

## Appendix A9.1: Local Landscape Character Areas

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This appendix supports Chapter 9 (Landscape) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and sets out the baseline landscape character using Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) to describe the study area, encompassing land up to 3km from the proposed scheme.
- 1.2 The landscape baseline has been established using desk study and field work to identify the distinctive areas of local landscape character and the individual elements, features and aesthetic and perceptual aspects which contribute to the character of each area.
- 1.3 For each LLCA a description includes location, topography, drainage, land use, settlement and views with a further tabular summary stating Key Characteristics, Positive Character Attributes, Negative Character Attributes and including an assessment of Value (including Landscape Designations, Landscape Quality (Condition), Scenic Quality, Rarity, Representativeness, Conservation/Cultural Interest, Recreation Value, Perceptual Aspects and Associations), Susceptibility to Change (including Landscape Elements and Landscape Features) and Sensitivity (which has been derived from Value and Susceptibility).
- 1.4 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (hereafter referred to as GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management (IEMA) 2013) (p. 156) defines landscape 'Elements' as '*Individual parts which make up a landscape, such as, for example, trees hedges and buildings*', and landscape 'Features' as '*Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements within the landscape, such as tree clumps, church towers or wooded skylines or a particular aspect of the project proposal.*'
- 1.5 The location of the LLCAs are shown on Figure 9.1 which accompanies Chapter 9 (Landscape) of the EIAR. Examples of typical views from the LLCAs are detailed below.

### 2 Baseline Conditions

- 2.1 The LLCAs within the study area are described below.

#### **Enclosed Farmed Landscapes LLCA**

- 2.2 The Enclosed Farmed Landscapes LLCA is located inland from the southern shore of the Moray Firth, to the east of Inverness and immediately to the east of Inverness Campus and is bisected by the Inverness – Nairn Transport Corridor LLCA. The Enclosed Farmed Landscapes LLCA is backed by a ridgeline topped with woodland to the south, which gently undulates towards the coastal plain. The north-west edge of the LLCA adjoins the Moray Firth and Cairnlaw Burn runs through the LLCA with small tributaries throughout.
- 2.3 The LLCA comprises a remnant estate landscape with simple, large scale and well-maintained geometric field patterns. Mixed fields are enclosed by mature deciduous shelterbelts, areas of deciduous woodland, fragmented hedgerows and post and wire fencing. Long distance views to the Moray Firth and the Black Isle beyond are frequently limited by built form and woodland, particularly Inverness Retail and Business Park and woodland surrounding the dualled A96, the former listed Stratton Lodge Hotel, Culloden and the vegetation around Allanfearn.
- 2.4 The variety of vegetation and mature deciduous trees dispersed throughout the landscape add to the range of colours and textures that change with the seasons.

- 2.5 Settlement consists of the hamlet of Milton, scattered farm steadings and individual properties. Beyond the LLCA boundaries, residential housing, retail and infrastructure developments, including those on the edge of Culloden and Inverness have encroached on field patterns, in contrast to existing agricultural uses and the former estate character.
- 2.6 There are no landscape designations within the LLCA, although some designated cultural heritage sites are scattered throughout and are mainly associated with farmsteads. These are not considered to contribute greatly to the character of the landscape area. The Aberdeen to Inverness Railway Line runs through the LLCA from the north-east to the south-west and The Highland Council designated core paths are located throughout. The area lacks a sense of tranquillity given the presence of nearby major road and rail corridors and encroaching settlement.

**Table 1: Landscape Character Enclosed Farmed Landscapes LLCA**

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flat to gently undulating coastal flood plain;</li> <li>a remnant estate landscape with a well-established character and landscape structure;</li> <li>mature trees and blocks of woodland throughout, which limit some long distance views;</li> <li>geometric fields enclosed by mature tree lines;</li> <li>settlement within the LLCA comprises generally of dispersed farm steadings;</li> <li>some open views towards the Kessock Bridge, the Moray Firth and the opposite shoreline of the Black Isle.</li> </ul>
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remnant mature estate woodland with mature beech avenues;</li> <li>strong simple rectilinear field pattern; and</li> <li>enclosed character with occasional views to the coast and beyond.</li> </ul>
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new developments contrast with the existing agricultural and former estate character.</li> </ul>
Value Overall value: Low to Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape designations: none</li> <li>landscape quality (condition): medium - well-maintained farmland, woodlands are well-established; Hedgerows are in poor condition;</li> <li>scenic quality: low to medium - distant views to the Moray Firth partially restricted by landform, woodland and the dualled A96 corridor;</li> <li>rarity: low - no rare landscape elements or features;</li> <li>representativeness: low to medium - remnant estate landscape is a feature;</li> <li>conservation / cultural interest: low - some scheduled monuments and cultural heritage sites;</li> <li>recreational value: low - recreational features limited to core paths;</li> <li>perceptual aspects: low - landscape is not valued for its wildness or tranquility;</li> <li>associations: low - no notable associations to landscape.</li> </ul>
Susceptibility to Change Overall susceptibility: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: low to medium - hedgerows in particular are in poor condition and changes to shelterbelts and hedgerows may alter the landscape character;</li> <li>Landscape features medium - changes to mature tree blocks, historic avenues and field patterns may potentially alter the landscape character, although the character area may have some ability to accommodate the proposed scheme.</li> </ul>
Sensitivity (derived from Value and Susceptibility) Overall sensitivity: Low to Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: low - considered potentially tolerant to substantial change;</li> <li>landscape features: medium - considered to have some ability to accommodate the proposed scheme.</li> </ul>

**Inverness – Nairn Transport Corridor LLCA**

- 2.7 Inverness – Nairn Transport Corridor LLCA is located inland from the southern shore of the Moray Firth, to the east of Inverness. The LLCA is located on a gently undulating coastal plain and passes through the Enclosed Farmed Landscapes LLCA and the Coastal Lowland Intensive Farming LLCA.
- 2.8 The LLCA comprises a linear transport corridor surrounding the dualled A96, which will be generally enclosed by woodland planting associated with the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme and this planting would frequently limit long distance views to the Moray Firth and the Black Isle beyond. Beyond the LLCA boundaries, residential housing, retail and infrastructure developments would be visible, with surrounding development encroaching on previous field patterns and former agricultural and estate character.
- 2.9 Settlement within the LLCA consists of scattered farm steadings and individual properties which border the A96.
- 2.10 There are no landscape designations within the LLCA.

**Table 2: Inverness – Nairn Transport Corridor LLCA**

<b>Landscape Attributes</b>	<b>Description</b>
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>linear transport corridor;</li> <li>flat to gently undulating coastal flood plain;</li> <li>roadside planting limiting long distance views;</li> <li>adjacent residential housing schemes and retail parks encroaching on previous rural edge;</li> <li>settlement within the LLCA comprises roadside properties;</li> <li>some open views north towards the Moray Firth and south towards the higher Culloden Forest ridge.</li> </ul>
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some remnant mature estate woodland with mature beech avenues;</li> <li>roadside planting.</li> </ul>
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new transport infrastructure conflicts with the previous agricultural and estate character of surrounding LLCAs</li> </ul>
Value Overall value: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape designations: none</li> <li>landscape quality (condition): medium - well-maintained roadside woodland;</li> <li>scenic quality: low to medium - distant views to Moray Firth partially restricted planting;</li> <li>rarity: low - no rare landscape elements or features;</li> <li>representativeness: low - modern transport corridor;</li> <li>conservation / cultural interest: low - some scheduled monuments and cultural heritage sites;</li> <li>recreational value: low - recreational features limited to core paths;</li> <li>perceptual aspects: low - landscape is not valued for its wildness or tranquility;</li> <li>associations: low - no notable associations to landscape.</li> </ul>
Susceptibility to Change Overall susceptibility: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: low to medium. Changes roadside planting would not greatly alter the landscape character;</li> <li>landscape features: low. Few notable landscape features.</li> </ul>
Sensitivity (derived from Value and Susceptibility) Overall sensitivity: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: low - considered potentially tolerant to substantial change;</li> <li>landscape features: low - considered to have some ability to accommodate the proposed scheme.</li> </ul>

**Inverness Urban Fringe and Culloden LLCA**

- 2.11 Inverness Urban Fringe and Culloden LLCA covers a large part of the study area and encompasses suburban residential and commercial areas to the north and east of Inverness City Centre LLCA. The area is located on a gently undulating coastal plain which rises to the south at Castle Heather, Westhill and Culloden.
- 2.12 The low-lying topography and urban nature of the LLCA results in long distance views frequently being generally restricted by built form. Settlement within the LLCA consists of stone mansions, modern semi-detached houses and terraced housing estates. Industrial estates and retail and business park developments are located on the urban edge with an often clearly defined break with the patterns of agricultural fields which surround these developments.
- 2.13 Major roads and their associated junctions, embankments, bridges, roundabouts and lighting are an integral part of the LLCA, with the A9, A82 and A96 prominent within the landscape.
- 2.14 The LLCA includes Culloden House Garden and Designated Landscape (GDL) which is visually contained due to surrounding woodland and Leys Castle GDL to the south which has a limited influence on the overall character of the area.

**Table 3: Inverness Urban Fringe and Culloden LLCA**

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flat to gently undulating coastal flood plain;</li> <li>residential housing dominant with commercial retail parks on rural edge;</li> <li>some open views north towards the Moray from elevated locations.</li> </ul>
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some recreational open space and golf courses; and</li> <li>open long distance views to the Moray Firth from more elevated locations.</li> </ul>
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dominant road network leads to disjointed landscape patterns; and</li> <li>some poorly maintained housing estates.</li> </ul>
Value Overall value: Medium to Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape designations: high - Culloden House GDL, Leys Castle GDL;</li> <li>landscape quality (condition): low - little parkland or woodland;</li> <li>scenic quality: low to medium - distant views to Moray Firth generally restricted by built form;</li> <li>rarity: low - no rare landscape elements or features;</li> <li>representativeness: low - suburban hinterland of no particular note;</li> <li>conservation / cultural interest: Medium - Leys Castle and Culloden House GDLs and some cultural heritage sites;</li> <li>recreational value: medium to low - recreational features include golf courses, parkland and core paths;</li> <li>perceptual aspects: low - landscape is not valued for its wildness or tranquility;</li> <li>associations: low - no notable associations to landscape.</li> </ul>
Susceptibility to Change Overall susceptibility: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: Low - additional road infrastructure would not greatly alter the landscape character;</li> <li>landscape features: low - few notable landscape features.</li> </ul>
Sensitivity (derived from Value and Susceptibility) Overall sensitivity: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: low - considered potentially tolerant to substantial change;</li> <li>landscape features: low - considered to have some ability to accommodate the proposed scheme.</li> </ul>

**Inverness Campus (Mixed Use) LLCA**

- 2.15 Inverness Campus (Mixed Use) LLCA covers a small section of the study area comprising a modern purpose-built campus within a parkland setting. The LLCA is on the urban edge of Inverness and bound to the west by the existing A9 and to the north-east by the Highland Main Line Railway.
- 2.16 The LLCA is located on relatively flat land within the coastal plain and its low-lying topography results in long distance views frequently being curtailed by built form or intervening vegetation. Buildings are a mixture of residential student accommodation and modern teaching facilities which are set within a parkland landscape. Parkland features include an open-air event space and integral Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) with a series of interconnecting lochans. The parkland is covered by a network of transport infrastructure including roads, car parking and the 'Golden Bridge' pedestrian cycle link between the campus and the city over the A9.
- 2.17 The LLCA features strong geometry in the form of linear field patterns with dry stone walls and hedgerows and repeated design elements. The contemporary design utilises a distinctive pallet of hard materials, finishes, street furniture, signage, lighting, earthworks and planting imparting a high-quality landscape setting and distinct sense of place.
- 2.18 There are no landscape designations within the LLCA.

**Table 4: Inverness Campus (Mixed Use) LLCA**

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>purpose-built campus buildings and extensive parkland landscape sited in flat to gently undulating lowlands;</li> <li>designed parkland landscape;</li> <li>SuDS featuring connected lochans;</li> <li>strong geometry within the landscape due to linear field pattern and strong boundaries;</li> <li>contemporary design with a distinct pallet of hard materials and planting;</li> <li>a network of transport infrastructure with roads, paths, car parking facilities and a pedestrian cycle link between the campus and the city.</li> </ul>
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consistency of designed environment resulting in a high-quality landscape setting;</li> <li>long distance views to the Moray Firth from open locations.</li> </ul>
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>transport infrastructure can lead to disjointed landscape patterns.</li> </ul>
Value Overall value: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape designations: low - none;</li> <li>landscape quality (condition): high - designed contemporary parkland landscape;</li> <li>scenic quality: high - designed landscape with some distant views to the Moray Firth;</li> <li>rarity: low - no rare landscape elements or features;</li> <li>representativeness: low - standard university campus;</li> <li>conservation/cultural interest: low - no cultural heritage sites;</li> <li>recreational value: medium - parkland and core paths;</li> <li>perceptual aspects: low - landscape is not valued for its wildness or tranquility;</li> <li>associations: low - no notable associations to landscape.</li> </ul>
Susceptibility to Change Overall susceptibility: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: medium - additional road infrastructure in close proximity may alter the existing landscape character; and</li> <li>landscape features: low - any existing landscape features would not be impacted by additional road structure.</li> </ul>
Sensitivity (derived from Value and Susceptibility) Overall sensitivity: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: medium - contemporary landscape parkland considered potentially tolerant to some change;</li> <li>landscape features: low to medium - considered to have ability to accommodate the proposed scheme.</li> </ul>

**Inverness City Centre LLCA**

- 2.19 Inverness City Centre LLCA covers the western part of the study area and encompasses the heart of the historic city of Inverness. The LLCA is located on a gently undulating coastal plain centred around the river Ness.
- 2.20 Settlement within the LLCA consists of residential and commercial mostly Victorian stone buildings interspersed with some more modern developments. The interplay of the main streets, parallel to the river, the connecting streets leading towards the river and views along them give the city its unique sense of place. Views from the LLCA are frequently restricted by built form although long distance linear views along the river banks to the north and south are a feature of the city.
- 2.21 The LLCA includes Tomnahurich Cemetery GDL and two conservation areas; Inverness (Crown) and Inverness (Riverside).

**Table 5: Inverness City Centre LLCA**

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flat to gently undulating coastal flood plain;</li> <li>a high-density city centre;</li> <li>residential and commercial stone buildings set within a historic street pattern;</li> <li>open views along the banks of the River Ness.</li> </ul>
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a distinctive and attractive city centre with a unique combination of built heritage and natural spaces;</li> <li>views of the river and its relationship with the city are integral to the character of the townscape.</li> </ul>
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some derelict buildings and open spaces.</li> </ul>
Value Overall value: High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape designations: high - Tomnahurich Cemetery GDL;</li> <li>landscape quality (condition): high - attractive historic townscape;</li> <li>scenic quality: high - views to and along the River Ness;</li> <li>rarity: high - a unique urban setting;</li> <li>representativeness: high - historic city centre;</li> <li>conservation/cultural interest: high - Inverness (Crown) and Inverness (Riverside) Conservation Areas;</li> <li>recreational value: medium - recreational features include visitor attractions, parks and core paths;</li> <li>perceptual aspects: high - townscape is valued for its historic qualities;</li> <li>associations: high - numerous historical associations with the landscape.</li> </ul>
Susceptibility to Change Overall susceptibility: High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: high - additional road infrastructure has the potential to greatly alter the landscape character; and</li> <li>landscape features: high - notable landscape features include river corridor and historic buildings and their settings.</li> </ul>
Sensitivity (derived from Value and Susceptibility) Overall sensitivity: High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: high - substantial change may affect landscape character;</li> <li>landscape features: high - considered to have little ability to accommodate visibility of additional road infrastructure.</li> </ul>

**Coastal Lowland Intensive Farming LLCA**

- 2.22 The Coastal Lowland Intensive Farming LLCA extends over part of the north-east of the study area, along and towards the southern coastline of the Moray Firth. The flat to gently undulating LLCA has little variation in landform and is of an open and expansive scale, with simple wide horizons.
- 2.23 The LLCA consists of large, mostly arable fields enclosed by timber post and wire fencing and fragmented gorse and broom hedges with interspersed coniferous plantation. Shelterbelts along field boundaries, tree clumps, scattered trees and areas of gorse add to the variety of vegetation and seasonal interest.
- 2.24 Farm steadings and individual properties are scattered across the character area and are often surrounded by mature trees, woodland and hedgerows.
- 2.25 The Inverness – Nairn Transport Corridor LLCA runs through the LLCA and The Highland Council designated core paths can be found within the LLCA. The Aberdeen to Inverness Railway Line runs partially in low cutting with gorse covered banks and is not always apparent within the landscape. The open nature of the LLCA combined with the generally flat landform allows visibility of the existing A96 within the landscape, particularly from adjacent fields and properties, although the focus is often on more expansive long-distance views to the hills to the south and Moray Firth and the Black Isle to the north.

**Table 6: Landscape Character Summary for Coastal Lowland Intensive Farming LLCA**

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flat to gently rolling landform;</li> <li>predominantly open, arable fields;</li> <li>scattered farmsteads often associated with mature trees and forestry;</li> <li>frequent long distant views to the Moray Firth and Black Isle beyond;</li> <li>strong horizontal scale of the landscape.</li> </ul>
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>open views across the Moray Firth and beyond;</li> <li>popular holiday destination.</li> </ul>
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visual diversity is mainly limited to seasonal changes in vegetation;</li> <li>in parts, the existing A96 and Aberdeen to Inverness Railway Line is prominent.</li> </ul>
Value Overall value: Low to Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape designations: none</li> <li>landscape quality (condition): low to medium - generally well- maintained farmland although some boundaries are fragmented, woodlands are well-established;</li> <li>scenic quality: medium - landform and lack of extensive woodland allows for open views to the Moray Firth;</li> <li>rarity: low - no rare landscape elements or features;</li> <li>representativeness: low to medium - landscape character, features and elements are not particularly unique;</li> <li>conservation / cultural interest: low - some scheduled monuments;</li> <li>recreational value: low - recreational features limited to core paths;</li> <li>perceptual aspects: low - landscape is not valued for its wildness or tranquility;</li> <li>associations: low - no notable associations to landscape.</li> </ul>
Susceptibility to Change Overall susceptibility: Low to Medium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: low - hedges in particular are in poor condition and changes to shelterbelts and hedgerows would not greatly alter the landscape character;</li> <li>landscape features: low to medium - large scale changes to the open views may have the potential to alter the landscape character.</li> </ul>
Sensitivity (derived from Value and Susceptibility) Overall sensitivity: Low to Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: low - considered potentially tolerant to substantial change;</li> <li>landscape features: low to medium. Considered to have some ability to accommodate the proposed scheme.</li> </ul>

**Enclosed Firth LLCA**

- 2.26 The Enclosed Firth LLCA, comprises the southern shoreline of the Moray Firth. The coast comprises a mixture of rocky intertidal areas, sandy beaches and mud flats, with the land rising gently behind. There are extensive panoramic views across the Moray Firth to the Black Isle beyond.
- 2.27 Medium scale arable and pasture fields are enclosed by low hedgerows and these together with the shades of the seascape, due to variations in season, light and weather, give a consistency in colour and texture across the LLCA.
- 2.28 The LLCA contains a few farms and individual properties which are generally orientated out to sea. The LLCA is not covered by any landscape designations, although the area lies adjacent to Longman and Castle Stuart Bays Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Inner Moray Firth Special Protected Area (SPA), which is an important ecological site. The SSSI and SPA, coastal weather conditions and views to the Moray Firth give the LLCA a sense of wildness and isolation.
- 2.29 A Highland Council core path runs along the coast with sections of the path in central and eastern parts of the study area having views to the existing A96. Milton Sewage Works is located within the LLCA.
- 2.30 The coastal edge location and lack of vegetation allows for wide panoramic views of a horizontal nature, with perceptions of the landscape greatly affected by variations in light and weather. The sheltered waters which are partially cut off from the open sea give a sense of enclosure to the seascape.

**Table 7: Landscape Character Summary for Enclosed Firth LLCA**

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flat coastal landscape;</li> <li>little woodland and vertical elements;</li> <li>agricultural fields divided by wire fences sloping towards the shore;</li> <li>long distance open views to the Moray Firth and beyond;</li> <li>intermittent settlement consisting of farms and individual properties.</li> </ul>
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fields form uniformity in colour and texture;</li> <li>panoramic views of the Moray Firth.</li> </ul>
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>views of the existing A96 from slightly elevated parts in the south;</li> <li>some areas poorly maintained with a derelict character.</li> </ul>
Value Overall value: Medium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape designations: none.</li> <li>landscape quality (condition): medium - generally well-maintained farmland with low hedgerows although some industry and abandoned areas to the south;</li> <li>scenic quality: high - limited vegetation allows for panoramic views to the Moray Firth;</li> <li>rarity: low - no rare landscape elements or features;</li> <li>representativeness: low to medium - landscape character, features and elements are not particularly unique;</li> <li>conservation / cultural interest: low - no scheduled monuments are present;</li> <li>recreational value: low to medium - recreational features include core paths;</li> <li>perceptual aspects: medium - landscape is not wild due to its developed nature but does have a sense of wildness and isolation and is generally tranquil; and</li> <li>associations: low - no notable associations to landscape.</li> </ul>
Susceptibility to Change Overall susceptibility: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape elements: low - changes to field boundaries or hedgerows would not greatly change the landscape character.</li> <li>Landscape features: medium - changes to the characteristic open views would potentially alter the landscape character.</li> </ul>
Sensitivity (derived from Value and Susceptibility) Overall sensitivity: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape elements: low - considered potentially tolerant to substantial change.</li> <li>Landscape features: medium - moderately susceptible, although the proposed scheme is set further south of the character area.</li> </ul>



**Coastal Lowlands Forest Edge Farming LLCA**

- 2.31 The Coastal Lowlands Forest Edge Farming LLCA is characterised by a diverse mix of open agricultural land and woodlands superimposed on a complex landform of rolling, north-facing hill slopes and plateaux.
- 2.32 The LLCA encompasses extensive areas of woodland and forestry including Culloden Forest. Woodland creates a strong sense of enclosure across the LLCA and where visibility is limited by forested horizons, attention is frequently focussed on the characteristic undulating landform which is clothed with the uniform colours and textures of large-scale fields, seen against the dark green backdrop of the forest edge. In contrast, open areas on the upper slopes allow distant views northwards to the Moray Firth and beyond.
- 2.33 The LLCA comprises a mixture of arable fields and those set to pasture and grassland which are enclosed by stone walls, timber post and wire fencing, hedges and shelterbelts. The character area includes a diverse range of vegetation including Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) woodland, shelterbelts, tree clumps and riparian scrub along tributaries. Woodland creates a uniformity of texture and colour with diversity seen with seasonal changes to deciduous trees and gorse along field boundaries.
- 2.34 The LLCA includes Leys Castle GDL and Culloden Battlefield both of which are visually contained and so have a limited influence on the overall character of the area.
- 2.35 The Highland Council designated core paths are located throughout, and mainly across the south-west, through and along the edge of woodland and forestry. NCR1 is located in the north and runs through Balloch and partially through Culloden Forest.
- 2.36 The existing A9 is located in the west of the LLCA and is generally visible from this part of the character area. There is a sense of isolation and tranquillity from paths within woodland, although this is limited throughout the LLCA given the prominence of the existing A96 and settlements.

**Table 8: Landscape Character Summary for Coastal Lowlands Forest Edge Farming LLCA**

Landscape Attributes	Description
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convex north facing slopes and plateaux;</li> <li>Undulating to gently sloping topography;</li> <li>Fields enclosed by stone walls, timber post and wire fencing, hedges and shelterbelts. Views locally are focused on uniform undulating slopes with long distance views to the Moray Firth from elevated parts.</li> <li>Settlement within the LLCA comprises of villages and dispersed farm steadings and properties</li> </ul>
Positive Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>long distance views to the Moray Firth from elevated parts;</li> <li>topography and extensive woodland creates a sense of enclosure</li> </ul>
Negative Character Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pylons located in the south and east.</li> </ul>
Value Overall value: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape quality (condition): medium. Generally well- maintained farmland, forestry and woodlands are well- established;</li> <li>scenic quality: medium. Views to the Moray Firth from elevated areas;</li> <li>rarity: low. No rare landscape elements or features;</li> <li>representativeness: low. Landscape character, features and elements are not particularly unique;</li> <li>conservation/cultural interest: high. Leys Castle GDL, Culloden Battlefield and some scheduled monuments;</li> <li>recreational value: low. Recreational features limited to core paths;</li> <li>perceptual aspects: low. Landscape is not valued for its wildness or tranquility; and</li> <li>associations: high. The historic battlefield of Culloden lies within the LLCA.</li> </ul>

Landscape Attributes	Description
Susceptibility to Change Overall susceptibility: Low to Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape elements: medium. Changes to the characteristic flow of the undulating landform may potentially alter the landscape character; and</li> <li>landscape features: low. Culloden Battlefield do not experience external visibility to the existing A9 road corridor.</li> </ul>
Sensitivity (derived from Value and Susceptibility) Overall sensitivity: Low to Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape elements: medium. Considered potentially tolerant to substantial change; and</li> <li>Landscape features: low. Considered to have some ability to accommodate the proposed scheme.</li> </ul>

### 3 References

#### Reports and Documents

Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition.