

**Wind Energy Project at Ascog Farm
Response to SNH and Argyll and Bute Council
comments dated 10/12/2012 and 11/12/2012**

Prepared for: Argyll and Bute Council

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1 Ascog Wind Energy Project – Additional LVIA Information

This document has been prepared by AMEC Environment and Infrastructure UK Ltd on behalf of SAC Consulting

1.1 Introduction

The Ascog Wind Farm application was submitted to Argyll and Bute Council in October 2012. We have received responses from both Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Argyll and Bute Council (ABC).

SNH in their consultation response¹ raised a number of concerns regards landscape and visual effects regards scale and the proposed siting of the turbines in a sensitive location as outlined below:

- Impact on Argyll and Bute's coastal landscape;
- Bute Rolling Farmland with Estates landscape character type (LCT);
- Potential to effect Kyles of Bute National Scenic Area (NSA) as illustrated by viewpoint 7 – Strone Point; and
- Contrary to recommendations of Argyll and Bute Wind Energy Capacity Study (March 2012);
 - *“...Scale disparity between the height of the turbines and the hill on which they sit as illustrated, by, ...for example viewpoints... 1, 3 and 10.”*

ABC in their consultation response² state that the application will require to be considered by the Council's Planning Committee. ABC state that they share the views of SNH and require three further viewpoints to be considered. Further viewpoints requested are located at:

- Road adjacent to dwelling at Braeside to the west of the application site;
- B881 public road between Lochend and Crossbeg; and
- Weymss Bay to Rothesay ferry crossing.

¹ SNH Consultation Response dated 10 December 2012, Annex 1.

² ABC letter dated 11 December 2012

This Technical Note responds to SNH's comments and is accompanied by three additional visualisations as detailed above (Figures 7.36 a and b to 7.38a and b) as requested by ABC.

1.2 Impact on Argyll and Bute's Coastal Landscape

SNH state that:

"The proposal will have significant adverse landscape and visual impacts on an area of Argyll and Bute's coastal landscape which is distinct and recognised as being a resource of regional importance (within an Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ))."

All wind farms will unavoidably have a significant effect on the underlying landscape character. We do not agree that a significant effect on a locally designated landscape is a valid reason for refusal and would point out that many existing wind farms have been consented within locally designated landscapes. We acknowledge that the proposal is within a general landscape of higher sensitivity in overall terms, but have shown that the local landscape specifics of this site within the wider LCT are of medium landscape sensitivity with the associated landscape elements typical of a lower landscape sensitivity specifically to this development. Further to this we have shown that the proposed scale and number of the turbines (3 turbines each 50m to hub) is appropriate especially given that only three turbines are proposed.

Please refer to the extract below from the original ES dated April 2012 (Section 7.6.8 Direct Effects on Landscape Designations):

"The proposed Ascog Wind Energy Project site is not designated at a national level although it is designated at a local level as an Area of Panoramic Quality (APQ). The APQ is illustrated on Figure 7.6a where it can be seen that the designated area extends to a total area of 321km² which includes the whole of the Isle of Bute. The sensitivity of the locally designated landscape to wind farm development is medium on account of its medium landscape quality and value and low to moderate landscape capacity. The magnitude of landscape change as a result of the proposed Ascog wind cluster would vary depending on distance from the turbines. Significant effects (very high and high magnitudes) would occur at distances of up to 800m from the proposed turbines. Elsewhere the magnitude would vary between medium and zero and would be negligible overall. The level of effect overall would be Slight / Negligible and not significant."

The magnitude of change was assessed as “negligible (zero to negligible during construction and decommissioning)” and the overall level of effect was “slight / negligible and not significant”.

Cumulative viewpoint analysis for existing, consented and application wind farms, and Ascog Wind Energy Project concluded that the magnitude of change was slight/negligible, on account of the existing Wind Farms on the main land. The cumulative level of effect would be slight/negligible and not significant.

1.3 Impact on Bute Rolling Farmland with Estates Landscape Character Type (LCT)

SNH state that:

“The development will erode the existing important qualities of the “Bute Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT, setting a precedent for further development of this type and scale in this sensitive landscape setting.”

We consider that the LCT may have greater sensitivity to taller turbines (typically above 100 m to blade tip). However, the turbines proposed at Ascog are not considered to be the ‘tall’ typology and are relatively modest in height and turbine number, in comparison with wind farms elsewhere in the Firth of Clyde. Importantly the Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT can be divided into two sub-character types: those areas of ‘rolling farmland’ and those areas of ‘estate landscape’ the latter of which are of a higher sensitivity. The broad scale of the Argyll and Bute Wind Energy Capacity Study does not examine the landscape at a local scale and therefore does not take account of this local variation in landscape character and capacity.

Please refer to section 7.6.6 of the original ES dated April 2012 extract below:

“Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT

The Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT is the ‘host’ landscape covering a much wider area than the Ascog Wind Cluster site and the effects would be both direct and indirect (affecting visual and perceptual characteristics of the landscape).

The proposed Ascog Wind Cluster would be located within the Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT. The key landscape characteristics of this LCT relevant to the study are as follows:

- *Broad, rounded ridges with occasional steep banks, knolls and conical upstanding hills;*

- *Groups of fairly large, rectangular fields, enclosed by linear shelterbelts and blocks of mixed woodland:*
- *Stone walls, follies, beech hedgerows and estate policy woodlands;*
- *Numerous hedgerows trees, often forming avenues along lanes;*
- *Scattered large farmsteads in countryside;*
- *Urban development on coastal plain and broader vales.*

Landscape Sensitivity

The landscape quality and value of the Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT are considered medium to high on account of the Area of Panoramic Quality landscape designation which covers the entire LCT.

In terms of landscape capacity, the Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT displays a number of characteristics that indicate some capacity for wind farm development including the broad, rounded ridges and fairly large, rectangular fields, and visual screening by linear shelterbelts and blocks of mixed woodland.

However, this is balanced with the visual sensitivity of this LCT which increases with proximity to the coast.

There are no other existing wind energy developments within the LCT suggesting a low to moderate capacity for further wind energy development within this LCA. Overall, the capacity of the Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT is considered to be medium.

For the reasons described above, the overall landscape sensitivity is medium.

Magnitude of Change and Level of Effect

The proposed Ascog Wind Cluster would not affect the physical characteristics of the Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT as listed within the SNH Argyll and Firth of Clyde Landscape Character Assessment (such as the topography or the field pattern), albeit there would be some affects on the key visual / perceptual characteristics not least by introducing a new feature to the landscape (wind turbines), although this must be seen in the context of a contemporary landscape and busy water way with ferries, coastal settlement, and infrastructure. Due to the rolling and hilly nature of the surrounding landform the ZTV pattern within the Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT is broken up and there are coastal locations and inland areas which are outside the ZTV and would be unaffected.

*The area immediately surrounding the turbines (approximately 800 m radius from the nearest turbine) would be subject to very high and high magnitudes of landscape change and significant landscape effects would occur. Beyond this distance, within the Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT, the wind cluster would reduce in terms of its landscape effects and there would frequently be physical separation between the turbines and the landscape receptors by intervening landform, reducing the potential for significant indirect landscape effects. Given the ZTV coverage and the relatively small area in which significant effects would occur, the overall magnitude affecting the entire LCT as a result of Ascog Wind Energy Project would be low. The level of effect would be **Moderate** and not significant.*

The type of effect would be negative in respect of the unavoidable introduction of turbines to the rural landscape in terms of their large scale, moving, man-made character, and form; although equally these aspects could be viewed as neutral given the large scale, open character of the receiving landscape, in which the proposed Ascog Wind Cluster could be reasonably well accommodated. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible) direct and indirect.

Cumulative Landscape Assessment

There are no existing, consented or proposed wind farms located within the Lowland Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT and there would be no cumulative landscape effects.”

As demonstrated above it is our view that the Ascog Wind Cluster would co-exist with the existing landscape. The proposed small scale of the turbines and their limited number would not erode the underlying landscape character.

We do not consider that it is reasonable to suggest that the Ascog Wind Energy Project would set:

“ a precedent for further development of this type and scale in this sensitive landscape setting”

There are currently no other wind farm proposals and there may never be other proposals in this area – this is an unknown quantity. The proposed wind farm has been demonstrated to be of an appropriate size and scale to its proposed location within an area of medium sensitivity. Any future wind farm proposals within the vicinity of Ascog would be judged on their own merits within the planning process. If demonstrable harm was shown they could then be refused on cumulative grounds.

1.4 Potential to effect Kyles of Bute National Scenic Area (NSA)

SNH state that:

“The proposal has the potential to affect the integrity of the Kyles and Bute National Scenic Area as the development will introduce wind turbines into views from the same as illustrated by viewpoint 7_ Strone Point”

The original ES dated April 2012 demonstrates the effect on the Kyles of Bute National Scenic Area to be slight and not significant. Please refer to extract below from the original ES Table 7.10.

Indirect Effects on Designated Landscapes within the Surrounding Area:

“ This NSA is located 9km to the northwest of the nearest proposed turbine at its closest point. The special qualities of “the NSA relevant to the assessment are the juxtaposition of human settlement and a wider undeveloped landscape of sea and hills. The type of effect is illustrated in viewpoint 7 (negligible magnitude). ZTV coverage is limited and accounts for ~10% of the designated area and is concentrated on the northern shores of the Kyles around Colintrave. The sensitivity is high. Given the distance of view and the large unaffected areas, the level of effect of the proposed turbines at Ascog would be Slight.

*Cumulative Assessment: There would be theoretical visibility of all the other windfarms most relevant to the cumulative assessment and illustrated on Figure 7.10. Cruach Mhor (existing wind farm) would be at minimum viewing distances of ~5km and the North Ayrshire schemes would be at minimum viewing distances of ~20km and the level of cumulative effect would remain as **Slight.**”*

SNH appear to infer by their statement above that the proposed turbines at Ascog would ‘introduce’ a new feature into the landscape. There are already a number of wind farms visible from the NSA and the addition of the small scale scheme at Ascog consisting of three turbines would not affect the integrity of the NSA.

1.5 Argyll and Bute Wind Energy Capacity Study

Please refer to section 7.2.3 of the original Environmental Statement dated April 2012 regards Landscape Capacity Assessment extract below:

“The relevant current capacity assessment report is *Assessment of the Sensitivity of Landscapes to Windfarm Development in Argyll and Bute*, (Land Use Consultants for Scottish Natural Heritage and Argyll and Bute Council, 2002).

The site area is deemed to be located within a Landscape Character Area (LCA) of “*moderate*” sensitivity to windfarms and the capacity and sensitivity of the landscape from field work carried out is one of inherent “*lower capacity and higher sensitivity*”. It is considered however that this inherent or generic assessment would vary according to the type, scale and design of the proposed development. A well designed wind farm development may, for example, be considered acceptable within a landscape of lower capacity or moderate / higher sensitivity subject to detailed assessment of the landscape and visual effects.”

Professionally, and through case studies tested at Public Inquiry, it is known that any capacity study is merely a starting point as an indication of sensitivity; the detailed Environmental Statement for Ascog Wind Cluster would take precedence and should be held as of higher relevance. Further to this the capacity study is based on the assumption that turbines within the 50-80 m height bracket (as those proposed at Ascog) are not assessed. In fact the capacity study does not cover the current Ascog Wind Cluster application. We understand that the overall visual sensitivity is considered by the capacity study to be high for the medium typology 50-80 m blade tip height but would assert that we have shown this generic sensitivity does not apply to the application site which we have shown to be of medium sensitivity due to existing lower quality landscape due to the presence of the sewage works and other manmade features.

Although there are no other operational or consented schemes within this character type many are visible from within its boundaries. Further to this, the proposed scheme utilises smaller turbines and a restricted number appropriate to the existing landscape.

1.6 Scale disparity between the height of the turbines and the hill on which they sit

We acknowledge that the proposed site is of some visual prominence in the landscape from some views (visible to visitors from the ferry for example). However there is precedence for this – the Section 36 consented Wind Farm at Stornaway is far larger than the one proposed at Ascog and far more prominent.

The proposed site should not be considered on its own but within its wider setting. The summit of Ascog Hill is approximately 30 m lower than that of the more locally prominent landform at Common Hill directly to the north. The summit of Ascog Hill is approximately 104 m AOD, the summit of Common Hill approximately 132 m AOD. Further south the hills of Arran rise to approximately 874 m AOD (Goat Fell) with the backdrop of the hills on the Kintyre Peninsula further south and west. When the Ascog site is viewed in context, the proposed turbines may not be considered to be out of scale. The small number of proposed turbines is also in keeping with the scale of the location.

Wind turbines are by their very nature tall - It is part of the appeal of wind turbines in that this is what can make them awe inspiring as well as tall. We would consider that the SNH advice regards turbines preferably being one third the height of the hills is debateable and many existing and consented wind farms do not and cannot comply with this from all vantage points. When read as a whole, the guidance would seem to imply that this is a general visual design consideration – viewing the turbine design in the round and considering the effects of perspective. It is not considered to be a judgement that should be reduced to a ‘mathematical calculation’. Otherwise there would never be wind farms consented with a lowland (i.e. flat) landscape which is clearly not the case. Even so it is only from Viewpoint 1 that this preference is in question as for all other viewpoints we consider we have demonstrated that both the size and scale of the proposed wind farm are appropriate to their location.

SNH believe their perceived scale disparity is demonstrated by viewpoints 1 – Common Hill, viewpoint 3 – Rothesay, Viewpoint 8 A78, Knock Castle and Viewpoint 10 Wemyss Bay to Rothesay Ferry route and that the proposed turbines at Ascog ‘overwhelm the distinctive skyline of Bute’. We do not agree with this observation as follows:

Viewpoint 3 - Rothesay (Figure 7.15 a and b). The turbines are largely screened by local topography and vegetation even in the winter months. They occupy only a small section of the horizontal view and fit the ‘1/3’ preference in the vertical dimension.

Viewpoint 8 – A78 – Knock Castle (Figure 7.20 a and b) The turbines are viewed at a distance of over 9km. They occupy a very small extent of the overall horizon and their vertical scale is appropriate to the adjacent hills to the north, south and west.

Viewpoint 10 – Weymss Bay to Rothesay Ferry Route (Please also refer to additional viewpoint 3 figure 7.38 a and b) These are shown at a distance of 9,201 m and approximately 4,571 m respectively. The turbines occupy a very small extent of the overall horizontal view, there is no turbine overlapping and they appear as a neat and coherent cluster on the horizon. Vertically the scale is appropriate to the wider landscape typified by the summits of hills to the north, south and west. Other large scale wind farms (in terms of both height and numbers of turbines) exist in the wider 360 degree view from these locations notably those in North Ayrshire to the south and east.

We acknowledge that Viewpoint 1 may be considered not to comply SNH's preferences in terms of vertical scale but would ask what wind farm can, when viewed at such close proximity. We advise that this is a limited view, experienced from a small area.

1.7 Additional Viewpoints

Please refer to additional Figures 7.36a and b to 7.38a and b, which provide existing photographs, wireframes and montages (except for Viewpoint 24 Weymss Bay to Rothesay Ferry route where it was not possible to provide a montage due to the motion of the ferry) for the additional three viewpoints requested by ABC letter dated 12th December 2012. Please also refer to the amended viewpoint analysis which refers to these additional views in the revised Appendix 7C and is summarised below: Please note that the effects identified below ranged from *slight to moderate and not significant* to *substantial and significant* from the two dwellings at Braeside.

Figure 7/36a/b	Viewpoint 22: Minor public road adjacent to Braeside
Description	<p>This viewpoint on the minor public road adjacent to the residential property at Braeside at 406m distance.</p> <p>The view from this section of the minor public road adjacent to the property at Braeside looks towards the hill of though the view is partially screened by intervening vegetation, roadside hedges and telegraph poles. To the base of the hill is a sewage works and associated ancillary structures. Further south and west lies the Loch Ascog reservoir and concrete dam, sluice and associated built structures. To the south and west a dramatic backdrop to the view is formed by the hills to the south. To the east at the northern foot of Ascog Hill are glimpsed views through to the Firth of Clyde and the mainland beyond. Please note that the actual property at Braeside was considered in the residential assessment included in the Environmental Statement.</p>
Sensitivity	<p>This viewpoint was requested by ABC and is within the Argyll and Bute Area of Panoramic Quality. It is experienced by road users receptors that are considered to be of medium sensitivity from the road . Two properties adjacent to this view point are on elevated ground from the road and would be of high sensitivity.</p>
Mitigation	<p>The design and scale of the turbines has evolved to minimise visual effects and the colour of the turbines would be a pale grey to reduce their visibility when viewed against the background sky. The turbines are evenly spaced forming a coherent pattern and their perceived height falls from north to south following the</p>

	curvature of Ascog hill.	
Magnitude of Change	<p><u>Whilst in Operation:</u></p> <p>All three turbines would be visible in this view as an evenly spaced and coherent group of turbines. All three turbines would openly be visible with little or no screening provided by existing vegetation or built structures. The towers and blade tips below the hubs of the three turbines are visible on the horizon against the sky. They would represent the introduction of new and relatively prominent, rotating, features to the view. However many manmade structures are already prominent in this view including the sewage works to the base of the hill and the man made elements of the reservoir.</p> <p>However, the three turbines would take up a relatively small proportion of the overall horizontal angle of view (AOV) and appear as simple and coherent almost sculptural features in the landscape and are of a reasonable scale when compared to the receiving wider panoramic landscape towards the west and south.</p> <p>Given the combination of close proximity views with no screening by the underlying topography, the magnitude of change would be high.</p> <p><u>Whilst in Construction and Decommissioning:</u></p> <p>Construction / decommissioning activity across the northern part of the site (including road construction) would be partly visible. Base activities of the northern most turbine would be visible. Within the southern part of the site, construction / decommissioning activities would be largely screened from view by the intervening landform.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would range from zero to high. The wireframe illustrates that theoretically, all three turbines would be visible.</p> <p><u>Whilst Under Construction and Decommissioning:</u></p> <p>Views of the construction activity would be largely limited to the crane and turbine erection. The magnitude of change would range from slight to moderate substantial.</p>	
Assessment	Sensitivity	Medium (minor road users) to high (adjacent properties)
	Magnitude	High
	Type of Effect	Long term (reversible), direct, and neutral.
	Level of Effect	Moderate / Substantial to Substantial and significant
<u>Cumulative Level of Effect: Existing Wind Energy Schemes</u>		
Magnitude of Change	No other wind farms are visible.	
Cumulative Level of Effect	Zero	
<u>Cumulative Level of Effect: Existing + Consented Wind Energy Schemes</u>		
Magnitude of Change	No other wind farms are visible	
Cumulative Level of Effect	Zero	

Cumulative Level of Effect: Existing + Consented + Application Wind Energy Schemes	
Magnitude of Change	No other wind farms are visible
Cumulative Level of Effect	Zero
Cumulative Level of Effect: Ascog + Existing + Consented + Application Wind Energy Schemes	
Cumulative Level of Effect	No cumulative effect

Figure 7.37a/b	Viewpoint 23: B881 between Lochend and Crossbeg, Isle of Bute	
Description	<p>This viewpoint is located along the B881 between Lochened and Crossbeg, at 1130m south and west of the proposal site. This area forms the route of the B881 minor road connecting the A844 south of the island with Rothesay to the north. Well maintained stone dykes run parallel to this road, and beyond to the left and right are grazing fields. To the far right in the distance the existing wind farms at Wardlaw Wood and Kelburn Estate on the mainland are visible. The middle ground is predominantly grazing land, with a line a telegraph poles crossing the grazing. Windyhall farmstead is visible to the north and east and dwellings at Ashford adjacent to the B881 to the north. Loch Ascog reservoir is visible in the middle distance to the east. Field boundaries are defined by small trees hedgerows and stone walls.</p> <p>The high ground of Barone Hill to the left and the linking of pockets of plantations across the view from the back ground. Kaimes Hill and Edinbeg Hill north of the island are just visible in the far background to the left. Waterhead Moor wind farm is visible from this location to the far east on the mainland across the Firth of Clyde.</p>	
Sensitivity	The viewpoint is located within the Argyll and Bute Area of Panoramic Quality and would be experienced by road users on the B881. The viewpoint location is considered to be of medium sensitivity.	
Mitigation	The colour of the turbines would be a pale grey to reduce their visibility when viewed against the background sky. The lower section of the southernmost turbine no 3 would be viewed against the backdrop of Hills of the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park in the far distance.	
Magnitude of Change	<p><u>Whilst in Operation:</u></p> <p>All three turbines would be visible in this view as an evenly spaced and coherent group of turbines. All three turbines would openly be visible with little or no screening provided by existing vegetation or built structures. The towers and blade tips below the hubs of the three turbines are visible on the horizon against the sky. They would represent the introduction of new and relatively prominent, rotating, features to the view. However many manmade structures are already prominent in this view including the power lines, the Wardlaw Wood and Kelburn Estate wind farms and the man made elements of the reservoir.</p> <p>However, the three turbines would take up a relatively small proportion of the overall horizontal angle of view (AOV) and appear as simple and coherent almost sculptural feature in the landscape and are of a reasonable scale when compared to the receiving wider panoramic landscape in all directions.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would be medium to high.</p> <p><u>Whilst Under Construction and Decommissioning:</u></p> <p>The construction works would be visible but only to a very small angle of the overall view and the magnitude of change would be medium to high.</p>	
Assessment	Sensitivity	Medium
	Magnitude	Medium to High
	Type of Effect	Long term (reversible), direct, and neutral.

	Level of Effect	Moderate to Moderate / Substantial and Significant
<u>Cumulative Level of Effect: Existing Wind Energy Schemes</u>		
Magnitude of Change	Wardlaw Wood and Kelburn Estate existing wind farms are visible from this location in the 90 degree view. In the wider 360 degree view Ardrossan and Extension are visible.	
Cumulative Level of Effect	Slight	
<u>Cumulative Level of Effect: Existing + Consented Wind Energy Schemes</u>		
Magnitude of Change	Millour Hill/ Wardlaw wood extension, Kelburn, and Dalry existing schemes may be visible from this location. From the angle of view they are visible on the skyline as a single large wind farm. Ardrossan wind farm is also theoretically visible in the wider 360 degree view to the south.	
Cumulative Level of Effect	Slight to Moderate	
<u>Cumulative Level of Effect: Existing + Consented + Application Wind Energy Schemes</u>		
Magnitude of Change	Waterhead Moor application wind farm would be visible from this location but we believe that the application has been withdrawn.	
Cumulative Level of Effect	Moderate	
<u>Cumulative Level of Effect: Ascog + Existing + Consented + Application Wind Energy Schemes</u>		
Cumulative Level of Effect	Moderate and not Significant	

Figure 7.38a/b	Viewpoint 24: Additional Wemyss Bay to Rothesay ferry crossing
Description	<p>Since this viewpoint is from a ferry route (i.e. a moving form of transport), it is not possible to take photographs to SNH standards. A wireframe only illustrates the proposed site within the landscape, which is represented by a wireframe for viewpoint 10. At the request of Argyll and Bute Council we have produced an illustrative montage and wireframe using a number of coordinates taken from the moving ferry. The result is illustrative and accurate as far as is possible.</p> <p>This viewpoint is located at 4571m to the northeast of the proposal site.</p>
Sensitivity	This viewpoint has been specifically selected, as requested by ABC, to overlap with the sailing routes and, in general be representative of Skelmorlie settlement. Views are experienced by ferry users, recreational and residential receptors. These receptors are considered to range from high (residents) to medium to high (ferry and recreational users).
Mitigation	The design and scale of the turbines has evolved to minimise visual effects and the colour of the turbines would be a pale grey to reduce their visibility when viewed against the background sky.
Magnitude of Change	<p><u>Whilst in Operation:</u></p> <p>The wireframe illustrates that all three turbines would be visible against the skyline. The three turbines would take up a small proportion of the overall horizontal AOV. The new elements would constitute a small change to the view, easily accommodated within this landscape scene. It can be seen from this view that the turbines are in scale within the view. The proposed overall height to blade tips is lower than the summit of the adjacent hill at Montford which is the prominent hill when entering Rothesay from the ferry. Further to the west the large scale hills of Arran and the Lochgilphead Peninsula give scale to the proposed wind farm.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would be low.</p> <p><u>Whilst Under Construction and Decommissioning:</u></p> <p>Views of the construction activity would be largely limited to the crane and turbine erection. The magnitude of change would range from zero to low.</p>

Assessment	Sensitivity	High to Medium
	Magnitude	Low
	Type of Effect	Long term (reversible), direct, and neutral to negative.
	Level of Effect	Moderate to Slight and not significant
<u>Cumulative Level of Effect: Existing Wind Energy Schemes</u>		
Magnitude of Change	There would be successive visibility of the existing / under construction Wardlaw Wood, Ardrossan and Kelburn windfarm developments including their respect extensions on the mainland towards the southeast between approximately 15-25 km distance (negligible magnitude).	
Cumulative Level of Effect	Slight	
<u>Cumulative Level of Effect: Existing + Consented Wind Energy Schemes</u>		
Magnitude of Change	There would be successive visibility of the consented Wardlaw Wood extension on the mainland towards the southeast at approximately 15km distance (negligible magnitude).	
Cumulative Level of Effect	Slight to Moderate	
<u>Cumulative Level of Effect: Existing + Consented + Application Wind Energy Schemes</u>		
Magnitude of Change	There would be successive visibility of the Waterhead Moor application on the mainland towards the southeast between at approximately 10km distance (low magnitude). However we believe that this application has been withdrawn.	
Cumulative Level of Effect	Moderate	
<u>Cumulative Level of Effect: Ascog + Existing + Consented + Application Wind Energy Schemes</u>		
Cumulative Level of Effect	Moderate and not Significant	

1.8 Conclusions

Considering the assessment of the capacity study that the whole of Bute is of high sensitivity it has been shown that this does not apply to the application site which is of *medium* sensitivity due to the landscape value, quality and condition as well as the existence of detractors such as power lines and sewage works.

This applies also to any potential significant effects on the Bute Rolling Farmland with Estates landscape character type. The more sensitive Estates landscape character type within this LCT is not effected. Slight to Moderate impacts of the less sensitive rolling farmland areas is not considered significant.

The proposed turbines are not of the tallest typology as seen elsewhere on the Firth of Clyde but are appropriate in scale and number to their proposed location. Ascog must be viewed within the context of higher landscapes surrounding it. The proposed development does not have a significant effect on Argyll and Bute's coastal landscape.

There is no erosion of the Kyles of Bute NSA from which a number of far larger and higher turbine schemes are visible across the Firth of Clyde.

We have provided the additional viewpoints as requested by ABC. This is accompanied by a detailed viewpoint assessment (revised Appendix 7c). However ABC do not specify why they request these additional viewpoints so we have not had the opportunity to respond to any specific concerns in this regard. From the additional viewpoints we have identified slight to moderate/substantial effects .

We recommend that the proposed three turbines at Ascog are consented for development.

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Reviewer: Rebecca Rylott

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