

Scottish Natural Heritage consultation on draft guidance: Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas – technical guidance

Summary

This consultation invites comment on the draft document '*Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas – technical guidance*'.

Following the consultation period (**26th January to 7th April 2017**), and consideration of responses, SNH will revise and finalise the guidance.

Context and scope of consultation

With input from landscape and planning professionals, we have drafted new technical guidance on assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas.

The draft guidance has drawn on experience of assessing effects on [Wild Land Areas](#) (WLAs) since publication of Scottish Planning Policy in 2014. It includes annexes containing illustrative examples and frequently asked questions. The methodology draws on the descriptions of each of the WLAs that we are publishing at the same time as this consultation on [SNH's website](#).

The revised guidance will now be the starting point for those undertaking an assessment of impacts on a WLA.

Responses to this consultation should focus on the draft guidance. The descriptions are not being consulted on. Comments are sought on the following questions:

- 1) Does the 2017 draft guidance provide a clear explanation of the methodology and general principles for assessing the impact of development proposals on Wild Land Areas?
- 2) Are the examples within Annex 2 helpful in illustrating the approach to assessing impacts?

Responding to this consultation

Responses should be received by SNH by **7th April 2017**. Respondents should use the [on-line form](#) provided. If you have problems using the online form, responses to the 2 questions above, with a completed Respondent Information Form (see below), can be sent to:

email: wildland@snh.gov.uk

post: Wild Land Assessment Guidance Consultation
Scottish Natural Heritage
Great Glen House
Leachkin Road
Inverness IV3 8NW

All responses will be published on SNH's website. Any personal data or other sensitive information will be redacted prior to publication.

Respondent Information Form

Please complete the two forms below and return with your consultation response. Your contact details are held solely for the purpose of the consultation.

Name or Organisation	
Title	
Forename	
Surname	
Address	
Postcode	
Email	

Release of information contained in consultation responses

SNH will normally publish all consultation responses we receive, although personal data or other sensitive information will be redacted.

Please complete this form.

I am responding as an individual. Yes / No	I am responding on behalf of a group or organisation. Yes / No
Do you agree to your name being made available when we publish your consultation response? Yes / No	The name of your organisation will be published along with your consultation response.

Scottish Natural Heritage Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas – Technical Guidance

1. INTRODUCTION

1. Wildness is a quality which people experience. Wild land areas are the most extensive areas where these qualities are best expressed. Physical attributes and perceptual responses are the measure by which changes in experience are to be assessed. As perceptual responses cannot be mapped, physical attributes were used to inform the preparation of the 2014 map of wild land areas. The Wild Land Areas map is a spatial planning tool and therefore an assessment of impacts on wild land areas must be informed by more detailed consideration of the specific nature of each development.

2. USING THIS GUIDANCE

Scope of this guidance – when and how should it be applied?

2. This guidance sets out a methodology and general principles for assessing the impact of development proposals on Wild Land Areas (WLAs) identified on the 2014 SNH map (hereafter referred to as the WLAs map). It supports the Scottish Planning Policy.
3. The method described applies the broad approach and principles set out within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment¹ (GLVIA) and is supplementary to a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) where one is required. Where a LVIA is not required, the wild land assessment will be a stand-alone assessment.
4. GLVIA provides the framework for assessing impacts upon landscape and visual amenity. It is focused on likely significant environmental effects rather than all possible effects. This method should be applied to proposals whose location, scale or design could result in a significant effect on the qualities of WLAs. Where effects are not expected to be significant, no such assessment is required.
5. In general terms, an assessment of impacts on a WLA is highly likely to be required where a proposed development falls, wholly or partly, in a WLA. Outwith WLAs, the need for an assessment will be more the exception and may only be necessary where significant effects on WLA qualities are likely. **The need for an assessment should be discussed with the decision maker and SNH at an early stage.**
6. A wild land assessment builds on the LVIA approach. It adds to, and should not duplicate, material that is already captured through the LVIA. A suitably qualified and experienced landscape or planning professional(s) (referred to in this document as ‘the assessor’) should undertake the assessment. The assessor must provide an appropriate level of information to enable the decision maker, and consultees, to reach a view on the effects of the proposal on the WLA.

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) *Guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment*, 3rd edition.

7. Frequently asked questions on the guidance and role of SNH are outlined in Annex 1.

Understanding wild land areas – attributes, responses and qualities

8. The WLAs map identifies areas where the quality and extent of wildness is considered to be of national importance. Wildness is a quality based on individuals' perceptions of Scotland's more natural, remote and uninhabited landscapes. The WLA's take into account that wildness is a product of people's perceptual response to certain physical attributes in the landscape. WLAs have not been identified on scenic grounds and are not a statutory designation.
9. Whilst the WLAs map identifies areas where wildness is most strongly expressed, the Areas are not 'wilderness', empty of any human activities or influence. They reflect Scotland's long history of past occupation and present use and management, albeit that evidence of such is often light and limited in extent.
10. As acknowledged in SNH's [Advice to Government](#) in 2014, capturing the quality of wildness is a subjective matter that requires informed judgements. This is because people respond differently according to their individual experience and expectations. For some, Scotland's wild landscapes are the setting for their home and workplace; for others, they are places that they visit. But there is sufficient commonality in appreciation to identify a set of attributes and responses that can be assessed if presented in a systematic, transparent and consistent way, namely.

WLAs have the following *physical attributes*:

- A high degree of perceived naturalness;
- The 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.

11. These physical attributes are strongly expressed, and are of sufficient extent, to evoke the full range of perceptual responses in WLAs. The term *wild land qualities* encompasses both *physical attributes* and *perceptual responses* – reflecting that it is a combination of factors that contributes to the value and appreciation of wildness. Development located outwith WLAs may only impact on perceptual responses.
12. SNH has produced descriptions of each WLA which set out their particular *wild land qualities*. For example: 'An extensive, simple interior with few human artefacts, contributing to a strong sense of naturalness, remoteness and sanctuary'. These descriptions should form the starting point for an assessment of impacts on a WLA.

2. THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Wild land impact assessment – key principles

13. Box 1 summarises the approach to take when considering impacts on WLAs. The assessment should:

- be proportionate to the scale of development and extent of likely effects;
- be clear and transparent so that the reasoning that informs judgements can be tracked; and
- convey the complexity of effects.

14. A short written report (including annotated photographs) with a table summarising impacts and their effects on particular qualities and the attributes and responses that contribute to these qualities will be helpful. Illustrative (but incomplete) examples of the summary table are provided in Annex 2

Box 1: Summary of wild land area impact assessment approach	
Step 1 - Define the study area and scope of the assessment	Identify a study area appropriate to the scale of development and extent of likely significant effects on the WLA.
Step 2 – Establish the baseline	Confirm the wild land qualities of the study area and the nature of their contribution to the WLA. The assessment should identify which qualities are likely to be significantly affected by the proposal.
Step 3 – Assess the sensitivity of the study area	Identify which wild land qualities of the WLA, including the physical attributes and perceptual responses that contribute to those qualities, are most sensitive to the type and scale of change proposed.
Step 4 – Assess the effects	Given the size or scale of change, extent and duration, describe the effects on individual qualities and / or combinations of qualities, drawing out which physical attributes and perceptual responses will be affected and how, and the potential for mitigation.
Step 5 – Judgement of the significance of effect	Describe the significance of residual effects on the wild land qualities of the Wild Land Area. This should take into account mitigation.

Step 1 - Define the study area and the scope of the assessment

15. The study area should reflect the extent of the likely effects on WLAs, including any cumulative effects. Early discussion with SNH is encouraged (at scoping stage) and can help to focus the assessment on areas where the effects on wild land qualities are likely to be significant. The rationale for the selection of the study area should be clearly stated within the assessment and should consider the following.

- **The scale of development and extent of effects.** A proposal with likely extensive effects could be considered at the scale of the entire WLA or WLAs that are likely to be affected. Small scale developments may have localised impacts that are not significant at the WLA scale.
- **The extent of visibility.** Where visibility is limited to part of the WLA a more focused study area may be appropriate. However any effects must be considered in addition to the contribution that this study area makes to the WLA as a whole.
- **Routes and movement through the WLA.** The assessment should take account of key locations, and routes within the WLA.
- **The wild land qualities likely to be affected** should be the focus of the assessment. The boundaries of WLAs have been identified for strategic purposes and require a case by case judgement when considering how development just within, or adjacent to these areas is assessed.
- **The potential for cumulative effects.** At an early stage of the assessment process, other proposals (either of the same or different type) which are likely to contribute to significant cumulative effects in addition to the proposal should be identified and discussed with the relevant planning authorities. The principles within SNH's cumulative guidance specific to onshore wind energy development² should be applied to assessing cumulative effects on WLAs.

Step 2: Establish the baseline

16. When reviewing the baseline, the strength of attributes and responses and their contribution to the wild land qualities of the area should be confirmed, taking in to account any changes that may have occurred either within or outwith the WLA since the mapping and descriptions were produced. Changes should only be referenced if individually or collectively they affect the appreciation of wild land qualities.
17. The WLA descriptions are important for understanding the baseline condition of the WLAs along with the desk-based mapping work on SNH's ['Mapping Scotland's Wild Land Areas'](#) web page. The assessor will need to augment these with fieldwork.
18. The strength to which the wild land qualities are expressed will vary in different parts of the WLA. In general, they will strengthen progressively as a person moves into a WLA. The WLA descriptions and fieldwork should be used to understand the different characteristics of the baseline environment, forming a basis for the assessment of effects on qualities.

Step 3: Assess the sensitivity of the study area

19. The sensitivity of the WLA qualities to different types and scales of development will be informed by the WLA descriptions and fieldwork. The assessment of sensitivity should take into account any evidence of past or current use. This does not automatically make them more or less sensitive to development and assessments should consider this on a case by case basis.

² SNH (2014) *Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments*.
<http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A675503.pdf>

Step 4: Assess the effects

- 20. An assessment of the effects on the wild land qualities should be undertaken in line with GLVIA. This sets out how to assess effects in terms of the size or scale of change, geographical extent of the area influenced, and their duration and reversibility.
- 21. The impact of development outwith a WLA will require careful justification and consideration. A wild land assessment should only consider effects on the qualities of the WLA as they are experienced within it, not from outwith it. This is in contrast to a scenic or landscape designation, whose appreciation from outwith is part of the standard LVIA approach.

Step 5: Judgement of the significance of effect

- 22. The significance of effects should be considered in terms of the WLA’s qualities. Some of the different judgements on significance are illustrated in Annex 2.
- 23. Assessing significance should follow the approach set out in the GLVIA. This recognises the need for an evidence based approach combined with professional and reasonable judgment. The subjective nature of wildness underlines the need for judgments on effects to be transparent and understandable, so that the underlying assumptions and reasoning can be understood by others. When evaluating the significance of effects, the subjective nature of perceptual responses should be taken in account.
- 24. Having identified potential effects, measures to reduce any anticipated adverse effects should be considered as part of the standard LVIA process. Whilst it is recognised that there will be limited scope for successful mitigation of large scale developments within or partly within WLAs, some examples of approaches to mitigation measures that could be applied to other developments are included in Box 2. Once these measures have been considered, the significance of residual effects should be clearly identified.
- 25. The overall judgement of significance should reflect the sensitivity of the wild land qualities within WLAs and the magnitude/extent of effect. Development located outwith WLAs may only impact on perceptual responses. The protection of wild land qualities, as set out in SPP, means that only in exceptional circumstances relating to scale, siting or design will development outwith WLAs have a significant effect. An example of the particular circumstances is illustrated in example 4b of Annex 2.

Box 2: Examples of potential mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationalise the spatial extent or scale of development or parts of the development. For example: effects can be mitigated by removing or reducing the scale of components in more sensitive locations; combining tracks and associated elements within a single working corridor; and revising construction access routes to avoid sensitive areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive siting of components. For example: re-siting components where woodland can provide (or will provide in the future) some screening;

and micro siting components to use land form to reduce their visual envelope.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A high standard of design. For example: effects can be reduced by burying development components; and selecting sympathetic materials can improve landscape fit.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of high standards of restoration. For example: tracks can be removed or their running width reduced, after construction of the development.

26. In addition to mitigation of new effects, in some cases it may be appropriate to consider the scope for removing and / or enhancing existing features that detract from wildness. For example by re-routing existing poorly sited tracks to ensure a better landscape fit; restoring redundant access tracks; or removing redundant fence lines.

Consultation Draft

ANNEX 1. Frequently asked questions

1. Why do we need to assess impacts on WLAs?

NPF3 and SPP support the right development in the right place. They recognise that WLAs need significant protection and that development in these areas (including wind farms) may be appropriate in some circumstances.

The assessment process set out in this guidance will aid the decision maker in their consideration of impacts on the qualities of WLAs. The significance of effects will take into account siting, design and other mitigation.

Impact on WLAs is just one factor to be taken into account by the decision maker in their consideration of the overall balance between protection and development.

2. Who should be consulted on the requirement for, and scope of, a WLA assessment?

It is the decision making body (the Planning Authority or Scottish Ministers) who decide if a wild land assessment is required. However, given its role, SNH may be consulted about the need for and scope of a wild land assessment in line with our service statement on [Planning for Development](#).

3. What is the role of Scottish Natural heritage (SNH) with respect to WLAs?

SNH is the government advisor on matters related to the natural heritage. Our work is about caring for the natural heritage, enabling people to enjoy it, helping people to understand and appreciate it, and supporting those who manage it.

In 2013, we were asked by Ministers to advise on mapping of wild land. The resulting advice and map of Wild Land Areas (<http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1323989.pdf>), submitted in June 2014, drew on previous research and wide consultation.

When consulted on by decision making bodies, we provide advice on the impact of development proposals on the wild land qualities of WLAs. In advising on impacts, SNH takes into account wider interests as may be appropriate.

4. How can all or part of a WLA have wildness quality if development is present within it, or visible from it?

WLAs are not 'wilderness'. Like most landscapes in Scotland, they contain some evidence of past occupation, contemporary use and/or land management. This can include amongst other things, buildings (derelict and still used), tracks, hydro-electricity infrastructure, and evidence of sporting and grazing management. Similarly, some development outwith WLAs can be seen from parts of WLAs. Despite the evidence of these developments (either within or outwith a WLA), it is sufficiently light and of limited extent that the range and strength of wild land qualities remains well expressed within the WLAs.

5. How can wild land qualities be affected by development located outwith a WLA?

Development outwith a WLA can affect the wildness qualities within the WLA where it affects the experience of these qualities.

The baseline condition of the WLA is described within the wild land description as a set of wild land qualities. Where any of these qualities are affected by development, regardless of where it is sited, they should be considered. Where impacts are identified that affect the strength of wildness within the WLA to the degree that one or more of the qualities is substantially eroded this is considered to be significant.

6. How do the qualities of the Wild Land Areas relate to Landscape Character Assessment, and the special qualities of National Scenic Areas or National Parks?

The qualities identified in the WLA descriptions provide additional information to that set out in SNH's national set of Landscape Character Assessments. These are in the process of being reviewed and updated to highlight where wildness is especially strong.

Wildness may also be identified as one of the special qualities identified for National Scenic Areas (NSA) or National Parks. This may occur in NSAs which are outwith, partially overlap or are wholly within a Wild Land Area. Where the NSA does not have the accompanying recognition as a WLA, the quality of wildness should be in line with other special qualities identified for the NSA. Where there is the additional recognition provided by a WLA, then wildness should be considered in the context of both the NSA and the relevant WLA/s.

ANNEX 2. Illustrative examples of wild land assessments

The following examples show how an assessment of the effect of a development proposal on Wild Land Area (WLA) qualities can be presented. They are:

- Example 1a: Run of river hydro-electric proposal located within a Wild Land Area
- Example 1b: Impoundment hydro-electric proposal located within a Wild Land Area
- Example 2: Telecom mast proposal located within a Wild Land Area
- Example 3: Wind farm proposal located partly within, and partly outwith a Wild Land Area
- Example 4a: Wind farm proposal located outwith a Wild Land Area
- Example 4b: Wind farm proposal located outwith a Wild Land Area

The examples illustrate different types, scales and locations of proposals and range of likely effects on the wild land area. All examples are hypothetical, and the following notes should aid understanding.

- The examples are not complete, but illustrate the type of thinking to be presented as part of a wild land assessment (note that Step 1 of the assessment will normally include an accompanying map, and step 2 would also include a statement describing any changes to the baseline where appropriate).
- The qualities as listed here are only the ‘headlines’. Reference to the full description is required to fully understand the range and contribution of wild land attributes and responses which combine to give rise to the qualities.

Example 1a: Run of river hydro-electric proposal located within a Wild Land Area

STEP 2 – establish the baseline	STEP 3 – assess the sensitivity of the study area	STEP 4 – assess the effects
<p><i>An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude</i></p>	<p>High: This quality is highly sensitive to any new built features that create prominent foci and appear as obvious human artefacts. Existing built structures tend to be isolated, discrete in siting and low-key in design.</p>	<p>Medium adverse in the medium term: The 5km of upgraded track (within the WLA) will result in significant visual effects that will detract from the quality of sense of sanctuary and solitude in the medium term.</p> <p>Low adverse in the long term: The powerhouse has been re-sited to a natural hollow where the landform and associated woodland provide screening from the majority of key elevated locations. The design is in-keeping with the nearby bothy and will be seen in a similar context. All intakes will be discreet in nature, with wingwalls formed using natural rock. These will reduce the perception of introducing new human artefacts/structures in the WLA and thereby minimise the impact on the strong sense of solitude. Over time, the width of the track will be reduced and a central</p>

		green running strip established. This will reduce the impact of the upgraded track on the sense of solitude. Once the woodland is established between the burn and track, this element of the proposal will no longer detract from the high sense of sanctuary.
<i>Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs</i>	High: This quality is highly sensitive to development that changes hydrological flow. The apparent naturalness of water features are key contributors to the WLA quality (including the large and promoted waterfalls).	Low adverse in the long term: Water abstracted will be returned to the burn before the falls. The high naturalness will therefore be maintained throughout the year and will not result in any effects on the appreciation on this quality.
<i>Native woodlands that contribute to the sense of naturalness and highlight some arresting landscape features</i>	Medium: Native woodlands along the burns contribute to the sense of naturalness therefore this quality is sensitive to any removal of existing native trees along watercourses.	High positive in the long term: The proposed new native woodland will link the current fragmented riparian woodlands. In time, this aspect of the proposal will enhance this WLA quality.
STEP 5 Judgment of the significance of effect	Not significant: By careful siting and design of the hydro-electric development, and associated woodland enhancement along the burn, the proposal will not result in long term significant effects on the WLA qualities.	

Example 1b: Impoundment hydro-electric proposal located within a Wild Land Area

STEP 2 – establish the baseline	STEP 3 – assess the sensitivity of the study area	STEP 4 – assess the effects
<i>An extensive, remote mountain interior with strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude</i>	High: This quality is highly sensitive to any new built features that appear as obvious human artefacts, or aid access to the more remote parts of the WLA.	High adverse in the long term: The proposed access track leading up to the dam will aid access whilst the dam and track introduce human features into an area where these are currently not apparent.
<i>Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and</i>	High: This quality is highly sensitive to development that changes hydrological flow or introduces water	Medium adverse in the long term: The proposed impoundment within the WLA will introduce a contemporary land use indicated by the fluctuating water levels which will result in a draw down scar. The

<i>waterfalls, with some containing lochs</i>	bodies which indicate contemporary land use. The apparent naturalness of water features are key contributors to the WLA quality.	water flow from the existing burn will be altered to the degree that in some periods, the flow will be substantially reduced. This will affect the perception of naturalness. This impact will be on a part of the WLA which is not currently influenced by contemporary land use and has high naturalness. The site of the proposed impoundment is some distance from, and does not have visibility of, other hydro lochs within this WLA.
<i>Native woodlands that contribute to the sense of naturalness and highlight some arresting landscape features</i>	Medium: Native woodlands along the burns contribute to the sense of naturalness therefore this quality is sensitive to any removal of existing native trees along watercourses.	Low adverse in the long term: The removal of some small groups of trees as a result of the impoundment will locally reduce the perception of naturalness within the glen. The new native woodland to be established around the powerhouse (outwith the WLA) will positively contribute to the character of that area.
STEP 5 Judgment of the significance of effect	Significant: The area where this proposal is located is currently of high naturalness and remoteness. It is not affected by contemporary land uses. The proposed development will effect these attributes, with the access track, dam and the draw down scar resulting in a significant adverse and long term impact on the qualities of this WLA. The new native woodland will not be sufficient to mitigate these adverse effects.	

Example 2: Telecom mast proposal located within a Wild Land Area

STEP 2 – establish the baseline	STEP 3 – assess the sensitivity of the study area	STEP 4 – assess the effects
<i>A remote interior where access involves long distances and lengthy time via penetrating glens or crossing over and around rugged landforms and waterbodies.</i>	Medium: This quality is sensitive to any improvements to access routes which reduce the physical challenge, high sense of remoteness and the sense of sanctuary currently experienced from within the WLA.	Medium adverse in the short term: The upgraded track required to deliver and construct the mast will iron out some landform features. Combined with a new bridge crossing and a short section of new access track, the challenge of access in this area will be reduced. Low adverse in the long term: This impact will be reduced in the long term as the track is restored to its current running width. Although the new bridge will be retained, access will remain challenging in the remaining part of the WLA away from the track.
<i>Strong qualities of sanctuary and solitude, away from</i>	High: This quality is sensitive to new development deep into	Low adverse in the long term: To ensure a good landscape fit, the mast will be located lower down the foothills. This

<i>the mountain foci near to the WLA margins</i>	the WLA where there is little other sign of activity.	will ensure a stronger association with the existing lodge and its outbuildings. The scale of the mast has also been selected so as not to dominate other built development associated with current estate activity.
STEP 5 Judgment of the significance of effect	Not significant: Careful siting and design of the mast has ensured a strong association with the scale of existing development in the WLA. The access improvements are also limited to a small part of the WLA. This mitigation ensures that effects on the wild land qualities are minimised in the long term.	

Example 3: Wind farm proposal located partly within and partly outwith a wild land area

STEP 2 – establish the baseline	STEP 3 – assess the sensitivity of the study area	STEP 4 – assess the effects
<i>The extent of the WLA is not always obvious and the higher slopes provide panoramic views to adjacent WLAs that seem to form a continuous mountain landscape</i>	High: This quality is very sensitive to large scale and prominent development that intrudes into ‘borrowed views’. These views provide the context for appreciation of the extent and scale of the wild land experienced from within the WLA.	High adverse in the long term: The proposal is located on lower ground within the strath at the edge of this WLA. The immediate arc of mountains will limit the extent of visibility of the proposal from much of the lower lying interior. However, from higher slopes within the WLA, the turbines and tracks will be highly visible and will affect appreciation of the wild land quality from within the WLA.
<i>A very remote interior drawing adventurous and experienced hillwalkers</i>	Medium: This quality is underpinned by the very high remoteness experienced from within the interior of this WLA. The quality is sensitive to any new forms of development that will aid access to the interior.	Low adverse in the long term: Although there will be a network of new tracks created across the development site, these only extend over a limited area where exiting estate tracks and stalkers paths already aid access. Further, the proposal is located at the edge of the WLA. Thus, the development will not substantially reduce the current physical challenge required to access the remote WLA interior.
<i>Arresting mountains and a sense of remoteness and sanctuary are experienced by many along a network of paths and tracks through the glens</i>	Medium: This quality is based on access by stalkers’ paths and tracks which follow landform features. The sensitivity of this quality is medium because there are a number of straths within the WLA where this quality can be	Medium adverse in the long term: The high sense of sanctuary experienced within the strath in which the wind farm is proposed will be affected. The larger wind farm tracks will iron out the more subtle landform features which the existing tracks reflect. The proposal will therefore change the experience within that part of the WLA from undeveloped focused on mountains, to one where the turbines are

	appreciated.	the focal feature. However, the extent of this impact on the overall WLA is limited because there are a number of popular straths where this wild land quality is accessed and appreciated.
STEP 5 Judgment of the significance of effect	Significant: There will be a significant effect on two of the qualities identified for this WLA: ‘... <i>the higher slopes provide panoramic views to adjacent WLAs that seem to form a continuous mountain landscape</i> ’ and ‘... <i>a sense of remoteness and sanctuary are experienced by many along a network of paths and tracks</i> ’. Although the proposal is located on low ground within the strath and is at the periphery of this WLA, the form of development is large in scale and highly visible when viewed from within the WLA. The scale and location of the turbines will introduce highly visible elements and detract from the extent of wild land quality currently provided by the unbroken views to adjacent and contributing mountains. These impacts are not able to be mitigated.	

Example 4a: Wind farm proposal located outwith a wild land area

STEP 2 – establish the baseline	STEP 3 – assess the sensitivity of the study area	STEP 4 – assess the effects
<i>A series of deep glens carved through the mountains, with arresting side slopes and spectacular geological features that contribute to a strong sense of naturalness</i>	Medium: The inspiring and arresting qualities of the interior are sensitive to development in both short and long frame views which detract from the sense of naturalness experienced within the WLA.	Low adverse in the long term: Although the proposal is located outwith the WLA, it is sited in line with one of the deep glens which penetrate through to the interior of the WLA. However, potential effects on this quality have been considered as part of the design process. The visual spread of the proposal has been limited by relocating and removing some turbines which appear as outliers when viewed from within the WLA. As a consequence, the proposal is sited where it would be largely backclothed by more distant landforms. This design has reduced the effects of development on long, channeled views from the interior of the WLA.
<i>A secluded, elevated and remote interior plateau shielded by an outer rim of hills, in which there is a strong sense of solitude, sanctuary</i>	High: This quality is particularly sensitive to any blades or turbines visible from within the WLA interior plateau especially where they will be seen without their bases and tracks.	Negligible: Through the iterative design process the turbines have been reduced in height in order to remove all visibility from the interior where the sense of remoteness, sanctuary and solitude are especially high.

<i>and risk</i>		
STEP 5 Judgment of the significance of effect	Not significant: Due to careful siting and design of the proposal, the long distant views of the proposed wind farm from the deep glens within the WLA will be constrained. Whilst removing all visibility of the development from the WLA is not possible, the proposal will not be visible from the interior, dominate views or result in a significant effect on the qualities of this WLA.	

Example 4b: Wind farm proposal located outwith a wild land area

STEP 2 – establish the baseline	STEP 3 – assess the sensitivity of the study area	STEP 4 – assess the effects
<i>A series of deep glens carved through the mountains, with arresting side slopes and spectacular geological features that contribute to a strong sense of naturalness</i>	Medium: The inspiring and arresting qualities of the interior are sensitive to development in both short and long frame views which detract from the sense of naturalness experienced within the WLA.	Low adverse in the long term: In some framed views, the proposal will appear as a new and dominant feature, detracting from the prominence and grandeur of the mountains which are recognised as a quality of the WLA. This is particularly the case from elevated locations in the WLA. In contrast, other contemporary land uses and human artifacts outwith the WLA, are of a smaller scale and their impacts on the WLA qualities are limited.
<i>A secluded, elevated and remote interior plateau shielded by an outer rim of hills, in which there is a strong sense of solitude, sanctuary and risk</i>	High: This quality is particularly sensitive to any blades or turbines visible from within the WLA interior plateau especially where they will be seen without their bases and tracks.	High adverse in the long term: The location and height of the proposal will result in turbines being visible from an area within the secluded interior plateau of the WLA. This will introduce views of human artefacts where they are not currently evident, and interrupt the simplicity of the landscape within the WLA. The turbines will appear to encroach on the WLA affecting the experiences of the sense of sanctuary and solitude that is currently high due to a lack of these influences.
STEP 5 Judgment of the significance of effect	Significant: This proposal will adversely affect the sense of sanctuary and solitude experienced within areas of the WLA where these attributes are currently strongly expressed as a result of the lack of external influences. In addition, from some locations, the proposal will detract from the grandeur of the inspiring and arresting mountains recognised as a quality of this WLA. The combination of these effects will result in a significant impact on the qualities of this WLA.	