

MARINE DIRECTORATE - LICENSING OPERATIONS TEAM'S  
ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT'S IMPLICATIONS FOR  
DESIGNATED SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION IN VIEW OF THE  
SITES' CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES.

APPLICATION FOR A MARINE LICENCE UNDER THE MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT  
2010 FOR CAPITAL DREDGING AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE CORRAN FERRY  
INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME

SITE DETAILS: CORRAN NARROWS, LOCH LINNHE

Name	Assessor or Approver	Date
Andrew Kyle	Assessor	11 June 2025
Robert McMorran	Approver	11 September 2025

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## **SECTION 1: BACKGROUND**

### **1. Appropriate assessment conclusion**

- 1.1 This appropriate assessment (“AA”) concludes that there will be no adverse effect on the site integrity of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor Special Area of Conservation (“SAC”) and the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC from the Highland Council’s proposal either in isolation or in combination with other plans or projects, providing that the condition(s) set out in Section 4 are complied with.
- 1.2 Marine Directorate – Licensing Operations Team (“MD-LOT”) considers that the most up to date and best scientific advice available has been used in reaching the conclusion that the Highland Council’s proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC or the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC and is satisfied that no reasonable scientific doubt remains.

### **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 This is a record of the AA undertaken by MD-LOT in regards to the Highland Council’s proposal to undertake capital dredging and construction activities as required under Regulation 48 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (“the 1994 Habitats Regulations”). MD-LOT, as the ‘competent authority’ under the 1994 Habitats Regulations, has to be satisfied that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site (special areas of conservation and special protection areas), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, before it can grant consent for the project.
- 2.2 NatureScot, operating name of Scottish Natural Heritage, has been consulted in accordance with Regulation 48(3) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994.

### **3. Details of proposed project**

- 3.1 The Highland Council proposes to construct new ferry service infrastructure to upgrade the Corran Ferry service and to carry out dredging to facilitate vessel movement on either side of the Corran Narrows, Loch Linnhe as part of the Corran Ferry Infrastructure Improvement Scheme (“CFIIS”). Approximately 35,000 wet tonnes (“wt”) of dredge material be removed from the western side of Loch Linnhe and 17,550 wt from the eastern side of the Corran Narrows, to

a maximum depth of 3.5 metres below chart datum. The CFIS requires the construction of slipways, marshalling areas and an overnight berthing structure below mean high water springs (“MHWS”) which will include piling activities, minor earthworks and land reclamation as well as the removal of subsea cables, which will take place before dredging activities begin. The proposed works are expected to take 3 years to complete.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 NatureScot were consulted on 28 March 2025 and provided a response with its advice on 23 April 2025.

#### **5. Main points raised during consultation**

- 5.1 NatureScot advised that the proposal will have a likely significant effect on the harbour seal qualifying interest of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC and that an appropriate assessment (“AA”) was required. NatureScot also advised that the proposal will have a likely significant effect on the harbour porpoise qualifying interest of the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC, and that an AA was required.

## **SECTION 2: INFORMATION ON EUROPEAN SITES**

#### **6. Background information and qualifying interests for the relevant European sites**

- 6.1 This section provides links to the NatureScot SiteLink website (“SiteLink”) where the background information on the sites being considered in this assessment is available. The qualifying interests for the sites are listed as are the conservation objectives.

**Table 1: Name of European sites affected and relevant links to SiteLink**

<p><b>Eileanan Agus Sgeiran Lios Mor SAC</b></p> <p><a href="https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/8251">https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/8251</a></p> <p><b>Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC</b></p>
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<https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/10508>

**Table 2: Qualifying interests**

**Eileanan Agus Sgeiran Lios Mor SAC**

Harbour Seal (*Phoca vitulina*)

**Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC**

Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)

**Table 3: Conservation objectives**

**Eileanan Agus Sgeiran Lios Mor SAC**

1. To ensure that harbour seals at Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mór SAC are in favourable condition and make an appropriate contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status.
2. To ensure that the integrity of Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mór SAC is maintained in the context of environmental changes by meeting objectives 2a, 2b and 2c:
  - 2a. The population of harbour seal is a viable component of the site.
  - 2b. The distribution of harbour seal throughout the site is maintained by avoiding significant disturbance of harbour seal.
  - 2c. The supporting habitats relevant to harbour seal are maintained.

**Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC**

1. To ensure that the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC continues to make an appropriate contribution to harbour porpoise remaining at favourable conservation status.
2. To ensure for harbour porpoise within the context of environmental changes, that the integrity of the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC is maintained through 2a, 2b and 2c:
  - 2a. Harbour porpoise within the Inner Hebrides and the Minches are not at significant risk from injury or killing.
  - 2b. The distribution of harbour porpoise throughout the site is maintained by avoiding significant disturbance.

2c. The condition of supporting habitats and the availability of prey for harbour porpoise are maintained.

### **SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT IN RELATION TO REGULATION 48 OF THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITATS, &C.) REGULATIONS 1994**

#### **7. Requirement for appropriate assessment**

7.1 Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of the sites?

7.1.1 The project is not directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of the sites.

7.2 Is the project likely to have a significant effect on the qualifying interests?

7.2.1 In its response dated 23 April 2025, NatureScot advised that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the harbour seal qualifying interest of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC. This is due to the proposal affecting the harbour seal foraging habitat, as well as prey availability, which is within 50 kilometres (“km”) of the proposed works. The proposal includes piling, rock breaking, dredging, potential blasting, and vessels movements passing the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC which could result in auditory injury and disturbance for harbour seals. NatureScot also advised that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the harbour porpoise qualifying interest of the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC due to construction activities, vessel movement and dredge disposal.

7.2.2 MD-LOT agrees with NatureScot’s advice and has undertaken an AA for the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC and the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC.

#### **8. Appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives.**

8.1 Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC

8.2 In its response dated 23 April 2025, NatureScot advised the proposal is within foraging range of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC, and that vessels will pass the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC enroute to the dredge disposal site, therefore auditory injury, disturbance and effects to the foraging habitat and prey availability of the harbour seal qualifying interest are possible. In its advice NatureScot concluded that the proposed works take place in a highly localised area and will be temporary in nature therefore the impact on the foraging habitat will be negligible. It further advised the vessels passing close to the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC will adhere to the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code (“SMWWC”) following best practice on navigating vessels in the vicinity of marine mammals. NatureScot welcomes the proposed mitigation measures including the use of bubble curtains and acoustic deterrent devices (“ADD”). NatureScot recommend a ‘soft start’ method should be employed for ADD to allow marine mammals time to distance themselves from the area. It also welcomes the employment of a marine mammal observer (“MMO”) and/or an Ecological Clerk of Works to carry out visual inspections before and during marine construction activities and recommend that a 30-minute pre-work search is undertaken before the commencement of piling operations. NatureScot concluded that following the proposed mitigation measures there will be no adverse effect on site integrity of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC.

### 8.3 Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC

8.4 NatureScot advised the proposal is within 25km of the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC and that the dredge disposal site is within the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC. NatureScot noted that vessels transiting to and from the dredge disposal site will follow the SMWWC and will follow best practice guidance on navigating vessels in the vicinity of marine mammals. As a result, NatureScot recommends an MMO should be employed to ensure the mitigation zone around the dredge disposal site is clear for 10 minutes before any dredge spoil is deposited. NatureScot also note that due to the distance from the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC to the Corran Narrows, combined with the proposed mitigation measures incorporating the required amendments from NatureScot, noise generating construction activities will not negatively affect the conservation objectives of the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC. NatureScot conclude that with the proposed mitigation measures in place there will be no adverse effect on site integrity of the Hebrides and the Minches SAC.

MD-LOT has considered the application and supporting documentation, together with the advice provided by NatureScot, and has used this to support this assessment. MD-LOT agrees with the view of NatureScot and has

concluded that the proposal alone will not have an adverse impact on the site integrity of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC or the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC, provided the conditions listed in section 4 are adhered to.

## 9. In-combination assessment

- 9.1 MD-LOT has considered whether the Highland Council's proposal will have a cumulative effect with other plans or projects which, in combination, would have the potential to affect the qualifying interests of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC and/or the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC.
- 9.2 The following projects currently have an active marine licence or European protected species licence and could potentially have a cumulative effect with the Highland Council's proposal. They all have an associated AA which identified a likely significant effect on the same qualifying interests of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC and the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC.

**Table 4: Projects considered in the in-combination assessment**

Project	Description
SHEPD - Argyll Region - Cable Survey - EPS/BS Licence	Geophysical surveys of 24 cable routes contained within 19 cable corridors with a maximum total survey area of 211 square kilometres. Surveys are due to be complete by 31 July 2028.
SHEPD - Argyll Region - Cable Survey - EPS/BS Licence	Geophysical surveys of 24 cable routes contained within 19 cable corridors n with a maximum total survey area of 211 square kilometres. Surveys are due to be complete by 31 July 2028.
SHEPD - West Highland Region - Geophysical Surveys	Geophysical surveys of 23 cable routes contained within 17 cable corridors with a maximum total survey area of 517 square kilometres. Surveys are due to be complete by 15 June 2028.
SHEPD - West Highland Region - Geophysical Surveys	Geophysical surveys of 23 cable routes contained within 17 cable corridors with a maximum total survey area of 517 square kilometres. Surveys are due to be complete by 15 June 2028.
The Scottish Salmon Company, Modification to an Existing Finfish Farm, East Tarbert Bay	Marine farm comprised 12 ring cages, 22 grid moorings and a feed barge.

Organic Sea Harvest -Scorrybreck, Portree	12 ring cages, 26 grid moorings, 1 feed barge.
Organic Sea Harvest - Culnacnoc, Portree	12 ring cages, 26 grid moorings, 1 feed barge.
MOWI Scotland - Fish Farm - Maclean's Nose	Marine farm comprised 16 ring cages, 26 grid moorings, 1 feed barge, 2 rafts and 40 marked buoys.
UK Marine Renewable Power Ltd - Geophysical Surveys - West Colonsay to North Ayrshire	Geophysical surveys within the ScotWind W1 PO site and potential export cable corridor. Survey campaigns are planned to occur between June 2021 and August 2027.
Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd - New Finfish Farm - Sconser Quarry, Isle of Skye	Variation to licence for marine farm to remove 12 ring cages and 12 grid moorings, retaining 7 ring cages, 1, feed barge, 3 boat moorings and 22 grid moorings.
MOWI Scotland - Finfish Farm - Northeast Rum	Marine farm comprised 8 160m ring cages, 30 grid moorings, 15 marked buoys and 1 feed barge.
Lochmaddy Ferry Terminal Development (Capital Dredging)	Capital dredging and redistribution of 360 wet tonnes of dredged material and removal of 500m <sup>3</sup> of rock. Activity anticipated to take up to 3 months.
Pentland Floating Offshore Wind Farm	A floating offshore windfarm with an installed capacity of around 100 megawatts ("MW") within the Pentland Firth, approximately 7.5 kilometres ("km") seaward of mean high water springs ("MHWS") at Dounreay, Caithness. The windfarm will consist of up to 6 floating offshore wind turbine structures and associated floating substructures. Offshore construction activities are anticipated to commence in 2027. Project will take 14 months to complete and will be operational for a period of 25 years.
Pentland Floating Offshore Wind Farm	A floating offshore windfarm with an installed capacity of around 100 megawatts ("MW") within the Pentland Firth, approximately 7.5 kilometres ("km") seaward of mean high water springs ("MHWS") at Dounreay, Caithness. The windfarm will consist of up to 6 floating offshore wind turbine structures and associated floating substructures.

	Offshore construction activities are anticipated to commence in 2027. Project will take 14 months to complete and will be operational for a period of 25 years.
Argyll & Bute Council - Dredging - Iona Harbour	Dredging of 2205 wet tonnes in the vicinity of ferry slipway, with material to be deposited at Portnahaven authorised sea deposit site (MA035). Expected to be completed prior to the construction of the associated breakwater over the course of one week, although future maintenance dredging could be required.
Argyll & Bute Council - Construction of Breakwater - Iona Harbour	Construction of a 70 metre breakwater south of Iona Ferry Terminal, with a footprint of 2.18 hectares. Works are expected to be completed over the course of one year, during the early phase of the licensable period.
Multi trophic fish/algal farm - Spelve B - Loch Spelve - Isle of Mull	Modification of an existing fish farm by removal of a number of cages and replacement with 40, 75m longlines to grow sugar kelp ( <i>Laminaria saccharina</i> )
Flex Marine Power Ltd - Tidal Turbine and associated infrastructure	Installation of a 70kW Swimmer Turbine in the southern end of the Sound of Islay. The power will be transmitted to a power unit of Dunlossit Estate via an umbilical. The proposed start date is Summer 2024 with the operational period anticipated to last 5 years.
Highland Council - Ferry Terminal Development - Uig, Isle of Skye	Upgrades to the existing ferry terminal including but not limited to widening of the pier, installation of a new linkspan, land reclamation and dredging and deposit. Both impact and vibratory piling will be used. The project may take up to 40 working months to complete.
Kishorn Port- Maintenance of Dry Dock Abutments	Maintenance of dry dock abutments including removal of corrosion from existing sheet piling and construction of concrete facia to existing abutments. Removal and reinstatement of sediment build up on surrounding seabed. Works expected to be completed by November 2026
Bakkafrost - Marine Farm - West Gigha, Isle of Gigha	New marine farm to include the deposit of: 8 No. Cages 1 No. Feed Barge 28 No. Grid Moorings 15 No. Marked Buoys
EPS and Basking Shark Licences - Construction of Breakwater and	Construction of a 70 metre breakwater south of Iona Ferry Terminal, with a footprint of 2.18 hectares, with works expected to be completed over the course of one year, during the early phase of the licensable period.

Dredging - Iona Harbour	Dredging of 2205 wet tonnes in the vicinity of ferry slipway, with material to be deposited at Portnahaven authorised sea deposit site (MA035), with the activity expected to be completed over the course of one week, prior to the breakwater construction, although future maintenance dredging could be required.
EPS and Basking Shark Licences - Construction of Breakwater and Dredging - Iona Harbour	Construction of a 70 metre breakwater south of Iona Ferry Terminal, with a footprint of 2.18 hectares, with works expected to be completed over the course of one year, during the early phase of the licensable period. Dredging of 2205 wet tonnes in the vicinity of ferry slipway, with material to be deposited at Portnahaven authorised sea deposit site (MA035), with the activity expected to be completed over the course of one week, prior to the breakwater construction, although future maintenance dredging could be required.
Deep Water Port, Glumaig Bay, Stornoway	Non-Material variation to the licence for Construction of a deep water port, with associated material deposits and removal.
Outer Hebrides Marine Region Cable Route Survey	Geophysical surveys using Sub-Bottom Profiling (“SBP”), Ultra-Short Baseline (“USBL”) positioning system and Multi Beam Echosounder (“MBES”) of 16 cable routes, within 13 cable corridors, , covering a maximum survey area of 260 square kilometres. Survey activities are expected to take approximately 173 days and be complete by September 2028.
Outer Hebrides Marine Region Cable Route Survey	Geophysical surveys using Sub-Bottom Profiling (“SBP”), Ultra-Short Baseline (“USBL”) positioning system and Multi Beam Echosounder (“MBES”) of 16 cable routes, within 13 cable corridors, , covering a maximum survey area of 260 square kilometres. Survey activities are expected to take approximately 173 days and be complete by September 2028.
Stornoway Harbour Authority - Construction and Capital Dredging - Deep Water Port, Glumaig Bay, Stornoway	Construction of a deep water port including 360m quay, 100m pontoon, link road and linkspan. Approximately 500,000 cubic metres will be dredged, it is expected that over 90% of this will be re-used in the land reclamation. The remaining unsuitable material (up to 50,000 cubic metres) is to be deposited at sea. - EPS licence

<p>Stornoway Harbour Authority - Construction and Capital Dredging - Deep Water Port, Glumaig Bay, Stornoway</p>	<p>Construction of a deep water port including 360m quay, 100m pontoon, link road and linkspan. Approximately 500,000 cubic metres will be dredged, it is expected that over 90% of this will be re-used in the land reclamation. The remaining unsuitable material (up to 50,000 cubic metres) is to be deposited at sea. - BS Licence</p>
<p>BEAR Scotland - Maintenance Works - Skye Bridge, Isle of Skye</p>	<p>Ten year schedule of routine and required maintenance works.</p>
<p>BEAR Scotland - Maintenance Works - Carrich Bridge, Isle of Skye</p>	<p>Ten year schedule of routine and required maintenance works.</p>
<p>Organic Sea Harvest, Fish Farm Deposit, Balmacqueen, Trotternish, Isle of Skye</p>	<p>Deposit a finfish farm comprising 10 ring cages each with a 120 metre circumference, 1 feed barge and 24 grid moorings</p>
<p>SHEPD - Coll to Tiree - HVAC Cable Construction</p>	<p>Proposal to install a new replacement 33 kilovolt HVAC subsea cable across the Gunna Sound. The cable will be approximately 4.3 kilometres long and will require various cable protection and stabilisation materials along with ultra-short baseline survey equipment for both pre- and post lay survey work. They have requested a marine, european protected species (“EPS”) and basking shark licences for a period from 23 May 2025 to 31 October 2026. The works will not take place for the duration of the licence period, they are anticipated to take 75 days to complete, however the longer licence period is to allow them flexibility to undertake the works.</p>
<p>SHEPD - Coll to Tiree - HVAC Cable Construction</p>	<p>Proposal to install a new replacement 33 kilovolt HVAC subsea cable across the Gunna Sound. The cable will be approximately 4.3 kilometres long and will require various cable protection and stabilisation materials along with ultra-short baseline survey equipment for both pre- and post lay survey work. They have requested a marine, european protected species (“EPS”) and basking shark licences for a period from 23 May 2025 to 31 October</p>

	2026. The works will not take place for the duration of the licence period, they are anticipated to take 75 days to complete, however the longer licence period is to allow them flexibility to undertake the works.
SHEPD - Mull to Iona - HVAC Cable Construction	Proposal to install a new replacement 11 kilovolt HVAC subsea cable across the Sound of Iona. The cable will be approximately 2.4 kilometres long and will require various cable protection and stabilisation materials along with ultra-short baseline survey equipment for both pre- and post lay survey work. They have requested a marine, European protected species (“EPS”) and basking shark licences for a period from 30 May 2025 to 30 November 2026. The works will not take place for the duration of the licence period, they are anticipated to take 46 days to complete, however the longer licence period is to allow them flexibility to undertake the works.
SHEPD - Mull to Iona - HVAC Cable Construction	Proposal to install a new replacement 11 kilovolt HVAC subsea cable across the Sound of Iona. The cable will be approximately 2.4 kilometres long and will require various cable protection and stabilisation materials along with ultra-short baseline survey equipment for both pre- and post lay survey work. They have requested a marine, European protected species (“EPS”) and basking shark licences for a period from 30 May 2025 to 30 November 2026. The works will not take place for the duration of the licence period, they are anticipated to take 46 days to complete, however the longer licence period is to allow them flexibility to undertake the works.
SHEPD - Mull to Iona - HVAC Cable Construction	Proposal to install a new replacement 11 kilovolt HVAC subsea cable across the Sound of Iona. The cable will be approximately 2.4 kilometres long and will require various cable protection and stabilisation materials along with ultra-short baseline survey equipment for both pre- and post lay survey work. They have requested a marine, European protected species (“EPS”) and basking shark licences for a period from 30 May 2025 to 30 November 2026. The works will not take place for the duration of the licence period, they are anticipated to take 46 days to complete, however the longer licence period is to allow them flexibility to undertake the works.

9.3 Assessment of in-combination effects on the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC.

9.3.1 The following projects were identified as have a likely significant effect on the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC:

- SHEPD - Argyll Region - Cable Survey - EPS/BS Licence
- SHEPD - Argyll Region - Cable Survey - EPS/BS Licence
- SHEPD - West Highland Region - Geophysical Surveys
- SHEPD - West Highland Region - Geophysical Surveys

9.3.2 The various geophysical surveys of the cables and cable routes are all relatively small scale and of short duration so there will be no in-combination effect with the proposal.

9.4 Assessment of in-combination effects on the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC.

9.4.1 The following projects were identified as have a likely significant effect on the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC:

- The Scottish Salmon Company, Modification to an Existing Finfish Farm, East Tarbert Bay
- Organic Sea Harvest -Scorrybreck, Portree
- Organic Sea Harvest - Culnacnoc, Portree
- MOWI Scotland - Fish Farm - Maclean's Nose
- UK Marine Renewable Power Ltd - Geophysical Surveys - West Colonsay to North Ayrshire
- Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd - New Finfish Farm - Sconser Quarry, Isle of Skye
- MOWI Scotland - Finfish Farm - Northeast Rum
- Lochmaddy Ferry Terminal Development (Capital Dredging)
- Pentland Floating Offshore Wind Farm
- Pentland Floating Offshore Wind Farm
- Argyll & Bute Council - Dredging - Iona Harbour
- Argyll & Bute Council - Construction of Breakwater - Iona Harbour
- Multi trophic fish/algal farm - Spelve B - Loch Spelve - Isle of Mull
- Flex Marine Power Ltd - Tidal Turbine and associated infrastructure
- Highland Council - Ferry Terminal Development - Uig, Isle of Skye
- Kishorn Port- Maintenance of Dry Dock Abutments

- Bakkafrost - Marine Farm - West Gigha, Isle of Gigha
- EPS and Basking Shark Licences - Construction of Breakwater and Dredging - Iona Harbour
- EPS and Basking Shark Licences - Construction of Breakwater and Dredging - Iona Harbour
- Deep Water Port, Glumaig Bay, Stornoway
- Outer Hebrides Marine Region Cable Route Survey
- Outer Hebrides Marine Region Cable Route Survey
- Stornoway Harbour Authority - Construction and Capital Dredging - Deep Water Port, Glumaig Bay, Stornoway
- Stornoway Harbour Authority - Construction and Capital Dredging - Deep Water Port, Glumaig Bay, Stornoway
- BEAR Scotland - Maintenance Works - Skye Bridge, Isle of Skye
- BEAR Scotland - Maintenance Works - Carrich Bridge, Isle of Skye
- Organic Sea Harvest, Fish Farm Deposit, Balmacqueen, Trotternish, Isle of Skye
- SHEPD - Coll to Tiree - HVAC Cable Construction
- SHEPD - Coll to Tiree - HVAC Cable Construction
- SHEPD - Mull to Iona - HVAC Cable Construction
- SHEPD - Mull to Iona - HVAC Cable Construction
- SHEPD - Mull to Iona - HVAC Cable Construction

9.4.2 The various geophysical surveys of the cables and cable routes are all relatively small scale and of short duration so there will be no in-combination effect with the proposal.

9.4.3 For the above marine farms, providing the conditions attached to the marine farm planning permissions are adhered to, there will be no likely in-combination effects with the proposal.

9.4.4 Construction of the Pentland Floating Offshore Wind Farm is not expected to commence until 2027. Due to the reduced temporal overlap and relatively small scale nature of the proposal, there will no likely in-combination effect.

9.4.5 There is potential for the proposal to have in-combination effects with the various dredging activities. However, the dredge activity associated with each project is of short duration within the licence periods and will have no likely in-combination effect with the proposal.

9.4.6 Construction of the Ferry Terminal in Uig, Isle of Skye, is expected to be complete by December 2025. As such there is limited temporal overlap and therefore no likely in-combination effects with the proposal.

9.4.7 There is potential for in combination effects with the remaining projects above, however due to the infrequent and temporary nature and limited area of The Highland Council's proposal, any overlap will be minimal and as such there will be no adverse effect on the site integrity of the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC from in-combination effects.

## **10. MD-LOT conclusion**

10.1 MD-LOT concludes that providing the conditions listed in Section 4 are adhered to, there will be no adverse effect on the site integrity of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC or the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC from The Highland Council's proposal either alone or in combination with other projects.

## **SECTION 4: CONDITIONS**

### **11. Requirement for conditions**

11.1 The following conditions are required to ensure the project will not adversely affect the site integrity of the Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor SAC or the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC:

11.1.1 The Licensee must adhere to the Rock Breaking and Piling Marine Mammal Protocol for any rock breaking and piling operations.

11.1.2 The Licensee must ensure an MMO or ECoW undertake a 15-minute watch prior to any detonation if onshore blasting is to take place, in addition to the mitigation measures set out in the Rock Breaking and Piling Marine Mammal Protocol, to ensure there are no marine mammals in the vicinity of the blast area.

11.1.3 The Licensee must undertake a 30 minute pre-work inspection prior to the commencement of piling operations in line with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee ("JNCC") pile driving guidance: <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/31662b6a-19ed-4918-9fab-8fbcff752046/JNCC-CNCCB-Piling-protocol-August2010-Web.pdf> .

- 11.1.4 The Licensee must use a soft-start approach to any underwater noise generating activities in addition to the JNCC mitigation measures.
- 11.1.5 The Licensee must adhere to the Dredged Spoil Disposal Marine Mammal Protocol at all times during the dredged spoil deposit operations, but the MMO must observe the mitigation zone to be clear for 10 minutes following the visual detection of a marine mammal, as per NS recommendations.
- 11.1.6 The Licensee must adhere to the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code at all times during travel between the works and the dredge disposal site.