

Landscape Character Type 7: Broad Farmed Valley

Introduction

The Broad Farmed Valley occurs in a single area within Moray where it covers the more enclosed valley of the Spey in the Moray and Nairn landscape character assessment. The valley of the River Fiddich between Dufftown and Craigellachie, Glen Rinnes, part of Glen Livet and the valley east of Ben Aigan have been incorporated into this character type due to their similarities of landform, land cover and scale. These areas were either classified as Upland Farmland (8) or Open Uplands (10) in the Moray and Nairn landscape assessment or extend beyond the boundary of the area considered in this assessment. Ben Aigan has also been included in this character type because it forms an integral part of the scenic composition of the Spey and Fiddich Valleys and a key focus in views. This hill is defined in this study as a 'landmark Hill' of significance across the wider the Moray landscape (see section 6).

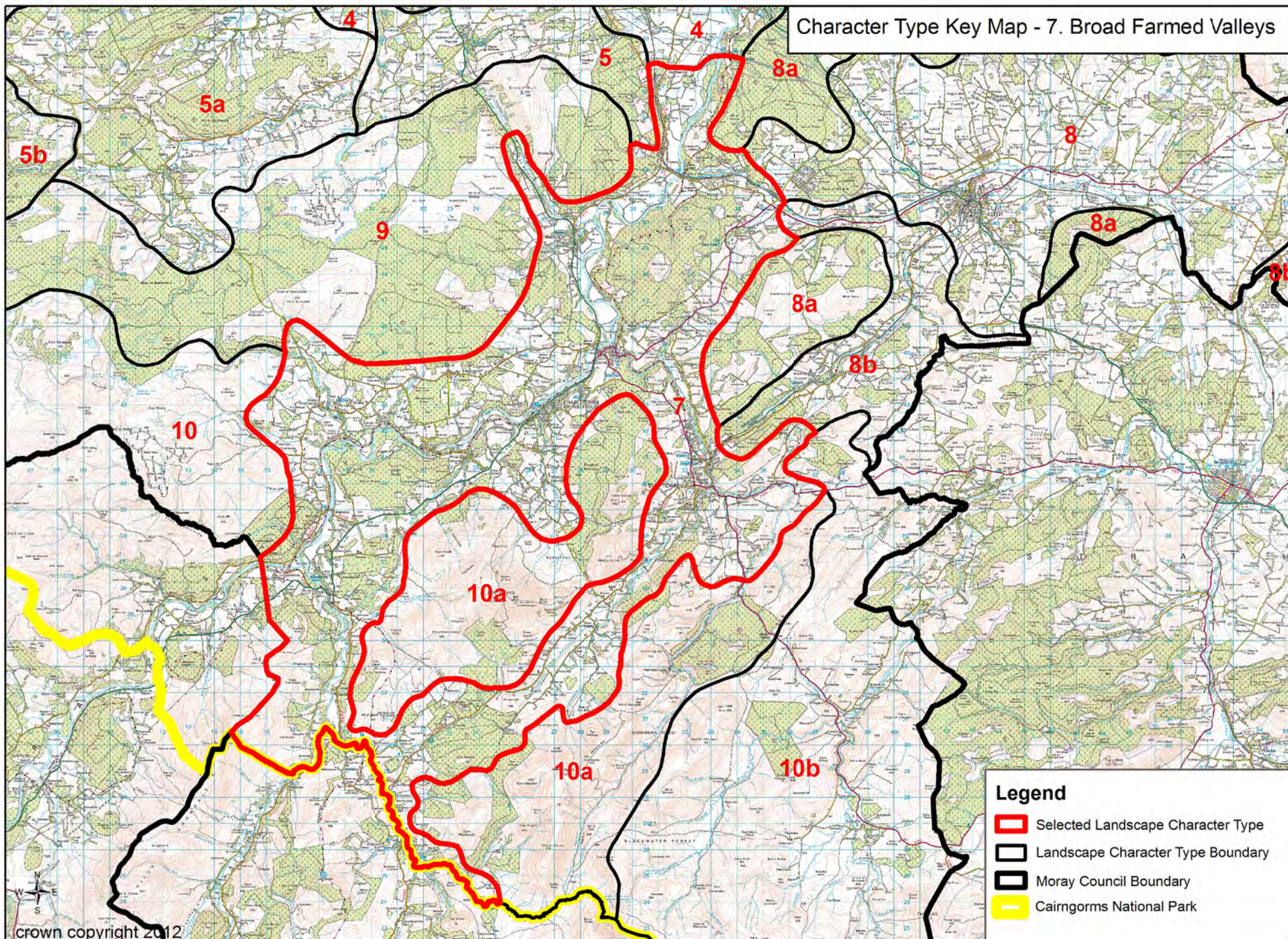
This assessment considers the sensitivity of both larger and smaller development typologies.

Operational and consented wind farm development

There are no wind farm developments sited within this character type. A single small turbine was noted near Archiestown during the field survey. A 67m high consented turbine is located within this character type at Ardoch Farm, close to the A95 (see Figure 2).

The Hill of Towie wind farm, currently being constructed in the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) character type, is visible in close proximity to Dufftown but also in views from the broader section of the Spey Valley between Aberlour and Knockando. The Paul's Hill wind farm sited within the 'Open Uplands' (10) and the operational and consented Rothes wind farm within the 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9) are also visible from the Knockando area within the Spey Valley. A consented 67m high turbine is located on Hunt Hill within the 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9) but close to the transition with the Spey Valley within the 'Broad Farmed Valley' (7).

Character Type Key Map - 7. Broad Farmed Valleys



Landscape character type 7: Broad Farmed Valley – Sensitivity assessment for larger typologies

Topic	Summary description	Large scale typology assessment (80-130m)	Sensitivity rating	Medium scale typology assessment (50-80m)	Sensitivity rating
Landscape context	This character type is visually contained by adjacent uplands, limiting its influence on the wider landscape. However, where these uplands form distinctive high hills with steep slopes, this can create highly scenic landscapes in their juxtaposition and contrast with the richly patterned settled landscapes of these valleys. This notably occurs within the upper Spey and Fiddich which are back-dropped by Ben Aigan sited within this character type but also Meikle Conval and Ben Rinnes within the 'Open Uplands' (10) which all form key 'landmark' features. Some of the valleys are relatively narrow, for example Glen Rinnes.	Although the Broad Farmed Valley (7) has relatively limited influence on surrounding landscapes, turbines of this size sited within this character type could detract from the setting of adjacent landmark hills, would be visible from surrounding higher hills and could diminish the visual composition in areas where a rich scenic juxtaposition occurs between these valleys and the uplands. The relatively small extent of some valleys is an additional sensitivity for this typology as turbines of this size could have a greater impact on adjacent upland character types, for example the steep scarp slopes of the 'Open Uplands with Steep Slopes' seen from Glen Rinnes.	Medium	Although the Broad Farmed Valley (7) has relatively limited influence on surrounding landscapes, turbines of this size sited within this character type could detract from the setting of adjacent landmark hills, would be visible from surrounding higher hills and could diminish the visual composition in areas where a rich scenic juxtaposition occurs between these valleys and the uplands. The relatively small extent of some valleys is an additional sensitivity for this typology as turbines of this size could have a greater impact on adjacent upland character types, for example the steep scarp slopes of the 'Open Uplands with Steep Slopes' seen from Glen Rinnes.	Medium
Scale and openness	These valleys are strongly contained, particularly within their upper reaches where higher, steeper side slopes occur. The undulating lower slopes of the valley are well-wooded and settled with a regular pattern of farms and other buildings contributing to its small scale. The floodplain of the Spey is more open in the north although the valley is still relatively narrow and strongly	This typology would dominate the small to medium scale of much of this landscape including the more open flat floodplain of the Spey. The even dispersal of buildings and other small features across this well-settled landscape increases sensitivity to turbines of this size.	High	This typology would dominate the small to medium scale of much of this landscape including the more open flat floodplain of the Spey. Although turbines of this size could relate to broader sections of the Spey Valley on more open upper valley sides at the transition with adjacent upland character types, the even dispersal of buildings and other small features across this well-settled landscape increases sensitivity.	High

	contained by wooded hill slopes. The Spey Valley between Aberlour and Knockando is broader and more open although a regular dispersal of small houses, woodlands and fields provide ready scale references. Scale increases on broader upper slopes where settlement is less dense and the land cover pattern more extensive.				
Landform	The Spey valley has a flat open floodplain to the north which the river meanders across. The floodplain narrows in the upper reaches of the Spey and within the Fiddich and is occasionally contained by steep scarp slopes. Rolling lower slopes step up to a broader more gently undulating elevated terrace in the Archiestown area and a number of tributaries cut narrow valleys in the upper Spey area. Small, rounded hills occur on the edge of these valleys and fringing the broader upland plateaux of LCTs (8a), (9) and (10), the highest of these being Ben Aigan.	This typology would detract from more distinctive landform features including more deeply incised sections of the Spey, steep scarp slopes, landmark hills such as Ben Aigan and more complex rolling landform commonly found within the valley floor and lower slopes of the upper Spey and Fiddich. Turbines of this size would also detract from the strong contrast that occurs between the open flat floodplain and steep containing side slopes in the lower reaches of the Spey. More gently undulating upper slopes at the transition with the 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9) would be less sensitive.	High-medium	This typology would detract from more distinctive landform features including more deeply incised sections of the Spey, steep scarp slopes, landmark hills such as Ben Aigan and more complex rolling landform commonly found within the valley floor and lower slopes of the upper Spey and Fiddich. Turbines of this size would also detract from the strong contrast that occurs between the open flat floodplain and steep containing side slopes in the lower reaches of the Spey. More gently undulating upper slopes at the transition with the 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9) would be less sensitive.	High-medium
Landscape pattern	This landscape is characterised by enclosed farmland (with smaller fields on lower slopes), broadleaved and coniferous woodlands including distinctive mixed policy plantings in places. The often diverse vegetation pattern reinforces the small scale of this landscape.	This typology would detract from areas with a more diverse land cover pattern although simpler and more extensive pastures on upper slopes would be less sensitive.	Medium	This typology would detract from areas with a more diverse land cover pattern although simpler and more extensive pastures on upper slopes would be less sensitive.	Medium
Built	A well-settled landscape with a regular pattern of small towns sited	Turbines of this size could affect the setting of settlements and other	High	Turbines of this size could affect the setting of settlements and other	High-medium

environment	next to the Spey and Fiddich including Charlestown of Aberlour, Craigellachie, Rothes and Dufftown and with occasional smaller settlements on upper hill slopes and side valleys. Historic houses, castles, bridges and traditional distillery buildings often form repeated landmark features within these valleys. Some more recent distillery buildings have a more industrial appearance.	historic built features, including characteristic distillery buildings which reflect the region's identity.		historic built features although sensitivity would be reduced to turbines towards the lower height band of this typology if sited on less well-settled upper valley sides and away from key views to settlements and landmark built features.	
Perceptual qualities	Although there is no pronounced sense of wildness in these well-settled and farmed valleys, a distinct sense of place may be associated with the production of whisky.	Large turbines could affect the sense of place associated with these valleys and their whisky heritage.	Medium	Large turbines could affect the strong sense of place associated with the Spey valley and its whisky heritage.	Medium
Visual amenity	This is a well-settled landscape with a network of roads located within the valley floor and also on the broader valley sides of the upper Spey. These valleys are well wooded and this can often screen views from lower roads such as the A95 although views along the valley floors from the A941 and B9015 are more open. The Spey Valley is particularly attractive for tourists and people engaged in recreational activities including fishing, cycling and walking. The Speyside Way long distance footpath is aligned through this character type. The immediate skyline formed by upper valley sides and the outer edge hills and slopes of the	Turbines of this size would be highly visible in views across and along these valleys from roads and settlement. They would also be seen in relative proximity from more elevated views from popular hill walking routes and also potentially from sections of the Speyside Way. The well-settled nature of this valleys and their popularity for tourism and recreation increases visual sensitivity.	High	Turbines of this size would be highly visible in views across and along these valleys from roads and settlement. They would also be seen in relative proximity from more elevated views from popular hill walking routes and also potentially from sections of the Speyside Way. The well-settled nature of this valleys and their popularity for tourism and recreation increases visual sensitivity.	High

	adjacent upland landscapes are prominent from the valley floor but more expansive views are possible from more elevated settlements, walking routes and roads.				
Cumulative effects	The operational/consented wind farms of Paul's Hill, Rothes and Hill of Towie are visible from the upper part of the Spey and from the Fiddich valleys. Existing large turbines are clearly associated with sparsely populated and relatively simple upland character types. Consented single turbines (67m high) located at the transition with the 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9) and also sited within this character type, are likely to be widely visible across the upper Spey valley and from the A95.	Cumulative landscape effects would occur if turbines of this size were introduced to this character type as this would weaken the clear association of large typologies with more simple and expansive upland landscapes. Inter-visibility between operational/consented developments largely seen on upland skylines and large turbines sited in these valleys would also be likely to result in significant cumulative visual effects.	High	Cumulative landscape effects would occur if turbines of this size were introduced to this character type as this would weaken the clear association of large typologies with more simple and expansive upland landscapes. Inter-visibility between operational/consented developments largely seen on upland skylines and large turbines sited in these valleys would also be likely to result in significant cumulative visual effects.	High

Landscape character type 7: Broad Farmed Valley – Sensitivity assessment for smaller typologies

Topic	Summary description	Small-medium scale typology assessment (35-50m)	Sensitivity rating	Small scale typology assessment (20-35m)	Sensitivity rating
Landscape context	<p>This character type is visually contained by adjacent uplands, limiting its influence on the wider landscape. However, where these uplands form distinctive high hills with steep slopes, this can create highly scenic landscapes in their juxtaposition and contrast with the richly patterned settled landscapes of these valleys. This notably occurs within the upper Spey and Fiddich which are back-dropped by Ben Aigan sited within this character type but also Meikle Conval and Ben Rinnes within the 'Open Uplands' (10) which all form key 'landmark' features.</p> <p>Some of the valleys are relatively narrow, for example Glen Rinnes.</p>	<p>Turbines of this size could detract from the setting of adjacent landmark hills and visual composition in areas where a rich scenic juxtaposition occurs with the more dramatic steep-sided hills of the 'Open Uplands' (10).</p> <p>This typology would have less of an effect in terms of landscape context where the valley is broader and backed by more gently undulating upland areas.</p>	Medium	<p>This typology could be more easily accommodated to minimise effects on more dramatic scenery and on landmark hills.</p>	Medium-low
Scale and openness	<p>These valleys are strongly contained, particularly within their upper reaches where higher, steeper side slopes occur. The undulating lower slopes of the valley are well-wooded and settled with a regular pattern of farms and other buildings contributing to its small scale.</p> <p>The floodplain of the Spey is more open in the north although the valley is still relatively narrow and strongly contained by wooded hill slopes.</p> <p>The Spey Valley between Aberlour and Knockando is broader and</p>	<p>This typology would appear very large in relation to the small scale of lower slopes and narrower valley floors and the small buildings which are evenly dispersed across much of this landscape. The broader sections of the Spey Valley and less densely settled upper slopes at the transition with the adjacent upland areas would be less sensitive to turbines of this size however.</p>	High-med	<p>The small scale of lower slopes and narrower and incised valley floors would be sensitive even to turbines of this size. There are greater opportunities to site the smaller turbines of this typology within this character type provided they were set back from small buildings on valley sides and within more extensive areas of farmland.</p>	Medium

	more open although a regular dispersal of small houses, woodlands and fields provide ready scale references. Scale increases on broader upper slopes where settlement is less dense and the land cover pattern more extensive.				
Landform	The Spey valley has a flat open floodplain to the north which the river meanders across. The floodplain narrows in the upper reaches of the Spey and within the Fiddich and is occasionally contained by steep scarp slopes. Rolling lower slopes step up to a broader more gently undulating elevated terrace in the Archiestown area and a number of tributaries cut narrow valleys in the upper Spey area. Small, rounded hills occur on the edge of these valleys and fringing the broader upland plateaux of LCTs (8a), (9) and (10), the highest of these being Ben Aigan.	Broader, more gently undulating valley sides at the transition with the 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9) would be less sensitive to this typology. More deeply incised sections of the Spey, steep scarp slopes, landmark hills such as Ben Aigan and the complex rolling landform commonly found within the valley floor and lower slopes of the upper Spey and Fiddich remain sensitive however.	Medium	Broader, more gently undulating valley sides at the transition with the 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9) would be less sensitive to this typology. More deeply incised sections of the Spey, steep scarp slopes, landmark hills such as Ben Aigan and the complex rolling landform commonly found within the valley floor and lower slopes of the upper Spey and Fiddich remain sensitive however. Although this size of turbine could relate to the simple flat openness of floodplain areas, they would detract from the scenic contrast these areas provide with often steep-sided well wooded or rolling farmed valley sides.	Medium
Landscape pattern	This landscape is characterised by enclosed farmland (with smaller fields on lower slopes), broadleaved and coniferous woodlands including distinctive mixed policy plantings in places. The often diverse vegetation pattern reinforces the small scale of this landscape.	This typology would detract from areas with a more diverse land cover pattern although simpler and more extensive pastures on upper slopes would be less sensitive.	Medium	Smaller turbines of this typology could fit within more complex areas of land cover without detracting from them.	Medium-low
Built environment	A well-settled landscape with a regular pattern of small towns sited next to the Spey and Fiddich including Charlestown of Aberlour, Craigellachie, Rothes and Dufftown and with occasional smaller	There are some limited opportunities to site turbines of this size on less well-settled upper valley sides at the transition with adjacent upland areas and away from key views to settlements and	High-med	There are increased opportunities to site turbines of this size on less well-settled upper valley sides and away from key views to settlements and landmark built features.	Medium

	<p>settlements on upper hill slopes and side valleys. Historic houses, castles, bridges and traditional distillery buildings often form repeated landmark features within these valleys. Some more recent distillery buildings have a more industrial appearance.</p>	landmark built features.			
Perceptual qualities	<p>Although there is no pronounced sense of wildness in these well-settled and farmed valleys, a distinct sense of place may be associated with the production of whisky.</p>	<p>This typology is less likely to affect the 'sense of place' that may be experienced by some people particularly if turbines were carefully sited to minimise visibility from key tourist routes and destinations.</p>	Medium-low	<p>This typology is less likely to affect the sense of place that may be experienced by some people.</p>	Low
Visual amenity	<p>This is a well-settled landscape with a network of roads located within the valley floor and also on the broader valley sides of the upper Spey. These valleys are well wooded and this can often screen views from lower roads such as the A95 although views along the valley floors from the A941 and B9015 are more open. The Spey Valley is particularly attractive for tourists and people engaged in recreational activities including fishing, cycling and walking. The Speyside Way long distance footpath is aligned through this character type. The immediate skyline formed by upper valley sides and the outer edge hills and slopes of the adjacent upland landscapes are prominent from the valley floor but more expansive views are possible from more elevated settlements,</p>	<p>Turbines of this size would be significantly larger than other landscape features and could be prominent if sited within the more densely settled and traversed lower valley areas. They would be likely to be less intrusive if sited on upper valley sides at the transition with adjacent uplands where rising ground could reduce visual prominence in key views from key roads and settlement.</p>	High-med	<p>This size of turbine would be generally less prominent in views from roads and settlement provided they were well-sited. They would be likely to be less visible if sited on valley sides where rising ground could reduce visual prominence in key views from key roads and settlement.</p>	Medium

	walking routes and roads.				
Cumulative effects	<p>The operational/consented wind farms of Paul's Hill, Rothes and Hill of Towie are visible from the upper part of the Spey and from the Fiddich valleys. Existing large turbines are clearly associated with sparsely populated and relatively simple upland character types. Consented single turbines (67m high) located at the transition with the 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9) and also sited within this character type, are likely to be widely visible across the upper Spey valley and from the A95.</p>	<p>This typology could have cumulative impacts with larger turbines sited in adjacent upland character types if sited close-by. They could also affect the setting and design integrity of operational wind farms by introducing different heights/designs and a new pattern of development, for example, appearing to 'spill' down lower hill slopes below fairly contained groupings of wind farms sited in adjacent upland areas. Although there is scope to site this typology to avoid impacts on design and integrity, turbines towards the upper height band of this typology would still appear very large from settlements and roads within the valleys and could affect the present clear rationale of large turbines being associated with upland areas and 'set back' from these well-settled valleys.</p>	High-medium	<p>There are increased opportunities to accommodate turbines of this size to minimise cumulative effects with larger turbines sited in adjacent upland character types. This typology would also have a clearer size differential with operational/consented turbines and this would increase scope for multiple turbines to be accommodated more successfully.</p>	Medium

Character type 7: Broad Farmed Valley

Summary of sensitivity

The Broad Farmed Valley (7) character type includes the valleys of the Spey, the Riddich and the narrower tributaries of Glen Rinnes, Glen Livet and the River Avon. These river valleys abut the upland character types of the Open Uplands (10) and the Upland Moorland and Forest (9). Ben Aigan forms a landmark hill included within this character type because it forms an integral part of the scenic composition of the Spey and Fiddich Valleys and a key focus in views. The enclosure of the valleys, which is reinforced by the diverse vegetation pattern, is a key sensitivity. They are particularly strongly contained in their upper reaches and within the side glens, where they are often scenically juxtaposed with the steep-sided slopes of Ben Rinnes and other nearby hills. The main valleys of the Spey and Fiddich have broader undulating terraces and side slopes in places. The valleys are well-settled and feature a number of distinctive settlements, landmark castles and historic distillery buildings. Operational wind farm development located in adjacent upland landscapes is visible from the Spey and Fiddich valleys and the potential for cumulative landscape and visual effects to occur increases sensitivity, particularly to larger typologies.

This character type has an overall **High** sensitivity to the large and medium typologies, a **High-medium** sensitivity to the small-medium typology and a **Medium** sensitivity to the small typology.

Potential cumulative issues

The Hill of Towie wind farm, currently being constructed in the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) character type, is visible in close proximity to Dufftown but also in views from the broader section of the Spey Valley between Aberlour and Knockando. The Paul's Hill wind farm sited within the 'Open Uplands' (10) and the operational and consented Rothes wind farm developments within the 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9) are also visible from the Knockando area within the Spey Valley.

The Paul's Hill wind farm forms a fairly tight cluster of turbines located on lower ground which is partially contained by the higher Roy's Hill thus limiting its visual impact when seen from the Spey valley within Moray. The operational Rothes wind farm is similarly contained by the hill of Carn na Cailliche and is set back into the core upland area, reducing impacts on the Spey Valley, although the consented extension will increase the extent of visibility of this development in the Knockando area. The The Hill of Towie wind farm is visible along a more open, but relatively low, section of skyline from parts of the Spey valley and near Dufftown and is particularly prominent when visible close to the immediate ridge which contains the narrow valley east of Ben Aigan.

Consented single turbines (67m high), located within this character type and the adjacent 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9), are likely to be widely visible.

Key cumulative landscape and visual issues include:

- Multiple developments extending along the skylines of the 'Open Uplands' (10), the Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) and the Upland Moorland Forest' (9) which contain these valleys which could dominate views from these well-settled and traversed landscapes – protection of the key landmark hills will be essential to

reduce impacts on sensitive skylines and limit the extent of development visible with the majority of upland skylines remaining open.

- Potential sequential effects on views from the A95 and other routes within the wider study area, particularly given the linearity of these valleys where multiple developments would be seen sequentially.
- Visual confusion and an absence of rationale which could occur between large turbines sited in less settled simple and more expansive upland areas and the same size of turbines also sited within these more settled smaller scale valleys.
- Variations in the type and size of single and small groups of small turbines proposed within the landscape type.

Constraints:

- The scenic juxtaposition of parts of these valleys with the dramatically steep-sided Ben Rinnes and associated hills.
- The relatively small extent, enclosure and containment of some of these valleys which reduces their scale.
- More complex landform features including incised sections of valley, rolling lower hill slopes, occasional rocky scarps but also the open flat floodplain which contributes to the diversity of these valleys.
- The consistent presence of small scale features such as farms and houses and enclosed fields and woodlands which provide ready scale references.
- Cumulative effects with larger typologies which currently have a clear association with broader, simpler upland areas.
- Views of the distinctive landmark hills of Ben Rinnes, Roy's Hill, Carn na Cailliche, Meikle Conval, Little Conval and Ben Aigan from roads and settlement.
- The setting of settlements, castles, traditional distilleries, mansion houses and their designed landscapes.
- The distinct sense of place associated with whisky production.

Opportunities:

- Broader, upper valley sides at the transition with the less dramatic upland areas with a simple gently undulating landform and medium scale which could best relate to the size of smaller typologies

Guidance on development

There is no scope to accommodate the larger typologies within this landscape due principally to their likely significant effects on landscape scale, the setting of settlement and because of cumulative landscape and visual effects that would arise with existing wind farm developments sited in the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a), 'Upland Moorland and Forestry' (9) and the 'Open Uplands' (10).

There is some **limited** scope to accommodate the small-medium typology (turbines 35-50m high) but only within broader valleys and on gently undulating upper slopes and the more expansive terraces that sit above the more enclosed lower river valleys. Care should be taken to avoid impact on the more dramatic steep-sided hills and key views to them. They should also avoid impacting on the setting of settlements, landmark historic buildings and designed landscape by being sited within less densely settled areas at the transition with the adjacent uplands. This typology should not be sited on upper hill slopes close to operational/consented wind farms located within adjacent upland landscapes.

There are greater opportunities to site the small typology (turbines 20-35m high) within these landscapes although the more contained narrow and incised glens and the open floodplains would still be sensitive. Turbines of this size would be better sited on the hill slopes above fields and below more extensive woodlands as this would accord with the consistent pattern of settlement found within these upper hill slopes and terraces.

Further guidance on the siting of smaller turbines is provided in section 5 of the main report.



These valleys are farmed and well-settled with a regular pattern of small farms, planned settlements and distilleries



The Spey valley is broader in its upper reaches within Moray with more expansive gently undulating hill slopes merging with the Upland Moorland and Forestry (9).



The 'landmark' hill of Ben Aigan seen across the farmland of the Spey valley



Glen Rinnes forms a narrower and generally smaller scale valley than the Spey.



The adjacent 'Open Upland with Steep Slopes' (10a) forms dramatic scarp slopes above Glen Rinnes



The valley floor of the Spey is deeply incised and wooded in its lower reaches within Moray

Character Type 7: Broad Farmed Valley

Landscape Character Type 8: Upland Farmland

Introduction

The Upland Farmland character type occurs in a single area within Moray. This is an extensive area with considerable variation in character as it comprises narrow contained valleys, more extensive farmland and sparsely settled forested plateau and hill tops.

The valley of the River Fiddich between Dufftown and Craigellachie and the valley east of Ben Aigen, which were classified as Upland Farmland (8) in the Moray and Nairn landscape assessment, has been incorporated into the adjacent 'Broad Farmed Valley' (7) character type due to their similarities of landform, land cover and scale. The more extensive areas of gently undulating farmland situated at the core of this character type have been retained as character type 8 Upland Farmland while the remainder of this landscape has been sub-divided as follows:

- 8a: 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland'
- 8b: 'Narrow valleys within Upland Farmland'

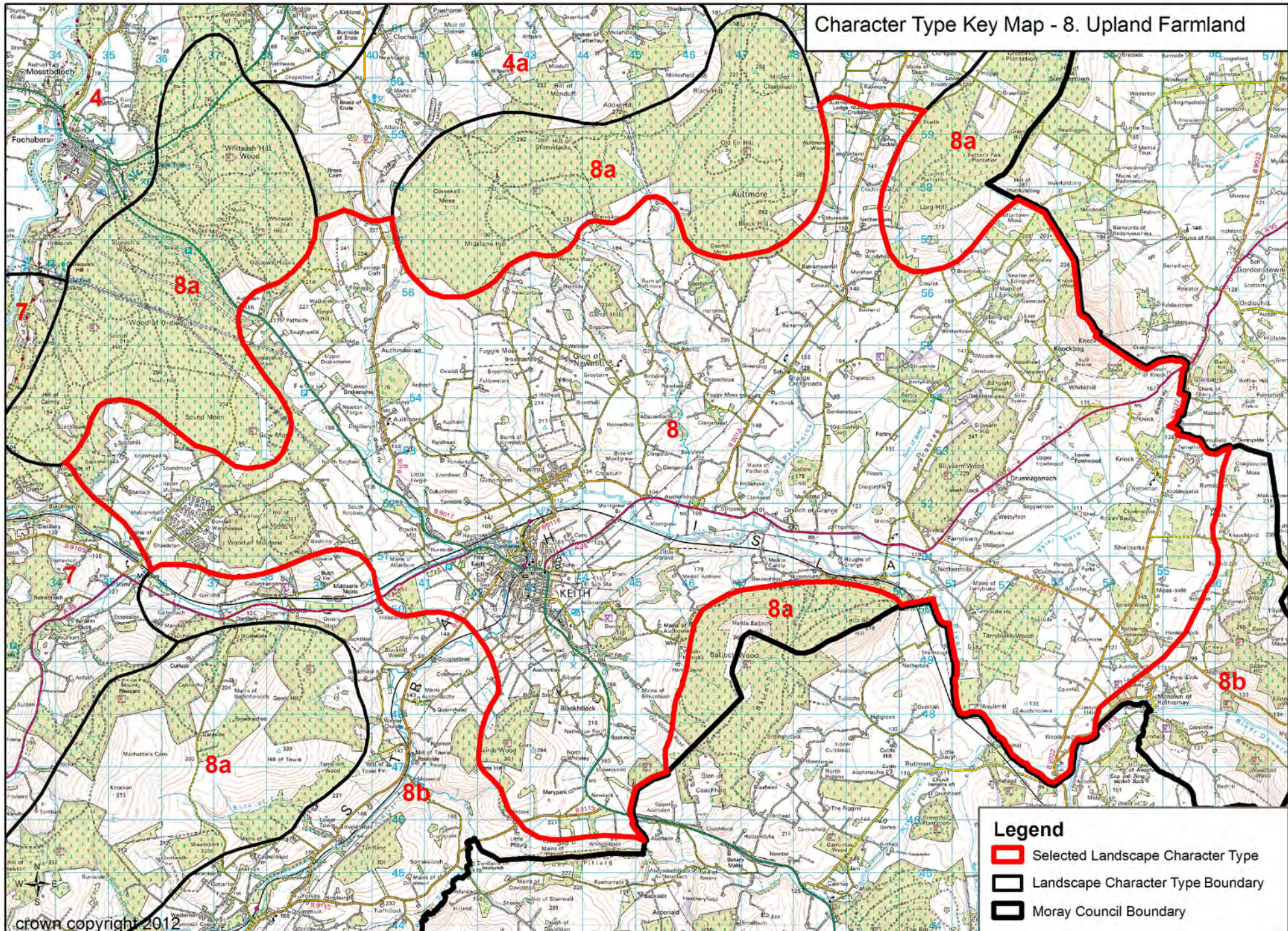
This assessment considers the sensitivity of both larger and smaller development typologies within the Upland Farmland (8) character type.

Operational and consented wind farm/turbine development

Two operational single turbines, one at Balnamoon (70m) and one 80m high at Myreton Crossroads are located in this character type, within approximately 3km of each other. Further developments of 4 additional turbines, ranging from 89m to 92m high have also been consented close to one of these operational single turbines, on the lower south west facing slopes of Lurg Hill. A number of smaller single turbines below 35m high are located in this character type.

The Hill of Towie wind farm (21 turbines at 100 m height) is currently being constructed in the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hill Tops within Upland Farmland' (8a) character type and is clearly visible from the Upland Farmland (8).

Character Type Key Map - 8. Upland Farmland



Landscape character type 8: Upland Farmland – Sensitivity assessment for larger typologies

Topic	Summary description	Large scale typology assessment (80-130m)	Sensitivity rating	Medium scale typology assessment (50-80m)	Sensitivity rating
Landscape context	This character type is contained by the higher ground of the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) character type and therefore has limited inter-visibility and influence on wider landscape character, including neighbouring Aberdeenshire. Although LCT 8a is sparsely settled and densely forested, thus limiting views to the Upland Farmland' (8), it includes the landmark hills of the Bin of Cullen and Meikle Balloch.	This landscape has little influence on surrounding landscapes. Turbines of this size would however appear to diminish the vertical scale and detract from more distinctive defined landmark hills within the 'Broad Forested Hills with the Upland Farmland (8a) if sited close-by.	Medium	This landscape has little influence on surrounding landscapes. Turbines of this size would however appear to diminish the vertical scale and detract from more distinctive defined landmark hills within the 'Broad Forested Hills with the Upland Farmland (8a) if sited close-by.	Medium
Scale and openness	The gently undulating shallow valleys of this landscape are expansive and open although the presence of a regular pattern of small farms and houses provide ready scale references and reduce the overall scale of the landscape. Some narrower and more contained valleys occur in places and a number of small well-defined hills are occasional features.	Although this typology could relate to the broad scale of the generally gently undulating landform, it would dominate small houses and farms which are evenly dispersed across this landscape. The more contained valley floors, including the valley of the River Isla and the relatively small hills which occasionally occur, would additionally be sensitive to this typology.	High-medium	Although this typology could relate to the broad scale of the generally gently undulating landform, it would dominate small houses and farms which are evenly dispersed across this landscape. The more contained valley floors, including the valley of the River Isla and the relatively small hills which occasionally occur, would additionally be sensitive to this typology.	High-medium
Landform	This gently undulating landscape encompasses the flat-bottomed valley of the River Isla, the broad slopes which provide its wider setting and the shallow valleys of visually insignificant tributaries running from the north which are divided by long, low ridges with gentle and smooth slopes.	This typology could relate to the generally simple landform of this character type although they would significantly detract from Knock Hill and from the smaller, yet distinctive, hills and ridges if sited on or close-by them.	Medium	This typology could relate to the generally simple landform of this character type although they would significantly detract from Knock Hill and from the smaller, yet distinctive, hills and ridges if sited on or close-by them.	Medium

	Occasional well-defined small hills and ridges occur - the most distinctive of these being the landmark hill of Knock Hill on the border with Aberdeenshire. The small hills of Mulderie, Cairds Wood, Gallow Hill and the ridge of Sillyean Wood also stand out within the generally gently undulating landform of this landscape.				
Landscape pattern	This landscape has a simple land cover of large fields of pasture and some arable land. Small geometric coniferous shelterbelts and woods pattern the farmland although it generally has an open and simple pattern.	The simple land cover pattern of this landscape reduces sensitivity to this typology.	Medium-low	The simple land cover pattern of this landscape reduces sensitivity to this typology.	Medium-low
Built environment	Keith, sited either side of the River Isla, is the only sizeable settlement within this landscape although there is an even dispersal of farms across this character type. There are few obvious archaeological or historic features which make a strong contribution to landscape character. Existing tall turbines are situated in the north-eastern part of this landscape character type and high voltage transmission lines and large substation are highly visible features in the area around Keith.	Turbines of this size would exacerbate the discordant clutter of transmission lines in the area around Keith, further diminishing its landscape setting. The setting of smaller settlements and individual buildings could also be affected, particularly by multiple turbines and this is considered further under 'cumulative effects'.	Medium	Turbines of this size would exacerbate the discordant clutter of transmission lines in the area around Keith, further diminishing its landscape setting. The setting of smaller settlements and individual buildings could also be affected, particularly by multiple turbines and this is considered further under 'cumulative effects'.	Medium
Perceptual qualities	There is no sense of wildness or a strong sense of place associated with this landscape.	There would be no significant effect on this sensitivity.	Low	There would be no significant effect on this sensitivity.	Low
Visual amenity	This is a very open landscape with long views possible from roads and elevated settlement across much of	Turbines of this height would be highly visible within this open landscape and would be seen in	High	Turbines of this height would be highly visible within this open landscape and would be seen in close	High

	<p>the character type.</p> <p>The distinctive summits of Knock Hill, Meikle Balloch, Bin of Cullen and Lurg Hill (the majority of these located in the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a)) and the distant Ben Rinnes form key foci in these views. The shallow valleys north of the River Isla are more contained, limiting views from the B9018 and B9017 to some extent.</p>	<p>close proximity to settlement and roads increasing potential impact. Turbines of this size could interrupt key views to focal hills within this character type and the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a).</p>		<p>proximity to settlement and roads increasing potential impact. Turbines of this size could interrupt key views to focal hills within this character type and the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a).</p>	
Cumulative effects	<p>Four operational and consented turbines (70-92m high) located in the north-eastern part of this character type and the Hill of Towie wind farm located in the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) are highly visible from across this landscape.</p>	<p>Existing and consented developments of larger turbines sited in this character type have/will have significant landscape and visual impacts. They also conflict with the predominant pattern within Moray of larger typologies being associated with more expansive and simple upland landscapes. Additional turbines of this size sited in the 'Upland Farmland' (8) would exacerbate these impacts and further diminish this association with landscape character.</p>	High	<p>Existing and consented developments of larger turbines sited in this character type have/will have significant landscape and visual impacts. They also conflict with the predominant pattern within Moray of larger typologies being associated with more expansive and simple upland landscapes. Additional turbines of this size sited in the 'Upland Farmland' (8) would exacerbate these impacts and further diminish this association with landscape character.</p>	High

Landscape character type 8: Upland Farmland – Sensitivity assessment for smaller typologies

Topic	Summary description	Large scale typology assessment (35-50m)	Sensitivity rating	Medium scale typology assessment (20-35m)	Sensitivity rating
Landscape context	This character type is contained by the higher ground of the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) character type and therefore has limited inter-visibility and influence on wider landscape character, including neighbouring Aberdeenshire. Although LCT 8a is sparsely settled and densely forested, thus limiting views to the Upland Farmland' (8), it includes the landmark hills of the Bin of Cullen and Meikle Balloch.	Turbines of this size could still detract from the landmark hills within the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) if sited nearby although there are increased opportunities for this typology to avoid such impacts.	Medium-low	Turbines of this size would be likely to have little effect on the landmark hills within this character type and the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) providing they were site away from them.	Low
Scale and openness	The gently undulating shallow valleys of this landscape are expansive and open although the presence of a regular pattern of small farms and houses provide ready scale references and reduce the overall scale of the landscape. Some narrower and more contained valleys occur in places and a number of small well-defined hills are occasional features.	This typology would still appear very large in relation to small houses and farms in this landscape. The even dispersal of buildings across this well-settled landscape increases sensitivity although more sparsely settled areas at the transition with the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) provide some opportunities to site turbines of this size.	Medium	This size of turbine would have less of an impact on the scale of small farms and houses and there are consequently increased opportunities to accommodate this typology.	Medium-low
Landform	This gently undulating landscape encompasses the flat-bottomed valley of the River Isla, the broad slopes which provide its wider setting and the shallow valleys of visually insignificant tributaries running from the north which are divided by long, low ridges with gentle and smooth slopes. Occasional well-defined small hills	This typology could relate to the generally simple landform of this character type although more contained valley floors and small well-defined hills remain sensitive.	Medium-low	This typology could relate to the generally simple landform of this character type.	Low

	and ridges occur - the most distinctive of these being the landmark hill of Knock Hill on the border with Aberdeenshire. The small hills of Mulderie, Cairds Wood, Gallow Hill and the ridge of Sillyean Wood also stand out within the generally gently undulating landform of this landscape.				
Landscape pattern	This landscape has a simple land cover of large fields of pasture and some arable land. Small geometric coniferous shelterbelts and woods pattern the farmland although it generally has an open and simple pattern.	The simple land cover of this landscape reduces sensitivity to this typology.	Medium-low	The simple land cover of this landscape reduces sensitivity to this typology. This size of turbine would be less likely to detract from areas with a more distinct field enclosure or woodland pattern.	Low
Built environment	Keith, sited either side of the River Isla, is the only sizeable settlement within this landscape although there is an even dispersal of farms across this character type. There are few obvious archaeological or historic features which make a strong contribution to landscape character. Existing tall turbines are situated in the north-eastern part of this landscape character type and high voltage transmission lines and large substation are highly visible features in the area around Keith.	Turbines of this size would exacerbate the discordant clutter of transmission lines in the area around Keith, further diminishing its landscape setting. The setting of smaller settlements and individual buildings could also be affected, particularly by multiple turbines and this is considered further under 'cumulative effects'.	Medium	Turbines of this size are less likely to affect the setting of individual settlements and farms. Multiple turbines of this typology, and particularly turbines towards the lower height of 20m, would have less of an impact on the setting of settlement.	Medium-low
Perceptual qualities	There is no sense of wildness or a strong sense of place associated with this landscape.	There would be no effect on this sensitivity.	Low	There would be no effect on this sensitivity.	Low
Visual amenity	This is a very open landscape with long views possible from roads and elevated settlement across much of the character type. The distinctive summits of Knock	Turbines of this height would still be prominent within this landscape. Multiple turbines of this size associated with a number of land holdings could have significant	High-medium	Turbines of this height would be less prominent within this open landscape and would be unlikely to impact on key views to landmark hills.	Medium

	Hill, Meikle Balloch, Bin of Cullen and Lurg Hill (the majority of these located in the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a)) and the distant Ben Rinnes form key foci in these views. The shallow valleys north of the River Isla are more contained, limiting views from the B9018 and B9017 to some extent.	cumulative effects on views as this landscape is open and highly visible from settlement and major roads. Turbines of this size could interrupt key views to focal hills within LCT 8a.			
Cumulative effects	Four operational and consented turbines (70-92m high) located in the north-eastern part of this character type and the Hill of Towie wind farm located in the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) are highly visible from roads and settlement across this landscape.	This typology could have cumulative impacts with larger turbines sited in adjacent upland character types if sited close-by. Turbines towards the upper height band of this typology would still appear very large from settlements and roads within this landscape and could exacerbate cumulative effects in some parts of this landscape.	High-medium	There are increased opportunities to accommodate turbines of this size to minimise cumulative effects with larger turbines sited in adjacent upland character types. This typology would have a clearer size differential with operational/consented turbines and this would increase scope for multiple turbines to be accommodated more successfully.	Medium-low

Character type 8: Upland Farmland

Summary of sensitivity

The Upland Farmland character type encompasses the broad shallow valleys largely lying to the north of the River Isla. This landscape has a simple land cover of open farmland with large fields of pasture predominantly enclosed by post and wire fences. There is an even distribution of farms across this extensive area, accessed by a close network of minor roads. This farmed and well-settled landscape is edged by the densely forested broader upland plateau and hill tops of the 'Broad Forested Hills within the Upland Farmland' (8a) which forms a low dark backdrop with occasional more distinctive conical hills such as Meikle Balloch and the Bin of Cullen forming landmark features in views from the 'Upland Farmland' (8). While some key characteristics of this landscape could relate to larger development typologies, the presence of an even dispersal of small farms and houses and the potential cumulative effects with large turbines sited both within this character type, and in adjacent simpler and larger scale upland landscapes, increases sensitivity.

This landscape has an overall **High** sensitivity to the large and medium development typologies. There would be a **High-medium** sensitivity to the small-medium typology and a **Medium-low** sensitivity due to its reduced effect on landscape scale and cumulative effects with larger turbines sited in this and adjacent character types.

Potential cumulative issues

The two operational single turbines located on Lurg Hill and at Balnamoon are highly visible from settlement and roads across this landscape. The consented developments for four additional turbines in the general Lurg Hill area have not been designed in an integrated manner as they form different applications. A number of operational smaller turbines >30m high sited in this character type have a better fit with the scale of this landscape and are likely to have fewer cumulative effects.

The wind farm development of Hill of Towie in the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) is under construction and is highly visible from this landscape. The 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) character type has been identified in this study as having potential for accommodating the Medium typology (turbines 50-80m).

Key cumulative landscape and visual issues include:

- Multiple turbines associated with the majority of land holdings across this well-settled landscape would result in significant visual clutter and confusion and would detract from the key features of this landscape. Turbines over 35m will create this effect more quickly than smaller turbines.
- Turbines visible on every hill top/upland plateau within the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) could have a dominant and 'over-bearing' effect on this character type and create further potential for visual clutter with any larger turbines located within this character type.
- Potential sequential cumulative visual effects on views from the A95 through Moray and into Aberdeenshire where a number of operational wind farms and small groups of larger turbines are sited (the screening provided by ridges and hills on the Aberdeenshire/Moray border limits inter-visibility).
- Visual confusion and an absence of rationale which could occur between large turbines sited in the adjacent less settled, simple and more expansive 'Broad

Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) and this character type and the same size of turbines also sited within this more settled, smaller scale landscape.

- Variations in the type and size of single and small groups of small turbines proposed within the landscape type.

Constraints:

- The presence of small scale features such as farms and houses and enclosed fields and woodlands which provide easily understood scale references.
- Cumulative effects with larger typologies which are predominantly associated with broader simpler upland areas.
- The openness of this landscape which allows extensive views.
- Views of the distinctive landmark hills in this and adjoining landscapes, which include the Bin of Cullen, Knock Hill and Meikle Balloch, seen from settlement and roads but also the smaller hills and ridges which form key features within the generally gently undulating landform of this landscape.
- Potential cumulative visual and landscape affects associated with multiple developments of the large, medium and small-medium typologies where they could exacerbate visual clutter around Keith and in the north-east of this character type where existing transmission lines and large turbines are present.

Opportunities:

- The simple gently undulating landform and medium scale of this landscape which could best relate to the size of smaller typologies

Guidance on development

There is no scope to accommodate the larger typologies within this landscape due principally to their likely significant effects on landscape scale, the setting of settlement and because of potential cumulative landscape and visual effects with large turbines.

There is **limited** scope for the small-medium typology (turbines 35-50m) to be accommodated in this character type. Turbines of this size should be located on broad, more gently undulating slopes, avoiding impact on the landmark hills (Figure 4) and being sited away from the smaller hills and ridges which form occasional landform features within this landscape. The potential for cumulative effects with transmission lines and operational and consented turbines (but also with any potential wind farm developments which may be sited in the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a)) is likely to severely restrict opportunities for this typology. The even distribution of settlement across this landscape also offers a potential constraint given the significant cumulative effects if a number of farms/land holdings featured a turbine of this size.

There are greater opportunities to accommodate turbines below 35m height in order to minimise potential cumulative impacts with larger turbines sited both in this landscape and within the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a). Multiple turbines of this height could also be accommodated more successfully in terms of reducing visual clutter and dominance across this open and well-settled landscape. Turbines should be sited on gentler slopes above fields and on slight ridges and terraces which often occur below woodlands. They should avoid being sited close to the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) where they could be seen in close proximity to existing or potential larger typologies.

Detailed guidance on the siting of smaller turbines is set out in section 5 of the main study report.

Given the number and range of turbines already sited in this landscape character type and the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a), it is recommended that periodic monitoring should be undertaken to review cumulative effects and gauge potential limits of capacity.



Although landform is broad and gently rolling, the presence of a regular pattern of farms, small woodlands and other settlement reduces landscape scale.



Existing tall wind turbines form prominent features within this landscape.



Knock Hill forms a landmark in views from both this landscape and from neighbouring Aberdeenshire.



Smaller wind turbines are generally associated with farms within this landscape

Character Type 8: Upland Farmland

Landscape Character Type 8a: Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland

Introduction

The Upland Farmland character type occurs in a single area within Moray. This is an extensive area with considerable variation in character as it comprises narrow contained valleys, more extensive farmland and sparsely settled forested plateau and hill tops.

The valley of the River Fiddich between Dufftown and Craigellachie and the valley east of Ben Aigen, which are classified as Upland Farmland (8) in the Moray and Nairn landscape assessment, have been incorporated into the adjacent 'Broad Farmed Valley' (7) character type due to their similarities of landform, land cover and scale. The more extensive areas of farmland situated at the core of this character type have been retained as character type 8 Upland Farmland while the remainder of this landscape has been sub-divided as follows:

- 8a: 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland'
- 8b: 'Narrow valleys within Upland Farmland'

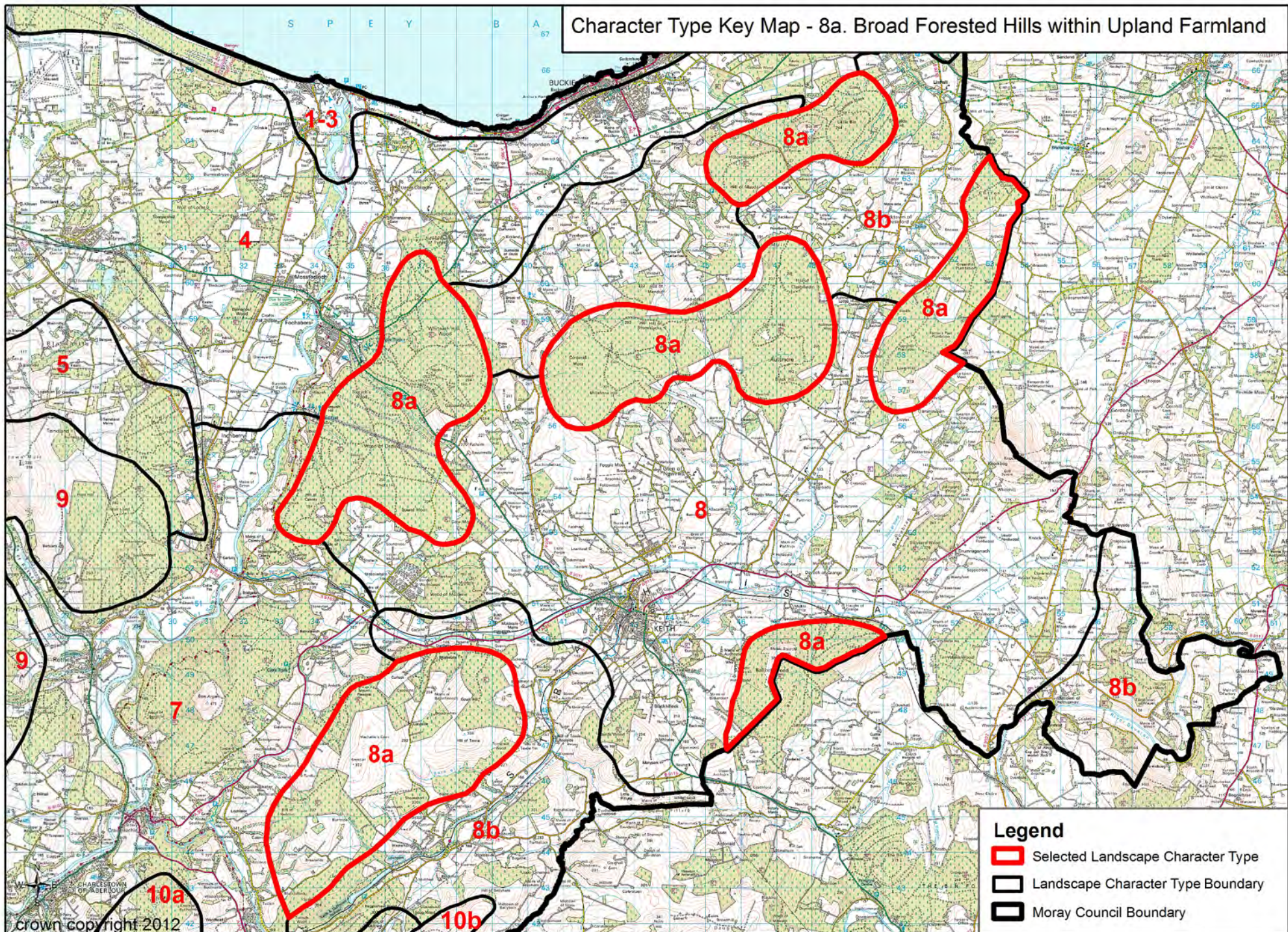
This assessment considers the sensitivity of larger development typologies in detail and summarises key constraints and opportunities for smaller typologies within the Broad Forested Hill within Upland Farmland (8a) character sub-type only.

Operational and consented wind farm development

The Hill of Towie wind farm (21 turbines at 100 m height) is currently being constructed in this character type.

Two operational single turbines, one at Balnamoon (70m) and one 80m high at Myreton Crossroads are located in the adjacent 'Upland Farmland' (8) character type. A further 4 turbines, ranging from 89m to 92m high, have also been consented close to one of these operational single turbines, on the lower south west facing slopes of Lurg Hill. A number of smaller single turbines below 35m high are additionally located in the 'Upland Farmland' (8) character type.

Character Type Key Map - 8a. Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland



Landscape character type 8a: Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland – Sensitivity assessment for larger typologies

Topic	Summary description	Large scale typology assessment (80-130m)	Sensitivity rating	Medium scale typology assessment (50-80m)	Sensitivity rating
Landscape context	The elevation of this character sub-type increases its visual influence on adjacent landscapes. This character type includes narrower ridges as well as broader plateaux although in general these upland areas are not extensive. These upland areas are important in forming a simple backdrop to more complex smaller scale settled landscapes including the 'Upland Farmland' (8), 'Broad Farmed Valley' (7), 'Coastal Farmland with Rolling Hills' (4a) and the 'Coastal Farmland' (4). In general however the simpler plateau and broader ridges make a lesser contribution to wider scenic character than the particularly distinctive 'landmark' hills of Bin of Cullen and Meikle Balloch which also provide an important backdrop to the Moray Coast (LCTs 2 and 4) and neighbouring Aberdeenshire. The densely wooded Whiteash Hill is important in providing the setting to Gordon Castle designed landscape and to Fochabers.	Turbines of this size would be likely to have a greater impact on adjacent landscapes particularly where the upland area is less extensive or if sited on or nearby the landmark hills of Bin of Cullen and Meikle Balloch.	<i>High-medium</i>	This typology would be likely to have a reduced impact on adjacent landscapes particularly if sited within the core of more extensive upland plateaux. Turbines sited on or nearby the landmark hills would have a significant effect on adjoining landscapes.	<i>Medium</i>
Scale and openness	The more expansive plateaux and broad ridges have a large scale although scale is reduced where ridges are narrower and where hills	This typology could relate to the scale of more extensive plateaux but would dominate the narrow, low ridges, occasional settled areas and	<i>High-medium</i>	There is increased scope to site turbines of this size to reduce effects on scale although more defined hills remain sensitive.	<i>Medium</i>

	have more defined summits and are generally smaller in extent.	the more defined summits of the landmark hills.			
Landform	This landscape generally features smooth gently graded slopes and subtly rounded indistinct hill tops within broader plateaux. However, more distinctive hills with steeper slopes and defined summits also occur and include Lurg Hill and the landmark conical hills of Bin of Cullen and Meikle Balloch.	This typology could relate to the generally simple landform of much of this character type although turbines of this size would detract from more defined hills which form landmark features within this landscape if sited on or close-by them.	Medium	This typology could relate to the generally simple landform of much of this character type although turbines of this size would detract from more defined hills which form landmark features within this landscape if sited on or close-by them.	Medium
Landscape pattern	This landscape has a simple land cover of extensive coniferous forestry with some relatively rare areas of moorland on the summits of more defined hills. Semi-improved fields of pasture occur on lower slopes at the transition with the Upland Farmland (8).	The simple land cover of this landscape reduces sensitivity to this typology.	Low	The simple land cover of this landscape reduces sensitivity to this typology.	Low
Built environment	A sparsely settled landscape with few prominent archaeological and historic built features evident.	The sparsely settled nature of this landscape reduces sensitivity in relation to the setting of settlements and other built features.	Medium-low	The sparsely settled nature of this landscape reduces sensitivity in relation to the setting of settlements and other built features.	Medium-low
Perceptual qualities	Although parts of this landscape may feel secluded away from adjoining settled landscapes, the presence of extensive commercial forestry and wind farm development in some areas limits any sense of wildness.	There would be no significant effects on this sensitivity.	Low	There would be no significant effects on this sensitivity.	Low
Visual amenity	Views from within this landscape are restricted due to the extensive coniferous forest covering much of these upland areas but also because few roads and settlement are present. The exception to this is some of the hills likely to be popular with walkers, including Bin of Cullen	Turbines would be highly intrusive if sited on more defined hills which are likely to be popular with walkers and also form key foci in views. This typology would be likely to be prominent in views from roads and settlement in surrounding character types including the Upland	High	Turbines sited in these upland areas would be particularly intrusive if sited on more defined hills which are likely to be popular with walkers and also form key foci in views. Turbines of this size would be likely to have less of a visual impact provided they were set well back within the core of more	High-medium

	and Meikle Balloch. This character type generally forms low even forested skylines seen from surrounding settled and farmed landscapes – the exception to this being the landmark hills.	Farmland (8), Narrow Valleys within Upland Farmland (8b), Broad Farmed Valley (7) and Coastal Farmland (4).		extensive forested plateaux.	
Cumulative effects	The Hill of Towie wind farm which is located in this character type is prominent in views from the 'Broad Valley Farmland' (7), the 'Upland Farmland' (8) and parts of the 'Valleys within Upland Farmland' (8b) character types. Operational and consented turbines located in the 'Upland Farmland' (8) lie close-by.	Significant cumulative effects would be likely to occur between larger turbines located in the 'Upland Farmland' (8) and this typology sited in nearby areas of the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a). Cumulative effects could occur with other operational and consented developments sited in the wider study area particularly if multiple developments were located on each of the upland plateaux within this character type.	Medium	Significant cumulative effects would be likely to occur between larger turbines located in the 'Upland Farmland' (8) and this typology sited in nearby areas of the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a). Cumulative effects could occur with other operational and consented developments sited in the wider study area particularly if multiple developments were located on each of the upland plateaux within this character type.	Medium

Character type 8a: Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland

Summary of sensitivity

This character type comprises the predominantly forested broader hills and upland plateaux which contain the lower and more settled 'Upland Farmland' (8) within the Isla Valley and its northern tributaries. Although the majority of these more elevated upland areas have a simple landform of gentle slopes, broad indistinct summits and rounded ridges, the more defined conical 'landmark' hills of the Bin of Cullen and Meikle Balloch also occur and these are highly sensitive to turbine development. These upland landscapes are very sparsely settled although they are not extensive and are surrounded by well settled and farmed lowland landscapes increasing sensitivity in relation to wider landscape context and views. While the landmark hills within this character type are visually prominent, forested plateaux and broad ridges form relatively low and even containing skylines to adjacent character types. Sensitivity is increased where parts of these upland areas form the backdrop to Fochabers and Gordon Castle designed landscape. An operational wind farm is located within this character type.

This landscape has an overall ***High-medium*** sensitivity to the large development typology and a ***Medium*** sensitivity to the medium typology.

Smaller typologies

Smaller turbines (below 50m high) would incur similar sensitivities to larger typologies within these landscapes. The more distinct and defined hills and lower plateaux important in providing landmark features and/or the setting to Fochabers and the Gordon Castle designed landscape would remain sensitive. Smaller typologies would be likely to have less of a visual effect on the adjoining 'Upland Farmland' (8) and especially so if sited on lower slopes so back-dropped to some degree by rising ground. Both larger and smaller typologies sited in close proximity within this character type could result in cumulative impacts and these are discussed below.

Cumulative issues

The wind farm development of Hill of Towie is under construction and is/will be highly visible from the 'Broad Farmed Valley' (7), the 'Upland Farmland' (8) and 'Valleys within Upland Farmland' (8b). The two operational single turbines, at Myreton (on Lurg Hill) and at Balnamoon within the adjacent 'Broad Farmed Valley' (8) are highly visible from settlement and roads. Consents for four additional turbines in this area will be likely to accentuate this effect.

Key cumulative landscape and visual issues include:

- Wind farm developments located on the majority of upland plateaux and ridges within this character area which would impact on views from the adjacent 'Upland Farmland' (8), potentially creating a dominant or 'overbearing' effect.
- Close inter-visibility of operational and consented larger turbines sited in the adjacent 'Upland Farmland' (8) character type and any larger typologies sited in nearby parts of the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) which could exacerbate visual clutter and domination of turbines in views from the B9018 and from settlement.

- Additional developments inter-visible with the existing Hill of Towie wind farm on skylines in adjacent character types such as the lower Spey Valley within the 'Coastal Farmlands' (4).
- Potential sequential cumulative visual effects on views from the A95 through Moray and into Aberdeenshire where a number of operational wind farms and small groups of larger turbines are sited.
- Cumulative effects from popular walking routes and hill tops including from the Bin of Cullen and Knock Hill where multiple wind farms and large turbines sited in both Moray and Aberdeenshire would be seen in relative proximity.

Constraints:

- The landmark hills of Meikle Balloch and the Bin of Cullen which have conical and confined open summits which form key foci in views.
- The relatively limited extent of these uplands areas increasing the potential for landscape and visual impact on smaller scale settled landscapes.
- Whiteash Hill which is important in providing the wider setting to Gordon Castle designed landscape and Fochabers.

Opportunities:

- The simple gently undulating landform, uniform land cover, very sparse settlement and medium to large scale of the plateau-like hills of this landscape

Guidance on development

There is no scope to accommodate the large typology due principally to the limited extent of these upland landscapes which increases the potential for impacts on adjacent settled landscapes.

There is some scope to accommodate the medium typology (turbines 50-80m) within this landscape. Turbines should be set well back into the interior of the more extensive undulating upland plateau where gentle undulations in landform would provide a degree of containment and allow for adequate separation to occur, thus minimising intrusion on adjoining well-settled character types.

Smaller typologies would fit better with the reduced scale of narrower ridges and lower hill slopes (which tend to immediately overlook more settled landscapes) in this character type. Care should be taken to avoid close inter-visibility between smaller and larger typologies and on-going monitoring will be necessary to consider cumulative effects and capacity both within this character type and the adjacent 'Upland Farmland' (8).

All turbines should avoid being sited on, or close by, the more defined landmark hills of Bin of Cullen and Meikle Balloch. Development should also be sited to avoid significant intrusion on the designed landscape of Gordon Castle and on the setting of Fochabers.

Further guidance is provided on the siting and design of smaller typologies in section 5 of the main study report.



Existing wind farm development is sited within this landscape



This upland landscape forms generally low and even forested skylines to adjacent more settled landscapes, such as the 'Coastal Farmland with Rolling Hills' (4a).



Occasional 'landmark' hills occur within this landscape and include the Bin of Cullen



Whiteash Hill Wood provides an immediate backdrop to Gordon Castle designed landscape and to Fochabers.

Character Type 8a: Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland

Landscape Character Type 8b: Valleys within Upland Farmland

Introduction

The Upland Farmland character type occurs in a single area within Moray. This is an extensive area with considerable variation in character as it comprises narrow contained valleys, more extensive farmland and sparsely settled forested plateau and hill tops.

The valley of the River Fiddich between Dufftown and Craigellachie and the valley east of Ben Aigen, which were classified as Upland Farmland (8) in the Moray and Nairn landscape assessment, have been incorporated into the adjacent 'Broad Farmed Valley' (7) character type due to their similarities of landform, land cover and scale. The more extensive areas of farmland situated at the core of this character type have been retained as character type 8 Upland Farmland while the remainder of this landscape has been sub-divided as follows:

- 8a: 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland'
- 8b: 'Narrow valleys within Upland Farmland'

This assessment considers the sensitivity of both larger and smaller development typologies within the 'Valleys within Upland Farmland' (8b) character sub-type. This landscape comprises the valleys of the River Deveron in the far eastern corner of Moray, the River of Deskford (which is partially defined as the 'Coastal Farmland' (4) in the Moray and Nairn Landscape Assessment), the Burn of Mulben and the upper reaches of the River Isla.

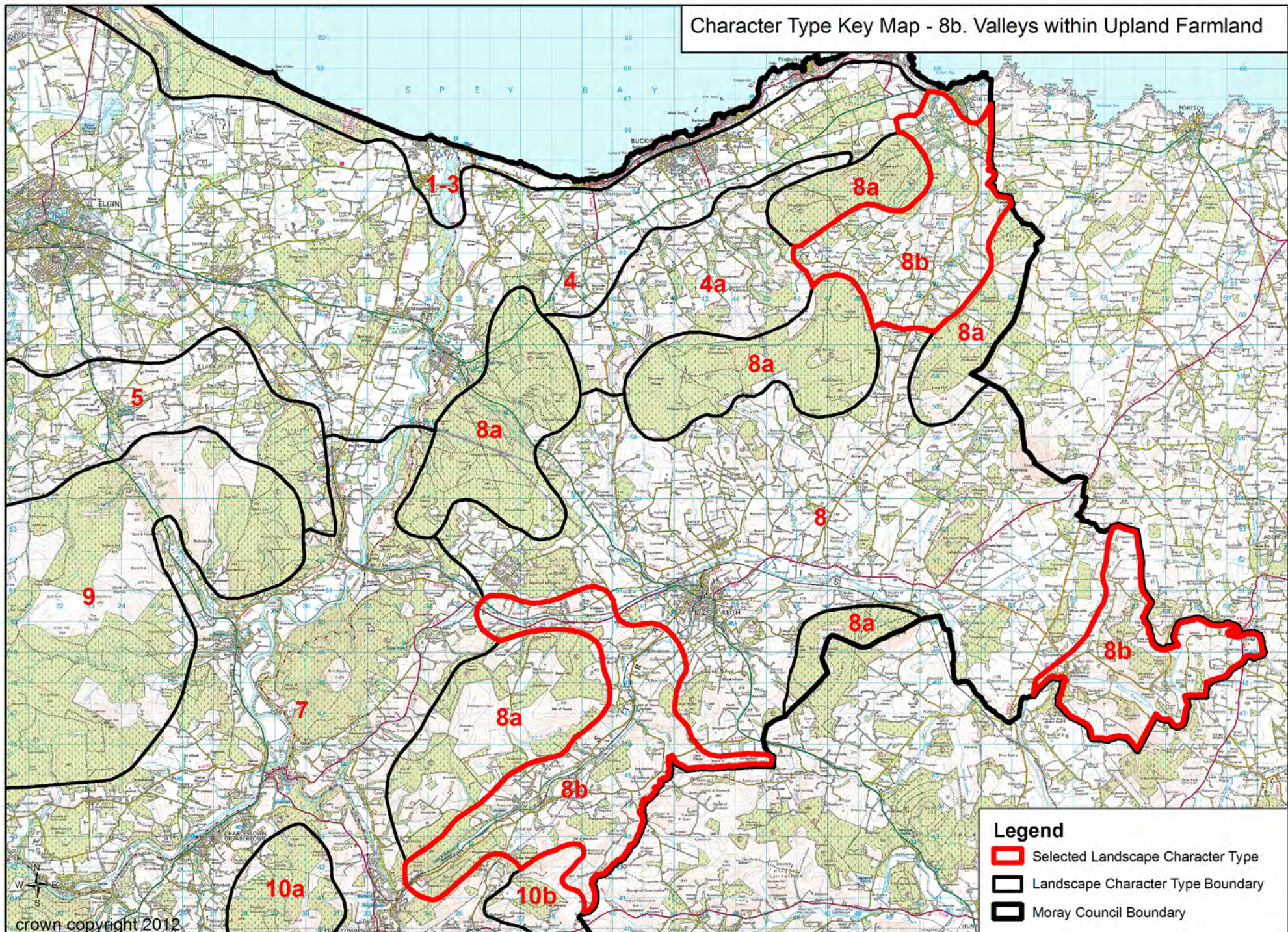
Operational and consented wind farm development

No existing commercial wind farm developments are located in this character type although some single small turbines were noted during our field work.

The Hill of Towie wind farm (21 turbines at 100 m height) located in the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) is visible in close views from parts of the Isla Valley.

Two operational single turbines, one at Balnamoon (70m) and one 80m high at Myreton Crossroads are located in the adjacent 'Upland Farmland' (8) character type. A further 4 turbines, ranging from 89m to 92m high, have also been consented close to one of these operational single turbines, on the lower south west facing slopes of Lurg Hill and these developments may be visible from parts of the Deskford Valley.

Character Type Key Map - 8b. Valleys within Upland Farmland



Landscape character type 8b: Valleys within Upland Farmland – Sensitivity assessment for larger typologies

Topic	Summary description	Large scale typology assessment (80-130m)	Sensitivity rating	Medium scale typology assessment (50-80m)	Sensitivity rating
Landscape context	These valleys have a limited influence on adjacent character types due to their strong containment. They are seen in conjunction with the adjacent upland area of 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a). Where the richly patterned landscape of the Deskford, Deveron and parts of the Isla valleys are juxtaposed with the more defined hills within (8a), scenic composition is enhanced.	Turbines of this size could detract from key views to the more distinctive hills within the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) where these are scenically juxtaposed with the valleys.	Medium	Turbines of this size could detract from key views to the more distinctive hills within the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) where these are scenically juxtaposed with the valleys.	Medium
Scale and openness	These narrow valleys are strongly contained by adjacent upland areas. The upper Isla and Deveron form winding valleys which limit visibility and give an intimate scale in places. The Deskford and Mulben valleys are more linear in form. Scale is increased where broader slopes and terraces open out on the west side of the Deskford and along parts of the Isla. The often well-wooded character of these valleys and the presence of small houses and farms further reduce scale.	This typology would dominate the small scale of these contained and well-settled valleys.	High	This typology would dominate the small scale of these contained and well-settled valleys.	High
Landform	Valley floors are narrow with occasional flatter floodplain areas. Steep lower slopes give way to more rolling broader upper slopes, on the south-east side of the Isla and west of the Deskford valley. Landform is more complex, with	It would be physically difficult to accommodate turbines of this size on steep slopes. This typology would detract from areas of more complex interlocking landform and from the small open floodplain areas which contribute to the	High	It would be physically difficult to accommodate turbines of this size on steep slopes. This typology would detract from areas of more complex interlocking landform and from the small open floodplain areas which contribute to the diversity of these	High

	steep slopes and interlocking hills in places, for example within the Deveron valley. Small rounded hills and ridges on the edge of these valleys at the transition with the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) contain and provide the backdrop to these valleys.	diversity of these landscapes. Broader, more gently undulating upper hill slopes and terraces would be less sensitive although these areas are not extensive and the numbers of turbines that could be accommodated would be limited.		landscapes. Broader, more gently undulating upper hill slopes and terraces would be less sensitive although these areas are not extensive and the numbers of turbines that could be accommodated would be limited.	
Landscape pattern	This landscape is often richly patterned with a mix of enclosed pastures and some arable land, policy woodlands, a strong pattern of shelterbelts, field trees and avenue plantings in the Isla, Deveron and parts of the Deskford valley. Small pockets of wetland occur on the floor of some valleys.	This typology would detract from more diverse areas where policy woodlands and a strong pattern of shelterbelts, field trees and avenues are present. Multiple developments of large turbines across these valleys would have a greater effect.	High-medium	This typology would detract from more diverse areas where policy woodlands and a strong pattern of shelterbelts, field trees and avenues are present. Multiple developments of large turbines across these valleys would have a greater effect.	High-medium
Built environment	These valleys are well-settled with small villages, dispersed farms and houses and occasional grand houses and castles evenly distributed across the slopes above the floodplain. Archaeological features are more visually evident in the Deveron valley. Roads are aligned through these valleys and power lines are routed through the Isla and Deskford valleys.	The setting of small settlements, mansion houses/castles and their designed landscapes and archaeological features which make a contribution to character would be sensitive to this typology. There are few less settled areas within these valleys where larger typologies could be accommodated without affecting settlement and other features. Turbines of this size could also have cumulative effects with power lines in the Isla and Deskford valleys.	High-medium	The setting of small settlements, grand houses/castles and their designed landscapes and archaeological features which make a contribution to character would be sensitive to this typology. There are few less settled areas within these valleys where larger typologies could be accommodated without affecting settlement and other features. Turbines of this size could also have cumulative effects with power lines in the Isla and Deskford valleys.	High-medium
Perceptual qualities	Although these well-settled and managed valleys have no pronounced sense of wildness, the steep-sided sinuous valley of the Deveron, together with its rich built heritage and designed landscapes, can instil a distinct sense of place.	There would be limited effects on key perceptual qualities within the majority of this landscape.	Medium-low	There would be limited effects on key perceptual qualities within the majority of this landscape.	Medium-low

Visual amenity	<p>These valleys are well-settled and also contain a number of main roads. Views beyond the valley are limited however due to their containment by adjacent upland areas.</p> <p>There are few views to these valleys from adjacent character types although the more popularly walked hills, such as the Binn of Cullen and Gallow Hill, will provide elevated views of the Deskford and Deveron Valleys.</p>	<p>Turbines of this height would be highly visible within these valleys and would be seen in close proximity to settlement and roads increasing impact. Cumulative visual effects could occur between existing/consented turbines sited in the 'Upland Farmland' (8) (seen from the Deskford valley) and from the Hill of Towie wind farm sited within the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) (seen from the Isla).</p> <p>Turbines of this size could interrupt key views to the Binn of Cullen within the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a). Views from adjacent character types would be likely to be limited due to the visual containment of these valleys.</p>	High	<p>Turbines of this height would be highly visible within these valleys and would be seen in close proximity to settlement and roads increasing potential impact. Cumulative visual effects could occur between existing/consented turbines sited in the 'Upland Farmland' (8) (seen from the Deskford valley) and from the Hill of Towie wind farm sited within the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) (seen from the Isla). Turbines of this size could interrupt key views to the Binn of Cullen within the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a). Views from adjacent character types would be likely to be limited due to the visual containment of these valleys.</p>	High
Cumulative effects	<p>The Hill of Towie wind farm is prominent in views from the western end of the Isla valley.</p>	<p>Cumulative effects could arise in the Isla and Deskford valleys with operational and consented wind farm and turbine developments sited in adjacent landscape character types.</p>	Medium	<p>Cumulative effects could arise in the Isla and Deskford valleys with operational and consented wind farm and turbine developments sited in adjacent landscape character types.</p>	Medium

Landscape character type 8b: Valleys within Upland Farmland – Sensitivity assessment for smaller typologies

Topic	Summary description	Small-medium typology assessment (35-50m)	Sensitivity rating	Small scale typology assessment (20-35m)	Sensitivity rating
Landscape context	These valleys have a limited influence on adjacent character types due to their strong containment. They are seen in conjunction with the adjacent upland area of 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a). Where the richly patterned landscape of the Deskford, Deveron and parts of the Isla valleys are juxtaposed with the more defined hills within (8a), scenic composition is enhanced.	Turbines of this size could detract from the backdrop of more distinctive hills within the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) where these are scenically juxtaposed with the valleys although there is increased scope to site turbines of this size to avoid such impacts. Cumulative effects could arise in the Isla with existing wind farm development if turbines were sited on upper slopes and seen close-by.	Medium-low	There would be greater opportunities to locate this typology to avoid impact on adjacent character types and overall scenic composition.	Low
Scale and openness	These narrow valleys are strongly contained by adjacent upland areas. The upper Isla and Deveron form winding valleys which limit visibility and give an intimate scale in places. The Deskford and Mulben valleys are more linear in form. Scale is increased where broader slopes and terraces open out on the west side of the Deskford and along parts of the Isla. The often well-wooded character of these valleys and the presence of small houses and farms further reduce scale.	This typology would dominate the small scale of these valleys where they are strongly contained by steep slopes within the valley floor and lower slopes. Turbines of this size would appear large in relation to houses and woodlands. There are few less well-settled areas within these valleys although upper hill slopes at the transition with the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) would be less sensitive. Multiple turbines of this size associated with a number of land holdings would appear cumulatively to 'fill' the narrow extent of these valleys.	High-medium	Turbines towards the upper height band of this typology would also appear large in relation to settlement and woodlands and could dominate the more strongly contained lower parts of these valleys. There would be increased scope to accommodate this small typology within the broader, less densely settled upper hill slopes at the transition with the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) where it would have less of an effect on landscape scale. There would also be greater scope to accommodate multiple turbines towards the lower height band of this typology to avoid cumulative impacts on scale.	Medium
Landform	Valley floors are narrow with occasional flatter floodplain areas. Steep lower slopes give way to more rolling broader upper slopes,	Turbines would detract from areas of more complex interlocking landform and from the small open floodplain areas which contribute to	High-medium	Turbines would detract from areas of more complex interlocking landform and from the small open floodplain areas which contribute to the diversity	Medium

	on the south-east side of the Isla and west of the Deskford valley. Landform is more complex, with steep slopes and interlocking hills in places, for example within the Deveron valley. Small rounded hills and ridges on the edge of these valleys at the transition with the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) contain and provide the backdrop to these valleys.	the diversity of these landscapes. Broader, more gently undulating upper hill slopes and terraces would be less sensitive.		of these landscapes although there is greater scope to accommodate turbines of this size within broader, more gently undulating upper hill slopes and terraces.	
Landscape pattern	This landscape is often richly patterned with a mix of enclosed pastures and some arable land, policy woodlands, a strong pattern of shelterbelts, field trees and avenue plantings in the Isla, Deveron and parts of the Deskford valley. Small pockets of wetland occur on the floor of some valleys.	There are opportunities for this typology to minimise effects on areas with a more diverse land cover pattern although multiple turbines of this size repeated across these valleys would still introduce new features that could cumulatively detract from the rich land cover pattern characteristic of these valleys.	Medium	There are greater opportunities to locate this small typology to avoid impacts on more diverse land cover. Multiple turbines towards the lower height band of this typology would be likely to have reduced cumulative effects.	Medium-low
Built environment	These valleys are well-settled with small villages, dispersed farms and houses and occasional grand houses and castles evenly distributed across the slopes above the floodplain. Archaeological features are more visually evident in the Deveron valley. Roads are aligned through these valleys and power lines are routed through the Isla and Deskford valleys.	The setting of small settlements, grand houses/castles and their designed landscapes would be sensitive to this typology. There is scope to site turbines of this size to minimise impacts on more densely settled areas and on other built features. Turbines of this size could also have cumulative effects with power lines in the Isla and Deskford valleys if sited nearby.	Medium	Less densely settled upper slopes offer opportunities for this typology to be sited while minimising effects setting.	Medium-low
Perceptual qualities	Although these well-settled and managed valleys have no pronounced sense of wildness, the steep-sided sinuous valley of the Deveron, together with its rich built heritage and designed landscapes,	There would be no effect on this sensitivity.	Low	There would be no effect on this sensitivity.	Low

	can instil a distinct sense of place.				
Visual amenity	<p>These valleys are well-settled and also contain a number of main roads. Views beyond the valley are limited however due to their containment by adjacent upland areas.</p> <p>There are few views to these valleys from adjacent character types although the more popularly walked hills, such as the Binn of Cullen and Gallow Hill, will provide elevated views of the Deskford and Deveron Valleys.</p>	<p>Turbines of this height would be highly visible if sited in the lower valley areas although broader upper hill slopes set back from main concentrations of settlement and main roads would be less visually sensitive. Cumulative visual effects could still occur between existing/consented turbines sited in the 'Upland Farmland' (8) (seen from the Deskford valley) and from the Hill of Towie wind farm sited within the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) (seen from the Isla) if turbines towards the upper height band of this typology were sited close-by.</p> <p>Turbines of this size could interrupt key views to the Binn of Cullen within the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a). Views from adjacent character types would be likely to be limited due to the visual containment of these valleys.</p>	High-med	<p>This typology would have less of an effect on views from settlement and roads provided turbines were set back on broader upper slopes and terraces and avoided intrusion on key views to distinctive hills with (8a).</p> <p>Cumulative visual effects with existing wind farm developments sited in (8a) would be reduced due to the clear size differential between turbines.</p>	Medium
Cumulative effects	The Hill of Towie wind farm is prominent in views from the western end of the Isla valley.		Medium-low		Low

Character type 8b: Narrow Valleys within Upland Farmland

Summary of sensitivity

The valleys of the upper Isla, Deskford, Deveron and Mulben are strongly contained by steep farmed and wooded slopes. They are generally narrow and have a small to medium scale which is reinforced by their well-settled character. The adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) form immediate skyline ridges seen from these valleys. These valleys often have a diverse land cover with mixed policy woodlands and a distinctive pattern of shelterbelts and avenue trees adding to the richness of well-managed farmland. Although these valleys are not readily visible from adjacent character types due to their visual containment, they are well-settled and contain a number of main roads increasing visual sensitivity.

This landscape has an overall **High** sensitivity to both the large and medium typologies. It has a **High-medium** sensitivity to the small-medium typology and a **Medium** landscape sensitivity to the small typology.

Cumulative issues

The wind farm development of Hill of Towie in the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) is under construction and is highly visible from this settled area. Two single turbines and 4 additional consented turbines (all between 70-92m high) lie close to the Deskford valley in the Hill of Lurg area within the 'Upland Farmland' (8).

Key cumulative landscape and visual issues include:

- Multiple turbines of even the small typology (20-35m) could result in significant visual clutter and detract from the often richly patterned character of these valleys, particularly where they are narrow and strongly confined by steep slopes.
- Wind farm developments located on the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) where large turbines could have a dominant and 'over-bearing' effect on this character type, especially if 'perched' close to the edge on immediate skylines which contain these valleys.
- An absence of rationale between large turbines sited in the less settled, simpler and more expansive 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) and also within these more settled smaller scale valleys which could lead to visual confusion and erode perceived differences in landscape character.

Constraints:

- The presence of small scale features such as farms and houses, enclosed fields and woodlands which provide ready scale references.
- Incised and narrow valley floors and the more complex rolling landform of upper slopes and shapely small hills within the upper Isla and Deveron valleys
- The often rich diversity of land cover which includes policy woodlands, a strong pattern of shelterbelts, field and avenue trees, enclosed fields and occasional pockets of wetland within valley floors.
- The setting to grand houses/castles and their policies.
- Cumulative effects with larger typologies clearly associated with broader simpler upland areas.
- Views to the landmark hill of the Bin of Cullen from the Deskford valley.

- Consideration of cumulative effects associated with multiple turbines which could potentially be associated with the majority of land holdings.

Opportunities:

- Broader, more gently sloping upper valley sides and more extensive undulating terraces, usually at the transition with the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) which could best relate to the size of smaller typologies (although potential cumulative effects with any larger typologies sited in 8a would need to be considered).

Guidance on development

There is no scope to accommodate the larger typologies due to the likely adverse effects on the scale of these often narrow and strongly contained valleys and the presence of an even dispersal of buildings, woodlands and other small features. Larger typologies would also detract from areas with a particularly diverse land cover pattern and would result in cumulative landscape and visual effects with existing wind farm developments sited in the adjacent 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) character type, which are already visible from some of these valleys.

The small-medium typology would also appear very large in relation to the small scale and often narrow extent of the majority of these valleys. This typology would also be more likely to have significant cumulative effects if closely inter-visible with operational and consented larger typologies within adjacent character types. There may be some **limited** opportunity however for turbines towards the lower height band of this typology to be accommodated within upper slopes and terraces within the broader valleys. The setting and views to the landmark hill of the Bin of Cullen and potential cumulative issues associated with any development within the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) will be key constraints however.

There is **some** increased scope to accommodate the small typology (turbines 20-35m) which would fit better with the scale of narrower valleys..

Turbines should be sited on gentler and more open slopes and terraces, avoiding areas with a more pronounced pattern of trees and policy woodlands. They should avoid being sited close to existing wind farm development (which is already visible in parts of the upper Isla) in the 'Broad Forested Hills within Upland Farmland' (8a) in order to avoid visual clutter associated with different turbine sizes and design. Areas with a more complex rolling landform and the incised and often intimately scaled valley floors should also be avoided as should intrusion on the setting to archaeological features and mansion houses and their designed landscapes.

Detailed guidance on the siting and design of smaller turbines is set out in section 5 of the main study report.



More open farmland within valley floors and on lower hill slopes



Low, rounded and interlocking hills contain these river valleys – settlement often extends high on upper slopes.



Mixed policy woodlands, avenue and field trees are a key feature of these sheltered valleys.



The Deveron has a convoluted alignment and this, together with its strong containment by steep slopes, lends it an intimate scale.

Character Type 8b: Valleys within Upland Farmland