

Troston Overhead Line Grid Connection

Appendix 6.3: Landscape Sensitivity

1 Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.1.1 The sensitivity of the landscape character types/areas which may receive noticeable landscape effects are assessed 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 development. Assessment text relates to sensitivity of the landscape receptor as a whole, to the proposed development, with additional comments regarding the proposed OHL route where relevant. In the main this has been taken from the 2019 Scottish Natural Heritage (now known as NatureScot) National Landscape Character Assessment (quotes shown in italics) as well as from local sources and site assessment. The table below is based on guidance provided within the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations – specifically table 1 within that document.

Host Landscape: Landscape Character Type (LCT) 176 Foothills with Forest – Dumfries & Galloway

Factors Affecting Sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Overhead Line (OHL) Development	Higher Sensitivity to OHL Development	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	The Galloway Hills Regional Scenic Area (RSA) intersects with the southern-most section of this LCT at over 11 km from the proposed development.	Regional
Natural heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	There are no noted natural heritage elements within this LCT.	Community
Cultural heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	Archaeological sites within the LCT are found in open ground, including <i>'relict landscapes of mainly post-medieval settlement and field systems cluster in some burn valleys, including Polharrow Burn, Bargaly Glen and Archer Beck.'</i>	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	This landscape is predominantly forested with <i>'areas dominated by Sitka Spruce, interspersed with mixed conifers and broadleaf planting, undergoing felling and replanting in large coupes'</i> . <i>'Design improvements are evident in many areas, e.g. deciduous fringes, informal edges, feathering on high slopes.'</i> Open areas are well used for grazing, consisting of a mix of semi improved and unimproved pasture.	Community

Factors Affecting Sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Overhead Line (OHL) Development	Higher Sensitivity to OHL Development	Explanation	Judgement
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 existing wood pole OHLs within the LCT. There are no noted cultural associations within this LCT.	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.	Commercial forestry limits distinctiveness of landscape within the study area, though elsewhere within the LCT, notable features include <i>'locally distinctive unforested areas, with semi-improved pasture, rougher and unenclosed in higher areas, and elsewhere with patterns of drystone dykes, occasional lochs and estate policies, distinctive ridges and landmark summits'</i> .	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.	Recreational routes including the Southern Upland Way and a network of adjoining core paths are <i>'found in this landscape type, with tourism facilities and way-marked trails integrated into the forests.'</i>	Regional
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	In general, <i>'the dense conifer forest of these areas gives a strongly unified landscape character'</i> which limits the scenic quality of the area.	Community

Factors Affecting Sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Overhead Line (OHL) Development	Higher Sensitivity to OHL Development	Explanation	Judgement
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	The scale and context of some of these areas is quite variable, with smaller, fine grain elements between large hills providing a brief sense of seclusion.	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.	The landscape has several functions including intensive sheep grazing, commercial forestry and recreation along core paths and the Southern Upland Way.	Community
Overall Judgement of Value				Community

Susceptibility				
Scale	Large scale landscapes where the OHL may be in proportion with the landscape are generally less sensitive.	Small scale intimate landscapes are generally more sensitive to large scale structures.	The landscape is of a medium scale with hills generally ranging between ' <i>heights of between 170 and 250m</i> '.	Medium
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes	The area consists of ' <i>undulating and gently rounded summits, dissected by many streams which have cut incisions into the landform</i> '	Medium
Openness/enclosure	Open and exposed landscapes	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Extensive forestry limits the openness of this landscape.	Medium/Low
Land cover	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover (including	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover	This landscape ' <i>has predominantly forest land cover which creates its forest-dominated character</i> '.	Medium

Factors Affecting Sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Overhead Line (OHL) Development (intensive farming and forestry)	Higher Sensitivity to OHL Development	Explanation	Judgement
Complexity and patterns	Simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex or irregular patterns	<p>'A relatively simple landform pattern with some finer grain elements present on lower slopes where water course cut shallow channels into this landscape and small lochans sit at the foot of hills.</p> <p>The more simple plateau landform is intercut with <i>'areas of more complex, locally distinctive and smaller-scale landscapes, with semi improved pasture with walled enclosures on open ground,</i></p>	Medium/Low
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	<i>The area is sparsely settled, though infrastructure development such as 'wind farm development is occurring in the Stroan and Ae parts of the Foothills with Forest.'</i>	Low
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	Views to adjacent landscape tend to be limited by landform and forestry; but are possible from open areas.	Medium
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	Views are limited from the LCT due to screening though adjacent upland forms distant horizons in some areas.	Low
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				Medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium