



SSE
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN OBJECTION
SPECIAL QUALITIES

NOTE FROM MARK TURNBULL

1 Introduction

1.1 Mark Turnbull (MT) of Mark Turnbull Landscape Architect (MTLA) was instructed by Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) to prepare this note on the ‘Special Qualities’ of the Cairngorms National Park in support of SSE’s objections to The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan

2 Basis for Note

2.1 Experience of preparing the document “The identification of the Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park and of the Special Qualities present in the area affected by the dismantling of the existing 132kv overhead transmission line and the construction and operation of the proposed 400kv overhead transmission line” (ANNEX 1)

2.2 Experience of living in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and being involved in the National Park Plan (ANNEX 2 and 3) and Local Plan processes.

2.3 Topic Paper: The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park (undated) prepared by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA)

2.4 Meeting with Don McKee of CNPA on 26-03-09 to discuss the Topic Paper.

2.5 Telephone Conversation with Hamish Trench of CNPA on 8-04-09 to discuss the Topic Paper and MT conclusions.

3 Key to understanding CNPA Position

3.1 The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 (The Act) in Section 1 sets out the aims of a National Park. In Section 2 the conditions for designation of an area as a National Park are specified as follows:

- That the area is of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage:
- That the area has a distinctive character and a coherent identity.



- That designating the area as a National Park would meet the special needs of the area and would be the best means of ensuring that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the area in a co-ordinated way.
- 3.2 Special Qualities are mentioned only once in Section 1 of the Act in terms of “promoting understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public”.
- 3.3 With regard to Special Qualities CNPA have interpreted The Act as follows in Section 3 of the Topic Paper:
- The special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park are those natural and cultural heritage qualities that not only make the area of outstanding national importance, but combine to give the area the distinctive character and coherent identity that is required in the conditions for establishing a National Park.
 - While it is possible and desirable to identify individual components that make up the special qualities, it is the sum of their parts – the distinctive character and coherent identity – that is the basis on which the National Park is designated. There is therefore no prescriptive or definitive list of special qualities, as the relevant qualities, their relationships to each other and to the whole will vary over time and place.
- 3.4 Section 3 of the Topic Paper also notes with regard to this interpretation that this is and has been a consistent approach taken by the Cairngorms National Park Authority and others throughout relevant policies and plans. Clearly this is not the approach taken by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, the only other National Park in Scotland (Paragraphs 3.6, 6.2, 6.5 and ANNEX 2 and 3) and there is no indication given as to who the others are.
- 3.5 On this basis, from the outset of work on the National Park Plan, CNPA decided to describe the Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park using General Text approach supported by a variety of policies (See Topic Paper Sub-section 5.1), Supplementary Planning Guidance on specific development topics (See Topic Paper Sub-section 5.2) and separate, sometimes very complex and technical documents, some of which have (For example Analysis of Wildness Qualities) or may have spatial expressions (For example: landscape character) (Topic Paper Sub-section 5.3 to 5.10).
- 3.6 This, what might be referred to as a Textual Approach, is very different from the Spatial Approach taken by the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park for their National Park Plan. That approach offers both strategic spatial guidance and a detailed evaluation of the “special qualities”.
- 3.7 CNPA’s position, according to Don McKee (Meeting 26-03-09), is that Ministers approved their approach when they approved the National Park Plan although this meant that the two National Parks did not adopt a consistent approach to the same requirements.
- 3.8 Given this background the work indicated in Section 5 of the CNPA Topic Paper for the Local Plan Inquiry represents Work in Progress. This would appear to be different from the position taken by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park in which the Special



Qualities were defined spatially at the stage of approval of the National Park Plan by Ministers through a detailed evaluation process.

4 The National Park Plan

4.1 Section 3 of the CNPA Topic Paper justifies the position as follows:

“Section 3.2 of the National Park Plan sets out the approach to the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park. It states (p25):

‘The Cairngorms is widely recognised and valued as an outstanding environment which people enjoy in many different ways. Everyone brings their own perceptions and interest to the Cairngorms, but there are some special qualities of the area that are commonly recognised and referred to. This section does not set out to describe all the characteristics of the National Park – much of that information can be found in the State of the Park Report – but it does seek to identify some of the natural and cultural qualities that combine to give the National Park its distinctive identity.

Some of these qualities are similar to those in other areas, some are unique. Only here in the Cairngorms do they come together to create the richness and diversity recognised by its designation as a National Park.’

This emphasises that fact that in considering the special qualities, both the individual components and their relationship to the overall integrity of the designation should be taken into account.

Section 3.2 of the National Park Plan goes on to identify the following particular components of the special qualities with commentary providing some detail on the nature and extent of those qualities:

- *distinctive landscape*
- *rich biodiversity*
- *mountains*
- *moorland*
- *forests and woodlands*
- *straths and farmland*
- *rivers and lochs*
- *recreation and enjoyment*
- *the built environment*
- *culture and traditions*

Section 3.3 of the National Park Plan explicitly sets these special qualities in the context of a dynamic environment and the need to manage change. It states (p28):

‘The special qualities and resources of the National Park are part of a dynamic environment and the result of a long history of changing natural processes, management and perceptions. The qualities that we value today are a snap-shot in time of social, economic and environmental conditions that are continually evolving.



The designation of the National Park brings a particular focus to these qualities and a special responsibility for their management, but it does not halt the processes of change and evolution.'

The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, the Report on the proposal for designation and the National Park Plan 2007 approved by Ministers therefore set out a clear and consistent basis for considering the special qualities of the National Park:

- a) the special qualities are the natural and cultural heritage qualities that make the area of outstanding national importance, and
- b) which combine together in a dynamic environment to give the area its distinctive character and coherent identity;
- c) the special qualities, their relationship to each other and to the overall integrity of the designation will vary over time and place."

5 Requirements of CNPA Approach to the Description of Special Qualities

5.1 Given 1 and 2 above, particularly the recognition that the special qualities and their relationship to each other will vary from place to place (area to area), the CNPA Approach requires when considering any area, whether general or site specific, the following to be identified and described:

- The Special Qualities present within the area with reference to list in Section 3.2 of the National Park Plan noting any other qualities not mentioned in 3.2
- How the Special Qualities and any other qualities combine to form a Distinctive Character and Coherent Identity
- How the Special Qualities and other qualities and the Distinctive Character and Coherent Identity contribute to the designated area as a whole
- How the Special Qualities and other qualities and the Distinctive Character and Coherent Identity have and may Vary over Time

6 Implications of CNPA Approach for the Development Process

6.1 Broadly speaking, there are two separate approaches to defining Special Qualities used for the two National Parks in Scotland: the Spatial Approach used by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority and the Textual Approach used by CNPA (Paragraph 3.5).

6.2 Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority have satisfactorily demonstrated that Special Qualities and Distinctive Character and Coherent Identity can be identified and described both textually and spatially as part of the National Park Plan (ANNEX 2 and 3).

6.3 There are three main difficulties with the purely Textual Approach, that is, non-spatial approach, used by CNPA. Firstly, there is no over-arching spatial analysis which offers a sufficiently detailed evaluation of the Park's "special qualities" and is designed to ensure that development proposals are channelled into or directed towards appropriate areas, having regard to those special qualities. Secondly, each time a development proposal is brought forward (without the benefit of advice from the spatial analysis) for every detailed area under consideration as part of the development process in which the effect on the Special Qualities requires assessment, the Special Qualities, and their combination, have to be identified and



described from the beginning from a number of separate documents on a case by case basis. Thirdly, once the impacts upon the special qualities (and any qualities which combine) have been identified and described, there is no guidance in place which explains the extent to which those special qualities, in that location, combine to form a distinctive character or coherent identity, and what contribution they make to the designated area as a whole.

- 6.4 Assuming the existence of a spatial analysis, adequate step by step guidance and the availability of relevant information in a concise and usable form (not as a series of separate lengthy, complex and technical documents, for example, Analysis of Wildness Qualities 2008, that have to be worked through), it is reasonable to expect the proposer of a development to identify the Special Qualities and other qualities (and their spatial extent) in the area likely to be immediately affected by the proposed development. However, it is entirely unreasonable to expect the proposer of the development to identify how these Special Qualities and other qualities (and the Coherent Identity they may form) contribute to the designated area as a whole and therefore what their effect would be on the National Park as a whole. The CNPA ought to be in a position to offer meaningful guidance to developers on these matters.
- 6.5 Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park have demonstrated that the special qualities can be described spatially and more meaningful guidance offered (see Annex 2). Similarly, in the absence of a detailed spatial approach within the Cairngorms National Park Plan, for the purposes of evidence presented to the Beaulieu-Denny overhead transmission line public inquiry, MTLA devised a framework designed to ensure that the special qualities, and any combination of those qualities, potentially affected by the line had been identified (see ANNEX 1). It can be seen from these Annexes that although it is an onerous task, it is perfectly possible to identify and analyse the special qualities and the conclusions which are reached are extremely valuable both to the Park Authority in achieving the aims of the Park and to the developer who is promoting a development within the Park.

7 Best Current Method of Assessing the Effect of a Proposed Development on the Special Qualities of CNP

- 7.1 In order to demonstrate the scale of the task which, based on CNPA's current purely Textual Approach, each developer would require to undertake, this section outlines the key stages of what might be the best current method of assessing the effect of a proposed development on the Special Qualities.
- 7.2 Take the general Special Qualities definitions and find which are present in the area affected by the development (Factual) referring as necessary to the relevant (existing) supporting documents (Difficult due to the nature of some of the documents, their length and technical complexity). Identify any other qualities present (Factual) and their spatial extent (Difficult unless the data is already prepared such as might be the case in an EIA Development). Identify how these qualities form or contribute to forming a Coherent Identity (very difficult without guidance).
- 7.3 Identify how the Special Qualities present have, are and may change with time (Factual)



- 7.4 Identify which Special Qualities and other qualities will change as a result of the development and their special extent (Factual but difficult to do except in the case of an EIA Development)
- 7.5 Assess how the changes and their spatial extent affect the overall Special Qualities and Coherent Identity of the National Park (Judgement). This can only be done if the Importance of the Special Qualities to the National Park as a whole and to the area under consideration have been identified. Currently CNPA do not set out their approach to this question in any documentation and there is much scope for subjective opinion and, therefore, disagreement.
- 7.6 Developers are currently placed in an invidious position. There is no location specific guidance which draws upon a detailed evaluation of the Park's special qualities. There is no documentary guidance as to how, in the absence of such work, the developer is to carry out its own analysis. The developer having then invested potentially very considerable sums in carrying out their own analysis, there is no guidance on the approach which is to be taken by CNPA to the assessment of the effect on the Coherence of Identity and National Park as a whole. The CNPA Textual Approach therefore fails to provide the developer with clear and transparent guidance and leaves far too much scope for reliance upon subjective opinion.
- 7.7 SSE point is that CNPA must take the lead in this, not the developer, because the developer can not reasonably be expected to have analysed and understood how a proposal in one limited location or area of an extensive National Park affects the National Park as a whole. Clear guidance is required from the CNPA.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 It is recommended that CNPA work immediately to formulate and implement a detailed Spatial Approach as expressed in section 5 of this Note. Such an Approach should have been embedded within the current local plan process. In the event that the Reporters are not minded to recommend delaying adoption of the local plan to await such a Spatial Approach, the following recommendations are made as to actions which should be taken in the short and medium to long term.
- 8.2 Short Term
- 8.2.1 CNPA explain their approach in clear practical terms and explain how they are going to progress towards a final product, how long this will take and the consultations/approvals involved. In particular they explain how they will assess the effect of a development on Special Qualities and Coherent Identity given the current lack of spatial information.
- 8.2.2 At Pre-application discussions with CNPA, a clear statement in the form of a Briefing Note on Special Qualities and Coherent Identity is given to and discussed with the proposer of a development. This to include the inter-relationship of the qualities, their importance, their spatial extent and how this will be assessed in terms of the Park as a whole.
- 8.2.3 Provide How to Use Guidance for complex technical sources of information such as Analysis of Wilderness Qualities 2008.



8.3 Medium to Long Term

8.3.1 CNPA have no option other than to define the Special Qualities of the National Park as a whole spatially, indicating by overlays how these interact, their importance and how they form Coherent Identity. If this is not done then every development proposal will require CNPA to identify, on a case by case basis, the Special Qualities and Coherent Identity of the National Park both as a whole and in terms of the area likely to be affected by the proposed development so that Judgements can be transparent.

8.4 If the Reporters are minded to support the approach the CNPA have taken towards defining Special Qualities, on a short term basis, it would be appropriate for the Local Plan to be adopted only on the basis that Special Qualities would be defined spatially within an alteration to the National Park Plan 2007 and/or then carried through into the Local Development Plan (Not as Supplementary Guidance to the LDP) which is identified within the CNPA Development Plan Scheme as commencing initial consultation to identify the main issues between September 2009 and February 2010. Adoption is anticipated for November 2011.



ANNEX 1

**THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AND OF THE SPECIAL
QUALITIES PRESENT IN THE AREA AFFECTED BY THE
DISMANTLING OF THE EXISTING 132kV OVERHEAD
TRANSMISSION LINE AND THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION
OF THE PROPOSED 400kV OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION LINE.**



APL/CNP-52

THE ELECTRICITY ACT 1989, SECTION 37

**PROPOSED BEAULY TO DENNY 400kV STEEL TOWER DOUBLE
CIRCUIT OVERHEAD ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION LINE**

**THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AND OF THE SPECIAL
QUALITIES PRESENT IN THE AREA AFFECTED BY THE
DISMANTLING OF THE EXISTING 132kV OVERHEAD
TRANSMISSION LINE AND THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION
OF THE PROPOSED 400kV OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION LINE.**

**MT
18-07-07**



1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park identified by the Park Authority (CNPA) and to identify the Special Qualities present within the area affected by the dismantling of the existing 132kV overhead transmission line and the construction and operation of the proposed 400kV overhead transmission line.

2 APPROACH

- 2.1 The starting point of the approach is the identification and description of the Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park set out by CNPA in the Park Plan and the State of the Park Report. It is accepted that although there may be broad agreement as to what constitute the Special Qualities of the Park, this would appear to be a categorisation not supported by any stated criteria for what should be considered 'Special'. It is therefore not simply a question of identifying 'unique' features as the Park Plan (page 25) states that 'Some of these qualities are similar to those in other areas, some are unique. Only here in the Cairngorms do they come together to create the richness and diversity recognised by its designation as a National Park'. On this basis it should not be assumed that all of the Special Qualities identified in the Park Plan are unique to the Park but rather that it is the combination of features that give the Park its distinctive identity. This is a qualitative judgement and is distinct from the detailed, quantitative and systematic approach to evaluating features on which the Environmental Impact Assessment is based.
- 2.2 It is assumed that the Special Qualities identified apply to the Park as a whole and that not every area of the Park is expected to contain all of them. On this basis it must be assumed that the combination will vary from area to area and that therefore the contribution to the overall distinctive identity of the Park will also vary area by area.
- 2.3 The Approach involved the EIA Consultants in the following steps
- A review of relevant material
 - The identification of the Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park
 - The identification of a study area relevant to their completion of a framework setting out the Special Qualities present within the study area.
 - The completion at a Workshop of a framework combining the EIA Consultants frameworks into one master framework.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Review of Relevant Material

- 3.1.1 Each EIA Consultant examined the following material as relevant to their topic and any additional material they considered relevant
- SHETL Statement of Case for the Newtonmore Session of the PI
 - The National Park Plan
 - The State of the Park Report



- The framework for the identification of the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park and their presence within a study area (Appendix 1)
 - The report Determination of The Landscape And Visual Study Area for the Dismantling of the Existing 132kV Overhead Transmission Line and for the Construction and Operation of the Proposed 400kV Overhead Transmission Line (Appendix 2)
 - The ES including Addenda
 - Precognitions
- 3.2 Identification of the Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park
- 3.2.1 Each Consultant identified the Special Qualities and the features making up the Special Qualities for their ES topic as described by CNPA in the Park Plan and the State of the Park Report and adjusted the indicative framework (Appendix 1) accordingly.
- 3.3 Identification of Special Qualities and Study Area
- 3.3.1 Each consultant established the study area for their ES topic. These were discussed in detail at the Workshop.
- 3.3.2 The landscape and visual study area was determined by locating the existing and proposed overhead lines and considering the geographical extent of the significant landscape and visual effects, and how these related to landscape character, landscape sensitivity and the visual impact, both adverse and beneficial, of the overhead lines for a distance of up to 10km from them. These were compared this to the Park boundary and the description of the Special Qualities that make up the Distinctive Landscape within the Park boundary (Appendix 2 section 2 and Figure 2.7). The study area also applied to Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Recreation and Forestry. Forestry and Cultural Heritage also had a more detailed study area relating to the overhead line corridors.
- 3.3.3 The Ecological study area was based on the overhead line corridors. For birds this extended to 5km from the existing and proposed overhead line routes, for habitats circa 250m either side of the lines and for protected species the limits of deviation +50m.
- 3.4 Identification of the Special Qualities present within the study area.
- 3.4.1 Each Consultant identified the features present in their study area which made up the Special Qualities. They also considered whether there were equivalent features not identified in the Park Plan or State of the Park Report which made up the Special Qualities of their study area (Appendix 1 paragraph 2.1 explains the test for equivalent features).
- 3.4.2 Each Consultant completed a framework for their ES topic and submitted this prior to the Workshop.
- 3.5 Completion of the Framework.
- 3.5.1 A Workshop was held at which each Consultant presented the rationale for their study area and presented their framework.



3.5.2 A combined framework was prepared through discussion and conclusions reached.

3.5.3 A draft report was circulated for comment



4 FRAMEWORK

NATURAL (N) OR CULTURAL (C) HERITAGE AS INTERPRETED IN NATIONAL PARKS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2000	SPECIAL QUALITIES		FEATURES PRESENT IN THE STUDY AREA WHICH MAKE UP THE SPECIAL QUALITIES	
	SPECIAL QUALITIES	FEATURES MAKING UP THE SPECIAL QUALITIES (BASED ON PARK PLAN AND STATE OF THE PARK REPORT)	FEATURES PRESENT IN THE STUDY AREA	EQUIVALENT FEATURES NOT IDENTIFIED IN THE PARK PLAN MAKING UP THE SPECIAL QUALITIES IN THE STUDY AREA
N	Distinctive Landscape	Mix of mountains, hills, glens, straths, lochs, rivers with shingle beaches and braiding	Hills, glens, straths, lochs, rivers with shingle beaches (and combinations of these)	None
		Variety of vegetation cover	Variety of vegetation cover	None
		Diversity of land use over time	Grazing, forestry and sporting pursuits	Control of water for industrial use
N	Rich Biodiversity	25% of UK priority BAP species are found in the Park area, and in many cases the Park supports much of the UK population (see individual broad habitat types for relevant UK BAP species)	Vertebrate animal species present in the study area for which the Park is considered to support a nationally important population include wildcat, pine marten, red squirrel, otter, mountain hare, black grouse, golden eagle, merlin, peregrine falcon, crested tit, Scottish crossbill	None
N	Mountains/Upland Moorland (UK priority vertebrate species from LBAP: water vole, black grouse, skylark, bullfinch, reed bunting)	Upland heath/ heather moorland	Present in several locations including Glen Shirra and Meall nan Eagan area.	None
		Blanket bog	Present in several locations including Cathar Mor and the Pass of Drumochter	
		Montane (e.g. montane heaths, snow-bed communities)	Not present	None
N	Forests and Woodlands (relevant UK priority vertebrate species from LBAP: wildcat, pine marten, red squirrel, capercaillie, black grouse, osprey, goldeneye, wryneck, song thrush, crested tit, Scottish crossbill)	Native pine forest	Not present	None
		Oak/birch woodland	Present (scattered locations, primarily along the route of the existing 132kV line)	None
		Aspen woodland	Not present	None
		Bog woodland	Not present	None
		Juniper woodland and montane scrub	Not present	None
		Plantations	Present (predominantly commercial conifer plantations)	None
N	Straths, farmland and grassland (relevant UK priority vertebrate species from LBAP: water vole, brown hare, pipistrelle sp., black grouse, grey partridge, corncrake, skylark, spotted flycatcher, song thrush, tree sparrow, linnets, corn bunting, reed bunting)	Arable land	Present (limited, along Strathspey)	None
		Grassland (i.e. improved for/by stock grazing)	Present (primarily along the route of the existing 132kV line)	None
		Boundary Features (e.g. drystone dykes)	Present	
N	Rivers and lochs (relevant UK priority vertebrate species from LBAP: otter, water vole, reed bunting, great crested newt)	Lochs and lochans	Present (Loch Crunachden, Spey Dam)	None
		Rivers and burns	Present (River Spey, River Pattack, River Mashie, Allt an s-Sluic, River Truim)	None
		Wetlands	Present (River Spey floodplain, River Truim marshes)	None
?	Recreation and	Wildness of the plateau	Not present	None



	enjoyment	Mountaineering and skiing	Not present	None
		Off-road cycling	Present but limited	None
		River activities	Present but limited	None
		Field sports	Present but limited	None
		Outdoor access	Present but limited	None
C	The built environment	Prehistoric remains	Present but limited	None
		Pre-improvement rural settlement remains (cairns, shielings and townships amongst hills and glens)	Present	None
		Military barracks	Present	None
		Planned villages and settlements	Present	None
		Country houses, Victorian estate architecture (including sporting lodges and estate houses)	Present	None
		Castles	Not present (Cluny Castle is included under country houses)	None
		Buildings constructed with traditional local materials/traditional techniques/to traditional designs	Present	None
		Designed landscapes	No HGDLs present. Designed landscapes more generally are present	None
		Improvement-era rural settlement remains, including farm buildings	Present	None
		Scheduled monuments and listed buildings	Dun da Lamh, Kinloch Laggan St Kenneth's Church and cross slab, Ruthven Barracks and Dalwhinnie Wade Bridge SAM's, approx 40 listed buildings (majority B and CS) present	None
		Roads (including military roads), railways and bridges (military and other bridges)	Present	None
C	Culture and traditions	The archaeological record	Present	None



5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The majority of the features making up the Special Qualities of the National Park as set out in the Park Plan and the State of the Park Report are identified as present or present to a limited extent or present in specific locations within the area affected by the dismantling of the existing 132kV overhead transmission line and the construction and operation of the proposed 400kV overhead transmission line. In terms of Distinctive Landscape mountains are not present in the mix, and in terms of Forest and Woodlands, native pine forest, aspen and bog woodland and juniper woodland and montane scrub are not present. In terms of Recreation and Enjoyment wildness of the plateau and mountaineering and skiing are not present. In terms of the Built Environment neither castles nor designated Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes are present.
- 5.2 The only equivalent feature not identified in the Park Plan or State of the Park Report is considered to be the effects of the control of water for industrial use in terms of built structures and controlled water bodies.



APPENDIX 1

INDICATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AND THEIR PRESENCE WITHIN A STUDY AREA



1 BACKGROUND

1.1 This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents

- SHETL Statement of Case for the Newtonmore Session of the PI
- The National Park Plan
- The State of the Park Report
- The report Determination of The Landscape And Visual Study Area for the Assessment of the Dismantling of the Existing 132kV Overhead Transmission Line and for the Construction and Operation of the Proposed 400kV Overhead Transmission Line

2 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to set out an Indicative Framework for the factual identification of the features present in the study area which make up the Special Qualities of the area with reference to the Special Qualities set out in the National Park Plan and for the identification of any equivalent features making up the Special Qualities of the area which are not identified in the Park Plan. The test for an equivalent feature which would add to the Special Qualities of the National Park would be one which would be considered to be special to the Cairngorms, for example, a species of bird present within the study area which was equally rare or particular to the Cairngorms, or, perhaps, of comparable conservation interest to those identified in the Special Qualities but which has not been identified in the Park Plan or the State of the Park Report.
- 2.2 Each consultant is expected to complete the Framework relating to their own ES topic after establishing the study area for the assessment of the Special Qualities relating to that topic.

3 APPROACH

- 3.1 This document is concerned with the following steps that will be completed at a Consultants Workshop.
- The review of relevant material
 - The identification of the Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park
 - The identification of a study area relevant to their completion of a framework setting out the Special Qualities present within the study area.
 - The completion at a Workshop of a framework combining the EIA Consultants frameworks into one master framework.

4 INDICATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The Indicative Framework and its headings are shown below.



INDICATIVE FRAMEWORK TO BE COMPLETED BY EACH CONSULTANT FOR THEIR ES TOPIC

ES TOPIC FRAMEWORK (eg Landscape and Visual)			
SPECIAL QUALITIES		FEATURES PRESENT IN THE STUDY AREA WHICH MAKE UP THE SPECIAL QUALITIES	
SPECIAL QUALITIES	FEATURES MAKING UP THE SPECIAL QUALITIES	FEATURES PRESENT IN THE STUDY AREA	EQUIVALENT FEATURES NOT IDENTIFIED IN THE PARK PLAN MAKING UP THE SPECIAL QUALITIES IN THE STUDY AREA
Distinctive Landscape	Mix of mountains, hills, glens, straths, lochs, rivers with shingle beaches and braiding		
	Diversity of land use over time		
Rich Biodiversity	Native semi-natural woodland		
Mountains	Mountains		
	Plateau (that dominates the heart of the Park) and wild land experience at its best		
Moorland	Heather moorland / upland heath epitomising the highland landscape		
	Blanket bog		
Forests and woodlands	Pine woodlands		
	Oak/birch woodland		
	Aspen woodlands		
	Bog woodland		
	Juniper woodland and montane scrub		
	Plantations		
Straths and farmland	Farmed landscape contrasts with mountains and forests		
Rivers and lochs	Lochs and lochans		
	Rivers and burns		
	Wetlands		
Recreation and enjoyment	Wildness of the plateau		
	Mountaineering and skiing		
	River activities		
	Outdoor access		
The built environment	Settlements and conservation areas		
	Military buildings		
	Planned villages		
	Victorian estate lodges		
	Roads and railways		
Culture and traditions	Historic landscape development		
	Scheduled monuments and listed buildings		
	Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes		



APPENDIX 2

DETERMINATION OF THE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL STUDY AREA FOR THE DISMANTLING OF THE EXISTING 132kV OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION LINE AND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE PROPOSED 400kV OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION LINE



1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to illustrate a method of determining the study area for the identification of the Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park present within the area affected by the dismantling of the existing 132kV overhead transmission line and for the construction and operation of the proposed 400kV overhead transmission line using Landscape and Visual Effects as an example.
- 1.2 Each consultant is expected to establish and record their method of determining the study area for the assessment of the Special Qualities relating to their ES topics

2 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EXAMPLE

2.1 Considerations

- 2.1.1 The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park are set out in the Park Plan (2007) in chapter 3: Context at pages 24 to 27, together with a cross-reference to the State of the Park Report. Note that the landscape and visual aspects that make up the Special Qualities are described under a number of headings, for example Distinctive Landscape, Mountains, Moorland, Straths and farmland etc.
- 2.1.2 The State of the Park Report (2006) at section 2.2.3 describes the landscape, the landscape character of the Cairngorms, the landscape experience, tranquillity, National Scenic Areas and monitoring
- 2.1.3 The Cairngorms Landscape Assessment (Turnbull Jeffrey Partnership for SNH 1996) describes the landscape character of the Cairngorms Mountains.
- 2.1.4 It is acknowledged that overhead electricity transmission lines are large linear elements in the landscape and that they affect, to varying degrees, visual and other environmental aspects of the area through which they are routed (ES paragraph 8.3.1.1)
- 2.1.5 In considering the geographical extent of the landscape and visual aspects identified in the Special Qualities and the State of the Park Report as applied to the effects of an overhead transmission line which is likely to be visible on the skyline at 10km, it is this distance measured from the existing and proposed overhead transmission lines which determines the maximum geographical extent of visual effects.

2.2 Method for determining the study area

- 2.2.1 The affected area is broadly identified on an OS Map in terms of the existing and proposed overhead transmission lines, the Park boundary and the County Boundary (Figure 2.1). This area is also examined in the context of the Park as a whole (Figure 2.2).
- 2.2.2 The significant adverse residual effects and the significant beneficial effects of the ES topics are indicated on the Significant Effects Map. The coloured boxes indicate the nature of the effects (Figure 2.3.).



- 2.2.3 Pinch points, designations, CNP boundary and significant adverse residual and significant beneficial effects (as coloured dots) are indicated on the Pinch Points and Significant Effects Map. This map along gives an indication of the spatial distribution and combination of effects in relation to route pinch points, designations and the Park boundary (Figure 2.4).
- 2.2.4 Section 23.5.1 and figure 23.2A of the ES identify with reference to The Cairngorms Landscape Assessment the landscape character types directly affected by the proposed overhead transmission line. Directly affected is determined as within 10km (See ES paragraphs 24.1.1.4 and .5 and section 24.3.4 for explanation) of the proposed overhead transmission line (figure 2.5).
- 2.2.5 The landscape sensitivity of the area to overhead transmission lines is shown in ES figures 23.3C and D and set out at paragraph 23.5.1.6 of the ES (Figure 2.6).
- 2.2.6 The landscape and visual study area has been determined by locating the existing and proposed overhead lines and considering the geographical extent of the significant landscape and visual effects, and how these relate to landscape character, landscape sensitivity and the visual impact both adverse and beneficial of the overhead lines up to a distance of 10km from them and comparing this to the Park boundary and the description of the Special Qualities that make up the Distinctive Landscape within the Park boundary (Figure 2.7).



Figure 2.1 Affected Area

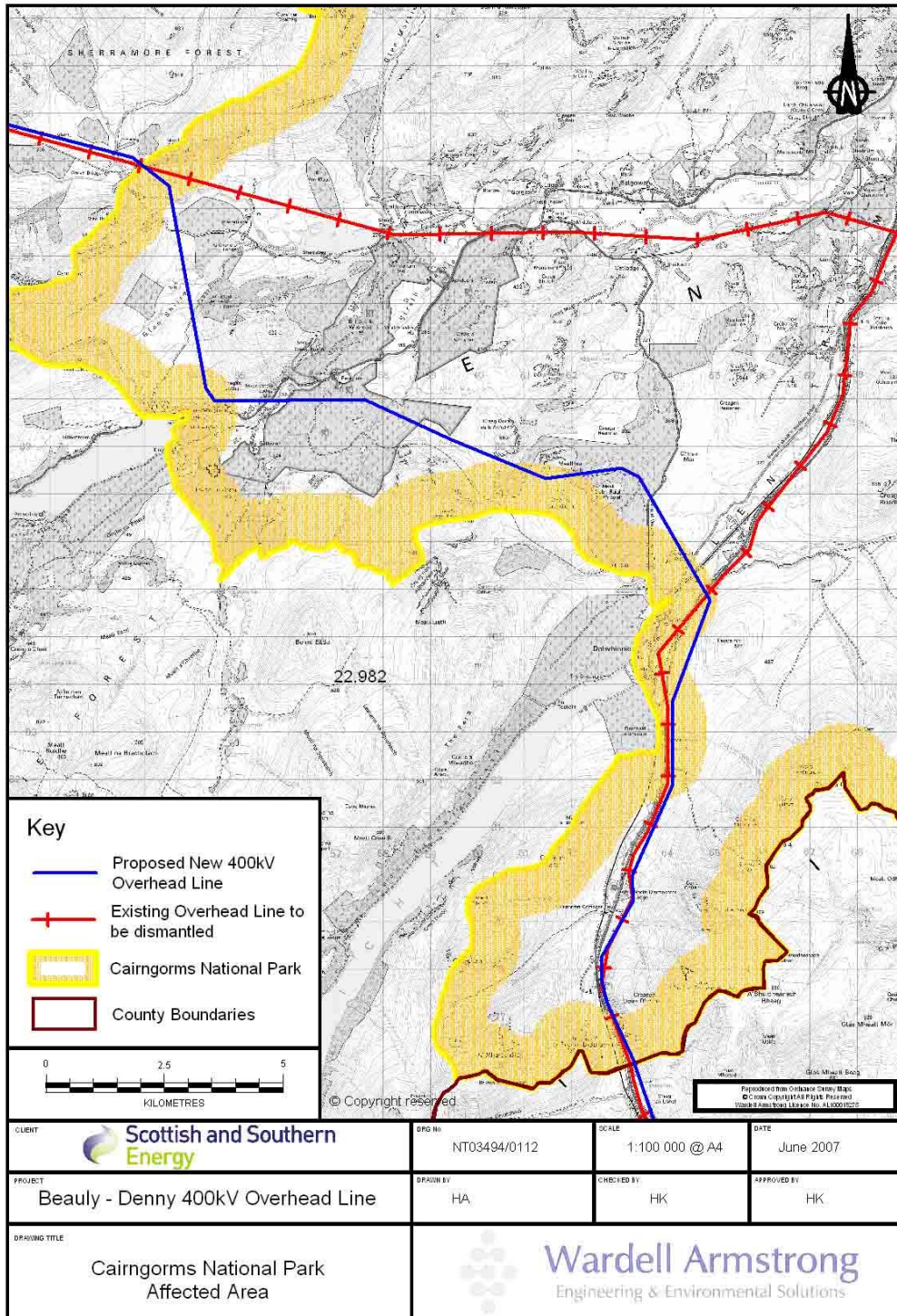




Figure 2.2 Affected Area in the context of the overall National Park boundary and the National Scenic Areas

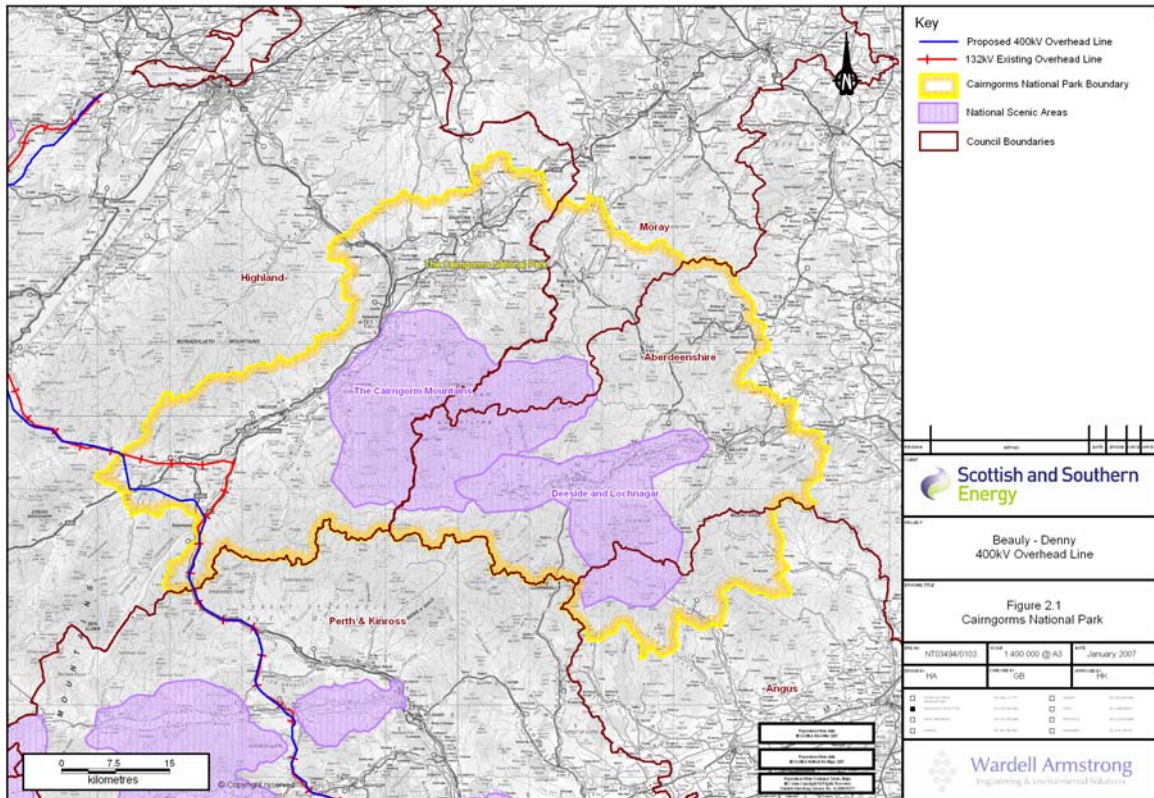
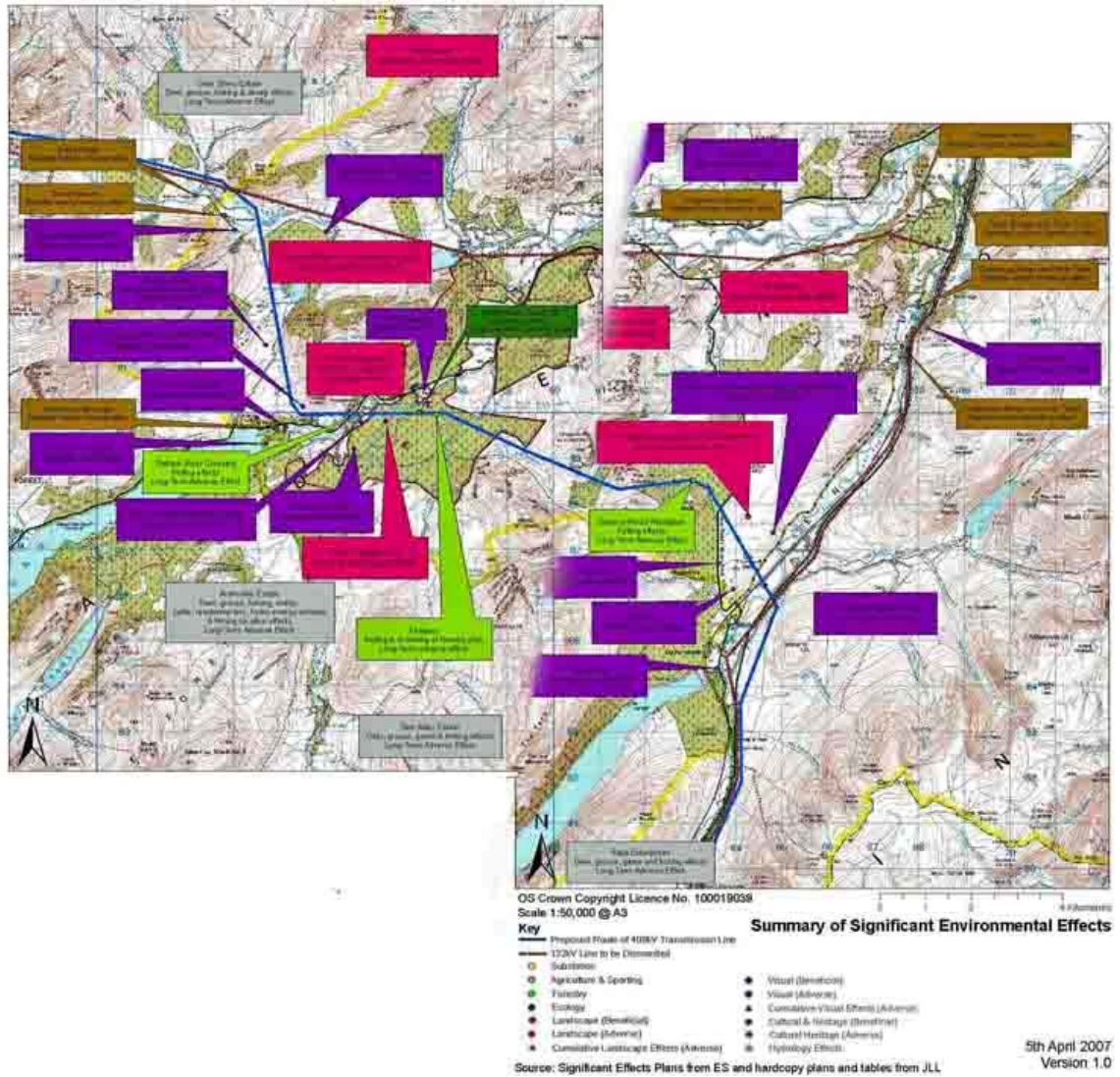


Figure 2.3 Significant Effects



Note : this plan is two plans merged together approximately for the purposes of this report and the park boundary is not indicated (the yellow line is a county boundary)



Figure 2.4 Pinch Points, Designations, CNP Boundary and Significant Effects (as dots)

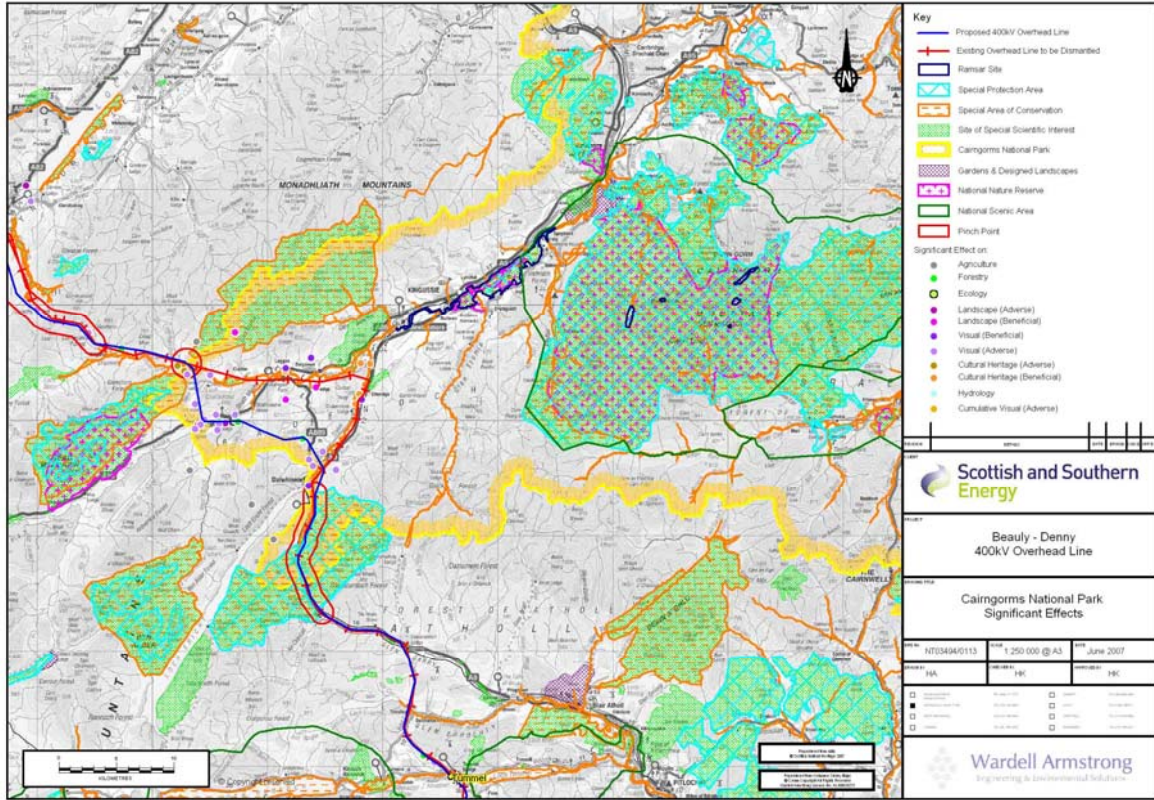


Figure 2.5 Landscape Character

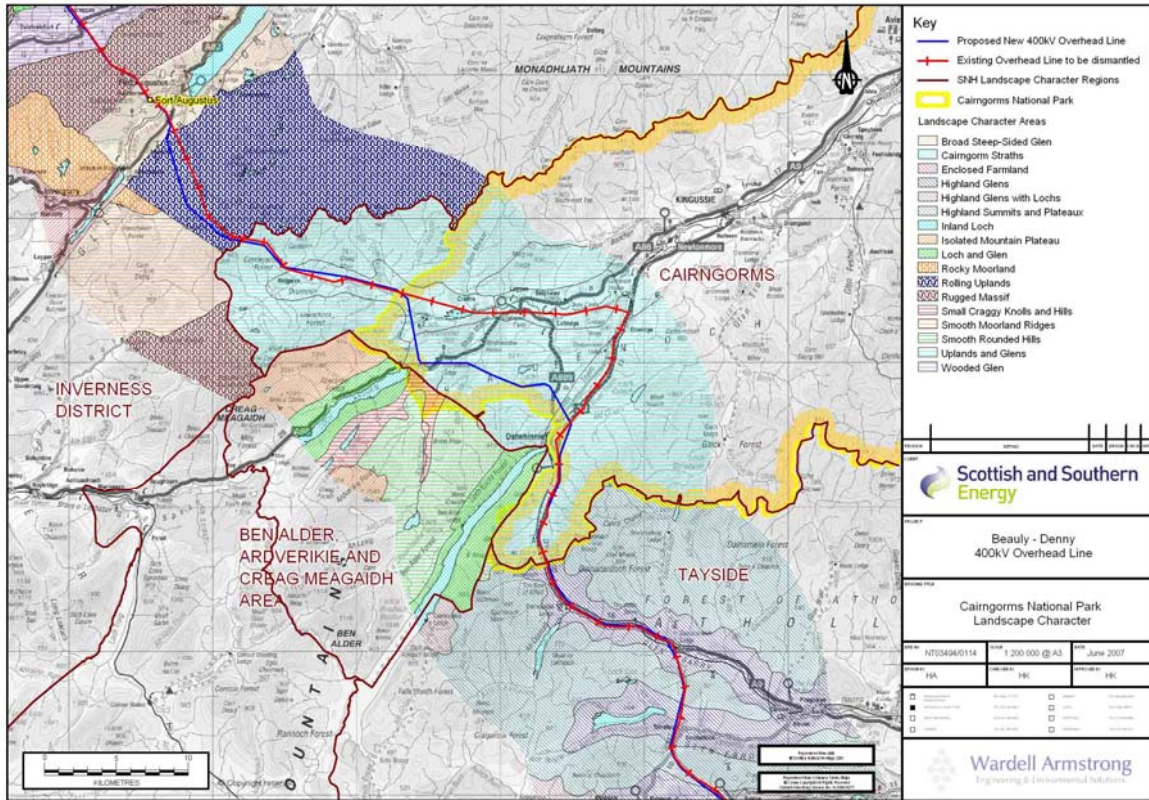




Figure 2.6 Landscape Sensitivity

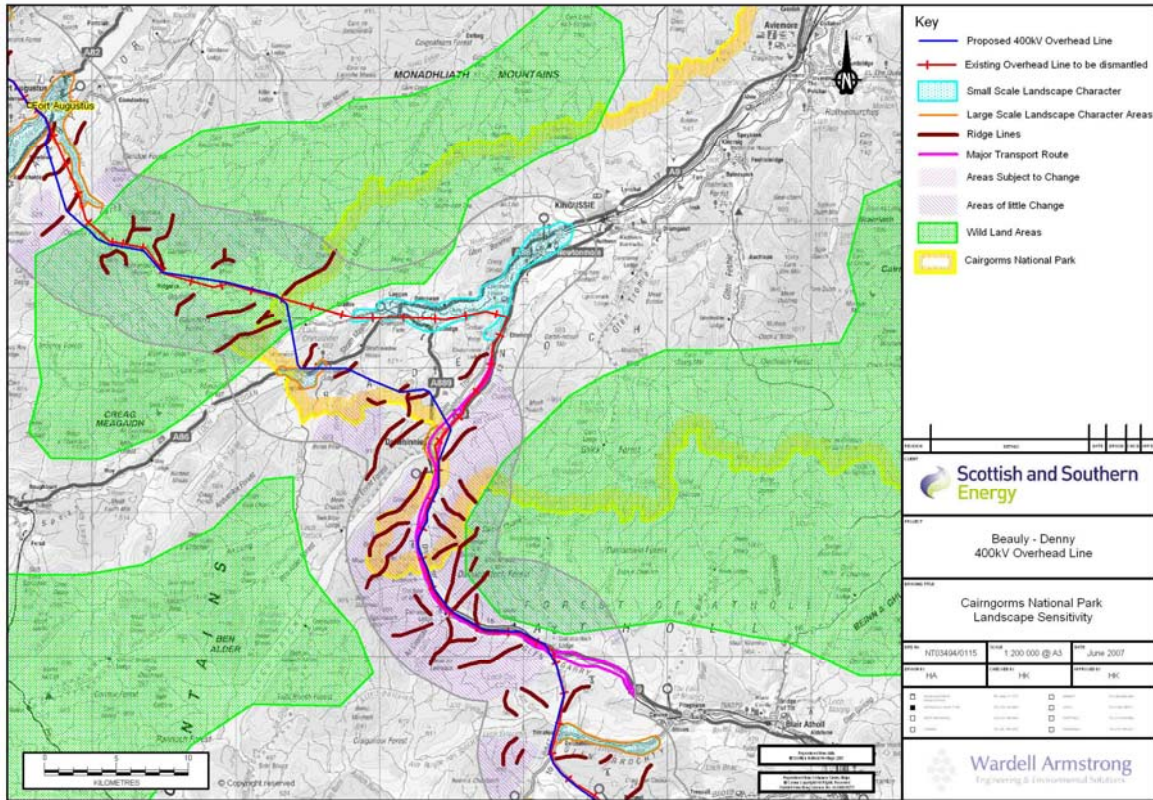
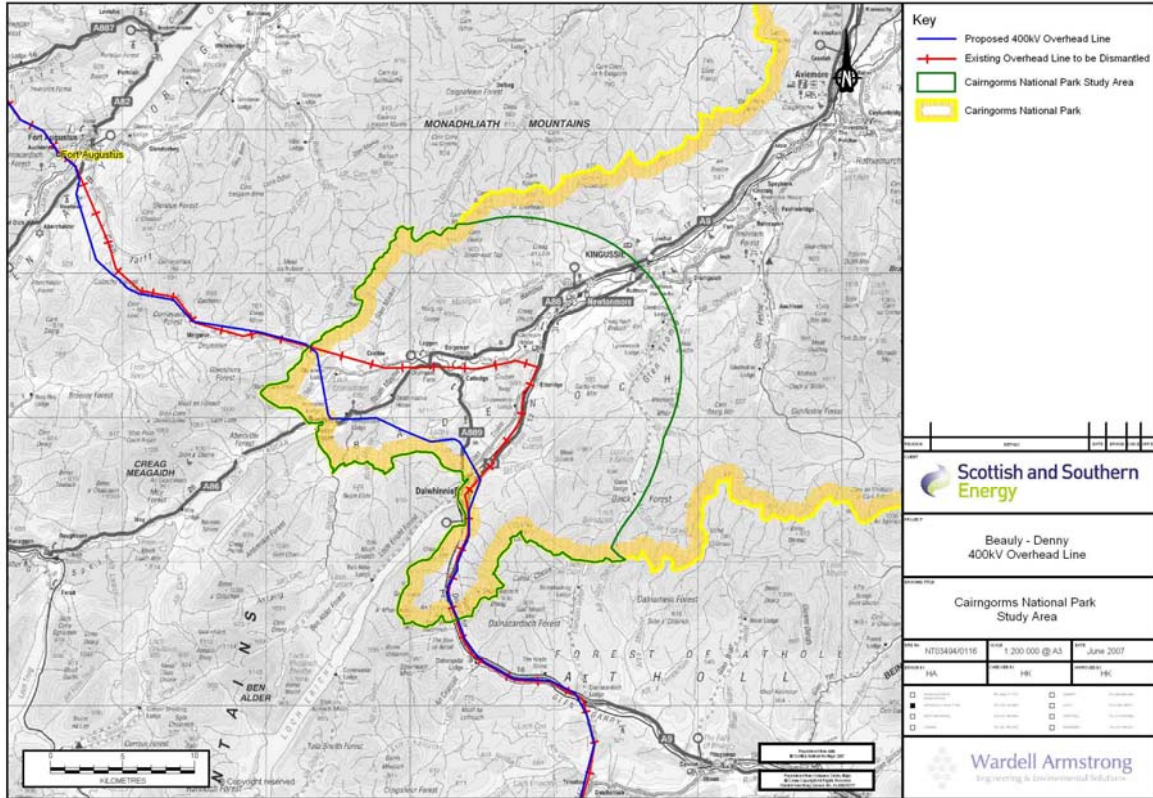




Figure 2.7 Landscape and Visual Study Area





ANNEX 2

CHAPTER 3: THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF LOCH LOMOND AND THE TROSSACHS EXTRACTED FROM THE LOCH LOMOND AND TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK PLAN 2007-20




3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The Park is widely celebrated for the scenic beauty of its landscapes and highly valued for its rich natural and cultural heritage. Many areas and features also have international, national or regional designations to ensure their continued conservation. But the qualities that combine to make the Park a special place go far beyond statutory designations.
- 3.1.2 These qualities – the highly contrasting character and scenic qualities of the landscapes, the wider natural systems that sustain the diverse wildlife, and the contribution made by the cultural legacy of human activity – considered together in a holistic approach define what is special about the Park. Many benefits arise from these special qualities, which contribute significantly to visitor enjoyment and to quality of life for residents.
- 3.1.3 The purpose in defining the Park’s special qualities is to ensure that they are conserved and enhanced. A Technical Appendix, *An Evaluation of the Special Qualities of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park* sets out a detailed geographical evaluation of these special qualities, considering both the relative heritage importance of individual physical features as well as non-physical characteristics such as tranquillity and wildness. The process to define the special qualities involved both experts and local communities, and there was a high level of consensus on what is special about the Park. It was the first such comprehensive evaluation attempted for a National Park or any other protected area in Scotland. It evaluates comprehensive information on landscape character, historic land use and the built environment, along with less complete sources of information on biodiversity, historic associations and traditions, archaeological surveys, geodiversity and landscape appraisals.



3. THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF LOCH LOMOND AND THE TROSSACHS

- 3.14 Conserving and enhancing these special qualities is one of the Plan's guiding principles and the central focus of all policies, programmes and activities. This chapter sets out a summary of the Park's most important special qualities and how they interact with one another. It includes distinctive special qualities associated with the Park as a whole and characteristics and experiences that contribute to the unique character of local areas. This diversity of qualities in the Park is highly valued in itself.

 [Link to: Guiding Principle 1, p12](#)

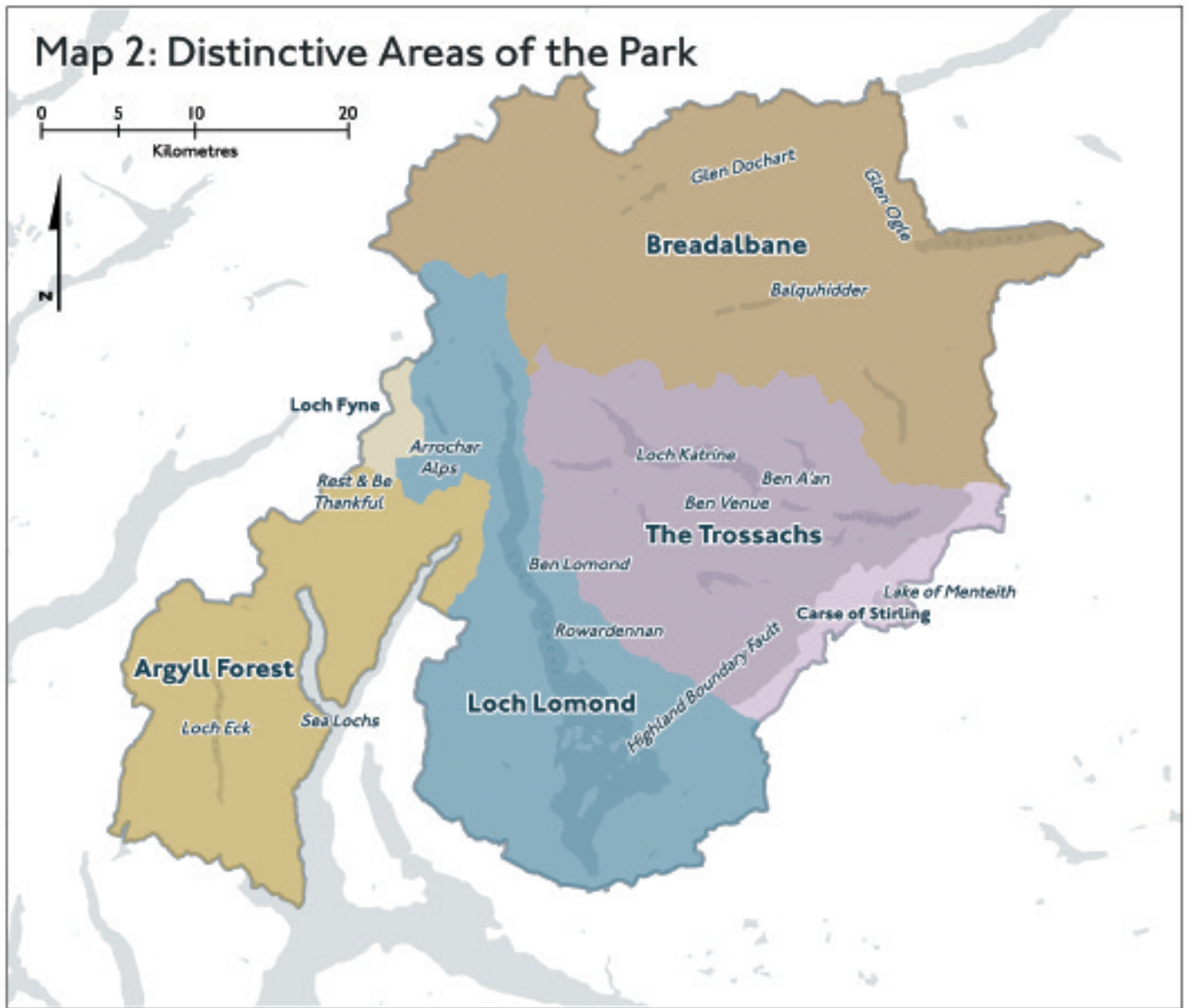
Policy SQ1 Conserving and Enhancing the Special Qualities

Conserving and enhancing the Park's special qualities underpins all the policies, programmes and activities promoted in the Plan and must be central to:

- a) The implementation of the plan by all partners.
- b) The development of more detailed plans and strategies.
- c) The decision-making and operational activities of the Park Authority and partner organisations, where their responsibilities affect the Park.

- 3.15 The Park comprises of four distinctive areas, each distinguished by its own characteristics and qualities: Argyll Forest, Breadalbane, The Trossachs and Loch Lomond (see Map 2). The Plan describes the special qualities of the Park as a whole and of these four areas.

Links  [State of the Park Report 2005](#)  [National Park Plan 2007](#)



3.2 Park-wide Special Qualities

Special qualities common to the Park as a whole include:

Diverse Landscapes and Diverse Experiences

3.2.1



The Highland Boundary Fault running across the southern edge defines the dramatic transition from gentle lowland to rugged highland landscapes. It gives a landscape of striking contrasts from lowland enclosed rolling farmland interspersed with settlements, estate buildings and designed landscapes, to dramatic mountain summits and open uplands with wooded intervening glens providing a rich setting for lochs and rivers. This variation in character and accessibility across the area lends itself to various experiences from remoteness, tranquillity and exposure to the busyness of more settled locations with their more intensive activity.

A Rich Biodiversity

3.2.2

The unique variation in topography, geology and historic land management, along with the relatively tranquil character of some areas, supports a diverse and extensive range of habitats and species,



many of national and international importance. The uplands provide important alpine and heather moorland habitats. Lochs and rivers support rare species such as the powan and river lamprey, and provide important spawning grounds for trout and salmon. The islands of Loch Lomond are a capercaillie stronghold, and semi-natural woodlands and wetlands provide rich habitats for plant and animal life.

Geodiversity

3.2.3



The Highland Boundary Fault is one of the key aspects of the Park's unique and very visible geological character. This character and the geomorphological processes that have taken place over time have been fundamental in shaping the Park's outstanding landscape, scenery and habitats.

Mountains and Moorlands

3.2.4

The Park's dramatic mountain ranges and iconic summits are a dominant feature of the landscape, contributing greatly to sense of place and the identity of the area. These ranges support fragile and highly valued montane habitats containing many rare alpine plants and important moorlands. They are also valued for their open undeveloped character.



Lochs and Rivers

3.2.5



The diverse expanses of open water that combine with the variety of settings provided by mountains, woodlands, islands and farmland contribute greatly to the Park's rich and varied scenic quality, and provide highly important wildlife habitats. The larger lochs are a dramatic landscape presence and Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine provide a valued source of drinking water for nearby towns and cities. Along with the rivers, watercourses and associated riparian areas, they make a valued contribution to biodiversity and are host to important and unique fish populations and spawning grounds. The sea lochs in the west add a rich coastal environment.

Forests, Woodlands and Trees

3.2.6

Woodlands and forests are an integral part of the landscape, particularly on the glen slopes, and make an important contribution to the Park's scenic quality and biodiversity importance. There are significant semi-natural woodlands with internationally important oakwoods, remnants of the Caledonian pinewood and woodland habitats supporting a rich variety of wildlife and plant species of international importance. The more recently established, predominantly coniferous, productive forests provide a considerable recreation resource. Woodlands contribute strongly to the Park's cultural heritage, reflecting past management and industrial processes and forming important features of designed and parkland landscapes with many outstanding examples of exotic and native tree specimens.



Cultural Landscapes

3.2.7



Human activity through the ages has heavily influenced the Park's landscapes and the resulting visual mix of natural elements and cultural features is a key scenic quality. The general pattern of open uplands, forested and wooded slopes and farmed glens, and historic


gardens and designed landscapes, estate parkland and buildings, improvement period farmland and settlement patterns reflects this strong cultural dimension. Many features of previous land-use patterns remain visible in the landscape, including shielings and abandoned townships, and a wide range of archaeological sites survives from the prehistoric and medieval periods.

Historic Associations

- 3.2.8 The Park's landscapes and their historical and mythical associations served as great inspiration to writers, poets and artists. This concentration of creative response and publication of material inspired by the area has been a key contributor to the Park's distinctive identity, popularity and richness of culture.



Communication, Travel and Accessibility

- 3.2.9  Travel has been a strong feature of the area through history and the Park's glens, lochs and passes have been important journey routes between the Highlands and the Lowlands and the west and east coasts. The Park has been an important 'escape' for people living in Glasgow and the populated, industrialised Lowlands, particularly since Victorian times, and this continues to contribute to its importance as a Scottish tourism destination. The legacy of travel is present in the form of old drovers' routes and military roads, railway lines and viaducts, steamship piers and historic bridges and toll houses. The Park today provides a focus for many long distance routes, including national transport routes, and cycling and walking paths.

Communities, Local Culture and Traditions

- 3.2.10 A wide range of cultural events, such as highland games and agricultural shows, are rooted in historical tradition and important traditional skills have links to the management of the land and the processing of its products. Some areas have strong historical links to myths and legends, and traditions associated with the Gaelic and Scots languages. These are most strongly evident in place names, stories and cultural events, contributing towards a vibrancy continued by the cultural vitality of communities today.



3.3 Argyll Forest

Special qualities include:

3.3.1



- **Loch Eck** is a landmark feature of the southern Cowal area of the Park that is valued for its high **biodiversity** and **landscape** importance. It has a unique combination of freshwater fish species and is a largely unspoilt enclosed wooded loch landscape, with a sense of **remoteness** and isolation that contributes to its **tranquil** qualities.

- The **Cobbler** and the **Arrochar Alps** are distinctive, landmark summits that combine with the **Rest and Be Thankful** pass to signify a dramatic **landscape** transition between the Park landscapes and Argyll area beyond. The area is characterised by partly forested large-scale glens that are accessible and popular with visitors, but still provide qualities of **remoteness, wildness and exposure**.



- **Forests and woodlands** are a strong unifying characteristic with a presence both as **landscape** features of the glen slopes and in the **cultural heritage** that contributes to a strong local distinctiveness. Significant pockets of ancient woodland are of high **biodiversity**



importance as habitats for mosses and ferns. The mix of conifer plantations and native woodlands are important habitats for red squirrel and black grouse. There is also a legacy of collecting exotic tree species in the policies and gardens of large houses, and more



significantly in **Benmore Botanic Garden** and **Kilmun Arboretum**. These represent a particularly rich resource contributing to local **landscape character** and symbolising a strong **tradition** of management and enjoyment of trees and woodland in the area.



- The **open upland hills and ridges** rising above the forested glens are distinctively rugged in character. They have **landscape, cultural heritage and biodiversity** value for their relatively undeveloped and tranquil character, as well as their moorland habitats and the visible remains of abandoned shielings.

- Small areas of **farmland** locally occupying the glen floors and lower reaches of watercourses provide a valuable contrast to the largely afforested glens. The 19th century rectilinear field boundaries and vernacular farm steadings make important contributions to open local **landscape** character and are of some **cultural heritage** value.



- The **sea lochs** provide a valued coastal **landscape** not found elsewhere in the Park. They were the main historic means of travel and have been a strong influence on patterns of settlement, communication and **built heritage**. The coastal communities, some of which are of medieval origin, such as Kilmun, display this relationship.



- Coastal towns and villages characterised by a rich 19th **century built heritage of** Victorian villas, piers and ferry houses reflect the **cultural tradition** of tourism brought about by steamer travel on the Clyde and contribute to a strong local distinctiveness.

- Narrow winding **traditional roads** through the Park provide an important experience of the **landscape**, and contribute to a valued sense of remoteness and travelling off the beaten track.

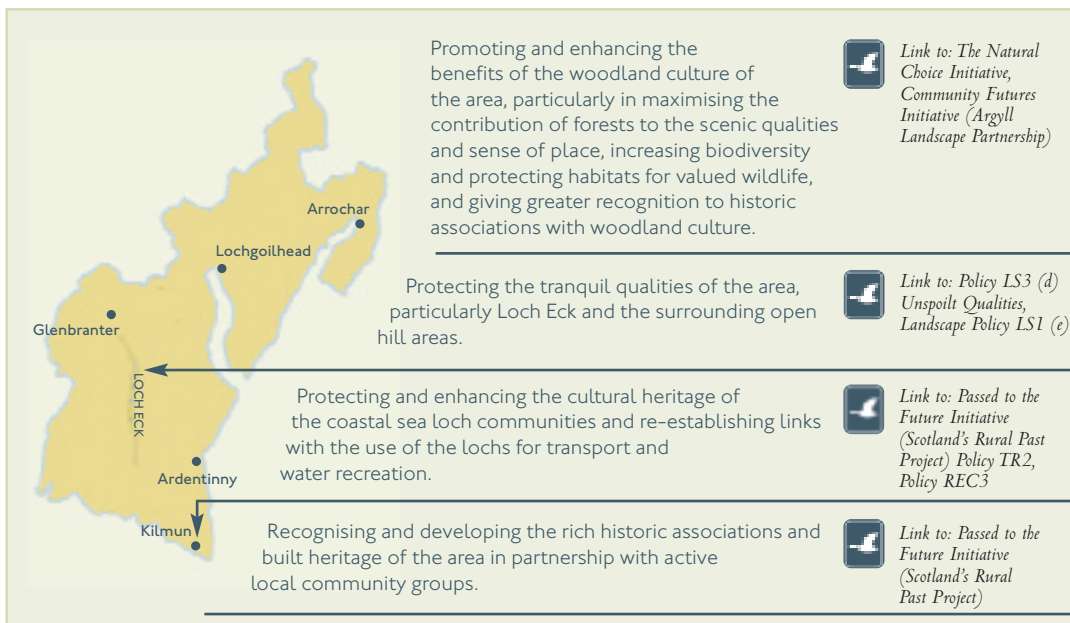


- Historic military **cultural associations** of the area, represented by **fortified features** of high importance including Carrick Castle, Dundaich Fort and remnants of Major Caulfield's **military roads**. The area is associated with the boundary between the ancient kingdoms of Strathclyde and Dalriada. It also has more recent military associations: Commandos trained on Loch Long during World War II, the remains of a torpedo range survive near Arrochar and military use of the sea lochs continues to the present day.

- The area has associations with the Campbells and the Macfarlanes: Carrick Castle was a Campbell stronghold and the Campbell mausoleum is at Kilmun.



Figure 3 Caring for the Special Qualities of Argyll Forest



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3.4 Breadalbane

3.4.1 Special qualities include:



- The **open upland hills** are important for **landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage**, and are valued for their generally **remote, undeveloped** and unspoilt character that provides a sense of **wildness**. They also provide habitats for a range of internationally important upland and montane plant communities, and important invertebrate and mammal species such as upland birds, red deer and mountain hare. Undisturbed and visible historical remains such as shielings provide a rich cultural dimension to the landscape and contribute to the sense of remoteness.

- The vertical scale and drama of the **landmark mountain summits** are key **landscape** features. They contribute to a strong visual identity for the intervening glens and wider area and punctuate distinctive individual mountain ranges. These include **Ben Lui, Ben More** and the **Crianlarich Hills**, as well as **Ben Vorlich, Stuc a Chroin**, and **Ben Ledi**, which also make a significant visual contribution as markers of the **Highland Boundary Fault** visible from considerable distances across central Scotland in striking contrast with the Carse of Stirling. The 'walks in' typical to mountain ascents provide **remote** and **wildness** qualities, particularly in areas such as Cononish, where apparently natural pine forests contribute greatly to the ambience. The narrow, visually **enclosed, glen landscapes** have flat glen floors, some with lochs and glen sides. They are less afforested and distinctive for their **open landscape character**. The glens are generally accessible and are a focus for roads and settlement. Smaller narrower **upland glens** cut through the hills with striking natural **landscape** features such as fast flowing burns and waterfalls.



- The Falls of Falloch and the Falls of Dochart are prominent **local landmarks**, with additional **natural and cultural heritage** significance. The high **geological** value of the **Falls of Dochart**, for example, is due to the features created by the action of the water on the rocks. Their closeness to the old bridge and graveyard in the centre of Killin makes the Falls one of the most atmospheric locations in the Park with a distinctive **sense of place**. The Park's two main areas of remnant **Caledonian pinewood** at Cononish and in Glen Falloch are highly important for their **biodiversity** value and make a distinctive contribution to landscape character and scenic quality.



- The flat **strath floors** are important **open landscapes**, valued for their **natural** and **cultural heritage** and for the important contribution that the **traditional hay meadows and fields** make to the local and wider **scenic quality and diversity**. They have particular **biodiversity** value for their **wetland habitats** such as the River Dochart Meadows and Loch Tay Marshes and as tributaries to **internationally important river systems** such as the Tay and the Teith, which are important for lamprey and salmon. The pattern of rectilinear fields and small areas of policies and parkland dating from the agricultural improvements of the 18th and 19th centuries reflect historic land use. The glen floors have



been a historical focus for **important communication routes** through the area. Important features such as **Major Caulfield's military road** and the remaining buildings and structures associated with former railways such as the **viaducts** through Glen Ogle and along Loch Earn are valued both as **landmark** features and for **engineering interest**. The **West Highland Railway Line** and the **West Highland Way** long distance footpath are both highly valued **travel experiences** to which the Park area makes a rich contribution.

- The water environments of **Loch Earn, Loch Voil and Loch Lubnaig** are valued as individual and **distinctive loch landscapes**. Loch Lubnaig is a relatively quiet loch surrounded by mostly undeveloped shores and heavily planted glen sides from which craggy hills emerge, combining to form a **rich and rugged landscape**. Loch Voil and Balquhiddier Glen are valued for the intimate visual interplay between the Braes and the Loch, which combined with an absence of significant boat use or through traffic on the narrow winding roads contribute to a sense of remote time and place with a particularly **tranquil character**. In contrast, Loch Earn is a grander broad expanse flanked by steep hills to the north and south, still of a predominantly traditional rural character but with some recent developments and a higher level of boat use.



- **Garabal Hill** is of world **geological** importance for its igneous rock exposures and **Crom Allt** for mineral exposures on the Tyndrum Main Fault.



- The **diverse patterns of settlement** comprises **nucleated villages** focusing on junctions of communication links and glens such as Crianlarich, in contrast with the more **scattered communities** such as Balquhiddier and **deserted townships** such as Glen Ogle, which reflect older land use and crofting patterns. The settlement pattern and the setting of the villages in the landscape are **important landscape characteristics**. A number of settlements such as Killin and St Fillans have **high quality built environments**, with many Victorian period buildings utilising local materials and adopting the distinctive architectural styles of the period. Older forms of settlement and **relict land-use patterns** are still evident, with many intact shielings. **Dundurn at St Fillans** is highly valued both as a rare example of a Pictish fort and as a distinctive landscape feature contributing to local identity.

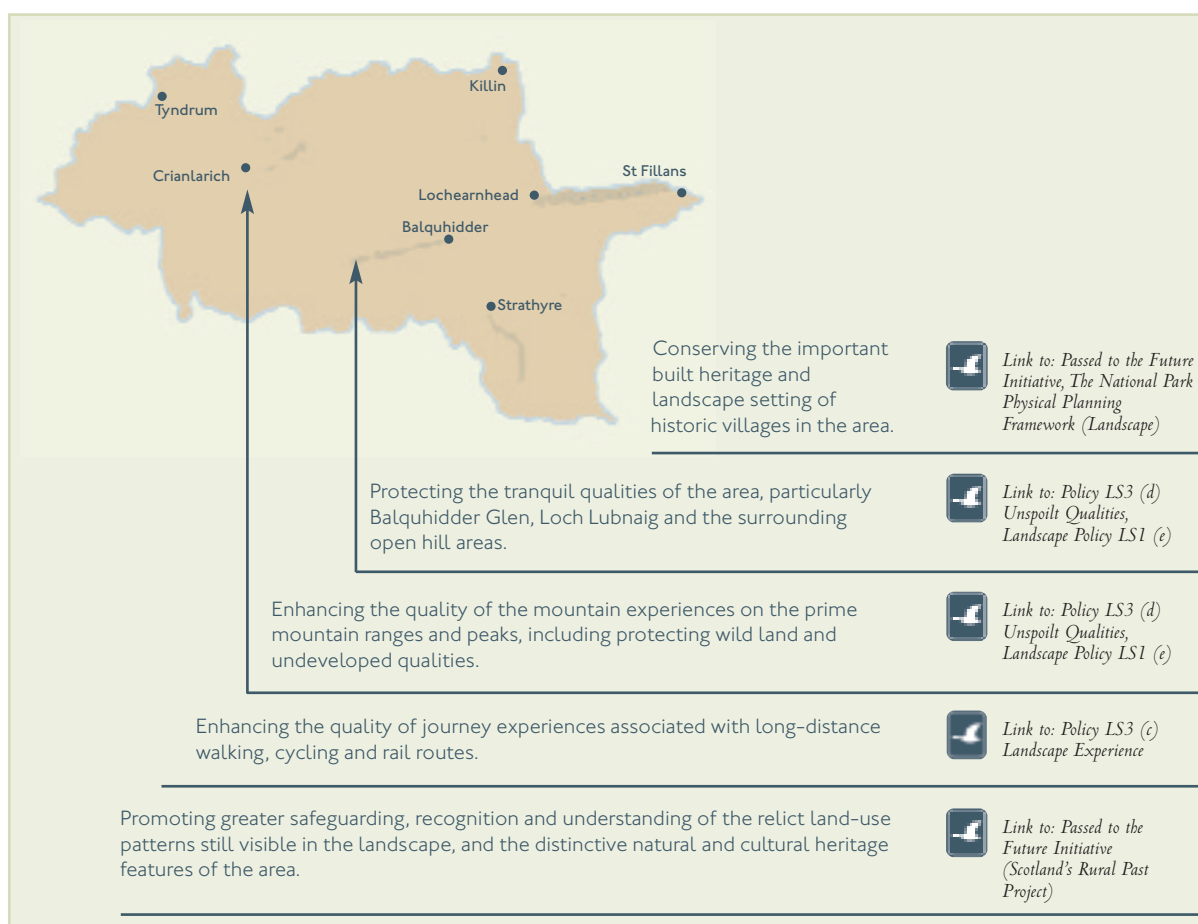


- The area has **rich and diverse historical associations**. Probably one of the best known historical characters is Rob Roy MacGregor, who spent his latter years at Inverlochlarig and whose grave is in Balquhiddier Churchyard. Breadalbane is associated with various clans including the Maclarens, McNabs and Campbells. Their clan burial grounds and castles are important heritage features.

- The area has a long tradition of worship and has associations with early Christian saints including St Fillan who preached and taught at Strathfillan and Killin, St Angus at Balquhiddier and St Blane at Lochearnhead. St Fillans takes its name from the St Fillan who preached from Dundurn. There are several important medieval religious sites in the area of which the graveyard and ruins of St Fillan's Priory at Kirkton are the most significant.



Figure 4 Caring for the Special Qualities of Breadalbane



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3.5 The Trossachs

3.5.1 Special qualities include:

- The Trossachs, distinguished by its overall identity and often described as **the Highlands in miniature**, is a pleasing blend of lochs, woodlands and craggy slopes and summits. The area is a landscape of great **natural and cultural diversity**, experienced as a sequence of **varied locally distinct places**.

- The area's southern boundary, the **Highland Boundary Fault**, forms **distinctive parallel ridges** with a strong north east to south west orientation. The strength of the landforms, revealed by relatively open land cover allows the geomorphology to be a dominant landscape characteristic of this zone. The **Drum of Clashmore, the Menteith Hills**, and more significantly **Ben Ledi**, are distinctive silhouette **landmarks** on the **transition from lowland to highland landscapes**, which is a defining feature of the Park. **Lime Craig Quarry** has fossils that help to date the rock strata of the Fault and show its links with Scandinavia and North America. The **outcrops of limestone** occurring in the area also have **biodiversity** importance, supporting unusual plant communities. The hills have important and extensive evidence of prehistoric use **including cup and ring marked rocks and burial cairns**.



- Travelling along the winding **Duke's Pass** road is a **celebrated journey experience**. It provides some of the finest views to the **landmark summit of Ben A'an**, internal views to the Forest Park, and a fine overview of the neighbouring Carse of Stirling and the straths of the Blane and Endrick beyond, with the distinctive backdrop of the

Campsie Fell and Kilpatrick Hills. The contrasting qualities of the **lowland landscape** to the south contribute to the drama of the **Highland Boundary Fault** and the Highlands, seen against and over the ridges. These include **rolling farmland** around the Lake of Menteith, Gartmore and to the south of Callander and **areas of moss**, valued as remnants of a once much more **extensive bog landscape** stretching over the Carse of Stirling.



The lake is of **biodiversity** importance, supporting wetland habitats and rare plant species. The **lake islands** have a **significant historical role**, containing the ruins of the medieval priory of **Inchmahome** and the remains of the Earl of Menteith's castle on Inch Talla. Robert the Bruce may have visited Inchmahome in the early-14th century and Mary Queen of Scots used it as a



refuge in the mid-16th century. Visible remains of a Roman fort and temporary camp survive on the lake shore. The distant prospect towards **Ben Lomond's** eastern flanks dominates much of the **Strathard** and lowland landscape, contributing strongly to the area's identity and connection with the Loch Lomond area.

- The **diverse mixed forest landscapes** are a key **landscape** characteristic of the Trossachs. Woodlands complement the broken and rugged terrain and display a combination of ancient semi-natural riparian and traditionally managed woodland, policy plantations from the 19th century, and more recent commercial forests. The high proportion of broadleaf and larch in the overall mix is valued for the





great seasonal diversity, particularly contributing to **spectacular autumnal colours**. The forest character is interspersed by clearings, local areas of farmland, loch deltas and marshy fringes and parkland. The forests frame a number of excellent **viewpoints** to the immediate landscape and more distant mountain peaks to the north, notably the Crianlarich Hills. The extensive existing and regenerating **semi-natural woodlands** are of international importance and are particularly valued for **biodiversity**. There is a **long tradition of enjoyment of the forests** associated with the **Queen Elizabeth Forest Park** and the **David Marshall Lodge** at Aberfoyle, where observers can view **protected birds of prey**, including peregrine falcon and osprey that nest in the area. Black grouse are also present in the area.

- This area's rich **industrial heritage** is associated with the Victorian adaptation of its numerous lochs, most notably **Loch Katrine**, to form reservoirs and the construction of an extensive network of **water supply catchments and storage infrastructure** to provide Glasgow with a clean water supply. This engineering feat resulted in an impressive **built heritage**, with visible dressed stone structures and buildings, and lines of towers and shafts on the waterwork conduit, along with less visible pipelines and aqueducts.



These are valued for their contribution to the **landscape** character and a very particular local distinctiveness, as well as their significant **industrial archaeological value**. The presence of the **Sir Walter Scott** steamship enriches the experience of Loch Katrine and its historic links, further contributing to sense of place. A former **slate quarry** above Aberfoyle is an additional feature of **industrial heritage** importance.

- The improvement period **lowland farmed landscape** to the south of the Menteith Hills is valued both for the significant **landscape** character and scenic contribution of the intact rectilinear **field patterns** and for the **planned settlements** built by improving landlords for their estate workers. **Gartmore** and **Callander** typify this and are valued for their high quality **built environments**. The landlords further improved their estates by constructing **large houses in wooded policies and designed landscapes** and there is a valued legacy of this today throughout the area, notably at **Gartmore House** and **Leny Estate**.



- The settlements of **Callander** and **Aberfoyle**, located at the foot of the dramatic boundary fault, are valued as providing a **strong human context framed in a dramatic 'natural' landscape**. Both settlements have a common linear form associated with the rivers running through them, but have clear sense of individual distinctiveness in their built form. Both communities are important gateways into the Park with a strong sense of **busyness and vibrancy** associated with visitor activity and the wide range of events and activities associated with their strong **cultural identities**. The **River Teith**, which flows through Callander, is of international importance as a **freshwater habitat** for salmon and lamprey.

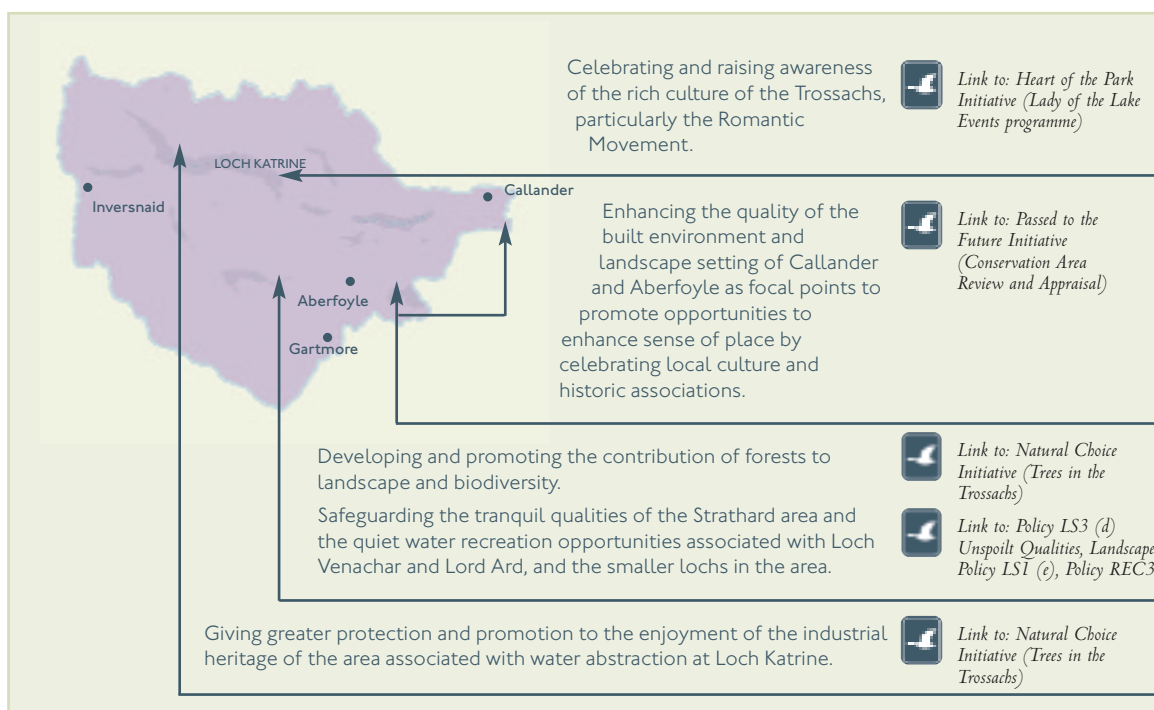


- There are just two small, dispersed rural hamlets, **Brig O' Turk** and **Kinlochard**, in the sparsely-settled interior of the Trossachs. This contributes to valued **landscape qualities** of a sense of **remoteness and tranquillity**, complemented by the winding narrow road network and the presence of **Loch Venachar, Loch Ard** and the smaller lochs in the area. Other forms of settlement that contribute to **local distinctiveness** are **buildings associated with estates**, and **industrial heritage** such as at **Stronachlachar** and **Invertrossachs**.



- The area is of high importance for its **rich cultural and historic associations**. The Trossachs has been a tourist destination since Victorian times. The publication of Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810 and *Rob Roy* in 1817 first established the wider popularity of the area. Well-known poets, writers and artists have visited the area and scenes such as Loch Katrine, the Falls of Finglas and Inversnaid Falls have formed a backdrop for painting and literature. Royalty visited the area on a number of occasions, including Queen Victoria who formally opened the Loch Katrine waterworks in 1859. Rob Roy's birthplace is on the banks of Loch Katrine and he is associated with places and historic events throughout the area, which is very rich in local folklore linked to the surrounding landscape.

Figure 5 Caring for the Special Qualities of The Trossachs



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3.6 Loch Lomond

3.6.1 Special qualities include:



- The looming presence of **Ben Lomond** dominates the **iconic landscape** of **Loch Lomond**, with its markedly contrasting lowland and highland landscapes. **Loch Lomond** straddles the lowland highland transition defined by the **Highland Boundary Fault**. The **parallel ridges** at **Conic Hill** and the **islands of the loch** define the fault's **high geological importance** and contribution to the **scenic qualities**. The **raised shorelines** along the south side of the loch are a product of late glacial changes in sea level and sediments deposited by the glacier.

- The **upland hills** surrounding Loch Lomond provide a **dramatic backdrop** to the loch. The upland hills are largely undeveloped and have an **open and wild sense of place**.



- **Loch Lomond**, the largest area of freshwater in mainland Britain, is widely valued for its **scenery** and as an exceptional **biodiversity** resource. The loch supports a **varied fish community**, including **powan**. The loch's water catchment includes the **Endrick Water**, which is of **international importance** for its **salmon** and **lamprey**.

The loch environment also provides a sanctuary for **birdlife** such as **capercaillie**, **Greenland white-fronted goose** and **osprey**, and a wide range of waterfowl and waders. The loch provides an enormously **rich variety of water environments** and experiences in association with the character of diverse adjacent shore areas. These include the **open expanses** of the south loch basin, the **tranquil shallows** of the Endrick Mouth, the dramatic **narrow highland loch character** to the north, the **intimate quiet narrows** between the islands, the diverse **wooded bays and inlets** and the more formal, busy character surrounding settlements, piers and other shore based facilities. The **cultural legacy** of the loch itself includes a collection of remnant Iron Age **crannogs** which may have been used for settlement into the early medieval period.



- The **south Loch Lomond** landscape is valued for its predominantly farmed landscape, dominated by rectilinear field systems dating from the agricultural improvements of the 18th and 19th centuries that provide an extensive and **rich mosaic of field boundaries, trees and shelterbelts**. This creates a distinctive and intimate **landscape** not found in other parts of the Park. This **network** of features is also valued for its contribution to **biodiversity**, providing important habitats for farmland and game birds, overwintering geese and woodland flora including lichens. Protected species include bats, badger, otter, barn owl and bluebell.

- The **historic designed landscapes and country houses** fringing the south end of the loch are a legacy of the main historic Colquhoun, Buchanan and Montrose estates, although wealthy Victorian industrialists built some of the houses that remain today. These make an important contribution to the **visual qualities, architectural heritage** and **landscape character** of the area, particularly the patterns of landmark trees,



parkland, historic houses, planned estate settlements (**Luss** is an outstanding example), lesser houses and buildings and formal estate boundaries. There are the ruins of a number of **medieval castles** in the lowland area, demonstrating the importance of south Loch Lomond to the upper echelons of society, such as the Earldom of Lennox, over a long period. The **built vernacular** of stonebuilt cottages, farmsteads and villages contributes to the **settled character** of this area. This lowland managed landscape forms an important **visual foreground** emphasising the drama of the Highland Boundary Fault and contrasting with the wilder mountains beyond to the north.



- **South Loch Lomond** is an expansive stretch of water that, where access allows, affords **long-range vistas and panoramic views** up and across the loch. The area also has a number of important **wetland habitats**, including the **Endrick Marshes**, which support a wide range of **important and protected wetland habitats and species**,

including the **Scottish Dock**. Its multiple national and international designations reflect its high importance. There are small areas of **lowland raised bog** to the south and east of the area. These are of high importance given the scarcity of this habitat at a European level.

- The **Luss Hills** are valued for their distinctive **landscape**, smooth landform with sweeping slopes and ridges and undeveloped qualities, which are highly visible from the southern areas of the Park. **Wooded glens** extend into the Luss Hills from the woodland areas fringing the west shore of Loch Lomond. **Glen Luss** and part of **Glen Douglas** contain **oakwoods** of international **biodiversity** importance. The glen floors are valued as relatively unsettled areas offering **landscape qualities of remoteness and tranquillity**, in contrast to the busier nearby loch shores. Remnants of traditional land management and the most substantial, **unspoilt archaeological evidence** of past settlement and land use are present on the west side of Loch Lomond. There is a **brown and sea trout spawning ground** in Glen Fruin. Luss Hills have **historic associations with the Colquhouns**. The clan history links to battles, such as the one between the MacGregors and Colquhouns in Glen Fruin in 1603.



- The **Loch Lomond islands** are valued as **unique landscape features** punctuating the loch. In some cases these are expressions of the Highland Boundary Fault across the Loch. Generally they are characterised by densely wooded hills and **secluded and tranquil character**. They have the densest collection of **archaeological**

remains in the Park resulting from early forms of settlement and fortification, occupation as clan strongholds and associations with early Christian saints and religious uses. The loch islands are also highly significant in **biodiversity** terms, supporting **oak, yew and alder woodlands** with rich lower plant assemblages providing important **habitats for capercaillie, otter, pine marten and endangered beetle species**.



- The **North Loch Lomond** area is a much smaller-scale landscape, where the **enclosing and rugged slopes** become a more dominant landscape characteristic. The loch north of Inveruglas has a **fjord-like character** with narrow and uneven sides and dramatic craggy slopes. The loch shore woodlands and meadows, rugged surrounding uplands and the loch itself create a **landscape of high scenic value**. The **open upland glens** and hills provide a mosaic of apparently **natural upland habitat types** such as moorland, acid grassland and

open native woodlands. Upland birds such as **skylark, red grouse, breeding waders, buzzards** and mammals such as **red deer, mountain hare** and possibly **water vole** all occur.

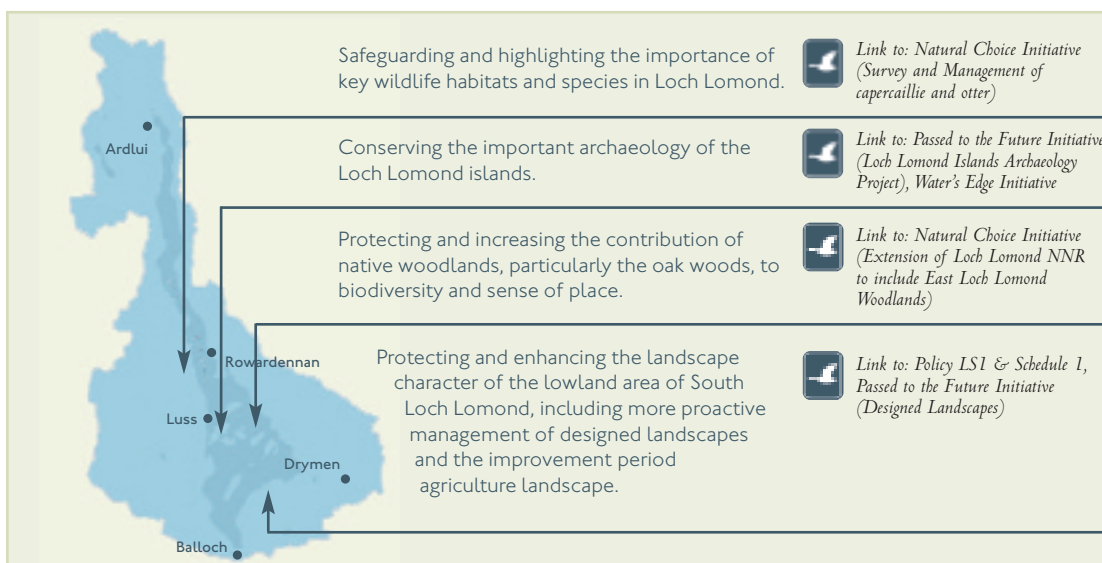


- **Native or ancient woodland** that is highly important in **biodiversity** terms fringes much of the shore of the Loch. These and, in particular, **oak woodlands** contribute significantly to **landscape character** and are **internationally important habitats**, having diverse lower plant assemblage and hosting **red deer, pine marten, black grouse, otter, bats** and **capercaillie**. This woodland is of extremely high **biodiversity** importance, forming part of one of the most extensive tracts of semi-natural broadleaved woodland in the UK. It is also of **cultural heritage importance**, reflecting past woodland management traditions and associated industries such as iron working, charcoal burning and tanning.

- The area is rich with **historic and literary associations** and celebrated in literature, poetry and song, notably in writings by **Wordsworth** and **Sir Walter Scott**. Famous travellers who recorded visits to the area include Dr Samuel Johnson and James Boswell on their tour of the Hebrides in 1773 and Dorothy Wordsworth who recorded her grand tour of the Highlands in 1803. The area was strongly associated with **Victorian tourism**, with visitors travelling to Loch Lomond by train from Glasgow to **Balloch** and taking pleasure trips on Loch Lomond on steamer ships, leaving a **legacy of piers around the loch**.

- The loch and shores have **historic associations with military activity**. The remains of a **Roman fort** outside Drymen only now exist as cropmarks. Vikings raided the shores of Loch Lomond and its islands in the 13th century. There are many tales of clan battles and the **ruined castles** of clan chiefs survive on the islands, built to defend more easily than sites on land. Traces remain of the **military roads** and the remains of the early **18th century military garrison** at Inversnaid, built at the request of the Duke of Montrose to defend his territories against Rob Roy and to control the Highlands in general.

Figure 6 Caring for the Special Qualities of Loch Lomond



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ANNEX 3

**SPECIAL QUALITIES OF BREADALBAIN: BRAES OF
BALQUHIDDER EXTRACTED FROM THE DOCUMENT
SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL PARK PLAN 2007-2012 TITLED AN
EVALUATION OF THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF LOCH LOMOND
AND THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK**



BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

SPECIAL QUALITIES OF BREADALBANE

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

Key Features

Loch Voil and Loch Doine
Braes of Balquhidder
Burial place of Rob Roy MacGregor

Summary of Evaluation

Sense of Place

The visual/sense of place qualities of this area are considered to be of high importance, particularly the inland lochs such as Loch Voil and Loch Doine and the surrounding open upland glens and hills. The upland glens are remote and undeveloped and include some dramatic hanging valleys and waterfalls, they often form part of the 'walk in' to the uplands and typically have framed views up to the upland slopes and summits or down to glimpses of glen floor, strath farmland and lochs beyond. The upland hills are visually dominant as distinctive landmarks creating a strong sense of local identity and include the twin peaks of Ben More and Stob Binnein. Settlement is located on the loch shore and introduces a human dimension to the Balquhidder Glen and the loch landscapes.

Cultural heritage

The landuse is predominantly moorland and rough grazing which is characteristic of much of the National Park. There are surviving areas of medieval/post medieval pre-improvement agriculture including shielings, deserted farmsteads and cultivation remains across this area, most visible in the open glens and hills.

The area contains some historic features of high value including burial grounds dating to the 17th/18th century. There are prehistoric cup and ring marked stones which provide tantalising glimpses of the presence of people in the glen in the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age around four to five thousand years ago.

The area is relatively unsettled and the main village is the dispersed settlement of Balquhidder. The village has a number of small crofts with fields running down to the loch side. The Old Parish Church and Graveyard are of particular historic interest.

Biodiversity

The biodiversity of the area is of high importance. Loch Voil and Loch Doine are part of the River Teith Special Area of Conservation for salmon and lampreys. In addition to the lochs the upland areas such as the Braes of Balquhidder provide important upland habitats and part of the uplands lies within the Stob Binnein/Ben More SSSI, with many rare upland plant communities. Red deer and mountain hare and upland birds such as skylark, breeding waders, ptarmigan, red grouse, buzzard and golden eagle may be seen in these areas. Although the majority of the area is open uplands and glens some of the glens are wooded or forested, particularly those to south of Loch Voil and Loch Doine. These areas support woodland flora and fauna.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

Associations

The associations of this area are internationally renowned and of high importance. Rob Roy MacGregor spent his final years at Inverlochlarig and is buried at Balquhidder graveyard. Balquhidder has also been home to the MacLaren Clan since the 12th century. Creag an Tuirc, the Boars Rock, was the ancient rallying place of the clan. The song 'Wild Mountain Thyme' originally written by Robert Tannahill laments the clearance of Balquhidder in the 18th century.

At around the 8th century St Angus brought Christianity to Balquhidder and St Angus' Stone is in the Church.

Qualities valued by local communities

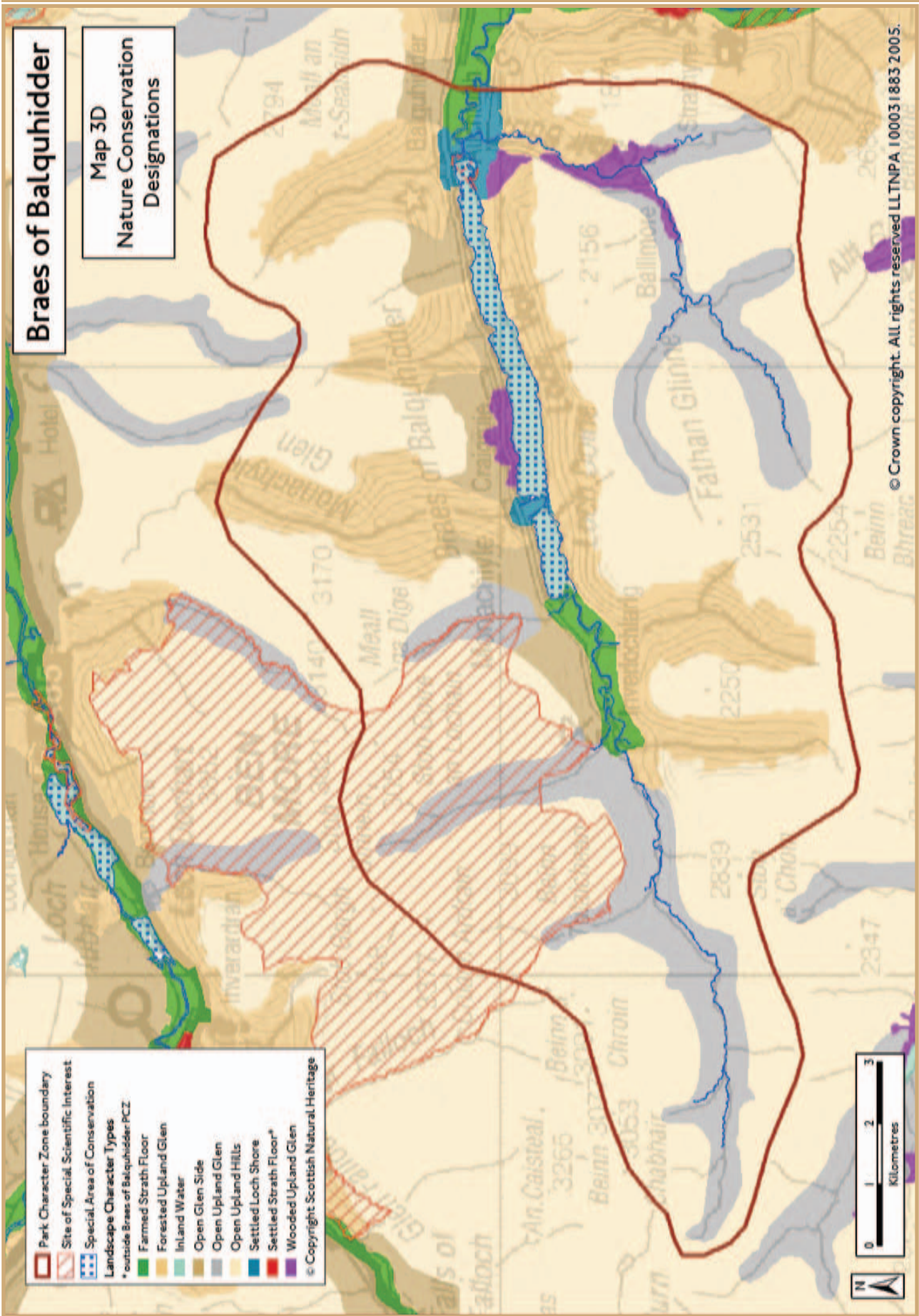
(Source: Community Futures and Park Plan Workshop on Special Qualities, April 2004)

In addition see comments under Aberfoyle and Callander which were collected as part of the Trossachs network

- Braes of Balquhidder
- Associations with Rob Roy
- Spiritual elements of the area and Celtic history

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

MAP 3D - NATURE CONSERVATION DESIGNATIONS



BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN UPLAND HILLS

The moorland hills to the north and south of Braes of Balquhidder and the high upper slopes and summits of the upper glen. Relatively small parts of the open upland areas have been drained in the 20th century and are used for rough grazing.

HLA: Prehistoric to present moorland and rough grazing

HLA Relict landuse: Areas of medieval/post medieval settlement and agriculture.



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Sense of place	The open upland hills dominate the upper reaches and sides of the glens forming high rocky summits and ridgelines, with a feeling of wildness, remoteness and exposure. The upland slopes are distinct from the glen sides, which tend to form a discrete mid slope.	Whilst being physically remote and difficult to access, the open upland hills are visually dominant and significant to communities and visitors to the Park, as distinctive landmarks that create a strong sense of identity. The views up Balquhidder Glen are exceptional and the open uplands are a significant component of the composition. The twin peaks of Ben More and Stob Binnein are well renowned Munros and particularly visually distinctive as seen from Balquhidder Glen and the Kingshouse area. The upland slopes and summits offer panoramic views over the surrounding area, accessible only by foot. These areas are remote and generally unspoilt although there is some evidence of masts, pylons and unsympathetic tracks. Open upland hills are a characteristic of all the highland area of the Park, but are distinctive in the Breadalbane area as being generally higher and more unbroken, with distinct exposed upper slopes which sit beyond the enclosed glens. Qualities of wildness and tranquillity can be more readily appreciated in Breadalbane compared to other parts of the park. The overall experience of travelling up Balquhidder, one of the Park's least developed glens, and then walking through the upland glens to the upper summits offers particular dramatic sequence and sense of remoteness.	There are certain pressures on all upland hill areas including pylon, mast and wind farm development. Recreational pressures are also evident on popular upland tracks, which can easily become severely eroded. The high visibility of the uplands and the general absence of structures or developments mean that any intrusion on the scene is likely to be highly visible and detrimental to the unspoilt qualities that underpin the areas opportunity for wildness and tranquillity. Inappropriate development in neighbouring glen or upland landscapes can also adversely impact on the experience of these uplands.
Cultural Heritage	A scatter of shielings across this Zone is evidence of medieval settlement and agriculture.	Important to local people, visitors and specialists Upper Glen Buckie has a group of at least 22 shielings which is an unusually large concentration for the open upland areas of this Character Zone. Both circular and square shielings are present confirming different phases of construction in the area.	Need to maintain as open areas especially in Glen Buckie. Appropriate grazing regimes are needed to ensure sites remain open and are not subsumed by widespread regeneration of trees, especially birch and other scrub. The spread of bracken is also an issue. It obscures remains much of the year and damages buried archaeology. There is a lack of base line survey data to enable effective monitoring of the effect of stock numbers.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN UPLAND HILLS (CONT)

BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Biodiversity	Parts of the open upland hills to the north of the Braes of Balquhidder fall within the Stob Binnein Ben More SSSI, with many rare upland plant communities. A mosaic of relatively natural upland habitat types are conspicuous, e.g. moorland, blanket bog. Upland birds, e.g. ptarmigan, red grouse, breeding waders, skylark, buzzard, golden eagle and mammals red deer, mountain hare are all present and often visible.	Important to local people, visitors and specialists. The upland wildlife and habitats are of very high biodiversity importance.	Overgrazing by sheep and deer may currently reduce the habitat quality in places.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- The open upland areas need to be protected from development to maintain their open and wild character.
- Neighbouring uplands and glen landscapes should also be protected from inappropriate developments that would adversely impact on the peace and quiet and the view.
- Recreation and access pressures require to be managed to minimise damage.
- Interpretation and improved access to the sheiling sites could be promoted.
- Monitor the effect of changes in stock numbers and bracken spread on archaeological remains.
- Overgrazing by sheep and deer could be reduced through changes to management. Restructuring of upper woodland edges may enhance the transition into this character type from the forested glens type.
- The biodiversity benefit could be enhanced. Ecologically more sympathetic management would allow plant communities such as tall herbs, heath, treeline and montane scrub to recover.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN UPLAND GLEN

The glens dissecting the open upland moorland hills, including and extending from upper part of Balquhiddel Glen and Glen Buckie.

HLA: Prehistoric to present moorland and rough grazing

HLA Relict Landuse: Areas of medieval/post medieval settlement and agriculture.



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
<p>Sense of place</p>	<p>These narrow glens with steep sides, rocky outcrops and screes, burns and waterfalls, are remote and undeveloped. They include some examples of dramatic hanging valleys and waterfalls. The higher upland glens provide open vistas and varied views as a result of their elevation and openness.</p>	<p>Upper Balquhiddel is an exceptionally important open upland landscape, unspoilt by development or afforestation, the interesting topography and remote 'interior' location of the glen, surrounded by some of the most dramatic mountain scenery, contribute to the areas wild land and tranquil qualities. Glen Buckie is particularly remote from views and access. The open upland glens have no vehicular access from the lower glen, which itself is only accessed by single tracks. They also tend to be hidden from direct views, although the void of the deep glens is apparent from the surrounding slopes and creates a great sense of depth in the landscape. These glens are of great significance to hill walkers, often forming part of the 'walk in'. The glens contribute to the overall open character of the open uplands and whilst well represented in the Breadalbane area, represent a pristine example in upper Balquhiddel. The glens typically have framed views up to the upland slopes and summits or down to glimpses of the glen floor, strath farmland and lochs beyond. The open upland glens are a valuable landscape and ecological resource.</p>	<p>Pressures which exist on this landscape include afforestation, new woodlands, hill tracks, and hydro-electric power developments.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Within the glens, especially in Glen Buckie, there are surviving areas of a medieval/post medieval pre-improvement agricultural system, including shielings, deserted farmsteads, townships and cultivation remains. Many of the shielings are cut off from their townships except in Glen Buckie/Glen Dubh. There is also some evidence of iron working. Documentary research in the Balquhiddel area has confirmed that a number of the townships and farms have their origins in the medieval period. There is also a probable prehistoric homestead at Inverlochlarig which gives hints at earlier settlement in these glens.</p>	<p>Of interest to local people and visitors, especially those undertaking genealogical research. Also of specialist archaeological interest mainly because of their potential to retain information on the sequent occupancy of these glens, especially through the medieval and post medieval periods, particularly in those areas which have managed to avoid large scale conifer plantation (Character Zone Forested Upland Glen). The archaeological remains also give added value to the hillwalking experience.</p> <p>Glen Buckie is particularly important as it includes one of only a handful of township sites of this type in the Park which have been subject to archaeological excavation. Evidence of iron working, whilst important, is better represented elsewhere in the Park (at Leny Woods).</p>	<p>Care should be taken to avoid severing links, both visual and physical between townships and farmsteads and their shieling grounds, some of which may lie in the Open Upland Hills Zone. This should be a particularly important consideration when designing schemes for woodland regeneration and from damage when implementing such schemes or felling existing plantations.</p>

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN UPLAND GLEN (CONT)

BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Biodiversity	A number of the open glens running north from Inverlochlarig form part of the Ben More and Stob Binnein SSSI. Others contain significant salmon spawning habitat in the River Teith SAC. Red deer and conspicuous birds including skylark, waders, short eared owl, golden eagle and hen harrier may be seen in these areas.	Important to local people, specialists and some categories of visitors such as hillwalkers & stalkers Of medium biodiversity importance.	A reduction in grazing could allow heather and other plants to recover allowing some bird species to increase e.g. grouse.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- The undeveloped and predominantly open character should be conserved.
- Retain the open qualities by supporting upland agriculture but seek enhancements to open habitats through management of grazing regimes.
- Focus new native woodland along burn sides or in relation to local enclosing slopes or features.
- Access to cultural heritage could be enhanced through improving the footpath link from Glen Finglas to Balquhidder and enhancing the walking experience. Interpretation (not signboards should be either guided walks or self-guide leaflets) and the possibility of stabilisation of the ruins here could be considered.
- In terms of landscape and biodiversity the integration of the open upland glens with other landscape character types could be improved, e.g. through softening adjacent woodland edges and limited expansion of tree cover in this LCT.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: FORESTED UPLAND GLEN

Forested upland glens occur along the southern side of the Braes of Balquhidder and into the side glens to the north.

HLA: 20th century coniferous woodland and forestry with smaller areas of prehistoric to present moorland and rough

HLA Relict landuse: Some remains of the medieval/post medieval period survive.



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Sense of place	Dense commercial plantations, often provide a uniform and enclosed appearance in the landscape.	The forested upland glens are not highly visible from the main glen as they are seen foreshortened. They tend to have a negative impact on landscape character and visual quality on both the visitor experience and for local communities. Commercial plantations in the upland glens (and glen slopes) comprise the prominent type of woodland in the Breadalbane area and within the individual glens, where there is a relatively poor representation of more natural woodlands. The forested tributary upland glens of lower and mid Balquhidder Glen, whilst not prominent in the wider landscape, impact negatively on the setting of the surrounding uplands, with forestry tending to extend too far up slope, with insensitive margins and artificial abrupt transitions to the open ground. The Braes of Balquhidder are particularly adversely affected. The forestry also detracts from hill walks. Other features, such as engineered forest roads, erosion scars and drainage ditches can also cause significant negative visual impact. There is a cumulative negative impact from these forested landscapes where they are seen with the forested glen sides and the amount of forestry obscures the distinctiveness and identity of glen structures.	The scale of this feature is likely to decrease over time as coniferous woodlands are restructured. At present there is an abundance of forested glen, with felling and replanting likely to be the key forces for change. New forest siting and design guidelines will help to improve the landscape character.
Cultural Heritage	These coniferous woodlands date mainly from the 20th century, representing the phase of forest expansion. Numerous archaeological sites including shielings and bloomeries (iron working) still survive totally subsumed within the plantations while yet others have been destroyed. Shielings are cut off from their townships on the lower ground. There are areas of medieval/post medieval relict settlement and agriculture around Muirlaggan.	Important to specialists and local people. Monachyle Glen is a particularly poignant example where although some important archaeology was left unforested it has been concealed/damaged by the encroachment of seeded trees and bracken.	The future felling of trees could result in further damage to archaeological features if this is not carried out sensitively.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: FORESTED UPLAND GLEN (CONT)

BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Biodiversity	There is a range of native birds including some visible or iconic species e.g. song birds, black grouse, raptors. Red squirrel, pine marten, roe and red deer, areas of ancient woodland, significant pockets of native broadleaf and pine trees amongst commercial conifers.	Important to local people, visitors and specialists The woodland biodiversity is of medium importance.	The benefit could be significantly expanded through an increase in extent and quality of the native woodland habitat. The red squirrel population in this area is potentially under threat from the expansion of grey squirrel populations up the Teith catchment.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Landscape and biodiversity benefits could be enhanced through restructuring with an emphasis on native woodlands and networks of open space.
- Opportunities should be taken to rescue the heritage sites from the trees when felling and restocking takes place.
- Access to a selection of historic sites should also be considered. A footpath already climbs through Monachyle Glen and the experience for walkers and other visitors could be enhanced.
- Scope exists to reverse the historical losses by felling significant tracts of the non-native conifers and replacing them with new native pinewood and broadleaved woodlands, especially on FCS land and though SFGS elsewhere. This process is already underway in places.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN GLEN SIDES

The open glen sides are a feature of the northern slopes of Braes of Balquhidder

HLA: Prehistoric to present moorland and rough grazing.

HLA Relict landuse: Areas of medieval/post medieval settlement and agriculture.



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
<p>Sense of place</p>	<p>Open glen sides contribute to the diversity of the landscape as they provide a visual contrast with wooded and forested glen sides.</p> <p>Interesting large scale open landscapes with varied features such as waterfalls and screes, which relate to the open upper slopes and summits and provide contrast and diversity with the forested glen sides south of mid and lower Balquhidder Glen and the forested upland glens of the Braes of Balquhidder. In places there appear to be relict landuse patterns, which create great visual diversity and associations with crofting patterns normally found much further north and west in Scotland.</p>	<p>The open glen sides are visible to local people and visitors, from the small rural roads up Balquhidder Glen and settlements. They make a positive contribution to landscape character and visual quality, differentiating the northern more open and southern forested glen slopes. The open glen sides reveal the diversity of a varied and contrasting landscape, which contributes to scenic quality at the local detail scale and in the wider glen context. The open glen sides have good quality views down onto the strath areas, but the glen sides are not greatly accessible due to their topography and lack of many paths. They overlook commercial plantations to the south, which do not make a positive contribution to the scenery and detract from the wider scene. There is an attractive route above Balquhidder that affords excellent views up the glen. The areas are generally unspoilt, although the adjacent forestry in the forested upland glens extends to the main glen floor, fragmenting the open glen sides. The glen sides do not always have a distinct character and may blend with the open upland hills. Elsewhere relict landuse patterns of strip fields are of great landscape character and visual interest, found only here, Loch Earn and in Glen Ogle in the Park and usually typical of areas much further north and west in Scotland.</p>	<p>These open areas are under pressure from the expansion of commercial forests, the invasion of bracken and rhododendrons and overgrazing.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>There is some visible evidence of the pre-improvement agricultural system surviving on the open south facing glen sides in the form of deserted farmsteads and townships. Some may date back to the medieval period although many in their present form probably belong to the 18th century. Many of the shielings are cut off from their townships on the lower ground by conifer plantations. There are several prehistoric cup marked stones recorded from the fields immediately to the north of the road on the eastern edge of this Character Zone. These provide tantalising glimpses of the presence of people in the glen in the late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age around 4-5 thousand years ago.</p>	<p>Most important to local people and visitors, especially those tracing their roots.</p>	<p>Increase in woodland cover could affect archaeological remains.</p>

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN GLEN SIDES

BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Biodiversity	South facing open glen sides tend to hold visible red deer populations in the winter months. They also contribute to the habitat used by the range of birds such as ptarmigan, red grouse, breeding waders, skylark, buzzard, golden eagle.	Of limited importance to biodiversity but a visible wildlife presence.	Comparatively high deer numbers for sporting objectives present a possible conflict with management objectives of neighbouring estates.
Associations	Rob Roy through the Braes of Balquhidder and St Angus in Kirkton Glen.		

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- The open qualities should be protected as they contribute to the diversity of the landscape.
- Restructuring and enhancement of woodland and forestry could enhance the landscape and visual qualities of the glen. A more proactive approach may be needed to the south of the glen.
- Any proposed increase in woodland cover would need to be carefully designed to conserve and enhance archaeological sites and their landscape settings.
- The interface between the open glen sides and adjacent woodlands could be improved by a softer transition rather than hard deer fenced edges.
- The open glen sides could also be managed to support heather moorland in place of the limited range of unpalatable grasses.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: WOODED UPLAND GLEN

Wooded upland glens occur in Glen Buckie and, to a lesser extent just to the north of Loch Voil. They are semi-natural woodland typically low density trees becoming more scattered and structured in form with increasing altitude.

HLA: A mix of 18th to 20th century, and later 20th century planting with patches of moorland and rough grazing



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Sense of place	Important component of the historic landscape (where they are unaffected by plantation afforestation). The woods contribute to the overall character of the lochs and glen slope landscapes.	These more natural woodlands are significant in a landscape dominated by commercial forestry plantations. They contribute a more natural character and an element of diversity. In Glen Buckie they are a dominant characteristic, but generally they are rather poorly represented.	Not known
Cultural Heritage	Although much of the woodlands date back to the 18th century, some areas, have been planted more recently. This is reflected in the presence of several deserted farmsteads, buildings dykes etc in these areas which in the mid 19th century had lain in open fields. There is also some evidence of ironworking. Most of the woodlands are listed in the ancient woodland inventory and the Scottish Native Woodland Inventory. There is an important area of relict medieval/post medieval settlement and agriculture in Glen Buckie.	Specialists, visitors and local people. Important for genealogical research.	Not known
Biodiversity	Mainly broadleaf semi-natural woodland supporting a woodland flora and fauna.	Important to local people, visitors and specialists The biodiversity of the full range of woodland types is of medium importance.	Not known

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity for further native broadleaf woodland and open space in the restructuring of plantations and along the lower slopes of Balquhidder glen, with limited extension up burn sides and locally in the open upland glen landscapes.
- There is some potential to 'rescue' archaeological sites from the forests where damage has been minimal and where the sites lend themselves to interpretation/access. Others may benefit from limited tree clearance and bracken spraying with open areas maintained in the woodlands. Care should be taken in any proposed woodland expansion schemes to ensure that features are protected.
- The biodiversity benefits could be expanded significantly, e.g. via restructuring of commercial plantations and expansion of broadleaf woodland habitats and through appropriate management.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: FARMED STRATH FLOOR

There are small areas of farm land along the glen floor.

HLA: Mix of 18th to 19th century fields and farming and prehistoric to present day moorland and rough grazing.



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
<p>Sense of place</p>	<p>Farmed strath floors are important areas of diversity in the Breadalbane landscape, providing strong visual contrast to the enclosing upland slopes. Traditionally managed farmed lands, these areas are notably managed with distinct field patterns providing a human dimension to the landscape. They are a component of the rural setting of the settled loch shore. Winter flooding is a feature of the meadows at the foot of Balquhidder Glen.</p>	<p>The strath floors have a distinctive character due to their flat topography and contrast with the surrounding uplands. This landscape type is generally important as an element of diversity in the Park's glen landscapes and specifically contributes to the scenic and distinctive qualities of the Breadalbane glens. In Balquhidder the extent of farmed strath floors is somewhat limited, with a greater proportion of the glen floor taken up with water bodies. However, whilst still occupying a small proportion of the landscape, the straths are visually highly significant, and compositionally important within views and in terms of allowing views across and through the glens. The areas have good quality views of the surrounding hills and upland areas and they are more accessible from the small rural roads that access Balquhidder Glen than elsewhere in Breadalbane. The scenic contribution of river and meadow landscapes can be exceptional, with traditional hay meadow management adding to the summer scene and atmosphere and winter flooding to the foot of the glen. Significantly this landscape type, as where it occurs elsewhere in the Park, helps to establish a farmed countryside setting to the rural villages of a generally unspoilt and traditional quality. Balquhidder Glen probably represents one of the Park's least spoilt landscapes retaining a sense of tranquillity and remoteness of time and place that underpins the glen's spiritual quality and reputation as a Celtic 'thin place'.</p>	<p>The farmed strath floor areas may come under pressure for housing and tourist developments in the future. Changes or decline in agricultural practise could lead to the decline of traditional features, such as field boundaries.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Several deserted farmsteads with cultivation remains are identified as relict medieval/post medieval settlement and agriculture.</p> <p>There are historic sites of interest in the area including the 18th century MacGregor graveyard at Immiriabhach, Gallows Hill and possible standing stone with historical associations.</p>	<p>Interest to specialists, locals and visitors.</p>	<p>Sites could be affected by future woodland planting.</p>

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: FARMED STRATH FLOOR

BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Biodiversity	River Teith SAC for lamprey and salmon. The boundary features and rushy pastures in fields support wildlife including waders.	The fish populations are of high importance. The damp grassland and other farm land habitats and the bird and other wildlife they support are of more local value.	Rural stewardship schemes in parts of this LCT are retaining and restoring structural diversity previously endangered or diminished by pressures for more intensive management.
Associations	Rob Roy's House and the Clan MacGregor generally.		

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Farmers should be encouraged to continue low intensity agricultural practices, including the traditional management of hay meadows, which makes a particular contribution to the summer landscape.
- New woodland planting should be controlled and generally discouraged.
- Access to these landscapes could be improved with path network development from the villages and also links along the rivers and field boundaries.
- Potential for interpretation of pre-improvement agricultural system.
- Need to protect links between different elements of pre-improvement agriculture where these still survive.
- Potential for interpretation associated with a programme of repair for the graveyards.
- The biodiversity benefit could be enhanced through more wildlife friendly farming and measures to improve the habitat value of the riparian corridors and woodlands.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: SETTLED LOCH SHORE

The settled loch shore comprises part of the dispersed ribbon of houses extending from Kingshouse to Auchtubh and on to Balquhiddier. The settled areas tend to be small groupings and clusters of development. There are small patches of 18th and 19th century rectilinear fields particularly on the lochsides.

HLA: Mosaic of prehistoric to present moorland and rough grazing, 18th and 19th century fields and farming, 18th to 20th century woodland and forestry and 19th century to the present built up area



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Sense of Place	Open water with some dispersed settlement. Historic character of traditional rural and estate buildings enhance the rural character.	The settlements introduce a human dimension to Balquhiddier Glen and the loch landscapes. Occasional loch shore settlement is typical of the Breadalbane landscape and occurs elsewhere in the Park. Here it relates to relict landuse patterns that can still be read over the open glen sides to the north east. This is unusual in the Park found only locally at neighbouring Lochearnhead and Glen Ogle, although a more typical characteristic in the north and west of Scotland.	Potential impacts of inappropriate development. At peak times visitor numbers to Rob Roy's grave can cause traffic congestion which impacts on the sense of place qualities.
Cultural Heritage	<p>A single cup marked stone at Gartnafuaran reaffirms the presence of people in the glen around 4-5 thousand years ago.</p> <p>In Balquhiddier the Old Parish Church and graveyard are of particular historic interest. The Church is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and listed. The graveyard contains Rob Roy's Grave.</p> <p>In 1848 the Stronvar Estate was purchased by David Carnegie, a wealthy local landowner, who carried out a number of village improvements. He rebuilt Stronvar House and several farms in the area and also built Balquhiddier Church, School and library for the benefit of his employees. There is a relict designed landscape associated with Stronvar House dating back to the 18th/19th century. The historic bridges such as Kirkton Bridge and Stronvar Bridge and small vernacular cottages contribute to the character of the area.</p>	<p>The settled areas are valued by local people, visitors and specialists.</p> <p>The stone at Gartnafuaran may be indicative of others as yet unrecorded in the area.</p> <p>Important collection of early Christian/medieval graveslabs including Rob Roy's grave. Important both locally and nationally. There may be other equally important sites of this type elsewhere in the Park e.g. at Luss.</p> <p>David Carnegie's improvements contribute to the historic interest and character of the settled area. A number of the landmark and public buildings, including Stronvar House, were designed by the leading Victorian architect David Bryce who was one of the earliest proponents of the Scots baronial style. These buildings are of historic and architectural interest and contribute to the character of the area. The small cottages clustered around Calair Burn are of local interest and contribute to the rural character of the area.</p> <p>This area contains the only relict designed landscape in this Character Zone. It is still associated with the mansion house for which it was created.</p>	Some recent development has eroded the traditional built character of the area.
Biodiversity	Many of the houses support bat roosts, especially pipistrelle bats. Stronvar Marshes SSSI (part) falls in the zone, displaying a transition of vegetation types from open water, through reeds and wet woodlands to dry ground.	The SSSI and bats are of medium biodiversity importance.	In this area, there is no evidence of a local decline in bat numbers. The SSSI is threatened by Rhododendron encroachment.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: SETTLED LOCH SHORE (CONT)

BENEFITS

Associations	The area has rich historic and cultural associations. At around the 8th century St Angus brought Christianity to Balquhiddar and St Angus' stone is in the church. Rob Roy's Grave is at Balquhiddar graveyard. Balquhiddar has been home to the MacLaren Clan since the 12th century. Creag an Tuirc, the Boar's Rock, was the ancient rallying place of the clan.
	The song 'Wild Mountain Thyme' was originally written by Robert Tannahill lamenting the clearance of Balquhiddar in the 18th century.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Prepare Design guidance/Village Design Statement for guiding design of new development
- Improved interpretation and visitor management in Balquhiddar could enhance access to the cultural heritage.
- Retain key landscape features of Stronvar designed landscape.
- Building works could be carried out sympathetically to the needs of bats and their hosts.
- Scope exists for improving management of the SSSIs.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: INLAND WATER AND LOCH ISLAND

Lochs Voil and Doine are natural water bodies. There are two artificial islands on Loch Voil
HLA: Natural water bodies have no historical period associated with them



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS, PRESSURES & TARGETS
Sense of place	The inland lochs have a small scale and intimate shoreline, with the single track road threading through rocky outcrops with trees, and around more open meadow areas. There are glimpsed views across open water, framed by trees and long dramatic vistas towards the hills. The lochs have a tranquil quality.	These inland lochs give a spectacular impression and have a distinctive identity. They are remote from main roads, which, along with their reasonably unspoilt quality creates a sense of tranquillity, further enhanced by the accessible loch shore from the single track road. Balquhidder offers a unique visitor experience, of which the loch landscapes are a key component. The lochs allow long dramatic vistas up through the glen and upland landscape of Balquhidder with good accessibility to the views, which often includes viewpoints along the footpaths and tracks at the loch shores. The views across the lochs to the plantations are less pleasing.	Use of the loch shores for informal camping can in some cases lead to fire damage, litter and erosion, having an adverse impact on the tranquillity and unspoilt qualities. Future pressures may include pressure for motorised recreational activity and development of tourist facilities.
Cultural Heritage	There are several possible crannogs recorded in the loch but these are unconfirmed.	If the presence of the crannogs was confirmed it would be of particular interest to specialists.	No pressures at present.
Biodiversity	Loch Voil and Loch Doine are parts of the River Teith Special Area of Conservation (SAC).	The biodiversity benefits associated with the SAC are salmon and lampreys. Within the lochs, these are most important to specialists but salmon angling is important to local people and visitors in the rivers that also comprise the SAC. Although forming part of a wider SAC complex, these biodiversity benefits make an important contribution to the biodiversity of the Park as a whole.	These species are suffering a widespread decline but locally some trends are moving in a positive direction, with decreases in conifer forestry in riparian corridors and improvements in regulations relating to land and water management
Associations	Alleged MacGregor stronghold on promontory on Loch Voil.		

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunities to improve viewpoints and visitor management, which can locally cause damage and erosion.
- Restructuring of commercial plantations to the south of the lochs.
- A survey of the potential crannogs would confirm its status and requirements for protection and management.
- The biodiversity benefit could be enhanced through riparian habitat enhancement and removal of artificial barriers to fish migration.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER