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Technical Appendix 7.6:

Not Signficant Landscape and Visual Effects

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A. Technical Appendix 7.6: Not Signficant Landscape and Visual Effects

A.1 Landscape

Upper Nithsdale unit Upper Dale – Dumfries and Galloway (SNH 165/ D&G 9)

A.1.1 As shown on **Figure 7.15**, this LCT includes the upper Nithsdale from Thornhill to Kirkconnel, over 4 km away. **Viewpoints 8, 10, 14 and 15** are located within this LCT. They demonstrate the range and nature of effects in this landscape type, which is described in detail within **Technical Appendix 7.5: Viewpoint Analysis**.

A.1.2 The susceptibility of this LCT is judged to be Medium. This is as a result of the medium to large scale of the wide valleys where windfarm development within the long distance views is already a characteristic. The value of the landscapes within this LCT is variable with the part north of Sanquhar judged to be Community whilst the lower part of this LCT is considered to be of Regional value. This is as a result of part of this landscape being a key element within the Thornhills RSA, but the northern part not so much, as well as the extent of amenity, recreational and cultural associations. Considering susceptibility and value together the sensitivity is judged to be Medium north of Sanquhar and High/Medium to the south.

A.1.3 As illustrated on the ZTVs and the **Viewpoints 8,10 and 15**, those nearest areas on the southern side of the River Nith and within the valley floor would experience little additional impact. Whilst those receptors with a more elevated position, such as those at **Viewpoint 14** would experience a more noticeable change. However, even from these more elevated locations given the existing influence of wind energy development the additional impacts would be no more than small. From these areas, the increase in scale of the proposed Development, compared to the existing wind energy development would not be noticeable. There would be little or no effect on any of the key characteristics of this LCT (recorded in **Technical Appendix 7.3**). There would be little or no impact on the Upper Dale LCT within the Thornhills RSA.

A.1.4 Whilst there would be some limited influence on the views from this LCT, the scale of change would be Negligible over an Intermediate extent of this landscape type. These changes are considered to be Permanent which would lead to a Slight/negligible magnitude of change within the northern part of the Upper Nithsdale unit Upper Dale LCT. The sensitivity of the landscape affected is Medium, leading to a Minor effect which would be Not Significant.

Shinnel unit Upland Glens - Dumfries and Galloway (SNH 166/ D&G 10)

A.1.5 As shown on **Figure 7.15**, this LCT includes the Shinnel, Scaur and Castlefairn/Dalwhat Upland Glens which extend northwest towards the proposed

Development between Moniaive and Thornhill. **Viewpoint 7** is located within the centre of the Shinnel Upland Glen and the nature of the change is described in detail within **Technical Appendix 7.5: Viewpoint Analysis**.

A.1.6 The Scaur Upland Glen is predominantly screened by landform and only the upper eastern slope of this glen would be affected, where it joins the surrounding Southern Uplands and is potentially going to be influenced by Whiteside Hill, Sanquhar and Twentyshilling Hill when this is fully constructed. As a result, the impact on this occurrence would be very limited and would be Not Significant. There would be limited intervisibility within the Castlefairn/Dalwhat unit, apart from a few tips or turbines, as illustrated with Additional Wireframe at Moniaive and the wirelines within the **Technical Appendix 7.7 RVAA** for Benbuie and Glenlaan. Due to the extent of screening by intervening landform and forestry the impact would be limited and would be Not Significant.

A.1.7 The susceptibility of this LCT is judged to be high/medium. This results from the complex landform and landcover of variable scales with views focussed up and down the glens. The value of the landscapes within this LCT is judged to be Regional. This results from these landscapes forming part of the Thornhills RSA and extent of amenity, recreational and heritage interests. Considering susceptibility and value together the sensitivity is judged to be High/medium.

A.1.8 There are little or no operational wind farms visible in adjacent LCTs within the Shinnel unit. As illustrated in the ZTVs, there would be a few, fairly restricted locations where there would be intervisibility with the proposed Development, due to the screening by topography and woodland/forestry. Where intervisibility would occur, there would be a few turbines visible beyond the head of the glen, as illustrated with reference to **Viewpoint 7**. This would introduce a new large scale modern element into this glen, which would contrast to some of the more historic and remote qualities of this LCT. However, the location at the head of the valley would not distract from the natural foci within the glen. Views to large scale windfarms has occurred within other units of this LCT. Despite some contrast with the traditional upland farming characteristic, there would be little impact on this or remaining key characteristics of this LCT (recorded in **Technical Appendix 7.3**).

A.1.9 As a result of the change in the views from a few parts of this glen, the scale of change would be Medium, but this effect would only occur over a Localised extent of this landscape type. These changes are considered to be Permanent which would lead to a Moderate/slight magnitude of change within the Shinnel unit of the Upland Glens LCT. The sensitivity of the landscape is High/medium, leading to a Moderate effect which would be Not Significant.

Upland Glen - Ayrshire (SNH 73/ EAC 14)

A.1.10 As shown on **Figure 7.15**, this LCT includes the Glen Afton which extends southeast towards the proposed Development from New Cumnock. **Viewpoint 5** is located at the southern end of Afton Reservoir where there is the greatest extent of visibility and the nature of the change is described in detail within **Technical Appendix 7.5: Viewpoint Analysis**.

A.1.11 The susceptibility of this LCT is judged to be high/medium. This results from the complex landform and landcover which is smaller scale and views contained but focussed up and down the glens. The value of the landscapes within this LCT is judged to be Regional. This results from a Regional value identified for this East Ayrshire Upland Glen for its landscape resource and scenic quality. Considering susceptibility and value together the sensitivity is judged to be High/medium.

A.1.12 There are operational wind farms within parts of this and within adjacent LCTs, resulting in an influence over the southern parts of this Upland Glen. As illustrated in the ZTVs and **Figure 7.12,** there would be a few, fairly restricted locations where there would be intervisibility with the proposed Development, due to the screening by topography and woodland/forestry. This would be predominantly on the upper west facing slopes of this glen, where Afton windfarm is currently located, as it joins the surrounding Southern Uplands with Forestry LCT. The limited patch of visibility on the valley floor is illustrated with reference to wirelines within **Technical Appendix 7.7 RVAA** for Craigdarroch.

A.1.13 Where intervisibility would occur, the greatest extent of this is illustrated with **Viewpoint 5**, there would be a few turbines visible beyond the head of the glen behind the recently constructed overhead powerline. This would introduce views to another windfarm within the upper part of this glen, which would contrast to some of the more remote qualities.

A.1.14 As a result of the change in views from a few parts of this glen, the scale of change would be Large/medium but this effect would only occur over a Limited extent of this landscape type. These changes are considered to be Permanent which would lead to a Moderate magnitude of change within the Glen Afton unit of the Upland Glens LCT. The sensitivity of the landscape is High/medium, leading to a Moderate effect which would be Not Significant due the limited extent affected and existing influence by the Afton windfarm.

Tynron, Keir and Dalmacallan units Foothills - Dumfries and Galloway (SNH 175/D&G 18)

A.1.15 As shown on **Figure 7.15**, this LCT includes the series of foothills which extend to the north west between Moniaive and Thornhill, towards the proposed Development. There would be little or no intervisibility with the Nithsdale unit. There are only patches of intervisibility from the highest ground within the Tynron, Keir and Dalmacallan units and forestry. **Viewpoint 12** is located on the summit of Auchengibbert Hill, within the Tynron unit and representative of the nature of impacts on this LCT with further detail within **Technical Appendix 7.4: Viewpoint Analysis.**

A.1.16 The susceptibility of this LCT is judged to be medium/low. This results from the large to medium scale of this elevated and open landscape of smoothy rounded hills with a few areas of more distinctive landform in places. The value of the landscapes within this LCT is judged to be Regional. This results from these landscapes forming part of the Thornhills RSA and extent of amenity, recreational and historical

associations. Considering susceptibility and value together the sensitivity is judged to be Medium.

A.1.17 Currently there are no windfarms located within the northern part of these three areas. However, there is some influence from wind energy development within adjacent sites including Twentyshilling Hill (when constructed), Wether Hill and Blackcraig Hill.

A.1.18 Views within this landscape are not usually extensive although there are panoramic views from summits. This is reflected in the pattern of intervisibility within the ZTVs. Visual characteristics are not strongly expressed within this landscape and as a result, there would be limited impact on the key characteristics of this LCT (recorded in **Technical Appendix 7.3**). However, the view from one of the summits is illustrated in **Viewpoint 12**. Whilst the wind turbines of the proposed Development would be visible from some of the summits, generally at distances of over 5-10 km away, the proposed Development within the adjacent Southern Uplands would have a limited influence on local landscape character of the Foothills.

A.1.19 Given the limited influence of visual characteristics on local landscape and context of the proposed Development, the impacts would be limited to mainly the highest summits. From these summits, the scale of change would be Small over a Localised part of these landscapes. These changes are considered to be Permanent which would lead to a Slight magnitude of change within the Tynron, Keir and Dalmacallan units Foothills LCT. The sensitivity of the landscape is Medium, leading to a Moderate/Minor effect which would be Not Significant.

A.2 Visual

A.2.1 **Sanquhar receptor group** (9.6 km, east of the proposed turbines) – receptors within this group comprise local residents and users of local roads and recreational paths in and around Sanquhar. This group would be of high susceptibility to the proposed Development while views are judged to be of Community value. Considering both the susceptibility and value, the group is judged to be of High/Medium sensitivity to the proposed Development.

A.2.2 The ZTVs indicate fairly widespread visibility from peripheral areas of Sanquhar, reducing in central parts of the settlement where there is a greater extent of built development. The most open views generally occur to the north west in the vicinity of Sanquhar Academy and the cemetery off Church Road, as illustrated by **Viewpoint 10**. There would be similarly open views from the south western edge of housing estates to the south east of the settlement in the vicinity of Bell Crescent, Deer Park Avenue and Mccron Court. Core Path 114 runs south from Sanquhar Primary School over open ground here and would also have relatively open views. In these locations a small number of the proposed turbines would be seen beyond existing turbines at Sanquhar and Whiteside Hill, as illustrated at **Viewpoint 10**, and a few turbines would be visible but not be readily discernible from the existing wind turbine development. Elsewhere, to the south of the A76, views would be limited to occasional glimpses of one or two turbines seen between buildings and set amongst existing turbine development.

A.2.3 To the north of the A76, outside of areas noted above, visibility of the proposed Development would be very limited. More open views are possible from the elevated area to the north of the railway line and there may be some views in the vicinity of Queensbury Square although trees and buildings would screen or filter views from here, particularly during summer months. Elsewhere to the north of the A76 views of the proposed Development would be unlikely.

A.2.4 The scale of change to views from this receptor group resulting from the proposed Development would be no greater than Small/Negligible, as at **Viewpoint 10**, occurring over a Localised extent of the group. Permanent effects would be Slight/negligible magnitude and, considering the High/Medium sensitivity of the group, would be Minor and Not Significant.

A.2.5 **Kirkconnel/Kelloholm receptor group** (6.8 km, north east of the proposed turbines) – receptors within this group comprise local residents and users of local roads and recreational paths in and around Kirkconnel and Kelloholm, two adjacent villages with no clear separation. This group would be of high susceptibility to the proposed Development while views are judged to be of Community value. Considering both the susceptibility and value, the group is judged to be of High/Medium sensitivity to the proposed Development.

A.2.6 To the south of the River Nith, built development is formed into a number of distinct clusters set amongst extensive areas of open space used for informal recreation. The ZTVs indicate that visibility would be limited within built up areas although relatively extensive from the open spaces between them. In the residential area to the east of the settlement, centred around McConnel Street and Anderson Street, there are occasional channelled views of existing turbines at Sanquhar windfarm although these views are relatively constrained, and the proposed Development is unlikely to be visible. In the residential area to the south of Greystone Avenue, rising landform constrains views south west towards the site. There are few notable views of existing turbines here and views of the proposed Development are unlikely. In the residential areas north of Greystone Avenue, around Williamson Way and Kingsway, there are glimpses of existing turbines at Sanquhar and Whiteside Hill seen between or over houses and garden vegetation. A small number of the proposed turbines may also feature in these views although they would not be readily discernible from the existing turbines.

A.2.7 In the open spaces southwest of Polmeur Road, west of Kelloholm Primary School and along the banks of the River Nith and Kello Water (including Core Path 86), the ZTVs indicate fairly widespread potential visibility. There are relatively open views of existing turbines at Sanquhar and Whiteside Hill from these areas and the proposed Development would add a small number of additional turbines into this existing pattern of development, as illustrated by **Viewpoint 8**, which would be visible but not readily discernible from the existing turbines.

A.2.8 The historic core of Kirkconnel lies to the north of the River Nith, along the A76. The settlement pattern here is of a higher density and views towards the site from public areas are very limited. Some more open views are possible from Main Street (A76) at the western end of the settlement, where a small number of proposed turbines would be seen beyond those existing at Sanquhar and Whiteside Hill.

A.2.9 The scale of change to views from this receptor group resulting from the proposed Development would be no greater than Small/Negligible, as at **Viewpoint 8**, occurring over a Localised extent of the group. Permanent effects would be Slight/negligible magnitude and considering the High/Medium sensitivity of the group, would be Minor and Not Significant.

A.2.10 **Euchan Water valley receptor group** (2.4 km, east of the proposed turbines) – receptors within this group primarily comprise local residents travelling to and from their places of residence. This group would be of high susceptibility to the proposed Development while views are judged to be of Community value. Considering both the susceptibility and value, the group is judged to be of High/medium sensitivity to the proposed Development.

A.2.11 The Euchan Water valley extends south west from Sanquhar; it is relatively broad and visually open at its north eastern end, near the settlement, becoming narrower and more visually contained as it extends to the south west to meet the eastern boundary of the Site. There is relatively little vegetation cover which allows for more extensive views along the valley itself. Access is generally limited to the dead end, unclassified road that runs along the valley bottom with few other tracks or paths. Intermittent but frequent views of existing turbines at Sanquhar and Whiteside Hill occur along the length of the valley. These are more open and widespread to the north eastern end, becoming more constrained and generally limited to small numbers of turbines appearing prominently over nearby hilltops as the valley narrows to the southwest. The recently constructed Glenglass substation is situated towards the south western end of the valley and there is a new overhead transmission line running along the valley side west of this.

A.2.12 As illustrated by the ZTVs there would be intermittent visibility of a small number of the proposed turbines at the northern end of the site along the length of the Euchan Water valley. At the north eastern end of the valley these would be seen amongst the existing turbines at Whiteside Hill and Sanquhar, similar to views described for the Sanquhar receptor group, but would become more of a focal point at the head of the valley towards the south west, as illustrated by the **Additional Wireline Volume 3b** near Glenmaddie in the Euchan Water valley. However, existing turbines would remain a more notable feature of views, appearing above nearer hillsides and of generally greater prominence.

A.2.13 The scale of change to views from this receptor group resulting from the proposed Development would be no greater than Medium/Small, occurring over a Localised extent of the group. Permanent effects would be Moderate/Slight magnitude and, considering the High/Medium sensitivity of the group, would be Moderate and Not Significant.

A.2.14 **Glen Afton receptor group** (2.3 km, west of the proposed turbines) – receptors within this group primarily comprise local residents and recreational visitors to Afton Reservoir, local heritage trail Old Road from New Cumnock to Dalquharin and the surrounding area. This group would be of high susceptibility to the proposed development and, being located within an East Ayrshire SLA, views are judged to be of regional value. Considering both the susceptibility and value, the group is judged to be of High/medium sensitivity to the proposed Development.

A.2.15 Glen Afton extends south from New Cumnock; it is relatively broad and visually open at its northern end, more so to the west than the east, and becomes narrower and more visually contained as it extends to the south, terminating at Afton Reservoir. The Old Road from New Cumnock to Dalquhairn follows the public road or Core Path to the Reservoir. Access is generally limited to the dead end, unclassified road that runs along the valley bottom although various paths, forestry and wind farm tracks now extend from Afton Reservoir, providing access up into the surrounding hills. East Ayrshire Core Path C10 follows the same route as the road and Core Path C14 runs alongside Afton Water to the south of New Cumnock, as far as Dalhanna Farm. The ZTVs indicate that there would be some intermittent visibility of generally just one of the proposed turbines from the northern part of the glen extending south of New Cumnock as far as Lochingerroch, including parts of the road and the southern end of Core Path C14. Roadside and riverside vegetation in this area would intermittently screen views of the proposed Development and when visible it would often be seen in the context of existing turbines at Afton and Hare Hill windfarms which are intermittently visible here on nearby hilltops.

A.2.16 Towards the southern end, as the glen becomes more visually contained, views towards the proposed Development become even more restricted by the intervening landforms of Blackcraig and Craigbraneoch Hills, as illustrated by the wireline within **Technical Appendix 7.7 RVAA** for the Craigdarroch group, while the existing Afton turbines become more prominent in views. However, at the head of the valley there would be some open views towards the proposed Development from paths to the western side of Afton Reservoir, as illustrated by **Viewpoint 5**, where a small number of the proposed turbines would be seen on hilltops across the water and above the recent overhead transmission line, although the existing Afton turbines would generally be seen at the same time in closer proximity within adjacent hills. Local heritage trail Old Road from New Cumnock to Dalquharin uses a foot path over the saddle on the west side of Alhang along Hom Burn to Dalquhairn where there would be views from high ground.

A.2.17 Visibility within Glen Afton would be extremely variable and the scale of change to views from this receptor group resulting from the proposed Development would be no greater than Large/medium, as at **Viewpoint 5**, and would occur over a very Limited extent of the group. Permanent effects would be at most, Moderate/Slight magnitude and, considering the High/Medium sensitivity of the group, would be Moderate and Not Significant.

A.2.18 **Tynron receptor group** (10.9 km south east of the proposed turbines) – receptors within this group comprise local residents and road users as well as recreational users of Core Paths around the village. This group would be of high susceptibility to the proposed Development and, being within the Thornhill Uplands RSA, views are judged to be of regional value. Considering both the susceptibility and value, the group is judged to be of High/medium sensitivity to the proposed Development.

A.2.19 The ZTVs indicate there would be no potential visibility from the core part of Tynron, centred around the bridge, although there are some areas of potential visibility shown to the south and south east of the main village along minor roads running parallel to Shinnel Water. Views from these areas are likely to be notably less than illustrated by the ZTVs due to extensive roadside and garden vegetation, even

during winter months when leaf cover is reduced. If the proposed turbines are visible, these views are likely to comprise one or two distant (11.5 km or more) turbines seen on hill tops through or just above intervening vegetation, as illustrated by **Additional Wireline in Volume 3b** at Milnton which is located on Core Path 73.

A.2.20 The scale of change to views resulting from the proposed Development within this receptor group would be Small at most and would occur over a Limited extent of the group. Permanent effects would be Slight/negligible magnitude and, considering the High/Medium sensitivity of the group, would be Minor and Not Significant.

A.2.21 **Hillwalkers Cairnsmore of Carsphairn receptor group** (8.1 km, south west of the proposed turbines) – receptors within this group comprise hillwalkers on summits of Cairnsmore of Carsphairn, Beninner and those on the Knockgray Trail. This group would be of high susceptibility to the proposed Development and views are judged to be of Regional value as located within Galloway Hills RSA and popularity of the Corbett. Considering both the susceptibility and value, the group is judged to be of High/medium sensitivity to the proposed Development.

A.2.22 The most popular ascent of Cairnsmore of Carsphairn is straight up the track from the bridge over Water of Deugh, north of Carsphairn and the back via Dunool. Visibility from this route would occur only at the summit and Black Shoulder. If, however, a longer route was taken this could include Beninner and descent via Knockgray Burn via the Knockgray Trail which ends at Liggat, south of Carsphairn. Visibility from this longer route would occur only at the summit of Cairnsmore of Carsphairn and Bennier.

A.2.23 From the northeastern side of the broad summit, there would be open views to the proposed Development, as illustrated in **Viewpoint 9**. Views would also include other windfarms in the area, particularly those within the Windy Standard group. However, the proposed Development would still represent a notable addition and the increased scale of the turbines, compared to other operational turbines would be apparent.

A.2.24 There would be a Medium scale of change, as illustrated in **Viewpoint 9**, but confined to the summits only which would be a Localised extent of the routes/area. These Permanent effects would be Moderate/slight in magnitude and result in a Moderate effect which would be Not Significant.

A.2.25 **Local Heritage Trails Moniaive to Sanquhar Drove Road** (8 km, south east of the proposed turbines) –This route remains as a track or faint route between tracks and has been illustrated on **Figure 7.16**, in relation to the ZTV with screening. Receptors would be of high susceptibility to the proposed Development while views are judged to be of Community value. Considering both the susceptibility and value, the group is judged to be of High/medium sensitivity to the proposed Development.

A.2.26 The Moniaive to Sanquhar Drove Road is located over 8 km to the east and there would be some views of the proposed Development when on the hill summits of Bardennoch Hill and Bennan, where the view would be similar to **Viewpoint 12**. However, all other parts of the route would be screening by landform. There would

be a Medium/small scale of change over a very limited part of this route and the Permanent effects would result in a Slight magnitude and Moderate/minor effect which would be Not Significant.

A.2.27 **Cairn Water valley receptor group** (10 km, southeast of the proposed turbines) – receptors within this group primarily comprise local residents southeast of Moniaive along the B729, including recreational users on Core Paths that would be of High/Medium sensitivity to the proposed Development. The range of ZTVs in **Figures 7.8-7.11** indicate that there would be some scattered visibility along this valley in places. However, apart from a few locations visibility is likely to be limited mainly to blade tips, as a result of screening by intervening landform and tree cover. Travelling north from Dumfries on the B729, there is an open elevated view on Lagganhill approaching Dunscore, where the proposed Development would be visible c.23 km to the northwest in the direction of travel. There would be some properties at Dunscore, part of the corepath and surrounding areas with open views northwest, up the valley, where the proposed Development would be visible on the distant horizon, c. 20 km away, as predicted by the ZTVs with screening. Further north along the B729, there would be continuing views intermittently, with visibility gradually reducing as the route approaches Wallaceton. At Wallaceton, c.17 km away, T19-21 would be noticeable on the skyline with the remaining turbines much more screened and less noticeable. Beyond Wallaceton, visibility drops away due to screening by landform and tree cover to some extent. There would be no visibility through Kirkland to Moniaive, as illustrated in **Additional Wireline in Volume 3b** at Moniaive.

A.2.28 The scale of change experienced by these users would be Small, across an Intermediate extent of the valley. These Permanent effects would be Slight in magnitude and result in a Moderate/minor effect which would be Not Significant.

A.2.29 **Hillwalkers Lowther Hills receptor group** (15 km, north east of the proposed turbines) – hillwalkers within the Lowther Hills. The impact on users on the Southern Upland Way, which extends across the Lowther Hills is assessed separately. This group would be of high susceptibility to the proposed Development and views are judged to be of Regional value as much of these hills are located within either the Thornhills Uplands or Leadhills and Lowther Hills RSAs. Considering both the susceptibility and value, the group is judged to be of High/medium sensitivity to the proposed Development.

A.2.30 The impact on recreational receptors on the main summits within the Lowther Hills is illustrated with **Viewpoints 16 and 18**, as East Mount Lowther and Queensberry. The area between Sanquhar and Wanlockhead is represented by **Viewpoint 11**, which is a similar distance and elevation. Views from the Lowther Hills would be variable, with little or no views within the valleys or at lower elevations. However, from summits and at higher elevation long distance views are possible across Nithsdale, to the proposed Development. As illustrated at the viewpoints, the proposed turbines would be seen 10-30 km away, in between the windfarms which are closer (Twentyshilling Hill, Whiteside Hill and Sanquhar) and those beyond including Hare Hill and the Windy Standard group. The proposed Development would be clearly visible and represent an increase in density of turbines visible

amongst this group, but the change would be less noticeable than if it were located on its own in a different part of the view.

A.2.31 There would be a Small to Negligible scale of change confined to areas of high ground and summits which would represent an Intermediate extent of the area. These Permanent effects would be Slight/negligible in magnitude and result in a Moderate/minor effect which would be Not Significant.

A.2.32 **A76** (7 km, northeast of the proposed turbines) – this is the main road route between Dumfries and Kilmarnock through Nithsdale. At its closest point it is located approximately 7 km north near Kirkconnel. Views from this road are judged to be Community value, although in places it does run through RSAs or SLCA, and users would be of Medium susceptibility due to the moderate speed of traffic on this main route through the area. Overall, users of the road are considered to be of Medium sensitivity to the proposed Development.

A.2.33 The ZTVs indicate that there would be a few patches of visibility likely between Dumfries and Kilmarnock, but visibility would not be extensive. Northbound, visibility through Dumfries would be screened by landform and tree cover. An Additional Wireline in Volume 3b is included at Closeburn, south of Thornhill on the A76 where a few turbines would be visible 20.1 km away over a short section of the route. Landform and extensive tree cover would screen all views from Thornhill, north to Mennock. From Mennock to Kirkconnel there would be more consistent views of the proposed Development, as illustrated in **Viewpoints 8, 10 and 15** and this would end views northbound. As illustrated by these viewpoints, a few of the proposed turbines would be clearly visible, but would be located behind existing windfarms and, therefore, the change to the view would be more limited.

A.2.34 Southbound from Kilmarnock to New Cumnock there would be a few distant glimpses intermittently whilst on high ground through the undulating landscape, 10-45 km away. However, views of the proposed Development would consist of only a few blade tips and virtually no hubs due to screening by landform and tree cover. Given the baseline situation, the change in the view would be difficult to perceive.

A.2.35 In summary, there would be views of the proposed Development between Mennock and Kirkconnel, over 7 km away where the scale of change would be small/negligible, at most. This would occur for approximately 14 km of the route which would be an Intermediate extent. These Permanent changes would be of Slight magnitude and result in a Moderate/minor effect which would be Not Significant.

A.2.36 **East Mount Lowther** (19 km, north east of the proposed turbines) – This viewpoint is identified on OS base mapping and is located just off the Southern Upland Way and illustrated in **Viewpoint 16** and the scale of change is set out in **Technical Appendix 7.5: Viewpoint Analysis**. The impact on users on the SUW is assessed separately. Recreational visitors at this viewpoint would be of high susceptibility to the proposed Development and views are judged to be of national value as this is predominantly visited by those on the SUW of national value. Considering both the susceptibility and value, receptors at this viewpoint are judged to be of High sensitivity to the proposed Development.

A.2.37 From this summit, long distance views are possible across Nithsdale to the proposed Development. The proposed turbines would be seen over 19 km away, in between the wind farms which are closer (Twentyshilling Hill, Whiteside Hill and Sanquhar) and those beyond including Hare Hill and the Windy Standard group. The proposed Development would be clearly visible and represent an increase in density of turbines visible amongst this cluster, but the change would be less noticeable, than if it were located on its own in a different part of the view.

A.2.38 There would be a Small scale of change from this viewpoint in a Limited part of the panoramic view. These Permanent effects would be Slight/negligible in magnitude and result in a Moderate/minor effect which would be Not Significant.

A.3 Designated Areas

Sensitive Landscape Character Area (East Ayrshire)

A.3.1 Proposed access route A, through Hare Hill, extends through the Southern Uplands within the Sensitive Landscape Character Area (SLCA), but the main site and proposed turbines are located just outside this area, as shown on **Figure 7.2** and on the ZTV on **Figure 7.12**. The SLCA nearest the proposed Development is considered to be of Medium sensitivity. This results from a Regional value identified for the East Ayrshire Southern Uplands and Upland Glen for its landscape resource and scenic quality and a Medium susceptibility due to the inclusion of both upland and valley LCTs.

A.3.2 EAC Background Paper (Mar 2015) identifies the characteristics and sensitivities of each LCT. For the Southern Uplands (with and without forestry), '*the steep sided, rugged open hills of the Southern Uplands form a dramatic backdrop to the adjacent low-lying upland basin, and form an important part of East Ayrshire's southern skyline. The well defined, steep-sided hills on the eastern edge of Glen Afton, Blackcraig and Craigbraneoch, are important landmark features and provide for some spectacular views. The Uplands to the east of Glen Afton is an important area for recreation / hill walking.*' For the Upland Glen, '*Glen Afton is the only Upland Glen within East Ayrshire, making it an important landscape feature for the area. The high ridgelines are visually prominent and the rugged upland landscape has a high scenic value, attractive to walkers. With only a single track road through the Glen, it provides a relatively remote and tranquil landscape.*'

A.3.3 As illustrated in the ZTVs, within the Southern Upland and Glen Afton areas there would be only limited intervisibility due to screening by landform. This accords with the general pattern of visibility of the proposed Development, which tends to be very restricted within glens or dales but more open and panoramic at summits. **Viewpoint 4** is from the summit of Blackcraig Hill, whilst **Viewpoint 5** is at the southern end of Afton Reservoir where there is some visibility within Glen Afton. There would be a significant effect on landscape character within part of the Southern Uplands LCT, but this area is already characterised by existing windfarm development, including Hare Hill within this LCT. There would be a Moderate but Not Significant effect on landscape character within Glen Afton.

A.3.4 As the turbines of the proposed Development are not contained within this area, the impact on the skyline of this SLCA would be more limited. The main impact would be on the scenic quality by recreational receptors within the East Ayrshire Southern Uplands and Glen Afton. Whilst there would be some significant impacts on recreational users within this area, this area is already strongly influenced by wind energy development. The impact on users at Glen Afton and Afton Reservoir would be much more limited. The views would change for those hillwalkers on high ground, but the scenic quality would still be available.

A.3.5 Inclusion within the SLCA does not preclude development, but requires that landscape impacts be given particular focus in the preparation of development proposal. Careful consideration has been given to minimise the impacts on these LCTs. The impact on landscape character would occur where there is already a strong influence by wind energy development. Proposed access route A would be the only element within this area and it would have limited impacts. Whilst the scenic quality of the area would be altered, it would not compromise the overall integrity of the landscape character of the SLCAs.

Thornhills Uplands Regional Scenic Area (Dumfries and Galloway Council)

A.3.6 The Thornhills Uplands RSA is located over 1 km east of the proposed Development and is shown on **Figure 7.2** and with ZTV on **Figure 7.12**. The proposed Development is wholly outside this designation and there would no physical change to the components of landscape character within this designation. The impacts would be on the visual components of landscape character. This designated landscape is considered to be of High/Medium sensitivity on account of it having a Regional value as a regional designation for landscape scenic quality and a High/Medium susceptibility due this RSA containing a number of glens and dales as well as upland landscapes types.

A.3.7 D&GC RSA Technical Paper (Jan 2018) does not identify a set of 'special qualities' but it does set out the basis for designation, boundaries and relationship with landscape character. '*The designated area centres around the Middle and Upper Dale of the Nith from Mennock south to Auldgirth, and the series of glaciated Upland Glens of the Mennock, Dalveen, Scar, Shinnel, Dalwhat and Castlefairn which form its tributaries, carving their way southwards through the hills of the Southern Uplands.*'

A.3.8 As illustrated in the ZTVs, the areas which are the focus of the designation, Upper Dale, Middle Dale, Upland Glens or Intimate Pastoral Valley landscapes, there would be little or no impact except at some of the elevated hills which form the edges and within the Shinnel Water glen. The impact on these areas are illustrated with **Viewpoints 7 and 15**. The impact on the Shinnel unit of the Upland Glen was Moderate but Not Significant. The impacts on the other valley LTCs would be very limited and not significant. This accords with the general pattern of visibility of the proposed Development, which tends to be very restricted within glens or dales but more open and panoramic at summits.

A.3.9 There would be intervisibility within the panoramic views available within the upland LCTs including the Lowther unit of the Southern Uplands, over 9 km away, as illustrated by **Viewpoints 16 and 18,** but effects at this distance would not be significant. The impact at the nearby Nithsdale unit of Southern Uplands is illustrated with **Viewpoint 6**, which is just outside this RSA but indicative. There have been some significant impacts identified on landscape character on the edge of the designation in this unit. However, there are no notable summits in the Nithsdale unit within the RSA and Twentyshilling Hill windfarm is under construction in this unit on the edge of the designation. The impact on the Foothills (Nithsdale, Tynron and Keir) within this designation is illustrated with **Viewpoint 12** but would be very limited due to screening by topography. There would be little or no impact on the Foothills with Forest outwith the forestry areas. There would be some limited areas with intervisibility from the Upland Fringe landscapes but at over 15 km away the impacts would not be significant.

A.3.10 A key reason for this designation is that '*the area encompasses varied and contrasting upland and valley scenery ranging from the exposed, remote summits of the Lowther Hills, through the wooded gorge of the Nith above Drumlanrig to the pastoral character of the wide, enclosed upper Cairn and Mid Nithsdale valleys.*' Given the very limited intervisibility from the valley LCTs, the key quality of contrasts would remain wholly intact throughout this designation and only affected in a few small locations as noted above by the proposed Development.

A.3.11 Based on these considerations, the effect on the reasons of designation of the RSA would be Medium/Small in scale in a Localised area and this Permanent change is likely to have a Slight magnitude of change. This would result in a Moderate effect, which would be Not Significant. The proposed Development is not within the designation so the physical integrity of the RSA as a whole would remain intact. The key qualities of the RSA would not be significantly altered and, therefore, the proposed Development would not result in any significant material effects upon the Thornhills Uplands RSA and would not compromise the overall integrity of this RSA.

Galloway Hills Regional Scenic Area (Dumfries and Galloway Council)

A.3.12 The Galloway Hills RSA is located over 5 km southwest of the proposed Development and is shown on **Figure 7.2** and with ZTV on **Figure 7.12**. The proposed Development is wholly outside this designation and there would no physical change to the components of landscape character within this designation. The impacts would be on the visual components of landscape character. This designated landscape is considered to be of High/Medium sensitivity on account of it having a regional value as a regional designation for landscape scenic quality and a High/Medium susceptibility to the proposed Development due this RSA containing predominantly upland landscapes types but also some valley landscape types.

A.3.13 D&GC RSA Technical Paper (Jan 2018) does not identify a set of 'special qualities' but it does set out the basis for designation, boundaries and relationship with landscape character. '*This area centres on the Rugged Granite Uplands and Coastal Granite Uplands of central Galloway, extending from the Ayrshire*

boundary south to where the hills meet the sea.''The relationship between the hills and the adjacent lowlands gives rise to sweeping and dramatic views of the hills...' 'The uplands vary in character from the massive craggy peaks of the Rugged Granite Uplands with their heather covered slopes and granite outcrops to the smoother, rounder, lower summits of the Foothills, and their extensive forested counterparts.'

A.3.14 There would be some distant intervisibility with the areas which are the focus of the designation, the Rugged granite uplands with and without forest at Merrick and Rhinns of Kells, as illustrated in **Viewpoint 17** and from the summit of Merrick in the **Additional Wirelines** in **Volume 3b**. However, these areas would be 15-35 km away and the effect would not be significant. The Cairnsmore Coastal Granite Uplands would be over 35 km away. The Southern Uplands at Carsphairn is the nearest landscape with intervisibility of the proposed Development and **Viewpoint 9** is from the summit, which is already affected by wind energy development. A small amount of this landscape would experience significant effect as a result of the proposed Development, but in the main the impact would not be significant. There would be limited impact on the afforested LCTs due to lack of intervisibility for the most part. The Foothills within this RSA are over 30 km away. There would be some intervisibility from some of the Upland Fringe areas but most would be over 20 km away.

A.3.15 As illustrated in the ZTVs, there would only be a limited impact on the Glenkens (Flooded Valley and Upper Dale) due to screening by landform and further by forestry and tree cover. There would be no impact on the Coastal Flats, nor the Narrow Wooded Valleys or Drumlin Pastures.

A.3.16 There would be no real impact on '*the interesting juxtaposition of contrasting upland, valley and coastal landscapes'*, nor '*on the relationship between the hills and the adjacent lowlands gives rise to sweeping and dramatic views of the hills.*' Whilst there would be some change in the composition of the views from some of the most popular hill summits, the impact would not be significant and this does not form a key part of this designation.

A.3.17 Based on these considerations, the effect on the reasons of designation of the RSA would be Small in scale across an Intermediate extent of this designation. This Permanent change would have a Slight magnitude of change. This would result in a Moderate effect, which would be Not Significant. The proposed Development is not within the designation so the physical integrity of the RSA as a whole would remain intact. The key qualities of the RSA would not be significantly altered and, therefore, the proposed Development would not result in any significant material effects upon the Galloway Hills RSA and would not compromise the overall integrity of this RSA.