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Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Swarclett Wind Farm

Technical Appendix 5-6: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

Swarclett Wind Energy Limited

wind2

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Technical Appendix 5-6: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

1.1 Introduction

The Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment LI Technical Guidance Note 2/19, states that *"When assessing relatively conspicuous structures such as wind turbines, and depending on local landscape characteristics, a preliminary study area of approximately 1.5 - 2km radius may initially be appropriate in order to begin identifying properties to include in a RVAA."* The following staged assessment is based on the LI methodology, to examine *"the effects of change to the views and visual amenity available to people at their place of residence."*

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment included in the EIA Report considered the effects of the Proposed Development on views and visual amenity as experienced by people by means of the viewpoint assessment. It also considered the visual effects at each settlement, in a more generalised sense. This assessment focuses on a specific group of the closest properties and involves a detailed assessment of the predicted changes to their views. In the context of the Proposed Development the RVAA is focussed on the western extent of the dispersed cluster of properties at Bowertower (Significant effects were found on Bowertower as set out in Table 5-14 of the LVIA).

1.2 Context

The planning system is designed to act in the public interest when making planning decisions. Nevertheless, effects on private interests are to be considered in the 'planning balance'. This includes weighing up effects on Residential Amenity.

Residential Amenity comprises a range of visual, aural, olfactory and other sensory components. Development can cause effects on one or more components of Residential Amenity, for example effects of noise, dust, access to daylight, vibration, shadow flicker, outlook and visual amenity. Sometimes this is referred to as 'living conditions'.

Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that no one has 'a right to a view.' This includes situations where a residential property's outlook / visual amenity is judged to be 'significantly' affected by a proposed development, a matter which has been confirmed in a number of appeal / public inquiry decisions.

At Enifer Downs (in Kent), Inspector Lavender noted that *"when turbines are present in such number, size and proximity that they represent an unpleasantly overwhelming and unavoidable presence in main views from a house or garden, there is every likelihood that the property concerned would come to be widely regarded as an unattractive and thus unsatisfactory (but not necessarily uninhabitable) place in which to live"*.

At the Harelaw Renewable Energy Park Inquiry (East Ayrshire and East Renfrewshire), the Reporter stated that *"Any consideration of proximity to houses effectively becomes an assessment of the effects of a wind farm on the amenity of a property: its pleasantness of place and its impact on living conditions. It is necessary to consider whether any of*

the effects on views or visual amenity have the potential to affect living conditions such that living at that property would become unpleasant or undesirable. This requires an objective approach, as far as possible, but is ultimately a matter of judgement."

It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before.

This assessment is confined to examining in detail judgements on Residential Visual Amenity.

The purpose of RVAA is to provide an informed, well-reasoned answer to the question: 'is the effect of the development on Residential Visual Amenity of such nature and / or magnitude that it potentially affects 'living conditions' or Residential Amenity'? This is referred to in the guidance document as the **Residential Visual Amenity Threshold (RVAT)**.

1.3 Approach

In terms of general approach, it is intended that the RVAA provides a transparent, objective assessment, grounded in GLVIA 3 principles and processes, evaluating and assessing the likely change to the visual amenity of a dwelling resulting from a development. RVAA requires assessors to draw a conclusion whether the effect of the development on visual amenity and / or views from the property reaches the RVAT.

1.4 Methodology

The RVAA is set out in the following four steps:

Step 1. Definition of study area and scope of the assessment – informed by the description of the proposed development, defining the study area extent and scope of the assessment with respect to the properties to be included.

Step 2. Evaluation of baseline visual amenity at properties to be included, having regard to the landscape and visual context and the development proposed.

Step 3. Assessment of likely change to visual amenity of included properties in accordance with GLVIA 3 principles and processes.

Step 4. Further assessment of predicted change to visual amenity of properties to be included forming a judgement with respect to the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.

1.4.1 Step 1 – Definition of Study Area and Scope of Assessment

Residential Visual Amenity Assessments from residential properties are usually based on a study area within a radius of 1.5km. Those inhabited properties with the potential for greater visibility of Proposed Development have been selected for inclusion in the RVAA. Properties within the same geographical location and/or are likely to experience similar views have been grouped.

For the Proposed Development a 1.5km study area was adopted. This distance broadly encompasses the western extent of the very dispersed properties at Bowertower at the c.50m contour line which have a closer and more open relationship with the open plateau moorland landscape to the west.

Properties were identified using Ordnance Survey (OS) data and verified using aerial imagery and observations made on visits to the Proposed Development Site and study area. The property cluster assessed encompasses the properties at Lower Bowertower.

1.4.2 Step 2 – Evaluation of Baseline Visual Amenity

The next step evaluates the baseline visual conditions at the properties to be included, informed as appropriate by desk study and fieldwork.

The existing (or baseline) visual amenity of a residential property has been described in terms of the type, nature, extent, and quality of views that may be experienced 'in the round', that being the all-round visual amenity experience, from the dwelling itself, including its 'domestic curtilage' (domestic gardens and access drives).

The following aspects have been considered:

1. the nature and extent of all potentially available existing views from the property and its garden / domestic curtilage, including the proximity and relationship of the property to surrounding landform, landcover and visual foci. This may include primary / main views from the property or domestic curtilage, as well as secondary / peripheral views; and
2. views as experienced when arriving at or leaving the property, for example from private driveways / access tracks.

In accordance with GLVIA 3 residents at home are considered, amongst 'visual receptors', to be the most 'susceptible' to change and to attach most value to their private, views and visual amenity. They are therefore considered to be most sensitive.

1.4.3 Step 3 – Assessment of likely change to visual amenity of properties

The third step in the process assesses the magnitude of visual change and significance of likely visual effect at the included properties. Effects are examined in accordance with GLVIA 3 principles and processes, considering the 'nature of the receptor' ('sensitivity' comprising 'value' and 'susceptibility') with the 'nature of effect' as set out in detail in Technical Appendix 5-1.

The aim of Step 3 is to identify those properties requiring further assessment in Step 4 in relation to the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold judgement.

Considerations which provide a framework for describing and evaluating the predicted magnitude of visual change and related visual amenity effects which may lead to the property being considered in Step 4 include:

3. Distance of property from the Proposed Development having regard to its size / scale and location relative to the property (e.g., on higher or lower ground).
4. Type and nature of the available views (e.g., panoramic, open, framed, enclosed, focused etc.) and how they may be affected, having regard to seasonal and diurnal variations.

5. Direction of view / aspect of property affected, having regard to both the main / primary and peripheral / secondary views from the property.
6. Extent to which development / landscape changes would be visible from the property (or parts of) having regard to views from principal rooms, the domestic curtilage (i.e., garden) and the private access route, taking into account seasonal and diurnal variations.
7. Scale of change in views having regard to such factors as the loss or addition of features and compositional changes including the proportion of view occupied by the Proposed Development, taking account of seasonal and diurnal variations.
8. Degree of contrast or integration of new features or changes in the landscape compared to the existing situation in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture, having regard to seasonal and diurnal variations.
9. Duration and nature of the changes, whether temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous, reversible or irreversible etc.
10. Mitigation opportunities – consider implications of both embedded and potential further mitigation.

This step has involved both desk study and detailed fieldwork.

Step 3 should confirm that the properties selected for inclusion in the RVAA will experience the maximum significance of effect. Any properties which do not meet this threshold are disregarded from Step 4 of the RVAA.

1.4.4 Step 4 – Forming the RVAA Judgement

The final step of RVAA involves a more detailed examination of the predicted effects on the visual amenity at those properties identified for further assessment in the previous step. This concluding judgement advises the decision maker whether the predicted effects on visual amenity and views at the property are such that it has reached the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold, therefore potentially becoming a matter of Residential Amenity. This judgement is explained in narrative setting out why the effects are considered to have either, reached the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold or, explain why the threshold has not been reached.

1.5 Supporting Graphics

A Residential Visual Amenity Receptor Plan is set out in Figure 5-4-1 to indicate the locations of the residential properties considered in the RVAA.

A detailed annotated aerial photo is presented for the properties at Lower Bowertower, Figure 5-4-2a, and Oakwood, Figure 5-4-3a with the following features marked:

11. Identification of RVAA property, the inhabited dwelling and other outbuildings.
12. Potential screening elements.
13. Direction of view, expressed as a bearing and point of the compass to centre of the Proposed Development.
14. Distance from the RVAA property to the nearest turbine.
15. The angle of view occupied by the proposed development.
16. Location of principal rooms and bearing of key views.
17. Description of the approach to general experience at the entrance to the property.

1.6 Visualisations

A photographic baseline panorama and matching wireline have been presented in Figures 5-4-2 and 5-4-3 in order to provide a view of the Proposed Development within its landscape context, and to assist the assessor in determining the change and resultant effect on the viewpoint location. A panorama, using an angle of view of 90°, illustrating the existing view presented alongside an identically sized matching wireframe. The size of the image and matching wireframe is 820mm by 130mm, with a 90° horizontal field of view and a 14.2° vertical field of view. To accommodate the required field of view, the image is presented as a cylindrical projection.

To facilitate the verification process, the horizontal extent of the central 50mm frame is indicated beneath the image, along with the extent of the 53.5° panorama. This format shows the wider landscape context within which the proposed development will sit and allows direct comparison of the changes to be made in addition to providing a useful aid memoire. The recommended viewing distance for these visualisations is at a comfortable arm's length, as set out on the visualisation figure.

An illustration of the photomontage view and predicted wireframe view to the Proposed Development using an angle of view of 65.5° at the equivalent of a 50mm lens are presented in Figures 5-4-2c/5-4-3c and Figures 5-4-2c/5-4-3c respectively. The image size is 260mm high by 820mm wide. The horizontal field of view is 65.5° and the vertical field of view is 18.2° in the centre of the image. The image is presented as a planar projection.

Two further photomontage images are presented as follows in Figures 5-4-2e/5-4-3e and Figure 5-4-2f/5-4-3g respectively:

1. Single frame colour photomontage image for each viewpoint, derived from a 50mm fixed lens in landscape format.
2. Page 2: A second single frame colour photomontage image for each viewpoint, at a 75mm focal length, recalibrated from the 50mm image.

The recommended viewing distance for these visualisations is a comfortable arm's length. This format allows for direct comparison of the effects in the field at a comfortable viewing distance as recommended by NatureScot and THC.

The visualisations have been prepared through the use of Adobe Photoshop and Resoft Wind Farm software.

1.7 Assessment

1.7.1 Step 1 – Identification of Properties

The Proposed Development Site lies upon the western extent of the low plateau ridgeline to the west of the settlement at Bowertower. The landscape is defined as the Farmed Lowland Plain Landscape Character Type. The land rises slightly and very gradually to a high point to the south east at 80m AOD. To the north the ridge continues to a subsidiary plateau summit at 64m AOD and the Proposed Development is positioned to the western side of this outlying ridge. The main portion of Bowertower extends to the east below c.70m AOD and is positioned with a northerly aspect.

The relatively recently built, occupied residential developments at Bowertower have extended the settlement edge to the north west with detached properties set within

large plots along the northern side of the ridge. This western sector of the dispersed cluster of properties at Bowertower has closer relationship with the open moorland to the west.

The surrounding landscape is characterised by gently rolling plateaux occasionally rising to undramatic summits. The landcover includes grazing across the higher slopes, transitioning to higher moorland vegetation, with well-defined rectilinear arable fields and improved pastures across the lower ground. Small blocks of dark green coniferous forestry and shelter belts break up the land cover.

The following table sets out those properties which have considered in detail in the RVAA. The locations are presented on Figure 5.4.1.

Table 5-6-1: Bowertower

Property	Grid Reference	Distance to Nearest Turbine
Lower Bowertower	322143, 962817	Turbine 2, 899 m
Oakwood	322108, 962424	Turbine 2, 896 m
Lissadel House	322098, 961974	Turbine 2, 1108 m
Stonefield Farm	322432, 962101	Turbine 2, 1319 m
Property with planning permission at 23/00185/FUL	321936, 962214	Turbine 2, 833 m
Dunnone	322192, 961985	Turbine 2, 1,175 m
The Croft	322290, 961884	Turbine 2, 1,134 m

A further derelict house was noted during fieldwork at Lower Bowertower, grid reference 322366, 962570 but, this property has not been considered in the RVAA.

1.7.2 Step 2 – Evaluation of Baseline Visual Amenity

The following tables present general conclusions relating to the individual properties assessed at the north western edge of Bowertower and a summary assessment of the sensitivity, magnitude of change and effect predicted at these properties.

Table 5-6-2:: Lower Bowertower

Lower Bowertower
Description of property, location and context: • The property lies at the north western extent of the settled area of Bowertower, accessed via a surfaced track leading north from the end of the public road at Bowertower. The detached property is set out in a large plot bounded by a shelter belt of spruce trees to the north, west and south which filters views. • The property lies to the north of the local shallow ridgeline. • The property is set within open pastures with a gently sloping northerly aspect. • The landscape transitions to moorland to the north west.
Description of likely effect on views and visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development on Lower Bowertower A review of wireframe modelling of views from Lower Bowertower, based on a bare-ground model, indicates that the proposed turbines will be visible in views to the north west, seen as a fully visible new elements to the towers, hubs and blades. The principal orientation of the properties is to the south away from the Proposed Development. Visibility will be filtered by the well-defined maturing line of spruce trees along the western boundary. The proposed turbines will be visible in secondary views to the northwest, bearing 280°. The turbines will span a relatively wide 37° of the available view.

Lower Bowertower
Where views are available from these properties, the magnitude of change is considered to be Substantial on residential receptors who are of high sensitivity, with a **Major** and **Significant** Effect.

Table 5-6-3:: Property at Oakwood (effects on the proposed property to west which is the subject of a planning application to Highland Council, reference 23/00185/FUL (refer to the wireframes at Figure 5-4-6), will be similar to those effects assessed at Oakwood.)

Property at Oakwood
Description of property, location and context: • The property is set out in a large open plot beside the western extent of the public road at Bowertower and lies to the southern side of the local shallow ridgeline. • The property is orientated to benefit from expansive views to the north. • The plot is surrounded by a simple post and wire fence with a low masonry wall to the south. As such the property is open to expansive views to the surrounding landscape.
Description of likely effect on views and visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development on Property at Oakwood A review of wireframe modelling of views from the property, based on a bare-ground model, indicates that the proposed turbines will be visible in views to the north west, seen as new elements to the towers, hubs and blades. The principal orientation of the property is to the north away from the Proposed Development. The proposed turbines will be visible in secondary views to the northwest, bearing 299°. The turbines will span a relatively wide 31° of the available view. The magnitude of change is considered to be Substantial on residential receptors who are of high sensitivity, with a **Major** and **Significant** Effect.

Table 5-6-4: Property at Lissadel House

Property at Lissadel House
Description of property, location and context: • The newly built property lies at the western edge of the small cluster of properties to the west of The Croft, Bowertower. • The property is set out in an open plot beside the western extent of the track at Bowertower and lies to the north western edge of the local shallow ridgeline. • The property is orientated to relate the existing cluster of properties and views from principal rooms are to the north east and the south west. • The plot is surrounded by a simple post and wire fence. As such the property is open to expansive views to the surrounding landscape. •
Description of likely effect on views and visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development on Property at Lissadel House A review of wireframe modelling of views from the property, based on a bare-ground model, indicates that the proposed turbines will be visible in views to the north west, seen as new elements to the towers, hubs and blades. The principal orientation of the properties is to the north east and south west away from the Proposed Development. The proposed turbines will be visible in secondary views to the northwest, bearing 316°, seen as a large scale new elements within the expansive open moorland to the north west, experienced in the context of foreground views to the adjacent residential development. The turbines are seen close together over a narrow 20° of the available view. Visibility will be most influential on the residents approaching the property. The magnitude of change is considered to be Moderate on residential receptors who are of high

Property at Lissadel House
sensitivity, with a **Major/Moderate** and **Significant** Effect.

Table 5-6-5: Property at Stonefield Farm

Property at Stonefield Farm
Description of property, location and context: • The newly built property lies to the west of the access track leading south from Bowertowera close to the small cluster of properties focussed on The Croft, Bowertower. • The property is set out in an open plot which together with outbuildings frame a courtyard to the east of the property. • The property is orientated to face east to the courtyard and west to the local fields of pasture. • The plot is surrounded by a simple post and wire fence. The property is open to expansive views to the wider landscape.
Description of likely effect on views and visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development on Property at Lissadel House A review of wireframe modelling of views from the property, based on a bare-ground model, indicates that the proposed turbines will be visible in views to the north west, seen as new elements to the towers, hubs and blades. The principal orientation of the properties is to the east and west away from the Proposed Development. The proposed turbines will be visible in secondary views to the northwest, bearing 304°, from this location, seen as a large scale new elements within the expansive open moorland beyond the immediate pastoral fields. The turbines are seen close together over a narrow 20° of the available view. Visibility will be most influential on the residents approaching the property. The magnitude of change is considered to be Moderate on residential receptors who are of high sensitivity, with a **Major/Moderate** and **Significant** Effect.

Table 5-6-6: Property at Dunnone

Property at Dunnone
Description of property, location and context: • The property lies towards the western extent of the access track leading past the cluster of properties focussed on The Croft, Bowertower. • The property is set out in an open plot to the north of the track. • The property is orientated to face north-south and east-west with local views across the fields of pasture and to the adjacent cluster of properties. • The plot is surrounded by a simple post and wire fence. The property is open to expansive views to the wider landscape.
Description of likely effect on views and visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development on Property at Lissadel House A review of wireframe modelling of views from the property, based on a bare-ground model, indicates that the proposed turbines will be visible in views to the north west, seen as new elements to the towers, hubs and blades. The principal experience of receptors at the property will be in relation to the south whilst within the property itself internal views will be orientated away from the Proposed Development. The proposed turbines will be visible in secondary views to the northwest, bearing 313°, from this location, seen as a large scale new elements within the expansive open moorland beyond the immediate pastoral fields. The turbines are seen close together over a narrow 20° of the available view. Visibility will be most influential on the residents approaching the property. The magnitude of change is considered to be Moderate on residential receptors who are of high

Property at Dunnone
sensitivity, with a **Major/Moderate** and **Significant** Effect.

Table 5-6-7: Property at The Croft

Property at The Croft
Description of property, location and context: • The property lies to the south side of the access track leading to the cluster of properties to the west The Croft, Bowertower. • The property is focussed around a courtyard on the southern side of the property, formed from the original croft to the north and the modern extension to the west. • The property is orientated to face north-south and east-west with local views across the fields of pasture and to the adjacent cluster of properties.
Description of likely effect on views and visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development on Property at The Croft A review of wireframe modelling of views from the property, based on a bare-ground model, indicates that the proposed turbines will be visible in views to the north west, seen as new elements to the towers, hubs and blades. The principal experience of receptors at the property will be in relation to the south whilst within the property itself internal views will be orientated away from the Proposed Development. The proposed turbines will be visible in secondary views to the northwest, bearing 315°, from this location, seen as a large scale new elements within the expansive open moorland beyond the immediate pastoral fields. The turbines are seen close together over a narrow 17° of the available view. Visibility will be seen in the context of local views to the foreground of the local cluster of residential properties. Visibility will be most influential on the residents approaching the property. The magnitude of change is considered to be Moderate on residential receptors who are of high sensitivity, with a **Major/Moderate** and **Significant** Effect.

The review indicates that the properties at Lower Bowertower and Oakwood are likely to experience a higher magnitude of change and Major Significant visual effects as a result of the proposed development. The property at Oakwood has been used as a proxy for the unbuilt property with planning permission at 23/00185/FUL. These properties have been examined in greater detail below.

The other properties reviewed above which are set back beyond 1 km from the Proposed Development are located further to the south as a distinct cluster, relate more closely together as a small hamlet. The Proposed Development is experienced more closely to its end-on orientation, with the turbines appearing closer together and over a reduced angle of view as a component of the typically expansive views across the foreground pastures and moorland beyond. As such the Proposed Development as a component in views from these properties is reduced and the magnitude of change will not be as great as the change potentially experienced at Oakwood and Lower Bowertower. As such, only these two properties are considered in further detail in the RVAA.

1.7.3 Step 3 – Detailed Assessment of likely change to visual amenity of properties

The effects on the properties at Lower Bowertower and Oakwood which will potentially experience the maximum magnitude of change are assessed in further detail below, in accordance with GLVIA 3 principles and processes, considering the 'nature of the receptor' ('sensitivity' comprising 'value' and 'susceptibility') with the 'nature of effect'.

Table 5-6-8: Operational Effects at Lower Bowertower

Lower Bowertower, Figures 5-4-2a-g and 5-4-4a-d	
Distance and Direction to the Proposed Development	0.89km
LCT and Designations	LCT 143 - Farmed Lowland Plain
Receptors and Sensitivity to Change	Residents - High
Theoretical visibility	Two turbines to tower, hub and blades.
Location and Rationale for Selection	
The viewpoint is located within the back garden, to the west of Lower Bowertower. It represents the potential effect on residents. The following wind farm development currently influences the existing baseline: • The large schemes at Stroupster and Lochend to the east. The following consented development will influence the settlement if constructed: • Slickly to the east of the study area. The following planning stage developments will influence the settlement if consented: • The large scheme at Hollandmey to the north east of the study area. In addition, the following scoping stage developments are being considered as suitable sites locally and will influence the settlement if consented: Lochend Extension, Greenland, and Red Moss.	
Description of the Existing View	
The existing view looks towards the location of the Proposed Development and shows the filtered view through the adjoining line of spruce trees along the western edge of the garden. The break in the tree belt at the filed gate reveals an oblique view across the rough grassland and moorland to the west, rising slightly to the low ridgeline.	
Determination of Visual Sensitivity	
The sensitivity to change associated with the Proposed Development at this location is considered to be **High** for residents: Value – High 18. This viewpoint is located at the north western edge of residential development at Lower Bowertower. Susceptibility to Change – High 19. Residents are highly likely to be aware of any changes to their existing visual amenity.	
Magnitude of Change	
The overall magnitude of change on receptors at this viewpoint is moderated by the existing boundary trees. The wireline indicates direct visibility to the two turbines, however, the line of trees will filter direct views from property and to much of the curtilage. The effect will be **Substantial** on the approaches to the property but from the property itself effects will be **Moderate** as the woodland belt filters direct views. The factors which have contributed to this judgement are as follows: ***Size or Scale*** The wireframe indicates that two turbines will be directly visible from this viewpoint. The wind farm occupies c.37° of the available 360° panoramic view.	

Lower Bowertower, Figures 5-4-2a-g and 5-4-4a-d
The turbines will be seen in heavily filtered views rising above low plateau moorland. The towers, hubs and blades will be prominent, visible against the skyline on the approach to the property. From within the garden the turbine blades will be seen intermittently as the residents move about the grounds. Ancillary components will be oblique to the viewpoint and will not be directly visible. The turbines will add new man-made vertical elements into the landscape, drawing development towards the north west of Lower Bowertower. ***Geographical Extent*** The Proposed Development will lie to the north east at 280° to the viewpoint. The Proposed Development will be seen over a short separation distance of 0.89km to the nearest turbine. The change in view will occur within the north western aspect of the view, which is characterised by an open moorland landscape.
Potential for Future Cumulative Effects
The *addition* of the Proposed Development will result in Moderate and Not Significant cumulative effects. The *total* cumulative effect of built, consented and planning stage schemes would result in a **Major/Moderate** and **Significant** cumulative effect when seen in successive views with the Red Moss scoping stage site which lies directly to the north.
Significance of Effect
The combination of the individual judgements of **High** sensitivity and **Substantial** and **Moderate** magnitudes of change are considered to result in **Major** and **Major/Moderate** effect on residents from the grounds and the property respectively which in the context of this assessment is considered to be **Significant**. In the medium term effects will be moderated by the maturing tree line which will further reduce the influence of the turbines.

Table 5-6-9: Operational Effects at Oakwood

Oakwood, Figures 5-4-2a-e and 5-4-5a-d	
Distance and Direction to the Proposed Development	0.89km
LCT and Designations	LCT 143 - Farmed Lowland Plain
Receptors and Sensitivity to Change	Residents - High
Theoretical visibility	Two turbines to tower, hub and blades.
Location and Rationale for Selection	
The viewpoint is located within the front garden, to the north of Oakwood. It represents the potential effect on residents. The following wind farm development currently influences the existing baseline: • The large schemes at Stroupster and Lochend to the east. The following consented development will influence the settlement if constructed: • Slickly to the east of the study area. The following planning stage developments will influence the settlement if consented: • The large scheme at Hollandmey to the north east of the study area. In addition, the following scoping stage developments are being considered as suitable sites locally and will influence the settlement if consented: Lochend Extension, Greenland, and Red Moss.	
Description of the Existing View	
The existing view looks to the north west towards the location of the Proposed Development and shows the open view across the fields of pasture at the western extent of the ridgeline at Lower Bowertower. Beyond the immediate pastures the land rises slightly across moorland to the low ridgeline. The edge of the house at Oakwood frames the view to the left. The view beyond terminated partly by the fragmented coniferous shelter belt to the west which has been damaged by winter storms. The centre and right of the view extend to the distant profile of the Hill of Olrig. The western edge of the garden is defined by a post and wire fence, with a young alder tree and	

Oakwood, Figures 5-4-2a-e and 5-4-5a-d
Pampas grass providing very limited cover along this boundary.
Determination of Visual Sensitivity
The sensitivity to change associated with the Proposed Development at this location is considered to be **High** for residents: Value – High 20. This viewpoint is located at the western edge of residential development at Lower Bowertower. Susceptibility to Change – High 21. Residents are highly likely to be aware of any changes to their existing visual amenity.
Magnitude of Change
The overall magnitude of change on receptors at this viewpoint will be **Substantial**. The wireline and photomontages indicate direct visibility to the two turbines. The factors which have contributed to this judgement are as follows: ***Size or Scale*** The wireframe indicates that two turbines will be directly visible from this viewpoint. The wind farm occupies c.31° of the available 360° panoramic view. The turbines will be seen to the north west rising above low plateau moorland. The towers, hubs and blades will be prominent, visible against the skyline. Ancillary components will be oblique to the viewpoint and will not be directly visible. The turbines will add new man-made vertical elements into the landscape. ***Geographical Extent*** The Proposed Development will lie to the north east at 299° to the viewpoint which to north west and away from the primary direction of views from the property which are to the north. The Proposed Development will be seen over a short separation distance of 0.89km to the nearest turbine. The change in view will occur within the north western aspect of the view, which is characterised by an open view across the pastoral and moorland landscape.
Potential for Future Cumulative Effects
The *addition* of the Proposed Development will result in Moderate and Not Significant cumulative effects. The *total* cumulative effect of built, consented and planning stage schemes would result in a **Major/Moderate** and **Significant** cumulative effect when seen in successive views with the Red Moss scoping stage site which lies directly to the north.
Significance of Effect
The combination of the individual judgements of **High** sensitivity and a **Substantial** magnitude of change are considered to result in a **Major** effect on residents which in the context of this assessment is considered to be **Significant**.

The effects have been examined in accordance with GLVIA 3 principles and processes considering the 'nature of the receptor' ('sensitivity' comprising 'value' and 'susceptibility') with the 'nature of effect'. The aim of Step 3 is to identify whether the property requires the further assessment in Step 4 in relation to the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold judgement.

1.7.4 Step 4 – Assessment of effects on Residential Visual Amenity

Analysis of the properties at Lower Bowertower and Oakwood through field work, the preparation of visualisations and the detailed assessment of the viewpoint has established that there will be the potential for Major and Significant effects on the views experienced from the properties and the garden grounds.

The Proposed Development will be seen to rise above the open moorland to the north west of the properties, and there will be a Significant visual effect on views to the north west.

The overall magnitude of change on receptors at Lower Bowertower will be moderated by the existing boundary trees. The wireline indicates direct visibility to the two turbines however, the line of trees will filter direct views from property.

The principal internal view from the Oakwood is to the north, and the proposed development will not influence this view.

There are a range of panoramic views experienced externally from the grounds of the properties. These are experienced in the context of the existing presence of wind farm development seen in wider distant views. The Proposed Development will influence a c.31-37° angle of view which would be experienced from the grounds of the property, where both turbines would be experienced. However, equally, views across the remaining 329-323° of the available views will be unaffected by the proposed development. As such, the effect of the proposed development is not of such a nature and / or magnitude that it potentially affects 'living conditions' or Residential Amenity' The proposed development is not considered to breach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold at either Lower Bowertower or Oakwood.

1.8 Summary of Findings

Residential receptors are considered to be of high sensitivity to change to their visual amenity. It is recognised that changes in views resulting from the presence of wind turbines at close proximity will inevitably give rise to significant visual impacts in the context of the EIA Regulations. Effects of significance are not unexpected.

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of these effects in more detail and examine whether the RVA Threshold has been breached.

The assessment concludes that the residents of Lower Bowertower and Oakwood at Bowertower will not experience effects arising from the Proposed Development that breach the residential amenity threshold .

1.9 References

Guidance – online

Landscape Institute. (2019). Technical Guidance Note, Residential Visual Amenity Assessment LI Technical Guidance Note 2/19:

https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technical-resource/rvaa/