

Paper 4

Appendix

Layout Plan

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Landscape Officer Response

► Site Location and Layout

-  Turbine Location
-  Site Boundary
-  Access Track
-  Turning Arc
-  Met Mast
-  Construction Compound
-  Control Building
-  Crane Pad

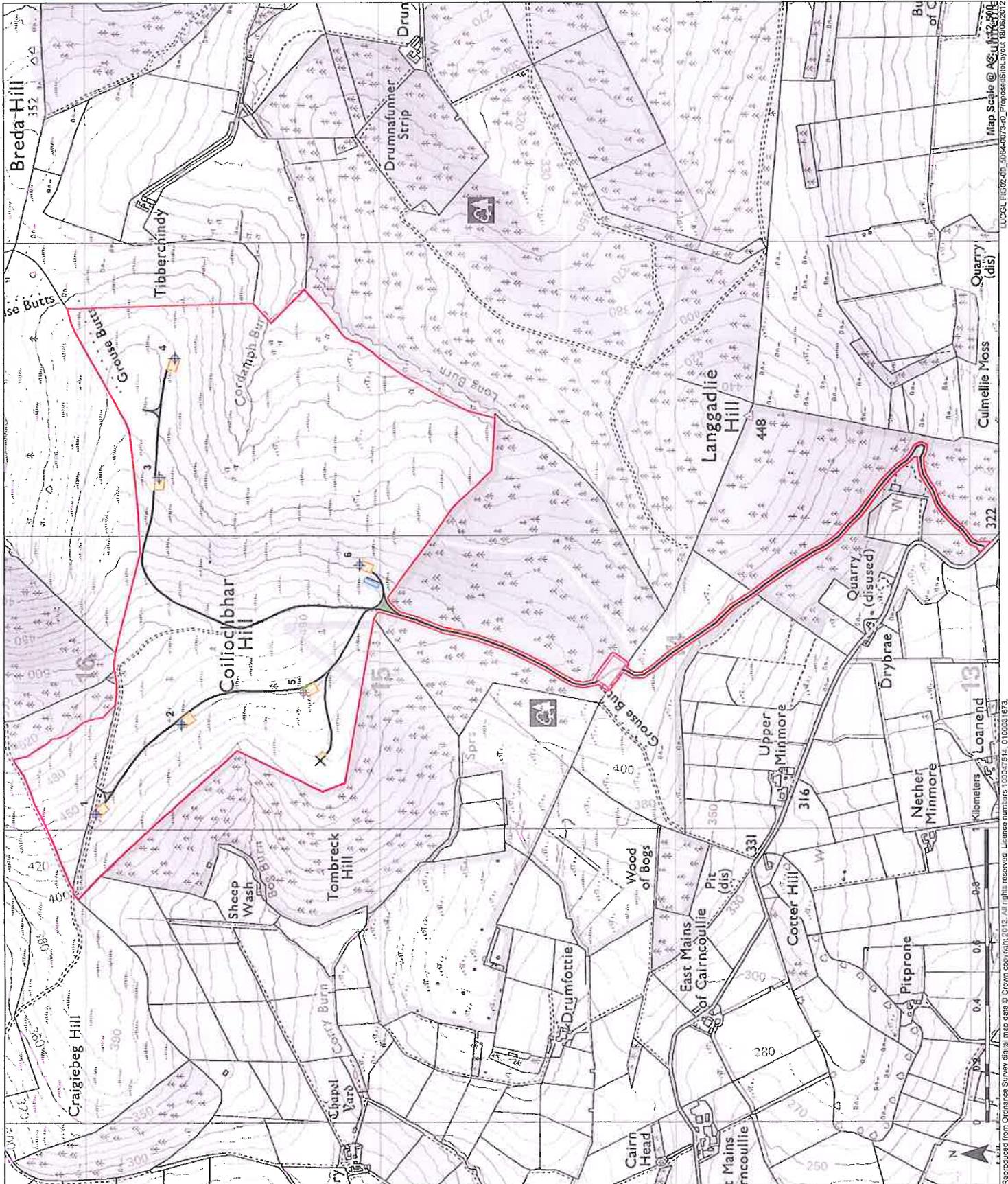


Figure 2



Tibberchindy Wind Farm: Landscape Response

1.0 The Development

The Tibberchindy wind farm is located approximately 8.5km from the National Park boundary above the river Don and a few km west of Kildrummy. The proposal is for 6 turbines 115m high

2.0 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

The ZTVs (blade and hub) demonstrate that the main areas affected are the hill slopes and uplands, north and south of Strathdon, including Morven, with small areas of fragmented visibility extending westwards to Brown Cow Hill. Visibility from the hill slopes within Strathdon is largely within areas of woodland. On the south side of Glen Tanar, east of Glen Muick and on Mt Keen there are also some small areas from which turbines would be visible though these are at distances between 25km and 35km. There will be views eastwards of the wind farm from the minor unclassified road between Heughhead and Glenkindie.

3.0 Setting and Landscape and Visual Impacts

Setting

The landscape setting of the Park on its eastern side is to a large extent determined by the continuity of character types across the boundary and in particular a number of upland spurs that extend out from the Cairngorms massif. Also contributing to the landscape setting of the Park are a number of free-standing areas of high ground separated from the larger body of upland by lower lying areas of farmland and forested glens. The former of these 'Grampian outliers'¹ often contribute substantially to the character and experience of the Park and its special landscape qualities. The latter of these, the free-standing 'Grampian outliers', are often visually distinctive landscape features in their own right and in places contribute to the local character and the quality of views from the Park.

Landscape Character

The Hill of Coiliochbar sits within a small and free-standing extent of the Grampian Outliers, and from the Park is generally viewed across intervening farmland. However, in views from the Park, the hill of Coiliochbar does not have a distinctive and easily recognised profile. As a consequence of this context the proposed wind farm whilst appearing as a new focal feature and having an effect on the landscape character, would not have a significant adverse effect on landscape character as experienced from the National park, nor in my view would it have a significant effect on the experience of the special landscape qualities of the Park.

¹ SNH South and Central Aberdeenshire: Landscape Character Assessment: ERM 1998

Policy 1.3 of the National Park Partnership Plan

The Tibberchindy wind farm as proposed will be a new focal feature in the landscape. It will be within and have an effect on the landscape setting of the National Park but owing to the specifics of the site and its context, this effect would not be significant. The proposal would meet policy 1.3 of the NPPP.

Visual Impacts

Within views from the Park (view pts 3, 7, 9 and 10) the turbines range along the hill slopes of Coiliochbar, generally it is the 4 most westerly turbines that figure in these views. These turbines appear in a simple elongated array, widely but evenly spaced along the hillside. Though the composition as viewed from the Park is generally simple, the relationship between individual turbine positions and landform appears variable with the line of 4 turbines not quite following the hill slope.

Advice: A closer spacing of the 4 western turbines in a more compact arrangement might produce a better fit with landform.

4.0 Wildness and other Special Qualities

This wind farm will be visible from areas of medium and high wildness. The ZTV blade tip visibility overlaps with some areas of medium level wildness in the uplands south and west of Strathdon and very small areas of band A wildness on Mt Keen and east of Glen Muick. However, given that the landscape and visual impacts on these areas are likely to be low to medium and therefore not significant, and the distances across which the wind farm would be viewed are considerable I would advise that the effects on wildness as a consequence of this development (in addition to others already constructed and consented) would be slight and adverse and not significant.

4.1 Policy 2.3 of the National Park Partnership Plan

Whilst the sense of wildness would not be conserved and enhanced as per policy 2.3, the net result would be a very minor impact on the sense of wildness that can be experienced in the National Park.

5.0 Cumulative Effects on the CNP

The additional landscape and visual impact resulting from Tibberchindy is assessed as not significant and I agree with this. However, possibly more relevant for the National park is the high degree of ZTV overlap between Tibberchindy, Kildrummy, Clashindarroch and Dorenell and the progressive effect that this will have on the landscape setting of the

National park. This will be further exacerbated by the increasing numbers of single and smaller turbines in the same area.

Frances Thin 18/12/2012