Salamander Offshore Wind Farm

Offshore EIA Report

Volume ER.A.3, Chapter 16: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity

SALAMANDER

Powered by Ørsted and
Simply Blue Group

Document Title:	Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity
Document no:	08420661
Project:	Salamander Offshore Wind Farm
Revision	00
Originator	Optimised Environments Ltd (OPEN)
Date	April 2024

Revision History:

Revision	Date	Status	Originator	Reviewed	Approved
00	19 April 2024	Final	OPEN	Salamander	Hugh Yendole

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

The additional figures referenced in this chapter are listed below but are provided in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations**.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Applicant	Salamander Wind Project Company Ltd. (formerly called Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Limited), a joint venture between Ørsted, Simply Blue Group and Subsea7.
Coastal (Seascape) effects	Effects on perceived seascape character, arising from visibility of structures located within the Offshore Array Area.
Cumulative Effects	The combined effect of the Salamander Project with the effects from a number of different projects, on the same single receptor/resource.
Cumulative Impact	Impacts that result from changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the Salamander Project.
Design Envelope	A description of the range of possible elements that make up the Salamander Project design options under consideration, as set out in detail in the project description. This envelope is used to define the Salamander Project for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) purposes when the exact engineering parameters are not yet known.
Effect	Term used to express the consequence of an impact. The significance of an effect is determined by correlating the magnitude of the impact with the importance, or sensitivity, of the receptor or resource in accordance with defined significance criteria.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A statutory process by which the likely significant effects of certain projects must be assessed before a formal decision to proceed can be made. It involves the collection and consideration of environmental information, which fulfils the assessment requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations (2017), including the publication of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).
EIA Regulations	The regulations that apply to this project are the Electricity Works (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, the Marine Works (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, the Marine Works (EIA) Regulations 2007, and the Town and Country Planning (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.
Impact	An impact is considered to be the change to the baseline as a result of an activity or event related to the Salamander Project. Impacts can be both adverse or beneficial impacts on the environment and be either temporary or permanent.

Term	Definition
Inter-Related Effect (or Inter Relationships)	The likely effects of multiple impacts from the proposed development on one receptor. For example, noise and air quality together could have a greater effect on a residential receptor than each impact considered separately.
Landfall	The generic term applied to the entire landfall corridor between Mean Low Water Spring (MLWS) tide and the Transition Joint Bay (TJB) inclusive of all construction works, including the offshore and onshore Export Cable Corridor, and landfall compound, where the offshore cables come ashore north of Peterhead.
Landscape	An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.
Landscape effects	Effects on perceived landscape character, and the special landscape qualities and integrity of designated landscapes arising from visibility of structures located within the Offshore Array Area.
Offshore Array	The collective term used for the wind turbine generators within the Offshore Array Area.
Offshore Array Area	The offshore area within which the wind turbine generators, foundations, mooring lines and anchors, and inter-array cables and associated infrastructure will be located.
Offshore Development	The entire Offshore Development, including all offshore components of the Project (WTGs, Inter-array and Offshore Export Cable(s), floating substructures, mooring lines and anchors, and all other associated offshore infrastructure) required across all Project phases from development to decommissioning, for which the Applicant is seeking consent.
Offshore Development Area	The total area comprising the Offshore Array Area and the Offshore Export Cable Corridor.
Offshore Export Cable(s)	The export cable(s) that will bring electricity from the Offshore Array Area to the Landfall. The cable(s) will include fibre optic cable(s).
Offshore Export Cable Corridor	The area that will contain the Offshore Export Cable(s) between the boundary of the Offshore Array Area and Mean High Water Springs (MHWS).
Receptor (Offshore)	Any physical, biological or anthropogenic element of the environment that may be affected or impacted by the Salamander Project. Receptors can include natural features such as the seabed and wildlife habitats as well as man-made features like fishing vessels and cultural heritage sites.

Term	Definition
Salamander Project	The proposed Salamander Offshore Wind Farm. The term covers all elements of both the offshore and onshore aspects of the project.
Scoping	An early part of the EIA process by which the key potential significant impacts of the Salamander Project are identified, and methodologies identified for how these should be assessed. This process gives the relevant authorities and key consultees opportunity to comment and define the scope and level of detail to be provided as part of the EIAR – which can also then be tailored through the consultation process.
Seascape	An area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land with sea, by natural and/or human factors.
Semi-Submersible	A Semi-Submersible structure is a buoyancy-stabilised platform which floats partially submerged on the surface of the ocean whilst anchored to the seabed. The structure gains its stability through the distribution of buoyancy force associated with its large footprint and geometry which ensures the wind loading on the structure and turbine are countered by an equivalent buoyancy force on the opposite side of the structure. Included in the Project Design Envelope, there are variations of the semi-submersible concept, such as barge, buoy, or hybrid.
SLVIA Study Area	The area within which there is potential for significant seascape/coastal, landscape or visual effects to occur.
Viewpoint	A place from where a view is gained, and that represents specific conditions or viewers (visual receptors).
Visual effects	Effects on views and visual amenity experienced by people from principal visual receptors and representative viewpoints
Wind Turbine Generator	All the components of a wind turbine, including the tower, nacelle, and rotor.

Acronyms

Term	Definition
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
CCA	Coastal Character Area

Term	Definition
CEA	Cumulative Effects Assessment
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England
ECC	Export Cable Corridor
EEA	European Economic Area
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EOWDC	European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre
GDL	Gardens and Designed Landscapes
GIS	Geographical Information System
GLVIA3	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition
GW	Gigawatt
HAT	Highest Astronomical Tide
HMP	His Majesty's Prison
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
JV	Joint Venture
LCCA	Local Coastal Character Area
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LMP	Lighting and Marking Plan
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
MHWS	Mean High Water Springs
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Term	Definition
MD-LOT	Marine Directorate – Licensing Operations Team
NNR	National Nature Reserves
NLB	Northern Lighthouse Board
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
OAA	Offshore Array Area
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
ODN	Ordnance Datum Newlyn
OS	Ordnance Survey
OWF	Offshore Wind Farm
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SLA	Special Landscape Areas
SLVIA	Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
SWPC	Salamander Wind Project Company Ltd. (formerly called SBES)
UK	United Kingdom
WTG	Wind Turbine Generator
YOI	Young Offenders Institution
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

16 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity

16.1 Introduction

16.1.1.1 The Applicant, Salamander Wind Project Company Ltd. (SWPC), a Joint Venture (JV) partnership between Ørsted, Simply Blue Group and Subsea7, is proposing the development of the Salamander Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter 'Salamander Project'). The Salamander Project will consist of the installation of a floating offshore wind farm (up to 100 megawatts (MW) capacity) approximately 35 kilometres (km) east of Peterhead. It will consist of both offshore and onshore infrastructure, including an offshore generating station (wind farm), export cables to landfall, and connection to the electricity transmission network (please see **Volume ER.A.2, Chapter 4: Project Description** for full details on the Project Design).

16.1.1.2 This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) presents the results of the potential effects of the Salamander Project on Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity. Specifically, this chapter considers the potential impact of the Salamander Project seaward of Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) during the Construction, Operation and Maintenance, and Decommissioning of the Offshore Development.

16.1.1.3 The chapter provides an overview of the existing environment for the proposed Offshore Development Area, followed by an assessment of significance of effects on Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity, as well as an assessment of potential cumulative effects with other relevant projects and effects arising from interactions on receptors across topics.

16.1.1.4 This chapter should be read alongside and in consideration of the following:

- **Volume ER.A.3, Chapter 17: Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage;**
- **Volume ER.A.3, Chapter 19: Socio-Economics and Tourism and Recreation;**
- **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) Methodology; and**
- **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations.**

16.1.1.5 This chapter has been authored by Optimised Environments Ltd. (OPEN). Further competency details of the authors of this chapter are outlined in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 1.1: Details of the Project Team.**

16.2 Purpose

16.2.1.1 The primary purpose of this EIAR is for the application for the Salamander Project satisfying the requirements of Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and associated Marine Licences. This EIAR chapter describes the potential environmental impacts from the Offshore Development and assesses the significance of their effect.

16.2.1.2 The EIAR has been finalised following the completion of the pre-application consultation (**Volume RP.A.4, Report 1: Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report)** and the Salamander EIA Scoping Report (SBES), 2023), and takes account of the relevant advice set out within the Scoping Opinion from Marine Directorate - Licensing Operations Team (MD-LOT) (MD-LOT, 2023) relevant to the Offshore Development. Comments relating to the Energy Balancing Infrastructure (EBI) will be addressed within the Onshore EIAR. The Offshore EIAR will accompany the application to MD-LOT for Section 36 Consent under the Electricity Act 1989, and Marine Licences under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

16.2.1.3 This EIAR chapter:

- Outlines the existing environmental baseline determined from assessment of publicly available data, project-specific survey data and stakeholder consultation;
- Presents the potential environmental impacts and resulting effects arising from the Salamander Project on Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity;
- Identifies mitigation measures designed to prevent, reduce, or offset adverse effects and enhance beneficial effects on the environment; and
- Identifies any uncertainties or limitations in the methods used and conclusions drawn from the compiled environmental information.

16.3 Planning and Policy Context

16.3.1.1 The preparation of the Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity chapter has been informed by the following policy, legislation, and guidance outlined in **Table 16-1**.

Table 16-1 Relevant policy, legislation and guidance relevant to Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity

Relevant policy, legislation, and guidance
Policy
Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (2023). Policy E2.1 *"We will refuse development that causes unacceptable effects through its scale, location or design on key characteristics, natural landscape elements, features or the composition or quality of the landscape character as defined in the Landscape Character Assessments produced by NatureScot. These impacts can be either alone or cumulatively with other recent developments. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) may be required to assess the effects of change on a landscape that could be experienced should a development proposal be approved. Appropriate mitigation should be identified."*
Aberdeenshire Council (2023a). Policy E2.2 *"Development that has a significant adverse impact on the qualifying interests of a Special Landscape Area will not be permitted unless it is adequately demonstrated that these effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of at least local importance. Appendix 13 on Special Landscape Areas is also intended to be used as a guide by prospective developers in assessing potential impact. Development, in terms of its location, scale, design, materials and landscaping, should be of a high standard and enhance the special qualities and character of the Special Landscape Area."*
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023). Policy 11 requires that project design and mitigation demonstrate addressal of: *"significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable"*.
Scotland's National Marine Plan: A Single Framework for Managing Our Seas (2015). General Policy 7 (GEN7) Landscape/Seascape, states: *"marine planners and decision makers should ensure that development and the use of the marine environment take seascape, landscape and visual impacts into account."* (p.21). It continues: *"The Scottish Government is committed to implementing the principles of the European Landscape Convention, which include seascape and applies an 'all landscapes approach' that addresses developed, altered and cultural landscapes as well as more natural scenic areas. This does not preclude development or change but recommends that it is carried out appropriately for the area's landscape character and visual amenity.*

Relevant policy, legislation, and guidance
Development and use that affect National Scenic Areas, National Parks and World Heritage Sites should only be permitted where: - *It will not adversely affect the integrity of the area or its special qualities for which it has been designated; or* - *Any such adverse effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.* *In making these judgments, planners and decision makers should have regard to the qualities of the location in question, including any designation. More generally, the siting and design of a development should take account of the local landscape/seascape character and quality. Potential effects on landscapes and seascapes, including cumulative effects should be considered and developers should seek to minimise adverse impacts through careful planning and design, considering the services which the natural environment is providing and maximising the potential for enhancement.* *Existing NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)) guidance on the principles of good siting and design and examples of emerging good practice should be followed. NatureScot Landscape Character Assessments and forthcoming NatureScot guidance on undertaking Coastal Character Assessment also provide useful tools in considering impacts on landscape."* (p.21-22).
Marine Planning Policy Statement (MPS) (2011). Paragraph 2.6.5.3 advises that *"In considering the impact of an activity or development on seascape, the marine plan authority should take into account existing character and quality, how highly it is valued and its capacity to accommodate change specific to any development. Landscape Character assessment methodology may be an aid to this process."*
Legislation
The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010.
Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.
Guidance
Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (2023) Appendix 13 Aberdeenshire Special Landscape Areas.
Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. 3rd edition. Routledge. (GLVIA3).
Landscape Institute (2019). Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19.
Landscape Institute (2021). Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Technical Guidance Note 02/21.
NatureScot (2021). Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments.
NatureScot (2018a). A Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment, Appendix 2: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Version 5.
NatureScot (2018b) Guidance Note: Coastal Character Assessment.
NatureScot (unpublished, 2018). Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities, working draft 11.

Relevant policy, legislation, and guidance
NatureScot (2017a). Siting and designing wind farms in the landscape. Version 3a.
NatureScot (2017b). Visual Representation of Wind Farms: Good Practice Guidance. Version 2.2.

16.3.1.2 Further details on the requirements for EIA are presented in **Volume ER.A.2, Chapter 2: Legislative Context and Regulatory Requirements**.

16.4 Consultation

16.4.1.1 Consultation is a key part of the application process. It has played an important part in ensuring that the baseline characterisation and impact assessment is appropriate to the scale of development as well as meeting the requirements of the regulators and their advisors.

16.4.1.2 An overview of the Salamander Project consultation process is outlined in **Volume ER.A.2, Chapter 5: Stakeholder Consultation**. Consultation regarding SLVIA has been conducted through the EIA scoping process and discussion with Aberdeenshire Council regarding the representative viewpoints.

16.4.1.3 The issues raised during consultation specific to SLVIA are outlined in **Table 16-2**, including consideration of where the issues have been addressed within the EIAR.

Table 16-2 Consultation Responses Specific to SLVIA topic (MD-LOT, 2023)

Consultee	Date and Forum	Comment	Where it is addressed in this EIAR
Marine Directorate – Licensing Operations Team (MD-LOT)	21 June 2023; Scoping Opinion	The Scottish Ministers are content with the Study Area as defined in Figure 9.11 of the Scoping Report with a buffer of 60km radius. In addition, the Scottish Ministers are in agreement with the relevant data sources and information to inform the baseline environment. This is a view supported by NatureScot.	The SLVIA is undertaken within a 60 km Study Area, as shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16-1**.
MD-LOT	21 June 2023; Scoping Opinion	The Scottish Ministers are content with the proposed viewpoints detailed in Table 9-12 of the Scoping Report however would refer the Developer further to the NatureScot representation with regard to night-time visualisations which must be fully considered.	The SLVIA is undertaken with reference to night-time views from viewpoints from the Salamander EIA Scoping Report (SBES, 2023) at Inverallochy (Viewpoint 3) and Peterhead (Gadle Braes) (Viewpoint 7), as shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16-13**.
MD-LOT	21 June 2023; Scoping Opinion	Within Table 9-13 of the Scoping Report, the Developer details the potential impacts on seascape, landscape and visual resources during the different phases of the Proposed Development, which it proposes to scope in and out for assessment within the EIA Report. The Scottish Ministers are broadly content with the impacts identified as being scoped in and out however highlight the clarification within the NatureScot representation relating to the potential impact of the presence of activity and partially completed/dismantled structures during construction and decommissioning.	The potential impact of the presence of activity and partially completed structures during Construction is assessed in **Section 16.11.3.** The potential impact of the presence of activity and partially dismantled structures during Decommissioning is assessed in **Section 16.11.4**
MD-LOT	21 June 2023; Scoping Opinion	The Scottish Ministers are content with the proposed approach to the EIA Report as outlined in Section 9.4.10 of the Scoping Report. This view is supported by NatureScot. The Scottish Ministers note the Developers consideration of mitigation measures proposed at Section 9.4.6 of the Scoping Report.	The methodology for the SLVIA is set out in full in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology** and aligns with the proposed approach to the EIA Report as outlined in **Section 9.4.10** of the Salamander EIA Scoping Report (SBES, 2023). Embedded mitigation measures relevant to the SLVIA are proposed in **Table 16-7** of this chapter.

Consultee	Date and Forum	Comment	Where it is addressed in this EIAR
MD-LOT	21 June 2023; Scoping Opinion	With regard to cumulative impacts, the Scottish Ministers note that the Developer proposes to undertake a cumulative effects assessment. The Scottish Ministers direct the Developer to the NatureScot representation in this regard to the guidance available for consideration within the cumulative impact assessment.	A cumulative effects assessment is undertaken in **Section 16.13** of this chapter, which follows NatureScot guidance on cumulative impact assessment (NatureScot, 2021).
MD-LOT	21 June 2023; Scoping Opinion	The Scottish Ministers agree with the NatureScot representation that there will be no transboundary or cross border impacts for seascape, landscape and visual impacts.	Transboundary impacts are scoped out of the SLVIA as described in **Section 16.15.**
Aberdeenshire Council	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	In relation to terrestrial aspects of the development, the following topics are proposed: - Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology - Ornithology - Ecology - Cultural Heritage (including Archaeology) - Air Quality **- Landscape and Visual Impact** - Traffic and Transport - Noise and Vibration - Land Use Aberdeenshire Council are 'satisfied with the content of the Scoping Report in relation to the above chapters and have limited further comments to make'. With regard to the selection of viewpoints for the terrestrial LVIA, Aberdeenshire Council are open to discussing any viewpoints that you may wish	Further consultation was undertaken with Aberdeenshire Council to discuss and agree the selection of viewpoints for the offshore SLVIA presented in this chapter of the EIAR. Viewpoint locations agreed with Aberdeenshire Council for the SLVIA are shown in the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) in **Volume ER. A 5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations Figure 16.5** and listed in **Table 16-5.**

Consultee	Date and Forum	Comment	Where it is addressed in this EIAR
		to propose. We believe your approach in terms of identifying receptor types is correct.	
Aberdeenshire Council	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	In respect of the viewpoints, Aberdeenshire Council have 'had a look over the viewpoints and would be agreeable to those which have been identified'.	Viewpoint locations agreed for the SLVIA are shown in the ZTV in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5** and listed in **Table 16-5.**
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	Appendix C - Seascape, landscape and visual impact assessment (SLVIA) SLVIA is considered in Section 9.4 of the Scoping Report and we have responded to the questions raised in the Scoping Report within our advice below.	This is noted.
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	Study Area We are content with the Study Area as described in Section 9.4.4, with a buffer of 60km radius from the proposed Offshore Array Area as an outer limit, within which theoretical visibility will be analysed.	The SLVIA is undertaken within a 60 km Study Area, as shown in **Volume ER,A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.2**.
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	Baseline information Section 9.4.2 correctly identifies the relevant legislation, policy and guidance for this receptor and Table 9-11 captures the relevant data and information sources to help inform the baseline characterisation for the SLVIA.	The SLVIA baseline is presented in **Section 16.7** and a summary of key data and information sources is set out in the data sources that have been collected and used to inform this SLVIA are summarised in **Table 16-3.**
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	Viewpoints We are content with the draft list of proposed viewpoints as detailed in Table 9-12 of the Scoping Report.	The SLVIA is undertaken with reference to the viewpoints from the Salamander EIA Scoping Report (SBES, 2023), as agreed with Scottish Ministers, with the addition of further viewpoints at Fraserburgh Beach (Viewpoint 2), St Combs (Viewpoint 4), Peterhead Bay, South Road (Viewpoint 8), Slains Castle

Consultee	Date and Forum	Comment	Where it is addressed in this EIAR
			(Viewpoint 13) and Cruden Bay (Viewpoint 14), as shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5**.
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	For night-time visualisations we advise that baseline images are rendered to show a noticeable contrast between the land, sea and sky. The visualisations should also be representative of the low light levels with typical twilight conditions (i.e. dawn/dusk) to allow consideration of the landscape context.	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5 to Figure 16.29** shows night-time baseline photographs and photomontages with a visible contrast between land, sea and sky; and includes night-time viewpoints that are representative of typical twilight conditions.
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	Potential Impacts We are content with the impacts proposed to be scoped in and out for seascape, landscape and visual resources as per Table 9-13, Section 9.4.7. The text preceding Table 9-13 suggests that visual effects during construction and decommissioning are proposed to be scoped out. However, in Table 9-13 only the introduction of artificial lighting during construction and decommissioning have been scoped out with the 'presence of activity and partially completed/dismantled structures during construction and decommissioning' scoped in for assessment. For clarity we agree with the justifications and conclusions in Table 9-13 regarding scoping in and out of potential impacts.	**Section 16.11** Impact Assessment includes an assessment of the effects of the Offshore Array during Construction and Decommissioning.
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	Impact assessment The proposed methodology for SLVIA is outlined in Section 9.4.10 and we are generally content with this as it reflects and takes cognisance of current good practice.	Noted.
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	Having reviewed section 9.4.6 of the Scoping Report, the information provided in relation to embedded mitigation measures being proposed is indicative and high level at this stage. However, we note that measures may include limiting	Noted.

Consultee	Date and Forum	Comment	Where it is addressed in this EIAR
		the horizontal spread of the wind farm or ensuring all turbines are of a standard size and design.	
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	Cumulative impacts It is noted in Section 9.4.8 that the cumulative effects assessment will be undertaken with reference to, and use of, the CEF currently being developed. The CEF will be able to assist ornithology and marine mammal cumulative assessments only. Please refer to the following guidance 'Assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of onshore wind energy development' (2021) (https://www.nature.scot/doc/guidance-assessing-cumulative-landscape-and-visual-impact-onshore-wind-energy-developments) to assist in the consideration of the cumulative impact assessment.	**Section 16.13** Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) follows guidance within 'Assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of onshore wind energy development' (NatureScot, 2021).
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	For the most up to date information on which existing, under construction, consented and proposed proposals to include in the cumulative assessment we recommend contacting MD-LOT and Aberdeenshire Council.	**Section 16.13** The CEA is informed by data provided by MD-LOT and Aberdeenshire Council as listed in the data sources that have been collected and used to inform this SLVIA are summarised in **Table 16-3.**
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	Transboundary / cross border impacts We agree that there will be no transboundary or cross border impacts for seascape, landscape and visual impacts.	Transboundary effects have been scoped out of the SLVIA as described in **Section 16.15.**
NatureScot	21 June 2023; comments on EIA Scoping Report	**Wet storage** Section 4.6.2 (Floating Substructures) refers to the potential for wet storage of the substructures prior to their installation within the array area, either at the initial assembly site, the wind turbine integration site or a separate dedicated storage location. Section 4.7.1 (Floating Assembly) also indicates that once operational the substructures and WTGs will form an integrated assembly piece	Wet storage of the floating substructures (and integrated WTGs) prior to tow-out to the Offshore Array Area (OAA) is considered to be outside the scope of this EIA and the Marine Licence applications for the Offshore Development. This is due to the fact that at this stage of the Salamander Project it is not known which port(s) will be used for wet storage and therefore it is challenging to undertake a meaningful assessment of impacts related to wet storage. The

Consultee	Date and Forum	Comment	Where it is addressed in this EIAR
		– the replacement of any major component parts of which is expected to be achieved by towing the assembly to port. Wet storage could represent a significant impact. Consideration of the potential impacts on all receptors needs to be addressed with the EIAR and HRA. We would welcome further discussion on this as and when further details are confirmed, noting the intention to seek a separate Marine Licence application for any requirements for wet storage out with the array area.	intent is that the Salamander Project will utilise the services of a port(s) that offer wet storage sites, which will have appropriate consents (obtained by the port authority) for wet storage of floating substructures, fabrication and assembly with the WTGs. To enable the availability of this option for the Salamander Project within the required timeframe, an owner of SWPC is an official member of the TS-FLOW UK-North Joint Industry Project (JIP) exploring the challenges of wet storage and identifying the opportunities and potentially suitable locations for these activities. This JIP is in collaboration with relevant ports and other floating offshore wind developers. Separate Marine Licences and associated impact assessments for wet storage areas outwith the Offshore Development Area will be applied for and undertaken as appropriate.

16.5 Study Area

16.5.1.1 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.2** shows the site location and the extent of the SLVIA Study Area, which has been defined on the basis of professional judgement regarding the geographical extent of potential significant effects arising from the Offshore Array. This judgement is based on the scale of the construction and development of the Offshore Array; the extent of the Offshore Array's Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV); and previous experience of similar projects. The SLVIA Study Area extends to a 60 km radius from the boundary of the Offshore Array Area (OAA), as agreed with consultees during scoping.

16.5.1.2 The SLVIA Study Area is not intended to provide a boundary beyond which the Offshore Array would not be seen, but rather to define the area within which there is potential for significant seascape/coastal, landscape or visual effects to occur. It is considered very unlikely that a significant effect would occur towards the boundary of the SLVIA Study Area (shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.1**).

16.6 Methodology to Inform Baseline

16.6.1 Site Specific Surveys

16.6.1.1 In order to provide site specific and up to date information on which to base the impact assessment, OPEN conducted a visual survey, as presented in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology, Table 16-2.**

16.6.2 Data Sources

16.6.2.1 The data sources that have been collected and used to inform this SLVIA are summarised in **Table 16-3**.

Table 16-3 Summary of Key Publicly Available Datasets for Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity

Source	Year	Spatial Coverage	Summary
Aberdeenshire Coastal Trail web page	2023	Aberdeenshire	Mapping and information
Aberdeenshire Council. Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023 Appendix 13 Aberdeenshire Special Landscape Areas	2023	Aberdeenshire	Mapping and information
Google Earth Pro.	2020	United Kingdom	Aerial and street level photography
NatureScot. An assessment of the sensitivity and capacity of the Scottish seascape in relation to offshore windfarms. Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) Commissioned Report No.103 (ROAME No. F03AA06)	2005	Scotland	Mapping and information
National Trust for Scotland. Any specific visitor attractions / tourist destinations	2023	Scotland	Mapping and information
Hywind Scotland Offshore Windfarm Environmental Statement. Coastal	2015	50 km radius from the edge of the Hywind Scotland turbine deployment area	Mapping and information

Source	Year	Spatial Coverage	Summary
characterisation in northeast Aberdeenshire			
Aberdeenshire Council. Core Paths Plan Maps	2023	Aberdeenshire	Mapping and information
Formartine and Buchan Way website.	2023	Aberdeenshire	Mapping and information
Historic Environment Scotland. Gardens and designed landscapes	2023	Scotland	Mapping and information
Nightblight website.	2016	United Kingdom	Interactive maps of the UK's light pollution and dark skies
NatureScot. National Coastal Character Types	2010	Scotland	Mapping and information
Sustrans. National Cycle Network (Geographical Information System (GIS) dataset)	2023	United Kingdom	Mapping and information
NatureScot. National Landscape Character Types	2023	Scotland	Mapping and information
North East 250 website.	2023	Scotland	Mapping and information
Ordnance Survey (OS).	2019	United Kingdom	Terrain 50 Digital Terrain Model (DTM)
OS. MasterMap	2023	United Kingdom	Mapping
OS. County Region, Local Unitary Authority, Railways, Road and Settlements	2019	United Kingdom	GIS datasets
Long Distance Walkers' Association. Overview map for Long Distance Paths and Walks	2024	United Kingdom	Mapping and information
OS. 1:50,000 scale mapping	2019	United Kingdom	Mapping
OS. 1:25,000 scale mapping	2019	United Kingdom	Mapping

16.7 Baseline Environment

16.7.1 Existing baseline

Overview

16.7.1.1 An overview of the current baseline conditions for SLVIA is initially outlined, and then subsequently described.

16.7.1.2 The SLVIA Study Area predominantly encompasses waters within the North Sea and adjoining terrestrial parts of the northern and northeastern Aberdeenshire coastline. The Offshore Array will be located within the setting of the Aberdeenshire coastline and may affect the coastal character; the character of the adjoining landscape, including designated areas within; and the views/visual amenity of people located on the coastline or offshore, such as ferry passengers.

16.7.1.3 Adjoining the developed coastline of Fraserburgh Local Coastal Character Area (LCCA 2) to the east is the sandy Fraserburgh Bay (LCCA 3). At the east end of the Bay, Cairnbulg Point marks the start of a short rocky section of coast, where Inverallochy lies (LCCA 4). As the coastline becomes more easterly facing, it becomes low lying with bays containing sandy beaches. Initially quite short at St Combs, these bays become much longer and more sweeping between St Combs and Peterhead (LCCA 5), with projections into the sea at Rattray Head and Scotstown Head. The coastline at Peterhead is largely developed apart from the sandy beaches within Peterhead Bay and the adjoining Sandford Bay (LCCA 6). South of Peterhead, the coastline becomes more southeasterly facing. This stretch of coastline to Rockend (LCCA 7) is more complex and higher, with erosion features and cliffs. The sandy Bay of Cruden (LCCA 8) interrupts this more rugged and wild stretch. A long, near straight sandy beach runs southwards from Rockend to Aberdeen (LCCA 9).

16.7.1.4 Dunes separate the low-lying coastline from the hinterland (Landscape Character Type (LCT) 12), north of Peterhead. Cliffs along the higher coastline south of Peterhead (LCT 11), isolate the shoreline from the agricultural hinterland to the south. Inland, the landscape varies from flat to gently undulating and is predominated by agricultural land interrupted by scattered individual settlements, small villages and larger blocks of coniferous plantation forestry (LCT 17). South of Peterhead, there is less forestry and settlement is more dispersed, with more open and exposed qualities.

Coastal Character

16.7.1.5 The OAA covers an offshore area of approximately 33 km^2, located within the North Sea and approximately 35 km from the closest section of the Scottish mainland's coastline, at Peterhead. Broadly, the SLVIA Study Area (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 10-2**) is formed by the North Sea and the northeast coast of Scotland and consists of a variety of seascapes including remote high cliffs, rocky coasts, deposition coastlines of sandy beaches/dunes and the outer Moray Firth.

16.7.1.6 The Marine Policy Statement (MPS) (UK Government, 2011) states *"references to seascape should be taken as meaning landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coasts and the adjacent marine environment with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other"*. In Scotland, coastal character is the *"distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements on the coast, land and sea that makes one part of the coast different from another"* (NatureScot, 2018) and is made up of the margin of the coastal edge, its immediate hinterland and areas of sea.

16.7.1.7 Given the definition in the MPS and the NatureScot coastal character assessment guidance, the assessment of seascape character effects in this SLVIA focuses on areas of onshore landscape with views of the coast or seas/marine environment, in other words the 'coastal character', on the premise that the most important effect of offshore wind farms is on the perception of the character of the coast.

16.7.1.8 The extent of the coast is principally influenced by the dominance of the sea in terms of physical characteristics, views and experience. The landward extent of the coast can be narrow where edged by cliffs or settlement; or broad where it includes raised beaches, dunes or more open coastal pasture or machair. The major determinant in defining the landward and seaward components of the coast is the sea – the key characteristic.

16.7.1.9 Scotland's coastal character is described at a very broad scale by thirteen National Coastal Character Types (NCCTs) (NatureScot, 2010). 'Guidance Coastal Character Assessment' (NatureScot, 2018) advises that *"Irrespective of the scale of characterisation to be the focus of the study, the Regional Coastal Character Area level needs to be established (where it does not yet exist)"*. It continues that *"the overview should additionally list the Local Coastal Character Areas which sit within the broader Regional Coastal Character Area"* and *"If carrying out a more detailed coastal character assessment, description of Local Coastal Character Areas should then follow. The key characteristics can usefully and succinctly be listed in a table or as bullet points."*

16.7.1.10 This SLVIA verifies and expands upon the coastal character assessment contained within the 'Hywind Scotland Offshore Wind Farm Environmental Statement' (Statoil, 2015). The Hywind Scotland Environmental Statement defined three Coastal Character Areas (CCAs) that were considered to equate to Regional CCAs defined within current guidance (NatureScot, 2018) i.e., recognisable geographical areas with a consistent overall character at a strategic scale. The Hywind Scotland Environmental Statement (Statoil, 2015) defined nine Local Coastal Character Areas (LCCAs) of distinct character, which were used as the basis of the coastal character baseline presented in this SLVIA, with the addition of a CCA covering coastline from Buckie to Fraserburgh.

16.7.1.11 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.3** illustrates the coastal character of the SLVIA Study Area and shows the boundaries of the LCCAs and the immediately adjacent LCTs that have a strong visual relationship with the sea/tidal waters and coastal landscape. LCCAs listed in and their associated coastal LCTs, form the baseline coastal characterisation and mapping for the SLVIA, against which the effects of the Offshore Array on coastal character are assessed. The baseline coastal character of these CCAs is described further below.

16.7.1.12 In accordance with the 'Guidance Note Coastal Character Assessment' (NatureScot, 2018), a hierarchy of three levels of seascape units were identified. These comprise:

- National Coastal Character Types (NCCTs);
- Coastal Character Areas (CCAs); and
- Local Coastal Character Areas (LCCAs).

16.7.1.13 NatureScot defines the NCCTs which are briefly described below. For the purposes of this SLVIA, CCAs and LCCAs were defined according to current guidance within 'Guidance on Landscape/Seascape Capacity for Aquaculture' (NatureScot, 2008) and informed by the coastal characterisation within 'Hywind Scotland Environmental Statement' (Statoil, 2015). Relevant CCAs are briefly described below to provide the context for the LCCAs which are described in more detail and assessed below.

National Coastal Character Types

16.7.1.14 Deposition Coastline (NCCT3) extends along the east coast of Angus and Aberdeenshire. It is characterised by long sections of sweeping curved sandy beaches often backed by dunes forming a soft, low-lying and linear coastline. Grassland and gorse backing the dunes merges into a flat hinterland of mixed or arable farmland. Golf courses and live firing ranges lie towards the coast while settlement lies within the farmland. Larger settlements are popular holiday and golf resorts, with St Fergus Gas terminal providing a prominent

and distinctive feature. Views are uninterrupted and expansive. These look along the coastline and over the North Sea where a simple composition of sky, sea and land is largely horizontal with shipping traffic providing a common feature. The open sea views and straightness of the coast lend a sense of exposure. The type is relatively well-populated, and its beaches are important for recreation.

16.7.1.15 Mainland Rocky Coastline (NCCT2) comprises long straight stretches of the northeast coast with cliffs rising to some 30 m height and often with a raised beach edge. It includes few significant headlands, although geological differences create variety where softer sandstone forms an indented coast with bays and inlets, arches and caves; and harder volcanic rocks produce a more resistant coastline of promontories, low cliffs and rocky shoreline. Productive arable farming occurs up to the cliff edge and tree cover is minimal. Compact fishing villages are located at the base of cliffs in small bays, while castles and cliff-top forts perch on dramatic headland locations, for example Dunnottar, near Stonehaven. These are highlighted against the simple sea backdrop. These settlements and built features all appear to be spaced at even intervals and thus provide a visual rhythm of foci along the coast. Views over the North Sea are generally expansive and open, although parts of the Caithness coast have views of Hoy over the Pentland Firth. Shipping is a common feature in gazing out to sea. Some isolated industry occurs along this coast. The exposed coastline provides open seascape views featuring shipping and landward views of an agricultural hinterland including settlements, roads and occasional industry. Combined with the presence of castles and cliff top forts, this limits the perceived wildness of the NCCT.

Coastal Character Areas

16.7.1.16 Fraserburgh to Peterhead (CCA), this section of coast faces broadly northeast, becoming slightly more northerly west of Inverallochy. Long, gently curving sandy beaches punctuated by small scale rocky headlands with offshore skerries at Kirkton Head, Scotstown Head and Rattray Head characterise the CCA. Dunes covered by marram grass back much of these beaches and separates the northernmost bay, Black Bar, from the Loch of Strathbeg. Settlement is limited to the villages of Cairnbulg/Inverallochy and St Combs, at the northern end of the CCA, and dwellings and farms scattered throughout the adjoining countryside. Large scale development at St Fergus Gas Terminal is prominent within the central/southern stretch of this CCA.

16.7.1.17 Peterhead (CCA) generally faces east and protrudes into the North Sea to form an enclosed bay, with the smaller Sandford Bay adjoining to the south. Much of the CCA is developed and includes an artificial harbour, a rocky shoreline and the small, sandy Sandford Bay. The mouth of the River Ugie defines the northern boundary and Meikle Mackie defines the southern, with indented coastline extending to the south. Promontories at Keith Inch and Buchan Ness partially enclose and shelter the coastline, enhanced by breakwaters enclosing much of Peterhead Bay. Larger buildings around Sandford Bay, including Glenugie Engineering Works and Peterhead Power Station, are prominent features in the coastal landscape.

16.7.1.18 Boddam to Aberdeen (CCA) comprises two sections of east southeast facing indented rocky coastline flanking the Bay of Cruden. Steep cliffs, skerries, caves and natural arches characterise the CCA which contrasts with the sweeping sandy beach and backing dunes of Cruden Bay. Extending right to the coast, the hinterland predominantly comprises agricultural land. Settlement is limited to the villages of Collieston, Cruden Bay and Boddam, and farmsteads and houses that are generally set back from the coast and dispersed within farmland. Slains Castle is a prominent feature on the headland just south of Broad Haven.

16.7.1.19 **Table 16-4** presents the CCAs and LCCAs within the SLVIA Study Area.

Table 16-4 Coastal Character Areas

CCA	LCCA
Buckie to Fraserburgh	Pennan Head to Phingask Shore (LCCA 1)
Fraserburgh to Peterhead	Fraserburgh (LCCA 2) Fraserburgh Bay (LCCA 3) Cairnbulg Point to South Inch (LCCA 4) South Inch to Peterhead (LCCA 5)
Peterhead	Peterhead and Sandford Bay (LCCA 6)
Boddam to Aberdeen	Boddam to Stirling Craig and The Skares to Rockend (LCCA 7) Bay of Cruden (LCCA 8) Rockend to Aberdeen (LCCA 9)

Landscape Character and Designations

16.7.1.20 Landscape character principally applies to terrestrial areas lying to the landward side of the highwater mark. The landscape of the onshore parts of the SLVIA Study Area are described by and assessed in relation to the published national Landscape Character Types (LCTs). The LCTs that are scoped in to the SLVIA are those that define the main coastal landscapes of the SLVIA Study Area. **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.3** illustrates the LCTs and **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.4** illustrates the landscape designations within the SLVIA Study Area.

16.7.1.21 The landward, topographical influences define the extent of the ZTV. To the west of the SLVIA Study Area, the northeast coastline of Aberdeenshire comprises Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12) with Fragmented Rocky Coast (LCT 11) between Peterhead and Whinnyfold. The North East Aberdeenshire Coast Special Landscape Area (SLA) covers this section of coastline, apart from Peterhead and Sandford Bay, between the town and Boddam. The SLA is locally designated. The landscape character of LCTs 12 and 11, and the special qualities of the SLA are described in **Section 16.11.2**. Inland, the broad Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17), extends from Fraserburgh to Ellon and west of Peterhead as far as Mintlaw. West of Mintlaw is the smaller area of Farmland and Wooded Policies (LCT 21) with Farmed Strath – Aberdeenshire (LCT 25), inland. Along the Moray Firth, the coastline comprises Cliffs and Rocky Coast – Aberdeenshire (LCT 10) which are backed by Coastal Farmland with Ridges and valleys (LCT 16) and Broad Ridges and Valleys (LCT 15). Much of this coastline west of Fraserburgh is covered by the North Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. Inland, these merge into the Undulating Agricultural Heartland (LCT 20) more quickly than the landscapes behind the eastern coastline.

Views and Visual Amenity

16.7.1.22 The visual baseline focuses on and describes the area in which the Offshore Array may be visible, as defined by its ZTV, the different groups of people who may experience views of the Offshore Array (visual receptors), the viewpoints where they will be affected and nature of views at those points.

16.7.1.23 The varied clarity or otherwise of the atmosphere will reduce the number of days (the 'frequency') upon which views of the Offshore Array will be available from the coastline and hinterland. Atmospheric conditions are likely to inhibit clear views, rendering the Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) within the Offshore Array as visually recessive within the wider seascape as they are located a longer distance offshore. The effects of the construction and operation of the Offshore Array will vary according to the weather and prevailing visibility. This means that effects that may be significant in the SLVIA under 'very good' or 'excellent' (i.e. worst-case/optimum) visibility conditions, may be not significant under moderate, poor or very poor visibility conditions.

16.7.1.24 The assessments in **Section 16.11** are based on a realistic worst-case position of optimum ('very good' or 'excellent') visibility, in line with current guidance (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), 2013). Within the visual assessment there is an assessment of the frequency or 'likelihood' of effect for each viewpoint, based on the distance of the OAA from the coast and professional judgement informed by previous experience of viewing offshore wind farms in different conditions and distances. The frequency of likely visibility of the Offshore Array has been taken into consideration, with visibility from viewpoints located at longer distances over 40 km (where 'excellent' visibility is required) occurring less frequently than viewpoints at closer range.

16.7.1.25 The photographs used in the photomontages shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5** to **Figure 16.29** were captured during June 2023 in very good to excellent visibility conditions and show this maximum potential visibility of the Offshore Array. In reality, the prevailing weather and visibility conditions will influence the degree and extent of visual effects arising from the Offshore Array and such excellent visibility occurs relatively infrequently.

Blade Tip ZTV

16.7.1.26 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5** show the Blade Tip ZTV that defines the areas where the visual baseline may be altered by the Offshore Array. Visual effects will only occur where the introduction of the Offshore Array changes or influences the visual amenity and views experienced by people in the area. The ZTV shows the main area in which the Offshore Array will theoretically be visible, highlighting the different areas where people may experience views of the Offshore Array and assisting in the identification of viewpoints where they may be affected. These ZTVs are a realistic worst-case overstatement of visibility as they are based on bare-earth terrain models and also do take account of atmospheric clarity where there may be a theoretical line of sight, however the Offshore Array may not be visible at times due to the weather conditions.

16.7.1.27 The Blade Tip ZTV (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5**) shows higher theoretical visibility of the Offshore Array from the surrounding seascape of the North Sea, which drops off sharply over approximately 70 km from the boundary of the OAA due to earth curvature. There may be visibility of the Offshore Array from the adjoining coastline of Aberdeenshire between Fraserburgh and Aberdeen, potentially as far south as the vicinity of Stonehaven, outside the SLVIA Study Area. The most consistent areas with theoretical visibility of the Offshore Array extend approximately 15 km inland from Fraserburgh and 5 km from Boddam. Beyond these areas, the ZTV is fragmented, reflecting the undulating nature of the more interior landscape. Beyond the coastline, high theoretical visibility of the Offshore Array extends

approximately 30 km inland from the northeastern corner of Aberdeenshire and as far south as Aberdeen. This reflects the extent of the Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire and extends into adjoining landscapes. Beyond 60 km of the OAA boundary, the landform restricts the ZTV to sporadic high points.

Blade Tip ZTV with Surface Features

16.7.1.28 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.7** shows the ZTV when screening from woodland (defined by Ordnance Survey (OS) MasterMap data and indicatively modelled at 10 m height) are included in the surface model. The figure illustrates the reduced theoretical visibility when taking these surface features into account and provides a more realistic impression of the Offshore Array's visibility. The figure shows that this visibility is likely to be high and consistent along the coastal edge but will almost immediately become intermittent and scattered inland. The figure also shows that the Offshore Array will be visible from areas of the coastal settlements of Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Inverallochy and St Combs. Visibility of the Offshore Array is shown as greatly reducing from 10 to 15 km inland of the coastline, particularly to the south. Within northeast Aberdeenshire, landform and woodland, especially blocks of forestry, are the main factors determining visibility of the Offshore Array.

16.7.1.29 Within coastal settlements, visibility from streets, open spaces and low storey buildings will typically be contained by surrounding buildings, with most visibility of the Offshore Array at the sea-front or where tall buildings or intervening open areas allow visibility from further back.

Horizontal Angle ZTV

16.7.1.30 The 'horizontal angle ZTV' in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.8** measures how much of the horizontal field of view (HFoV) is occupied by the Offshore Array, in theoretical views. It measures the maximum spread from the furthest left to the furthest right theoretically visible WTG within the Offshore Array, as a horizontal angle in degrees. The horizontal angle ZTV provides further information on which to judge the likely visual effects of the Offshore Array because the results reflect the effect that distance has on its apparent size and horizontal spread: a large object up close has more visual impact than the same sized object further away (all other things being equal) and this is shown in the horizontal angle ZTV by how much of the horizontal field of view is occupied. The horizontal angle ZTV is displayed using coloured bands showing incremental degrees of horizontal angle, in order to highlight areas of higher effect.

16.7.1.31 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.8** shows that the widest horizontal field of view is occupied in close proximity to the OAA and within the OAA itself, where WTGs within the Offshore Array will occupy more than 180 degrees (50%) of the field of view, and within approximately 2 km to the southwest and southeast, where it will occupy 90-180 degrees (25 to 50%) of the field of view. These areas of greatest effect on the HfoV occur only from areas of seascape within the North Sea and will not be experienced to this extent in coastal views, in which the HfoV is much reduced to between 5-10 degrees of the HfoV, due to the distance between the coast and the windfarm site.

Visual Receptors – Overview

16.7.1.32 The principal visual receptors in the SLVIA Study Area are focused along the closest sections of the Aberdeenshire coastline, including people within coastal settlements, including Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Inverallochy; driving on main roads that run along the Aberdeenshire coastline, including the A90 primary road, A952 A950; and A98; visiting tourist facilities or historic environment assets, including Bullers of Buchan and Slains Castle; and engaged in recreational activity such as on walking on the Formartine and Buchan Way, core paths and cycle routes, where the sea is a strong influence in the baseline view.

Nature of Views – Overview

16.7.1.33 There is a range of views within the SLVIA Study Area that are increasingly dominated by the sea towards the coastline. To the east, where the landform is elevated with higher relief, there are expansive views over the lower and flatter coastal plain, against a backdrop of the open North Sea. Within landward areas of the coastal plain, views are more contained and short range due to low-lying gently undulating topography and the screening effect of surface features such as trees and woodland. These encompass the lightly settled farmland occupying much of the coastal plain and, in the north, coniferous forestry that interrupts visibility of the sea.

16.7.1.34 North of Peterhead, large grass covered sand dunes sever the immediate hinterland from the shoreline where there are expansive, longer-range views out to sea and along the coastline to north and south. South of Peterhead, rocky and more elevated coastline, often with high cliffs, have similar but more expansive and longer-range seaward views with the more complex coastline interrupting views along the coastline. While there are notable settlements, including Peterhead, and associated roads along the coast, settlement and transport infrastructure has less presence inland. Energy infrastructure is also notable on the coast, with Peterhead Power Station, St Fergus Gas Terminal and pylons extending inland and often crossing views across the landscape. There are prominent coastal landmarks such as Slains Castle and Reform Tower, within Peterhead, and lighthouses delineating the edge of the land at Rattray Head and Buchan Ness. Few artificial structures lie in the seascape, mainly the WTGs of Hywind Scotland which are visible from much of the coastline and further south, Aberdeen Bay Offshore Wind Farm.

16.7.1.35 The south-easterly aspect of much of the coastline relegates Hywind Scotland to the periphery of views from the coastline to the south of Peterhead, while it is directly ahead in seaward views from the town. Further north Hywind Scotland tends to appear towards Peterhead. Shipping far offshore and fishing boats nearer the shore are commonplace elements within the seascape, particularly towards the busy harbour at Peterhead.

Viewpoints

16.7.1.36 Viewpoints have been compiled within the SLVIA Study Area as informed by the Hywind Scotland ES (Statoil, 2015), incorporating consultee feedback noted in **Table 16-2** and based on the ZTV for the Offshore Array **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.15** to **Figure 16.29**), identification of the landscape and visual receptors within the ZTV, further desk study through wireline analysis, as well as field survey observations.

16.7.1.37 The viewpoints for the SLVIA are those considered necessary to assess the potential significant effects of the Offshore Array, informed by guidance contained within the GLVIA3 (Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013, pp107-110) and Visual Representation of Windfarms (NatureScot, 2017) (p16-21).

16.7.1.38 Viewpoints within the SLVIA Study Area are set out in **Table 16-5** and shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5**. The viewpoints take account of a range of factors, including:

- A range of viewpoints from where there are likely to be significant effects;
- Those representative of views within the SLVIA Study Area, from specific viewpoints and illustrative of certain effects;
- The accessibility to the public, and potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected;
- The viewing direction, distance and elevation, including a range of distances between 34.3 km – 52.1 km to test threshold of significance from coastal to inland areas;

- The nature of the viewing experience and activities (e.g. static views, views from settlements, tourist destinations, and views from sequential points along roads and recreational routes, such as the south downs way);
- The view type (e.g. panorama, vistas and glimpses);
- Areas of high landscape, scenic or recreational value;
- The potential for combined views of the Offshore Array with existing operational windfarms and other proposed windfarms; and
- Potential for integrated approach – viewpoints representing several aspects from the same location, such as visual effects of the offshore and onshore infrastructure, or views representing onshore cultural heritage assets.

16.7.1.39 **Table 16-5** lists the viewpoints considered within the SLVIA and the relevant baseline panorama showing the existing view from each of these viewpoints. The existing view from these viewpoints is described within the baseline description. **Table 16-5** includes the distance between the viewpoint and the nearest proposed WTG as shown on the indicative layout in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.1**, which represents a realistic worst-case scenario in respect of visual effects; and is consistent with the photomontages and wirelines within **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.15** to **Figure 16.29.**

16.7.1.40 As the final layout and location of the proposed WTGs is still to be determined, the assessments included within this chapter are based on an indicative layout, shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.1**, that represent the realistic worst-case scenario in respect of visual effects. This realistic worst-case scenario assumes that a higher proportion of the proposed WTGs will be located towards the landward Offshore Array Area boundary and will lie approximately 700m inside the Offshore Array Area boundary. This realistic worst-case scenario differs from that considered in **Volume ER.A.3, Chapter 14: Shipping and Navigation**, which represents the realistic worst-case scenario in respect of shipping and navigation.

16.7.1.41 **Table 16-5** presents the viewpoints assessed in this chapter.

Table 16-5 Viewpoints Included in the SLVIA

ID	Viewpoint	Figure (Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations)	Landscape/Seascape Character	Distance to nearest WTG (km)
1	Kinnaird Head, Fraserburgh	**Figure 16.15**	LCT 10/LCCA2	45.5
2	Fraserburgh Beach	**Figure 16.16**	LCT 10/LCCA2	45.2
3	Inverallochy	**Figure 16.17**	LCT 12/LCCA4	41.1
4	St Combs	**Figure 16.18**	LCT 12/LCCA4	39.6
5	Rattray Head	**Figure 16.19**	LCT 12/LCCA5	34.3

ID	Viewpoint	Figure (Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations)	Landscape/Seascape Character	Distance to nearest WTG (km)
6	Scotstown Head	**Figure 16.20**	LCT 12/LCCA5	34.5
7	Peterhead (Gadle Braes)	**Figure 16.21**	LCT 12/LCCA6	34.6
8	Peterhead Bay (South Road)	**Figure 16.22**	LCT 12/LCCA6	35.7
9	Peterhead, Reform Tower	**Figure 16.23**	LCT 12/LCCA6	36.1
10	Boddam	**Figure 16.24**	LCT 12/LCCA7	36.0
11	Stirling Hill	**Figure 16.25**	LCT 12/LCCA7	37.2
12	Bullers of Buchan	**Figure 16.26**	LCT 12/LCCA7	40.3
13	Slains Castle	**Figure 16.27**	LCT 11/LCCA7	42.2
14	Cruden Bay (East Sandend)	**Figure 16.28**	LCT 11/LCCA8	45.6
15	Forvie National Nature Reserve	**Figure 16.29**	LCT 12/LCCA7	52.1

Night-time Baseline Lighting

16.7.1.42 The baseline lighting conditions across the SLVIA Study Area vary considerably and there is no single data source that serves to provide a detailed or quantitative evidence base. **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.12** provides some context to the assessment and illustrates information relating to light pollution in the SLVIA Study Area provided by Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), who have produced interactive maps of the UK's light pollution and dark skies as part of a national mapping project. This is based upon data from the National Geophysical Data Center, part of the National Center for Environmental Information (NCEI) in the USA. Land Use Consultants (LUC) has processed this satellite data to prepare a map showing the areas of relative light pollution across Great Britain (LUC/CPRE, 2016). This open-source data has been used to help understand and illustrate the existing baseline lighting levels of the SLVIA Study Area.

16.7.1.43 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.12** shows that existing lighting pollution is concentrated within and around the larger settlements of within the SLVIA Study Area, Fraserburgh and Peterhead, due to street lighting and lighting associated with buildings. Sporadic, smaller and less bright areas along the coast relate to smaller coastal settlements: Inverallochy, St Combs, Crimond, Cruden Bay, Newburgh and Balmedie. However, the brightest area occurs at the St Fergus Gas Terminal and this is similar in extent to lighting associated with Peterhead.

16.7.1.44 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.12** also shows that the majority of the coastline and hinterland of the SLVIA Study Area lies within the darker light influence categories. The coastline and

inter-tidal area between St Combs and Rattray Head, and between Boddam and Blackdog fall within the darkest colour band, containing areas where the sky is expected to be 'dark'. These areas with lower levels of existing night-time lighting are often not accessible as they include inter-tidal areas located off the coast. Operational lighthouses lie at Cairnbulg point and Rattray Head, the latter forming a particularly bright point. Within the SLVIA Study Area, the North Sea includes some visible aviation and/or navigation lighting associated with the operational Hywind Scotland.

16.7.1.45 The impression gained from **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.12** is borne out by the assessment experience from visiting and inspecting the SLVIA Study Area at night. Rural sections of the coastline and the coastal plain are darker areas. Brightness increases towards the larger settlements and developments along the coastline, which are more well-lit at night due to the number of light sources including:

- Street lighting, buildings and retail areas within settlements;
- Roads and road junctions, including service areas and associate vehicles using the road network;
- Energy infrastructure including St Fergus Gas Terminal;
- Red aviation lights on tall structures including communication masts and the Peterhead Power Station chimney;
- Lighting of cardinal buoys and vessels in the sea; and
- The operational Offshore Wind Farm (OWF) aviation and marine navigational lights which can be seen out to sea, lighting Hywind Scotland, to the east within the North Sea.

16.7.1.46 Lighting from these sources provides a noticeable level of baseline illumination which is apparent when travelling through and around the coastal parts of the SLVIA Study Area, most notably at the transition between the urban environment and the adjoining rural areas. Lighting within Peterhead and less so, other more urbanised parts of the coastline, are demonstrably intrusive and interrupt the transition between dark landscape and dark skies above in views towards the seascape.

16.7.1.47 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.13** presents a ZTV that informs the assessment of the effects of the Offshore Array at night. The ZTV is based on lighting parameters which are described in the Project Design Envelope in **Section 16-8**.

16.7.2 Future Baseline

16.7.2.1 The EIA Regulations require that a *"a description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge"* is included within the Offshore EIA Report.

16.7.2.2 The baseline character of the landscape, coastline and seascape within the SLVIA Study Area is dynamic and is likely to evolve and change in future because of the effects of climate change, land use policy, environmental improvements and development pressures, irrespective of whether the Offshore Array progresses to construction and operation or not.

16.7.2.3 The future baseline environment for the SLVIA will include further offshore wind energy developments and the less-certain scenario of schemes currently at the scoping or pre-application stage progressing through to construction. Consented and application stage offshore wind farms are considered as Development Stage 3: Plans or projects with an application submitted in the CEA (**Section 16.13**).

16.7.2.4 A range of policies impact on the management of the landscape, coastline, and seascape, ranging from national policy and regulation, through to community strategies and development frameworks. Planning policies covering the landscape, coastal and seascape resource within the Study Area generally seek to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, while recognising the need to adapt to inevitable change over time, particularly in areas where natural processes may drive more rapid change, such as coastal landscapes shaped by coastal processes, changing agricultural practices and/or changes to the integrity of agricultural character, and the need to respond to development pressures that reflect the changing needs of society.

16.7.3 Summary of Baseline Environment

16.7.3.1 The key receptors that will be assessed in **Section 16.11** comprise the following:

- **Coastal Character Areas**: Pennan Head to Phingask Shore (LCCA 1), Fraserburgh (LCCA 2), Fraserburgh Bay (LCCA 3), Cairnbulg Point to South Inch (LCCA 4), South Inch to Peterhead (LCCA 5), Peterhead and Sandford Bay (LCCA 6), Boddam to Stirling Craig and The Skares to Rockend (LCCA 7), Bay of Cruden (LCCA 8), Rockend to Aberdeen (LCCA 9);
- **Landscape Character Types**: Cliffs and Rocky Coast – Aberdeenshire (LCT 10), Fragmented Rocky Coast (LCT 11), Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12), Broad Ridges and Valleys (LCT 15), Coastal Farmland with Ridges and Valleys (LCT 16), Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17), Undulating Agricultural Heartland (LCT 20), Farmland and Wooded Policies (LCT 21), Farmed Strath – Aberdeenshire (LCT 25);
- **Landscape Designations**: North Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, Cairness Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL), Crimonmogate GDL and Haddo GDL;
- **Settlements**: Fraserburgh, Inverallochy, St Combs, St Fergus, Lunderton, Peterhead and Boddam.
- **Roads:** A90, A950 and A975;
- **Recreational Routes:** Formartine and Buchan Way, Aberdeenshire Coastal Trail and North East 250;
- **Viewpoints:** 1 to 15, as listed in **Table 16-5**; and
- **Offshore Receptors**: Including ferry users.

16.8 Limitations and Assumptions

16.8.1.1 The limitations and assumptions identified for the SLVIA are set out in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology**.

16.8.2 Impacts Scoped Out of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report

16.8.2.1 The SLVIA covers all potential impacts identified during scoping, as well as any further potential impacts that have been highlighted as the EIA has progressed.

16.8.2.2 However, following consideration of the baseline environment, the project description outlined in **Volume ER.A.2, Chapter 4: Project Description** and in line with the Scoping Opinion, a number of impacts are not considered in detail within this EIAR, as illustrated in **Table 16-6**.

16.8.2.3 In addition, screening of transboundary impacts has been carried out in **Section 16.15** and has identified that there is no potential for significant transboundary effects with regard to the seascape, landscape and visual topic from the Offshore Array upon the interests of other European Economic Area (EEA) States. Therefore, transboundary impacts have been scoped out of this Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity chapter.

16.8.2.4 **Table 16-6** presents the impacts that have been scoped out of the assessment in this chapter.

Table 16-6 Impacts Scoped Out of the SLVIA

Potential Impact	Project Aspect	Project Phase	Justification
Effect of views of the Offshore Array on characteristics and qualities of coastal and landscape receptors, including effects of turbine lighting at night	Offshore Array	Construction and Decommissioning	The effects on seascape / landscape character owing to the use of artificial lighting to enable construction works during the hours of darkness is expected to be temporary and is unlikely to impact character.
Effect of views of the Offshore Array on visual amenity including effects of turbine lighting at night	Offshore Array	Construction and Decommissioning	The effects on visual amenity owing to the use of artificial lighting to enable construction works during the hours of darkness is expected to be temporary and is unlikely to impact character.
The seascape, landscape, and visual impacts of the operation of the Offshore Export Cable(s).	Offshore Export Cable Corridor	Construction and Decommissioning Operation and Maintenance	The Offshore Export Cable(s) will be located below the sea surface. They will not be visible as part of the seascape once operational and will have no effect on seascape, landscape, and visual receptors. This includes the related presence and activity of vessels, whose appearance will be of short-duration, intermittent and temporary.

16.8.3 Embedded Mitigation

16.8.3.1 As part of the project design process, a number of measures were proposed to reduce the potential for impacts on SLVIA receptors (see **Table 16-7**). As there is a commitment to implementing these measures, they are considered inherent parts of the design of the Offshore Array and are considered in the assessment presented in **Section 16.11** below (i.e. the determination of magnitude and therefore significance assumes implementation of these measures). These measures are considered standard industry practice for this type of development.

16.8.3.2 The embedded mitigation relevant to Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity is presented in **Table 16-7**.

Table 16-7 Embedded Mitigation for Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity

Potential Impact and Effect	Mitigation ID	Mitigation	Project Aspect	Project Phase
Primary				
Effects on visual receptors / views	Co20	The maximum blade tip height is 310 m* (above Ordnance Datum Newlyn (ODN)) which has been reduced from 325 m (above ODN) proposed at scoping. ** In order to ensure that a worst-case effect is assessed, the assumed blade tip height assessed and modelled for seascape, landscape and visual is slightly larger (315 m blade tip above ODN) than the current project design (310 m blade tip above ODN).*	OAA	Construction, Operation and Maintenance, and Decommissioning
Tertiary				
Effects on visual receptors / views at night	Co53	Approval and implementation of a Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) in agreement with Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) and International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA). LMP will be in line with IALA Recommendation G1162 (IALA, 2021) including a buoyed construction area if required by NLB.	OAA and Offshore ECC	Construction, Operation and Maintenance, and Decommissioning
Effects on visual receptors / views at night	Co54	Approval and implementation of a Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) in agreement with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which will set out specific requirements in terms of aviation lighting to be installed on the wind turbines, as required under CAP 764, CAA Policy and Guidelines on Wind Turbines (Version 6, February 2016) and will include details of: - Lights and their shape, colour and character; and - Notifications and Inspections.	OAA	Construction, Operation and Maintenance, and Decommissioning

16.9 Project Design Envelope Parameters

16.9.1.1 Given that the realistic worst-case scenario is based on the design option (or combination of options) that represents the greatest potential for change, as set out in **Volume ER.A.2 Chapter 4: Project Description**, a confidence can be taken that development of any alternative options within the Project Design Envelope parameters will give rise to no effects greater or worse than those assessed in this impact assessment. The Project Design Envelope and parameters relevant to the SLVIA are outlined below, in **Table 16-8**.

Table 16-8 Design Envelope parameters for Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity

Potential Impact and Effect	Project Design Envelope parameters for Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity
Construction	
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on visual receptors/views	Construction activity and the emerging structures comprising: seven offshore WTGs with a modelled blade tip height of 315 m* above ODN and 265 m* rotor blade diameter with three blades and a horizontal rotor axis, connected to 140 m long/wide semi-submersible substructures with a height above water of 25 m (substructure type yet to be selected). * In order to ensure that a worst-case effect is assessed, the assumed blade tip height and rotor diameter in the project design parameters for seascape, landscape and visual are slightly larger than the current project design (which has a WTG blade tip height of 310 m ODN and 250 m rotor blade diameter).
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on seascape (coastal) character.	
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on perceived landscape character.	
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on perceived special qualities of designated landscapes.	
Operation and Maintenance	
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on visual receptors/views.	Operation and maintenance of the proposed offshore WTGs, whose parameters are stated above. 35 year operation and maintenance period.
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on seascape (coastal) character.	
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on perceived landscape character.	
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on perceived special qualities of designated landscapes	

Potential Impact and Effect	Project Design Envelope parameters for Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity
Effects (night-time) of the Offshore Development lighting on visual receptors/views and perception of coastal character	Marking and lighting of the Salamander WTGs in accordance with a LMP, which will be produced and consulted on post-consent.
Decommissioning	
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on visual receptors/views	Dismantling activity and the diminishing structures of the proposed offshore WTGs, whose parameters are stated above.
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on seascape (coastal) character.	
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on perceived landscape character.	
Effects (day-time) of the Offshore Development on perceived special qualities of designated landscapes.	

16.10 Assessment Methodology

16.10.1.1 **Volume ER.A.2, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology** sets out the general approach to the assessment of potential significant effects that may arise from the Salamander Project.

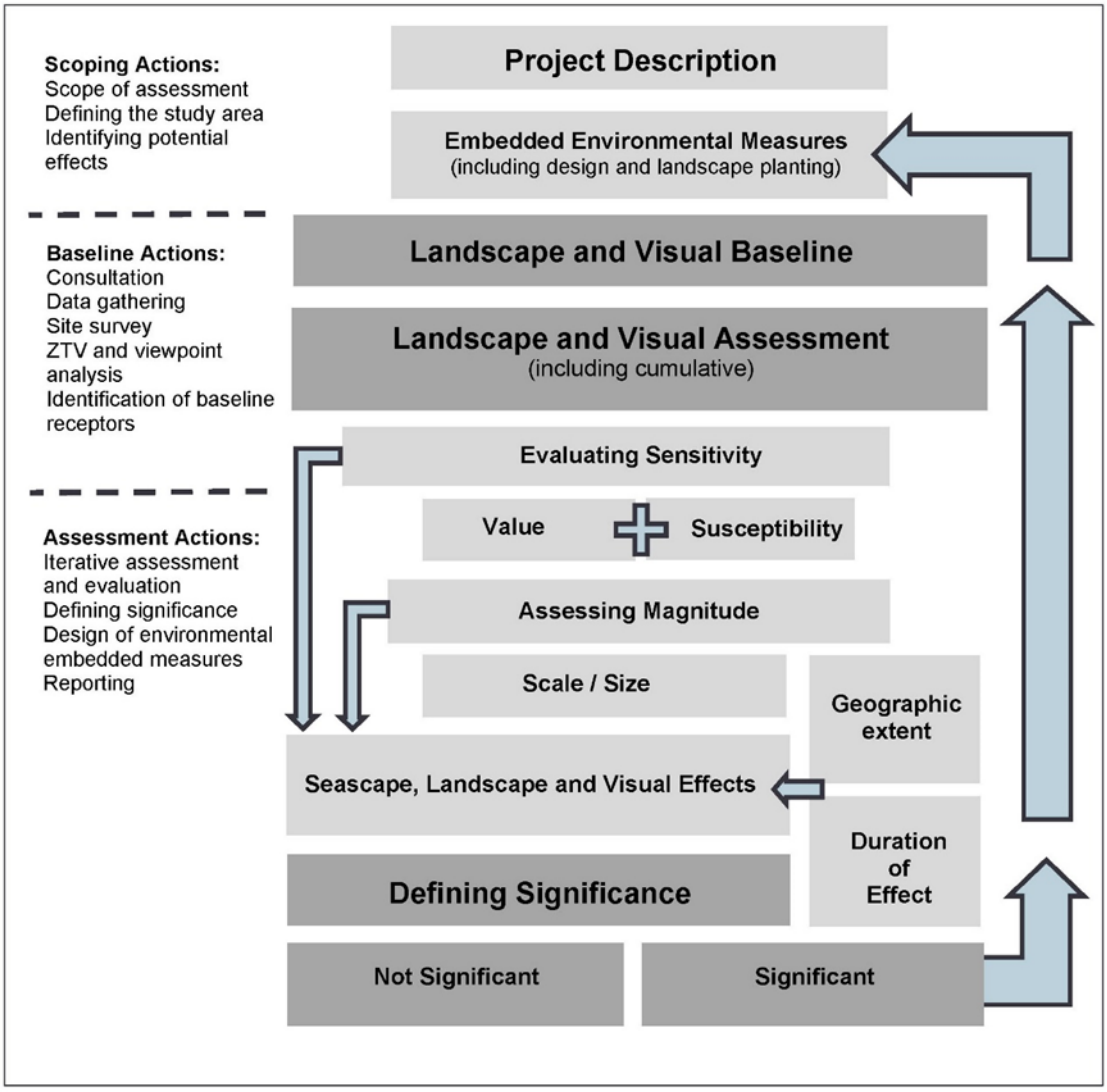
16.10.1.2 Whilst **Volume ER.A.2, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology** provides a general framework for identifying impacts and assessing the significance of their effects, in practice the approaches and criteria applied across different topics vary.

16.10.1.3 A summary of the approach to the SLVIA that has been addressed in the EIA is outlined below.

16.10.1.4 The full methodology for the SLVIA is set out in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology.**

Overview

16.10.1.5 The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the Landscape Institute and IEMA (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3), and other best practice guidance. An overview of the SLVIA process is provided here and illustrated, diagrammatically in **Graphic 16-1.**



Graphic 16-1 Overview of Approach to SLVIA

16.10.1.6 The SLVIA assesses the likely effects that the Construction, Operation and Maintenance and Decommissioning of the Offshore Array on the seascape, landscape and visual resource, encompassing effects on coastal/landscape character, designated landscapes, visual effects and cumulative effects.

16.10.1.7 An appropriate and proportionate level of assessment has been undertaken and agreed through consultation at the scoping stage. The level of assessment may be 'preliminary' (requiring desk-based data analysis) or 'detailed' (requiring site surveys and investigations in addition to desk-based analysis.

16.10.1.8 The seascape, landscape and visual assessment involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessment and a consensus of professional opinion has been sought through consultation, internal peer review, and the adoption of a systematic, impartial, and professional approach.

16.10.1.9 Essentially, the seascape, landscape and visual effects (and whether they are significant in EIA terms) is determined by an assessment of the 'sensitivity' of each receptor or group of receptors and the 'magnitude of change' that would result from the Offshore Array.

16.10.1.10 The evaluation of sensitivity takes account of the value and susceptibility of the receptor to the Offshore Array. This is combined with an assessment of the magnitude of change which takes account of the size and scale of the proposed change. By combining assessments of sensitivity and magnitude of change, a level of seascape, landscape or visual effect can be evaluated and determined. The resulting level of effect is described in terms of whether it is significant or not significant, and the geographical extent, duration and the type of effect is assessed as either direct or indirect; temporary or permanent (reversible); cumulative; and beneficial, neutral or adverse.

Definitions of Sensitivity, Value and Magnitude

16.10.1.11 The sensitivity of a seascape / landscape or visual receptor is an expression of the combination of the judgements made about the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change associated with the development proposed and the value related to that receptor. An overall sensitivity assessment of the receptor has been made by combining the assessment of the value of the receptor and its susceptibility to change.

16.10.1.12 An evaluation of sensitivity to change has been applied for each receptor – high, medium-high, medium, medium-low and low – by combining individual assessments of the value of the receptor and its susceptibility to change. The basis for the assessments has been made clear using evidence and professional judgement in the evaluation of sensitivity for each receptor, informed by criteria that tend towards higher or lower sensitivity, which are set out in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology**.

16.10.1.13 The magnitude of change affecting seascape / landscape receptors is an expression of the scale of the change that will result from the Offshore Array and is dependent on a number of variables regarding the size or scale of the change that will be experienced. The magnitude of change resulting from the Offshore Array is described as 'High', 'High-medium', 'Medium', 'Medium-low' 'Low' and 'Negligible' for seascape/landscape and visual receptors and is described further in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology**.

Defining Impact Significance

16.10.1.14 The matrix presented in **Table 16-9** helps to inform the threshold of significance when combining sensitivity and magnitude to assess significance. In line with the emphasis placed in GLVIA3 upon the application of professional judgement, an overly mechanistic reliance upon a matrix is avoided through the provision of clear and accessible narrative explanations of the rationale underlying the assessment made for each landscape and visual receptor.

16.10.1.15 Significant landscape and visual effects are shaded red in **Table 16-9**. They relate to all those effects that result in a 'Major' or a 'Major / Moderate' level of effect. Moderate levels of effect (shaded orange) may be significant or not significant subject to the assessor's opinion, which are explained further with professional judgement. Yellow and grey shaded boxes in **Table 16-9** indicate a non-significant effect. In those instances where there would be no effect, the magnitude has been recorded as 'Zero' and the level of effect as 'None'.

16.10.1.16 **Table 16-9** presents the significance matrix that informs the SLVIA.

Table 16-9 Significance of Effect Matrix

Significance of effect		Magnitude of change					
		Negligible	*Low*	*Medium-low*	*Medium*	*Medium-high*	*High*
Sensitivity	*Low*	Negligible (Not Significant)	Negligible (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)	Moderate / minor (Not Significant)	Moderate / minor (Not Significant)
	Medium-low	Negligible (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)	Moderate / minor (Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)
	Medium	Minor (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)	Moderate / minor (Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Major / Moderate (Significant)
	Medium-high	Minor (Not Significant)	Moderate / minor (Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Major / Moderate (Significant)	Major (Significant)
	High	Minor (Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant / Not Significant)	Major / Moderate (Significant)	Major (Significant)	Major (Significant)

Geographical Extent

16.10.1.17 The geographic extent over which the seascape / landscape and visual effects will be experienced is also assessed, which is distinct from the size or scale of effect. This evaluation is not combined in the assessment of the level of magnitude, but instead expresses the extent of the receptor that will experience a particular magnitude of change and therefore the geographical extents of the significant and not significant effects.

16.10.1.18 The reasoning behind this approach is explained in **Volume ER.A.4. Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology**.

16.10.1.19 The extent of the effects varies depending on the specific nature of the Offshore Development and is principally assessed through analysis of the extent of perceived changes through visibility of the Offshore Array.

Duration and Reversibility

16.10.1.20 The duration and reversibility of seascape, landscape and visual effects is based on the period over which the Offshore Development is likely to exist and the extent to which it will be removed and its effects reversed at the end of that period. OPEN's methodology does not include duration and reversibility as part of magnitude of change, instead these are determined separately in relation to the assessed effects.

16.10.1.21 Long-term, medium-term and short-term seascape / landscape effects are defined as follows:

- Long-term – more than 10 years;
- Medium-term – 6 to 10 years; and
- Short-term – 1 to 5 years.

Visual Representations Methodology

16.10.1.22 The methodology for the production of visual representations (photomontages and ZTVs) of the Offshore Array is set out in full in **Volume ER.A.4. Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology**.

16.10.1.23 The visual representations presented in **Volume A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.15** to **Figure 16.29**, were produced in accordance with Visual Representation of Wind farms (NatureScot, 2017) and Visual Representation of Development Proposals (TGN 06/19) (Landscape Institute, 2019).

16.10.1.24 The ZTVs in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5** to **Figure 16.10** have also been produced in line with guidance in Visual Representation of Wind farms (NatureScot, 2017) and are generated using Geographical Information System (GIS) software (ESRI ArcGIS Version 10.5) to model the theoretical visibility of the Offshore Array.

16.11 Impact Assessment

16.11.1.1 It is anticipated that the effects of the Offshore Array will largely be due to the presence of the proposed offshore WTGs and that the effects of the completed Offshore Array will be greater than those during Construction and Decommissioning, when the proposed WTGs will appear to increase and decrease in size, respectively. For this reason, this section considers the effects of the Offshore Array during Operation and Maintenance first, as effects of the Construction and Decommissioning phases are expected to be no greater than those during Operation and Maintenance.

16.11.2 Operation and Maintenance

16.11.2.1 During the Operation and Maintenance phase, the visual impact of the Offshore Array on the perceived coastal character and landscape character of the northeast Aberdeenshire coastline, and the views and visual amenity of receptors on land may have a significant effect upon these SLVIA receptors.

16.11.2.2 Operation and maintenance phase effects on these SLVIA receptors will occur as a result of the presence of the Offshore Array and the associated presence and activity of vessels within the OAA. Visibility of these structures and associated activities in combination may alter the perceived coastal character and landscape character of the northeast Aberdeenshire coast.

16.11.2.3 Under the operation and maintenance phase, the following potential impacts have been assessed:

- Assessment of effects on coastal character;
- Assessment of effects on landscape character;
- Assessment of effects on designated landscapes;

- Assessment of effects on views / visual amenity;
- Preliminary assessment of visual receptors;
- Detailed assessment of effects on visual receptors; and
- Assessment of night-time effects on views.

Assessment of Effects on Coastal Character

Preliminary Assessment of Effects on Coastal Character

16.11.2.4 A preliminary assessment of the effects of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on local coastal character areas (LCCAs) is presented in **Table 16-10** with reference to the ZTV analysis in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations**, **Figure 10-9**. A detailed assessment follows for each LCCA and associated coastal LCT that is identified in the preliminary assessment as requiring detailed assessment. These LCCAs and associated coastal LCTs have potential visibility of the Offshore Array (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and potential for long-term, reversible effects on their perceived character due to the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array. Detailed assessment of these potential effects is undertaken in **Section 16.11.**

16.11.2.5 **Table 16-10** presents the preliminary assessment of the effects of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on local coastal character areas (LCCAs).

Table 16-10 Preliminary Assessment of Coastal (Seascape) and Landscape Character

Coastal Character Area	Associated Coastal LCT	Minimum Distance (to Offshore Array Area (km))	Preliminary Assessment
Potential for significant effects that require detailed assessment			
Cairnbulg Point to South Inch (LCCA 4)	Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12)	37.4	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows that the north easterly aspect of this coastline and its distance to the OAA means theoretical visibility of the Offshore Array is continuous along the coastal edge of the LCCA.
South Inch to Peterhead (LCCA 5)	Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12)	33.1	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows that the easterly aspect of this coastline and its distance to the OAA means theoretical visibility of the majority of the WTGs within the Offshore Array is near continuous along the coastal edge of the LCCA.
Peterhead and Sandford Bay (LCCA 6)	Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12)	33.1	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows that the easterly aspect of this coastline and its distance to the OAA means theoretical visibility of the majority of the WTGs within the Offshore Array is near continuous along the coastal edge of the LCCA.

Coastal Character Area	Associated Coastal LCT	Minimum Distance (to Offshore Array Area (km))	Preliminary Assessment
Boddam to Stirling Craig and The Skares to Rockend (LCCA 7)	Fragmented Rocky Coast (LCT 11)	35.1	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows that the southeasterly aspect of this coastline and its distance to the OAA means theoretical visibility of the majority of the WTGs within the Offshore Array is near continuous along the coastal edge of the LCCA.
Considered in preliminary assessment but found to have no likelihood of significant effects			
Pennan Head to Phingask Shore (LCCA 1)	Rocky Coast – Aberdeenshire (LCT 11)	47.0	No theoretical visibility of the Offshore Array is indicated by **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9**, due to the northerly aspect and indented nature of the coastline.
Fraserburgh (LCCA 2)	Rocky Coast – Aberdeenshire (LCT 11)	43.9	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows that theoretical visibility of the Offshore Array is limited to the eastern portion of the settlement with buildings within the settlement, intervening distance and the northerly aspect of the coastline restricting the potential for significant effects.
Fraserburgh Bay (LCCA 3)	Rocky Coast – Aberdeenshire (LCT 11)	40.7	Little theoretical visibility of the Offshore Array is indicated by **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9**, due to screening by landform extending to Cairnbulg Point, as indicated by the ZTV.
Bay of Cruden (LCCA 8)	Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12)	42.1	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** indicates that theoretical visibility of the Offshore Array is restricted to a small part of the bay and limited by its southeasterly aspect, distance from the Offshore Array and enclosure by adjoining headlands.
Rockend to Aberdeen (LCCA 9)	Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12)	53.6	Distance from the boundary of OAA and the southeasterly aspect of the coast limits the potential for significant effects as the WTGS within the Offshore Array will be perceived as small elements within the setting of the LCCA, although **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** indicates that a number of WTGs within the Offshore Array are theoretically visible from much of the coastal edge.

Detailed Assessment of Effects on Coastal Character

16.11.2.6 A detailed assessment of the effects of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on coastal character is presented as follows for the LCCAs and coastal LCTs that are identified in the preliminary assessment (**Table 16-10**) as requiring detailed assessment.

Cairnbulg Point to South Inch (LCCA 4)

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.7 The coastline between Inverallochy and St Combs has a generally northeasterly aspect and is complex and rocky coastline, to the north, with wide curving sandy beaches to the south. Landform is generally level and low-lying with landcover predominantly comprising managed grassland and arable farmland that includes gorse scrub and small blocks of coniferous plantation. The LCCA is relatively well settled and contains the villages of Inverallochy and St Combs both covered by Conservation Areas. The harbour at Cairnbulg Boathaven is a focus for maritime activity while distant passing vessels lie out at sea. Inverallochy golf course extends between the two villages and a disused airfield adjoins Inverallochy. The shoreline is readily accessible from the villages via several tracks to the coastline and footpaths along the coast. The village extends to the shoreline, limiting the natural qualities of the LCCA. The open sea and sky dominate expansive, far-ranging seaward views from beaches while enclosing dunes or buildings within the villages screen views inland. The villages provide alternative focal points to the sea in views along the coast. Coastal landmarks comprise the lighthouses at Cairnbulg Point which relates to a strong historic association with the sea. The hinterland is characterised as Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12), backed by Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17). Visibility of offshore wind development is limited to Hywind Scotland, to the southeast. Viewpoint 3: Inverallochy (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.17**) and Viewpoint 4: St Combs (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.18**) lie within the LCCA.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.8 A **Medium** sensitivity rating has been attributed to Inverallochy to St Combs (LCCA 4), reflecting its medium value and the medium susceptibility of its perceived character to changes arising from the Offshore Array, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.9 **Value**. No national landscape designations are associated with this LCCA, which lies within the locally designated North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. The LCCA is representative of the *"Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low-lying landform and 'soft' gradual transition from land to sea"* and *"Panoramic views out to sea from cliff tops and open beaches"* that are special qualities of the SLA. Coverage by a Conservation Area indicates the value of the townscape of both villages. While these factors indicate a higher value, the fact that dense development extends to the shoreline and contributes little to the scenic quality of the LCCA limits this value. The well settled nature of the LCCA limits the qualities of wildness and remoteness but the smaller size of the two villages and the limited network of roads mean there is some quality of tranquillity. There are limited cultural associations beyond the villages themselves and no heritage designation beyond the Conservation Areas.

16.11.2.10 **Susceptibility**. The natural qualities of the LCCA are relatively low. Inland, a low-lying landscape with low relief characterised as Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17) merges into an immediate hinterland characterised as Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12). The LCCA is well settled and modified, with urban development extending to the shoreline at both villages; associated land uses including a golf course and disused airfield; and arable farmland with very low levels of tree cover. The tidal range makes a limited contribution to the coastal character.

16.11.2.11 The LCCA is reasonably robust, despite the absence of offshore development, because it is well settled with two villages and a few heritage features like the lighthouse and Conservation Areas showing a strong relationship with the sea. Neither village is a fishing port nor has a working harbour, but shipping lanes are evident further offshore. Development is largely residential and the lack of harbourside activity shows a limited association with the sea. The urban form of both villages detracts from the more natural qualities of the coastline and contributes to the lower general condition of the LCCA. From the coastline, the sea skyline is simple and large scale with Cairnbulg Point, to the west. The level of residential development reduces qualities of remoteness, and wildness but there is a tranquil quality derived from the expansive sea, settlement scale and limited road network.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.12 A **Low** magnitude of change to the perceived coastal character of St Combs (LCCA 4) resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.13 The physical characteristics of the LCCA will remain unchanged. The Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array will only change the perceived character of the CCA in areas with visibility of the Offshore Array. The far ranging and expansive views of the sea will fundamentally continue to be experienced regardless of the presence of the Offshore Array. The ZTV encompasses the coastline and hinterland (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5**) where expansive and far-ranging sea views will be partially changed through the introduction of the Offshore Array on the sea skyline. The OAA will be located 37 km from the LCCA (at its closest point) and will appear relatively small in vertical scale, within a large scale, open and expansive seascape, as a 'horizon development' rather than being viewed 'within' the seascape, which moderates the magnitude of change. The Offshore Array will be perceived as introducing artificial elements offshore, contrasting with the open sea's sense of naturalness, but relating to its windswept and exposed character. The Offshore Array will affect the maritime influences of the LCCA, resulting in a small change to the seascape to the east through the introduction of WTGs on the skyline.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.14 The effect on the perceived character of Inverallochy to St Combs (LCCA4) and its associated coastal LCT – Rocky Coast – Aberdeenshire (LCT 10) resulting from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **not significant (minor)** in EIA terms, indirect, long-term and reversible.

16.11.2.15 Backing dunes to the south of the area, buildings within Inverallochy and St Combs and local topography will largely restrict this effect to the coastline and open areas of the immediate hinterland within approximately 1 km of the coastline. Beyond these areas the effect will be **Negligible** and no effect will occur in areas without visibility of the Offshore Array.

South Inch to Peterhead (LCCA 5)

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.16 This section of coastline from South Inch to Peterhead has a generally east northeasterly aspect, is large scale and is characterised by a sweeping, 27 km long uninterrupted length of sandy beach backed by huge dunes up to 23 m high. A few skerries lie along the beach. Passing ships and fishing activity lie offshore, within the wider North Sea with limited development offshore at Hywind Scotland. The coastline is sparsely settled with little shoreline development. Craigewan Links lies at the southern end. Marram grass covers the dunes. The shoreline is quite wild, rugged and exposed with a strong sense of openness that creates a sense of isolation. Seaward and coastal views are expansive and far ranging with the sky contributing to their vast scale. Several landmarks lie along the coast, with Rattray lighthouse and St Fergus Gas Terminal, during both

the day and night, being the most prominent. The coastline provides visual interest, particularly towards Peterhead. The hinterland comprises low-lying farmland interspersed with coniferous plantations and contains St Fergus Gas Terminal and a disused airfield, inland of Loch of Strathbeg. Wind turbines and sporadic individual properties and farmsteads lie further inland. Few roads provide access to the coast, but one leads to a car park behind Scotstown Beach and there are coastal paths. Viewpoint 5: Rattray Head (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.19**) and Viewpoint 6: Scotstown Head (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.20**) lie within the LCCA.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.17 A **Medium-High** sensitivity rating has been attributed to South Inch to Peterhead (LCCA 5), reflecting that it has medium-high value and medium-high susceptibility to changes arising from the Offshore Array, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.18 **Value**. No national landscape designations are associated with this LCCA, which lies within the locally designated North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. The qualities of the SLA designation area experienced within the LCCA particularly the *"Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low-lying landform and 'soft' gradual transition from land to sea"* and *"Panoramic views out to sea from cliff tops and open beaches"*. This SLA designation indicates a higher scenic quality and sense of place, derived from the combination and pattern of features that characterise this coastline, such as the extensive sandy beach and dunes. These are well-defined, distinctive attributes of the LCCA that are consistent and intact throughout. The shoreline has natural qualities that combine with perceptual qualities of remoteness and isolation to make the beach a notable recreational source, as emphasised by its coastal paths. The hinterland of the LCCA also hosts several heritage conservation sites and a nature conservation site (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Loch of Strathbeg). A low level of OWF development in the associated seascape, and energy infrastructure and industrial development in the hinterland influences the scenic quality of the LCCA and its value.

16.11.2.19 **Susceptibility**. The LCCA is relatively natural with a degree of fragility, due to its lightly settled agricultural character. The LCT is more robust within the vicinity of the disused airfield and St Fergus Gas Terminal. The hinterland of the LCCA is broadly typical of the Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12). The scale, straightness and level nature of the coastline limits its susceptibility.

16.11.2.20 The LCCA is relatively fragile, due to coastal processes, and relative lack of coastal development. The LCCA is only susceptible to changes in perceived character / perceptual qualities arising from the introduction of the Offshore Array in its seascape setting.

16.11.2.21 The large scale and open nature of the seascape and adjoining coastal landscape means the LCCA is more liable to changes within the seascape.

16.11.2.22 Seaward views are simply composed and expansive with WTGs within Hywind Scotland piercing the sea skyline. There is little shoreline development to impede visibility of the open sea skyline, mainly lighthouses such as Rattray Lighthouse. From further inland, masts near Loch of Strathbeg, taller structures within St Fergus Gas Terminal and other vertical elements such as wind turbines and pylons, interrupt the skyline.

16.11.2.23 Hywind Scotland influences the character of the LCCA which becomes more modified and settled in the lightly settled hinterland. Masts within the disused airfield and structures St Fergus Gas Terminal detract from the more natural qualities of the LCCA and its general quality. Running parallel to but offset from the coast, the A90 provides a further element detracting from these qualities.

16.11.2.24 A sense of exposure and isolation exists within the beaches that reduces inland with enclosed, sheltered pockets within the backing dunes.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.25 It is assessed that a **Low** magnitude of change to the perceived coastal character, resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, will occur along the coastline with a negligible magnitude of change within the hinterland, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.26 The physical characteristics of the LCCA will remain unchanged. The Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array will only alter the perceived character of the LCCA in views from the coastline. Vast, expansive and far-ranging views of the sea, sky and beaches; sense of exposure and awareness of the sea, its tides and the sky, will fundamentally continue to be experienced regardless of the presence of the Offshore Array. The ZTV encompasses the beaches and backing dunes (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5**) where the introduction of the Offshore Array on the sea skyline will alter the expansive and far-ranging sea views. The Offshore Array will lie 33.1 km from the LCCA (at its closest point) and will appear relatively small within a large scale, open and expansive seascape. Screening by dunes, the level of residential development and the presence of St Fergus Gas Terminal limits the magnitude of change within the hinterland and inland areas of the Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (NLCT 12).

16.11.2.27 The Offshore Array will be perceived as introducing man-made elements offshore, contrasting with the open sea's sense of naturalness, but relating to its windswept and exposed character. The Offshore Array will affect the maritime influences of the CCA, resulting in a small change to the seascape to the east through the introduction of WTGs on the skyline.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.28 The effect on the perceived character of St Combs to Peterhead (LCCA 5) and associated Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (NLCT 12) resulting from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** in EIA terms along the coastline and **Not Significant (Minor)** within the hinterland, beyond the tall dunes. These adverse effects will be indirect, long-term and reversible.

16.11.2.29 Dunes backing the coastline and topography will restrict this effect to the coastline, the area around Netherton of Lonmay; an area between Loch of Strathbeg and the disused airfield; and the hinterland between Rattray Head and Peterhead within approximately 1 km of the coastline. Beyond these areas the effect will be negligible and no effect will occur in areas without visibility of the Offshore Array.

Peterhead and Sandford Bay (LCCA 6)

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.30 The Peterhead coastline has an easterly aspect overall and makes a convex curve into the sea. The coastline is relatively small in scale with a rocky shoreline interrupted by small sandy beaches within Peterhead Bay and Sandford Bay. Artificial structures including piers, harbour walls, breakwaters and light houses lies on the coastline with urban form extending back from the shoreline to cover much of the area. A high level of development and human activity limits the levels of natural processes, ruggedness, remoteness and wildness to low levels. These mostly derive from the sandy Peterhead Bay and rocky coastline. The coastline is highly developed with coastal development extending up to the shoreline with development offshore limited to Hywind Scotland. The shoreline is readily accessible from the adjoining town and only limited by industrial development and harbour activities. A sense of enclosure within both bays, that is emphasised by dense settlement, contrasts with the more exposed experienced promontories. The harbour is busy with fishing related activity and shipping vessels lie out at sea within expansive views of open sea beyond the town. Urban form tends to limit these seaward views to the coastal edge, where harbour related activity and the sandy beach are main focal points. Coastal landmarks comprise the larger or taller buildings of Reform Tower

and Kinnaird Head lighthouse, within the town; and Peterhead Power Station and Buchan Ness lighthouse, towards Boddam. A smaller part of the town lies within Conservation Areas. The generally low lying and gently rounded hinterland is largely urban and industrial. Viewpoint 7: Peterhead (Gadle Braes) (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.21**) and Viewpoint 8: Peterhead Bay (South Road) (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.20**) lie within the LCCA.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.31 A **Low** sensitivity rating has been attributed to Peterhead (LCCA 6), reflecting that it has low value and low susceptibility to changes arising from the Offshore Array, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.32 **Value**. No landscape designations are associated with this LCCA, which indicates a lower value to the LCCA. The LCCA's rugged, rocky coastline and sandy beaches within embayment are typical of the northeast Aberdeenshire coastline in general. Shoreline development related to Peterhead's Harbour detracts from the natural qualities of this coastline. The town and artificial harbour are relatively uncommon features along the northeast Aberdeenshire coastline, but contribute little to the scenic qualities of the LCCA. Conservation Areas indicate Peterhead's townscape quality. The presence of artificial structures along the shoreline, harbour related activity and the density of urban development, which includes larger development such as a prison and power station, means there is little sense of naturalness or remoteness. Due to the LCCA's developed nature, it has little value for nature conservation and its cultural value largely derives from Reform Tower and the Conservation Areas.

16.11.2.33 **Susceptibility**. The natural qualities of the LCCA are low. Inland, the Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT17) is a low-lying landscape with low relief. The immediate hinterland comprises a gently rounded headland covered by the town of Peterhead. Shallow slopes fall to a rocky shoreline with some indentation below. Existing industrial, residential and harbour related development characterises the LCCA. Due to the level of shoreline development, the tidal range makes a limited contribution to the coastal character.

16.11.2.34 The LCCA is robust as it contains a working harbour, there is existing offshore development and relatively few heritage features showing a strong relationship with the sea. Peterhead is a major fishing port with a busy commercial harbour and shipping lanes are evident further offshore. Associated industry and harbourside activity; and the town's urban form detract from the more fragile natural qualities of the coastline. From the coastline, the sea skyline is simple and large scale with breakwaters enclosing Peterhead Bay. While the coastline of the LCCA has some complexity, the enclosing breakwaters and development within the town provides some screening of the sea. Development and activity at the harbour, and enclosure of it and Peterhead Bay, reduces qualities of remoteness, tranquillity, wildness.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.35 A **Negligible** magnitude of change to the perceived coastal character of Peterhead (LCCA 6) resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.36 The physical characteristics of the LCCA will remain unchanged. The Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array will only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the LCCA, as apparent to people in views from parts of the LCCA with visibility. The varied sense of exposure and awareness of the sea, its tides and the sky, which are mostly experienced from the town's coastal edge, will fundamentally continue to be experienced regardless of the presence of the Offshore Array. The ZTV encompasses the town and the urban coastline (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations**, **Figure 16.5**) where expansive and far-ranging sea views will be partially changed through the introduction of the Offshore Array on the sea skyline. The OAA will be located 33.1 km from the LCCA (at its closest point) and

will appear relatively small in vertical scale, within a large scale, open and expansive seascape, as a 'horizon development' rather than being viewed 'within' the CCA, which moderates the magnitude of change. Though the Offshore Array will be perceived as introducing artificial elements offshore, contrasting with the open sea's sense of naturalness, it will relate to its windswept and exposed character. Additionally, it will be experienced from within a settled and developed context with notable industrial and maritime structures nearby. These factors moderate the degree of change. The Offshore Array will affect the maritime influences of the CCA, resulting in some loss of open seascape to the east through the introduction of WTGs on the skyline.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.37 The effect on the perceived character of Peterhead and Sandford Bay (LCCA 6) and the associated areas of Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12) and Fragmented Rocky Coast (LCT 11) resulting from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Negligible)** in EIA terms, indirect, long-term and reversible.

16.11.2.38 This effect will occur along the approximately 5 km long urban coastline within Peterhead and within the area north of Boddam and east of the A90 extending up to 1 km from the coast. No effect will occur within the town's interior where there is no visibility or other areas without visibility of the Offshore Array.

Boddam to Stirling Craig and The Skares to Rockend (LCCA 7)

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.39 The coastline between Peterhead and Rockend is generally straight with a southeasterly aspect and is indented, complex and deeply incised. Erosion features including cliffs, caves and arches; and natural havens enclosed by headlands and skerries characterise the rocky coastline. Unmanaged grassland covers clifftops and headlands. The coastline has higher qualities of ruggedness and, in parts, wildness as no development lies on the clifftops or in the immediately adjoining seascape. Settlement is limited to isolated properties and farmsteads dispersed along roads that are closely aligned with the coast and the village of Boddam, which is covered by a Conservation Area. Roads and coastal paths provide ready access to cliff tops, headlands and havens. Activity is limited to recreational vessels at Boddam's small harbour and distant passing vessels and tankers in the open sea. An absence of coastal development means that it is more natural, while the influence of settlement and roads limits the sense of remoteness. Hywind Scotland is visible from much of the coastline, within the adjoining seascape. Perceptual qualities of shelter and enclosure are higher within the havens and lower on the more exposed headlands. Screening by the indented coastline varies visibility of the open sea. This is emphasised along the A975 and the A90 where topography and dismantled railway embankments screen the sea entirely. Notable landmarks along the coastline include Slains Castle and the natural sea arches at Bullers of Buchan. The largely flat and low-lying hinterland is higher in parts with landcover comprising agricultural grasslands with sporadic gorse and scrub. Forvie National Nature Reserve (NNR), south of Collieston contains an area of moorland. The immediate hinterland is characterised as Fragmented Rocky Coast (LCT 11) and Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12), backed by Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17). Viewpoints 10: Boddam (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.24**, 11: Stirling Hill (**Figure 16.25**), 12: Bullers of Buchan (**Figure 16.26**), 13: Slains Castle (**Figure 16.27**), 14: Cruden Bay (East Sandend) (**Figure 16.28**) and 15: Forvie Nature reserve (**Figure 16.29**) lie within the LCCA.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.40 A **Medium-High** sensitivity rating has been attributed to Boddam to Stirling Craig and The Skares to Rockend (LCCA 7), reflecting that it has medium-high value and medium susceptibility to changes arising from the Offshore Array, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.41 **Value**. No national landscape designations are associated with this LCCA, which lies within the locally designated North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. The LCCA is representative of the horizontal composition, low-lying landform and panoramic seaward views from cliff tops and beaches that are special qualities of the SLA. The LCCA is higher in quality as it is a stretch of relatively intact complex, rocky coastline with numerous notable features, most notably at Bullers of Buchan. The LCCA has some recognised value for wildlife as it includes Forvie NNR and Longhaven Cliffs Local Nature Reserve (LNR), which covers a 2.4 km stretch of the coastline, south of Peterhead There is a strong natural quality to the LCCA derived from perceived wildness and remoteness of the shoreline that reduces near the sparse settlement and road network. The natural qualities of the LCCA are emphasised by a greater sense of exposure on headlands while a stronger sense of tranquillity arises within the sheltered bays and havens. Slains Castle is the most notable cultural asset within the LCCA but otherwise cultural associations are limited. The rocky coastline is commonplace along the northeast Aberdeenshire coastline.

16.11.2.42 **Susceptibility**. The LCCA is largely natural in character and close association with the seascape towards Aberdeen means that it is more susceptible to changes within the seascape. The immediate hinterland, characterised as Fragmented Rocky Coast (LCT 11) and at the southern extent, Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12), merges into the low-lying Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17) inland.). The hinterland largely comprises sparsely settled arable farmland with low levels of tree cover and has a modified character. Much of the coastal edge is elevated and rugged, with cliffs and other erosion features that precludes shoreline development and promotes a sense of naturalness.

16.11.2.43 The LCCA is reasonably fragile because there is little shoreline development, it is lightly settled and has few heritage features showing a strong relationship with the sea. There is a modern harbour at Boddam and a historic pier at Collieston and shipping lanes further offshore, but contemporary development or large scale vessels have little influence on the LCCA. Coastal development largely comprises small scale historic settlements and the influence of energy infrastructure or industry is negligible. Collieston's pier and older buildings within the settlements have a strong relationship with sea, the latter often directly addressing the sea from the front façade. The character of the coastline is largely consistent, with detractors generally limited to contemporary development in and around Boddam. A strong sense of exposure and isolation exists on the beaches and clifftops that reduces inland and within the enclosed havens. There are qualities of wildness, remoteness, and tranquillity derived from the largely natural shoreline.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.44 A **Negligible** magnitude of change to the perceived character of Boddam to Stirling Craig and The Skares to Rockend (LCCA 7), Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12) and the Fragmented Rocky Coast (NLCT 11) resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as negligible, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.45 The physical characteristics of the LCCA will remain unchanged. The Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array will only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the LCCA, as apparent to people in views from parts of the LCCA with visibility of it. The varied sense of exposure; awareness of the sea, its tides and the sky; and the strongly indented rocky coastline with cliffs that lend a sense of naturalness will fundamentally continue to be experienced regardless of the presence of the

Offshore Array. The ZTV encompasses the cliffs, rocky coastline and the agricultural hinterland (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.5**) where intermittent views of the vast, far-ranging and simply composed view will be partially changed through the introduction of the Offshore Array on the sea skyline. The OAA will be located 36 km from the LCCA (at its closest point) and will appear relatively small in vertical scale, within a large scale, open and expansive seascape, as a 'horizon development' rather than being viewed 'within' the CCA, which moderates the magnitude of change. The east to southeast facing aspect of the coastline addresses the open North Sea and the Offshore Array will have less of a visual influence due to its location and its appearance within the periphery of seaward views. Expansive offshore views and far-ranging views along coastline to the north and south will largely remain unchanged.

16.11.2.46 The Offshore Array will be perceived as contrasting with the sense of naturalness experienced along this LCCA, through the introduction of further artificial elements, however it relates legibly to the windswept and exposed character, which moderates the degree of change. The Offshore Array will affect the maritime influences of the LCCA, resulting in some loss of open seascape to the northeast through the introduction of WTGs on the skyline.

16.11.2.47 Offshore wind development is an established characteristic of the seascape within the SLVIA Study Area due to the presence of Hywind Scotland within 20 km of the Offshore Array. Both developments are of similar scale and extent, their influence decreasing with distance. Shipping is also characteristic of the adjoining area of sea and in combination these factors severely limit the magnitude of change.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.48 The effect on the perceived character of Boddam to Stirling Craig and The Skares to Rockend (LCCA 7), Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12) and the associated Fragmented Rocky Coast (LCT 11) resulting from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Minor)** in EIA terms. This adverse effect will be indirect, long-term and reversible.

16.11.2.49 The complexity and elevation of this coastline largely restricts this effect to the coastline and the immediate hinterland within 1 km of the coast. The landward extent of this effect will reduce towards Rockend, where it will be restricted to the coastline. No effect will occur in areas without visibility of the Offshore Array.

Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character

Preliminary Assessment

16.11.2.50 Coastal LCTs are considered alongside their associated LCCAs above. Preliminary assessment of the effects of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on Landscape Character Types (LCTs) which do not adjoin the coastline adjoining the North Sea is presented in **Table 16-11** with reference to the ZTV analysis in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.10**. The preliminary assessment of these inland LCTs considers potential visibility of the Offshore Array (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and potential for long-term, reversible effects on their perceived character due to the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.51 **Table 16-11** presents the preliminary assessment of the effects of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on LCTs.

Table 16-11 Preliminary Assessment of Inland Landscape Character Types

Landscape Character Type	Preliminary Assessment
Potential for significant effects that require detailed assessment	
Coastal Agricultural Plain (LCT 17)	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows potential visibility of the Offshore Array from areas between 35 and 50 km from the OAA, covering much of the LCT inland and north of Peterhead.
Considered in preliminary assessment but found to have no likelihood of significant effects	
Coastal Farmed Plain (LCT 3)	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows that distance from the OAA and very limited ZTV coverage limits the potential for significant effects.
Broad Ridges and Valleys (LCT 15)	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows that distance from the OAA and the LCT's closer association with the Moray Firth limits the potential for significant effects.
Coastal Farmland with Ridges and Valleys (LCT 16)	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows that distance from the OAA and the LCT's closer association with the Moray Firth limits the potential for significant effects.
Undulating Agricultural Heartland (LCT 20)	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows that distance from the OAA and low coverage by the ZTV limits the potential for significant effects.
Farmland and Wooded Policies (LCT 21)	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows that distance from the OAA and low coverage by the ZTV limits the potential for significant effects.
Farmed Strath – Aberdeenshire (LCT 25)	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** indicates no ZTV coverage and no potential for significant effects.

Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17)

16.11.2.52 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.9** shows the location of the Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17). The LCT has a medium sensitivity rating, reflecting its medium value and medium-low susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.53 This LCT gradually transitions into Beaches Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12), forming its hinterland. It is a large scale, low-lying landscape (generally lying below 60 m AOD) emphasised by very gently undulating landform that gradually rises to the west. Water courses contained by broad shallow valleys and steeper-banked basins include the River Ugie, which meanders across floodplain west of Peterhead; and the River Ythan, which flows across the central area. Land cover is predominantly arable farmland in a pattern of large fields bounded by post and wire fencing, dilapidated stone walls, or hedges. Villages and relatively

large farms are regularly dispersed across the well-settled LCT with major roads including the A90 and A953. Masts, electricity transmission lines, St Fergus Gas Terminal and WTGs are common features within the open farmland. Large WTGs near St Fergus Moss and the chimney of Peterhead power station are particularly prominent. Tall structures tend to be prominent against the horizon in views and generally take in the high coastal dunes and sea, particularly from the eastern-most areas. Together with the windswept character of this landscape, this gives a strong sense of its coastal context.

16.11.2.54 The key characteristics of the LCT are:

- *"Low-lying and very gently undulating landform, with a pattern of subtle ridges and valleys in the north-east;*
- *Water courses in broad shallow valleys;*
- *Mainly arable farming, with fairly extensive areas of moss and wetland;*
- *Large, open, geometric fields;*
- *Coniferous forest particularly extensive in southern part of the area;*
- *Limited broadleaf woodland, forming rare shelterbelts and small groups around farms;*
- *Well settled landscape of dispersed farms, many newer houses and a number of settlements, and occasional mansions in designed landscapes;*
- *Communication structures and tall masts on some higher ground, and power transmission lines radiating from Peterhead power station, which itself is highly visible; and*
- *Major roads crossing the area.*
- *Consistent views of high coastal dunes and sea, giving a strong coastal context."*

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.55 A **Low** sensitivity rating has been attributed to LCT 17, reflecting its low value and negligible susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.56 **Value.** LCT 17 is a large, typically agricultural landscape that is not particularly distinctive or unusual in character. This LCT does not encompass an area that is nationally designated or locally designated for its scenic value. Two GDLs that lie towards the northern end of the extensive LCT are relatively uncommon within the northeast of Aberdeenshire, although a handful of GDLs lie towards and inland of Aberdeen. The landscape is typically agricultural and variable in quality but generally good. There are no particularly rare or uncommon features and, while there may be areas within the LCT that are wild, remote or tranquil, overall, it is not particularly valued for these perceptual aspects.

16.11.2.57 **Susceptibility.** The LCT is liable to potential changes within its setting including the seascape beyond intervening coastal LCTs. The LCT is relatively robust in character as it is well settled and largely covered by farmland interspersed with settlement and associated transport and road infrastructure. The skyline seen from within the LCT is generally undeveloped apart from Hywind Scotland with some large-scale elements rising above lower screening features such as landform and vegetation cover. A combination of very gently undulating landform and smaller landscape elements provides screening that restricts visibility within the LCT such that many features only have localised influence on the landscape.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.58 The anticipated change to the character of the Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17) due to operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Negligible** magnitude.

16.11.2.59 The Offshore Array will alter the seascape that forms part of the setting to the LCT. It will appear as a distant feature on the expansive sea horizon and will be similar in appearance to Hywind Scotland, which lies a similar distance offshore. Visibility of the Offshore Array from the LCT will be limited to east facing slopes and higher areas. Much of the Offshore Array will be visible from and will influence areas closer to the coastline. Communication structures, tall masts on higher ground and power transmission lines radiating from the highly visible Peterhead power station are identified as key characteristic of LCT 17. These elements exert a strong influence on the LCT inland of Peterhead. Beyond 40 km from the OAA, less ZTV coverage indicates a weakening influence further inland. Undulating topography and the dispersal of surface elements across the LCT will limit the magnitude of change.

16.11.2.60 North of Peterhead, St Fergus Gas Terminal and masts inland of Loch of Strathbeg exert on influence on areas towards the coast and east of the A90, itself an influence on this area. Further inland, wind farms at St Fergus Moss and Greenwellheads influence much of the northern part of the LCT. Undulating topography means that potential visibility of the Offshore Array is intermittent and restricted to higher areas and east facing slopes. Large coniferous forests will often interrupt this visibility. Other intervening landscape elements will limit the Offshore Array's influence in this area particularly beyond 40 km from the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.61 South of Peterhead, ZTV coverage is sporadic apart from an area southwest of the Bay of Cruden. The Offshore Array will not be visible and will not exert an influence on this southern portion of the LCT. While there is greater ZTV coverage near Cruden, the southeasterly aspect of the coastline limits the Offshore Array's influence. Hywind Scotland, which will appear similar to the Offshore Array and at a similar distance range from the coast, establishes offshore wind farm development in the LCT's broader seascape setting. It's presence and the small scale of the Offshore Array will substantially limit the magnitude of change due to the Offshore Array.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.62 Based on the low sensitivity of the Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17) and the negligible magnitude of change, the effects of operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array on the perceived character of the Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17) are assessed as **Not Significant (Negligible)** in EIA terms. These effects will be direct, adverse, long-term and reversible.

16.11.2.63 This effect will extend across much of the LCT north of Boddam, extending up to approximately 10 km inland, near Strichen and up to approximately 4 km inland at Peterhead; and across the area within approximately 3 km to the west and south-west of Cruden Bay. No effect will occur in areas without visibility of the Offshore Array.

Assessment of Effects on Designated Landscapes

Preliminary Assessment

16.11.2.64 Preliminary assessment of the effects of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on designated landscapes is presented in **Table 16-12** with reference to the ZTV analysis in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.10**. A detailed assessment follows for each designated landscape that is identified as requiring detailed assessment. These designated landscapes have potential for long-term, reversible impacts on their special qualities arising as a result of the Operation and Maintenance of the

Offshore Array, which may be visible from the designated landscape (during very good and excellent visibility conditions).

16.11.2.65 **Table 16-12** presents the preliminary assessment of the effects of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on designated landscapes.

Table 16-12 Preliminary Assessment of Designated Landscapes

Designated Landscape	Minimum Distance (to Offshore Array Area (km))	Preliminary Assessment
Potential for significant effects that require detailed assessment		
North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA	32.8	The aspect of this coastline, which is predominantly easterly, and its comparative distance to the Offshore Array means higher ZTV coverage. **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.10** indicates near continuous theoretical visibility of a most of the WTGs within the Offshore Array north of Peterhead to Cairnbulg; and more intermittent visibility south of Peterhead from Boddam to North Tarbothill.
Considered in preliminary assessment but found to have no likelihood of significant effects		
North Aberdeenshire Coast SLA	46.7	The northerly aspect of this coastline limits the potential for significant effects on it. **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations Figure 16.10** shows that topography restricts ZTV coverage to open farmland on east facing slopes south of Pittulie, along the inland boundary and east of Pennan. A high level of intervening landscape features effectively screens the sea from much of the SLA with distance being a further limiting factor. There is no likelihood of the perceived landscape characteristics and qualities of the SLA being significantly affected by the Offshore Array.
Cairness GDL	39.7	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.10** shows that ZTV coverage is restricted to the eastern boundary and southern section of the GDL. The ZTV indicates visibility of a greater number of WTGs within the Offshore Array in these areas. Tree cover within the south and along the boundaries of the GDL; and in the surrounding landscape, in combination with the flatter topography of the wider landscape effectively screens visibility of the sea and the Offshore Array therein. There is no likelihood of the perceived landscape characteristics and qualities of the GDL being significantly affected by the Offshore Array.
Crimonmogate GDL	39.5	**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.10** indicates continuous theoretical visibility of most of the WTGs within the Offshore Array across the entire GDL. The high level of tree cover within the GDL and along its boundaries; and in the surrounding landscape, in combination with the flatter topography of the wider landscape effectively screens visibility of the sea and the Offshore Array therein. There is no likelihood of the

Designated Landscape	Minimum Distance (to Offshore Array Area (km))	Preliminary Assessment
		perceived landscape characteristics and qualities of the GDL being significantly affected by the Offshore Array.

Landscape Designations

North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.66 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.10** shows that the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA encompasses two separate sections of coastline and coastal farmland extending between Fraserburgh and Peterhead, and between Buchan Ness and Blackdog. The coastline of the SLA contains Cairnbulg Point to South Inch (LCCA 4), South Inch to Peterhead (LCCA 5), Boddam to Stirling Craig and The Skares to Rockend (LCCA 7) and Bay of Cruden (LCCA 8). The landscape of the SLA is characterised as Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12), with Fragmented Rocky Coast (LCT 11) between Buchan Ness and Rockend, and it extends into Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17) as far the B977, the A975 and Longhaven, south of Peterhead; and the A90, Crinmongate and the B9033, to the north. The coastline of the SLA comprises wide sandy beaches backed by rolling dunes with outcrops of rugged cliffs and unified by the east-facing orientation of the landscape towards the open North Sea.

16.11.2.67 The aspects and features for which this landscape is designated which could be potentially affected by the Offshore Array include:

- *"Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low-lying landform and 'soft' gradual transition from land to sea;*
- *Expansive beaches backed by rolling dunes. The views from beaches are typically directed out to sea or along the coast;*
- *Rugged and dramatic cliffs to the south of Boddam, with intricate landforms such as the Bullers of Buchan;*
- *Important nature conservation sites: Forvie National Nature Reserve that covers an extensive area around the mouth of the Ythan; and the Loch of Strathbeg;*
- *Lighthouses, such as Rattray, form landmark features along the coast as by necessity, they have prominent locations, colours, and a vertical form;*
- *A popular coast for visitors, with coastal paths, accessible dunes, golf courses and popular beaches;*
- *Prehistoric sites of national importance, including the Mesolithic landscapes at Sands of Forvie and Blackdog;*
- *Features of built heritage typically prominent in the open landscape;*
- *The iconic Slains Castle and its association with Bram Stoker;*
- *Remains of WWII anti-invasion defences along the beaches, in particular at the mouth of the Ythan River and around Rattray Head;*

- *Coastal settlement is generally associated with small harbours, such as at Collieston and Cruden Bay. The siting and orientation of buildings can be highly distinctive, as seen at Inverallochy; and*
- *Panoramic views out to sea from cliff tops and open beaches." (Aberdeenshire Council, 2016).*

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.68 A **Medium-High** sensitivity rating has been attributed to the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, reflecting that it is of high value, and that its perceived character and special qualities are of medium-high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.69 **Value.** The SLA is a largely natural coastline whose special qualities are recognised by local designation for its scenic value. Designation as an SLA reflects that the area exhibits "particular qualities and characteristics within them that are valued locally" (Aberdeenshire Council, 2023b), with specific special qualities that are important to conserve and worthy of protection in the local development plan.

16.11.2.70 **Susceptibility**. The SLA is a large, typically agricultural landscape that is strongly associated with the seascape hosting the Offshore Array. The visual influence of the North Sea means that the *"Panoramic views out to sea from cliff tops and open beaches"* within the SLA and *"views from beaches [that] are typically directed out to sea or along the coast"* that are special qualities of the SLA, are particularly susceptible to change as a result of the Offshore Array, alongside its *"*Overriding horizontal composition*"*. Widespread visibility of the sea means that more specific features of the SLA are susceptible to the effects of the Offshore Array on their setting, including its *"*Rugged and dramatic cliffs to the south of Boddam, with intricate landforms such as the Bullers of Buchan*"*; important nature conservation sites; landmark lighthouses,; the iconic Slains Castle; remnants of World War II anti-invasion defences along the beaches; and coastal settlement, either associated with small harbours, such as at Collieston and Cruden Bay or with a highly distinctive pattern of development, as at Inverallochy.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.71 The magnitude of change to the special qualities of the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array has been assessed as **Low**, along the coastline; and **Negligible** inland, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.72 Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array will not affect the physical elements of the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA but will have a visual impact on its special qualities. The introduction of the Offshore Array will contrast with the SLA's *"Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low-lying landform and 'soft' gradual transition from land to sea"* due to their vertical form and scale. In particular, *"Panoramic views out to sea from cliff tops and open beaches"* and *"views from beaches [that] are typically directed out to sea or along the coast"* will be altered. The introduction of the Offshore Array will be perceptible within the seascape context of the *"Rugged and dramatic cliffs to the south of Boddam"*, that includes the Bullers of Buchan*;* Loch of Strathbeg and Forvie NNRs; the lighthouse and remnants of World War II coastal defences at Rattray; and Slains Castle. The Offshore Array will also be perceptible to a lesser degree within the coastal settlements of Inverallochy, Cruden Bay and Collieston. While the Offshore Array will be perceived as introducing elements that detract from these special qualities, the scale of the Offshore Array will moderate its effects on these special qualities. In combination, the distance of the OAA from the coastline, the low number of constituent WTGs within the Offshore Array and their contained extent within views from the coastline will limit the visual influence of the Offshore Array. The presence of similar development to the Offshore Array at Hywind Scotland will also moderate the effects of its introduction. The Hywind Scotland WTGs will be sufficiently similar in scale, number, location and visibility that much of the coastline will be influenced by both developments together. These WTGS provide a visual precedent for

the proposed WTGs. The presence of shipping and other vessels within the sea, onshore turbines within the hinterland and coastal development including lighthouses, settlement and energy infrastructure at Peterhead Power Station and St Fergus Gas Terminal, will also moderate the degree of change. Within this context, the Offshore Array will form a relatively and distant feature, over 33 km from the SLA at the closest point, although much of it will be visible. **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.10** indicates no visibility of the Offshore Array from Fraserburgh Bay and Cruden Bay and limited ZTV coverage across much of the inland parts of the SLA. North of Peterhead this includes areas north of St Fergus and including Loch of Strathbeg. More visibility of the Offshore Array is shown towards the inland boundary of the SLA where the ground rises into hills. In this area, distance from the OAA and elevation further limits the magnitude of change. South of Peterhead, visibility of the Offshore Array is limited to the area southwest of Cruden Bay. Here, distance from the OAA and the coastal aspect further limits the magnitude of change.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.73 The effect on the perceived character and special qualities of the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA resulting from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** in EIA terms, along the coastline and reduces to **Not Significant (Minor)**, inland. These effects will be indirect, long-term and reversible.

16.11.2.74 This effect will largely be contained within the area along the coastline and within open areas of the immediate hinterland within approximately 1km of the coast. In the section of the SLA north of Peterhead, this includes areas south of Inverallochy, south of St Combs, around Netherton of Lonmay, between Loch of Strathbeg and the disused airfield, and between Rattray Head and Peterhead.

16.11.2.75 In the section of the SLA south of Boddam, this includes areas south of Boddam and extending to Bullers of Buchan, west and south west of Cruden Bay, and an increasingly narrow section along the coast south of Cruden Bay to Rockend. No effect will occur in areas without visibility of the Offshore Array.

Assessment of Effects on Views / Visual Amenity

16.11.2.76 Visual effects are concerned wholly with the effect of the Offshore Array on views and the general visual amenity. The assessment of visual effects *"deals with the effects of change and development on views available to people and their visual amenity. The concern … is with assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the context and character of views."* (Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013, paragraph 6.1)

16.11.2.77 Visual effects are identified for different receptors (people) who will experience the view at their place of residence, within their community, during recreational activities, at work, or when travelling through the area. Visual effects may include changes to an existing static view, sequential views, or wider visual amenity as a result of development or the loss of particular landscape elements or features already present in the view.

16.11.2.78 The level of visual effect (and whether this is significant) is determined through consideration of the sensitivity of each visual receptor (or range of sensitivities for receptor groups) and the magnitude of change that will be brought about by the Construction, Operation and Maintenance and Decommissioning of the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.79 The Offshore Array will have impacts on visual receptors / views during the Operation and Maintenance phase. This section considers the effects of the Offshore Array during the Operation and Maintenance phase on visual receptors / views at the representative viewpoints listed in **Table 16-5**.

Viewpoint 1 Kinnaird Head, Fraserburgh

Baseline Characteristics and Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.80 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 1 Kinnaird Head, Fraserburgh are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.15a-d**.

16.11.2.81 This viewpoint is located on the rocky coastline forming the northern boundary of Fraserburgh and lies just north of the distinctive Kinnaird Head Lighthouse. The viewpoint is slightly elevated above the sea and overlooks a rocky headland in the foreground, which is backed by buildings associated with the harbour; open water within Fraserburgh Bay; and the low-lying coastline terminating at Cairnbulg Point. The landform of Kinnaird Head and its lighthouse buildings, in the foreground, restrict the view of the open sea to the north. The Aberdeenshire coastline partially encloses the expansive, longer-range view of the North Sea. The seaward view is large-scale, with the prevailing expanse of open sea becoming more influenced by human activity inshore and on land. Sea-going vessels, including fishing boats, may be present within the seascape. Peripheral to the view, buildings and activity associated with Fraserburgh Harbour and development within Inverallochy exert an influence on the nature of the view.

16.11.2.82 Viewpoint 1 has been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has medium-high value and that receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.83 **Value.** Although it is not an OS marked viewpoint, this is a viewpoint with benches orientated to overlook Fraserburgh Bay, which aids enjoyment of the setting to the lighthouse and museum. The view is representative of the *"Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low-lying landform"* of the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA special qualities, which are afforded planning policy protection. This implies a higher value to the visible landscape which has scenic qualities relating to its content and composition.

16.11.2.84 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of people engaged in recreation by walking along the route along the coast (7LD.01.13P), which extends the core path along the Broadsea area of Fraserburgh (7LD.01.12); visitors to the Kinnaird Head Lighthouse and / or the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses, which it houses; and those receptors sitting on the provided benches. The focus of the view is to the north into the expansive seascape of the Moray Firth however there are also views into Fraserburgh Bay.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.85 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.15** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 1 Kinnaird Head, Fraserburgh.

16.11.2.86 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.87 The Offshore Array will be visible on the horizon and forming a feature on the periphery of a large, open seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. It will appear clearly separated from the mainland coast, and headlands enclosing the intervening seascape. The Offshore Array is sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the panoramic views to the sea north of the Offshore Array will be retained. The majority of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be seen as rotors visible above horizon.

16.11.2.88 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 45.5 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond a broad swathe of seascape.

16.11.2.89 The upper towers and rotors of all seven WTGs will be visible above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.90 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the seascape in the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline and Aberdeenshire coastline, but the WTGs will appear no greater in vertical scale than the coastal landform at Cairnbulg Point / Inverallochy; and considerably smaller than the operating Hallmost Farm and Gowanfield Farm WTGs.

16.11.2.91 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 6.7° of the horizontal field of view (HfoV) a relatively narrow portion of the view and the open sea skyline. While appearing near to the Inverallochy coastline, on the horizon, the Offshore Array will be clearly separated from the coastline and in open seascape offshore at long distance from the coast.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.92 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Low** magnitude of change, the significance of effect arising from the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** in EIA terms. Nearby buildings will limit this direct, long-term and reversible effect to the lighthouse grounds and its immediate geographic extent.

Viewpoint 2 Fraserburgh Beach

Baseline Characteristics and Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.93 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 2 Fraserburgh Beach are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.16a-d**.

16.11.2.94 This viewpoint is located on the promenade on the eastern boundary of Fraserburgh and is slightly elevated above the sea. It overlooks open water within Fraserburgh Bay and the enclosing low-lying coastline terminating at Cairnbulg Point. Development within Fraserburgh, including static caravans nearby, enclose the view to the north and west. The coastline encloses the longer-range view across Fraserburgh Bay. While the setting of the viewpoint is urban, the sea view is large-scale and relatively natural, with the dominating expanse of open water within the bay only being influenced by human activity on land. This includes low-lying urban development at Inverallochy. Several onshore WTGs at Halmoss Farm and Gowanfold Farm extend above the skyline. Sea-going vessels, including fishing boats, will at times be present within the seascape beyond the bay. The presence of visual detractors associated with the adjoining settlement, and more distant detractors within the vicinity of Cairnbulg and Inverallochy, limits receptor susceptibility.

16.11.2.95 Viewpoint 2 has been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has medium-high value and that receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.96 **Value.** Although it is not an OS marked viewpoint, this is a specific viewpoint whose value is indicated by a promenade with benches orientated to overlook Fraserburgh Bay; car parking behind the promenade, which indicates the popularity of the beach and the number of visitors to the beach; and the number of static caravans nearby that are oriented to observe the view. The viewpoint lies on the boundary of the North the East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. The view takes in landscape within North the East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA and is representative of the SLA's special quality of an *"Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low-lying landform"*, which is afforded planning policy protection.

16.11.2.97 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of people engaged in recreation either on the beach or walking along the promenade, who take in the view at their leisure. The easterly aspect of the coastline means that the coastline extending to Cairnbulg and enclosing Fraserburgh Bay provides an equal focus to the open sea further north.

16.11.2.98 Due to the aspect of the coastline, the viewpoint affords a view over Fraserburgh Bay to the enclosing coastline to the east, in which viewers are less liable to be influenced by development in the sea beyond. Receptors at this location do not view the seascape east of Peterhead, due to screening by the low-lying coastline in the view. Coastal features within the bay itself and towards Cairnbulg Point provide visual interest. The presence of visual detractors associated within the setting of the viewpoint in the adjoining settlement, limits receptor susceptibility.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.99 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16-16** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 2 Fraserburgh Beach.

16.11.2.100 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.101 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 45.2 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond the coastline enclosing Fraserburgh Bay.

16.11.2.102 All seven WTGs within the Offshore Array will be partially visible. The upper towers and rotors of three WTGs will be visible above the sea skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The hubs and blades of four WTGs will be visible above land. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.103 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the view. The Offshore Array will be smaller in scale than the operational turbines in the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline and coastline, and the WTGs will appear noticeably greater in vertical scale than the coastal landform at Cairnbulg Point, directly in front. Several individual onshore WTGs will appear much greater in vertical scale.

16.11.2.104 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 6.9° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view. The Offshore Array will appear to extend from the coastline and urban development at Inverallochy, increasing the sense of enclosure.

16.11.2.105 The Offshore Array will appear contiguous with the coastal landform at Cairnbulg Point. The WTGs within the Offshore Array are sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the panoramic views to the sea north of the Offshore Array will be retained.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.106 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Low** magnitude of change, the significance of effect arising from the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** in EIA terms. Cairnbulg Point will screen the Offshore Array from Fraserburgh Beach east of the viewpoint and large buildings associated with the harbour will frequently screen it from the town north of Links Road.

These elements will limit the geographic extent of this direct, long-term and reversible effect to section of coastline in-between, with buildings on Strichen Road restricting its extent inland.

Viewpoint 3 Inverallochy

Baseline Characteristics and Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.107 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 3 Inverallochy are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure16.17a-d**.

16.11.2.108 This viewpoint is located on the rocky coastline forming the northern boundary of Inverallochy, on Shore Street. The expansive, longer-range view takes in the North Sea with the Aberdeenshire coastline partially enclosing it. To the north, housing backing the viewpoint screens much of the view with Cairnbulg Point entering into the expansive seascape of the North Sea. To the south, housing screens views inland while the rocky coastline slightly encloses the view. Views north and south are much shorter range than the view out to sea. While the seaward view is large-scale and natural, human activity inshore and on land provides a contrast in scale and character. Sea-going vessels, including fishing boats, will be present within the seascape. Housing and associated infrastructure, including light posts, telephone posts and overhead wires within the immediate foreground, influence the scene.

16.11.2.109 Viewpoint 3 has been attributed a **Medium**-**High** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has medium-high value and that receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.110 **Value.** This is neither an OS marked viewpoint nor a specific viewpoint with facilities for tourist visitors but a point on the seaward edge of the settlement where properties look directly towards the sea from the front or sides of these buildings. The viewpoint lies within the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, which implies a higher value to the visible landscape and has scenic qualities relating to the content and composition of the visible landscape. While the view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy, it is representative of the *"Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low-lying landform"* and the highly distinctive siting and orientation of buildings at Inverallochy that are special qualities of the SLA, which are afforded planning policy protection.

16.11.2.111 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of local residents on the coastal edge, who overlook the coastline from the front or side of their properties. Although residents are the main receptor, who gain static long-term views, there are factors specific to the change associated with the Offshore Development that limit the visual susceptibility.

16.11.2.112 The northerly aspect of this section of coastline directly addresses the open sea and as the viewpoint affords a direct view out to sea from the coastal edge and is focused to the north, viewers are more liable to be influenced by development in the sea in this direction. Coastline and urban development contains views along the coast to the northwest and southeast, emphasizing the relationship with the sea to the north and northeast. This provides coastal features of some interest in the view that weakens the viewers focus out to sea. The presence of visual detractors associated with the adjoining settlement, limits receptor susceptibility.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.113 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.17** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 3 Inverallochy.

16.11.2.114 A **Low** magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.115 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 41.1 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond a foreground of settled coastline.

16.11.2.116 The upper towers and rotors of all seven WTGs will be visible above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.117 The vertical height / apparent scale of the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the seascape in the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline, but the WTGs will appear no greater in vertical scale than urban development in the foreground.

16.11.2.118 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 7.6° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view and the open sea skyline. The Offshore Array will be isolated from the coastline on the horizon and will not appear to overlap with any of the WTGs within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.119 The Offshore Array will be visible on the horizon and forming a feature on the periphery of a large, open seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. It will appear clearly separated from the nearby coastline. The Offshore Array is sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the panoramic views to the sea north of the Offshore Array will be retained. The majority of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be seen as rotors visible above horizon.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.120 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Low** magnitude of change, the significance of effect arising from the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** in EIA terms. This direct, long-term and reversible effect will be restricted to the geographic extent of the northeast facing coastline between Cairnbulg Point and Point of Whitelinks.

Viewpoint 4 St Combs

Baseline Characteristics and Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.121 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.18a-d** shows the location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 4 St Combs.

16.11.2.122 This viewpoint is located on the dunes forming the northeastern boundary of St Combs. The viewpoint lies just above sea level, overlooking the open North Sea with the coast partially enclosing it to north and south. The viewpoint's setting is largely agricultural with development within St Comb and several WTGs further inland, directly behind. The view looks east to the OAA. Sea-going vessels, including fishing boats, will at times be present within the seascape. The view is large-scale, longer-range and relatively wild, with only the WTGs within Hywind Scotland within the visible expanse of sea. There is very little within the seascape that detracts from the quality of the view and the attention aId interest of receptors is on the sea view.

16.11.2.123 Viewpoint 4 has been attributed to a **High** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has medium-high value and that receptors experiencing the view have a high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.124 **Value.** The viewpoint is not marked on OS mapping but is a specific viewpoint located on the settlement's coastal edge, behind the beach. The viewpoint lies within the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, whose

content and composition has scenic qualities and implies a higher value. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy, but is representative of the *"Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low-lying landform",* a special quality of the SLA, which is afforded planning policy protection.

16.11.2.125 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of people engaged in recreation on the beach and local residents, who take in the view at their leisure. The aspect of the coastline at this point means that the viewpoint affords a direct view out to sea from the coastal edge which is focused more towards the north and northeast. At this location viewers are more liable to be influenced by development in the sea in this direction. Enclosure by built form that is slightly elevated by landform, to the east; and the presence of visual detractors within the adjoining settlement, limits receptor susceptibility. There is very little within the seascape that detracts from the quality of the view and the attention and interest of receptors is on the sea view.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.126 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.18** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 4 St Combs.

16.11.2.127 A **Low** magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.128 Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array and provide a visual precedent for them. Hywind Scotland will be visible within the same sector of the view, at a slightly longer range than the Offshore Array and the Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear slightly smaller in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.129 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 39.6 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline.

16.11.2.130 All seven WTGs within the Offshore Array will be partially visible. The upper towers and rotors of the WTGs will be visible above the sea skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.131 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline and will appear larger in vertical scale to those within the Hywind Scotland, while appearing smaller than the coastal landform partially enclosing the view.

16.11.2.132 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 7.8° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view.

16.11.2.133 The Offshore Array will be visible on the horizon and forming a feature on the periphery of a large, open seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. The Offshore Array is sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the greater part of the sea horizon and the view will be unchanged.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.134 Based on the combination of the **High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Low** magnitude of change, effects on the view arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array are assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate)** in EIA terms. Dunes, landform and coastal settlement will restrict the geographic extent of these effects to the coastline between Point of Whitelinks and Inzie Head. These effects will be direct, adverse long-term and reversible.

16.11.2.135 Moderate effects are assessed as **Not Significant** on receptors experiencing this view as they fall within the 'significant or not significant' area of the matrix (indicated in orange in **Table 16-9**) and their significance is subject to the assessor's professional judgement. The effect on receptors experiencing the view from St Combs (Viewpoint 4) are assessed as not significant primarily due to the magnitude of change factors evaluated, which is assessed as low at worst in optimum visibility conditions, the distance of the Proposed Development over 39.6 km from the viewpoint, the apparent scale of the Proposed Development WTGs at this distance and its narrow lateral extent in a panoramic sea view, their position beyond the sea skyline, their introduction as further elements that are already a feature in the baseline view out to sea.

Viewpoint 5 Rattray Head

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.136 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 5 Rattray Head are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.19a-d**.

16.11.2.137 The expansive, longer-range view takes in the North Sea with the Aberdeenshire coastline partially enclosing it. To the north, high coastal dunes are distinctive features on the low lying coastline that limit the view. Tall structures within St Fergus Gas Terminal are notable contrasting development features to the south within the backdrop of the coastal dunes. There is a predominantly horizontal emphasis to the view out to sea and along the expansive beaches and dunes, which have a high degree of perceived naturalness, albeit in the setting of coastal farmlands and development influences such as the infrastructure at St Fergus Gas Terminal and a number of visible onshore wind turbines and tall communications masts. The view is large-scale and the coastal sections of the view have a sense of remoteness, with the open expanse of sea prevailing backed by rolling dunes. Vessels may be visible within the expansive seascape with fishing boats and recreational vessels visible inshore.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.138 A **High** sensitivity rating has been attributed to Viewpoint 5, reflecting that the view has high value and that receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.139 **Value.** The viewpoint is not marked on OS mapping, however an informal public car park near the lighthouse cottages indicate it is visited by people for recreation. The viewpoint is within the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, which implies a higher value to the visible landscape and scenic qualities relating to the content and composition of the visible landscape. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy, but is representative of the *"Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low-lying landform"*, and "*Expansive beaches backed by rolling dunes"* with *"views from beaches [that] are typically directed out to sea or along the coast"* that are special qualities of the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, which are afforded planning policy protection. The seascape in the view is largely free of offshore development apart from Hywind Scotland and Rattray lighthouse which provides a focal point within the view and is recognised as a special quality of the SLA as a *'landmark feature along the coast'*. Landscape within the SLA provides the viewpoint setting and extends along the coastline to north and south, with its natural qualities and dunes contributing to the value of the view. A number of infrastructure developments in the panorama, including St Fergus Gast Terminal, tall communications masts and a scattering of onshore WTGs, influence the visual qualities experienced in the view and contrast with some of its other aforementioned perceptual qualities.

16.11.2.140 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of people engaged in recreation by walking along the beach or the coastal path (7LD.01.18). The viewpoint affords a direct, expansive view out to sea from the coastal edge, in which viewers are more liable to be influenced by development in the sea. To the north and south, the Aberdeenshire coastline stretch out along coastal edge of the seaward view. Artificial elements include

the Rattray Head lighthouse, the five WTGs comprising Hywind Scotland and sea going vessels, offshore; and St Fergus Gas Terminal, communications masts and WTGs, onshore. The presence of built element features including St Fergus Gast Terminal, tall communications masts, a scattering of onshore WTGs and the existing Hywind Scotland WTGs influence the visual amenity experienced and moderates susceptibility to change to further offshore WTG development, however the specific directional view of Rattray lighthouse as landmark feature is susceptible to changes in its seascape backdrop. Development influences out to sea are relatively few and are limited to Hywind Scotland's WTGs, offshore; and onshore development influences in the wider panorama, including taller structures within the St Fergus Gas Terminal, which are view relatively close to the shoreline in the coastal context.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.141 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.19** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 5 Rattray Head.

16.11.2.142 A **Medium-Low** magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.143 Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array and provide a visual precedent for them. Hywind Scotland will be visible within the same sector of the view, at a similar range to the Offshore Array, although the Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear slightly smaller in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.144 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 34.3 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond a broad seascape that is only interrupted by Rattray lighthouse.

16.11.2.145 The Offshore Array will be an additional new feature that is visible directly behind the landmark lighthouse, within the backdrop to it that forms a competing feature to the lighthouse. Beyond the lighthouse, the upper towers and rotors of all seven WTGs will be visible above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.146 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the seascape in the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline but is consistent with the inshore lighthouse, directly ahead and the more distant WTGs of Hywind Scotland, further south.

16.11.2.147 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 9° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the panoramic sea view and the open sea skyline. The Offshore Array will be isolated from the coastline and Hywind Scotland and will not appear to overlap with the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.148 The Offshore Array will appear clearly separated from the coastline and will be visible on the horizon, forming a feature on the periphery of a large, open seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. The Offshore Array is sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the greater portion of the panoramic view of the sea horizon will be retained. On balance, the magnitude of change to the view is assessed as medium-low.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.149 Based on the combination of the **High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Medium-Low** magnitude of change, the significance of effect arising from the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate)** in EIA

terms, direct, long-term and reversible. This effect will be limited in geographic extent to the vicinity of the viewpoint at Rattray Head and the nearby tops of the dunes, due to the projection of the coastline at this point and the visual containment provided amongst the lower lying areas within the dunes. It is considered that even for high sensitivity receptors, the level of effect is limited by the narrow extent of the Offshore Array, the low number of constituent WTGs and visibility of Hywind Scotland Pilot Park, whose WTGs will appear similar in form and number, and at a broadly similar range to those within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.150 Moderate effects are assessed as **Not Significant** on receptors experiencing this view as they fall within the 'significant or not significant' area of the matrix (indicated in orange in **Table 16-9**) and their significance is subject to the assessor's professional judgement. The effect on receptors experiencing the view from Rattray Head (Viewpoint 5) are assessed as not significant primarily due to the magnitude of change factors evaluated, which is assessed as medium-low at worst in optimum visibility conditions, the distance of the Proposed Development over 34.3 km from the viewpoint, the apparent scale of the Proposed Development WTGs at this distance and its narrow lateral extent in a panoramic sea view, their position beyond the sea skyline, their introduction as further elements that are already a feature in the baseline view out to sea and the moderating influence of large scale infrastructure development features in the coastal context.

Viewpoint 6 Scotstown Head

Baseline Characteristics and Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.151 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 6 Scotstown Head are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations**, **Figure 16.20a-e**.

16.11.2.152 This viewpoint is located on the slight headland at the southern end of Scotstown Beach, approximately 600 m from the path to the car park, through the dunes backing the beach. The expansive, longer-range view takes in the North Sea with the Aberdeenshire coastline partially enclosing it. To the north, the low lying coastline terminates at Rattray head. Marram grass covered dunes backing the broad sandy beach limits the view inland. Tall structures within St Fergus Gas Terminal and onshore WTGs further inland are notable contrasting features within the predominantly horizontal landscape of the viewpoints setting. To the south, sand dunes backing the beach screen the view along the coastline with Peterhead Power Station and other vertical structures further inland. At times, vessels may be visible towards the sea horizon with fishing boats and recreational vessels visible inshore.

16.11.2.153 Viewpoint 6 Scotstown Head has been attributed a **High** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has medium-high value and that receptors experiencing the view have a high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.154 **Value.** This viewpoint lies at a recreational location served by a car park some 600 m away. It is not an OS marked viewpoint but a specific viewpoint with facilities for visitors limited to the car park and associated picnic area. The viewpoint lies within the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, which implies a higher value to the visible landscape and has scenic qualities relating to the content and composition of the visible landscape. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy but is representative of the *"Overriding horizontal composition",* and *"Expansive beaches backed by rolling dunes"* with *"views from beaches [that] are typically directed out to sea or along the coast"* that are special qualities of the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, which are afforded planning policy protection. The seascape in view is largely free of offshore development apart from Hywind Scotland. The setting of the viewpoint setting encompasses landscape within the SLA that extends along the coastline to north and south. The natural qualities and large dunes of the coastline contributes to the value of the view. St Fergus Gast Terminal within this setting influences the scene and diminishes its value.

16.11.2.155 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of people engaged in recreation by walking along the beach or the coastal core path (7LD.01.18).

16.11.2.156 The sea view is large-scale, and appears remote, with the open expanse of sea prevailing. Artificial elements include the Rattray Head lighthouse, St Fergus Gas Terminal, Peterhead Power Station and other vertical structures further inland, onshore; and sea going vessels, offshore.

16.11.2.157 The viewpoint affords a direct, expansive view out to sea from the coastal edge, in which viewers are more liable to be influenced by development in the sea. To the north and south, the coastline backs the wide open view that is focused on the open seascape. While the gas terminal is quite prominent in views along the coastline, the influence of development is not sufficient to markedly lower receptor susceptibility.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.158 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.20** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 6 Scotstown Head.

16.11.2.159 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Medium-Low**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.160 Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array and provide a visual precedent for them. Hywind Scotland will be visible within the same sector of the view, at a similar range to the Offshore Array and the Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear similar in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.161 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 34.5 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond a broad swathe of seascape.

16.11.2.162 The upper towers and rotors of all seven WTGs will be visible above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.163 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the seascape in the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline but will be similar to the more distant WTGs of Hywind Scotland. These will appear perceptibly smaller in vertical scale and quite separate from the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.164 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 8.7° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view and the open sea skyline. The Offshore Array will lie on the horizon and isolated from the protruding coastline.

16.11.2.165 The Offshore Array will generally be seen beyond the horizon, viewed as a 'horizon development' beyond a large, open seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. It will appear clearly separated from the long coastline of sandy beaches. The Offshore Array is sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the panoramic views to the sea horizon will largely be retained. The majority of the Offshore Array will be seen as rotors visible above horizon.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.166 Based on the combination of the **High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Medium-Low** magnitude of change, the significance of effect arising from the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate)** in EIA

terms, direct, long-term and reversible. This geographic extent of the effect will be limited to the vicinity of the viewpoint, due to the projection of the coastline at this point. It is considered that the moderate effect of the Offshore Array will be not significant because of the contained extent of the Offshore Array, the small number of its constituent WTGs and the existing presence of Hywind Scotland. This presence establishes offshore windfarm development as characteristic of this view, and both developments will be similar in appearance; vertical scale, due to distance from the shoreline; and number of constituent WTGs.

16.11.2.167 Moderate effects are assessed as **Not Significant** on receptors experiencing this view as they fall within the 'significant or not significant' area of the matrix (indicated in orange in **Table 16-9**) and their significance is subject to the assessor's professional judgement. The effect on receptors experiencing the view from Scotstown Head (Viewpoint 6) are assessed as not significant primarily due to the magnitude of change factors evaluated, which is assessed as medium-low at worst in optimum visibility conditions, the distance of the Proposed Development over 34.5 km from the viewpoint, the apparent scale of the Proposed Development WTGs at this distance and its narrow lateral extent in a panoramic sea view, their position beyond the sea skyline, their introduction as further elements that are already a feature in the baseline view out to sea and the moderating influence of large scale infrastructure development features in the coastal context.

Viewpoint 7 Peterhead (Gadle Braes)

Baseline Characteristics and Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.168 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 7 Peterhead (Gadle Braes) are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.21a-d**.

16.11.2.169 The expansive, longer-range view takes in the North Sea with the coastline enclosing it to the north. This coastline is low lying with sandy beaches and marram covered dunes behind. St Fergus Gas Terminal is a notable industrial element within the largely natural coastline to the north with incongruous lattice towers and gas flares. Rattray Head lighthouse is a perceptible vertical element in the distance, off the coast. Housing behind the viewpoint screens the view inland and along the coastline to the east. The view is large-scale and influenced by the urban location. Artificial elements are commonplace on land with relatively scarce offshore elements mainly comprising sea going vessels.

16.11.2.170 Viewpoint 7 has been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has medium value and that receptors experiencing the view have a medium susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.171 **Value.** This viewpoint is not an OS marked viewpoint but is a specific viewpoint on the promenade following the northern edge of Peterhead with benches facing the sea provided for visitors, with housing behind that looks directly over the sea. While the viewpoint lies outside the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, it overlooks landscape within the SLA implying a higher value to parts of the visible landscape in the view, however other parts of the view fall within urban areas of Peterhead, which are outside the SLA and more influenced by urban development. The urban character of the viewpoint's setting limits the visual qualities experienced in part of the view.

16.11.2.172 **Susceptibility.** This viewpoint is located on the northern edge coastline of Peterhead and is representative of the view seen by recreational users of the promenade and core path (7LD.01.20) along the coast; and residents of properties on Peterhead's coastal edge, on the road of Gadle Braes.

16.11.2.173 The viewpoint affords a direct, expansive view out to sea from the coastal edge, in which viewers are more liable to be influenced by development in the sea. Coastline enclosing the view north, provides interest

beyond the wide seascape. Receptor susceptibility at this location is limited by artificial elements including St Fergus Gas Terminal, development within Peterhead, and sea going vessels offshore. The features of interest in the view are mainly to the north across the estuary to the dunes that extend northwards along the coast.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.174 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.21** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 7 Peterhead (Gadle Braes).

16.11.2.175 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Medium-Low**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.176 Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array and provide a visual precedent for them. Hywind Scotland will be visible within the same sector of the view, at a slightly longer range than the Offshore Array and the Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear similar in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.177 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 34.6 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond a broad swathe of seascape.

16.11.2.178 The upper towers and rotors of all seven WTGs will be visible above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.179 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the seascape in the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline, and while the WTGs will appear slightly greater than those of Hywind Scotland, they will be no greater in vertical scale than landform to the north and built form to the south.

16.11.2.180 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 8.5° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view and the open sea skyline. The Offshore Array will be isolated from the coastline and from Hywind Scotland on the horizon.

16.11.2.181 The Offshore Array will be visible on the horizon and forming a feature on the periphery of a large, open seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. It will appear clearly separated from the mainland coast, and Hywind Scotland. The Offshore Array is sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the panoramic views to the sea north of the Offshore Array will be retained. The majority of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be seen as rotors visible above horizon.

16.11.2.182 The coastal aspect at this location is more northeasterly and the main focus in views from this location is on the coastline beyond the estuary of the River Ugie. At this location, the coastline directly addresses the seascape northeast of Peterhead while the Offshore Array will lie towards the east and will lie more towards the periphery of the main views from this section of coastline.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.183 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Medium-Low** magnitude of change, the effect of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate)** in EIA terms, direct, long-term and reversible. The geographic extent of this effect will be observable from Peterhead's northeast facing coastline along Gadle Braes near the mouth of the River Ugie. While the effect of the Offshore Array

at Viewpoint 7 will be **Moderate**, this effect is not considered significant as the Offshore Array will appear within the context of Peterhead and Hywind Scotland.

16.11.2.184 Moderate effects are assessed as **Not Significant** on receptors experiencing this view as they fall within the 'significant or not significant' area of the matrix (indicated in orange in **Table 16-9**) and their significance is subject to the assessor's professional judgement. The effect on receptors experiencing the view from Peterhead (Gable Braes) (Viewpoint 7) are assessed as not significant primarily due to the magnitude of change factors evaluated, which is assessed as medium-low at worst in optimum visibility conditions, the distance of the Proposed Development over 34.6 km from the viewpoint, the apparent scale of the Proposed Development WTGs at this distance and its narrow lateral extent in a panoramic sea view, their position beyond the sea skyline, their introduction as further elements that are already a feature in the baseline view out to sea and the moderating influence of urban development features in the coastal context.

Viewpoint 8 Peterhead Bay (South Road)

Baseline Characteristics and Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.185 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 8 Peterhead (South Road) are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.22a-d**.

16.11.2.186 Viewpoint 8 has been attributed a **Medium** sensitivity, reflecting that the view has low value and that receptors experiencing the view have a medium susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.187 **Value.** The viewpoint is not marked on OS mapping but is a representative viewpoint located on the edge of residential development overlooking Peterhead Bay. The viewpoint lies outside the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. Lack of coverage by this designation implies a lower value to the immediately surrounding landscape. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy and development and harbour activity define much of the view. The value of the view is reduced as it encompasses parts of Peterhead associated with the harbour. Urban development, large scale industrial structures including warehouses beside the harbour, vessels in the harbour and associated activity limits the scenic quality of the view and its value. Similarly, breakwaters enclosing the harbour and an artificial shoreline detracts from the value.

16.11.2.188 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of residents of South Road and recreational visitors to the beach, which includes guests of the caravan park, beach goers and users of the public open space behind, who take in the view at their leisure. The viewpoint is slightly elevated above sea level, on a small bank behind the beach and overlooks Peterhead Bay and the adjoining harbour. Breakwaters containing the bay weaken the association with the open sea beyond. The viewpoint's setting is urban and the coastal view is enclosed by urban form within Peterhead. At times, vessels within or approaching / leaving the harbour or further out within the open sea will be present in the view. The view is framed and longer-range, with the WTGs within Hywind Scotland directly ahead on the sea horizon. Although susceptibility is experienced by residents and some visitors to the harbour, the presence of existing built elements influences reduce susceptibility to change, including major port infrastructure and existing offshore WTGs on the sea skyline.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.189 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.22** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 8 Peterhead Bay (South Road).

16.11.2.190 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.191 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 35.7 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline.

16.11.2.192 Larger dockside structures will limit visibility of the WTGs within the Offshore Array to the blade tips of five WTGs. The upper towers and rotors of two WTGs will be visible above the sea skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. Lighting towers, a chimney, rooftop structures and structures on vessels form numerous intrusions on the skyline that will appear taller than the WTGs, and amongst which the WTGs will appear less noticeable. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.193 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will appear consistent with dockside structures, particularly lighting columns. The WTGs will appear no larger in vertical scale than the largest buildings within the Peterhead, and similar to those within the Hywind Scotland.

16.11.2.194 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 8.5° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view. Where visible, the Offshore Array will be glimpsed between and beyond harbourside buildings and structures, appearing in the context of the operational Hywind Scotland.

16.11.2.195 The Offshore Array will be glimpsed beyond partially screening built form within Peterhead, on the horizon and on the periphery of the open seascape beyond the enclosed waters of the bay, the town and the open sea. Limited visibility of the WTGs within the Offshore Array, and their distant, small scale appearance, means that the greater part of the view will be unchanged.

16.11.2.196 Peterhead and in particular, its harbour, lies in the foreground and will provide the context for the Offshore Array. Taller and larger scale structures associated with the harbour, harbourside activity and the presence and activity of vessels entering and leaving the port will occupy the foreground with the Offshore Array in the backdrop to the adjoining seascape.

16.11.2.197 The view of the existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland is largely unimpeded and as they are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array, they provide a visual precedent to the WTGs within the Offshore Array. Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland will be visible within the same sector of the view, at a slightly longer range than the Offshore Array. The Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear similar in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.198 Based on the combination of the medium sensitivity of receptors at the viewpoint and low magnitude of change, the significance of effect arising from the Offshore Array is **Not Significant (Minor)** in EIA terms, neutral, indirect, long-term and reversible. The shape of the bay, adjoining buildings within the town and rising landform to the south will restrict the geographic extent of this effect to the bay's coastline and adjoining areas where these elements allow visibility of the Offshore Array.

Viewpoint 9 Reform Tower, Peterhead

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.199 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.23a-d** shows the location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 9 Reform Tower, Peterhead, which is representative of people engaged in recreation by walking within the surrounding area of Meet Hill.

16.11.2.200 The viewpoint is elevated on Meet Hill, a slight hillock within the south of Peterhead, southeast of the harbour and east of the A982. It is located within open ground at the base of the tower, which is not accessible to the public. The viewpoint overlooks suburban areas within the south of the town, at Burnhaven and Invernettie; His Majesty's Prison and Young Offenders Institution (HMP & YOI) Grampian on the coastline; and looks northeast to the North Sea and the Offshore Array. The view from the grassy hillock takes in the compact Peterhead Bay with the curve of the sandy Peterhead Beach sweeping round from South Bay Harbour and the adjoining marina to the northern harbour. Sea vessels are often moored at the docks or may be visible within the expansive seascape and there is considerable associated activity within the view. The bay is enclosed by breakwaters. Large scale buildings and structures associated with the harbour contrast with the finer grain and density of surrounding urban form to the north and south of the bay. On a slightly rounded headland, this urban form defines the northern skyline. To the south, beyond Invernettie, large buildings within the Score Europe site, and Sandford Bay, Peterhead Power station is a large scale industrialising influence on the view. This includes a large water tank and tall chimneys.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.201 Viewpoint 9 has been attributed a **Medium** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has medium value and that receptors experiencing the view have a medium susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.202 **Value.** This viewpoint is not an OS marked viewpoint but a specific viewpoint at a historic structure and tourist attraction, without facilities provided for tourist visitors. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy. The viewpoint lies outside the SLA and overlooks Peterhead, its harbour and the sea. Lack of coverage by this designation implies a lower value to the immediate surrounds and the urban setting.

16.11.2.203 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of visitors to the tower and recreational visitors to the hill.

16.11.2.204 The viewpoint affords a wide view out to sea over intervening urban form from an elevated location, in which viewers are less liable to be influenced by development in the sea. The wider panorama includes urban form, to the north; the harbour, related activity including sea going vessels and Hywind Scotland, to the east; and large-scale industrial development, to the east and south. These artificial elements strongly influence the view and lower receptor susceptibility.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.205 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.23** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 9 Reform Tower, Peterhead.

16.11.2.206 A **Low** magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.207 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, (approximately) 36.1 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond a broad swathe of seascape.

16.11.2.208 The upper towers and rotors of all seven WTGs will be visible above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing south southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.209 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the seascape in the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline.

16.11.2.210 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 8.3° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view and the open sea skyline. The Offshore Array will be isolated from the coastline and Hywind Scotland, neither of which will appear to overlap with the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.211 The Offshore Array will generally be seen beyond the horizon, viewed as a 'horizon development' beyond a large, partially enclosed seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. It will appear clearly separated from the coastline. The Offshore Array is sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the panoramic views to the sea north and south of the OAA will be retained. The majority of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be seen as rotors visible above the horizon.

16.11.2.212 The Offshore Array will be seen beyond the Peterhead coastline, within the context of the town and the harbour. Larger scale structures associated with the harbour, harbourside activity and the presence and activity of vessels entering and leaving the port will occupy the foreground with the Offshore Array in the backdrop to the adjoining seascape.

16.11.2.213 Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland are of similar appearance to those and provide a visual precedent for those within the Offshore Array, while Peterhead Power Station provides a prominent onshore element of energy infrastructure. The view of the existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland is largely unimpeded and they will be visible within the same sector of the view, at a slightly longer range than the Offshore Array. The Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear similar in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.214 Based on the combination of the **Medium** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Low** magnitude of change, the effect on the view arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Minor)** in EIA terms. This neutral, direct, long-term and reversible effect will be observable from a limited geographic area of open space around the top of Meet Hill near the Reform Tower and is not representative of the effects from the wider lower lying areas of Peterhead that tend to have more contained views at lower elevation and within the built environment.

Viewpoint 10 Boddam

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.215 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 10 Boddam are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.23a-d**, which is representative of residents of Boddam.

16.11.2.216 This viewpoint lies on the slightly elevated coastline of Boddam, just south of the harbour within an area of open grass. The coastal village backs the viewpoint. Overlooking the skerrie of Meikle Mackie, the view looks northeast to an expansive horizon of the open North Sea. To the north, beyond Sandford Bay, the coastline of Peterhead ending at South Head encloses the view. The low lying coastline is predominantly urban with larger scale buildings, within HMP & YOI Grampian or associated with the harbour, noticeably taller on the generally low skyline. Cranes and other structure within the dockside pierce the skyline in places. To the south, the rocky coastline extends to form Buchan Ness which curtails views along the coast. The distinctive Buchan Ness Lighthouse is a prominent vertical structure within the short range view. Smaller associated buildings lie on the headland which otherwise appears largely undeveloped.

16.11.2.217 The viewpoint affords a wide view out to sea over the rocky coastline, in which viewers are liable to be influenced by development in the sea. The wider panorama includes urban development, a small harbour at Boddam, structures and activity related to the harbour within Peterhead, to the north, and the prominent lighthouse, nearby and to the south. These coastal elements within the setting of the viewpoint and the offshore elements of vessels and WTGs within Hywind Scotland provide a strong contrast to the rocky coastal

foreground and seascape in the view. The strong influence of these artificial elements lowers receptor susceptibility. The focus of the view is out to sea but urban development to the north draws attention along the coastline.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.218 Viewpoint 10 has been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has medium value and that receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.219 **Value.** This is not an OS marked viewpoint nor a viewpoint with facilities for tourist visitors, but a location on the seaward edge of the settlement near its small harbour. The viewpoint lies at the northern tip of the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA but has limited visibility of the landscape within the SLA, due to screening by built form. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy and the influence of urban development means it is little representative of the special qualities of the SLA. These factors reduce the value of the visible landscape implied by coverage by the designation. Views out to sea are likely to be valued by local residents.

16.11.2.220 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of residents of properties on the seaward edge of Boddam and people engaged in recreation by walking along the harbourside and the surrounding area.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.221 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.24** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 10 Boddam.

16.11.2.222 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.223 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 36 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond a broad expanse of open sea.

16.11.2.224 The upper towers and rotors of all seven WTGs will be visible above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.225 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the seascape in the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline.

16.11.2.226 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 8.7° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view and the open sea skyline. The Offshore Array will be isolated from the coastline, offshore skerries and Hywind Scotland, which will not appear to overlap any WTGs within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.227 The Offshore Array will generally be seen beyond the horizon, viewed as a 'horizon development' beyond a large, partially enclosed seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. It will appear clearly separated from the coastline. The Offshore Array is sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the panoramic views to the sea north and south of the OAA will be retained. The majority of the Offshore Array will be seen as rotors visible above horizon.

16.11.2.228 The view of the existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland is unimpeded and as they are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array, they provide a visual precedent to the WTGs within the Offshore Array.

Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland will be visible within the same sector of the view to and at a slightly longer range than the Offshore Array. The Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear similar in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.229 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Low** magnitude of change, the effect on the view arising from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** in EIA terms. The direct, long-term and reversible effect will be observable from the section of coastline between Salthouse Head and South Castle Haven. Buildings and structures within and around Peterhead and Boddam restrict the geographic extent of this effect to the coastline of these areas with landform largely containing it within the immediate hinterland.

Viewpoint 11 Stirling Hill

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.230 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 11 Stirling Hill are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.25a-d**.

16.11.2.231 The viewpoint looks northeast over Boddam and the coastline to the North Sea. The sea horizon extends across much of the view. At times, distant shipping and fishing boats and recreational vessels inshore may be visible in the expansive seascape. Looking north, Peterhead lies beyond gently undulating farmland. Between Peterhead and Boddam, Peterhead Power Station is a prominent, bulky feature on the coastline. Pylons with overhead cables from the Power Plant stretch across the view north and head inland. The relatively low-lying area is characterised by urban form with larger development that is industrial in nature within the area of the harbour; and within the Whitehill Industrial Estate, within the southwest of the town.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.232 Viewpoint 11 has been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has medium value and that the receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.233 **Value.** This viewpoint is located on a minor road leading to Lendrum Terrace on the northern slope of Stirling Hill. It is located slightly inland and overlooks the coast. The viewpoint is not marked on OS mapping nor are there facilities for tourists to take in the view, beyond a bench. The viewpoint lies outside the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA but only partially overlooks coastal landscape within the SLA. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy and the view is not particularly representative of the special qualities of the SLA. The view is primarily influenced by urban development, within Boddam and Peterhead, and Peterhead Power Station, which forms a large scale industrial element in the view with its large cooling towers prominent. These detract from the content and composition of the visible landscape and limits the scenic value implied by the SLA designation.

16.11.2.234 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of receptors sitting on the provided bench; residents of the houses on Lendrum Terrace and people engaged in recreation by walking along the nearby core path (202.01).

16.11.2.235 The viewpoint affords a wide view out to sea over the Boddam, in which viewers are liable to be influenced by development in the sea. The wider panorama includes urban form including larger buildings and activity related to the harbour within Peterhead; power infrastructure, including pylons; and Peterhead Power Station. In the seascape are sea going vessels and Hywind Scotland. The presence of these artificial features

influences the visual amenity experienced and moderates the susceptibility of changes associated with the development out to sea, in the context of these prominent foreground influences.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.236 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.25** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 11 Stirling Hill.

16.11.2.237 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.238 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 37.2 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond the coastline and an expansive seascape.

16.11.2.239 The upper towers and rotors of all seven WTGs will be visible above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.240 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the seascape in the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline. The WTGs within the Offshore Array will be similar in vertical scale compared to those at Hywind Scotland. Structures comprising Peterhead Power Station, particularly its chimney; and Boddam Lighthouse will appear much greater in vertical scale.

16.11.2.241 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 8.3° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view and the open sea skyline. The Offshore Array will be isolated from the coastline and Hywind Scotland, which will not appear to overlap with any WTGs within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.242 The Offshore Array will appear clearly separated from the coastline and sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the panoramic views to the sea north and south of the Offshore Array will be retained. The majority of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be seen as rotors visible above horizon.

16.11.2.243 The view of the existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland is unimpeded and as they are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array, they provide a visual precedent to the WTGs within the Offshore Array. Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland will be visible within the same sector of the view to and at a slightly longer range than the Offshore Array. The Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear similar in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.244 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Low** magnitude of change, the effect on the view arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** in EIA terms. The direct, long-term and reversible effect will be observable from the northern and eastern slopes of the higher ground of Stirling Hill that provide an open outlook due to their elevation.

Viewpoint 12 Bullers of Buchan

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.245 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 12 Bullers of Buchan are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.26a-d**.

16.11.2.246 The viewpoint lies on the coastline above the Bullers of Buchan's 'pot', an almost circular 30 m deep chasm formed by a collapsed sea cave. It is located on a clifftop core path running broadly northeast, along the strongly indented coastline. The viewpoint overlooks the dramatic cliffs that characterise this coastline and looks northeast to a wide sea horizon. The view is far-ranging. To the north and south the strongly indented coastline encloses the wide view of the North Sea. At times, distant shipping and fishing boats and recreational vessels inshore may be visible. Grass-covered clifftops back the near vertical sea cliffs, abruptly turning into the pastoral farmland of the immediate hinterland. While wire sheep fencing enclosing the farmland is discernible, other artificial landscape elements in view is largely limited to sporadic settlement comprising isolated individual properties and farmsteads. Inland, to the west and southwest, low hills enclose less far ranging views. A discernible pattern of farmland and plantation forestry covers the hills.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.247 Viewpoint 12 has been attributed a **High** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has high value and the receptors experiencing the view have a high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.248 **Value.** While not an OS marked viewpoint, this viewpoint is a specific viewpoint whose intrinsic appeal is the distinctive coastal feature of the collapsed sea arch and its coastal setting. Facilities for tourist visitors include a public car park, some 200 m from the viewpoint and off the A975. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy, however the landscape within view is representative of the "Rugged and dramatic cliffs to the south of Boddam, with intricate landforms such as the Bullers of Buchan" that are a special quality of the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA and which are afforded planning policy protection. The viewpoint lies within the SLA, which implies a higher value to the visible landscape and has scenic qualities relating to the content and composition of the visible landscape.

16.11.2.249 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of people engaged in recreation by walking along the clifftop core path (7LD.01.25). It is a popular visitor location with a car park and short walk to the Bullers of Buchan and is of particular interest to birdwatchers.

16.11.2.250 The viewpoint affords a direct view out to sea from the coastal edge, in which viewers are more liable to be influenced by development in the sea. The dramatic coastline of cliffs and other erosion features in the immediate foreground form notable features of interest in the view, which is less focused on the open seascape as a result. There is a sense of remoteness and risk visiting this rugged, steep coastline at Bullers of Buchan associated with the steep cliffs and exposure. Viewers experience a high level of visual amenity at the location and the influence of artificial landscape elements is limited to sea-going vessels and the distant influence of Hywind Scotland to the northeast. The very limited presence of these built elements and the natural, ruggedness of the coastline raises receptor susceptibility.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.251 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.26** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 12 Bullers of Buchan.

16.11.2.252 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.253 The Offshore Array will form an additional artificial feature in the seascape that will contrast with the rugged cliffs and unusual feature of the Bullers of Buchan from which perceptions of remoteness, naturalness and drama derive. The Offshore Array will relate to the winds and weather conditions at sea which inform this section of coastline's sense of exposure.

16.11.2.254 From Bullers of Buchan, the view of existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland is unimpeded and as they are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array, they provide a visual precedent to the WTGs within the Offshore Array. Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland will be visible within the same sector of the view to and at a slightly longer range than the Offshore Array. Hywind Scotland's WTGs will appear similar in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.255 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 40.3 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond a broad swathe of largely uninterrupted seascape.

16.11.2.256 The upper towers and rotors of all seven WTGs will be visible above the skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.257 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the seascape in the view. These will appear lower than the coastal landform but perceptibly taller than the more distant Hywind Scotland. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline.

16.11.2.258 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 7.8° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view and the open sea skyline. The Offshore Array will be isolated from the coastline which will not appear to overlap any WTGs within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.259 The Offshore Array will generally be seen beyond the horizon, viewed as a 'horizon development' beyond a large, partially enclosed seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. It will appear clearly separated from the coastline. The Offshore Array is sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the panoramic views to the sea north and south of the Offshore Array will be retained. The majority of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be seen as rotors visible above horizon.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.260 Based on the combination of the **High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Low** magnitude of change, the effect on the view arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate)** in EIA terms. The direct, long-term and reversible effect will be observable from similar clifftop locations between Long Haven and Twa Havens.

16.11.2.261 Moderate effects are assessed as **Not Significant** on receptors experiencing this view as they fall within the 'significant or not significant' area of the matrix (indicated in orange in **Table 16-9**) and their significance is subject to the assessor's professional judgement. The moderate effect of the Offshore Array assessed at Viewpoint 12 is considered not significant as the WTGs within the Offshore Array will appear as relatively small features within the expansive view, that will be similar in form, scale, number of constituent WTGs and view range in comparison to those of the operational Hywind Scotland. The dramatic cliffs along the coastline to the north will provide greater interest at short range with greater vertical scale against which the Offshore Array will appear relatively small. The Offshore Array will also relate to perceived qualities of exposure at the viewpoint and will not affect the physical coastline.

Viewpoint 13 Slains Castle

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.262 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 13 Slains Castle are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.27a-d**. This viewpoint is located near the castle which is the main

attraction within the view and elevated above the rocky coastline and open North Sea which provides the wider setting of the castle. The panoramic view overlooks the largely undeveloped coastline and associated seascape which contains Hywind Scotland on the open sea horizon, whose WTGs are perceptible in the far distance beyond the coastline to the south. Shipping provides distant point features within the seascape with fishing boats and recreational vessels having a less frequent presence, inshore.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.263 Viewpoint 13 has been attributed a **High** sensitivity, reflecting that the view has high value and the receptors experiencing the view have a high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.264 **Value.** The viewpoint is not marked on OS mapping but is a specific viewpoint located at the popular landmark of Slains Castle. The viewpoint lies within the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, within a coastal setting with little development that is generally representative of the SLA's character. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy and is less representative of the SLA's *"Rugged and dramatic cliffs to the south of Boddam, with intricate landforms such as the Bullers of Buchan"* and *"Panoramic views out to sea from cliff tops and open beaches"* which are afforded planning policy protection as a special quality of the SLA. The content and composition of the visible part of the SLA has scenic qualities that, alongside the castle's association with Bram Stoker's Dracula, increases the value of this view. The castle is a well-known tourist attraction served by two car parks approximately 1 km to the north and 1 km to the west, that indicates the number of its visitors who value the setting of the castle.

16.11.2.265 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of visitors to the castle, who take in the view at their leisure. Viewers are likely to be focused on the experience of a high level of visual amenity at the location due to the visual setting of Slains Castle and its commanding position overlooking the cliffs and open seascape.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.266 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.27** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 13 Slains Castle.

16.11.2.267 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.268 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 42.2 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline.

16.11.2.269 All seven WTGs within the Offshore Array will be partially visible. The upper towers and rotors of the WTGs will be visible above the sea skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.270 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline and will appear slightly greater in vertical scale to those within the Hywind Scotland.

16.11.2.271 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 7.6° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view. The Offshore Array will be isolated from the coastline and Hywind Scotland. The Offshore Array will extend over a wider extent of the view than the WTGs within Hywind Scotland.

16.11.2.272 The Offshore Array will generally be seen beyond the horizon, viewed as a 'horizon development' beyond a large, partially enclosed seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. The Offshore Array is

sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the greater part of the panoramic sea view will be retained.

16.11.2.273 The view of the existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland is unimpeded and as they are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array, they provide a visual precedent to the WTGs within the Offshore Array. Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland will be visible within the same sector of the view to and at a slightly longer range than the Offshore Array. The Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear similar in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.274 Based on the combination of the **High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Low** magnitude of change, the effect on the view arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate)** in EIA terms. The direct, long-term and reversible effect will be observable from much of the coastline between Twa Havens and The Donnons, particularly where land projects into the sea.

16.11.2.275 Moderate effects are assessed as **Not Significant** on receptors experiencing this view as they fall within the 'significant or not significant' area of the matrix (indicated in orange in **Table 16-9**) and their significance is subject to the assessor's professional judgement. The effect on receptors experiencing the view from Slains Castle (Viewpoint 13) are assessed as not significant primarily due to the magnitude of change factors evaluated, which is assessed as low at worst in optimum visibility conditions, the distance of the Proposed Development over 42.2 km from the viewpoint, the apparent scale of the Proposed Development WTGs at this distance and its narrow lateral extent in a panoramic sea view, their position beyond the sea skyline, their introduction as further elements that are already a feature in the baseline view out to sea.

Viewpoint 14 Cruden Bay (East Sandend)

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.276 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 14 Cruden Bay (East Sandend) are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.28a-d**. This viewpoint is located on the approach to the main settlement, East Sandend, where residential properties overlook Cruden Bay. The bay partially encloses the view with the open sea beyond and to the east and is the main focal point in the wider panorama which also encompasses farmland to the west and open sea to the east, with Slains Castle also forming a focal point across the bay. The view looks northeast to the OAA, 45.6 km away from the viewpoint. The wide view overlooks the settled coastline including Slains Castle and the associated seascape which contains Hywind Scotland on the open sea horizon. At times distant sea-going vessels may be visible.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.277 A **Medium-High** sensitivity rating has been attributed to Viewpoint 14, reflecting that the view has medium-high value and the receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.278 **Value.** The viewpoint is not marked on OS mapping but is a specific viewpoint located on the minor road to the village of Whinnyfold on the southern side of Cruden Bay. The viewpoint lies within the SLA, within a coastal setting with isolated settlement in the immediate foreground and at the far end of Cruden Bay, within the village of Cruden Bay. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy but is representative of the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA's *"Panoramic views out to sea from cliff tops and open beaches"*, which is afforded planning policy protection as a special quality of the SLA. The content and composition of the visible part of the SLA has scenic qualities that are consistent with the higher value implied by this

designation. Slains Castle sits in a commanding position on the cliffs to the north of Cruden Bay and forms a valued feature in the view.

16.11.2.279 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of local residents on Whinnyfold Road, whose properties tend to be orientated towards the sea and take in the view.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.280 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.28** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 14 Cruden Bay (East Sandend).

16.11.2.281 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.282 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 45.6 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline.

16.11.2.283 All seven WTGs within the Offshore Array will be partially visible. The upper towers and rotors of the WTGs will be visible above the sea skyline, with the lower parts of the towers and semi-submersible platforms hidden by the intervening horizon. The rotor blades are likely to appear oblique / side on to the viewer when operating during the prevailing southwesterly wind direction.

16.11.2.284 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the view. The vertical appearance of the WTGs will contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline, but the WTGs will appear similar in vertical scale to those within the Hywind Scotland and the overall height of the coastal landform.

16.11.2.285 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 6.9° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view. The Offshore Array will be isolated from the coastline and Hywind Scotland. The Offshore Array will extend over a wider extent of the view than the WTGs within Hywind Scotland.

16.11.2.286 The Offshore Array will generally be seen beyond the horizon, viewed as a 'horizon development' beyond a large, partially enclosed seascape, rather than being viewed 'within' this seascape. The Offshore Array is sufficiently distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that the greater part of the panoramic sea view will be retained.

16.11.2.287 The view of the existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland is unimpeded and as they are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array, they provide a visual precedent to the WTGs within the Offshore Array. Existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland will be visible within the same sector of the view to and at a slightly longer range than the Offshore Array. The Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear similar in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.288 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Low** magnitude of change, the effect on the view arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** in EIA terms. The aspect of the coastline and the Bay of Cruden will limit the geographic extent of the direct, long-term and reversible effect to the section of coastline comprising the southern end of the bay south to The Skerries and the hinterland backing this section.

Viewpoint 15 Forvie National Nature Reserve

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.289 The viewpoint is located south of Collieston, on a coastal path running broadly northeast along and slightly set back from the indented coastline that stretches from Cruden Bay south to Rockend. The surrounding landscape comprises uncultivated grass moorland forming habitats within Forvie NNR, with little settlement. The viewpoint overlooks the rocky coastline that characterises this coastline and looks east to an expansive horizon of open sea. The sea view is far-ranging, while views along the coast are less far-ranging, to the south; and shorter-range, to the north. The strongly indented coastline, at Collieston and St Catherine's Dub to the north; and Hackley Head / Forvie Ness, to the south, encloses the wide view of the North Sea. Settlement within Collieston, on a slight rise, defines part of the northern skyline. While this appears largely absent to the south, the broad sandy sweep of the coastline south of Rockend culminates at Aberdeen and the dense urban form of the city, in the far distance. Girdle Ness lighthouse is perceptible at the apparent termination of the land. Artificial elements in the seascape are relatively scarce and limited to offshore WTGs within the European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre (EOWDC) (also known as Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm), off the coast at Aberdeen, and sea-going vessels.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.290 The location and baseline panorama from Viewpoint 15 Forvie NNR are shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.29a-d**.

16.11.2.291 Viewpoint 15 has been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating, reflecting that the view has medium-high value and the receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to change, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.292 **Value.** The viewpoint is located on a clifftop core path (7LD.01.31) that provides dynamic views of the seascape rather than an OS marked viewpoint, or a specific viewpoint with facilities for tourist visitors. The viewpoint is within the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, which implies a higher value to the visible landscape and has scenic qualities relating to the content and composition of the visible landscape. The view itself is not afforded protection in planning policy, however the view is representative of the *"Panoramic views out to sea from cliff tops and open beaches."* Of the SLA's special qualities, which are afforded planning policy protection. The view also encompasses landscape within Forvie NNR, indicating its importance for nature conservation.

16.11.2.293 **Susceptibility.** The viewpoint is representative of people engaged in recreation by walking along the coastal core path (7LD.01.31) and visitors to Forvie NNR. The viewpoint affords a direct, expansive view out to sea from the coastal edge, in which viewers are more liable to be influenced by development in the sea. The view is large-scale, and the scene has some qualities of remoteness, with the open habitats of the NNR and expanse of sea being the main features of the wide, open view. Artificial elements in the seascape are relatively scarce and limited to offshore WTGs within the EOWDC, off the coast at Aberdeen, and sea-going vessels. The influence of the EOWDC on the horizon to the south influences receptor susceptibility to further changes associated with OWF development out to sea.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.294 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.29** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 15 Forvie National Nature Reserve.

16.11.2.295 The magnitude of change to the view resulting from the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Negligible**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.296 From Viewpoint 15, the longer-range view of the existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland is unimpeded and as they are of similar appearance to those within the Offshore Array, they provide a visual precedent to the WTGs within the Offshore Array. The existing Hywind Scotland WTGs are visible in their entirety, in contrast to those within the Offshore Array and will be visible within the same sector of the view to and at a slightly longer range than the Offshore Array. The Hywind Scotland WTGs will appear broadly similar in vertical scale compared to those within the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.297 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from this viewpoint, 52.1 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond the coast and a wide expansive seascape.

16.11.2.298 Visibility of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be very limited. The upper tower and rotor of one wind turbine will be visible above the skyline, with its lower tower and semi-submersible platform hidden by the intervening horizon. Screening by built form within Forvie will limit the visibility of the remaining turbines to the hub and rotor of another turbine and potentially WTG blade tips. Two turbines will be entirely screened.

16.11.2.299 The vertical height / apparent scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be relatively small, due to their long distance offshore and the large scale of the seascape in the view. Coastal landform, which is relatively tall at this location, and buildings within Forvie directly in front of the Offshore Array, will appear greater in vertical scale than the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.300 The lateral spread of the Offshore Array will occupy up to 5.8° of the HfoV, a relatively narrow portion of the view and a small proportion of the open sea skyline.

16.11.2.301 The Offshore Array is sufficiently screened, distant, small scale and narrow in lateral extent, that there will be little change to the panoramic views to the open North Sea.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.302 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of the viewpoint and **Negligible** magnitude of change, the effect on the view arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Not Significant (Minor)** in EIA terms. The direct, long-term and reversible effect will be observable from similar clifftop locations along the coastline south of Collieston to Hackley Head.

Preliminary Assessment of Visual Receptors

16.11.2.303 **Table 16-13** presents a preliminary assessment of the effects of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on visual receptors in the SLVIA Study Area. A detailed assessment follows for each receptor that is identified in the preliminary assessment as requiring detailed assessment.

16.11.2.304 Receptors that are identified in **Table 16-13** as having no potential for significant effects are not considered in the detailed assessment.

Table 16-13 Preliminary Assessment of Visual Receptors

Visual Receptor	Minimum distance to Offshore Array Area (km)	Preliminary Assessment
Coastal Settlements		
Peterhead	32.8	Potential for long-term, reversible impacts on the view arising as a result of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, which may be visible

Visual Receptor	Minimum distance to Offshore Array Area (km)	Preliminary Assessment
		from this location (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and may therefore alter its visual amenity. Potential impacts require further assessment, which is undertaken in this section of the SLVIA. Potential for significant effects on visual amenity from the coastal edges and elevated areas of the town, particularly the areas of Buchanhaven, Burnhaven and adjoining Peterhead Bay. **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** shows that the ZTV encompasses much of the town apart from the inland edge, but the pattern and density of urban form is likely to limit visibility of the proposed development to intermittent glimpses along roads and between buildings. Potential for significant effects that require detailed assessment, which are assessed in this section of the SLVIA.
Boddam	34.3	Potential for long-term, reversible impacts on the view arising as a result of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, which may be visible from this location (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and may therefore alter its visual amenity. Potential impacts require further assessment, which is undertaken in this section of the SLVIA**.**
Fraserburgh	43.8	Potential for long-term, reversible impacts on the view arising as a result of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, which may be visible from this location (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and may therefore alter its visual amenity. Potential impacts require further assessment, which is undertaken in this section of the SLVIA. Potential for significant effects on visual amenity from the town exists long the eastern coastal edge, while the northern coastline and western edge lie outside the ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11**. While the pattern and density of urban form is likely to limit visibility of the proposed development, a notable part of eastern Fraserburgh comprises open space with adjoining housing oriented towards the east / southeast, towards the OAA. Potential for significant effects that require detailed assessment, which are assessed in this section of the SLVIA.
Inverallochy	39.4	Potential for long-term, reversible impacts on the view arising as a result of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, which may be visible from this location (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and may therefore alter its visual amenity. Potential impacts require further assessment, which is undertaken in this section of the SLVIA.
St Combs	37.6	Potential for long-term, reversible impacts on the view arising as a result of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, which may be visible

Visual Receptor	Minimum distance to Offshore Array Area (km)	Preliminary Assessment
		from this location (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and may therefore alter its visual amenity. Potential impacts require further assessment, which is undertaken in this section of the SLVIA**.**
Cruden Bay	42.3	No potential for significant effects due to lack of visibility as indicated by the ZTV in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11**.
Collieston	50.9	No potential for significant effects due to distance from the OAA, coastal aspect and screening by landform as indicated by the ZTV in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11**.
Long-Distance Recreational Routes		
Formartine and Buchan Way	33.6	Potential for long-term, reversible impacts on views from the route arising as a result of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, which may be visible from locations along the route (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and may therefore alter its visual amenity. Potential impacts require further assessment, which is undertaken in this section of the SLVIA. Potential for significant effects on visual amenity from the route exists along the sections between Maud and Fraserburgh; and Maud and Peterhead. A section of the former, approximately 9 km long; and of the latter, 7 km long, lies within the ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11**. This indicates visibility of most of the WTGs within the Offshore Array from these sections.
Aberdeenshire Coastal Trail	33.8	Potential for long-term, reversible impacts on views from these routes arising as a result of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, which may be visible from locations along these routes (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and may therefore alter its visual amenity. Potential impacts require further assessment, which is undertaken in this section of the SLVIA. Potential for significant effects on visual amenity from these coterminous routes exists between Fraserburgh and Peterhead and south of Peterhead as far south as Longhaven, where they follow the A90; and at Chapel Hill, where they follow the A975. The ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** indicates consistent visibility of a higher number of WTGs from these areas with more intermittent visibility south of Blairythan.
North East 250	33.8	

Visual Receptor	Minimum distance to Offshore Array Area (km)	Preliminary Assessment
Major Road Routes		
A90	34.6	Potential for long-term, reversible impacts on views from the route arising as a result of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, which may be visible from locations along the route (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and may therefore alter its visual amenity. Potential impacts require further assessment, which is undertaken in this section of the SLVIA. Potential for significant effects on visual amenity from the road exists between Fraserburgh and Peterhead; south of Peterhead as far south as Longhaven; at Chapel Hill; and between Blairythan and Aberdeen. The ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** indicates consistent visibility of a higher number of WTGs from these areas with more intermittent visibility south of Blairythan.
A950	34.1	Potential for long-term, reversible impacts on views from the route arising as a result of the Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, which may be visible from locations along the route (during very good and excellent visibility conditions) and may therefore alter its visual amenity. Potential impacts require further assessment, which is undertaken in this section of the SLVIA. Potential for significant effects on visual amenity from the road exists on the (approximately 3 km) section of road west of Peterhead and much of the section between Longside and Mintlaw, where the ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** indicates consistent visibility of a higher number of WTGs. The section of road within Peterhead, within the ZTV, is unlikely to have visibility of the Offshore Array due to screening by urban form.
A952	42.9	No potential for significant effects, as the road lies inland, between 6 and 14 km from the coastline, and only very short stretches (under 1 km long) lie within the ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** north and south of Mintlaw and at Waterloo. The ZTV indicates consistent visibility of a higher number of WTGs from an approximately 5 km section of road between Rathen and New Leeds. Landform and vegetation cover intervening between the road and the coastline restricts visibility of the sea and potential for significant effects.
A975	39.3	No potential for significant effects on visual amenity as only a short (approximately 4 km) section of road at Chapel Hill, over 43 km from the Offshore Array lies within the ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11**. Remaining stretches of the road lie out

Visual Receptor	Minimum distance to Offshore Array Area (km)	Preliminary Assessment
		with the ZTV with no potential to be significantly affected by the Offshore Array.
Long-Distance Recreational Routes		
Sustrans National Cycle Route (NCR) 1	52.7	No potential for significant effects as much of the route lies out with the ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11**, with a short stretch, east of Corsegight (approximately3 km); and a longer stretch south of Udny Green (approximately 5 km), within. While consistent visibility of a higher number of WTGs is indicated along these parts of the route, they lie over 50 km from the boundary of the OAA and 19 km from the coastline, with intervening landscape features providing screening that precludes any potential for significant effects.

Detailed Assessment of Effects on Visual Receptors

Settlements

Peterhead

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.305 Viewpoints 7-9 are representative of Peterhead and its visual amenity. Representative views are shown in:

- **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.21a-d** Viewpoint 7 Peterhead (Gadle Braes);
- **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.22** Viewpoint 8 Peterhead Bay (South Road); and
- **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.23** Viewpoint 9 Reform Tower, Peterhead.

16.11.2.306 The town of Peterhead lies on a convex section of coast, with a bay to the southeast. It lies on low, relatively flat land with slightly elevated parts to the southwest and south. The A90 contains the town which is consistently tight grained with a looser grain to the southwest, south and northeast due to Dales Industrial Estate, HMP & YOI Grampian and the Port of Peterhead, respectively. The combination of urban form and topography limits the influence of the sea to the coastal areas of the town comprising the seafronts of Buchanhaven, Roanheads, Keith Inch, Clerkhill and Invernettie. Adjoining the North Ugie Water, Waterside and Blackhouse have less visibility of the sea while the town's interior, including the areas of Middle Grange and Meethill, has little visibility of the sea and is largely uninfluenced by it. The town is closely associated with the sea with harbours on both enclosing headlands. Sea views are widespread along the coastline, including the sandy beach within the bay; the A982 / South Road, behind the beach; the rocky northern coastline and Gadle Braes; adjoining residential areas; and related green spaces. Elsewhere the combination of topography and development screens the sea from many areas. There are glimpses of the sea from roads that run perpendicular to the coastline. Tower Hill, south of the bay, provides elevated and more open sea views across the bay.

Sensitivity to change

16.11.2.307 Receptors along the coastline of Peterhead have been attributed a **Medium** sensitivity rating, reflecting the low value of the view seaward and their medium-high susceptibility to change in the view, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.308 **Value**. The town is largely residential with notable industrial areas on the periphery and is largely typical of a coastal town. Views from the town are not afforded protection in planning policy. To the north, the town overlooks the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. Views from the town's coastal edge are expansive and dominated by the North Sea. The coastline to north and south contains sea views and provides focal points including lighthouses, masts and closer by, Peterhead Power Station. While the sea and more distant coastline are largely natural, the influence of the town and associated development within the surrounding landscape detracts from the scenic quality of the seascape.

16.11.2.309 **Susceptibility**. From the towns coastal edge, receptors are liable to be influenced by development in views of the sea. Urban form, large-scale industrial development, the port and sea going vessels characterise existing views of the sea. The influence of these artificial elements limits receptor susceptibility. Beyond the town's coastal edge, urban form largely screens the sea from view.

Magnitude of change

16.11.2.310 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of Peterhead arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low** along the coastline and **Negligible** within the town's interior, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.311 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from Peterhead, (approximately) 35 km at its closest point. The Offshore Array will lie in the far distance on the seascape skyline, beyond a broad expanse of sea.

16.11.2.312 From Peterhead, the Offshore Array will be contained within a relatively small proportion of the horizon of open sea and its vertical height / apparent scale will be relatively small, due to its long distance offshore and the large scale of the sea view. The upper towers and rotors of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be visible and contrasting with the horizontal emphasis of the sea skyline.

16.11.2.313 The Offshore Array will be a noticeable addition to the sea horizon. The developed character of the coastline including the port and associated activity, will limit the visual impact of the Offshore Array. For receptors along this edge, the anticipated change to the view will be low magnitude. Urban form will restrict this impact to coastal parts of the town including Buchanhaven, South Road, adjoining areas of greenspace and the higher parts of the town at Tower Hill and overlooking Peterhead Bay from the southern headland. Glimpsed views towards the Offshore Array along roads that are perpendicular to the coastline will undergo a similar magnitude of change. Remaining areas will observe a negligible magnitude of change due to the town's development pattern and density.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.314 **Not Significant (Minor)** effects in EIA terms on receptors located on Peterhead's coastline are assessed as arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, based on their **Medium** sensitivity and the **Low** magnitude of change. Within the town's interior, the magnitude of change is **Negligible** and the effect of the Offshore Array will be **Not Significant (Minor)**. These adverse effects will be direct, long-term and reversible.

Fraserburgh

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.315 Viewpoints 1 and 2 are representative of Fraserburgh and its visual amenity. Representative views are shown in:

- **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.15a-d** Viewpoint 1 Kinnaird Head, Fraserburgh; and
- **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.16a-d** Viewpoint 2 Fraserburgh Beach.

16.11.2.316 The town of Fraserburgh lies on a broad headland ending at Kinnaird Head between two bays on the north-facing coastline. The low, flat headland rises slightly to the south. Boothby Road, connecting the A90 and A98, contains the town, which is consistently tight grained. Fraserburgh Harbour, Kessock Park and Kessock Industrial Estate create a looser grain to the east. The combination of urban form and topography limits the influence of the sea to the eastern edge of the town. There are views east to the sea from Kinnaird Head to Fraserburgh Golf Club. Often these are interrupted by large buildings that are associated with the harbour, in the north, or within or adjoining the Kessock Road Industrial Estate, to the south. The A90 / Maconochie Road, linking these two areas, provides more open views across sports fields and Fraserburgh Beach. Further inland, the A981 / Strichen Road and adjoining residential properties, also have more open views across James Ramsey Park. There are glimpses along roads running perpendicular to the coast, towards the north. South of the harbour, roads tend not to align with the coast, limiting sea views from the town's south. The town's interior has little visibility of the sea and is largely uninfluenced by it, due to the pattern and density of development and the town's level topography

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.317 Receptors within Fraserburgh, have been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating reflecting that the view towards the OAA has medium value and that the receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to changes within the view, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.318 **Value.** There are no OS mapped viewpoints within Fraserburgh, limited facilities related to enjoyment of sea views and views from the town are not afforded protection in planning policy. The town is not designated for its landscape value but overlooks the locally designated North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA and North Aberdeenshire Coast SLA to the east and west respectively. Views from the town are broadly representative of some of the SLA's special qualities, which are protected by planning policy. Sea views are valued as the setting of the town and an important part of the experience of residents and workers within the town. Views from the town have not been identified following a review of art and literature.

16.11.2.319 **Susceptibility.** From the towns coastal edge, viewers are liable to be influenced by development in views of the sea looking towards the OAA. Urban form, large-scale industrial development, the harbour and sea going vessels characterise existing views of the sea. The strong influence of these artificial elements limit receptor susceptibility.

16.11.2.320 Receptors within Fraserburgh are only susceptible to changes in perceived character / perceptual qualities because of the potential introduction of the Offshore Array in the setting of the town, in sea views experienced from the more exposed areas of the LCCA. Views from the town are predominantly land to sea with the coastline at Cairnbulg Point limiting intervisibility with the open sea. The open sea is relatively featureless and free of recreational vessels or coastal landmarks. Residents have seawards views but a

dearth of coastal routes, features like promenades and heritage features limits the number of sensitive receptors.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.321 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of Fraserburgh arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low** along the coastline and negligible within the town's interior, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.322 The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from Fraserburgh, (approximately) 44.5 km at its closest point. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond a broad swathe of seascape.

16.11.2.323 From Fraserburgh, the Offshore Array will occupy a relatively small proportion of the horizon, with approximately half of it behind coastline. Its vertical height / apparent scale will be relatively small, due to its long distance offshore and the large scale of the view. Much of the Offshore Array, comprising the upper towers and rotors, will be distantly visible and contrasting with the horizontal emphasis of the sea and low lying coastline.

16.11.2.324 The Offshore Array will be a perceptible, distant and uncharacteristic addition to sea views from Fraserburgh. The settled character of the coastline and nearby development including the harbour and associated activity, will limit the visual impact of the Offshore Array. Urban form will restrict this impact to coastal parts of the town. For receptors along this edge, there will be a low magnitude change to the view that is negligible in remaining areas of the town.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.325 **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** effects in EIA terms on Fraserburgh's visual amenity along the coastline and **Not Significant (Minor)** within the town's interior are assessed as arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of Fraserburgh's residents and **Low** magnitude of change along the coastline and negligible magnitude of change within the town's interior. These adverse effects will be direct, long-term and reversible.

Inverallochy

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.326 Viewpoint 3 Inverallochy (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.17**) lies on the village's seafront.

16.11.2.327 Inverallochy lies on a northeast facing section of rocky coastline. The small village has a relatively regular development pattern that addresses the sea with Shore Street running very close to and along the coastline. The village extends along the coast to east and west along runs running parallel to the coast from Rathen Road, in the middle of this coastal part of the village. An equally large part of the village extends inland along and addressing the road. Seafront buildings have expansive, longer-range views of the North Sea. Due to the road layout and flat topography, there are very few glimpses of the sea along the road. The northeastern corner of the village between Rathen Road and Frederick Street contains overlooks Inverallochy Golf Club. Despite a slight rise in landform within the golf course, the combination of open space and southeasterly running roads provides more visibility of the sea to the east in this area. The southeastern edge of the village is more southerly oriented and looks inland.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.328 Receptors within Inverallochy have been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating reflecting that the view towards the OAA has medium value and that the receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to changes within the view, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.329 **Value.** There are no OS mapped viewpoints within Inverallochy, limited facilities related to enjoyment of sea views and views from the village are not afforded protection in planning policy. The village overlooks the locally designated North Aberdeenshire Coast SLA to the west. Views from the village are broadly representative of some of the SLA's special qualities. Sea views are valued as part of the village's setting and an important part of the experience of its residents. Views from the village are not recognised in art or literature.

16.11.2.330 **Susceptibility.** Residents are liable to be influenced by development in views of the sea looking towards the OAA and are susceptible to changes in perceived character / perceptual qualities because of the potential introduction of the Offshore Array in the village's setting.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.331 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of Inverallochy arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low** along the coastal edge including Shore Street and the northeast corner of the village between Rathen Road and Frederick Street. A **Negligible** magnitude of change will be observed within the village's interior. The Offshore Array will be located a long distance from Inverallochy and will appear in the far distance occupying a relatively small proportion of the distant sea horizon. Its vertical height / apparent scale will be relatively small, due to its long distance offshore and the large scale of the view. The settled character of the coastline and adjoining development will limit the visual impact of the Offshore Array. The density and pattern of development within the village, which tends to face northeast, will restrict much this impact to coastal parts of the village and the northeastern part within Rathen Road and Frederick Street, where roads run southeasterly. Receptors with visibility of the sea to the east, will observe a low magnitude which will be negligible within the village's interior.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.332 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of Inverallochy's residents and **Low** to **Negligible** magnitude of change, the effects of Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on Inverallochy's visual amenity will be **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** along the village's coastal edge including Shore Street and the north eastern edge to Rathen Road; and **Not Significant (Minor)** within the village's interior. These adverse effects will be direct, long-term and reversible.

St Combs

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.333 Viewpoint 4 St Combs (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.18**) lies on the village's seafront.

16.11.2.334 The small village of St Combs clusters around the junction of two minor roads, West Street and High Street, with its centre slightly set back from the coastline. North of High Street, buildings lie in largely regular pattern along several parallel roads. These buildings tend to face north or south, with gable ends facing east, to the sea. The smaller part of the village lies south of High Street, with buildings aligning High Street and the parallel West Park / Corsegelly Place. Playing fields adjoin the village's southern boundary. Buildings along the seaward edge, have expansive, longer-range views of the North Sea. Inland, these become increasingly

screened due to the pattern of development and flat topography. Glimpses of the sea along roads to the coast are limited to those from High Street and West Park / Corsegelly Place. Buildings along the southern edge tend to be more north / south oriented.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.335 Receptors within St Combs have been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating reflecting that the view towards the OAA has medium value and that the receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to changes within the view, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.336 **Value.** There are no OS mapped viewpoints within St Combs, limited facilities related to enjoyment of sea views and views from the village are not afforded protection in planning policy. The village overlooks the locally designated North Aberdeenshire Coast SLA to the north and south. Views from the village are broadly representative of some of the SLA's special qualities. Sea views are valued as part of the village's setting and an important part of the experience of its residents. Views from the village are not recognised in art or literature.

16.11.2.337 **Susceptibility.** Residents are liable to be influenced by development in views of the sea looking towards the OAA and are susceptible to changes in perceived character / perceptual qualities because of the potential introduction of the Offshore Array in the village's setting.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.338 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.18** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 4 St Combs.

16.11.2.339 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of St Combs arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low** along the coastal edge including Church Street and the northeast and southeastern corners of the village. A **Negligible** magnitude of change will be observed within the village's interior. The Offshore Array will lie a long distance from St Combs and will appear in the far distance occupying a relatively small proportion of the distant sea horizon. It will appear as relatively small feature, due to its long distance offshore and the large scale of the view. Distant visibility of Hywind Scotland will limit the visual impact of the Offshore Array alongside the settled character of the coastline and adjoining development. The density and pattern of development within the village, will restrict much this impact to coastal parts of the village. For receptors with visibility of the sea, there will be a low magnitude change to the view while those within the village's interior will observe a negligible magnitude of change.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.340 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of St Combs' residents and **Low** to **Negligible** magnitude of change, the effects of Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on St Combs' visual amenity will be **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** along the village's coastal edge including Church Street and **Not Significant (Minor)** within the interior of the village. These adverse effects will be direct, long-term and reversible.

Boddam

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.341 Viewpoint 10 Boddam (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.24**) lies on the village's seafront.

16.11.2.342 The village of Boddam clusters around Station Road which connects the A90 with the coastline, at Harbour Street / B9108. The village is elevated above the rocky coastline. The larger part of the village lies south of Station Road / Seaview Road. The village has a mixed pattern of development that is less dense than the other small villages considered above. This pattern is often planned with buildings in a variety of orientations. The pattern is looser to the west and there are playing fields to the northwest. Buildings on Harbour Street face the sea with adjoining roads leading to the coastline. Buchna Ness lighthouse lies to the southeast. Buildings along Harbour Street and adjoining roads have expansive, longer-range views of the North Sea, the latter being framed by buildings. Inland, the road layout and development pattern largely screen the sea from view. Hywind Scotland is visible within the sea views. Buildings along the southern edge overlook the seascape to the southeast with the northern edge looking past Peterhead Power Station to Peterhead itself.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.343 Receptors within Boddam have been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating reflecting that the view towards the OAA has medium value and that the receptors experiencing the view have a medium-high susceptibility to changes within the view, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.344 **Value.** There are no OS mapped viewpoints within Boddam, limited facilities related to enjoyment of sea views and views from the village are not afforded protection in planning policy. The village is influenced by Peterhead, it's harbour and the power station to the north and overlooks the North Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, to the south. Views from the village are broadly representative of some of the SLA's special qualities. Sea views are valued as part of the village's setting and an important part of the experience of its residents. Views from the village are not recognised in art or literature.

16.11.2.345 **Susceptibility.** Residents are liable to be influenced by development in views of the sea looking towards the OAA and are susceptible to changes in perceived character / perceptual qualities because of the potential introduction of the Offshore Array in the village's setting.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.346 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.18** shows the predicted view of the Offshore Array from Viewpoint 4 Boddam.

16.11.2.347 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of Boddam arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array is assessed as **Low** along the coastal edge including Church Street and the northeast and southeastern corners of the village. A **Negligible** magnitude of change will be observed within the village's interior. The Offshore Array will lie a long distance from Boddam and will appear in the far distance occupying a relatively small proportion of the distant sea horizon. It will appear as relatively small feature, due to its long distance offshore and the large scale of the view. Distant visibility of Hywind Scotland will limit the visual impact of the Offshore Array alongside the settled character of the coastline and adjoining development. The density and pattern of development within the village, will restrict much this impact to coastal parts of the village. For receptors with visibility of the sea, there will be a low magnitude change to the view while those within the village's interior will observe a negligible magnitude of change

16.11.2.348 Based on the combination of the **Medium-High** sensitivity of Boddam's residents and **Low** to **Negligible** magnitude of change, the effects of Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array on Boddam's visual amenity will be **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** along the village's coastal edge including Church Street and **Not Significant (Minor)** within the interior of the village. These adverse effects will be direct, long-term and reversible.

Long-Distance Recreational Routes

Formartine and Buchan Way

16.11.2.349 The Formartine and Buchan Way is designated as one of Scotland's Great Trails. The 85 km long route is completely off road and relatively flat, making it suitable for all abilities of walkers, cyclist and horse-riders. The route uses the former railway line linking from Dyce, on the edge of Aberdeen in the south, to the village of Maud where it splits into two routes: eastwards to Peterhead and northwards to Fraserburgh.

16.11.2.350 Aberdeenshire Council (2023c) divides the route into eleven short and easy to manage sections, all of which enter the SLVIA Study Area and have some ZTV coverage. **Table 16-14** considers the potential for significant effects along each section of the route to determine which require detailed assessment below.

Table 16-14 Preliminary Assessment of Sections of the Formartine and Buchan Way

Sections of the Formartine and Buchan Way (Length)	Rationale
Northwards to Fraserburgh	
Potential for significant effects that require detailed assessment	
Strichen to Fraserburgh (16.9 km)	This section lies between 50 and 42 km from the boundary of the OAA, and mostly runs through generally level, open farmland within Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17). From Strichen, it initially heads west north west sweeping round to approach Fraserburgh from the south southeast. The ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** indicates theoretical visibility of the proposed OAA from an approximately 7.5 km stretch (as the crow flies) between Cockmuir and Milltown, that comprises the larger part of this section.
Considered in preliminary assessment but found to have no likelihood of significant effects	
Auchnagatt to Maud (7.2 km)	No ZTV coverage shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11**, indicating no potential visibility of the Offshore Array. No potential for baseline visual amenity to be significantly affected.
Maud to Strichen (8.8 km)	The ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** indicates no potential visibility of the Offshore Array, apart from a very short (under 1 km) stretch to the south west of Strichen that is over 50 km from the boundary of the OAA. No potential for baseline visual amenity to be significantly affected.

Sections of the Formartine and Buchan Way (Length)	Rationale
Eastwards to Peterhead	
Considered in preliminary assessment but found to have no likelihood of significant effects	
Maud to Old Deer (4.8 km)	No ZTV coverage shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11**, indicating no potential visibility of the Offshore Array. No potential for baseline visual amenity to be significantly affected.
Old Deer to Mintlaw (4 km)	West of Deer Abbey, this section starts from the road linking the B9029 with the A950, passing through open countryside north of Old Deer, along woodland within Aden Country Park and crossing the A950 to skirt the northern edge of Mintlaw. The ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** indicates potential visibility of a low number of WTGs within the Offshore Array from the route adjoining the northern edge of Mintlaw. The level of tree cover and built form surrounding this section is likely to screen the Offshore Array. No potential for baseline visual amenity to be significantly affected.
Mintlaw to Longside (4 km)	This short, easterly running section lies between 45.4 and 42.0 km from the boundary of the OAA, within the generally level, open farmland of the Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17). The ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** indicates visibility of a number of WTGs within the Offshore Array. The dispersal of landscape elements including built form and woodland blocks combined with relatively flat landform restricts likely visibility of the Offshore Array. No potential for baseline visual amenity to be significantly affected.
Longside to Peterhead (9.6 km)	This section, between approximately 42.0 and 33.7 km from the boundary of the OAA, runs broadly eastwards through Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17) before turning south eastwards past Longside Airfield to enter Peterhead. ZTV coverage shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** indicates continuous visibility of the Offshore Array along the route east of Glendaveny to Peterhead with a gap on the western extent of the town encompassing the A90. Much of this section along the disused railway line lies in cutting. In combination with screening by intervening landscape elements such as trees and buildings, this will greatly restrict visibility of the Offshore Array. No potential for baseline visual amenity to be significantly affected.
Newmachar to Udny Station (8 km)	This section lies over 60 km from the boundary of the OAA. It curves eastwards towards Kingseat then westwards to Newmachar before heading north northeast to Udny Station. It runs through open countryside within the Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17). The ZTV shown on **Volume ER.A.5,**

Sections of the Formartine and Buchan Way (Length)	Rationale
	Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11 encompasses less than 3.5 km of the route and indicates potential visibility of the Offshore Array. A relatively high level of tree cover relatively nearby, along with other elements within the wider intervening landscape are likely to screen the Offshore Array from view. No potential for baseline visual amenity to be significantly affected.
Udny Station to Ellon (8 km)	No potential to be significantly affected as ZTV coverage shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11** is very limited and indicates potential visibility of a low number of WTGs within the Offshore Array, at very long range (over approximately 55 km from the boundary of the OAA) with screening by elements in the intervening landscape. No potential for baseline visual amenity to be significantly affected.
Ellon to Auchnagatt (11.3 km)	No ZTV coverage shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.11**, indicating no potential visibility of the Offshore Array. No potential for baseline visual amenity to be significantly affected.

16.11.2.351 The following assessment focuses on the Formartine and Buchan Way between Strichen and Fraserburgh, which has been identified in the preliminary assessment in **Table 16-14** as having potential for significant effects that need further assessment.

Baseline

16.11.2.352 The Strichen to Fraserburgh section runs broadly north-eastwards from Strichen before curving around to the north as it passes over the A90. It often runs along shallow cuttings through rolling open farmland that flattens towards the north. Low vegetation and intermittent shrubs and trees, often aligns the route, interrupting visibility of the surrounding farmland. This generally increases as the route continues northwards. The route crosse the A952, A90 and several minor roads. Pylons are often visible in the surrounding countryside and lie near the route towards Strichen, crossing it north of the A90. Wind turbines are visible nearby north of New Leeds. Low-lying landform and numerous intervening surface features screen the sea from view. Occasional low hills to the west enclose inland views. An absence of landform in the distance to the north and east combined with a landscape of low relief indicates the presence of the sea in these directions.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.353 Receptors on the Formartine and Buchan Way have been attributed a **Medium-High** sensitivity rating, reflecting the medium value of views from the route and the medium-high susceptibility of receptors on this route to the visual impact of the Offshore Array, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.354 **Value**. The route does not pass through an area that is designated for its scenic value, the closest of which lies on the coast within the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. Two GDLs lies to the east of the route, within 5 km of the section between Strichen and Fraserburgh. Although there are some scenic qualities that can be appreciated from the route, the greater part of the Formartine and Buchan Way runs through a farmed landscape typical of the Coastal Agricultural Plane (LCT 17), with lesser parts within Undulating Agricultural Heartland (LCT 20) and Farmland and Wooded Policies (LCT 21).

16.11.2.355 **Susceptibility**. Walkers on the Formartine and Buchan Way, whose attention is focused on the landscape, are more susceptible to the Offshore Array

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.356 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of the Formartine and Buchan Way between Strichen to Fraserburgh is assessed as **Negligible**, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.357 The route is a very long distance from the boundary of the OAA boundary (37.3 km at the closest point of the route) and is primarily inland crossing agricultural landscapes (rather than following the coast); it's orientation is oblique (north-south) therefore views are not directed towards the Offshore Array; visibility is restricted to certain limited sections and further screened by intervening vegetation. When it is visible, intermittently at longer range, the WTGs within the Offshore Array would be small-scale, covering a narrow lateral extent in the view, and in the backdrop. Also viewed in the context of Hywind Scotland and other onshore development features.

16.11.2.358 In general, the Offshore Array will be a relatively small scale addition to the seascape within the Way's wider context. As existing WTGs within Hywind Scotland are similar in their nature to those within the Offshore Array, it will increase the presence of an existing element, rather than introduce a new and unfamiliar element.

16.11.2.359 Distance from the OAA limits the extent of the view which the Offshore Array will occupy, when seen from the Formartine and Buchan Way. The Offshore Array will be contained within a small proportion of the view when seen from the Way, because such views tend to be expansive due to the low-lying nature of the landscape and its generally large scale.

16.11.2.360 The appearance of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be consistent with those of Hywind Scotland, with which they share a strong rationale for their location. In places the larger scale of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be perceptible, but their scale will be sufficiently similar that in general, it will not contrast with those of Hywind Scotland. Onshore WTGs are a noted feature of the area northwest of Peterhead and the WTGs within the Offshore Array will also appear similar to these, with foreshortening making them much smaller features in comparison.

16.11.2.361 WTGs within Hywind Scotland and the Offshore Array will be contrasting vertical elements seen against a sea horizon that is otherwise largely free of contrasting features. While the horizon of open sea is largely undeveloped, coastal development includes prominent elements that contrast both with the horizon and the surrounding low-lying landscape.

16.11.2.362 **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.7** shows that all seven of the WTGs within the Offshore Array will be visible, as a group separate from the relatively nearby Hywind Scotland. The Offshore Array will also appear separate from nearer onshore WTGs at St Fergus Moss and Greenwell heads, which will appear to encapsulate the offshore developments.

16.11.2.363 The appearance of the Offshore Array will be largely consistent during the Operation and Maintenance phase. The screening or filtering effects of intervening vegetation will vary seasonally to some degree, with associated changes to the visibility of the Offshore Array. However, due to the influence of coniferous forest this is likely to be relatively slight in its variation.

16.11.2.364 The Strichen to Fraserburgh section of the route lies between approximately 42 km and 46 km from the boundary of the OAA. At this distance, the Offshore Array will constitute a smaller scale component of the view. The dispersal and amount of screening elements within the intervening landscape is such that visibility

of the Offshore Array is likely to range from near complete screening to largely uninterrupted, where the landscape is characteristically open.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.365 **Not Significant (Minor)** effects in EIA terms on receptors located on the Strichen to Fraserburgh section of the Formartine and Buchan Way are assessed as arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, based on their **Medium**-**High** sensitivity and the **Negligible** magnitude of change. These adverse effects will be direct, long-term and reversible; and will extend across the section of the route with visibility of the Offshore Array, from south of Mormond Hill to south of the Water of Philorth.

Major Road Routes

A90

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.366 The A90 passes through low-lying arable land with coastal views of ragged cliff formations south of Peterhead and numerous sandy beaches and dune systems north of the town. Expansive seascapes lie to the east of the route which heads to the town of Fraserburgh and the beginning of the Moray Firth past Fraserburgh Bay with the North Sea ahead. The North Sea is peripheral to the route and predominantly visible at an angle to the direction of travel, beyond the coastline. The presence of the sea is more appreciable in places where the orientation of the route aligns more directly with it, particularly south of Boddam. Elsewhere, the route either lies more inland and overlooks the coastal plain against the peripheral, distant backdrop of the sea, or heads inland with the sea behind. For receptors travelling between Crimond and Rathen, the sea appears peripheral to the route when northbound; and lies directly ahead when southbound. Between Rathen and Fraserburgh, the Moray Firth lies directly ahead for northbound receptors while southbound receptors look inland with the sea peripheral to the direction of travel.

16.11.2.367 The 166.7 km Aberdeenshire Coastal Trail runs northwards from St Cyrus, just north of Montrose on the east coast of Aberdeenshire, to Cullen on the north coast, adjoining the Moray Firth. The trail comprises four itineraries which provide day trips for motorists. Two of these itineraries run through the SLVIA Study Area following the A90: Day 2 Balmedie, Cruden Bay & Rattray; and Day 3 Crimond, Fraserburgh & Macduff. The Balmedie, Cruden Bay & Rattray section of the route follows the A90 from Longhaven through Boddam, bypassing Peterhead to St Fergus, before approaching Fraserburgh via Rathen. The Crimond, Fraserburgh & Macduff section of the route follows the A90 from Crimond to Fraserburgh.

16.11.2.368 The North East 250 is a circular route along the roads within six of Scotland's most inspiring regions. The route follows the A90 from Longhaven, to St Fergus, Crimond, Rathen and Fraserburgh.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.369 Motorists on the A90 have been attributed a **Medium** sensitivity rating, reflecting the high to medium value of the road's visual context and their low susceptibility to change to this visual context. Users of the Aberdeenshire Coastal Trail and North East 250 have been attributed a medium-high sensitivity rating, reflecting their medium susceptibility to change.

16.11.2.370 **Value.** Views from the A90 are of high to medium value as they encompass areas within the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA, that are more representative of its special qualities and areas where those special qualities are less evident. Those special qualities that are deemed worthy of protection in the local development plan include the *"Panoramic views out to sea from cliff tops"* within the SLA, its *"Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low-lying landform and 'soft' gradual transition from land to sea"*, its

"Rugged and dramatic cliffs to the south of Boddam" and the important nature conservation site at Loch of Strathbeg NNR. In general, the landscape in view south of Longhaven and north of Peterhead has qualities of naturalness due to lower levels of development inland, and the near absence of development on the shoreline and in the associated seascape. In places such as Boddam, Peterhead or St Fergus, where urban development or energy infrastructure exerts an influence, the special qualities of the landscape are less evident. The exposed nature of the coastline reduces the tranquillity of the SLA in parts but emphasises its close association with the adjoining seascape.

16.11.2.371 **Susceptibility.** Motorists on the A90 are of low susceptibility to change arising from the Offshore Array, primarily due to the incidental, transient and fleeting nature of the views they experience as they travel through the landscape.

16.11.2.372 Users of the Aberdeenshire Coastal Trail and North East 250 are of medium susceptibility, due to their greater interest in the scenic quality of their surroundings, and the intrinsic importance of the view to their experience.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.373 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of the A90 arising from the Offshore Array is assessed as **Negligible**, within areas where it is likely to be visible as indicated by the ZTV; and zero, where no visibility is indicated, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.374 South of Blairythan, approximately 59 km from the boundary of the OAA, visibility of the Offshore Array by northbound receptors will be longer-range and intermittent. At this range, landscape elements and landform will screen the lower parts of the Offshore Array. These will appear relatively small in vertical scale within a contained proportion of the skyline. As this section of the route gradually leaves the coast screening will gradually increase.

16.11.2.375 The route is generally closer to the OAA between Rathen and Longhaven, approximately 44 and 40 km away, respectively. For northbound receptors, the Offshore Array will appear small scale along the route south of Peterhead where it will be most visible as the route curves around Stirling Hill, closely following the coastline to Boddam with the Offshore Array directly ahead. Development will intervene at Boddam, Peterhead Power Station and Peterhead itself with brief visibility of the Offshore Array between the two settlements. North of Peterhead, the Offshore Array will remain a relatively small-scale feature that is peripheral to the route, increasingly moving behind the direction of travel as the route gently curves inland until St Fergus.

16.11.2.376 For Southbound receptors between Rathen and Lunderton, the Offshore Array will be visible beyond the skyline defined by the surrounding landscape. Slight undulations in this landscape in combination with trees, hedgerow and built form will largely screen the Offshore Array, while infrequent glimpses of it will occur where the road is slightly elevated and the surrounding landscape is emptier of these screening landscape elements. A number of linear woodland blocks along this section of the route, extending eastwards from Crimond, bounding the St Fergus Gas works site and extending southwards to the village of St Fergus, have a notable screening effect that increases as more extensive woodland blocks between the village and Lunderton, and adjoining the onshore Sub Station site.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.377 The effects on the views seen by motorists on the A90 arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array are assessed as **Not Significant (Minor)** in EIA terms, where there is visibility of the Offshore Array, between Longhaven and Peterhead and between Peterhead and Rathen; and **Not Significant (No Effect)** in EIA terms, where there is none, including sections west of Peterhead, south of Longhaven and

north of Strichen. For users of the Aberdeenshire Coastal Trail and North East 250, who are of higher sensitivity, the effects on the views arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array are assessed as **Not Significant (Minor)** in EIA terms, where there is visibility of the Offshore Array; and **Not Significant (No Effect)** in EIA terms, where there is none. These adverse effects will be direct, long-term and reversible.

A950

Baseline Characteristics

16.11.2.378 Passing through the village of Pitsligo, the road runs southeast through open farmland down a shallow valley, winds across fields to Mintlaw. Continuing through Longside and along sweeping bends to Flushing across open countryside, the road runs south of Longside Airfield (formerly RAF Peterhead) to cross the A90 bypass at the Howe O'Buchan Roundabout. The road gently descends through Peterhead to adjoin the A982 at another roundabout within the town's Kirktown district

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.379 Motorists on the A950, have been attributed a **Medium** sensitivity rating, reflecting the medium value of the road's visual context for road users and their low susceptibility to change to this visual context, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.380 **Value.** Views from the A950 are of medium value as the A950 does not run through an area designated for its scenic value nor do views from the road take in a designated landscape. Views from the road encompass landscape that is representative of the Farmland and Wooded Policies (LCT 21), Undulating Agricultural Heartland (LCT 20) and Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeen (LCT 17) that the road traverses. In general, the landscape in view is well settled and modified by farmland with patches of woodland. Alongside the nucleated settlements along the road of New Pitsligo, Mintlaw and Longside there are a number of individual properties quite regularly dispersed along the road and smaller settlements further afield including Maud and Strichen. Landscape viewed from the road is influenced by Longside Airfield and Peterhead.

16.11.2.381 **Susceptibility.** Motorists on the A950 are of low susceptibility to change arising from the Offshore Array, primarily due to the incidental, transient and fleeting nature of the views they experience as they travel through the landscape.

Magnitude of Change

16.11.2.382 The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of the A950 arising from the Offshore Array is assessed as **Negligible**, where there is visibility of the Offshore Array, between Peterhead and Thunderton, and zero where there is none, for the reasons set out below.

16.11.2.383 The OAA is located a long distance from the road, over 34 km from the closest point, where it adjoins the A982. At this distance, the Offshore Array will be in the far distance on the distant seascape skyline, beyond a broad swathe of seascape.

16.11.2.384 Theoretically, the Offshore Array will be visible from New Pitsligo to Craigculter, Mintlaw to Longside, and Thunderton to Peterhead. In reality, it is likely that intervening landform and landscape elements will screen the Offshore Array from much of the route west of Thunderton, particularly the stretch between New Pitsligo and Craigculter, over 50 km from the boundary of the OAA. Built form and vegetation adjoining the road will limit visibility of the Offshore Array to infrequent glimpses, particularly where the road is slightly elevated and / or the surrounding landscape is emptier of screening landscape elements, including the section east of Thunderton. Vegetation within the surrounding landscape is likely to partially screen or filter

the Offshore Array for much of this section, with built form intermittently screening it until the route enters Peterhead, where urban form will screen it entirely.

16.11.2.385 By over 40 km from the OAA, visibility of the Offshore Array will be longer-range and intermittent. At this range, the Offshore Array will appear relatively small in vertical scale, appearing comparable in scale to intervening landscape elements, within a contained proportion of the skyline.

16.11.2.386 Visibility of the Offshore Array will be limited to eastbound receptors, who will perceive the Offshore Array slightly north of the direction of travel. For these receptors, the Offshore Array will remain a relatively small-scale feature, with the rotors and upper towers occasionally visible beyond the coast and the numerous elements within the intervening landscape. For westbound motorists, the proposed development will be located behind the main direction of travel and no change would occur to views when travelling inland away from the coast.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.387 Effects on the view seen by users of the A950 arising from Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array are assessed as **Not Significant (Minor)** in EIA terms on the short (approximately 4 km) section of road between Peterhead and Thunderton and **Not Significant (No Effect)** in EIA terms, within Peterhead and west of Thunderton, based on the combination of **Medium** receptor sensitivity and **Low** magnitude of change. These adverse effects will be direct, long-term and reversible.

Offshore Visual Receptors

16.11.2.388 In relation to offshore visual receptors, people engaged in a range of activities are likely to see the Offshore Array. Such receptors will include people travelling on recreational vessels; people travelling on ferries between Aberdeen and Orkney; and people engaged in commercial or employment activities including fishing, manning cargo vessels and people employed in the offshore oil and gas industries or dredging for marine aggregates. Many of these offshore receptors will be more focussed on the activity taking place and the context of that route or activity will make a limited contribution to the overall experience.

16.11.2.389 People travelling on recreational vessels and ferries are considered to be more sensitive receptors. This is due to a combination of the activity they are engaged in the and the likely level of attention placed on the view. Notwithstanding this, there are factors that will potentially reduce their relative sensitivity. Receptors on recreational vessels will be able to plan a journey that increases the separation distance between the vessel and the elements of the Offshore Array. Ferry passengers are principally travelling along a specific route to get from place to place and the character of the route is largely incidental to this purpose. In both instances the Offshore Array is likely to be seen for a relatively small part of an overall journey.

16.11.2.390 At its closest point, the Offshore Array will be located approximately 28 km to the east of the ferry route between Aberdeen and Orkney; and approximately 15 km to the east of the ferry route between Aberdeen and Shetland. The Offshore Array WTGs will be prominent elements on the horizon that will have a relatively contained spread and a relatively small number of WTGs. The Offshore Array's seven WTGs will be seen in the context of operational offshore wind farm development, including Hywind Scotland and EOWDC. The proposed WTGs will be seen within this context for relatively short periods of the overall journey as experienced by ferry passengers on the routes west of the OAA, between Aberdeen and Orkney and between Aberdeen and Shetland.

16.11.2.391 Ferry passengers on these routes are attributed a **Medium**-**Low** sensitivity rating (low value and medium susceptibility). The Offshore Array is assessed as resulting in a **Medium**-**Low** magnitude of change with **Not Significant (Minor)** effects observed from the closest parts of the Aberdeen to Orkney route, lying around

29-30 km from the OAA, reducing to low magnitude and **Not Significant (Minor)** in EIA terms over the majority of the wider and more distant parts of the route.

16.11.2.392 The Offshore Array is assessed as resulting in a **Medium** magnitude of change with a **Not Significant (Moderate / Minor)** effect from the closest parts of the Aberdeen and Shetland route (around 15-20 km from the OAA), reducing to **Medium-Low** to **Low Magnitude** and **Not Significant (Minor)** in EIA terms over the majority of the wider and more distant parts of the route.

Assessment of Night-time Effects on Views

Introduction

16.11.2.393 The lighting ZTV in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.13** shows theoretical visibility of the Offshore Array at night during the Operation and Maintenance phase. This section provides an assessment of the visual effects arising from the visible lighting requirements (aviation and marine navigational) of the Offshore Array.

16.11.2.394 Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) guidance requires that 'en-route obstacles' at or above 150 m above ground level are lit with visible lighting to assist their detection by aircraft. As such, there is potential that parts of the Offshore Array will be visible at night. All surface infrastructure, including any required aids to navigation, will be designed in accordance with relevant guidance from the NLB, the CAA and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). This will include colours, marking and lighting.

16.11.2.395 This visual assessment of WTG lighting is supported by a lighting ZTV (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.13**) and night-time photomontage visualisations from two viewpoints shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 10-17j-k** and **10-21g-h**.

Regulations and Guidance

16.11.2.396 In the UK, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) requirements for lighting wind turbines are implemented through CAA publication CAP 764: Policy and Guidelines on Wind Turbines (CAA, 2016), and CAP 393: Air Navigation Order 2016 (CAA, 2016).

16.11.2.397 The proposed WTGs would require lighting under Article 223 of the Air Navigation Order (CAA, 2016). This requires that WTGs in UK territorial waters of 60 m or more above sea level Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT), are "*fitted with one medium intensity steady red light positioned as close as reasonably practicable to the top of the fixed structure*" and that "*the periphery of the group need to be fitted with a light*". For the purpose of the assessment, medium intensity aviation lighting is assumed to be 2,000 cd fitted on the top of each nacelle, positioned on peripheral structures.

16.11.2.398 For 2,000 cd medium intensity steady or fixed red lights, ICAO indicates a requirement for no lighting to be switched on until 'Night' has been reached, as measured at 50 cd/m2 or darker. CAA have confirmed that UK policy broadly aligns with the International standards, including insofar as the point at which lights must be switched on at 'Night' rather than 'Twilight'.

16.11.2.399 Article 223 of Air Navigation Order (CAA, 2016) also requires that "*the angle of the plane of the beam of peak intensity emitted by the light must be elevated to between 3-4° degrees above the horizontal plane*", but that 20-45% of the peak intensity is to be visible at the horizontal plane and not more than 10% of the peak intensity is visible at 1.5 degrees or more below the horizontal plane. This focusses the 2,000cd lighting in the horizontal plane between 3-4° above horizontal and allows for a reduced intensity of the light at and below the horizontal plane.

16.11.2.400 Article 223 of Air Navigation Order (CAA, 2016) also allows for 2,000 cd aviation lights to be dimmed to "*not less than 10% of the minimum peak intensity*" if "*visibility in all directions from every wind turbine generator in a group is more than 5km*". Visibility conditions are measured using a visibility sensor, to allow the aviation lights to dimmed automatically to respond to prevailing meteorological conditions. 2,000 cd lights will therefore only be experienced in visibility of <5 km; and their intensity would be dimmed to 200 cd in visibility of >5 km.

16.11.2.401 GLVIA3 (Landscape Institute, 2013) recommends that "*the visual effects assessment will need to include qualitative assessments of the effects of the predicted light levels on night-time visibility*" and that "*reference should be made to appropriate guidance, such as that provided by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP, 2011)*".

16.11.2.402 Guidance produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP, 2011) is useful in setting out some key terminology that is used in this visual assessment of wind turbine lighting:

- "*Obtrusive Light – whether it keeps you awake through a bedroom window or impedes your view of the night sky, is a form of pollution, which may also be a nuisance in law and which can be substantially reduced without detriment to the lighting task"*;
- *"Skyglow – the brightening of the night sky";*
- *"Glare – the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a darker background"; and*
- "*Light Intrusion – the spilling of light beyond the boundary of the property or area being lit, are all forms of obtrusive light which may cause nuisance to others*."

Assessment Methodology

16.11.2.403 The assessment of night-time visual effects is based on the description of proposed wind turbine lighting set out in the Project Design Envelope parameters in **Section 16-8** and the ICAO / CAA regulations and standards described above, utilising the methodology set out in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology**.

Significance of Effect

16.11.2.404 The effects of the Offshore Array's lighting are assessed at two viewpoints which have been selected as representative of the typical lighting conditions at night along the coastline within the SLVIA Study Area. Photomontages showing the night view at these viewpoints, Viewpoint 3 Inverallochy and Viewpoint 7 Peterhead (Gadle Braes), give an indication of the typical effects on visual receptors where they are most likely to be observed. The assessment of the night view from these viewpoints establishes whether the effects of the Offshore Development vary greatly from those during the day. As such, the night-time assessment should be related to the day-time effects assessed in **Section 16.11**.

Viewpoint 3 Inverallochy

Baseline

16.11.2.405 This existing night-time view from Viewpoint 3 Inverallochy is shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.17g-h**.

16.11.2.406 Lights on shipping traffic and boats are transient moving features seen at sea. Low-level street lighting within Inverallochy is sparse and influences the nearby baseline environment. The settlement sits on the coast and lights within it are screened by built form behind this location.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.407 A **Medium** sensitivity rating has been attributed to this viewpoint at night, reflecting that the night view has a low value and that receptors experiencing the view having medium-high susceptibility to changes in the view.

16.11.2.408 There is no formal recognition of this night-time view for its value and it is not specifically promoted to encourage visitors with the express intention of viewing the night sky. The visual context of Inverallochy (LCCA 4) or the Beaches, Dunes and Links -Aberdeenshire (LCT 12) do not identify any special night-time or dark sky qualities.

Magnitude of change

16.11.2.409 The predicted view of the aviation lights at 2,000 cd is shown on the photomontage in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.17j-k**.

16.11.2.410 This is an accessible location from which to look out to sea at night. Taking into consideration a baseline that includes WTG aviation lighting at Hywind Scotland, and other distant onshore sources of light such as vessels, receptors at this location would be at a reasonably dark location.

16.11.2.411 Aviation lighting at the nacelle height of the WTGs within the Offshore Array is predicted to be visible at night, only in excellent visibility conditions. Marine navigational lights at platform level are not expected to be visible from the viewpoint due to their relatively low position and the screening effect of earth curvature which forms an intervening horizon that prevents them from being visible at this distance offshore.

16.11.2.412 A **Low** magnitude of change on the night-time view from Inverallochy is assessed. The aviation lighting will be visible as distant point sources of red light, at slightly varying heights but generally seen low to the horizon. Generally, the aviation lighting will not intrude on views of stars or dark skies above, that tend to lie overhead. The aviation lights will appear relatively evenly spaced within a contained portion of the sea horizon, towards the eastern coastline and will appear more peripheral to the seascape that the village overlooks. The aviation lights will be small scale and reasonably distant from this location.

16.11.2.413 The aviation lights will influence the continuity between the dark sea below and the dark skies above, in a limited portion of the view, however they are low to the horizon and do not extend into, nor impede, the view of sky at night. The aviation lights are not expected to result in obtrusive light that impedes the wider expanse of night sky, which can be experienced readily above the viewer, nor result in brightening of the night sky (skyglow) or glare on to the sea surface and would not detract from the overall experience of the night sky.

Significance of effect

16.11.2.414 A **Not Significant (Minor)** effect in EIA terms on the night-time view from Inverallochy is assessed as arising from the lighting of the Offshore Array. This reflects the **Medium** sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint and the **Low** magnitude of change on the night-time view resulting from the WTG aviation lights operating at 2,000 cd. The visual effect of the Offshore Array at night will be direct, long-term, and reversible.

16.11.2.415 The operation of aviation lighting at the lower intensity of 200 cd when visibility from every WTG is greater than 5 km will provide further mitigation and reduction in the perceived intensity of the visible lighting.

Viewpoint 7 Peterhead (Gadle Braes)

Baseline

16.11.2.416 The existing night-time view from Viewpoint 7 Peterhead (Gadle Braes) is shown on **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.21g-h**.

16.11.2.417 Aviation lighting on the Hywind Scotland will be visible in night-time views seen at a minimum distance of 25.1 km. Lights on shipping traffic and boats are occasional, transient moving features seen at sea. Onshore, there is light intrusion from street lighting within Peterhead that spills into the nearby context of the viewpoint. Lighting on St Fergus Gas Terminal and masts at Loch of Strathbeg provide the main onshore points of light sources. Both light sources are relatively high above the skyline and lighting within the gas terminal is particularly bright.

Sensitivity to Change

16.11.2.418 A **Medium** sensitivity rating has been attributed this viewpoint at night, reflecting that the night view has a medium-low value and that receptors experiencing the view have a medium susceptibility to changes in the view.

16.11.2.419 There is no formal recognition of this night-time view for its value and it is not specifically promoted to encourage visitors with the express intention of viewing the night sky. The visual context of Peterhead (LCCA 4) or the Beaches, Dunes and Links -Aberdeen (LCT 12) do not identify any special night-time or dark sky qualities.

16.11.2.420 This is a readily accessible location from which to look out to sea at night and the susceptibility of people experiencing the night-time view is influenced by light spilling from existing street lighting and distant points of light related to shipping, on the sea horizon; and masts and energy infrastructure, onshore along the coastline. Taking this into consideration alongside the WTG aviation lighting at Hywind Scotland, receptors are considered to have lower susceptibility to the type of change proposed.

Magnitude of change

16.11.2.421 The predicted night-time view of the aviation lights at 2,000 cd is shown on the photomontage in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.21j-k**.

16.11.2.422 Aviation lighting at the nacelle height will be visible in the view at night, with the closest aviation light located 34.6 km from this viewpoint. Marine navigational lights at platform level will not be visible from the viewpoint due to their relatively low position and the screening effect of earth curvature which forms an intervening horizon that prevents them from being visible at this distance offshore.

16.11.2.423 A **Low** magnitude of change on the night-time view from Peterhead is assessed. The aviation lighting will be visible as distant point sources of red light, at slightly varying heights but generally seen low to the horizon. Generally, the aviation lighting will not intrude on views of stars, that tend to lie overhead. The aviation lights will appear relatively evenly spaced within a contained portion of the sea horizon. The aviation lights will be small scale and reasonably distant from this location.

16.11.2.424 The aviation lights will influence the continuity between the dark sea below and the dark skies above, over a narrow portion of the skyline, however they are low to the horizon and do not extend into, nor impede, the view of sky at night. The aviation lights are not expected to result in obtrusive light that impedes the wider expanse of night sky, which can be experienced readily above the viewer, nor result in brightening of the night sky (skyglow) or glare on to the sea surface and would not detract from the overall experience of the night skies in this view.

Significance of effect

16.11.2.425 A **Not Significant (Minor)** effect in EIA terms on the night-time view from Peterhead is assessed as arising from the lighting of the Offshore Array. This reflects the **Medium** sensitivity of receptors at this viewpoint and the **Low** magnitude of change on the night-time view resulting from the WTG aviation lights operating at 2,000 cd. The visual effect of the Offshore Array at night will be direct, long-term, and reversible.

16.11.2.426 The operation of aviation lighting at the lower intensity of 200 cd when visibility from every WTG is greater than 5 km will provide further mitigation and reduction in the perceived intensity of the visible lighting.

Summary of night-time effects

Lighting of the Offshore Array is assessed to result in **Not Significant (Minor)** effects, as indicated by the night-time viewpoints considered above. These adverse, long-term and reversible effects will extend along the coastline and reduce in level away further inland. There will be no effect in areas without visibility of the lighting associated with the Offshore Array.

16.11.3 Construction

16.11.3.1 The effects of the Offshore Array on coastal character, landscape character, views and visual amenity during Construction are assessed as being of no greater magnitude and significance on receptors as those arising due to Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, as assessed in **Section 16.11.2**, differing primarily as the effects will be short-term and temporary during the length of the Construction phase. There will also be some variation in appearance of the construction activities, compared to the Operation and Maintenance phase, mainly due to the appearance of the partially constructed Offshore Array over the short-term and the influence of vessels in the seascape that will not be present during the Operation and Maintenance phase.

16.11.4 Decommissioning

16.11.4.1 The effects of the decommissioning of the Offshore Array on coastal character, landscape character, views and visual amenity are assessed as being of no greater magnitude and significance on all receptors as those arising due to Operation and Maintenance of the Offshore Array, as assessed in **Section 16.11.2**, differing primarily as the effects will be short-term and temporary during the length of the Decommissioning phase. There will also be some variation in appearance of the decommissioning activities, compared to the Operation and Maintenance phase, mainly due to the appearance of the partially dismantled Offshore Array over the short-term and the influence of vessels in the seascape that will not be present during the Operation and Maintenance phase.

16.11.5 Summary of Impact Assessment

16.11.5.1 A summary of the impacts and effects identified for Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity is set out in **Table 16-15**.

Table 16-15 Summary of Impacts and Effects for Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
Coastal Character									
Impact on characteristics and qualities of coastal (seascape) and landscape receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array	OAA	Co20	Cairnbulg Point to South Inch (LCCA 4)	Medium	Low	Minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor	Not Significant
		Co20	South Inch to Peterhead (LCCA 5)	Medium-high	Low along the coastline. Negligible within the hinterland.	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor within the hinterland.	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor within the hinterland.	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
Impact on characteristics and qualities of coastal (seascape) and landscape receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array							mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
		Co20	Peterhead and Sandford Bay (LCCA 6)	Low	Negligible along the urban coastline within Peterhead and north of Boddam, extending up to 1 km from the coast	Negligible	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Negligible	Not Significant
		Co20	Beaches, Dunes and Links – Aberdeenshire (LCT 12)	Medium-high	Low along the coastline north of Peterhead and along the urban coastline within	Moderate / minor along the coastline north of Peterhead.	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect	Moderate / minor along the coastline north of Peterhead.	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
Impact on characteristics and qualities of coastal (seascape) and landscape receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array					Peterhead and north of Boddam, extending up to 1 km from the coast. Negligible south of Rockend. Negligible within the hinterland.	Minor along the coastline within Peterhead, south of Rockend and within the hinterland.	above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor along the coastline within Peterhead, south of Rockend and within the hinterland.	
		Co20	Boddam to Stirling Craig and The Skares to Rockend (LCCA 7)	Medium-high	Negligible	Minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
Impact on characteristics and qualities of coastal (seascape) and landscape receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array	OAA	Co20	Fragmented Rocky Coast (LCT 11)	Medium-high	Negligible	Minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor	Not Significant
Inland Landscape Character									
Impact on characteristics and qualities of landscape receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array	OAA	Co20	Coastal Agricultural Plain – Aberdeenshire (LCT 17)	Low	Negligible	Negligible	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table**	Negligible	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
							16-7 as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
Landscape Designations									
Impact on characteristics and qualities of landscape receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array	OAA	Co20	North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA	Medium-high	Low along the coastline. Negligible inland	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor inland.	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor inland.	Not Significant
Viewpoints									
Impact on visual receptors during operation and	OAA	Co20	Walkers on the coastal route (VP01 Kinnaird	Medium-high	Low	Moderate / minor	No additional mitigation measures have	Moderate / minor	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
maintenance of the Offshore Array			Head Lighthouse, Fraserburgh)				been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
		Co20	Recreational visitors to the beach and promenade (VP02 Fraserburgh Beach)	Medium-high	Low	Moderate / minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate / minor	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
Impact on visual receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array		Co20	Residents (VP03 Inverallochy)	Medium-high	Low	Moderate / minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate / minor	Not Significant
		Co20	Recreational visitors to the beach and residents (VP04 St Combs)	High	Low	Moderate	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that	Moderate	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
Impact on visual receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array							the effect was Not Significant		
		Co20	Recreational visitors to the beach and walkers on the coastal path (VP05 Rattray Head)	High	Medium-low	Moderate	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate	Not Significant
		Co20	Recreational visitors to the beach and walkers on the coastal path (VP06 Scotstown Head)	High	Medium-low	Moderate	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed	Moderate	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
Impact on visual receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array							in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
		Co20	Recreational visitors to the beach and promenade and residents (VP07 Peterhead, Gadle Braes)	Medium-high	Medium-low	Moderate	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate	Not Significant
		Co20	Residents recreational visitors to the beach (VP08	Medium	Low	Minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and	Minor	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
Impact on visual receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array			Peterhead Bay (South Road))				beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
		Co20	Tower visitors and recreational visitors (VP09 Peterhead, Reform Tower)	Medium	Low	Minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor	Not Significant
Impact on visual receptors during operation and		Co20	Residents and recreational	Medium-high	Low	Moderate / minor	No additional mitigation measures have	Moderate / minor	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
maintenance of the Offshore Array			visitors (VP10 Boddam)				been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
Impact on visual receptors during operation and		Co20	Residents and walkers (VP11 Stirling Hill)	Medium-high	Low	Moderate / minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate / minor	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
maintenance of the Offshore Array		Co20	Walkers (VP12 Bullers of Buchan)	High	Low	Moderate	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate	Not Significant
Impact on visual receptors during operation and		Co20	Castle visitors (VP13 Slains Castle)	High	Low	Moderate	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that	Moderate	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
maintenance of the Offshore Array							the effect was Not Significant		
		Co20	Residents (VP14 Cruden Bay (East Sandend))	Medium-high	Low	Moderate / minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate / minor	Not Significant
		Co20	Walkers and visitors to Forvie NNR (VP15 Forvie National Nature Reserve, near Collieston)	Medium-high	Negligible	Minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed	Minor	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
							in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
Night Viewpoints									
Impact on visual receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array	OAA	Co53, Co54	Residents and recreational visitors to the beach and promenade at VP03 Inverallochy	Medium	Low	Minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor	Not Significant
Impact on visual receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array	OAA	Co53, Co54	Residents and recreational visitors to the beach and	Medium	Low	Minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified	Minor	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
			promenade at VP07 Peterhead, Gadle Braes				for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
Settlements									
Impact on visual receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array Impact on visual receptors during	OAA	Co20	Peterhead	Medium	Low along the coastline. Negligible within the town's interior.	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor within the town's interior.	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor within the town's interior.	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array							the effect was Not Significant		
		Co20	Fraserburgh	Medium-high	Low along the coastline. Negligible within the town's interior.	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor within the town's interior.	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor within the town's interior.	
Impact on visual receptors during		Co20	Inverallochy	Medium-high	Low along the coastline. Negligible within the hinterland.	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor within the hinterland.	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor within the hinterland.	

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array							listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
		Co20	St Combs	Medium-high	Low along the coastline. Negligible within the village's interior.	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor within the village's interior.	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate / minor along the coastline. Minor within the village's interior.	
		Co20	Boddam	Medium-high	Low along the coastline.	Moderate / minor along the coastline.	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and	Moderate / minor along the coastline.	

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
					Negligible within the village's interior.	Minor within the hinterland.	beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor within the village's interior.	
Long-Distance Recreational Routes									
Impact on visual receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array	OAA	Co20	Formartine and Buchan Way	Medium-high	Negligible	Minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
Major Road Routes									
Impact on visual receptors during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array	OAA	Co20	A90	Medium	Negligible to zero	Minor to No Effect	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor to No Effect	Not Significant
		Co20	A950	Medium	Negligible to zero	Minor to No Effect	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as	Minor to No Effect	

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
							it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
Recreational Routes									
Impact on visual amenity including impacts of turbine lighting at night during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array	OAA	Co20	Aberdeenshire Coastal Trail	Medium-high	Negligible to zero	Minor to No Effect	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor to No Effect	Not Significant
		Co20	North East 250	Medium-high	Negligible to zero	Minor to No Effect	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect	Minor to No Effect	

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
							above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant		
Offshore Receptors									
Impact on visual amenity during operation and maintenance of the Offshore Array	OAA	Co20	Aberdeen to Orkney route	Medium-low	Medium-low along the closest parts of the route. Low over the majority of the wider and more distant parts of the route.	Minor	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Minor	Not Significant

Salamander Project Activity and Impact	Project Aspect	Embedded Mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of Effect	Additional Mitigation	Residual Significance of Effect	Significance of Effect in EIA terms
		Co20	Aberdeen and Shetland route	Medium-low	Medium along the closest parts of the route. Medium-low to low over the majority of the wider and more distant parts of the route.	Moderate / Minor along the closest parts of the route. Minor over the majority of the wider and more distant parts of the route.	No additional mitigation measures have been identified for this effect above and beyond the embedded mitigation listed in **Table 16-7** as it was concluded that the effect was Not Significant	Moderate / Minor	Not Significant

16.12 Mitigation and Monitoring

16.12.1.1 No additional mitigation or monitoring is required, as none of the impacts assessed alone were deemed significant in EIA terms.

16.13 Cumulative Effect Assessment

16.13.1.1 A Cumulative Effect Assessment (CEA) has been made based on existing and proposed developments in the Study Area **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 6.2: Cumulative Effects Assessment Technical Annex.** The approach to the CEA is described in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 6.2: Cumulative Effects Assessment Technical Annex**. Cumulative effects are defined as those effects on a receptor that may arise when the development is considered together with other projects.

16.13.1.2 The maximum spatial extent of potential effects on as SLVIA as identified within this chapter are determined by theoretical visibility of the Offshore Development, as informed by the ZTV, and professional judgement. Areas beyond this range are unlikely to experience any measurable change. As such, only plans or projects with potential to overlap spatially or temporally will be included in the cumulative assessment.

16.13.1.3 On this basis, the projects considered within this cumulative assessment are presented in **Table 16-16**. Further information on these projects is outlined in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 6.2: Cumulative Effects Assessment Technical Annex**.

16.13.2 Methodology

16.13.2.1 The CEA considers the impacts associated with the Offshore Development together with other relevant plans, projects and activities. Cumulative effects are therefore the additional or combined effect of the Offshore Development in combination with the effects from a number of different projects, on the same receptor.

16.13.2.2 The CEA has been undertaken based on the over-arching approach to the CEA described in **Volume ER.A.2, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology** and considers the Offshore Development's contribution to the cumulative effects. As part of this process, the assessment considers which of the effects assessed for the Offshore Array on their own have the potential to contribute to a cumulative effect, the data and information available to inform the cumulative assessment and the resulting confidence in any assessment that is undertaken. **Volume ER.A.2, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology** provides further details of the general framework and approach to the CEA.

16.13.2.3 For SLVIA the potential cumulative effects include additional changes to the Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity caused by the Offshore Array in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future. These include cumulative seascape / landscape effects on either the physical fabric or character of the seascape / landscape, or any special values attached to it; and cumulative visual effects caused by combined visibility, which occur where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint and / or sequential effects which occur when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments.

16.13.2.4 In undertaking this CEA for the Offshore Development it is important to bear in mind that other projects and plans under consideration will have differing potential for proceeding to an operational stage and hence a differing potential to ultimately contribute to a cumulative effect alongside the Offshore Array. Therefore, a tiered approach has been adopted. This provides a framework for placing relative weight upon the potential for each project / plan included in the CEA to be realised, based upon the project / plan's current stage of

maturity and certainty in the projects' parameters. The tiered approach utilised within the CEA of the Offshore Array employs the tiers as set out in **Section 16.13.3**. Operational and under construction projects are considered as part of the baseline in accordance with guidance (Landscape Institute, 2013).

16.13.2.5 The projects and plans selected as relevant to the CEA presented within this chapter are based upon the results of a screening exercise (see **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 6.2: Cumulative Effects Assessment Technical Annex** of the EIA Report). Each project or plan has been considered on a case by case basis for screening in or out of this chapter's assessment based upon data confidence, effect-receptor pathways and the spatial / temporal scales involved. A comprehensive 'long list' of projects was reviewed, and those within the 60 km SLVIA Study Area (**Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 10-14**), were selected from the 'long-list'.

16.13.2.6 As agreed with MD-LOT and Aberdeenshire Council, the CEA has not considered projects without detailed impact data available at scoping or which have not submitted scoping requests up to six months before the submission of the application for the Offshore Development. These projects will need to include any impacts from the Salamander Project in their cumulative effect assessments when they submit a consent application.

16.13.3 Cumulative Effects Assessment of Projects at Different Development Stages

16.13.3.1 The details of how the CEA will be undertaken are set out in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology, Section 10.10.1.8**.

16.13.3.2 The specific projects scoped into the CEA for coastal (seascape), landscape and visual receptors, are set out in **Table 16-16**. The project design scenarios identified in **Table 16-16** for each project have been selected as those having the potential to result in the greatest effect on an identified receptor or receptor group.

16.13.3.3 Development Stage 1: Plans or projects which are operational or in construction are assessed as part of the main assessment in **Section 16.11** of this SLVIA.

16.13.3.4 **Table 16-16** sets out the specific projects scoped into the CEA for coastal (seascape), landscape and visual receptors.

Table 16-16 Summary of Projects Considered for the Cumulative Effects Assessment in Relation to the Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity

Project	Status	Project Worst-case	Approximate distance to shore (km) from cumulative development boundary	How assessed?
***Development Stage 2**: Plans or projects which have been granted a consent but are not yet under construction*				
No consented but not yet under construction projects within SLVIA Study Area	N/A	N/A	N/A	Development stage 2 not considered any further in CEA as no consented projects within the SLVIA Study Area.
***Development Stage 3**: Plans or projects with an application submitted*				

Project	Status	Project Worst-case	Approximate distance to shore (km) from cumulative development boundary	How assessed?
Green Volt Floating Offshore Wind Farm	Consent Application Submitted	35 WTGs x 242 m blade tip height (220 m rotor diameter)	80 km	The impacts from the Salamander Project are assessed alongside impacts from the application stage Green Volt Floating Offshore Wind Farm below.
***Development Stage 4**: Projects which have submitted a scoping request*				
Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm	Scoping (offshore wind)	67 floating WTGs x 340 m blade tip height (300 m rotor diameter).	63 km	The impacts from the Salamander Project are assessed alongside impacts from the scoping stage Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm and MarramWind Offshore Wind Farm below.
MarramWind Offshore Wind Farm	Scoping (offshore wind)	225 floating WTGs x 350 m blade tip height (326 m rotor diameter).	75 km	

16.13.4 Cumulative Effects Assessment Development Stage 3: Plans or Projects with an Application Submitted

16.13.4.1 Projects with an application submitted within the SLVIA Study Area consist of Green Volt Floating Offshore Wind Farm, as identified in **Table 16-16** and **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.14**. The closest point of the Green Volt Floating Offshore Wind Farm is located approximately 80 km from shore. In its Scoping Opinion, The Scottish Ministers (MD-LOT, April 2022) (para 5.14) were content that no SLVIA was required for the Green Volt Floating Wind Farm due to the distance from shore and agreed to scope seascape, landscape and visual receptors out of the EIA on the basis that the distance from shore means no adverse impacts are likely.

16.13.4.2 On this basis and due to the lack of potential cumulative impact pathways between Green Volt Floating Offshore Wind Farm and the proposed development, this CEA finds that there is no likelihood of the proposed development resulting in additional cumulative effects with Green Volt Floating Offshore Wind Farm on coastal (seascape), landscape or visual receptors, due to the very long distance of Green Volt (80 km) from the coastline. Development stage 3 projects are consequently not considered further within the CEA and not shown in the viewpoint wireline visualisations in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figures 16.15 to 10.29**.

16.13.5 Cumulative Effects Assessment Development Stage 4: Projects Which Have Submitted a Scoping Request

16.13.5.1 Projects with a scoping request submitted within the SLVIA Study Area consist of MarramWind Offshore Wind Farm and Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm, as identified in **Table 16-16** and **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.14**.

16.13.5.2 The closest point of MarramWind Offshore Wind Farm is approximately 75 km from shore. In its Scoping Opinion, The Scottish Ministers (MD-LOT, May 2023) (para 5.13) were content that given the distance from shore, the SLVIA for the offshore elements located within MarramWind Offshore Wind Farm could be scoped out of the EIA.

16.13.5.3 Similarly, the closest point of the Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm is located approximately 63 km from shore. In its Scoping Opinion, The Scottish Ministers (MD-LOT, September 2023) (para 5.12) agreed with NatureScot's that the SLVIA for the offshore elements of the Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm could be scoped out of the EIA. In its advice on the EIA Scoping Report for Muir Mhòr (NatureScot, August 2023), NatureScot agreed that the proposed development in the wind farm array area and the export cable corridor to MHWS was unlikely to give rise to significant effects to coastal character and / or visual receptors and therefore could be scoped out of the EIA.

16.13.5.4 On this basis and due to the lack of potential cumulative impact pathways between the Salamander Project, MarramWind Offshore Wind Farm and Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm, this CEA finds that there is no likelihood of the Offshore Development contributing to cumulative effects with these cumulative projects, due to their very long distance from the coastline. Development stage 4 projects are therefore not considered further in the CEA and are not shown in the viewpoint wireline visualisations in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figures 16.15 to 16.29.**

16.14 Assessment of Impacts Cumulatively with the Onshore Development

16.14.1.1 There is potential for the OAA to have impacts cumulatively with the Onshore Development from locations where their ZTV overlap. The Onshore Development components are summarised in **Volume ER.A.2, Chapter 4: Project Description**. These project aspects have been considered in relation to the impacts assessed within this chapter.

16.14.1.2 The seascape, landscape and visual receptors that may be affected cumulatively by both the OAA and the Onshore Development include the South Inch to Peterhead (LCCA 5), which characterises the closest section of coastline from which the Offshore Development may be visible, while also adjoining the Onshore Development Area; and the Beaches, Dunes and Links -Aberdeenshire (LCT 12), that will host the Onshore Development, including the Onshore Substation (OnSS), Energy Balancing Infrastructure (EBI) and Battery Storage Area.

16.14.1.3 No significant project alone effects on coastal (seascape) character, landscape character or visual receptors as a result of the Offshore Development have been assessed. This is primarily due to its small scale, limited visibility and long distance offshore from this coastline, and the presence of similar development within the baseline (Hywind Scotland) and the influence of other terrestrial energy developments within the coastal character.

16.14.1.4 While there is potential for cumulative effects to occur from receptors in the locality of the Onshore Development Area, the lack of potential significant project alone effects from the Offshore Development on any of the coastal (seascape), landscape and visual receptors means that any potential additional cumulative

effects are also unlikely to be significant (as an addition to effects arising from the Onshore Development) given the factors assessed (its small scale, limited visibility and long distance offshore).

16.15 Transboundary Effects

16.15.1.1 Transboundary effects arise when impacts from a development within one European Economic Area (EEA) states affects the environment of another EEA state(s).

16.15.1.2 There is no potential for significant transboundary effects with regard to the seascape, landscape and visual topic from the Offshore Development upon the interests of other EEA states as it lies entirely within Scottish waters. For this reason transboundary impacts have not been considered in this Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity chapter.

16.16 Inter-related Effects

16.16.1 Introduction

16.16.1.1 The following assessment considers the potential for inter-related effects to arise across the three project phases (i.e. Project lifetime effects) as well as the interaction of multiple effects on a receptor (i.e. receptor-led effects).

- Project lifetime effects are considered to be effects that occur throughout more than one phase of the Salamander Project, (Construction, Operation and Maintenance, and Decommissioning) to interact to potentially create a more significant effect on a receptor, than if just assessed in isolation in these three key project phases (e.g. Construction phase, Operation and Maintenance phase and Decommissioning).
- Receptor-led effects involve spatially or temporal interaction of effects, to create inter-related effects on a receptor or receptor group. Receptor-led effects might be short term, temporary or transient effects, or incorporate longer term effects.

16.16.1.2 It is important to note that the inter-related effects assessment considers only effects produced by the offshore elements of the Salamander Project and not from other projects, which are considered within **Section 16.13**.

16.16.1.3 The significance of the individual effects, as determined in **Section 16.11** is presented herein for each receptor group. A descriptive assessment of the scope for these individual effects to interact to create a different or greater effect has then been undertaken. This assessment incorporates qualitative and, were reasonably possible, quantitative assessments. It should be noted that the following assessment does not assign significance of effect for inter-related effects; rather, any inter-related effects that will be of greater significance than the individual effects acting in isolation on a given receptor are identified and discussed.

16.16.2 Project Lifetime Effects

16.16.2.1 Project lifetime effects are effects that occur throughout more than one phase of the Salamander Project, (Construction, Operation and Maintenance, and Decommissioning) to interact to potentially create a more significant effect on a receptor.

16.16.2.2 **Table 16-17** considers the impact interactions identified and Project lifetime effects on receptors across all development phases.

16.16.2.3 Although the assessment is broken down into different receptors based upon both physical and policy definitions (seascape character, landscape character, designations and views / visual receptors), the actual receptor in each case are the people perceiving the effect. Therefore, these people will only perceive the

effect in one way (visually) at one point in time, and will not experience the construction, operation and decommissioning phases simultaneously, or across multiple pathways.

Table 16-17 Interaction between impacts – phase and lifetime assessment

Highest significance level				
Receptor	*Construction and decommissioning*	*Operation and maintenance*	*Phase assessment*	*Lifetime assessment*
Seascape character receptors – changes to seascape character	Not significant	Not significant	No greater than individually assessed impact	No greater than individually assessed impact
Landscape character receptors – changes to character and qualities of designated landscapes	Not significant	Not significant	No greater than individually assessed impact	No greater than individually assessed impact
Visual receptors – changes to views experienced by people from specific and representative viewpoints and visual receptors	Not significant	Not significant	No greater than individually assessed impact	No greater than individually assessed impact

16.16.3 Receptor Led Effects

16.16.3.1 Receptor-led effects involve spatially or temporal interaction of effects, to create inter-related effects on a receptor or receptor group. Receptor-led effects are where effects from different environmental aspects combine spatially and temporally on a receptor and for seascape, landscape and visual, these inter-related effects are:

- **Volume ER.A.3, Chapter 17: Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage** – Temporary (during construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases), long-term (during operation and maintenance phase only) and reversible (post-decommissioning) addition of Proposed Development resulting in direct effect to views from and indirect effect to perceived

character of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs). **Section 16.12** informs assessments within Chapter 17;

- **Volume ER.A.3, Chapter 19: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation** – Temporary (during construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases), long-term (during operation and maintenance phase only) and reversible (post-decommissioning) addition of Proposed Development resulting in indirect effect to visitor and tourist use of the coast including receptors such as beaches, recreational routes, golf courses and visitor attractions. **Section 16.12** informs assessments within Chapter 19.

16.16.3.2 In the SLVIA, inter-related receptor-led effects may also occur where specific receptors may be affected by both the construction and operation of the Offshore Development and the construction and operation of the Onshore Development (i.e. onshore substation, EBI and battery storage area, onshore cable corridor and landfall location).

16.16.3.3 An assessment of significant inter-related effects has been undertaken below to assess any areas where the construction and operation of the Offshore Development and the construction and operation of the Onshore Development combine, or inter-relate, to have an effect. For example, visibility of the Offshore Development and the onshore substation, from a particular viewpoint or CCA, may interact to produce a different, or greater effect on a receptor than when the effects are considered in isolation.

16.16.3.4 In the SLVIA, no significant effects have been assessed as arising from the Offshore Development during Construction, Operation and Maintenance, and Decommissioning.

16.16.3.5 The majority of receptors in the SLVIA Study Area will not experience inter-related effects, since they have either no visibility, or very limited / distant visibility, of either the Offshore Development or the Onshore Development, and therefore have limited potential for inter-related effects to occur. Inter-related effects will only occur on those receptors near the onshore substation and landfall, where the construction and operational of the onshore infrastructure will occur in areas that may also be susceptible to changes resulting from views of the Offshore Development.

16.16.3.6 Combined visibility of both the Offshore Development and the Onshore Development will be restricted to the coastline and its immediate hinterland within the vicinity of the onshore substation and landfall, however there is notable screening by forestry around the onshore substation, that tends to restrict views of either the Offshore Development or the Onshore Development. While there may be visibility of both Onshore and Offshore Developments, they will generally not be seen together due to the intervening distance (approximately 33 km) and their separate geographic locations relative to each other.

16.16.3.7 It is considered that screening by surface elements including dunes, landform and coniferous forestry will restrict visibility of the Offshore Development from much of the area near the onshore substation, including the A90 corridor and smaller settlements along this route. Lunderton Cottages and Lunderton will have no visibility of the Offshore Development, while its visibility from Inverquizie may be severely restricted. Further afield, the Offshore Development will be visible from higher areas further inland such as at St Fergus and Hallmoss which also have visibility of Hywind Scotland. A lack of visibility of the Onshore Development from these areas means that the effects of the Salamander Project at these locations will be the same as for the Offshore Development alone.

16.16.3.8 Views in which both the Offshore Development and Onshore Development will be most noticeable are likely to occur in the local geographic area between Craigewen and Kirktown Head, where more of the Onshore Development will be visible at close-range and the Offshore Development will be visible at long range in wider views out to sea. Visibility of the Onshore and Offshore Developments will be consecutive rather than simultaneous, in different sections of the view, with the effects of both remaining similar in magnitude to

their effects when considered individually. The combined magnitude of change of both the Offshore Development and the Onshore Development will be slightly higher than for either alone, but not markedly due to the distance of the Offshore Development at very long range out to sea. The inter-related effects on these visual receptors in the coastal area between Craigewen and Kirktown Head are assessed as being of no greater effect significance compared to the impacts considered alone for the onshore substation. This reflects the position and scale of the Offshore Development relative to the expansive seascape of the North Sea and the precedents of offshore WTGs (Hywind Scotland) and elements of energy infrastructure on land along the coastline.

16.16.3.9 Bearhill lies directly inland of the Onshore Substation Site with the OAA directly to the east. This area will have simultaneous visibility of both the Onshore Development and the Offshore Development. The combined magnitude of change of both Onshore and Offshore Developments will be slightly higher than for either alone, but not markedly due to the distance of the Offshore Development at very long range out to sea. The inter-related effects on these visual receptors at Bearhill are assessed as being of no greater effect significance compared to the impacts considered alone for the onshore substation. This reflects the relatively modest scale of both the Onshore Substation and EBI relative to the surrounding landscape and the Offshore Development relative to the expansive seascape of the North Sea and the sea horizon. Both developments will have some visual precedent, including the WTGs of Hywind Scotland; and the elements of energy infrastructure on land.

16.17 Conclusion and Summary

16.17.1.1 This chapter of the EIAR has considered the potential effects of the Offshore Development on Seascape, Landscape and Visual amenity within the SLVIA Study Area, in line with current guidance and according to a defined methodology it is only the visible elements of the Offshore Array that will affect Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity, only the effects of the Offshore Array have been assessed.

16.17.1.2 Information on Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity within the SLVIA Study Area was collected through desktop review, site surveys and consultation.

16.17.1.3 The SLVIA has identified and assessed the significance of changes resulting from the Construction, Operation and Maintenance and Decommissioning of the Offshore Array. This was carried out in relation to both the coastal (seascape) and landscape character, as environmental resources in their own right and on people's views and visual amenity, including at night, as well considering the cumulative effects of the Offshore Array with other projects. Findings of significance arising from the Offshore Array were made according to the methodology and using professional judgement informed by previous experience of similar projects.

16.17.1.4 The siting of the OAA approximately 35 km offshore from Peterhead forms the key designed in measure which minimises potential for significant coastal (seascape), landscape and visual effects. The spatial scope of the SLVIA Study Area is shown in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology, Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.2** and is defined as the area within 60 km of the OAA.

16.17.1.5 The Project Design Envelope is described in **Volume ER.A.2, Chapter 4: Project Description** and has been refined during preparation of this chapter and production of supporting figures and visualisations. Notably, the WTGs have reduced in height from those shown in **Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.29.** For the purpose of this assessment and in compliance with EIA Regulations, the Project parameters used in this chapter are considered to constitute a realistic 'worst-case' scenario.

16.17.1.6 In accordance with GLVIA3 (Landscape Institute, 2013, paragraph 7.13), the baseline for both landscape and visual effects assessments includes operational and under construction offshore and onshore wind farms.

These projects are shown in **Volume ER.A.4, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Methodology, Volume ER.A.5, Annex 16.1: SLVIA Visualisations, Figure 16.2**.

16.17.1.7 The coastal character of the northeast Aberdeenshire coast (LCCAs 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) was assessed as being of medium-high to low sensitivity. This range of sensitivity ratings reflects the coverage of the coast beyond the towns of Peterhead and Fraserburgh by the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. The magnitude of change to this coastal character due to the Offshore Array was assessed as low along the coastline and negligible within the hinterland from South Inch to Peterhead (LCCA 5), along the urban coastline within Peterhead and north of Boddam and from Boddam to Stirling Craig and The Skares to Rockend (LCCA 7).

16.17.1.8 The coastal landscape character (LCTs 11 and 12) assessed as being of medium-high sensitivity, reflecting coverage by the North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA. The magnitude of change to this coastal landscape character due to the Offshore Array was assessed as negligible. The inland landscape character was assessed as being of low sensitivity and the magnitude of change due to the Offshore Array was assessed as negligible.

16.17.1.9 It was determined that the effects of the Offshore Development on the North East Aberdeenshire SLA will be limited to indirect, visual effects on its seascape setting. Relatively few of the SLA's special qualities will be affected and these were found to remain fundamentally unchanged by the Offshore Array.

16.17.1.10 The assessment found that the Offshore Array will be an observable new feature within the sea views seen from much of the coastal edge. The small scale of the Offshore Array relative to the seascape within which it will be seen and the presence of similar, existing development within Hywind Scotland will limit its visual effects. Visibility of the Offshore Array will decrease further inland as coastal features such as dunes, surface landscape elements and landform increasingly screen it from view. Visual receptors along this coast were assessed as being of high to medium sensitivity and the magnitude of change due to the Offshore Array was assessed as low along much of the coastline, dropping to negligible near Collieston.

16.17.1.11 The night-time visual assessment determined visual receptors to be of medium sensitivity and the magnitude of change due to the Offshore Development to be low.

16.17.1.12 In general, the CEA found there to be little potential for additional cumulative effects on coastal (seascape), landscape or visual receptors due to the Offshore Array and other potential OWF projects. The CEA found that the Offshore Development will not have additional cumulative effects on coastal (seascape), landscape or visual receptors with the scoping stage Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm and MarramWind Offshore Wind Farm; and application stage Green Volt Floating Offshore Wind Farm due to the distance of these projects from the coastline (63 km, 75 km and 80 km).

16.17.1.13 No significant effects, in EIA terms, on coastal (seascape) character, landscape character, designated landscapes or visual receptors at representative viewpoints have been identified in the assessment.

16.17.1.14 No monitoring to test the predictions made within the Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity chapter or additional mitigation is considered necessary.

16.18 References

Aberdeenshire Council (2023c). Formartine and Buchan Way. Available at: https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/paths-and-outdoor-access/long-distance-routes/formartine-and-buchan-way/.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2014). Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri and L.A. Meyer (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, 151 pp.

Landscape Institute and IEMA (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. 3rd edition. Routledge. (GLVIA3)

Landscape Institute (2019). Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19.

Landscape Institute (2021). Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02/21.

Land Use Consultants (2011). An assessment of the impacts of climate change on Scottish landscapes and their contribution to quality of life: Phase 1 - Final report. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 488.

MD-LOT (Marine Directorate – Licencing Operations Team), (2023). Scoping Opinion adopted by the Scottish Ministers under: The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 and Electricity Act 1989 Salamander Offshore Wind Farm. 21 June 2023. https://marine.gov.scot/node/24085 [Accessed December 2023]

MD-LOT (Marine Directorate – Licensing Operations Team), (2023). Scoping Opinion for Salamander Offshore Wind Farm.

NatureScot (2018a). A Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment, Appendix 2: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Version 5.

NatureScot (2018b). Guidance Note: Coastal Character Assessment.

NatureScot (unpublished, 2018). Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities, working draft 11

NatureScot (2021). Offshore Renewables: Guidance on assessing the impact on coastal landscape and seascape.

NatureScot (2017a). Siting and designing wind farms in the landscape. Version 3a.

NatureScot (2017b). Visual Representation of Wind Farms: Good Practice Guidance. Version 2.2.

NatureScot (2019). National Landscape Character Assessment of Scotland.

Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Ltd. (SBES) (2023). Salamander Offshore Wind Farm, Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report. Available online at: https://marine.gov.scot/sites/default/files/salamander_offshore_wind_farm_-_scoping_report.pdf

Planning Policy

Aberdeenshire Council (2023a). Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023.

Aberdeenshire Council (2023b). Appendix 13 Aberdeenshire Special Landscape Areas

Legislation

Civil Aviation Authority (2016). The Air Navigation Order 2016.

HM Government (2009). Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents.