

Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275kV Connection

Environmental Impact Assessment

Volume 4 | Technical Appendix 8.2

Landscape Character Types: Baseline
Descriptions

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Technical Appendix 8.2 – Landscape Character Types: Baseline Description

Figure 8.3a (EIAR Volume 3a) shows the location and extent of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the 10 km LVIA study area, using information derived from NatureScot's 2019 online database¹. All LCTs which are found within the study area are listed, and their key and defining characteristics described, in **Table 8.3.1** below.

¹ Retrieved from: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e3b4fbb9fc504cc4abd04e1ebc891d4e&extent=-2030551.0017%2C6851563.2052%2C1100309.6769%2C8923312.4198%2C102100>

Table A8.2.1 – Landscape Character Types Baseline Description

LCT	Description	Sensitivity
LCT 40 – Craggy Upland – Argyll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular upland moorland plateau of rounded knolls, rock outcrops and lochs. • A craggy landform which forms a complex and irregular landscape, with numerous rocky outcrops that form distinctive rounded knolls on lower slopes. • Within valleys, the rounded knolls are a characteristic feature. • Steep glens create broad ridges which add to the jumbled and ragged silhouette. The horizontal ridges meet steep-sided vertical hills, and occasional even slopes to create a medium scale landscape. • The mountainous landscape to the north makes what would have been an expansive landscape seem smaller. • No prominent summits are found within the area, and the average elevation is approximately 300 m, with the highest ridges rising to over 500 m, but still considerably lower than the mountains to the north and east. Moving north, the area becomes higher and broader in scale. • Burns run through the narrow valleys, draining water from the moorland above. These form winding rivers in some of the elevated glens. • A myriad of small lochs is found in low-lying hollows and glens, and occasionally at high elevations. • Upland areas are a large-scale mosaic of unenclosed moorland and large conifer plantations. These are extensive in some areas and the forests camouflage the landscape pattern. • Moorland consists of rock outcrops, heather and grass giving the area its characteristic mottled appearance. • On lower slopes extensive oak-birch woodland is found. Stands of oak trees on rounded knolls are prominent local landscape features. • The landscape pattern is more complex in the glens: a historic settled farmland character dominates. • Broadleaved woodland, pastures and settlements form an intricate pattern, with larger pastures enclosed by stone walls, or occasionally hedgerows. • Pastures are of differing sizes and shapes in keeping with their historic character. • Areas of rushes and patches of bog or scrubby damp woodland are found in low-lying areas of many of the fields, indicative of their poor condition. Straight drainage ditches are seen in damper fields to attempt to redress this. • There are very few, if any, roads within the upland area. Smaller and single-track roads align along glens, normally leading to cottages and farmsteads. Larger roads follow lochs, with occasional routes traversing between larger settlements. • There are very few settlements. Along some of the glens a few small villages and farmsteads are found in more sheltered areas. • There are numerous archaeological sites, and many of the knolls at the sites of Iron Age forts or duns. These are often located close to existing settlements. 	<p>Susceptibility: High.</p> <p>A key characteristic of the LCT is its upland moor with irregular, rather amorphous landform, with rounded knolls, rock crops and numerous loch and glens.</p> <p>Value: High</p> <p>The Argyll and Bute Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ) extends across the eastern extent of this LCT as it lies within the study area.</p> <p>Sensitivity to this type of development proposed within this LCT: High</p>
LCT 37 Upland Glens – Argyll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This landscape is comparatively flat compared to the surrounding uplands, hills and mountains. 	Susceptibility: High.

Table A8.2.1 – Landscape Character Types Baseline Description

LCT	Description	Sensitivity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The valleys are more settled and contain important transport routes between settlements and into the area. • The Upland Glens LCT is characterised by flat glen floor within linear mountain glens. • Formed from the silty deposits washed down from the surrounding mountains and uplands to form level alluvial plains, the glens are associated with a sharp break in slope at glen sides. • The surrounding mountains and uplands form a distinctive skyline, creating a sense of enclosure and a small-scale landscape. • The rivers, their associated creeks and tributaries flow into long ribbon lochs forming the lower glen. • In the upper glen glacial moraines have created uneven landform with small, rounded lochans. • Rainwater running down from the surrounding mountains and uplands join to form winding creeks and later the main glen river to create mudflats, sand or gravel bars and shifting islands. • The landscape transitions from pasture (peaty areas with more arable land) to mud and shingle of riverbank. • The level and gently rolling topography of the river plains has resulted in domestic scale farms, crofts and small-scale settlements. • Rectangular fields are divided by straight draining ditches in the flat floodplain. • The field division changes to a mix of hedges and stone walls as the topography becomes more varied towards the heads of the glens and mountainsides. • Patches of commercial conifer forestry and belts of mature mixed species trees at a similar scale to the fields punctuate the landscape. • Along the sides of the glens, trees along burns and drains create linear breaks in the landscape. Some hedges have hedgerow trees which further emphasises this linear character and creates a characteristic layered view along glens. • Farms, crofts and cottages are dispersed throughout the glens. • Those found along the sides of the glen are often prominent in the landscape as they are often painted white. • Towards the heads of the glens, settlements are more obscured often hidden from view by mature oak trees that have been planted along lanes and thrive in the sheltered conditions. • In the upper glen landscape, there is a strong sense of seclusion, but not remoteness as the landscape is settled and farmed. This quality diminishes towards the valley base. • Estates and castles form important local landmarks, for example Kilchurn Castle in the Strath of Orchy. Often have a wooded parkland character which creates dramatic framed views. • In contrast, sand and gravel quarries, and electrical substations and their overhead lines have a local visual impact. • Mix of crofting and domestic-scale farming, tourism, small-scale commercial activity, some forestry management and infrastructure. 	<p>Human activity and interventions are limited to the glen landscape, with the surrounding mountains forming a distinctive skyline, creating a sense of enclosure and small-scale landscape.</p> <p>Value: High</p> <p>Valued for its intimate scale and enclosed nature, with channelled views out with. The Argyll and Bute Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ) extends across the central extent of this LCT as it lies within the study area.</p> <p>Sensitivity to this type of development proposed within this LCT: High</p>

Table A8.2.1 – Landscape Character Types Baseline Description

LCT	Description	Sensitivity
LCT 35 – Rugged Mountains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic mountain backdrops to many of the glens, lochs and coastal areas. • Steep mountainous ridges with a massive scale are inaccessible creating a sense of wildness. • The underlying rock forms complex bulky mountains with multiple ridges, rocky summits and scooped corries with steep slopes patterned with scree and exposed rock faces. • A number of summits over 1000 m, including Beinn Cruachan, whose distinctive profiles act as important landmarks. • Massive peaks and ridges are divided by gullies, narrow glens, and upland basins and corries • Relatively wide glens divide the mountain ranges. • In some places, rivers have eroded much wider glens, which lochs such as Loch Awe. • Exposed rock, crags and moorland dominate the landscape. • Areas of moorland interspersed with patchy heather and occasional blanket bog creates an open landscape where visual interest is focused on the sculpted rock forms. • Small upland lochs and numerous water courses criss-cross the landscape. • Scrubby birch-oak woodlands are found in some sheltered gullies and rock crevices. • Along burns and gullies of the lower slopes, broadleaved woodland is at times present. • On the lower slopes and the floors of some of the wider glens conifer forests have been planted. • There is virtually no sign of settlement; all of these combined give strong wild characteristics. • Where present dispersed and isolated properties found at the fringes of the LCT, including some small farmsteads. • There are very few roads, although there are stone bridges crossing burns and remote mountain passes, including some drove roads, thread through a few of the high glens. • Some forestry management, and a very small amount of domestic-scale farming occurs within the LCT. 	<p>Susceptibility: High.</p> <p>The key characteristic of this LCT is the dramatic mountainous backdrop to many of the surrounding glens, lochs and coastal areas, creating a sense of wildness.</p> <p>Value: High</p> <p>The Argyll and Bute Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ) extends across the western extent of this LCT as it lies within the study area. Additionally, the Loch Etive Mountains WLA comprises the eastern most extent of this LCT, adding to the massive scale of inaccessible landscape, creating a true sense of wildness.</p> <p>Sensitivity to this type of development proposed within this LCT: High</p>
LCT 34 – Steep Ridges and Mountains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • characterised by steep-sided, craggy topped mountains and sharp ridges. • Dramatic, mountainous area - steep ridges with a rounded profile • rocky outcrops jut into the skyline give each ridge a distinctive identity • ribbon lochs and meandering rivers with confined floodplains are present within the valleys. • Rivers and lochs, fed by burns and narrow waterfalls, have eroded deep gullies within sheer slopes. • Larger rivers have carved wider floodplains in parts and form a dramatic contrast with the surrounding mountains and larger mountain glens. • Steep, lower mountain slopes of managed forestry contrast with open moorland across the upper slopes. • Forestry is predominantly composed of Sitka spruce with areas of larch. Areas of deciduous trees create a seasonal difference. 	<p>Susceptibility: High.</p> <p>Despite the extent of development in parts of this LCT and the large scale of the landscape, it is considered to have a relatively high sensitivity to the type of development proposed due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its openness and the number and distribution of sensitive receptors; and

Table A8.2.1 – Landscape Character Types Baseline Description

LCT	Description	Sensitivity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some locations, smaller blocks of forestry have created distracting shapes that are out of scale with the landscape or straight lines across the grain of the mountains. In others, forestry provides a sense of scale within the landscape. • The open moorland is characterised by rough grass between scattered boulders and rocky outcrops. Steep burns form gullies which create shelter for scattered lines of birch trees. • Ancient oak woodland covers the lower slopes of wide, sheltered glens • Tracks or narrow mountain roads provided access within the steep glens. • On lower glens large fields are enclosed by stone walls but disappear beyond the head dyke on upper slopes. • Largely inaccessible mountainous landscape means there is little scope for built development • few buildings and no settlements. • The interior of the uplands is secluded and difficult to access. Within upper glens a few scattered crofts and barns can be found, and there is more recent development along the few glens accessible by road. • Historic built development, where present, is found along the edges of lochs where the landform allows. • Prominent local landmarks, such as Dunderave, are found along the edges of lochs. • Several power stations, and a few reservoirs and dams exist within this LCA, for example Lochan Shira reservoir. • There are operational windfarms at Cruach Mhor, of limited visibility as it sits within a basin landform, and Clachan Flats which is visible at the head of Loch Tyne. 	<p>. The limited scope of mitigation.</p> <p>Value: High</p> <p>Valued for its dramatic and mountainous topography, with steep ridges and rounded profiles. The Argyll and Bute APQ and the Ben Lui Wild Land Area are both situated to the northern and eastern extent of the LCT as it lies within the study area.</p> <p>Sensitivity to this type of development proposed within this LCT: High</p>
LCT 53 – Rocky Coastland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found between lochs or sea and the high tops or craggy uplands in Argyll and Bute • LCT is characterised by an irregular and narrow ribbon of undulating and uneven land with distinctive rounded rocky knolls. • Irregular and rocky small-scale landscape. • Complex and rolling landform with rocky outcrops and narrow glens. This complexity continues along the loch shorelines with raised beaches, cliffs and distinctive rounded knolls. • The rocky, indented coastline features small flat alluvial fans at inlets, small sandy bays and offshore islands. • A small scale, transitional landscape characterised by very diverse and patchy landcover with a rich mix of colours, textures and intricate patterns. • There is a transition from rough moorlands on the upper slopes to rough pasture and scattered woodland on the undulating landform and distinctive rounded knolls to a rocky shoreline with the crumbling cliff faces of raised beaches. • A mosaic of gorse and birch woodland is found on steep slopes and in gullies, with a scattering of stunted oak trees. There is bracken covered hills slopes and gorsy knolls, along with broadleaved woodland, with stands of windblown Scots pine, whose wild character are in contrast to small blocks of 	<p>Susceptibility: High.</p> <p>While the experience of the landscape is largely focused on the Loch and loch sides, the absence of major developments and the feeling of remoteness makes it highly susceptible to change associated with the proposed development.</p> <p>Value: High</p> <p>The overwhelming majority of this LCT is covered by the Argyll and Bute APQ. Moreover, there is the Gardens and</p>

Table A8.2.1 – Landscape Character Types Baseline Description

LCT	Description	Sensitivity
	<p>conifers, often in planted in hard-edged geometric shapes and designed landscape features such as avenue trees and parkland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In fields towards the uplands there are patches of rough, tussocky moorland grass which changes to walled in-by fields on lower hillslopes. Close to the loch-side there are smooth rich pastures of the alluvial fans. • There are winding coastal roads and small, dead-end tracks leading off these forming a haphazard road system. • The area is comparatively well settled with isolated farmsteads groups of cottages and small clustered settlements along winding, narrow loch-side roads which are often major transport routes. • Farms are scattered a distance from the main road towards upper moorland slopes. Small estates are characteristic features. • Rich archaeological heritage. Prehistoric remains include standing stones, stone circles, burial cairns and stone. Quern quarry and pit remains indicate later prehistoric industry. Castles along the coast, in some case in ruins, are representative of the medieval period. Some chapels and churches within the area are possibly of early Christian origin. Old military roads cross the landscape and are remains of the travel and communication networks that remain from the post-medieval period. • The area is a focus for recreation and tourism with highly scenic views attracting visitors. A common land use for the area is managing the woodland. 	<p>Designed Landscape of Ardanaiseig House, which sits to the northwest banks of Loch Awe.</p> <p>Sensitivity to this type of development proposed within this LCT: High</p>
LCT 39 – Plateau Moor and Forest – Argyll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upland landscape of steep ridges, with rounded profiles and craggy outcrops • The uplands reach an average height of 300 m which increases gradually towards the north. The contours of steep ridges with rounded profiles and craggy outcrops follow the north west to south east alignment • Upland lochs can be found in low-lying hollows. There are winding narrow glens which are wider if rivers run through them. • There is an extensive, large-scale mosaic of open moorland and forestry. Conifer forestry covers vast areas, masking the characteristic landform of undulating slopes and rounded summits. • Forestry extends to the summits of the plateau with breaks where there are rocky outcrops or lochs. Despite the linear boundary of the forested, these are generally indented to follow the landform. • Forest management is the predominant land use: the landscape pattern is in constant flux. • Areas not covered in conifer plantations are open moorland with extensive marginal upland pasture and blanket bog. The few farms located on the edge of the moor do not have field boundaries associated with them. • Settlement is sparse with isolated farms and dwellings are found on the edges of the moor. On lower hill slopes at the transition with adjacent LCTs and within the narrow glens which cut through the uplands, small, enclosed pastures and occasional farms and houses can be found. • There is little access; where there are roads, they follow shorelines. • The main land use is forestry management; there is sparse domestic-scale farming. 	<p>Susceptibility: High</p> <p>A key characteristic of this LCT is the steep ridges and craggy outcrops which traverse the landscape, combined with a strong sense of remoteness and lack of habitation.</p> <p>Value: High</p> <p>The Argyll and Bute APQ extends across the majority of the LCT particularly along the northwestern extent of Loch Fyne. Moreover, the Inveraray Castle GDL is located along the central extent of the LCT at Inveraray.</p>

Table A8.2.1 – Landscape Character Types Baseline Description		
LCT	Description	Sensitivity
		Sensitivity to this type of development proposed within this LCT: High
LCT 251 – Highland Summits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High mountains generally lying above 800 metres, but lower and intensely craggy in the core of the Trossachs where geology is particularly complex. • Steep slopes often covered in scree. • Narrow rocky ridges, deeply scooped corries and rocky gullies on many of these mountains. • Narrow glens deeply cut into the mountains, often contain fast-flowing burns and waterfalls. • Strongly patterned landscape with exposed rock, crags, small lochs and myriad water courses significantly increasing complexity. • Simple vegetation cover is, largely comprising semi-natural grassland with patchy heather and ground-hugging alpine species on upper slopes and summits. Bracken and bog occurs on lower slopes and within glen floors. Coniferous forestry present on some lower slopes, extending up into glens. • Broadleaf woodlands rare, confined to steeper slopes with fragments of oak and birch tracing burns and gullies. • Very sparsely populated with roads and dispersed settlement occurring only on its fringes. • mounded lochs, coniferous forestry and hydroelectric infrastructure and transmission lines close to the mountains northwest of Loch Lomond. • Highly visible massive peaks and ridges of the mountains forming a scenic rugged backdrop to the lower settled loch shores, glens and straths. • Instantly recognisable mountain forms such as the Cobbler and Ben Lomond. Ben Ledi, Ben Vorlich and Ben Lomond are important landmark features, marking the Highland edge seen widely from the Central Lowlands of Scotland. • Popular mountains with walkers because of their highly natural and rugged character, and the presence of 'Munro' and 'Corbett' peaks. The higher summits offer extensive views. • Distinct sense of wild character of the summits due to their rugged and natural qualities, especially away from hydro-electric infrastructure and poorly integrated forestry. • Where snow is held on the high summits and the corries of Ben Lui and Ben Oss long in the year, this accentuates the exposure and wild character. 	<p>Susceptibility: High</p> <p>The key characteristic of this LCT is its high mountains, steep slopes and narrow ridges, with deeply scooped corries and rocky gullies. This LCT has a strong sense of remoteness, due to it being void of any settlement or transport routes.</p> <p>Value: high</p> <p>There are two landscape designations/ classifications within the LCT, with the main being the Ben Lui WLA which extends across the vast majority of the LCT, and the Argyll and Bute APQ which extends from Loch Fyne to the south and Loch Etive to the north.</p> <p>Sensitivity to this type of development proposed within this LCT: High</p>
LCT 7c – North Loch Awe Craggy Upland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This character types covers the low wooded hills and mor open higher ridges which immediately contain the scenic basin of the head of Loch Awe • This LCT comprises an irregular upland plateau which sits at the juxtaposition of a number of different character types at the head of Loch Awe. • The relatively simple pattern of vegetation, the presence of existing transmission infrastructure and the lack of settlement within the LCT have been identified as a key characteristic. 	The same susceptibility, value and sensitivity as the Craggy Upland – Argyll LCT (detailed above)

Table A8.2.1 – Landscape Character Types Baseline Description		
LCT	Description	Sensitivity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plateau landscape forms the backdrop, and is often visible as a skyline, from small scale low-lying, settled landscape types. This LCT forms the foreground in views to the steep sided, massive bulk of Ben Cruachan and other mountain areas. The LCT is also highly visible from Ben Cruachan and from roads, settlements, Loch Awe and the railway as well as from key historic features. The landscape makes a strong contribution to the diversity of relief, scale, form and pattern which come together to create the scenic qualities and visual drama associated with the North Loch Awe Area of Panoramic Quality. 	
LCT 7 – Craggy Upland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This LCT comprises the uplands which lie either side of Loch Awe. Comprises a high irregular upland plateau, largescale and simple land cover of extensive moorland and coniferous forestry which reduces, with more complex craggy knolls and lochans throughout. This LCT is very sparsely populated with roads aligned in valleys, with views restricted by extensive coniferous forestry and loch-side vegetation. The backdrop of the view from this LCT is formed by the adjacent hills on the edge of the Craggy Upland, and visible from settled loch shores and valleys. These uplands already accommodate existing operational windfarms and transmission infrastructure near Loch Awe, inner Fyne and on the surrounding smaller scale settled glens and valleys. There are no designated landscapes within the LCT, with exception to the north eastern and western extent of the LCT which are covered by the APQ. 	The same susceptibility, value and sensitivity as the Craggy Upland – Argyll LCT (detailed above)
LCT7a – Craggy Upland with Settled Glens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This LCT occurs on the western fringes of the Craggy Uplands character type (7). Forms a series of deep glens, some of these containing narrow lochs, and areas of more expansive low craggy plateaux. Scales varies with the contained glens having small scale accentuated by the often-intricate pattern of broadleaved woodland, pastures and settlement and with scale increasing in the more extensive and open plateau areas which are densely forested. Views are restricted from roads, due the incised landform of the glen and adjacent Craggy Coast and Islands (7b). Settled landscape and predominately diverse landform. An APQ designation applies to the western extent of this landscape. Complex irregular landform which includes steep rocky slopes containing deep glens, rocky outcrops and knolls and the occasional pronounced craggy topped hills. Rich diversity of broadleaved and policy woodlands, lochs, wetlands and small pastures are a key characteristic of the LCT. The backdrop of the steep slopes and skyline ridges which provide the immediate setting to the well-settled coastal edge of the Craggy Coast and Islands (7b). 	The same susceptibility, value and sensitivity as the Craggy Upland – Argyll LCT (detailed above)

Table A8.2.1 – Landscape Character Types Baseline Description		
LCT	Description	Sensitivity
LCT 2 – High Tops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This LCT type is found in the north and northeast of the mainland Argyll and Bute authority area. The character of the LCT comprises an extensive mountainous area which extends into the neighbouring Highland Region and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. The dramatic craggy mountainous scenery of the High Tops forms a highly scenic backdrop to many of the more settled loch shores and coastal landscapes of Argyll and Bute. Complex rugged landform and strong wildland qualities experienced within this LCT are key characteristics. This LCT is highly visible and features a number of Munro and Corbett mountains popular with hill walkers. The majority of this LCT lies within the Ben Lui and Loch Etive Mountains WLA. It is also largely covered by the Argyll and Bute APQ and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. 	The same susceptibility, value and sensitivity as the Rugged Mountains LCT (detailed above)
LCT 20 – Rocky Mosaic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This LCT forms a narrow linear margin along the shores of Loch Fyne and the Kintyre coastline. There are also some 'inland' areas of the LCT defined on the Mull of Kintyre and Loch Awe which essentially form smaller scale valleys set within the adjacent upland areas. The context of this LCT varies greatly with some areas featuring an expansive sea-ward context while others are more contained being located either side of a narrow sea loch or at the end of Loch Awe and along Loch Etive. Key characteristics however include the small scale and often rolling landform, a well-settled character and the backdrop provided to these low-lying linear loch fringes and valleys by more expansive upland landscapes. The rolling landform of the landscape provides strong containment, and the presence of small woodlands, fields and settlement reinforces its predominantly small scale. These loch shores and coastal fringes make an important contribution to the wider scenic context of Argyll, forming an intricately patterned band between the foreground of sea of loch and backed by simple and more expansive upland landscapes. The Rocky Mosaic character is relatively well-settled, often accommodates major transport routes and is focus for recreation. 	The same susceptibility, value and sensitivity as the Rocky Coastland – Argyll LCT (detailed above)
LCT 6a – Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Loch Fyne Upland Forest Moor Mosaic comprises relatively narrow bands of hill ground either side of Loch Fyne and above the shoreline Rocky Mosaic (20). This character type forms a traditional landscape between the settled and smaller scale loch fringe and the more extensive and very sparsely populated uplands of the Craggy Uplands (7) and the steep Ridgeland and Mountains (1). Landform is varied with complex and pronounced hills aligning the northwest shoreline of Loch Fyne and also occurring north of Portavadie. Broader basins and undulating craggy plateaux areas also occur, particularly at the transition with the Craggy Upland (7) LCT where the scale of the landscape also becomes more extensive. This LCT has a generally simple land cover of extensive forestry and moorland and is very sparsely settled. 	The same susceptibility, value and sensitivity as the Plateau Moor and Forest – Argyll LCT (detailed above)

Table A8.2.1 – Landscape Character Types Baseline Description

LCT	Description	Sensitivity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This LCT is highly visible from roads and settlement including from the A83, a major tourist route. • The narrowness of the inner Loch Fyne allows close views across the loch and this landscape forms prominent skylines and steep containing hill slopes in these views. Long views down the inner loch are also framed by these slopes. • The majority of the LCT is not covered by any landscape designations, with exception to key hills forming the immediate backdrop to Loch Fyne which are included within the Argyll and Bute APQ. 	