

TECHNICAL APPENDIX 7.4: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

The sensitivity of the host landscape character type where there would be physical changes to the landscape fabric is detailed below. Landscape sensitivity is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location. To assess the sensitivity of a particular landscape it is good practice to consider the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the particular form of change likely to result from the proposed Harestanes West Windfarm (hereafter, the ‘proposed Development’). Assessment text relates to sensitivity of the landscape receptor as a whole, to the proposed Development, with additional comments regarding the Site where relevant. In the main this has been taken from the Dumfries and Galloway Council’s Windfarm Landscape Capacity Study 2, 2020 (DGWLCS) and NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland digital map based LCA (2019) (quotes shown in italics). The table below is based on guidance provided within the Landscape Institute’s Technical Guidance Note for Assessing landscape value outside of national designations, 2021(LI TGN 02/21) - specifically Table 1 within that document.

Host Landscape: Ae unit of LCT 18a Foothills with Forest (NS LCT 176 - Foothills with Forest - Dumfries & Galloway)

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	No national or local landscape designations.	Community
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	The scale of forestry across the long undulating plateau covers much of this landscape within the study area. There are some more valued habitats associated with and tributaries but the scale of forestry tends to limit the overall ecological interest.	Community
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	There are some archaeological sites of outstanding significance and distinctiveness, some of which are promoted for public benefit. <i>“Relict pre-improvement (pre-19thc) land-use with their remains of buildings and distinct field shapes, as</i>	Regional

			<p><i>well as areas of pre-medieval features are noted in the Stroan, Ae, Lauriston and Rhinns of Kells..”</i></p> <p><i>“Archaeological and historic features occur on the open hill fringes of this landscape, a relict of past land-use. There are designated ASAs at Whitestanes Moor in the south and Coats Hill in the north” (SNH 2019¹)</i></p>	
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	Extensive areas of forestry are at different stages of rotation.	Community
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	There are limited cultural associations within the landscape which is mostly associated with forestry operations.	Community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	The scale of forestry and windfarm development are large scale commonplace features of limited distinctiveness. Settlement is sparse with limited distinctive qualities.	Community
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well-used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	This LCT is host to several National routes. The Roman and Reivers Route runs through the centre of this area, mostly enclosed in forestry. Parts of the Roman Reivers Route also forms part of the local core path network. A section of the Southern Upland Way traverses through the	National/Regional

¹ SNH National Landscape Character Assessment (2019). LCT 176 Foothills with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway

			northeastern part of the study area entirely within forestry. This landscape is also host to a range of cycling and includes the 7Stanes mountain biking centre and regional cycling routes.	
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	<i>“Although the dense conifer forest of these areas gives a strongly unified landscape character, the scale and context of some of these areas is quite variable”</i>	Community
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	<i>“While the interior of these landscapes can feel remote due to the distance from settlement and public roads, the presence of extensive commercially managed forestry and operational wind farm development in much of this area precludes a strong sense of wildness” (SNH 2019²)</i>	Community
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	Commercial forestry is the prevailing function within this landscape and therefore limits the blue/green infrastructure potential albeit there is some.	Community
Overall Judgement of Value				Regional/Community

² SNH National Landscape Character Assessment (2019). LCT 176 Foothills with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway

Susceptibility				
Scale	Large scale landscapes where the turbines may be in proportion with the landscape are generally less sensitive.	Small scale intimate landscapes are generally more sensitive to large scale structures.	This is a large scale afforested across an expansive undulating upland plateau. However, there are also some more tightly contained valleys such as the Water of Ae and its tributaries.	Medium
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes	<p><i>“This landscape unit forms an expansive undulating upland plateau generally lying between 290-400m above and west of Annandale” (SNH 2019³)</i></p> <p>The landscape within the study area is also dissected by several streams with incisions into the landform.</p>	Medium
Openness/enclosure	Open and exposed landscapes	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	The incised valleys offer a greater sense of enclosure, but otherwise is a very exposed landscape.	Medium
Land cover	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover (including intensive farming and forestry)	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover	Landcover is dominated by forestry and different stages of maturity across the hillside combined with large scale windfarm developments. There are some unforested areas with semi improved pasture and occasional open summits to the northeast.	Low
Complexity and patterns	Simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex or irregular patterns	Sparsely settled landscape with few roads and simple and expansive	Low

³ SNH National Landscape Character Assessment (2019). LCT 176 Foothills with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway

			blocks of forestry extends across the entire landscape.	
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	Sparsely settled landscape with small villages and scattered farmsteads. This landscape also includes several operational windfarms and associated tracks and masts.	Low
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	<i>'Extensive forest cover restricts views from within this landscape and, although these foothills border well-settled Nithsdale and Annandale, visibility of the interior plateau is limited.'</i>	Low
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	Landform comprises a large undulating plateau which is much less distinctive than the Lowther Hills to the north, but does form a sensitive skyline to Nithsdale to the west.	Medium
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				Medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium