

From: [REDACTED]@lochlomond-trossachs.org>
Sent: 27 Apr 2026 03:15:27
To: [REDACTED]@lochlomond-trossachs.org
Cc:
Subject: FW: Balquidder Masts Landscape comments DEC2025
Attachments:

From: [REDACTED]@lochlomond-trossachs.org>
Sent: 07 January 2026 16:04
To: [REDACTED]@lochlomond-trossachs.org>
Subject: RE: Balquidder Masts Landscape comments DEC2025

[REDACTED]

So rereading the two applications. I continue to assess that mitigation options such as ATV access track or native planting will not reduce the significant and adverse cumulative issues raised on both applications. These cumulative aspects cover views within this Blaquidder area, changes to the landscape character, and effects on the SLQs how they are experienced and enjoyed and protecting what is special about them.

In Glen Buckie if there was no access track or minimal ATV track with additional native planting this would reduce the significance of effects on the **Upland Glens LCT**. No access track would reduce some of the significant and adverse visual effects but there would still be some due to the introduction and location of the mast and associated infrastructure.

I hope this clarifies. Happy to discuss when you are working through the detailed assessment.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

Landscape and Natural Heritage Advisor

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 January 2026 09:38
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Balquidder Masts Landscape comments DEC2025

Thanks [REDACTED] I'm going to start writing up the detailed assessments to see where the balance lies then will be checking it with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Its useful just to be able to say that the mitigation would not reduce the cumulative impacts.

[REDACTED] MRTPI

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@lochlomond-trossachs.org>
Sent: 07 January 2026 09:21
To: [REDACTED]@lochlomond-trossachs.org>
Subject: RE: Balquidder Masts Landscape comments DEC2025

[REDACTED],
Happy New Year!

I will reread through my comments with fresh 2026 eyes and let you know re mitigation options. The cumulative issues cannot be mitigated unless they reconsider mast options, such as reducing them and sharing with existing. The Buckie Glen can be mitigated to reduce effects with other access options and planting native trees in a natural pattern but it introduces a mast into a new area of the Balquidder area that is not currently effected by mast structures and is a remoter area of Balquidder and therefore more sensitive.

I will get back to you know after re reading.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Landscape and Natural Heritage Advisor

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From: [REDACTED]@lochlomond-trossachs.org>
Sent: 19 December 2025 11:04
To: [REDACTED]@lochlomond-trossachs.org>
Subject: RE: Balquidder Masts Landscape comments DEC2025

[REDACTED]

Hope had a lovely break 😊

Thank you for these comments. I have attached versions with your changes accepted.

Could you just let me know if you would consider the suggested mitigation would reduce the effects enough to be less than significant adverse?

Happy to discuss.

Thanks,

[REDACTED] MRTPI

Planning Officer

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From: [REDACTED]@lochlomond-trossachs.org>

Sent: 18 December 2025 10:46

To: [REDACTED]@lochlomond-trossachs.org>

Subject: Balquidder Masts Landscape comments DEC2025

[REDACTED]
I have attached my revised comments on the two masts due to the new additional information being received from the application regarding cumulative assessment.

I am just about to go into a meeting and then I finish up at lunch. I hope you have a lovely Christmas with [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] wishing you all a happy healthy 2026.

Happy to discuss any comments made in 2026! I am back in on the 6th.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Landscape and Natural Heritage Advisor

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DRAFT, Balquidder, Auchleskine Farm, Telecommunication mast Landscape and Visual comments updated with cumulative 10 DEC 2025 2024/0339/DET

Site location

The site is located on the southern slopes of Meall an t-Seallaidh to the north of Auchleskine Wood and east of Creag an Tuirc and Kirkten Glen. It is approx. 0.8km northeast of Balquidder and west of Strathyre and Lochearnhead. It sits within the LLTNP and 4km from the Ben More-Ben Ledi Wild Land Area (WLA).

Site selection

The application includes a supporting statement to demonstrate the reasons for the site selection. This revised application has explored options for site selection and provided justification for new ground-based mast over utilising existing masts or location or site sharing. This justification is provided in the Fig comparison TNS_Cluster 81. It demonstrates some minimal additional 4G coverage gain than the LLTNP suggested location, but it is in NTS zones. The extra coverage is to the north of Balquidder to the northeast section of Kirkten Glen and to the northwest on the southern slopes of Creag Breag above Tulloch. A slightly larger section of coverage in the Ben More Ben Ledi WLA to the west of Ballimore, running west along Glenn Dubh and to the north. This will only be achieved if the separate application 2025/0051/DET is also approved. It should be noted that the coverage gained does not cover additional settlement/farm areas.

The LLTNP suggested mast location would negate the need for two masts and move the mast out of inner Glen Buckie, into existing forestry plantations with existing access tracks. It provides additional 4G coverage to the northeast covering, Balquidder train station, a section of the A84 and to the east and west of it. These additional coverage areas are not in the NTS zones. Another small additional section of coverage is in the southeast covering the summit ridge of Buachaille Breige and Beinn an Sithein. These areas are partly in the NTS zones.

Both the LLTNP and the 2 proposed application masts provide 4G coverage in NTZ zones covering Glen Buckie, areas to the south of Loch Voil and areas to the north along Loch Voil where settlement exists.

It should be noted the applicants site selection has focused on NTS coverage rather than where a mast is best located within the National Park landscape.

Proposed development

The proposed development includes a 25-meter-high lattice tower, 3no supporting antennae, 1 no.VF dish, 1 PSC cabinet and 1 no meter cabinet, a 1.2m stock fenced compound, a stone hard standing 6.5mx6.5m and set down area. Access will use and widen the existing forest access track from the water treatment works. A new 20m by 3m wide section of access track will be required from gate B. This access track will be reduced after construction with a grass strip down the middle. Electricity supply its thought to be provided by underground cabling from mains supply south of the site. The development will also require earthworks to level ground for the hard standing areas and drainage. No lighting is required.

A Wild Land Assessment (WLA) assessment is not required.

This is a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, and as such the applicant is not required to conclude on significance of effects. The LVA considers that the type of development is negative (adverse)

unless specifically stated. The LLTNP considers the appraisal assessment of **Substantial, Substantial to Major, Major, Major to Moderate** effects to be **Significant effects**.

Mitigation Measures

Embedded mitigation

- Reduction of mast height from 30m to 25m
- Location on the lower/middle slopes of Meall an t-Seallaidh instead of more prominent higher elevation
- Designed to reduce complex unnatural forms which can be visible intrusive in areas of landscape character with inherent qualities of naturalness. It is unclear how they have achieved this.
- Mast and all associated ancillary equipment to be coloured as RAL 7034 to blend into surrounding landscape. Any in this application they state that the RAL colour is a yellow grey. I think Brown might be a better fit.
- Locally appropriate 1.2m stock proof fence
- siting to utilise existing forestry to reduce visibility, although forestry felling in the future will reduce or negate this mitigation
- use of existing tracks but will be widened from 1.5m to 3m and will require 20m new track which will be reduced in width and central grassy strip implemented

Landscape character effects

It would have been helpful to have a ZTV with the landscape character overlaid to illustrate the visibility coverage in each landscape type.

The LVA has used the NatureScot (NS) 2019 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). This LCA assessment is at a 50,000 scale and is more suitable for larger developments or developments outside or cross between the LLTNP and other authority boundaries. The LLTNPA 2010 LCA is carried out at 25,000 scale and therefore is at a finer grain and the more appropriate assessment for this type of development.

The NS2019 LCA relevant landscape receptors are:

- Straths and Glens ('host LCT')
- Straths and Glens with Lochs
- Highland Summits Landscape Character Type (LCT)
- Upland Glens – LCT

Direct landscape effects would include the removal of a limited amount of upland grassland, widening of the existing forest track, the construction and presence of the mast, 20m new access track, ground modelling and other ancillary infrastructure including equipment cabinets, and fencing within the site.

Strath and Glens 'Host' LCT

The LVA recognises the sensitivity, **high-medium**, of the Strath and Glens 'Host' LCT and predicts the effects at construction to be **Substantial to Major** within 0.5km of the site reducing to **minor to none** beyond. At operational stage effects are predicted to be **Major** within 0.5km of the site reducing to **minor to none** beyond. All effects on this LCT are considered negative.

LLTNP consider sensitivity to be high and the effects to extend further than predicted. The addition of this mast to the existing baseline will increase mast influence in this sensitive Glen to the extent that masts will be a feature.

Within the LLTNP this type of landscape occurs here in Balquidder and in the north along Glen Dochart, smaller sections occur in Cowal and single areas in the Trossachs and Loch Lomond areas. This LCT is a rural landscape, where development is largely confined to the lower elevation. The Balquidder area has strong cultural associations that the landscape and scenic qualities of this LCT strongly contribute too .

The ZTV illustrates wide visibility of the mast along the strath floor where the River Balvag meanders. In the main, apart from masts, existing development is constrained to the valley floor. This mast adds another mast development into the upper reaches of this LCT, extending manmade elements in elevated areas of this LCT. Within the Balquidder area of the Straths and Glens LCT there are 3 existing masts within a 2km area at the entrance into the Balquidder Glen and a fourth in Straths and Glens subset Lochs within 9km extending mast influence west and deeper into the Glen. Except for one mast located on the east of the A84, all existing masts are located on the north side of minor road of Balquidder Glen. The proposed mast will also be located on the north side of the minor road and within the 2km area where 3 existing masts are in this LCT. The addition of this mast will make masts a feature in this landscape. This LCT is appreciated from the strath floors, Strath, Glens and Lochs, channelled views north from Upland Glen LCT and elevated Highland summits LCT. LLTNP consider **significant and adverse effects** will arise in this LCT from the proposed development.

Straths and Glens and Lochs LCT

The LVA recognises the sensitivity, **high-medium**, of the Straths and Glens and Lochs LCT and predicts the effects for the construction period to be **moderate** within 1km reducing to **minor/negligible to none**. At operational stage to be **moderate to minor** within 1km reducing to **minor/negligible to none**.

LLTNP consider this LCT to be a 'host' landscape due to the access track running through it. Access tracks to the mast are part of the development. LLTNP recognise that the existing baseline has an access track but this will be widened from 1.5m to 3m which will include tree thinning in Kirkten Glen.

As this LCT covers lochs this LCT covers all the lochs within the LLTNP. Each Loch has its own distinctive character. Key to note in the Balquidder area of this LCT although the road largely follows the shoreline as in other areas of this LCT it is not a through road. It is a small single road that by its very nature is quiet. The largest settlement is Balquidder with other settlement dispersed and infrequent. This LCT has a strong rural character, where development is largely confined to the lower elevation, along the waters edge. The scenic qualities of this landscape and its contribution to the wider landscape is recognised in the LCT citations. The Balquidder area has strong cultural associations that the landscape and scenic qualities of this LCT strongly contribute too.

The existing forest track which will be utilised for access to the site lies within this LCT to the eastern extent. Existing forestry to the west and south of the development site contains visibility of the access track and mast and there is likely to be limited visibility on both north and south banks of Loch Voil. The ZTV illustrates visibility along the length of Loch Voil, although this will be intermittent due to vegetation. This LCT is a subset of Strath and Glens and is

appreciated in conjunction with the Strath and Glens LCT. As stated above the addition of this mast with the existing 4 masts within these LCTs in Balquhiddy will make masts a feature in this landscape.

LLTNP consider the sensitivity of this LCT to be high and the magnitude of change to greater than predicted in consideration of the addition of this mast to existing baseline but do not consider the effects to be significant.

Highland Summits LCT

The LVA recognises the sensitivity, **high-medium**, of the Highland Summits LCT and predicts the effects on for the construction and operational period to be **moderate** within 1km reducing to **minor/negligible to none**.

I largely agree with the assessed effects but as stated in the LVA from this LCT the pattern of 'existing human influences' is viewed 'across the floor of the valley'. From this LCT development, settlement of Balquhiddy and associated human influences such as roads, would be viewed as located on the lower elevation across the valley floor. This development extends human influences and development into an area that is largely unaffected by development with exception of existing masts and appreciated as a transitional area to open hillside. The addition of this mast to the existing baseline of masts within the higher reaches of the Strath and Glens (and subset Lochs) LCT will add to the repeating pattern of masts as a feature of this landscape and will be appreciated from a greater distance than the predicted 1km in the elevated areas of Highland Summits LCT.

Upland Glens LCT

The LVA recognises the sensitivity, **high-medium**, of the Upland Glens LCT and predicts the effects for the construction and operational period to be **minor/negligible to none**. LLTNP consider the sensitivity of this LCT to be High. LLTNP agree that the effects at operational stage will be minor and therefore not significant..

The existing forestry surrounding the development site to the south and west reduces visibility and contains the effects currently. Changes to forestry would extend effects beyond what is predicted. Mitigation in the form of scattered and natural native tree planting should be implemented to reduce the likely changes in effects. This would provide BNG and landscape gains by to achieve a more natural transition from lower woodlands to open hills.

Visual Amenity Effects

In accordance with NS's [Standing advice for planning consultations – Telecommunication masts in National Scenic Areas, National Parks and Wild Land Areas | NatureScot](#) A ZTV for the proposal should;

- Extend to a 10km radius
- Use OS terrain base mapping and bareground visibility
- Illustrate the visibility of mast components and any new access tracks using two different colours.

The ZTVs Fig 1&2 extend to a 10km radius from the site but do not illustrate the visibility of the 20m new track or the associated ancillary development. Most of the track will be utilising an existing forest track but widening it from 1.5 to 3m and this forestry block in Kirkton Glen is planned to be thinned and therefore the access track may be more prominent than assessed.

Fig 1 ZTV provides bare ground (allowing only for screening provided by landform but not buildings or forestry so representing worst case/maximum scenario) ZTV. Fig 2 ZTV provides a ZTV which assigns a height of 15m for main blocks forestry and woodland.

Forestry is widespread in the area and felling coups a common feature. There are fairly substantial proposed changes to Long Term Management plans within the Balquidder area due in part to maturity of forest crop but also to clear diseased Larch. Currently the entire south face of commercial forest in Kirkton Glen is proposed to be clear felled opening large areas of visibility to this site. This is illustrated in ZTV Fig1. The forestry changes will open up views and increase visibility to the mast that are not currently available.

Although Corepaths are considered visual receptors to the development they are not illustrated on the ZTVs which is not helpful in analysing visibility from these paths.

Fig 1 bareground ZTV illustrates visibility within 1-4 km within Strath and Glen floor of Loch Voil and the River Balvag. This includes the clustered settlement of Balquidder, and the more dispersed settlement and farms to the south including Stronvar, Ballinluig and Gartnafuaran. To the east along the minor road Auchleskine stretching to the western edge of Auch tubh. Visibility stretches east along the strath floor containing River Balvag to the A84 and forested western slopes of Meall nan Oighreag. This includes the descent or ascent of the Rob Roy Way to the Kingshouse hotel (Mhor). To the west, visibility stretches along Loch Voil and the lower slopes north and south including Kirkton Glen which is to be largely clear felled and continues to Creag Mhor, which is the northeastern boundary of the Ben More- Ben Ledi WLA on the southern side of Loch Voil. To the south visibility stretches along the entrance into Glen Buckie along the minor road to Ballimore and the forested and wooded east and western slopes of Beinn ant Sithein and Creag Mhor.

Within 4-8km visibility is largely restricted by landform to stretching west along and up the Strath of Loch Voil, which includes the length of the minor road and Scottish track 119 to Inverlochlarig and south along upland Glen Buckie, minor road to Ballimore and Scottish Access track 118 and the northern facing slopes and summit of Benvane (Corbett).

Within 8-10km this pattern of visibility continues along Balquidder Glen and to the east visibility hits the elevated summits of Ben Our, Ben Vorlich, Stuc a Chroin and Ben Each.

Fig 2 ZTV with forestry illustrates visibility with existing forestry blocks layered onto the ZTV mapping. As stated above there is some substantial clear felling planned within the next 5 years and some of the forestry blocks layered have already been cleared therefore the more reliable ZTV for analysis is Fig 1 bareground. It is recognised that there will be more screening of the development due to forestry within the area than Fig 1 illustrates. Within 1-4 km there is likely to be more limited visibility in Balquidder and to the settlements and paths south of Balquidder and the northern and southern edges of Loch Voil, including the minor road and 119 track, and the minor road to the east of Balquidder including parts of the NCR7.

Within 4-8km where there is an increase in elevation and openness visibility is similar to the bareground ZTV and this pattern continues to 8-10km

The LVA considers the visual receptors to include;

- Users of the Old Military Road
- Users of Sustrans Cycle Route 7 (which overlaps with Core paths S1139/S0841/S1064/S1131/S1107/S114/S1058/S1160/S1055 and the minor road)

- Recreational users of Scottish Hill Track (SHT) 121 (which overlaps with Corepaths S0847/S0064)
- Recreational walkers accessing the surrounding summits of Creag Mhor, Ben Vorlich, Stuc a Chroin, Beinn Each, Ben Vane and Sgiath a Chaise and
- Visitors and tourists of Rob Roys Grave and Kirkyard

The applicant has scoped out certain receptor's due to no ZTV coverage due to existing forestry that currently provides screening.

Visualisations have been carried out when vegetation is in leaf and therefore not presenting worst case scenario. Visibility is likely to be greater in the 6 months of the year when vegetation is bare. There are no visualisation for year 1 and year 15 with mitigation measures.

The LVA has assessed the visual effects from 5 representative Viewpoints.

I agree that the focus of the visual assessment should be the operational stage. The LVA considers that the majority of visual effects would be experienced as a result of the lattice tower, during the operational period. I consider the ancillary development, hardstanding and track will draw the eye from elevated areas. This can be reduced by track width reduction and natural form rather than angular geometric design of the fencing etc.

The LVA predicts main views of the proposed development would occur within 2km from the site. This would include users of the minor road south of the site, NCR7 and walkers on the Scottish Hill track 121 up Kirkten Glen (illustrated in VP 1 &3). **Minor effects** are predicted up to 2km of the minor road, NCR7 and Scottish Hill track 121, reducing to **negligible/no view** beyond the 2km. Negligible/No View are predicted of users of the Old Military Road and **Negligible effects** are predicted from the surrounding summits such as Benvane, Ben Vorlich and Creag Mhor due to screening and distance.

I largely agree with the visual effects predicted but consider views obtained from elevated areas within the 4km of the site, particularly channelled views from the south in Glen Buckie, and southwest would be greater than minor and negligible.

The LVA assessment does not consider the effects on visual amenity of the addition of the proposed mast on the existing visual baseline that includes masts in the study area, this is a major omission. It is considered that receptors from certain static, transient and sequential views will experience views of 2 or all 3 masts (proposed and 2 existing) in the area. Within and not necessarily limited to 2km of the site. This clustering of masts would have High magnitude of effect to the visual amenity in Balquidder and the surrounding area. As recognised in the LVA many receptors within this location are high sensitivity receptors which are focused on views of the landscape and heritage assets where the views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience of visiting, living and recreating within the Balquidder area. Therefore, the addition of this mast to the existing baseline is considered to be **significant and adverse** within Balquidder and surrounding area.

Special Landscape Qualities

The LVA considers only the Breadalbane sub area Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs). It does not consider the overarching general SLQs, this is an omission. The assessment does not consider the effects of the proposed mast in addition to the existing mast development in the Breadalbane area, again this is an omission. The LVA predicts **minor effects** would be

experienced on four SLQs and the overall integrity of the LLTNP would not be affected by the Proposed Development.

I consider the effects on the SLQs will be greater than predicted due to the incremental effects on the following SLQs;

Tranquility – *‘the sense of peacefulness’* that is experienced, valued and enjoyed in the Balquidder and Glen Buckie area is *‘enhanced by the general absence of large-scale development’*. This development on its own would not greatly reduce this experience but the addition of this development to the existing baseline creates a greater presence of manmade infrastructure to this highly sensitive glen. It would create a higher magnitude of change.

The combined cumulative effect of the interdependent mast at Immerion farm will extend the effects. This effect would be experienced while living, visiting and recreating in the Balquidder and Glen Buckie area.

Wild and rugged highlands contrasting with pastoral lowlands – the cumulative mast development would adversely effect the *‘more desolate and textured scene’* of the uplands *‘with the pasture on the glen floors, sides of rough moorland, native and conifer plantations and the craggy hills’*. Again, this development on its own would not greatly effect the texture of open rough moorland sides but the addition to the existing mast development the collection of masts would have a greater magnitude of change.

The combined cumulative effect of the interdependent mast at Immerion farm will extend the effects. This effect would be experienced while living, visiting and recreating in the Balquidder and Glen Buckie area.

The ***‘Steep mountains and long glens, crossroads within remote mountain ranges and settlements nestled within a vast natural backdrop’*** are either not considered or underrepresented. These SLQs relate to settlement, roads, development and human influences on the valley floors which the undeveloped upper hills and summits provide a strong contrast to. This contrast contributes to the experience and *‘appear (ance) of being untouched, remote and wild’* and *‘acutely emphasises the remoteness’ and silence of the high summits and strong sense of all-enveloping nature’*. The proposed development extends human influence beyond the typical pattern into the transitional edge between undeveloped upper hills and summits and more developed glen floors.

Again, this development on its own would not greatly diminish further the sense of remoteness, naturalness and all enveloping nature in this unique highly sensitive and valued Glen but the addition to the existing mast development would have a greater magnitude of change.

The combined cumulative effect of the interdependent mast at Immerion farm will extend the effects. This effect would be experienced while living, visiting and recreating in the Balquidder and Glen Buckie area.

Cumulative effects

In accordance with NS’s [Standing advice for planning consultations – Telecommunication masts in National Scenic Areas, National Parks and Wild Land Areas | NatureScot](#) a Cumulative CZTV should be provided for the proposal where other masts are proposed within the 10km radius study area to show any intervisibility between the proposed masts, as well as a separate CZTV to show all existing and consented masts.

All cumulative effects from existing, consented, or proposed telecommunication masts within the surrounding proposed study area should be considered to ensure significant effects are minimised through siting and design of mast clusters and proposed mitigation measures.

We welcome the additional CTZV information requested. However there has not been any amendments to the LVA cumulative assessment despite LLTNP raising concerns that the cumulative assessment was inaccurate and omitted 2 existing masts within 2km of the proposed mast. The LVA cumulative assessment still considers only the proposed mast at Immerion farm. This is considered a significant omission to the cumulative assessment.

Given the proposed mast at Immerion Farm and this proposed development are interdependent a combined cumulative assessment should be considered. This should consider the cumulative effects of all built, consented and proposed developments within the 10km study area.

Given the existing baseline conditions and the interdependency of the two mast applications it is necessary to assess the overall extent of effects from the combination of mast developments in the Balquidder area.

Cumulative visual effects

The Bareground CTZV indicates theoretical visibility of one or more masts extends over the majority of the 10km study area. This covers the whole of the lower ground of Balquidder Glen extending in the west along and including Loch Voil, Loch Doine, River Larig to Inverlochlarig, the higher elevated ground both north and south extending to summits including and not limited to Stob Breac, Braes of Balquidder, the Stob, Kirkten Glen, Meall and t Seallaidh, and Creag Mhor. In the south this covers the lower ground of Glen Buckie, extending to Ben Vane and higher elevated areas east and west of Glen Buckie including and not limited to Beinn an t Sithein and southern hills of Glen Dubh. In the east this covers Balquidder, River Balvag, higher ground above Mhor 84 stretching to Ben Our, Ben Vorlich, and Meall a Mhadaidh.

It is recognised that screening and vegetation will reduce the extent of combined visibility however given the way highly sensitive visual receptors use the area for recreation and visiting iconic cultural destinations it is likely that they will experience sequential views of masts development from numerous routes and paths. This is evidenced in the CTZV with likely visibility of several masts along the various access tracks, NCR, Rob Roy, minor roads and popular hill summits.

The CTZV indicates that there is theoretical visibility of all 6 masts (2 proposed and 4 existing) in Balquidder and to the north on the lower slopes of Kirkten Glen on the west and the east. To the south along the minor road into Glen Buckie and stretches to the west in the commercial forest and Bealach a Chonnaidh and to the east along the wooded slopes of Calair Burn.

As stated in the LVA there is intervisibility between Immerion farm mast and the proposed mast. This is experienced along sections of the minor road from Glen Buckie which is also the 121 and the 181 track and at residences near Ballimore. These are channelled and direct views. There would also be views along the NCR and the minor road along the glen.

LLTNP considers that **significant adverse cumulative visual effects** will arise from this development, in addition and in combination with existing and interdependent proposed masts.

Cumulative Landscape effects

As stated above the addition of the proposed mast to existing mast development in the Straths and Glens and subset Lochs LCT is likely to result in **significant adverse cumulative landscape effects** rather than reduce the susceptibility to the proposed development as the LCT is highly susceptible to the type of development proposed. In both the LLTNPA and NSLCA there are existing references to the sensitivity to this type of development within the LCT.

The proposed Immerion Farm mast is not located in the same LCT and is on the transition from Upland Glen LCT to Highland Summits LCT. It therefore does not add another development to the Strath and Glen LCT. It does however extend the influence of mast development in the Balquidder area. This would extend and introduce mast development into Glen Buckie which currently is devoid of mast development. In this sensitive valued landscape, the concentration of 6 mast developments would make mast development a feature.

Further Mitigation Measures to be conditioned

Mitigation recommended to reduce the effects would be to:

- Fully remove and reinstate the new 20 track to the site after construction. Infrequent maintenance would only require a ATV track. This would reduce the presence of the development in the area.
- Implement scattered native woodland planting to reduce effects of any track and the mast and associated infrastructure. This planting should be naturalistic in form and scattered as existing native woodland in the site location. The use of tree shelter and guards must be of muted colours to blend into the landscape and either biodegradable or removed when trees are established.

DRAFT Glen Buckie, Balquidder, Telecommunication mast Landscape and Visual comments DEC 2025 2025/0051/DET

Site location

The site is located on the western slopes of Beinn an t Sitheinn to the east of Glen Buckie 500m northeast of Immerion Farm, approximately 2.5km south of Balquidder and west of Strathgryre. It sits within the LLTNP and 2.4km from the Ben More- Ben Ledi Wild Land Area (WLA).

Site selection

The application includes a supporting statement to demonstrate the reasons for the site selection. This revised application has explored options for site selection and provided justification for new ground-based mast over utilising existing masts or location or site sharing. This justification is provided in the Fig comparison TNS_Cluster 81. It demonstrates some minimal additional 4G coverage gain than the LLTNP suggested location but it is in NTS zones. The extra coverage is in the north of Balquidder to the northeast section of Kirkton Glen and to the northwest on the southern slopes of Creag Breag above Tulloch. A slightly larger section of coverage in the Ben More Ben Ledi WLA to the west of Ballimore, running west along Glenn Dubh and to the north. This will only be achieved if the separate application 2024/0339/DET is also approved. It should be noted that the coverage does not cover additional settlement/farm areas.

The LLTNP suggested mast location which would negate the need for two masts and move the mast out of inner Glen Buckie provides additional 4G coverage to the north east covering, Balquidder train station, a section of the A84 and to the east and west of it. These additional coverage areas are not in the NTS zones. Another small additional section of coverage is in the southeast covering the summit ridge of Buachaille Breige and Beinn an t Sitheinn. These areas are partly in the NTS zones.

Both the LLTNP and the 2 proposed application masts provide 4G coverage in NTZ zones covering Glen Buckie, areas to the south of Loch Voil and areas to the north along Loch Voil where settlement exists.

It should be noted the applicants site selection has focused on NTS coverage rather than where a mast is best located within the National Park landscape.

Proposed development

The proposed development includes a 25-meter-high lattice tower, 3 supporting antennas, 1 no.VF dish, 4 equipment cabinets (approx. 2x0.6m, 1.85x0.85m, 1.1x0.64m and 1.4x0.5m) , a 1.2m stock fenced compound, a stone hard standing and set down area, retaining gabion wall to the east of the site (up to 1.6m high for 13m)and access track just under 1km long. It is proposed to have a connection to the existing electricity network which would involve approximately 40m of overhead line to connect to a nearby existing timber pole overhead line. The development will also require earthworks to level ground for the hard standing areas and drainage. No lighting is required.

Access track

Access will be from the A84, following minor roads from Strathgryre to Balquidder along Glen Buckie to Ballimore. At Ballimore access would continue along existing tracks towards Immerion and east of the Calair Burn after which it continues through forest and grassland

followed by the creation of a new, semi-permanent (what does that mean? Conflicting text in LVA states permanent) access track (approx. 986m). to the site traversing woodland, indicated as ancient of semi natural origin and native woodland, grassland, rush pasture, bracken and blanket bog. The access track will be 3 metres wide with varying widths of cut and fill both sides depending on the topography.

A Wild Land Assessment (WLA) assessment is not required.

This is a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, and as such the applicant is not required to conclude on significance of effects. The LVA considers that the type of development is negative (adverse) unless specifically stated. The LLTNP considers the appraisal assessment of **Substantial, Substantial to Major, Major, Major to Moderate** effects to be **Significant effects**.

Mitigation Measures

Embedded mitigation

- Reduction of mast height from 30m to 25m
- Location on the lower/middle slopes of Glen Buckie instead of more prominent higher elevation utilising a fairly flat section within a craggy outcrop
- Designed to reduce complex unnatural forms which can be visible intrusive in areas of landscape character with inherent qualities of naturalness. It is unclear how they have achieved this.
- All associated ancillary equipment to be coloured as RAL 7034 to blend into surrounding landscape. Brown would be a better fit.



- Locally appropriate 1.2m stock proof fence
- siting to utilise existing woodland to reduce visibility
- use of existing tracks but will be widened

Landscape character effects

It would have been helpful to have a ZTV with the landscape character overlaid to illustrate the visibility coverage in each landscape type.

The LVA has used the NatureScot (NS) 2019 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). This LCA assessment is at a 50,000 scale and is more suitable for larger developments or developments outside or cross between the LLTNP and other authority boundaries. The LLTNP 2010 LCA is carried out at 25,000 scale and therefore is at a finer grain and the more appropriate assessment for this type of development.

The NS2019 LCA relevant landscape receptors are:

- Highland Summits Landscape Character Type (LCT) ('host LCT')

- Upland Glens – LCT (It should be noted that the permanent access track runs through this LCT and therefore this LCT is should also be considered the ‘host LCT’)
- Straths and Glens with Lochs
- Straths and Glens. It should be noted that this LCT is not consider in the LVA assessment, but the ZTV illustrates visibility to the east of Balquidder.

I agree that the focus of the assessment should be on the Highland Summits and Upland Glens which are likely to be most affected by the proposed development. Direct landscape effects would include the removal of a limited, but valued amount of woodland and vegetation, widening of the existing opening in the stone wall, the construction and presence of the mast, access track, ground modelling and other ancillary infrastructure including equipment cabinets, fencing and gabion wall within the site.

Highland Summits LCT

The LVA recognises the sensitivity, **high-medium**, of the Highland Summits LCT and predicts the effects on both the construction and operational period to be **moderate** within 1km of the site reducing to **minor to none** beyond. The LVA considers the sensitivity is *‘slightly reduced particularly due to the presence of forest cover and adjacent telegraph line’*.

LLTNP consider existing development and settlement in Glen Buckie is associated with the Upland Glen LCT such as Ballimore, Immerion Farm and the minor road. There are detracting tracks that extend into the Highland Summits LCA to the west of Ballimore and to the south of Immerion Farm, currently the east side of the Glen is devoid of visible tracks and more limited in development influence . This development will introduce a mast and access track that extends into this LCT in an area not effected by access tracks and has a strong sense of naturalness. The access track will be more apparent than illustrated and assessed in the LVA. The mast, equipment cabinets, fencing will introduce a more noticeable collection of man made elements into this key transitional open section than existing telegraph lines.

The existing baseline does not include mast structures in the Highland Summits LCT that surround Glen Buckie. The upper reaches of the Highland Summits LCT to the west and south of Glen Buckie are included in the Ben More- Ben Ledi Wild Land Area (WLA). LLTNP considers that the mast development will add to the existing detracting features in this landscape and the magnitude of change will be greater than predicted. LLTNP considers the effects on the Highland Summits LCT surrounding Glen Buckie will be **significant and adverse**.

Upland Glens LCT

The LVA recognises the sensitivity, **high-medium**, of the Upland Glens LCT and predicts the effects on for the construction period to be **moderate to minor to negligible**, and operational period to be **moderate to minor to none**.

Glen Buckie is a relatively small area of the Upland Glens landscape. The Glen Buckie Upland Glen LCT includes open, farmed, wooded, forested and farmed with crofts subsets. The latter, farmed with crofts, is a rare subset of the Upland Glen LCT within the NP and occurs at the foot of Glen Buckie. Farmed Glens with Crofts are important in the sequence and transition to the wilder upland areas. All upland glen LCT and subsets are associated with the remote upland slopes and summits of the highlands, but form transitions visually when moving through to lower lying and enclosed main glens. The LLTNP 2010 LCA citation highlights high sensitivity to

change in the form of development or landuse change *‘that detracts from the unspoilt and wild upland qualities, such as engineered hill tracks, new infrastructure, and masts’.*

Given the rarity of the farmed with croft, and wooded upland glen subsets contained in the Glen Buckie Upland Glen LCT and the existing features that diminish scenic, remote and natural qualities LLTNP consider the sensitivity to be **High**.

LLTNP consider this LCT is also the host landscape with the introduction of a permanent access track at 3 metres wide with varying cut and fill sections both sides of the track. As a result, LLTNP consider the magnitude of change on the Upland Glens at operation period to be higher due the permanent new section of access track through the woodland. Access tracks are a feature of this landscape but not in this eastern section where the existing native woodland provides a strong scenic quality and sense of naturalness. This permanent wide access track will be more apparent than illustrated and assessed in the LVA and diminish the scenic quality and sense of naturalness of this landscape. LLTNP considers the effects on the Glen Buckie Upland Glens LCT area to be **significant and adverse**.

LLTNP consider the effects to be greater and extend further than assessed on both LCTs. I do not consider a permanent 3m access tracks is required for this development. The main requirement of the access track will be the construction period and then infrequent maintenance requirements. If it is concluded that this development should be permitted mitigation recommended to reduce the effects would be to implement alternative access solutions for construction and operation such as helicopter or ATV track. Scattered native woodland planting should also be implemented to reduce effects of any track and the mast and associated infrastructure.

Visual Amenity Effects

In accordance with NS’s [Standing advice for planning consultations – Telecommunication masts in National Scenic Areas, National Parks and Wild Land Areas | NatureScot](#) A ZTV for the proposal should;

- Extend to a 10km radius
- Use OS terrain base mapping and bareground visibility
- Illustrate the visibility of mast components and any new access tracks using two different colours.

The ZTVs Fig 1&2 only extend to a 5km radius from the site and does not illustrate the visibility of the new track or the associated ancillary development, this does not meet best practice. Fig 1 ZTV provides bare ground (allowing only for screening provided by landform but not buildings or forestry so representing worst case/maximum scenario) ZTV. Fig 2 ZTV provides a ZTV which assigns a height of 15m for main blocks forestry and woodland.

Forestry is widespread in the area and felling coups a common feature. There are fairly substantial proposed changes to Long Term Management plans within the Balquidder area due in part to maturity of forest crop but also to clear diseased Larch. Currently the entire south face of commercial forest in Kirkton Glen is proposed to be clear felled opening large areas of visibility to this site. This is illustrated in ZTV Fig1. The forestry changes will open up views and increase visibility to the mast that are not currently available.

It would have been clearer if the boundary of the Ben More- Ben Ledi WLA was a different colour to the greens that were illustrating visibility and forestry.

Long distance route Rob Roy Way and Sustrans NCR7 are illustrated in the ZTV but not core paths such as the path to Ben Vane and Brig o Turk.

Fig 1 bareground ZTV illustrates visibility within 1-3 km within Glen Buckie floor including the farms of Immerion and Ballimore. Visibility stretches east and west up the slopes of Beinn an t Sithein (east) and Lianach (west). Visibility extends north along Calair Burn the dwellings at Ballinluig to the village of Balquidder and southern slopes of Meall and t- Seallaidh, Kirkton Glen and Meall Reamhar.

Within 4-5km visibility stretches to the west into the Ben More- Ben Ledi WLA to the northwest of Gleann Dubh. In the south the northern slopes and summit of Ben Vane. North, visibility extends to the upper reaches of the southern slopes of Meall and t- Seallaidh, Kirkton Glen and Meall Reamhar.

Fig 2 ZTV with forestry illustrates visibility within 1-3 km within Glen Buckie floor including the farms of Immerion and Ballimore. Visibility stretches east and west up the slopes of Beinn and Sithein (east) and Lianach (west). Due to woodland visibility is limited along the Calair Burn and dwellings at Ballinluig but the most visibility continues to be apparent north at the village of Balquidder and southern slopes of Meall and t- Seallaidh, Kirkton Glen and Meall Reamhar.

Within 4-5km visibility is similar to the bareground ZTV and stretches to the west into the Ben More- Ben Ledi WLA to the northwest of Gleann Dubh. In the south the northern slopes and summit of Ben Vane. North, visibility extends to the upper reaches of the southern slopes of Meall and t- Seallaidh, Kirkton Glen and Meall Reamhar.

The LVA considers the visual receptors to include;

- Settlement of Balquidder
- Minor road to Ballimore
- Sustrans Cycle Route 7
- Cores Path SO842 southwest of Ballimore/Scottish Track 118
- Scattered residential properties in Glen Buckie
- Network of Corepaths at Balquidder/Kirkton Glen (including part of the Scottish Forestry Track 121)
- Hillwalkers accessing hills (Ben Vane) to the south and southwest of the study area

The applicant has scoped out certain receptors due to existing forestry that currently provides screening. As stated previously there is a substantial amount of change to forestry in this area largely to do with SLARP removal and the ZTV Fig 1 should be the figure used to determine scoping in or out of receptors. Currently the entire south face of commercial forest in Kirkton Glen is proposed to be clear felled opening large areas of visibility to this site.

It is therefore considered that the network of corepaths at Balquidder/Kirkton Glen will experience views of the mast that are currently not available. We also consider the largely southern facing views experienced from Balquidder to Glen Buckie are important to consider.

Visualisations have been carried out when vegetation is in leaf and therefore not presenting worst case scenario. Visibility is likely to be greater in the 6 months of the year when vegetation is bare. There are no visualisation for year 1 and year 15 with mitigation measures.

The LVA has assessed the visual effects from 5 representative Viewpoints.

I agree that the focus of the visual assessment should be the operational stage. The LVA considers that the majority of visual effects would be experienced as a result of the lattice tower, during the operational period. As stated in NS [Standing advice for planning consultations – Telecommunication masts in National Scenic Areas, National Parks and Wild Land Areas | NatureScot](#) ‘Access tracks may be more visually prominent in the landscape than the masts, particularly at high elevations where there is a lack of screening’. I consider the access track will also effect visual amenity and should have been consider in the visual assessment.

The LVA predicts highest visibility would occur in the open area to the south of Glen Buckie where there would be views across and along the glen towards the mast. Receptors experiencing the changes in views would be road and recreational users accessing the minor road through Glen Buckie (illustrated in VP 1) and the corepath southwest of Ballimore/Scottish Hill track 118 (illustrated in VP 2). **Moderate effects** are predicted up to 1.9km of the minor road and **Moderate to minor effects** would be experienced from the corepath users.

LLTNP consider the site location is not associated with the built form of the lower lying Glen floor and more associated with the open, remoter and more natural upland slopes. LLTNP also consider the access track will draw the eye and emphasise the mast and associated infrastructure. The access track will be noticeable from elevated summits that recreational receptors will experience. LLTNP consider the visual effects within Glen Buckie and the surrounding slopes and higher ground will be greater than predicted and **significant and adverse**.

I further consider Balquidder and recreational receptors accessing the viewpoint above Balquidder will experience the top section of the mast. Although this will be a small feature in the view, the views from Balquidder are focused south towards Glen Buckie and Ben Vane and the mast’s location is likely to draw the eye as it introduces an incongruous feature to the view. This is illustrated in VP 3 and VP5.

Special Landscape Qualities

The LVA considers only the Breadalbane sub area Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs). It does not consider the overarching general SLQs, this is an omission. The assessment does not consider the effects of the proposed mast in addition to the existing mast development in the Breadalbane area, again this is an omission. The LVA predicts **moderate and minor effects** would be experienced on three SLQs and the overall integrity of the LLTNP would not be affected by the Proposed Development.

LLTNP consider additional SLQs to be effected and the effects on SLQs ‘**Tranquillity and A Landscape of Distinctive Glens and Straths**’ and ‘**settlements nestled within a vast natural backdrop**’ to be greater than predicted. LLTNP consider these SLQs should be grouped together as they relate to the remote, all enveloping nature and tranquil qualities that would be affected by the development.

The Balquidder valley and the side glen of Glen Buckie are unique in that there is no through passage by road, and as a result both upper Balquidder and Glen Buckie have a stronger sense of remoteness at lower elevation along the glen floor than other glens within the ‘**A Landscape of Distinctive Glens and Straths**’ SLQ. Settlement is limited to a few isolated farms in Glen Buckie adding to the sense of ‘*all enveloping nature*’ remoteness and tranquillity. The ‘*living, working feel to the glens*’ is concentrated in the low-lying areas which provides a

‘strong sense of peacefulness enhanced by the small scale of human development within the expansive landforms, and general absence of large-scale development’.

The lower slopes of the glen sides have considerable tree cover and then transition to the higher open slopes with rocky moorland, with craggy, rocky outcrops and open summits. The mast location is in a key transitional section between lower glen sides and open remote wilder slopes and summits. The track and mast development will extend industrial elements to an area of Balquidder currently not affected by this type of development and it will diminish the sense of remoteness all enveloping nature and tranquillity in this valued Glen. The effects of the mast and access track will be experienced within Glen Buckie, on the lower slopes of surrounding hills and elevated summits such as Ben Vane.

LLTNP considers the introduction of this type of development at this location in an area that is not effected by mast development will be significant and adverse on the ***‘Tranquillity and A Landscape of Distinctive Glens and Straths’ and ‘settlements nestled within a vast natural backdrop’*** SLQs.

The addition of this development to the existing baseline in the Balquidder area and in combination with the interdependent Auckleskine Farm mast will further diminish the sense of remote, all enveloping nature and tranquil qualities that the Balquidder area is valued, enjoyed and recognised for. It is therefore considered by LLTNP the cumulative effects on the ***‘Tranquillity and A Landscape of Distinctive Glens and Straths’ and ‘settlements nestled within a vast natural backdrop’*** SLQs will be **significant and adverse**.

DRAFT Cumulative effects

In accordance with NS’s [Standing advice for planning consultations – Telecommunication masts in National Scenic Areas, National Parks and Wild Land Areas | NatureScot](#) A Cumulative CZTV should be provided for the proposal where other masts are proposed within the 10km radius study area to show any intervisibility between the proposed masts, as well as a separate CZTV to show all existing and consented masts.

All cumulative effects from existing, consented, or proposed telecommunication masts within the surrounding proposed study area should be considered to ensure significant effects are minimised through siting and design of mast clusters and proposed mitigation measures.

We welcome the additional CTZV information requested. However there has not been any amendments to the LVA cumulative assessment despite LLTNP raising concerns that the cumulative assessment was inaccurate and omitted 2 existing masts within close proximity to the proposed mast. The LVA cumulative assessment still considers only the proposed mast at Auckleskine Farm. This is considered a significant omission to the cumulative assessment.

Given the proposed mast at Auckleskine Farm and this proposed development are interdependent a combined cumulative assessment should be considered. This should consider the cumulative effects of all built, consented and proposed developments within the 10km study area.

Given the existing baseline conditions and the interdependency of the two mast applications it is necessary to assess the overall extent of effects from the combination of mast developments in the Balquidder area.

Cumulative visual effects

The Bareground CTZV indicates theoretical visibility of one or more masts extends over the majority of the 10km study area. This covers the whole of the lower ground of Balquidder Glen extending in the west along and including Loch Voil, Loch Doine, River Larig to Inverlochlarig, the higher elevated ground both north and south extending to summits including and not limited to Stob Breac, Braes of Balquidder, the Stob, Kirkten Glen, Meall and t Seallaidh, and Creag Mhor. In the south this covers the lower ground of Glen Buckie, extending to Ben Vane and higher elevated areas east and west of Glen Buckie including and not limited to Beinn an t Sithein and southern hills of Glen Dubh. In the east this covers Balquidder, River Balvag, higher ground above Mhor 84 stretching to Ben Our, Ben Vorlich, and Meall a Mhadaidh.

It is recognised that screening and vegetation will reduce the extent of combined visibility however given the way highly sensitive visual receptors use the area for recreation and visiting iconic cultural destinations it is likely that they will experience sequential views of masts development from numerous routes and paths. This is evidenced in the CTZV with likely visibility of several masts along the various access tracks, NCR, Rob Roy, minor roads and popular hill summits.

The CTZV indicates that there is theoretical visibility of all 6 masts (2 proposed and 4 existing) in Balquidder and to the north on the lower slopes of Kirkten Glen on the west and the east. To the south along the minor road into Glen Buckie and stretches to the west in the commercial forest and Bealach a Chonnaidh and to the east along the wooded slopes of Calair Burn.

As stated in the LVA there is intervisibility between Auckleskine Farm mast and the proposed mast. This is experienced along sections of the minor road from Glen Buckie which is also the 121 and the 181 track and at residences near Ballimore. These are channelled and direct views. There would also be views along the NCR and the minor road along the glen.

LLTNP considers that **significant adverse cumulative visual effects** will arise from this development, in addition and in combination with existing and interdependent proposed masts.

Cumulative Landscape effects

The proposed Immerion Farm mast is not located in the same Straths and Glens and subset Lochs LCTs as the other existing and proposed Auckleskine Farm masts. Immerion Farm mast is on the transition from Upland Glen LCT to Highland Summits LCT. It therefore does not add another development to the Strath and Glen LCT. It does however extend the influence of mast development in the Balquidder area and yet another type of LCT. This would extend and introduce mast development into Glen Buckie which currently is devoid of mast development. As stated previously there are existing references to the sensitivity to this type of development within the LCT. In this sensitive valued landscape, the concentration of 6 mast developments would make mast development a feature. **Further Mitigation Measures to be conditioned**

Mitigation recommended to reduce the effects would be to:

- Implement alternative access solutions such as helicopter or ATV track.
- Implement scattered native woodland planting to reduce effects of any track and the mast and associated infrastructure. This planting should be naturalistic in form and scattered as existing native woodland in the site location. The use of tree shelter and guards must be of muted colours to blend into the landscape and either biodegradable or removed when trees are established.