

LCT 22: MOORLAND PLATEAUX

There are two distinctive moorland landscape character types, the only upland character areas in Aberdeenshire, *Farmed Moorland Edge* and *Moorland Plateaux*. These make up the high ground in the western part of the study area and are the transitional landscapes between the much higher Grampian Mountains massif, within the Cairngorms National Park, and the rolling lowland landscapes of agricultural heartland. They are the distinctive, upland backdrop to much of Aberdeenshire.

The *Moorland Plateaux* comprise the unique ridges and prows that project out into the much lower farmland. They have simple, open, moorland tops with distinctive rocky outcrops such as Milther Tap and Tap O'Noth. These areas have strong wilderness qualities, forming islands of 'wild land' contrasting strongly with the farmed landscape that surrounds them. Often extensive conifer plantations clothe the slopes and steadings are located at the base of hills where there is a transition to farmland. The unique plunging slopes of the Highland Boundary Fault are reflected in *The Mounth* LCA. Here there is an abrupt transition between the higher *Moorland Plateaux* and arable farmland of the *Howe of Mearns* below.

22 (i) THE GRAMPIAN OUTLIERS

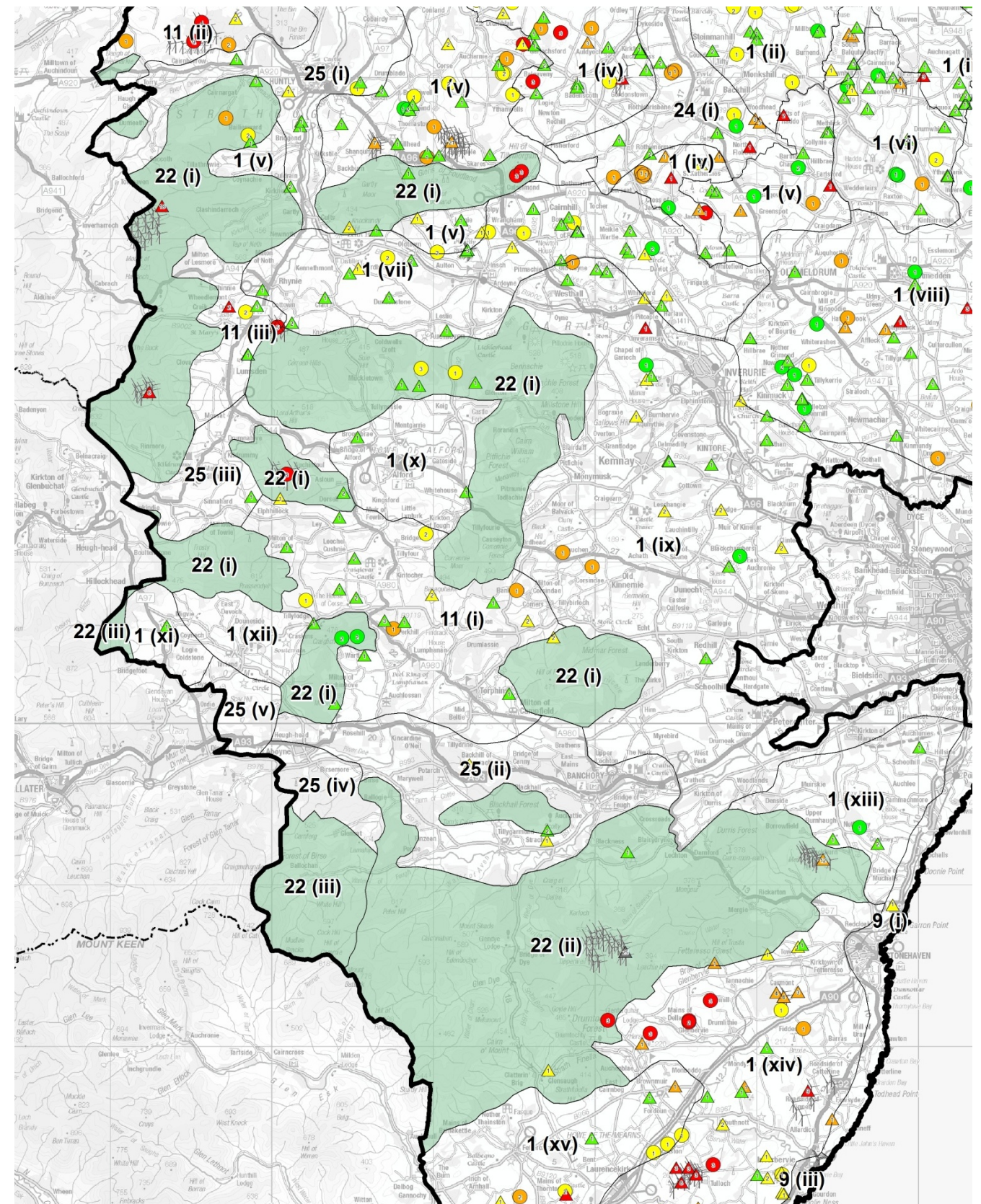
The *Grampian Outliers* are moorland spurs extending out from the Cairngorm Massif into the surrounding farmland, forming promontories. They are usually smooth rolling hills of both gentle and steep relief, with occasional dramatic rocky outcrops such as Bennachie, Mither Tap and Tap O'Noth. These hills are distinctive landmarks integral to the landscape identity of Aberdeenshire and have qualities of wilderness and remoteness. They have simple bare moorland tops, extensive conifer plantations on slopes and distinctive fields at their base. Steadings lie at the base of slopes in sheltered locations. They have a high degree of integrity and many are popular for recreation providing excellent viewpoints out across Aberdeenshire.

22 (ii) THE MOUNTH

The Mounth is a substantial broad outcrop, an unbroken ridge which forms a vast smooth rolling plateau extending from the Cairngorm massif almost to Stonehaven at the coast. It is the southern and eastern edge of the great Highland Boundary Fault which crosses Scotland and is a location where the dramatic change from lowland landscape to mountains is most clearly visible. The smooth landform is dissected by shallow gullies and small glens with occasional rocky outcrops such as at Clachnaben. It has a simple bare moorland plateau, extensive conifer plantations in the east and steadings located at the base of slopes in sheltered locations. It is the foreground to the Cairngorm massif and acts as a distinctive backdrop to the lower settled farmland of the Mearns. The hills also have a wild, remote and windswept character.

22(iii) THE NORTH-EASTERN HILL RANGES

Low rounded summits, gentle slopes and long smooth interlocking spurs extending from the Cairngorm massif. Small burns incise the hillsides and flow into rivers on the valley floors. It is an open simple landscape with bare moorland tops and peat hags, small fields of poor quality grazing at the valley bottom. There are areas of regenerating native pine woodland and occasional broadleaved trees running along watercourses. It is the foreground to the Cairngorm massif and the distinctive backdrop to lower areas such as *Deeside*. The hills have a wild, remote and windswept character and it is contiguous with a Core Area of Wild Land.



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: 22. MOORLAND PLATEAUX																		
Key: <input type="radio"/> No Capacity <input type="radio"/> Low Capacity <input type="radio"/> Medium Capacity <input type="radio"/> High Capacity Turbine Size: Small/Medium=15-<30m; Medium=30-<50m; Medium/Large=50-<80m; Large=80m+; Very Large=125m+																		
BASE LANDSCAPE CAPACITY (ie. not taking account of current wind energy development)					CURRENT CONSENTED DEVELOPMENT					PROPOSED LIMITS TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT (ie. proposed acceptable level of wind energy development)								
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development				Landscape Capacity (Related to turbine size)					Existing/ Consented Developments	Current Wind Energy Landscape Type(s)	Future Wind Energy Landscape Type(s)	Remaining Landscape Capacity (Related to turbine size)					Current Applications	Analysis & Guidelines (Refer to Detailed Guidance for Further Information on Siting and Design)
Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	S/M	M	M/L	L	VL				S/M	M	M/L	L	VL		
22 (ii) Landscape Character Areas: The Mounth																		
Med/High	Med/High	Med/High	Med/High	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Currently two wind farms Mid Hill (25 very large turbines) Meikle Carewe (twelve medium/large turbines) have been consented. Four medium turbines and twelve small/medium turbines in singles or very small groups have been approved at the base of slopes. In adjacent LCAs large turbines (seventeen at Hill of Garvock, seven at Cloch-na Hill and nine at St John's) are all visible from the Mounth LCA,	Moorland Plateaux with No Wind Turbines/ with Occasional Wind Turbines/ with Wind Turbine Moorland Plateaux	Moorland Plateaux with No Wind Turbines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	A wind farm of three large turbines is proposed at Bog Burn. On the boundary with the adjoining LCA in <i>Garvock and Glenbervie</i> LCA, three groups of three large turbines are proposed on the smaller hills below the edge of this LCA. These are visually contiguous with the <i>Mounth</i> LCA	<p>Landscape Analysis: Although large in scale and simple in pattern with the characteristics considered suitable for wind farm development, the <i>Mounth</i> is a distinctive landform (the Highland Boundary Fault), integral to the identity of much of Aberdeenshire and visible from a very wide area. Its southern flank has a high degree of visual sensitivity.</p> <p>It forms the backdrop to many sensitive LCAs and is the foreground to the Cairngorm massif and National Park.</p> <p>These areas would be unsuitable for wind turbine development beyond a domestic scale, less than 15m associated with farm buildings or tourist facilities and turbines should be sited at the base of slopes.</p> <p>Comments on Consented and Proposed Turbines: Parts of the <i>Mounth</i> are already <i>Wind Turbine Moorland Plateaux</i> and over its underlying capacity. Current proposals for further turbines would take it further over this threshold.</p> <p>A wind farm of three large turbines is proposed at Bog Burn. In the adjoining LCA in <i>Garvock and Glenbervie</i> LCA, three groups of three large turbines are proposed on the smaller hills below the edge of this LCA. There is only approx. 100m height difference between these hills and the hills of the <i>Mounth</i> and they are part of the edge of the Highland Boundary fault. This would exceed capacity in this area.</p>

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: 22. MOORLAND PLATEAUX																		
Key: <input type="radio"/> No Capacity <input type="radio"/> Low Capacity <input type="radio"/> Medium Capacity <input type="radio"/> High Capacity Turbine Size: Small/Medium=15-<30m; Medium=30-<50m; Medium/Large=50-<80m; Large=80m+; Very Large=125m+																		
BASE LANDSCAPE CAPACITY (ie. not taking account of current wind energy development)					CURRENT CONSENTED DEVELOPMENT				PROPOSED LIMITS TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT (ie. proposed acceptable level of wind energy development)									
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development				Landscape Capacity (Related to turbine size)					Existing/ Consented Developments	Current Wind Energy Landscape Type(s)	Future Wind Energy Landscape Type(s)	Remaining Landscape Capacity (Related to turbine size)					Current Applications	Analysis & Guidelines (Refer to Detailed Guidance for Further Information on Siting and Design)
Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	S/M	M	M/L	L	VL				S/M	M	M/L	L	VL		
22 (iii) Landscape Character Areas: The North-Eastern Hill Ranges																		
Med/High	Med/High	Med/High	Med/High	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Currently no consented turbines in this area.	Moorland Plateaux with No Wind Turbines	Moorland Plateaux with No Wind Turbines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Currently no applications for turbines in this area.	Landscape Analysis: This LCA whilst large in scale and often of the rolling shape considered suitable for wind farm development, the hills also have a wild, remote and windswept character. It is contiguous with a Core Area of Wild Land and forms the backdrop to many sensitive LCAs and is the foreground to the Cairngorm massif and National Park. These areas would be unsuitable for wind turbine development beyond a domestic scale, less than 15m associated with farm buildings or tourist facilities and at the base of slopes. This is because of its high landscape and visual sensitivity. Comments on Consented and Proposed Turbines: