LCT 22: MOORLAND PLATEAUX

There are two distinctive moorland landscape character types, the only upland character areas in Aberdeenshire, *Farmed Moorland Edge* and *Moorland Plateaux*. These make up the high ground in the western part of the study area and are the transitional landscapes between the much higher Grampian Mountains massif, within the Cairngorms National Park, and the rolling lowland landscapes of agricultural heartland. They are the distinctive, upland backdrop to much of Aberdeenshire.

The *Moorland Plateaux* comprise the unique ridges and prows that project out into the much lower farmland. They have simple, open, moorland tops with distinctive rocky outcrops such as Milther Tap and Tap O'Noth. These areas have strong wilderness qualities, forming islands of 'wild land' contrasting strongly with the farmed landscape that surrounds them. Often extensive conifer plantations clothe the slopes and steadings are located at the base of hills where there is a transition to farmland. The unique plunging slopes of the Highland Boundary Fault are reflected in *The Mounth* LCA. Here there is an abrupt transition between the higher *Moorland Plateaux* and arable farmland of the *Howe of Mearns* below.

22 (i) THE GRAMPIAN OUTLIERS

The *Grampian Outliers* are moorland spurs extending out from the Cairngorm Massif into the surrounding farmland, forming promontories. They are usually smooth rolling hills of both gentle and steep relief, with occasional dramatic rocky outcrops such as Bennachie, Mither Tap and Tap O'Noth. These hills are distinctive landmarks integral to the landscape identity of Aberdeenshire and have qualities of wilderness and remoteness. They have simple bare moorland tops, extensive conifer plantations on slopes and distinctive fields at their base. Steadings lie at the base of slopes in sheltered locations. They have a high degree of integrity and many are popular for recreation providing excellent viewpoints out across Aberdeenshire.

22 (ii) THE MOUNTH

The Mounth is a substantial broad outcrop, an unbroken ridge which forms a vast smooth rolling plateau extending from the Cairngorm massif almost to Stonehaven at the coast. It is the southern and eastern edge of the great Highland Boundary Fault which crosses Scotland and is a location where the dramatic change from lowland landscape to mountains is most clearly visible. The smooth landform is dissected by shallow gullies and small glens with occasional rocky outcrops such as at Clachnaben. It has a simple bare moorland plateau, extensive conifer plantations in the east and steadings located at the base of slopes in sheltered locations. It is the foreground to the Cairngorm massif and acts as a distinctive backdrop to the lower settled farmland of the Mearns. The hills also have a wild, remote and windswept character.

22(iii) THE NORTH-EASTERN HILL RANGES

Low rounded summits, gentle slopes and long smooth interlocking spurs extending from the Cairngorm massif. Small burns incise the hillsides and flow into rivers on the valley floors. It is an open simple landscape with bare moorland tops and peat hags, small fields of poor quality grazing at the valley bottom. There are areas of regenerating native pine woodland and occasional broadleaved trees running along watercourses. It is the foreground to the Cairngorm massif and the distinctive backdrop to lower areas such as *Deeside*. The hills have a wild, remote and windswept character and it is contigious with a Core Area of Wild Land.

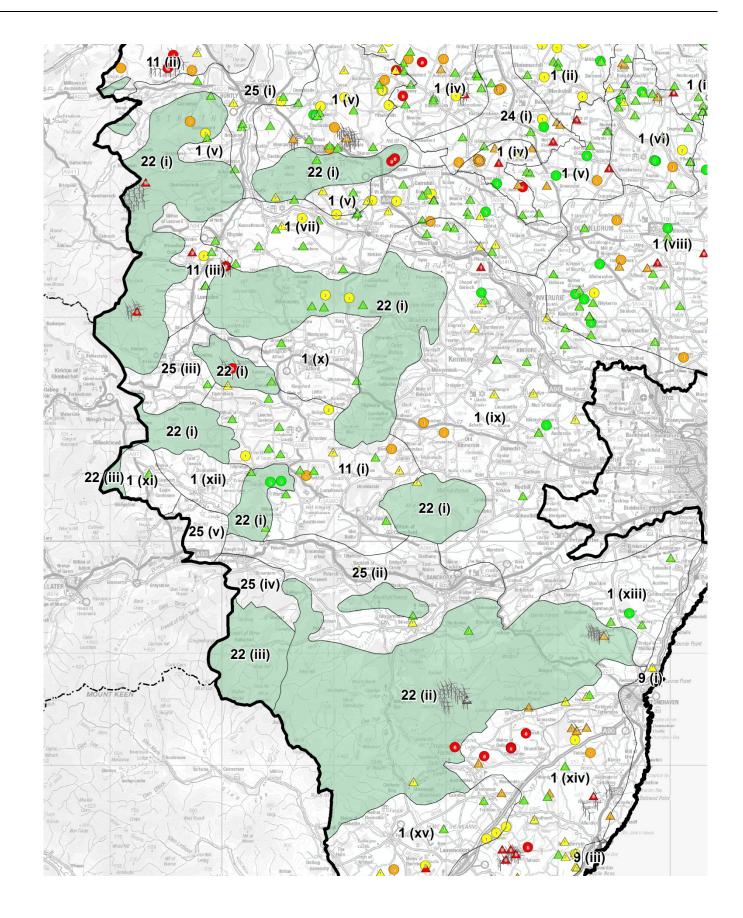


Table 6.1(i): Summary of Landscape Capacity, Cumulative Effects and Guidance for Future Wind Energy Development: Moorland Plateaux

, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,						CURRENT CONSENT DEVELOPMENT	ΓED	PROPOSED LIMITS TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT (ie. proposed acceptable level of wind energy development)									
andscape Sensitivity to Vind Energy Development				Landscape Capacity (Related to turbine size)				Existing/ Consented Developments	Current Wind Energy Landscape Type(s)	Future Wind Energy Landscape Type(s)	Remaining Landscape Capacity (Related to turbine size)					Current Applications	Analysis & Guidelines (Refer to Detailed Guidance for Further Information on Siting and Design)
Landscape Character Sensitivity Visual		Sensitivity Landscape		S/M	M/L					, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	S/M	Σ	M/L	_	۸۲		
22 (i) Land				reas:	The G	ramp	ian Ou		Moorland Plateaux	Moorland Plateaux				ı			I
ligh Hig	h Hiệ	gh Hig						Currently two wind farms Kildrummy (eight large turbines) Clashindarroch (eighteen large turbines) have been consented. Five medium turbines and eight small/medium turbines in singles or very small groups have been approved at the base of slopes. In adjacent LCAs the Hills of Foudland Wind Farm (twenty one medium/ large turbines), Dummuies Wind Farm (seven medium/ large turbines), Cairnmore (three large turbines), and Dorenell (fifty nine very large turbines) in Moray are all visible from the Grampian Outliers.	with No Wind Turbines/ with Occasional Wind Turbines/ with Wind Turbines	with No Wind Turbines Max. Numbers in Group Min Group Separation Distances (km)						A windfarm of six large turbines is proposed at Tibberchindy and two groups of three large turbines at Hill of Tillymorgan. A single medium/large size turbine at Hill of Foudland, six medium turbines and four small/medium turbines are also proposed.	Landscape Analysis: Although large in scale and simple in pattern with so of the characteristics considered suitable for wind far development, the <i>Grampian Outliers</i> are distinctive landforms, integral to the identity of much of Aberdeenshire and visible from a very wide area. They form the backdrop to many sensitive LCAs and are the foreground to the Cairngorm massif and National Park. They define the extent of views acrost the lowlands. They have a high value, high visual sensitivity and high wilderness qualities, forming islands of wild land with the surrounding farmland. These areas would be unsuitable for wind turbine development beyond a domestic scale, less than 15 associated with farm buildings or tourist facilities and turbines should be sited at the base of slopes. Comments on Consented and Proposed Turbine Parts of the Grampian Outliers are already <i>Moorland Plateaux with Wind Turbines</i> and over their underlying capacity. Current proposals for further turbines woultake it further over this threshold.

No (Capacit	Low	Capacı	ity M	ealum	Capac	High Capacity	i urbine S	ize: Smaii/Wedium=1	o-<30	ın; Me	aium	i=3U-<	:oum;	wedium/Large=50-<80n	n; Large=80m+; Very Large=125m+
BASE LANDSCAPE CAPACITY (ie. not taking account of current wind energy development)					ng acc	ount	CURRENT CONSENT DEVELOPMENT	PROPOSED LIMITS TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT (ie. proposed acceptable level of wind energy development)								
				Landscape Capacity (Related to turbine size)			Existing/ Consented Developments	Current Wind Energy Landscape Type(s)	Future Wind Energy Landscape Type(s)	Remaining Landscape Capacity (Related to turbine size)					Current Applications	Analysis & Guidelines (Refer to Detailed Guidance for Further Information on Siting and Design)
Landscape Character Sensitivity Visual Sensitivity	Landscape	Landscape Value	S/M	M/L		VL				S/M	Z	M/L	L	VL		
2 (ii) Lands			Areas	: The M	ounth											
fled/ Med/ ligh High	Med						Currently two wind farms Mid Hill (25 very large turbines) Meikle Carewe (twelve medium/large turbines) have been consented. Four medium turbines and twelve small/medium turbines in singles or very small groups have been approved at the base of slopes. In adjacent LCAs large turbines (seventeen at Hill of Garvock, seven at Cloch-na Hill and nine at St John's) are all visible from the Mounth LCA,	Moorland Plateaux with No Wind Turbines/ with Occasional Wind Turbines/ with Wind Turbine Moorland Plateaux	Moorland Plateaux with No Wind Turbines Max. Numbers in Group Min Group Separation Distances (km)						A wind farm of three large turbines is proposed at Bog Burn. On the boundary with the adjoining LCA in Garvock and Glenbervie LCA, three groups of three large turbines are proposed on the smaller hills below the edge of this LCA. These are visually contagious with the Mounth LCA	Landscape Analysis: Although large in scale and simple in pattern with the characteristics considered suitable for wind farm development, the <i>Mounth</i> is a distinctive landform (Highland Boundary Fault), integral to the identity of much of Aberdeenshire and visible from a very wide area. Its southern flank has a high degree of visual sensitivity. It forms the backdrop to many sensitive LCAs and is foreground to the Cairngorm massif and National Patthese areas would be unsuitable for wind turbine development beyond a domestic scale, less than 15 associated with farm buildings or tourist facilities and turbines should be sited at the base of slopes. Comments on Consented and Proposed Turbine Parts of the <i>Mounth</i> are already <i>Wind Turbine Moor Plateaux</i> and over its underlying capacity. Current proposals for further turbines would take it further or this threshold. A wind farm of three large turbines is proposed at B Burn. In the adjoining LCA in <i>Garvock and Glenbern</i> LCA, three groups of three large turbines are propoon the smaller hills below the edge of this LCA. The is only approx. 100m height difference between the hills and the hills of the Mounth and they are part of edge of the Highland Boundary fault. This would exceed capacity in this area.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: 22. MOORLAND PLATEAUX Key: No Capacity Low Capacity Medium Capacity High Capacity Turbine Size: Small/Medium=15-<30m; Medium=30-<50m; Medium/Large=50-<80m; Large=80m+; Very Large=125m+ PROPOSED LIMITS TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT (ie. proposed acceptable level of wind energy BASE LANDSCAPE CAPACITY (ie. not taking account | CURRENT CONSENTED of current wind energy development) **DEVELOPMENT** development) **Future Wind** Landscape Sensitivity to **Landscape Capacity Existing/ Consented Current Wind** Remaining Landscape **Current Applications Analysis & Guidelines Wind Energy Development Developments Energy** Energy Capacity (Related to turbine size) (Refer to Detailed Guidance for Further Landscape Landscape (Related to turbine size) Information on Siting and Design) Type(s) Type(s) Landscape Sensitivity S/M S/M ML M 7 7 Σ Σ 22 (iii) Landscape Character Areas: The North-Eastern Hill Ranges Moorland Plateaux Moorland Plateaux Currently no applications Med/ Med/ Med/ Med/ Currently no consented Landscape Analysis: with No Wind with No Wind for turbines in this area. High High High High turbines in this area. This LCA whilst large in scale and often of the rolling **Turbines Turbines** shape considered suitable for wind farm development, the hills also have a wild, remote and windswept character. It is contiguous with a Core Area of Wild Max. Numbers in Land and forms the backdrop to many sensitive LCAs Group and is the foreground to the Cairngorm massif and Min Group Separation National Park. Distances (km) These areas would be unsuitable for wind turbine development beyond a domestic scale, less than 15m associated with farm buildings or tourist facilities and at the base of slopes. This is because of its high landscape and visual sensitivity. **Comments on Consented and Proposed Turbines:**