north to Bennachie), Lumphanan Peel, Queens View, various heritage trails and accessing the higher hills. Medium
Internal Visibility	Locally landform limits views at some locations, but open views across the area towards Mither Tap in the north and down to Deeside in some locations. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from surrounding higher ground (Pressendye, Hill of Fare & Benaquhallie) and up from Deeside. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	HGDL surrounding Craigievar Castle (which has extensive views from its grounds of the Grampians in the south-west and north to Bennachie), SAMS and AWI. Medium/High
Community value	Core paths around Torphins & Lumphanan, visitors to adjacent Queens View and Castle & Victoria tourist trails, area used by local residential population for formal/informal recreation. Medium/High
Cultural value	Historic interest linked with Queen Victoria, Craigievar Castle, and Lumphanan Peel with SAMs. Medium/High
Perceptual	An upland farmed landscape with open views in some areas and the moorland ridges contrast to form an imposing backdrop to most views, it is overwhelmingly a pastoral landscape. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

11(ii). Daugh of Cairnbarrow

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium scale. Rare within the wider region. Medium
Landform	A plateau of low, shallow, rolling hills and shallow valleys, open with long views. Occasional distinct hills such as The Bin and The Balloch, form prominent elevated foci. Medium
Pattern	Rough upland farmland, with a rich mosaic of textures and features creating a small-scale landscape pattern. Mix of wild unkept grasslands with scrubby patches of willow, birch and pine and occasional small fields of lush green pasture enclosed by drystone dykes or post and wire fences. Coniferous plantations are also a feature on hills such as The Bin and The Balloch. Medium/High
Development	Limited settlement with only the hamlet of Cairnie and occasional grey stone farmsteads. A section of main road crosses the area together with minor roads and tracks. On the eastern edge runs the railway between Aberdeen and Inverness. Medium
Quality	Conifer plantations can conceal landform and these together with a decline in farming, loss of drystone dykes and isolated derelict farmsteads reduce landscape integrity and quality. Medium/Low
Elements and Features	Low rolling plateau landform, open, mosaic of textures, local distinct landforms such as The Bin and the Balloch, drystone dykes, small areas of pasture. Medium
Context	Contrasts with the more intensive managed farmland below in the river valleys. The boundary with the higher ground is often marked by a strong contrast between bright smooth pasture in one and dark heather and forest in the other. Is part of the setting and backdrop to Huntly, and Keith in Moray. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria/ Thresholds
Receptors	Low population of residential receptors within and high population adjacent in Keith and Huntly. High travelling population. Visitors on heritage railway. Medium
Internal Visibility	Rolling plateau landform allows open extensive views across area, very limited local screening by landform and trees but not large enough to screen large structures. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from higher ground such as at Knock Hill and from the valley floor below. Medium/High
5OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria/ Thresholds
Designations	SAC & SSSI (Mortlach Moss) SSSI (Whitehill, Den of Pitlurg & Bin Quarry) and AWI. Medium
Community value	Core paths on Bin Hill and The Balloch, area used by local residential population for formal/informal recreation and visitors travelling along the Castle Trail. Medium
Cultural value	Some historic interest, with numerous cairns at the edges of high ground Medium/Low
Perceptual	An upland farmed landscape with open moorland roads, these with numerous derelict grey stone steadings create a sense of remoteness. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium

11(iii). Lumsden Valley

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Threshold
Scale	Within the wider valley profile small-scale. Rare within the wider region. High/Medium
Landform	In profile a compact valley landform, but with no watercourse. It is the division between the watersheds of the Don and Bogie. Surrounded by higher ground. The majority of the area has convoluted glacial features of moraines and eskers, which create a landform of small hummocks and depressions. Medium
Pattern	Winding roads, small glacial landforms and small fields well defined by drystone dykes create overall a small-scale landscape pattern. Open farmed land in the east and the transition to remote exposed moorland in the west. High
Development	Small evenly spaced grey stone steadings and cottages with frequent derelict buildings. The small village of Lumsden, two A roads and three large-scale wind turbines. Medium/High
Quality	The landscape has a moderate degree of integrity but the loss of drystone dykes, conifer plantations screening landform and pattern, and isolated derelict farmsteads reduce quality. Medium
Elements and Features	Intricate landform, small fields well defined by drystone dykes, woodland shelterbelts, well spaced vernacular steadings, transition to moorland in the west. Medium/High
Context	A transition landscape surrounded on most sides by the higher ground of the Moorland Plateau (The Buck, Correen Hills and Top o'Noth) and acting as its foreground. Dropping to the intensively managed farmland in the east, it is the midground in views up towards higher ground from Inch. Its also the setting for smaller villages such as Lumsden and Rhynie. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Low population of residential receptors within and moderate travelling population. Higher population from Inch. Visitors to Sculpture Walks and accessing the higher hills and passes. Medium
Internal Visibility	Small scale convoluted landform limits views at lower levels, from the valley sides views across the area, very limited local screening by landform and trees but not large enough to screen large structures. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from higher ground (The Buck, Coreen Hills and Top o'Noth) and higher levels roads, but valley profile limits wider vistas. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Small part of SAC & SSSI (Hill of Towanreef), SAMs and AWI. Medium
Community value	Core paths around Clova House and start of core paths up to Cabrach, Top O'Noth and Correen Hills, visitors to Sculpture Walks and following Castle Trail, area used by local residential population for formal/informal recreation. Medium
Cultural value	Some historic interest, with SAMs and Sculpture Walks Medium
Perceptual	An upland farmed landscape with open moorland roads, these with numerous derelict grey stone steadings create a sense of remoteness. Views of open Moorland Plateaux surrounding the valley notably Tap O'Noth. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium

REGIONAL LCT MOORLAND - Moorland Plateaux

22(i). Grampian Outliers

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Large, with some medium scale areas. Rare within the wider region. Medium
Landform	Moorland spurs extending from the Cairngorm massif and out into the surrounding farmland forming promontories. Smooth, rolling hills of both gentle and steep relief, with occasional dramatic rocky outcrops such as at Bennachie, Mither Tap and Tap o'Noth. These hills are distinctive landmarks integral to the landscape identity of Aberdeenshire. High
Pattern	Simple with bare moorland tops, extensive conifer plantations on slopes and distinctive fields at the base. Landform/pattern is almost entirely obscured by extensive conifer plantations in some areas. Steadings located at the base of slopes where there is a transition to farmland. Medium
Development	Limited development with occasional farms, minor roads and tracks at lower elevations. Few sections of main roads and telecommunication masts. High
Quality	Areas of high quality with a high degree of integrity, but conifer monoculture, decline in traditional moorland management and loss of drystone dykes at lower elevations. Medium/High
Elements and Features	Distinctive spurs of moorland, with dramatic rocky outcrops, projecting out into surrounding farmland, bare moorland summits, large blocks of coniferous woodland, traditional stone steadings at lower elevations. High
Context	Defines the extent of views across the lowlands. Setting to many towns and villages, foreground to the Cairngorm massif and acts as a distinctive backdrop to the farmed lowland areas and straths. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Low population of residential receptors. Visible from a number of larger settlements below such as Huntly, Aboyne, Banchory, Inverurie, Inch and Alford. Bennachie visible from Aberdeen. Visible from many main transport routes and tourist trails into the national park, large number of visitors. High
Internal Visibility	Spectacular open views from many higher points, but restricted in some areas by landform and woodland. Medium/High
External Visibility	Very conspicuous from external areas and prominent in views across Aberdeenshire, Banff and Buchan and from Cairngorm National Park. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	SAC (Hill of Towanreef), SSSIs (Coreen Hills, Tilliefour Wood, Craigs of Succoth), HGDL, SAMs, AWI. It abuts Cairngorm National Park. High
Community value	Many areas very popular for informal recreation to take in views from distinctive landmarks such as Pressendye, Bennachie and Tap O'Noth, mountain bike/cycle trails, ski trails, core paths and tourist routes. High
Cultural value	HGDL, Monument on Scolty Hill, Hillforts, SAM's, written about by poets, in traditional songs and rhymes, such as "Clachnaben and Bennachie, Are twa landmarks frae the sea". High
Perceptual	An undeveloped landscape, with strong wilderness qualities mapped as having a high level of wildness by SNH. Valued for high scenic qualities and distinctive landforms. Islands of 'wild land' contrasting strongly with the farmed landscape that surrounds them. High

OVERALL RATING	High
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22(ii). The Mounth

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Large, with some medium scale areas in the hills at the base of the plateau. Rare within the wider region. Medium
Landform	A substantial broad outcrop, an unbroken ridge, which forms a vast smooth rolling plateau extending from the Cairngorm massif almost to Stonehaven on the coast. Its southern edge is the eastern end of the Highland Boundary fault. The smooth landform is dissected by shallow gullies and small glens, with occasional dramatic rocky outcrops such as at Clachnaben. Medium
Pattern	Simple with bare moorland plateau, extensive conifer plantations in the east and distinctive fields of pasture at the base of slopes. However in some locations large plantations dominate. Steadings located at the base of slopes where there is a transition to farmland. Medium
Development	Little development, with occasional farms, minor roads and tracks at lower elevations. Telecommunication masts on summits and lines of pylons at the base of the ridge. Some wind farms. Medium/High
Quality	Areas of high quality with a high degree of integrity, but conifer monoculture, decline in traditional moorland management and loss of drystone dykes at lower elevations. Medium
Elements and Features	Extensive broad ridge of moorland, with dramatic rocky outcrops, rising above distant farmland, large blocks of coniferous woodland, traditional stone steadings at lower elevations. High
Context	Defines the extent of views across the lowlands. Setting to many towns and villages, foreground to the Cairngorm massif and acts as a distinctive backdrop to the farmed lowland areas of straths and Howe of Mearns. Distinctive continuation of the highland boundary fault. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Very low population of residential receptors. Highly visible from Stonehaven, Aberdeen and Brechin, mainly from the south and other large settlements such as Banchory. Visible from many main transport routes and tourist trails and main routes into the national park, large number of visitors. High
Internal Visibility	Spectacular open views from many higher points, but restricted in some areas by landform and woodland. Medium/High
External Visibility	Very conspicuous from external areas and prominent in views across Aberdeenshire, Angus and from Cairngorm National Park. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	A number SAMs, small part of HGDL, AWI, part of the Cairngorm SPA, It abuts the Cairngorm National Park. Medium/High
Community value	Many areas very popular for informal recreation to take in views from distinctive landmarks such as Cairn O'Mount and Clachnaben, mountain bike/cycle trails and core paths. Medium/High

Cultural value	HGDL, SAM's and in traditional songs and rhymes, such as "Clachnaben and Bennachie, Are twa landmarks frae the sea". Medium
Perceptual	A remote upland area, with strong wilderness qualities in the west where it extends into the Cairngorm Massif, less so in the east where conifer monoculture has eroded these qualities. Mapped as having a high level of wildness by SNH. Valued for scenic qualities and contrasting strongly with the farmed landscape below. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

22(iii) The North-Eastern Hill Ranges

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Large and expansive. Rare within the wider region. Medium
Landform	Low rounded summits, gentle slopes and long smooth interlocking spurs extending from the Cairngorm massif. Small burns incise the hillsides and flow into rivers within the valley floors. Medium
Pattern	Open and simple with bare moorland slopes and peat hags, small fields of poor quality grazing on the valley bottom. Regenerating native pine woodland. Occasional broadleaf trees running along watercourses. Occasional steadings located at the base of slopes and flat valley floors. Medium/Low
Development	Very little development, with occasional buildings, minor roads and hill tracks. High
Quality	Areas of high quality with a high degree of integrity, but decline in traditional moorland management and loss of drystone dykes at lower elevations. Medium/High
Elements and Features	Extensive area of moorland, rounded summits, regenerating pine woodland, traditional stone steadings at lower elevations. High
Context	Foreground to the Cairngorm massif and acts as a distinctive backdrop to the farmed lowland areas such as the straths of Deeside. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Very low population of residential receptors. Visible from Aboyne, from main routes into the national park, moderate number of visitors. High
Internal Visibility	Spectacular open views from many higher points, but restricted in some areas by landform but not sufficient to screen large structures. Medium/High
External Visibility	Summits conspicuous from external areas and prominent in views across Deeside and from Cairngorm National Park. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	SAMs, AWI and part of the Cairngorm SPA. It abuts the Cairngorm National Park. Medium/High
Community value	Many areas very popular for informal recreation with the Fungle Road a SRoW and old Drovers road. Part of area is the Forest of Birse Community, land held in community trust for the common good. Medium/High
Cultural value	SAM, historic buildings and Fungle Road a drove road. Medium
Perceptual	A remote upland area, with strong wilderness qualities adjacent and extending into the Cairngorm Massif mapped as having a high level of wildness by SNH.. Valued for scenic

	qualities and contrasting strongly with the farmed landscape below. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

REGIONAL LCT STRATHS AND RIVER VALLEYS - River Valleys

24(i). Deveron and Upper Ythan Valley

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to small. Medium/High
Landform	Shallow valleys bounded by broad and rolling hill rides to either side, valley sides steepen as River Deveron flows towards the sea. Medium/High
Pattern	Woodlands mixed deciduous and coniferous clothe the valley sides and are well-related to landform, Agricultural land extends to the river's edge and settlements such as Turriff, Rothienorman and Fyvie occupy the slopes. Medium/High
Development	Settlements such as Fyvie and Turriff, development of farms and steadings, main roads, electricity lines, wind turbines and a network of smaller roads. Medium
Quality	An attractive river valley with a high degree of integrity. A mix of well-maintained farmland, broadleaved policy woodland and winding rivers. Medium/High
Elements and Features	Valley landform, river and woodland on the valley sides. Medium/High
Context	Running from the agricultural heartlands the valley defines the edge of other landscape types. Setting for some towns such as Banff, Turriff and roads. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors. Medium travelling population, visitors using national cycle route, tourist trail and visiting HGDLs. Medium
Internal Visibility	Good visibility along river valley and down from the valley sides. Medium/High
External Visibility	Visible from the surrounding landscapes and from nearby towns. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	Five HGDLs; Duff House (views of the river, and the hills to the east and south), Hatton Castle, Forglen (views upstream along the valley floor, higher parts of the policies afford wider panoramic views northwards down the Deveron valley, and eastwards across the agricultural lands north of Turriff) and Fyvie Castle (views from the castle encompass the long artificial loch of Fyvie and the steeper valley slopes along the east and west edges of the designed landscape) some SSSI, SAMs and AWIs. Banff Conservation Area. Medium/High
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors cycling the National Cycle Network (North Sea Cycle Route) and travelling on the Castle Trail. Medium/High
Cultural value	Locations of archaeological/ historic interest including HGDLs and Banff Conservation Area. Medium/High
Perceptual	An attractive, well maintained river valley landscape. A distinctive backdrop to some settlements. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

REGIONAL LCT STRATHS AND RIVER VALLEYS – Straths & Valleys

25(i). Deveron and Bogie Straths

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to small, enclosed. Medium/High
Landform	Distinct Valley form, constricted valley associated with schists but widening into gentle straths through the soft gabbros such as the lower Deveron and the Bogie. A moorland backdrop lends a grand sense of scale. High
Pattern	A mosaic of different land uses, but a neat farmland patchwork on the flood plain, with hedges and post and wire fences. Broadleaved woods, conifer-covered knolls in the Deveron Strath. Dense settlement in the valley associated with road corridors. Medium/High
Development	Farmhouses scattered along straths, the settlement of Huntly, the main Aberdeen to Inverness railway, A97, A96, network of minor roads, pylon lines, wind turbines and telecommunication masts. Medium
Quality	An attractive landscape of farmland contrasting the surrounding moorland, however there are patches of neglected farmland. Medium
Elements and Features	Shallow rocky rivers, broadleaved woodland, regular patterned farmland, views up to moorland and traditional farms. Medium/High
Context	Setting for the settlement of Huntly and foreground to the surrounding moorland areas. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors. high travelling population, visitors using national cycle route, Castle tourist trail and visiting Huntly castle. Medium
Internal Visibility	Good visibility along river valley and down from the valley sides. Medium/High
External Visibility	Visible from the surrounding landscapes such as Grampian outliers (Clashmach Hill, Hills of Foudland) and Daugh of Cairnborrow (The Bin). Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	SSSI, SAMs and AWIs. Huntly Conservation Area. Medium
Community value	Areas used by local residential population for informal recreation, core paths and visitors travelling on the CastleTrail. Medium
Cultural value	Locations of archaeological/ historic interest including Huntly Castle and Conservation Area. Medium
Perceptual	An attractive, well maintained river valley landscape. A distinctive backdrop to settlement. Medium
OVERALL RATING	Medium

25(ii). Deeside

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to small, enclosed. Medium/High
Landform	Deep, narrow valley but expanding around Strachen. Medium/High
Pattern	Strong pattern where thick broadleaved woodlands clothe the valley sides. A richly wooded landscape with pockets of open agricultural landscape along the Water of Feugh. Settlement and roads together with numerous estates run along the valley floor. High
Development	A well settled landscape, with towns and villages such as Banchory and Kincardine O'Neil, it was the traditional transport route from Aberdeen into the heart of the Grampians. A93, minor roads and heritage railway. Telecommunications masts and wind turbines. Medium
Quality	Highly scenic landscape of broadleaved woodland, numerous estates with fine buildings, grand gatehouses and long avenues of beach trees. Attractive traditional settlements and the sparkling, shingly river. High
Elements and Features	River Dee, extensive broadleaved woodland with a rich understorey, occasional views up to moorland, grand estates and traditional settlements. High
Context	The main access to the Grampians, and setting for the Cairngorm National Park. Setting for some towns, villages and estates. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors adjacent/ near. High travelling population and very high number of visitors accessing Cairngorm National Park. High
Internal Visibility	Varied visibility due to landform and trees but not large enough to screen large structure. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from higher ground (the Grampian Outliers), Cairngorm National Park and higher levels roads. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	HGDL surrounding Inchmarlo (Views are south across the River Dee to the Blackhall Forest and the Scolty Monument and west to the Grampian Mountains) and Crathes Castle (long views south-east across the River Dee to the Durris Forest which rises to the hill of Cairnmen-earn and south towards Mongour Hill), Conservation Areas at Kincardine O'Neil, SAC, SSSIs and AWI. High
Community value	Deeside Way, core paths, main access for visitors to Cairngorm National Park and Castle & Victoria Trails, area used by local residential population for formal/informal recreation. High
Cultural value	Historic interest linked with Queen Victoria, Crathes Castle and traditional villages such as Kincardine O'Neil. High
Perceptual	A well wooded landscape with occasional views up to the surrounding moorland and hills. The river valley with its broadleaved woodland and traditional estates creates the impression of a well settled and prosperous area. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	High

25(iii). Donside

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to small, enclosed. Medium/High
Landform	Steep, narrow gorges between upland areas but widening into gentle straths through the sandstone areas. These are open areas where contours are smooth and terrain sinuous. High
Pattern	Overall a regular pattern. In the schist gorges, broadleaved beech woodlands clothe the valley sides and hide the roads. In the wider sandstone valley, fields are regular, smooth, with few boundaries and a regular pattern of farms. Forested moorland edges mark the transition to the surrounding higher ground woodland forms bold clumps and shelterbelts augmenting the pattern. High
Development	Regular traditional farmsteads, village of Kildrummy, the A97, network of minor roads and telecommunication masts. Medium/High
Quality	Highly quality scenic landscape of broadleaved woodland, hidden well manicured farmland contrasting the surrounding moorland (Grampian outliers). High
Elements and Features	River Don, broadleaved woodland, steep gorges, regular patterned farmland, views up to moorland and traditional farms. High
Context	The main access to the Grampians, and setting for the Cairngorm National Park. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Low population of residential receptors. Moderate travelling population and very high number of visitors accessing Cairngorm National Park. Medium/High
Internal Visibility	Varied visibility due to landform and trees but not large enough to screen large structure. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from higher ground (the Grampian Outliers), Cairngorm National Park and higher levels roads. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	HGDL at Kildrummy Castle (There are extensive views north-east to Tap 'North and the Correen Hills. The Calliver Hills can be seen from both the castle and the house, beyond the River Don), SAM's and AWI. Medium/High
Community value	Access for visitors to Cairngorm National Park, Castle Trail, Kildrummy Castle and Highland Tourist Route to Speyside, area used by local residential population for formal/informal recreation. Medium/High
Cultural value	Historic interest linked with Kildrummy Castle and Castle Trail. Medium/High
Perceptual	A peaceful, attractive pastoral landscape where manicured farmland contrasts with the surrounding moorland and hills. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

25(iv). Upper Deeside Estates

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to small. Medium/High
Landform	Low rounded, flat topped hills to the south of the River Dee. The strath surrounding the river Spey, rising up to the mountainous peaks to the south. The broad River Dee is a prominent feature. Medium/High
Pattern	Extensive woodland covers the hills, predominantly conifer plantations. In the east there are small pastures enclosed by stone dykes. Settlement and roads together with numerous estates run along the valley floor. High
Development	Isolated cottages and farmsteads are dispersed through the area together with the settlement of Aboyne, large country houses and estates. Part of the traditional transport route from Aberdeen into the heart of the Grampians. A93 and minor roads. Telecommunications mast. Medium
Quality	Highly scenic landscape of woodland, small irregular shaped hills and the river valley. Attractive traditional farmsteads and the sparkling, shingly river. Conifer monoculture reduces the quality. Medium/High
Elements and Features	River Dee, extensive coniferous woodland, occasional views up to moorland and traditional farms and field patterns. High
Context	The main access to the Grampians, setting for the Cairngorm National Park and NNR. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors. High travelling population and very high number of visitors accessing Cairngorm National Park. High
Internal Visibility	Varied visibility due to landform and trees but not large enough to screen large structure. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from higher ground (the Grampian Outliers), Cairngorm National Park and higher levels roads. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	SAMs, SAC, AWI and Aboyne Conservation Area Medium
Community value	Deeside Way, core paths, main access for visitors to Cairngorm National Park and Castle & Victoria Trails, area used by local residential population for formal/informal recreation. High
Cultural value	Historic interest linked with Queen Victoria and traditional estates. High
Perceptual	A well wooded landscape with occasional views up to the surrounding moorland and hills. The river valley with its broadleaved woodland and traditional farmsteads create an attractive landscape. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	High

25(v). Muir of Dinnet

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Criteria /Thresholds
Scale	Medium to small. Medium/High
Landform	The hills to the east of the Muir of Dinnet (within Cairngorm National Park & NNR). A valley landform close to the river Spey, with low irregularly shaped hills to the north separating it from the Howe of Cromar. Medium/High
Pattern	Woodland extends up the low hills, a mix of conifer plantations and broadleaved, interspersed with a pattern of small fields, which are predominantly laid to pasture. Heather and bracken covers the tops of some of the small hills and areas of open ground within woodlands. Settlement and roads together with numerous estates run along the valley floor. High
Development	Isolated cottages and farmsteads are dispersed through the area but generally the area is not heavily populated. Part of the traditional transport route from Aberdeen into the heart of the Grampians. A93 and minor roads. Small airfield on the floodplain of the Spey. Medium
Quality	Highly scenic landscape of woodland, small irregular shaped hills and the river valley. Attractive traditional farmsteads and the sparkling, shingly river. High
Elements and Features	River Dee, extensive broadleaved woodland, Heather covered hill tops, occasional views up to moorland and traditional farms and field patterns. High
Context	The main access to the Grampians, setting for the Cairngorm National Park and NNR. High
OVERALL RATING	Medium/High

Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
Receptors	Moderate population of residential receptors adjacent/ near. High travelling population and very high number of visitors accessing Cairngorm National Park. High
Internal Visibility	Varied visibility due to landform and trees but not large enough to screen large structure. Medium
External Visibility	Visible from higher ground (the Grampian Outliers), Cairngorm National Park and higher levels roads. High
OVERALL RATING	High

Landscape Value	Criteria
Designations	SAMs, SAC and AWI. Medium
Community value	Deeside Way, core paths, main access for visitors to Cairngorm National Park and Castle & Victoria Trails, area used by local residential population for formal/informal recreation. High
Cultural value	Historic interest linked with Queen Victoria and traditional farmsteads. High
Perceptual	A well wooded landscape with occasional views up to the surrounding moorland and hills. The river valley with its broadleaved woodland and traditional farmsteads create an attractive landscape. Medium/High
OVERALL RATING	High