

Landscape and Visual Impacts on the NP

The sensitivity of the NP landscapes and receptors is assessed as high. However, given the distance from the wind farm and the limited extent of the wind farm in the view, the magnitude of change to landscape character and views from the NP is negligible. As assessed in the ES, this would lead to a negligible and non-significant level of impact. I concur with this assessment.

Cumulative Impacts on the NP

The proposed Hill of Towie II wind farm will be seen in very close association with the existing Hill of Towie wind farm (ZTV figure 7.14). Views from Carn Mor will be substantially affected by the consented Dorenell wind farm, and views from Creag an Sgor by Kildrummy and Dorenell. The impact of Hill of Towie II in addition to other operational and consented wind farms on the National Park will be negligible.

The proposed wind farm would have negligible impact on the landscape character areas that encompass the northern fringe of the NP, and a negligible visual impact in the small number of locations within the National Park from which the wind farm would be visible. The cumulative impact arising from the addition of Hill of Towie II on receptors in the National Park would be negligible. This level of landscape and visual impact is not significant.

3.4 Wildness and other Special Qualities (NPPP policy priority 2.3)

Visibility of Hill of Towie II coincides with an area of high wildness in the Ladder Hills. However, the sense of wildness that can be experienced here was unsuccessfully defended at the Dorenell PLI and once constructed Dorenell will have the effect of reducing this quality. At a distance of 27km any additional effect that Hill of Towie II will have on the sense of wildness in the Ladder hills will be negligible.

In my view there would be no significant loss in the quality and extent of wildness that can be experienced in the National Park following the construction of Hill of Towie in addition to all currently consented wind farms.

Given the distance away from the Park and the limited extent of visibility, any effect on other special landscape qualities experienced within the Park as a consequence of the proposed Hill of Towie II wind farm is likely to be minimal.

3.5 National Park Setting (NPPP policy priority 1.3)

Contiguity and consistency of landscape character across the park boundary, combined with intervisibility between the Park and its landscape context, are parameters which contribute to the Park's landscape 'setting'.

The proposed wind farm site is within an area of broad forested hills and upland farmland (fig 7.12) and is separated from the Park by a number of different landscape character areas. Whilst turbines on this site will be visible from a few locations in the Park, in both terms of distance and landscape character this wind farm sits out with the landscape setting of the National Park.

I conclude that the Cairn Duhie proposal would not have a significant adverse effect on the landscape setting of the National Park.