

EARRAGHAIL RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Appendix 7.8

Wild Land Assessment

Prepared for ScottishPower Renewables

A. Appendix 7.8: Wild Land Assessment

A.1 Introduction

A.1.1 The purpose of this Technical Appendix is to provide an assessment of the effects of the proposed Development on the attributes of potentially affected Wild Land Areas (WLA).

A.2 Policy and Guidance

A.2.1 Wild Land Areas are not a statutory designation but are included in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) as 'Group 2: Areas of significant protection' under the spatial framework advice (SPP 2014, page 39) relating to windfarm development. This requires that any development within a Wild Land Area must "*demonstrate that any significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation.*"

A.2.2 Supporting the planning policy, NatureScot (NS) have undertaken detailed analysis of Scotland and identified Wild Land areas and provided maps and descriptions of each. These build on earlier mapped studies which remain of relevance.

A.2.3 This assessment is carried out with reference to the guidance provided in 'Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas' (NatureScot, September 2020). The guidance provides a methodology and general principles based on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, 2013, Landscape Institute and IEMA (GLVIA3).

A.3 Consultation, Scope and Study Area

A.3.1 NatureScot identify in their 2020 guidance that "*the guidance should only be applied to proposals whose nature, siting, scale or design are likely to result in a significant effect on the qualities of the WLA*" (para 5) and advise that "*An assessment will only be required where it has been deemed necessary by the competent authority.*" (para 6).

A.3.2 NatureScot requested a Wild Land Assessment of the North Arran WLA, as part of the Scoping process. NS requested to consider how people move through the area with a focus on the effect of the wild land qualities and their experiential nature. Viewpoints were agreed on Arran to represent some aspects of the WLA, but additional photomontages and assessment points were requested at a range of elevations to support the WLA and these have been included within this assessment.

A.3.3 The consultation correspondence also places a particular focus the potential impact of the proposed Development at night as a result of the visible aviation lighting of the proposed Development both on its own and cumulatively with other proposed windfarms. Night-time viewpoint locations were agreed within and near the WLA and night-time impacts form part of the assessment.

ZTV and Study Area

A.3.4 The study area for this assessment encompasses the entire North Arran WLA.

A.3.5 The ZTVs illustrated on **Figures 7.7 – 7.10** indicate that visibility within the North Arran WLA is concentrated on the northern half of the area and largely confined to hilltops and outward facing slopes with much more limited visibility within lower lying valley landforms. In the southern half of the WLA there is some more limited visibility at Goatfell and from some of the other more elevated hilltops to the north and west of here.

A.4 Approach

Methodology and Significance Criteria

A.4.1 The approach to WLA assessment in accordance with the guidance follows a five-step process, similar to standard LVIA methodology set out in GLVIA3:

- Define the study area and scope of assessment (see section A.3 above);
- Verify the WLA baseline;
- Assess the sensitivity of the qualities;
- Assess the magnitude of the effects; and
- Judgement of significance of effect.

A.4.2 The 2020 NatureScot guidance notes that the judgment of sensitivity is based on the “*nationally important value attached to WLAs and susceptibility to the type of change proposed*”. This judgement is similar to sensitivity judgements for landscape and visual receptors within the LVIA although the value of all wild land qualities is assumed to be the same. Table 1 below illustrates how the judgement is made in this assessment:

Table 1: Sensitivity of Wild Land

WILD LAND		Susceptibility			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Value	National	High	High/Medium	Medium	Low

A.4.3 Judgements of the magnitude and significance of effects are made in the same manner as within the LVIA. However, the consideration of whether an effect is ‘significant’ or not may differ given the specific criteria set out in the 2020 NatureScot technical guidance which requires that where “*effects are identified that result in a material change in the experience of any of the wild land qualities, this is considered to be significant*” (paragraph 29).

Wild Land Qualities

A.4.4 The guidance identifies the key qualities of Wild Land Area (in general) to be:

WLAs have the following physical attributes:

- *a high degree of perceived naturalness;*
- *a lack of modern human artefacts or structures;*
- *little evidence of contemporary land uses;*
- *landform which is rugged, or otherwise physically challenging; and*

- remoteness and / or inaccessibility.

The perceptual responses evoked by these physical attributes include:

- a sense of sanctuary or solitude;
- risk or, for some visitors, a sense of awe or anxiety;
- perceptions that the landscape has arresting or inspiring qualities; and
- fulfilment from the physical challenge required to penetrate into these places.”

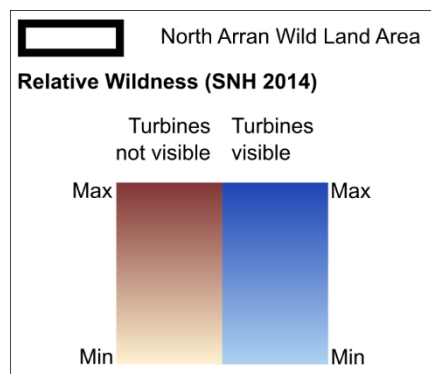
A.4.5 The documented and manifest qualities for each of the individual WLA vary both between and within the WLAs and are considered below.

A.5 Assessment

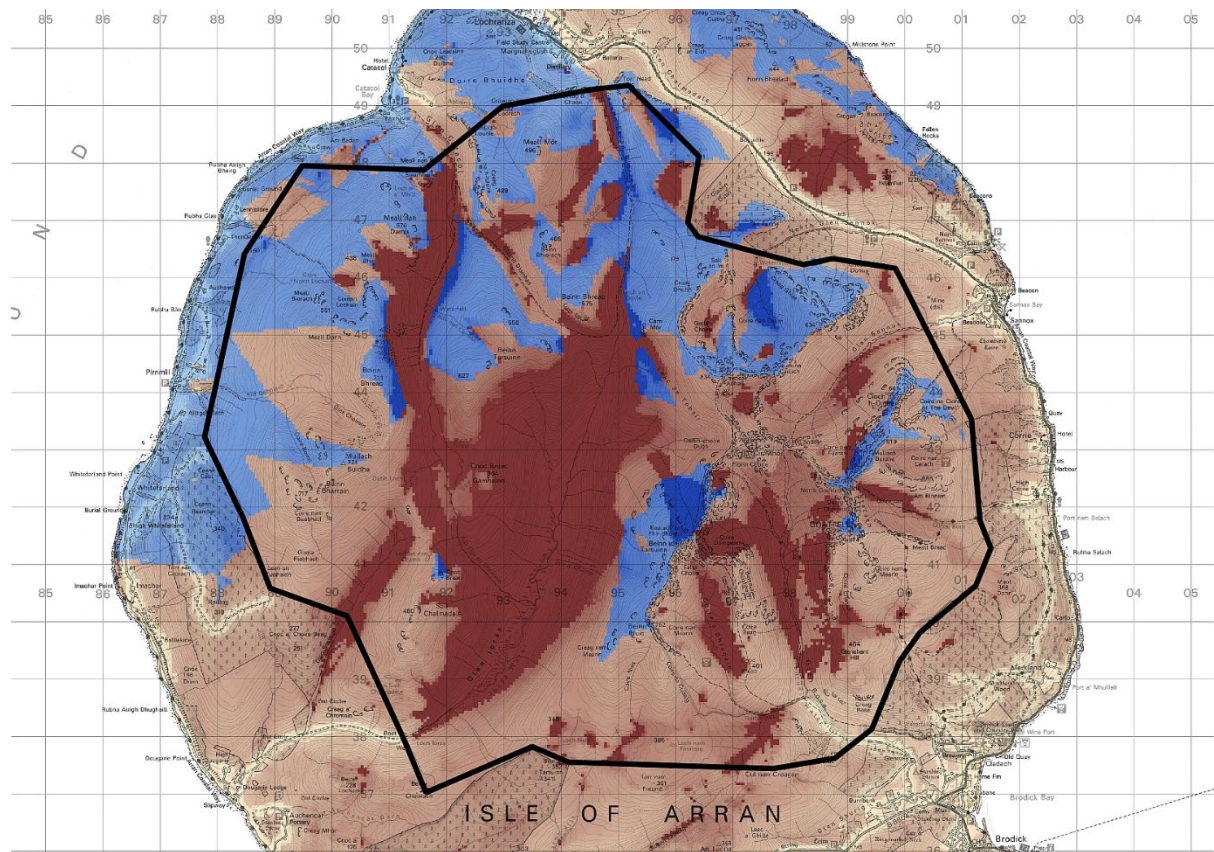
Wild Land Area: North Arran

Baseline

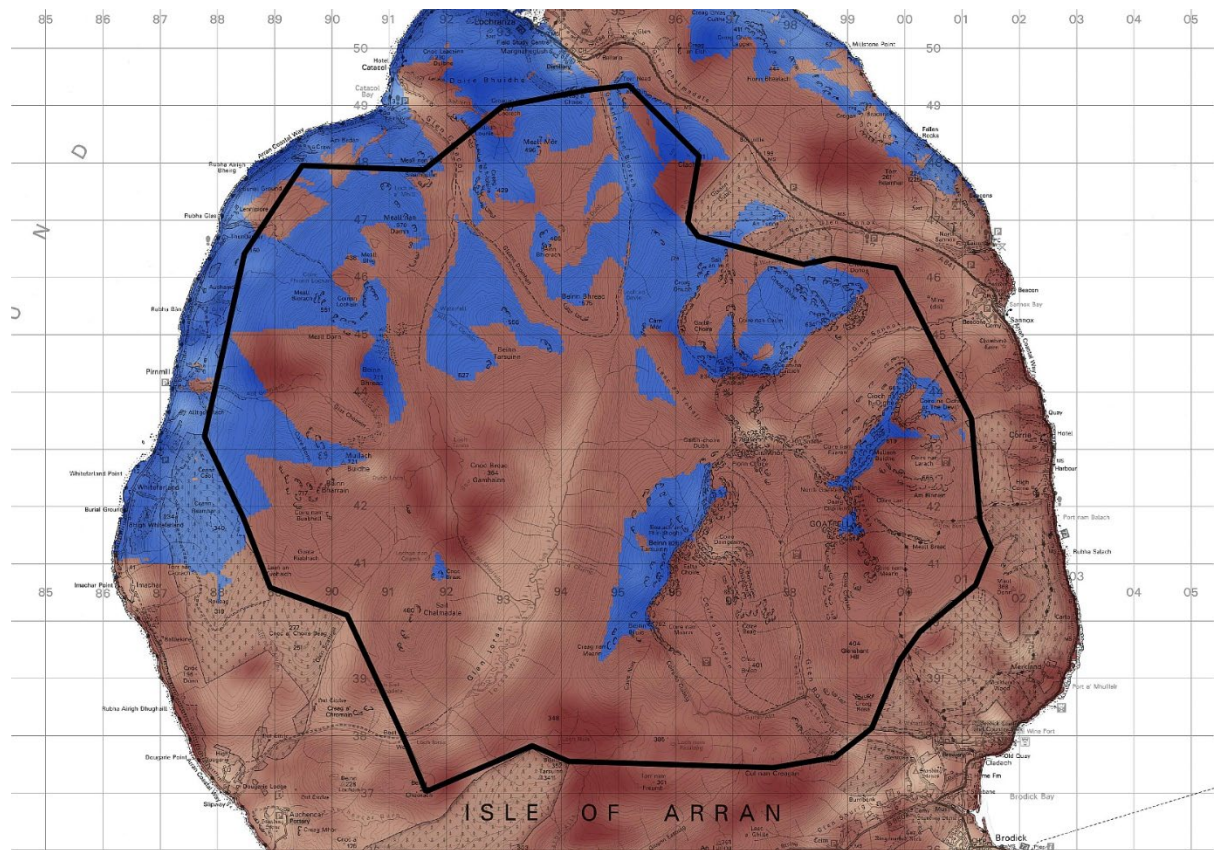
A.5.1 The inset maps below show relative wildness within the study area (SNH 2014 data), overlaid with the theoretical visibility of the proposed Development.



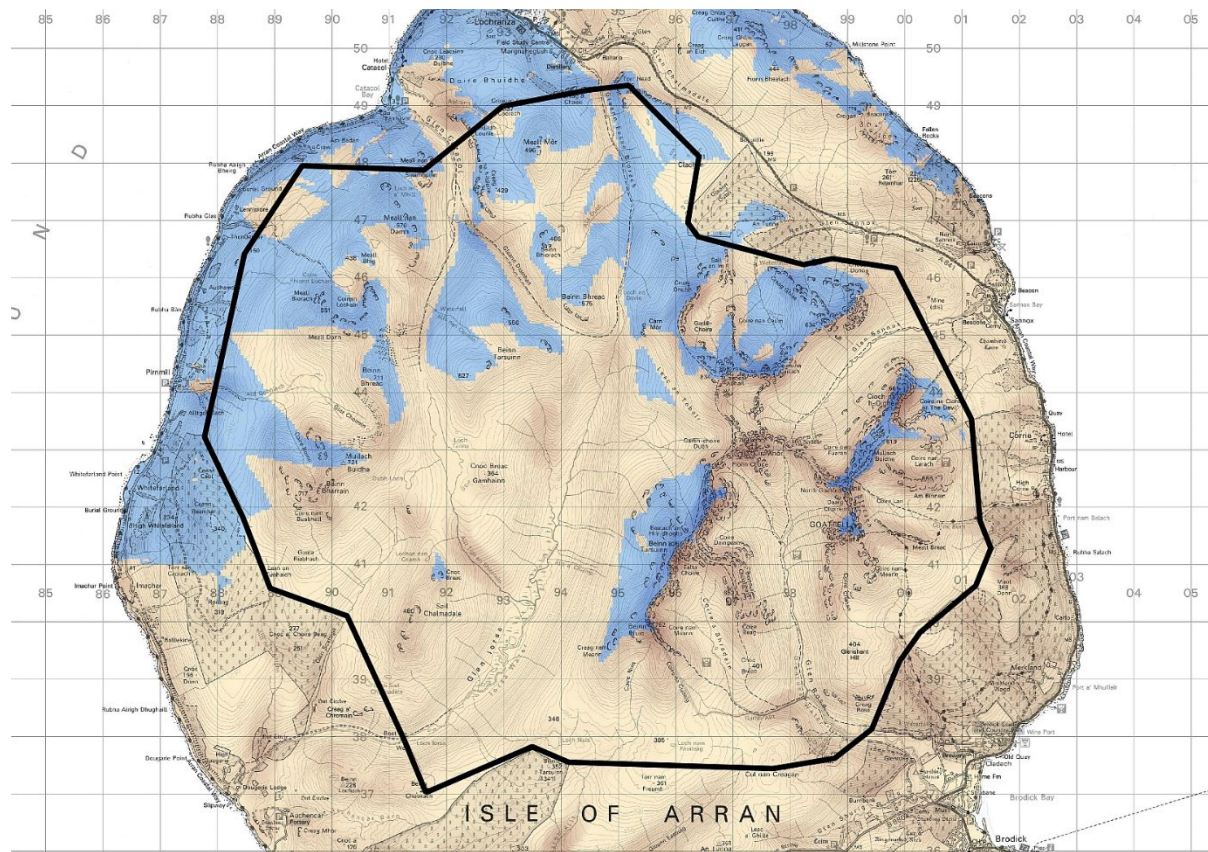
Wildness – Absence of Modern Artefacts



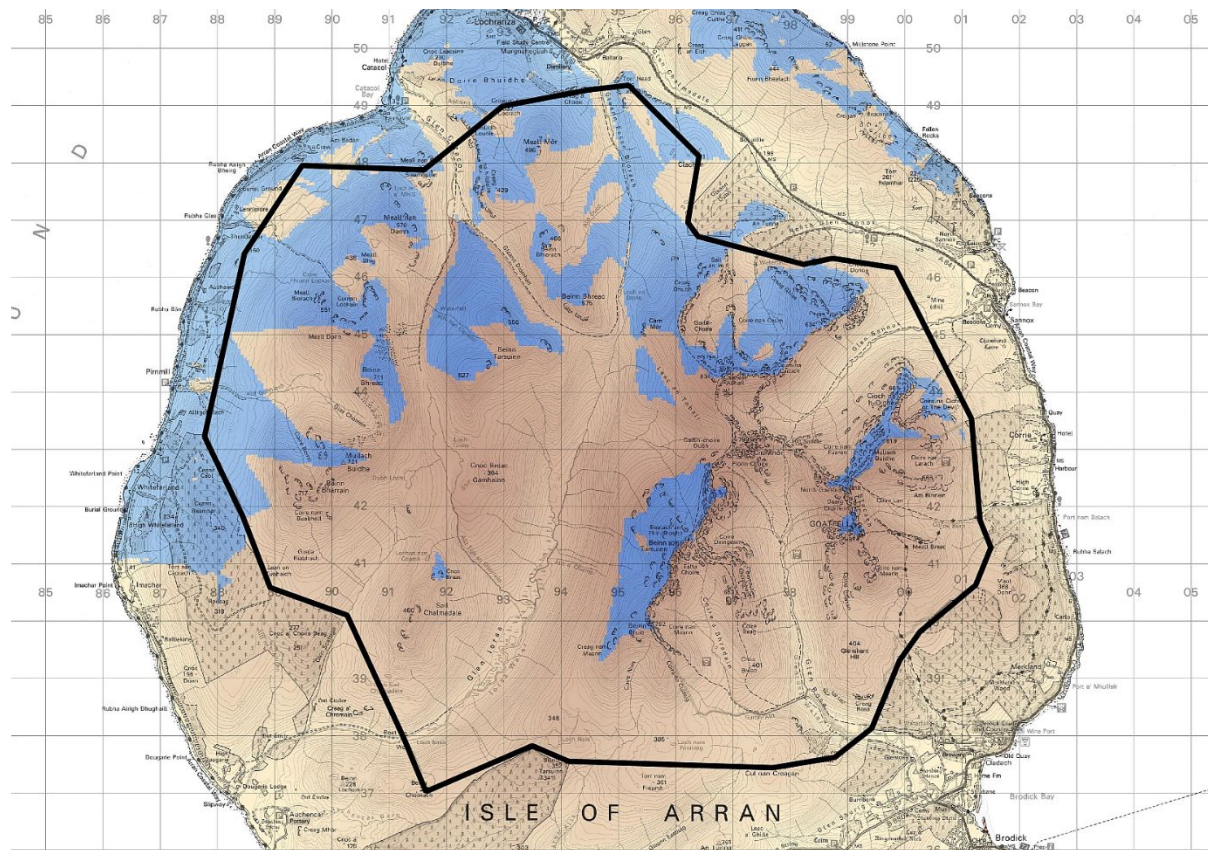
Wildness – Perceived Naturalness



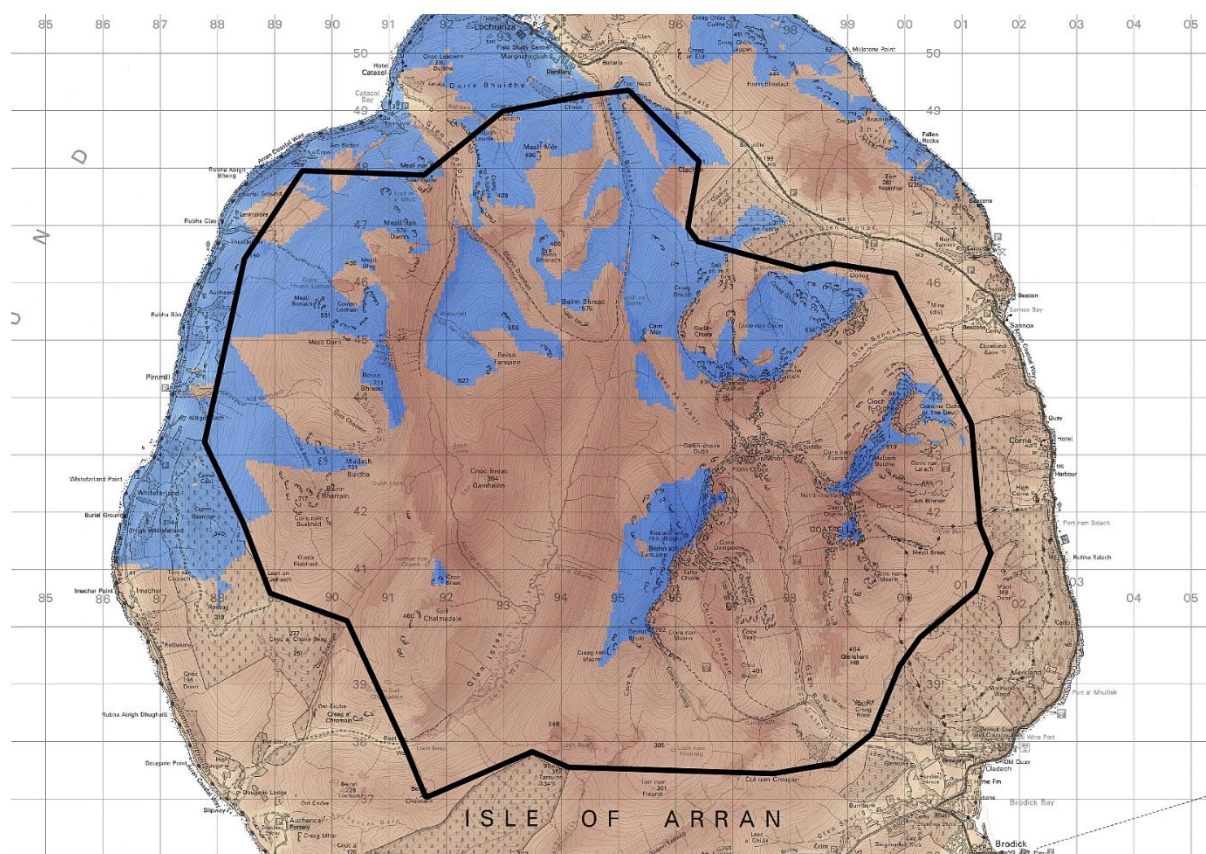
Wildness – Rugged or Challenging Terrain



Wildness – Remoteness from Roads and Ferries



Wildness – Composite



A.5.2 The key attributes and qualities of the WLA as set out in the description are:

- *“A readily accessible area, but with strong wild land attributes, especially within the remote interior*
- *The contrast in experience between the rugged east and smoother and more remote west mountain ranges*
- *A landscape which is well-defined, whose rugged qualities are widely experienced from the surrounding areas*
- *A strong sense of naturalness, with unmodified catchment systems and little intensive land use within the wild land area”.*

A.5.3 Based on a review of the information presented above and site work, the following key points are noted in relation to the baseline and are taken into account in the assessment of sensitivity:

- The mapping shows that a lack of modern artefacts and perceived naturalness are relatively strongly expressed within this WLA with the former more clearly expressed in the sheltered valleys and latter more so on exposed hilltops. There is a sharp disparity between a strong absence of modern artefacts and weak perceived naturalness in the Glen Iorsa.
- The composite mapping of wildness qualities illustrates that overall there is little clear difference in relative wildness between the WLA and coastal areas of Arran lying outside the WLA.

- The WLA is readily accessible with many signposted and maintained paths, local charitable groups exist to improve access across Arran and include projects within the WLA. Marked paths are well used throughout the year and diminish the ‘sense of risk’ associated with these areas and in some cases also makes access less ‘physically challenging’.
- Given that one of the key attributes is that the area is ‘readily accessible’, there are relatively large volumes of recreational visitors to the WLA, particularly the more rugged eastern hills which can detract from the ‘sense of remoteness, sanctuary and solitude’.

Effects

A.5.4 As set out within **Chapter 7**, potential effects on the Wild Land Area would arise as a result of:

- Visual changes arising from the introduction of further wind turbines in views of the Kintyre peninsula during the day. Primarily occurring from elevated hilltop locations and covering a localised extent of the WLA.
- Visual changes arising from the introduction of visible aviation lighting in night-time views. Primarily occurring from elevated hilltop location and covering a limited extent of the WLA.

A.5.5 A detailed assessment of how the changes described above may affect the Wild Land Area, considering the sensitivity of each of the key attributes / qualities; and setting out the magnitude of effects is provided below:

Table 2: Effects on the Wildness Attributes of the North Arran WLA

Key attribute / quality	Susceptibility and potential effects	Magnitude of Change
A readily accessible area, but with strong wild land attributes, especially within the remote interior	<p>There are few <i>human artefacts</i> within the WLA and little human influence evident in lower lying parts of the interior. However, from the elevated ground and hilltops within the WLA, human influences in the surrounding landscape are clearly evident and include extensive wind turbine development clearly visible on the Kintyre peninsula and mainland Ayrshire, as illustrated by Viewpoints 18 and 19. The susceptibility of this attribute is judged to be Medium.</p> <p>Day-time impacts: Figure 7.16 illustrates that there are few areas within the WLA where the proposed Development would introduce new visibility of wind energy development¹. These small areas are confined to upper valley sides in Glen Catacol and Gleann Easan Biorach in the northern part of the WLA. These areas of new visibility are</p>	<p>Slight</p> <p>Scale: Small Extent: Localised Duration: Permanent</p>

¹ It should be noted that Figure 7.16 and other cumulative ZTVs only include the sites noted on them and do not include existing wind farms on southern part of the Kintyre peninsula and mainland Ayrshire although development in these areas is widely visible from hilltops in western and eastern parts of the WLA.

Key attribute / quality	Susceptibility and potential effects	Magnitude of Change
	<p>generally unlikely to be visited given the nature of the terrain although a section of path extending over approximately 1km through Gleann Easan Biorach would gain new views and is frequented by visitors to the WLA. The view from here is illustrated by Viewpoint W1 where it can be seen that channelled views of distant turbines would be introduced to a short section of the valley. This would result in a slight reduction to the <i>sense of remoteness, sanctuary and solitude</i> experienced here.</p> <p>From the more elevated hilltops across the WLA, existing development is already visible, and the '<i>sense of remoteness, sanctuary and solitude</i>' is expressed to a lesser degree as a result. The proposed Development would add a further group of turbines in views from these elevated locations but would have little notable impact on this attribute in these areas.</p> <p>Night-time impacts: The proposed visible aviation lighting would introduce views of distant red lights into parts of the WLA. In new areas of visibility within Glen Catacol and Gleann Easan Biorach as well as some of the lower, more remote hilltops in the interior of the WLA these would be the only source of artificial light visible and would result in a slight reduction to the '<i>sense of remoteness, sanctuary and solitude</i>' in these areas. Views from more elevated hilltops on the eastern side of the WLA and areas around the periphery already experience wide ranging views of lighting associated with coastal settlement and industry and the introduction of visible aviation lights would have little notable impact on this attribute in these areas. However, from western areas where there is less lighting visible, such as illustrated in night-time photomontage for Viewpoint 18, there would be a slight reduction to the <i>sense of remoteness, sanctuary and solitude</i>.</p> <p>Cumulative impacts: Impacts on this attribute arise primarily as a result of introducing views of turbines in areas where no existing development is visible. Figures 7.17 to 7.20 illustrate that no consented or proposed Development would notably alter the areas of 'new visibility' arising from the proposed Development in Glen Catacol and Gleann Easan Biorach and cumulative effects on this attribute</p>	<p>Negligible</p> <p>Scale: Small Extent: Limited Duration: Permanent</p>

Key attribute / quality	Susceptibility and potential effects	Magnitude of Change
	<p>would be no different to those of the proposed Development alone.</p> <p>At night, aviation lights at Narachan and Rowan would be visible from more elevated parts of the WLA, as illustrated by Viewpoints 18 and 19. Assuming the prior presence of these schemes, the addition of the proposed Development would add a further, discrete cluster of lights in westward views towards Kintyre and Knapdale where aviation lights on turbines would be an existing feature of night-time views. The extent, quantum and proximity of lights would not fundamentally differ from those of the other schemes. Assuming the prior presence of Narachan and Rowan, the cumulative effects on this attribute would be the same level as the proposed Development alone.</p>	<p>Slight</p> <p>Scale: Small Extent: Localised Duration: Permanent</p>
<p>The contrast in experience between the rugged east and smoother and more remote west mountain ranges</p>	<p>This quality is concerned with internal contrasts within the WLA. The susceptibility of this attribute to the proposed Development, which is outside the WLA, is judged to be Negligible.</p> <p>The proposed Development would have no physical impact on the WLA or influence on internal contrasts and it would have no notable impact on this quality.</p>	<p>Negligible</p> <p>Scale: Negligible Extent: Negligible Duration: Permanent</p>
<p>A landscape which is well-defined, whose rugged qualities are widely experienced from the surrounding areas</p>	<p>The proposed Development is outside of the WLA and has no potential to interfere with how the 'extent' of the WLA is appreciated. However, there are views from outside the WLA where the proposed Development would be juxtaposed with the landform of the WLA. The susceptibility of this attribute is judged to be Medium.</p> <p>Day-time impacts: As illustrated by Viewpoints 4, 13 and 14, the surrounding water provides clear separation between Arran and the proposed Development in views from the wider area and the scale of the turbines would be subordinate to the hulking mass of Arran. Outside of the Site itself (see Viewpoint 1), there are no notable views where the proposed Development would be seen in front of the mountains of the WLA. Although some juxtaposed views would occur, the proposed Development would be a secondary feature to that of Arran and the WLA and would not diminish its dominance within the Firth of Clyde and views of the rugged eastern mountain massif would be no less 'arresting'.</p>	<p>Negligible</p> <p>Scale: Small Extent: Limited Duration: Permanent</p>

Key attribute / quality	Susceptibility and potential effects	Magnitude of Change
	<p>Night-time impacts: The extent and landform of the WLA are not readily appreciable at night. There is no potential for the proposed visible aviation lighting to impact on this attribute.</p> <p>Cumulative impacts: All cumulative scenarios consider a general intensification of wind energy development in a series of clusters along the Kintyre peninsula. The addition of the proposed Development would lead to another clearly separate cluster at the head of the Kintyre peninsula, with a similar gap as exists between other groups. Other groups of turbines would be less prominent in views to Arran and would not notably influence the juxtaposition of the proposed Development with the profile of the WLA. Effects on this attribute in any cumulative scenario would be no different to those of the proposed Development alone.</p>	<p>Negligible</p> <p>Scale: Negligible Extent: Negligible Duration: Permanent</p> <p>Negligible</p> <p>Scale: Small Extent: Limited Duration: Permanent</p>
A strong sense of naturalness, with unmodified catchment systems and little intensive land use within the wild land area	<p>This quality is concerned with land use and land cover within the WLA. The susceptibility of this attribute to the proposed Development, which is outside the WLA, is judged to be Negligible.</p> <p>The proposed Development would have no physical impact on the WLA or influence on land cover or land use and would have no notable impact on this quality.</p>	<p>Negligible</p> <p>Scale: Negligible Extent: Negligible Duration: Permanent</p>

A.5.6 Two of the identified wildness attributes may be notably affected by the proposed Development. Considering the susceptibility of all the identified wildness qualities along with their National value, the overall sensitivity of the North Arran WLA to the proposed Development would be High/Medium. Considering the scale, extent and duration of potential effects on wildness attributes as set out in **Table 2**, these would result in a change to the wildness qualities of Slight/Negligible magnitude.

A.5.7 Taking into account the High/Medium sensitivity and Slight/Negligible magnitude of change, the overall effect on the North Arran WLA would be of **Moderate/Minor significance and Adverse**, primarily due to the introduction of new views of turbines from some small areas within Glen Catacol and Gleann Easan Biorach.