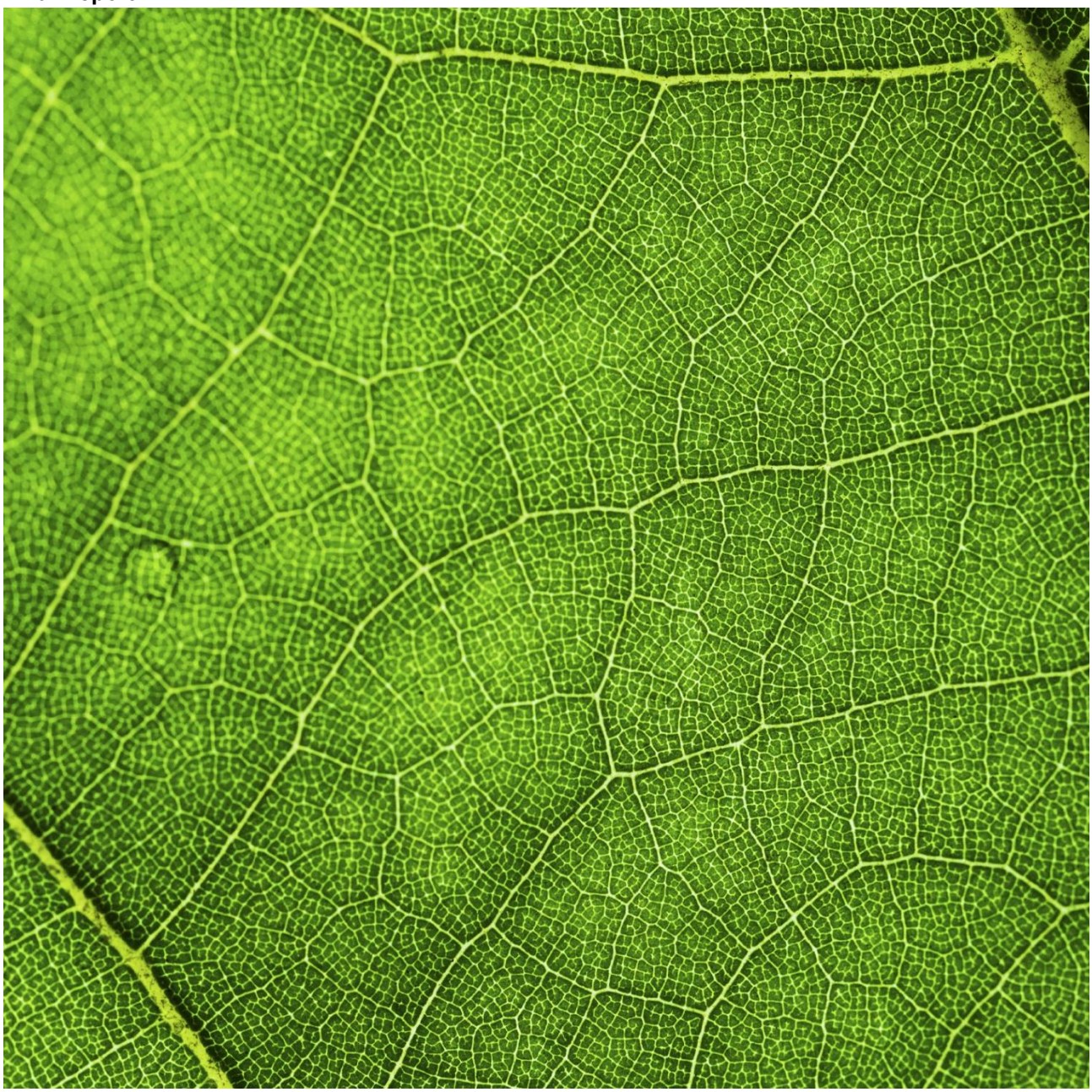
ScottishPower Renewables

MachairWind Offshore Windfarm

Appendix 16.2: Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities

Final Report



ScottishPower Renewables

MachairWind Offshore Windfarm
Appendix 16.2: Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities

Project Number
12059

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1.	Draft report	LC EC JH	LC	PM	24.10.2025
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Contents

Figures

Appendix 16.2
Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities

Introduction

1.1 This Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (AESLQ) is independent of, but draws upon, the findings of the Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) contained in Chapter 16 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report (EIAR). This AESLQ provides an assessment of the potential effects of MachairWind Offshore Wind Farm ("the Project") on the key special qualities of National Scenic Areas (NSA), which are set out in 'The special qualities of the National Scenic Areas' (Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), 2010).

1.2 The methodology for this AESLQ is based on NatureScot's 'Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on assessing effects' (2025). Special Landscape Qualities (SLQ) are defined in the guidance as "*the characteristics that make a designated landscape special in terms of landscape and scenery, both individually and combined. They are qualities that are perceived and experienced by people, affecting the sense of place*."

1.3 The scope of the assessment was agreed with NatureScot and Argyll and Bute Council as set out in the EIA Scoping Report and EIA Scoping Opinion, summarised in **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, Table 16.2. This included agreeing viewpoint locations (including within NSAs) and the relevant SLQs to consider in the AESLQ. It also included the consideration of Wild Land Area (WLA) key attributes and qualities to inform the AESLQ.

1.4 The following NSAs are considered in this assessment:

- Jura NSA (see **Figure A16.2.1**);
- Loch na Keal, Isle of Mull NSA (see **Figure A16.2.2**); and
- Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs NSA (see **Figure A16.2.3**).

1.5 Figures and visualisations referred to within this appendix can be found in **Chapter 16 SLVIA** and **Appendix 16.4 SLVIA Visualisations**. Figure 16.13 of **Chapter 16 SLVIA** illustrates the location of designated landscapes and WLA within the SLVIA Study Area and these are shown with the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) in Figure 16.14 of **Chapter 16 SLVIA**. Field work was undertaken to all three NSAs, and photographs are included in Annex A.

Policy Context

1.6 NSAs are designated under Part 10 of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 as areas "*of outstanding scenic value in a national context*". These areas are highly valued and represent parts of the country's finest landscapes, which are afforded the highest level of protection in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

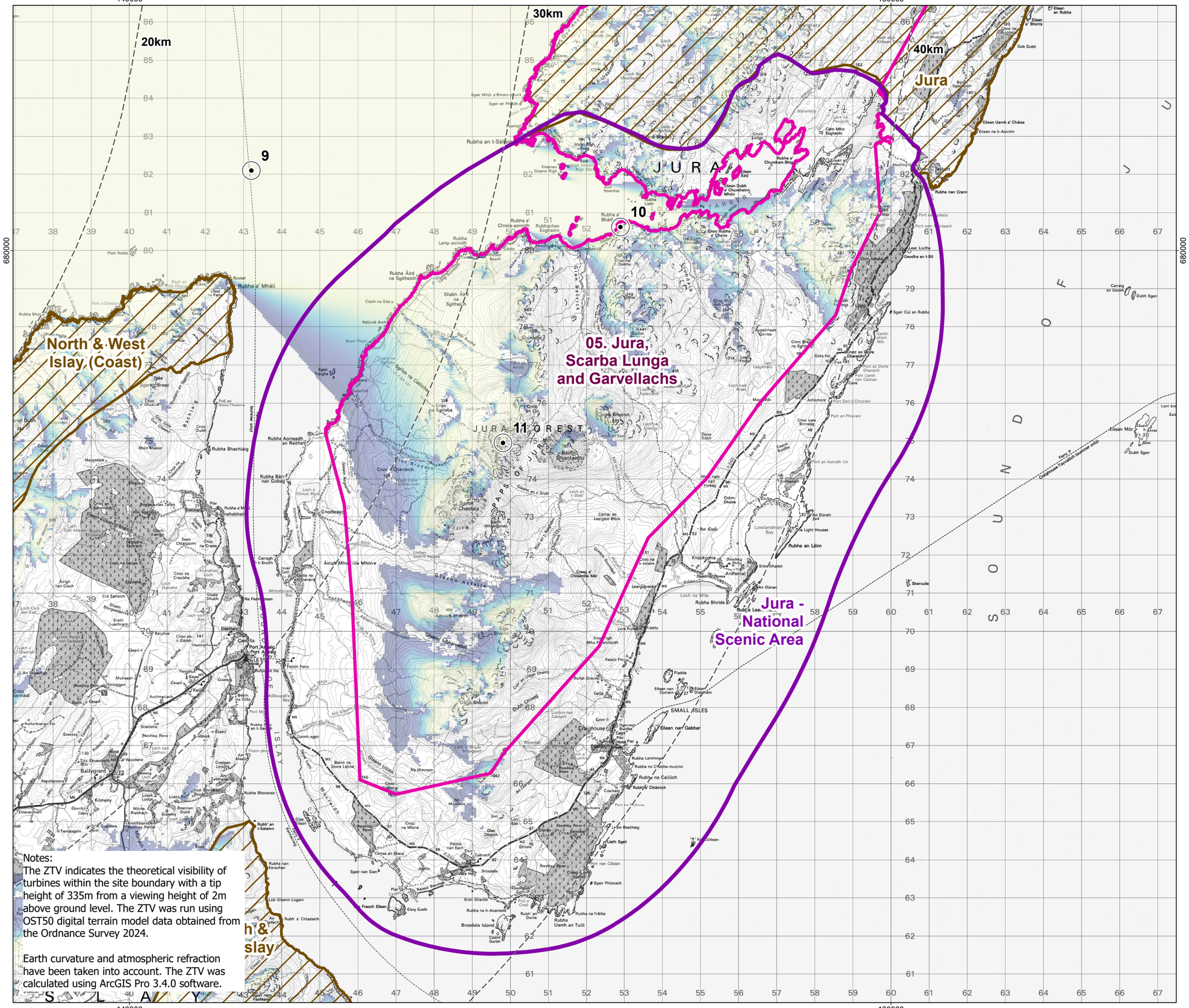
1.7 With regard to renewable energy development, NPF4 Policy 11e notes that: "*Development proposals that impact on international or national designations will be assessed in relation to Policy 4*."

1.8 NPF4 Policy 4c states that: "*Development proposals that will affect a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve will only be supported where:*

- *i. The objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or*
- *ii. Any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance*."

1.9 Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (LDP) 2 (Argyll and Bute Council, 2024) Policy 70: Development Impact on National Scenic Areas states that "*Argyll and Bute Council will resist any development in, or affecting, National Scenic Areas that would compromise the objectives of their designation and the overall integrity of the area either individually or cumulatively, or that would fail to safeguard Special Qualities of the area…*"

1.10 This AESLQ provides information in relation to NPF4 Policy 4c and Argyll and Bute LDP2 Policy 70 as described above.



Notes:
The ZTV indicates the theoretical visibility of turbines within the site boundary with a tip height of 335m from a viewing height of 2m above ground level. The ZTV was run using OST50 digital terrain model data obtained from the Ordnance Survey 2024.

Earth curvature and atmospheric refraction have been taken into account. The ZTV was calculated using ArcGIS Pro 3.4.0 software.

10km interval from windfarm development area

Local Landscape Area

Wild Land Area

National Scenic Area: Jura

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

More turbines visible

Less turbines visible

Viewpoint

9: Colonsay – Port Askaig Ferry

10: Loch Tarbert, Jura

11: Beinn an Oir, Jura

N

0 6 Kilometres

REV	REV DATE	GIS CREATOR	GIS REVIEWER	TECHNICAL CHECKER	TECHNICAL APPROVER
2	30/01/2026	DS	TH	LC	PM

DRAWING NUMBER	MCW-DWF-ENV-MAP-RHS-000020		
DATUM	OSGB36 (EPSG:27700)	PROJECTION	Transverse Mercator
SCALE	1:97,000	PAGE SIZE	A3
PROJECT TITLE	MachairWind		

Figure A16.2.1:
Jura
National Scenic Area - Blade Tip Height (335m)
Zone of Theoretical Visibility

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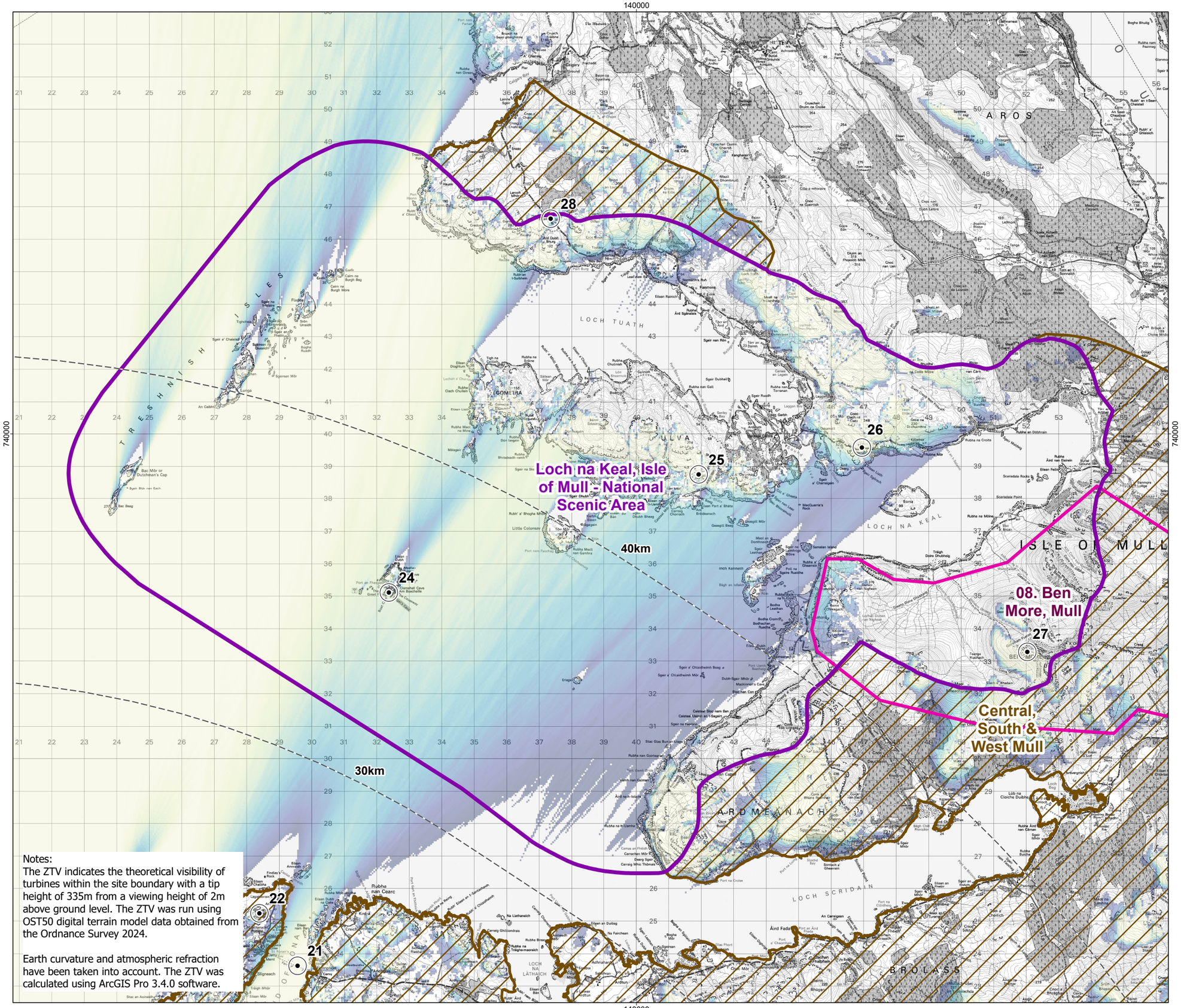


10km interval from windfarm development area

Local Landscape Area

Wild Land Area

National Scenic Area: Loch na Keal, Isle of Mull

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

More turbines visible

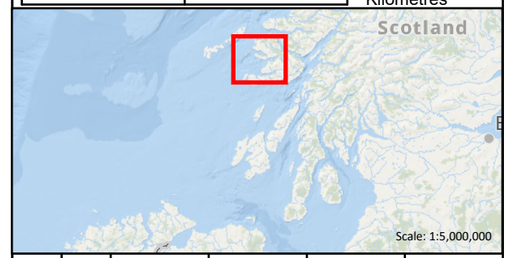
Less turbines visible

Viewpoint

21: Mull – Iona Ferry
22: Dun I, Iona
24: Staffa
25: Ulva
26: B8085 Mull
27: Ben More, Mull
28: Cruachan Treshnish Cairn, Mull

N

0 6 Kilometres



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DATUM	OSGB36 (EPSG:27700)	PROJECTION	Transverse Mercator
SCALE	1:113,000	PAGE SIZE	A3
PROJECT TITLE	MachairWind		

Figure A16.2.2:
Loch na Keal, Isle of Mull
National Scenic Area - Blade Tip Height (335m)
Zone of Theoretical Visibility

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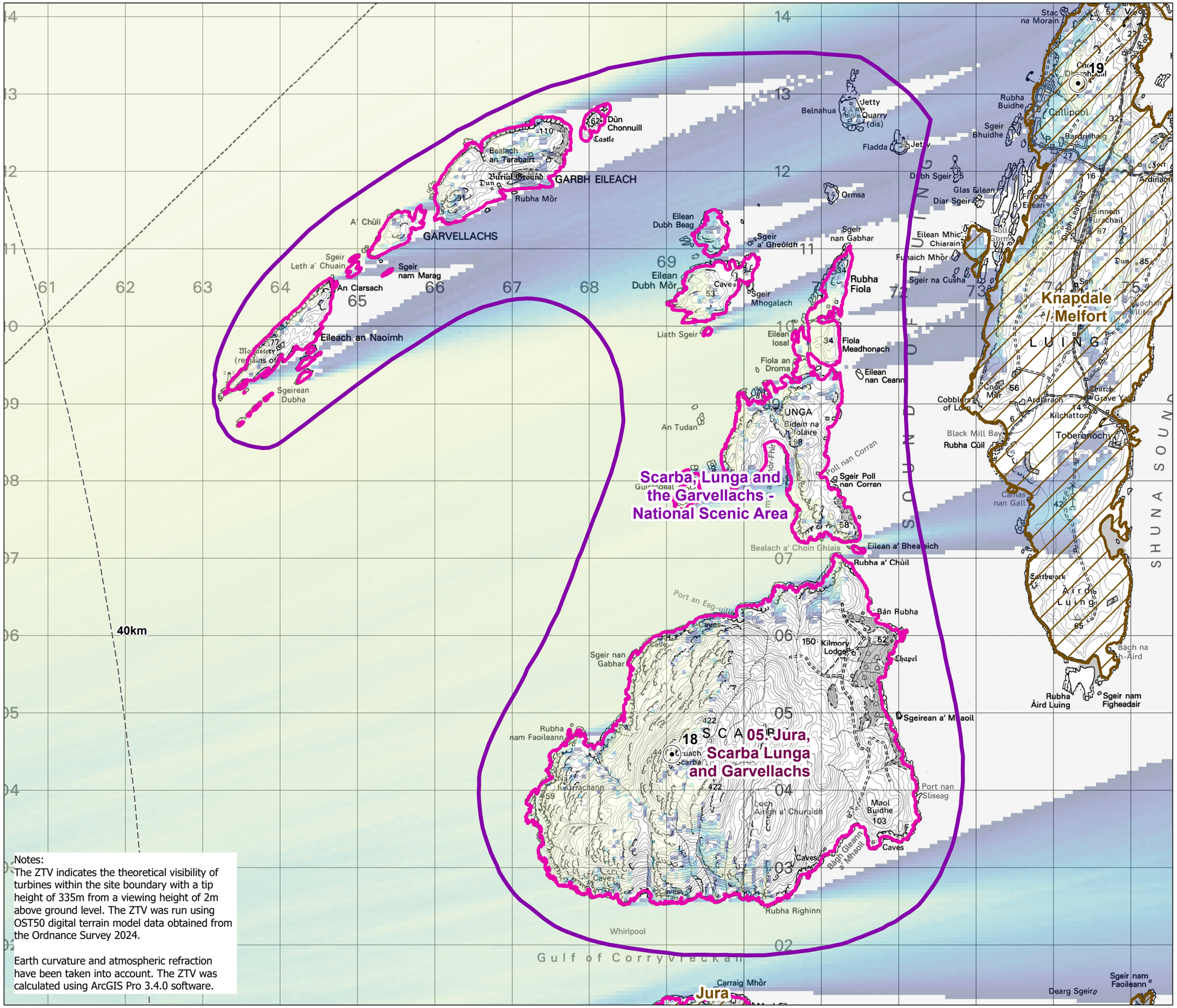


10km interval from windfarm development area

Local Landscape Area

Wild Land Area

National Scenic Area: Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

More turbines visible

Less turbines visible

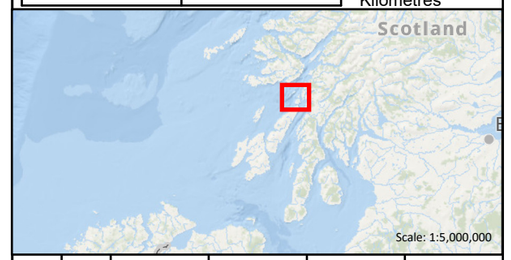
Viewpoint

18: Scarba

19: Cnoc Dhomnuill, Luing

N

0 3 Kilometres



REV	REV DATE	GIS CREATOR	GIS REVIEWER	TECHNICAL CHECKER	TECHNICAL APPROVER
2	30/01/2026	DS	TH	LC	PM

DRAWING NUMBER	MCW-DWF-ENV-MAP-RHS-000022		
DATUM	OSGB36 (EPSG:27700)	PROJECTION	Transverse Mercator
SCALE	1:48,000	PAGE SIZE	A3
PROJECT TITLE	MachairWind		

Figure A16.2.3:
Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs National Scenic Area - Blade Tip Height (335m) Zone of Theoretical Visibility

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Approach and Methodology

Guidance and References

1.11 The following list identifies the key documents and sources of information used in preparing the assessment:

- NatureScot (2025) Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on assessing effects;
- SNH (unpublished, 2018) Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (Working Draft 11);
- SNH (2010) The special qualities of the National Scenic Areas. SNH Commissioned Report No.374;
- NatureScot (2019) Scottish Landscape Character Types Maps and Descriptions;
- NatureScot (2017) Wild Land Area Descriptions;
- Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3);
- SNH (2017a) Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Version 2.2; and
- SNH (2017b) Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, Version 3.

Data Sources

- Ordnance Survey (OS) maps; and
- OS 'Terrain50' and 'Terrain5' Digital Terrain Model (DTM).

Methodology

1.12 The following steps are set out in NatureScot (2025) Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on assessing effects.

Step 1 - Review and describe the Project

1.13 The AESLQ draws upon **Chapter 3 Project Description** to identify and describe the main components of the Project, and to provide a summary of those which could affect the SLQs of the designated landscapes being considered. This also considers where there is potential for specific individual components, or the Project in its entirety, to have an effect on the SLQs. Gaining a thorough understanding of the Project allows the full extent of potential effects on the SLQs to be understood.

Step 2 - Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project

1.14 This step establishes the scope of the assessment including the extent of the AESLQ Study Area and the specific SLQs likely to be sensitive to the Project. The following key stages are set out in the guidance:

- Step 2a: Refer to relevant information which underpins the SLQs;
  - Refer to the SLQ report for the NSA or National Park and the SLQ descriptions (plus SLQ maps if available);
  - Refer to other landscape material which may provide more information or context for the SLQs. This may include landscape character, coastal character, WLA descriptions and sites of historic significance;
- Step 2b: Site visit and identify key SLQs;
  - Identify on site the likely key SLQs that are relevant to and might be affected by the Project. The AESLQ was informed by field work to all NSAs;

  - Consider how the individual key SLQs come together and are experienced by people;
  - Consider how the SLQs are experienced from different parts of the NSA, including whilst moving through the area and from key locations (for example arrival, exit or crossing points, hill tops, or public attractions);
- Step 2c: Identify the Study Area;
  - Identify the area over which the Project is likely to have effects on the key SLQs;
  - Produce a map of the Study Area showing its boundary, location of all elements of the Project and the assessment points;
- Step 2d: Assess the sensitivity of the key SLQs to the Project;
  - Assess the sensitivity of the key SLQs identified (Step 2b) to the Project within the Study Area (Step 2c);
  - Consider whether SLQs may be grouped where they interact or are experienced together, and provide a brief justification for the grouping;
  - Only take forward SLQs which are considered to be sensitive to the Project and likely to be significantly affected;
- Step 2e: Consult relevant organisations;
  - Discuss and agree key SLQs and proposed Study Area with relevant decision-making authority and/or consultees. A series of workshop meetings have been held with Argyll and Bute Council and NatureScot to discuss the Project, and the SLQs to be included in this AESLQ were agreed with NatureScot as set out in **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, Table 16.2.

Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs and design objectives

1.15 The guidance proposes an iterative assessment process, which takes into account design alternatives, potential effects and mitigation to reduce effects, until a solution is found which maximises positive effects and minimises adverse effects on the SLQs. The following key stages are set out in the guidance:

- Step 3a: Design objectives in direct response to SLQs;
- Step 3b: Assessment of effects on SLQs; and
- Step 3c: Further mitigation, design amendment and final assessment of residual effects.

1.16 NatureScot's 'Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on assessing effects' was published in January 2025. Earlier landscape analysis and design advice was informed by the unpublished draft of NatureScot's Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (Working Draft 11, 2018). In accordance with Step 3a, design objectives were discussed with NatureScot and are presented in **Appendix 15 Design Strategy**.

Step 4 - Summary of significant effects on SLQs

1.17 The final stage draws together the assessment to present a clear and transparent summary of the predicted significant residual effects on SLQs. This provides evidence to inform judgements made by decision makers. As set out in the guidance, the summary includes:

- "*The relevant SLQs, i.e. those for which likely significant effects are predicted, both individual and grouped;*
- *The nature and magnitude of effects on relevant SLQs;*
- *The location, extent and distribution of effects on the SLQs, for example whether these are localised, extensive, isolated or repeated and how these are encountered. This should also consider different effects during day and night and the seasons;*

- *The nature and pattern of effects on the SLQs in relation to both the extent of the SLQ and the wider NSA or National Park;*
- *An indication of the range of people who will experience the effects on the SLQs;*
- *How the final proposal reduces adverse effects on the SLQs through design and mitigation or enhancement measures. Where relevant, how it meets the design objectives; and*
- *Potential cumulative effects[1] with other proposals over time, for example contributing to incremental effects on SLQs.*"

Significance of Effects

1.18 The assessment draws on both landscape and visual criteria, as set out in Appendix 16.1 SLVIA and Visualisation Methodology.

1.19 Judgements of susceptibility and value inform the evaluation of sensitivity of the SLQ to change. The value of the SLQs is judged to be high, given the national status of the designation and the high level of policy protection given to it.

1.20 Scale and geographical extent inform the evaluation of magnitude of change, whilst effects are considered to be long-term (in respect of duration) and reversible (in respect of reversibility), unless otherwise stated. Moderate or major effects are considered to be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations. All effects are assumed to be adverse.

The Project (Step 1)

1.21 The site selection process is described in **Chapter 4 Site Selection and Alternatives**. Chapter 4 also describes the refinement of the WDA boundary from the Option Agreement Area (OAA) (754 km^2) through to the WDA presented in the EIA (448 km^2). The refinement of the WDA boundary was informed by Project engineering and environmental constraints, including seascape, landscape and visual considerations. and stakeholder feedback. The northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the WDA were refined to increase distances to landscape and visual receptors, which also reduced the horizontal spread of Wind Turbine Generators (WTG) in some key views. The Project is located approximately 12.4 km to the west of Colonsay and 15 km to the northwest of Islay.

1.22 The Project is described in detail in **Chapter 3 Project Description**. The final design of the WDA will be confirmed by detailed engineering surveys and studies post-consent, and will be informed by the design objectives set out in **Appendix 15 Design Strategy**. The SLVIA is based on a 'worst-case' design scenario as set out in **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, Table 16.4. This includes assumptions in relation to marine navigation and aviation lighting. This comprises up to 91 WTGs (up to 335 m height to tip above Lowest Astronomical Tide, with visible aviation warning lighting on 36 WTGs) and two Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs).

1.23 Committed mitigation measures of relevance to the assessment are set out in **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, Table 16.13. Effects identified in this assessment are residual and take embedded mitigation measures into account.

1.24 Effects are considered to arise mainly from the introduction of the proposed WTGs including visible aviation and marine navigation lighting (as detailed in **Appendix 12 Outline Lighting and Marking Plan**). Effects arising from the introduction of OSPs are less likely to result in significant effects on SLQs and are not considered further. As the Project is located outside of NSAs, effects on SLQs are indirect and relate to the more perceptual aspects of the SLQs.

[1] Given the limited nature of other windfarm proposals within the SLVIA study area, no cumulative assessment was undertaken.

Assessment of Effects (Steps 2-4)

Jura NSA

Location and Extents

1.25 Jura NSA is located approximately 26 km to the southeast of the WDA at its closest point. The NSA extends across the southern half of Jura and includes the surrounding seascapes. The NSA borders the Jura Local Landscape Area (LLA) which encompasses the northern half of the island. Part of the NSA is within WLA 05. Jura, Scarba, Lunga and Garvellachs.

Study Area, Viewpoints and ZTV

1.26 The Study Area for the assessment is the NSA boundary (see **Figure A16.2.1**).

1.27 The following viewpoints have informed the assessment:

- LVIA Viewpoint 10: Loch Tarbert, Jura (Figure 16.2.10 of **Appendix 16.4**); and
- LVIA Viewpoint 11: Beinn an Oir, Jura (Figure 16.2.11 of **Appendix 16.4**).

1.28 The blade tip height ZTV map in **Figure A16.2.1** illustrates theoretical visibility of the Project from the NSA, at distances of between approximately 26 km and 40 km. There is theoretical visibility from the elevated summits and west-facing slopes of the Paps of Jura in the centre of the island (see Viewpoint 11: Beinn an Oir, Jura in Figure 16.2.11 of **Appendix 16.4**) and other summits and west-facing slopes including Beinn Bhreac (441 m above Ordnance Datum (AOD)), Scrinadle (508 m AOD), Glas Bheinn (562 m AOD) and Dubh Bheinn (530 m AOD). These mountains would screen views of the Project from the east of the NSA, as indicated by the ZTV. There is also theoretical visibility from the west coast of Jura, north of Rubha Aoineadh an Reithe extending into Loch Tarbert and enclosing shorelines (see Viewpoint 10: Loch Tarbert, Jura in Figure 16.2.10 of **Appendix 16.4**). There is no theoretical visibility from the south of the NSA along the Sound of Islay and Sound of Jura, due to intervening landform on Islay and Jura which would screen the Project.

Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities

1.29 The SLQs that may be affected by the Project are set out below. These were informed by desk studies and field work, and were agreed with stakeholders as set out in **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, Table 16.2:

- *The distinctive Paps of Jura;*
- *A continually varying coast;*
- *Large tracts of wild land;*
- *An island close yet remote;* and
- *The inaccessible Loch Tarbert.*

1.30 An assessment of effects on SLQs is set out in **Table 1.1** below.

Table 1.1 Assessment of Effects on the Special Landscape Qualities of Jura NSA

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
The distinctive Paps of Jura	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: *"The Paps of Jura tower over the whole landscape. Their steep, rounded cones rise out of the surrounding moorland, and their summits of silvery rock and scree provide unparalleled views to the Inner Hebrides, the Mull of Kintyre and beyond.* *Their distinctive profiles also make them readily identifiable landmarks, visible from much of the west coast, from the inland mountains and from as far afield as the north coast of Ireland."* This SLQ is related to the "*Large tracts of wild land*" and "*An island close yet remote*" SLQs. The following characteristics of relevant underlying landscape character types (LCTs) are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 35 - Rugged Mountains – *"Rugged, steep sided mountain ranges with a massive scale.* – *Diverse landform with gullies, scarp slopes and rocky screes.* – *Fast-flowing burns, waterfalls and small upland lochs are distinctive features.* – *Inaccessible and relatively uninhabited, with strong wildness qualities.* – *Dramatic mountain scenery."* The following WLA key attributes and qualities are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ WLA 05. Jura, Scarba, Lunga and Garvellachs – "*All-pervading influence of the sea and sense of being perched on the edge of the land.* – *Inaccessible and remote, with a strong sense of solitude, despite the proximity to the mainland.*	This SLQ relates primarily to the physical characteristics (shape, colour, texture) and distinctive profile of the Paps of Jura. The SLQ is largely focused on the visual prominence of the Paps in views from within the NSA, and towards it, from Islay and further afield. However, the SLQ description also notes outward views from the summits of the Paps, as "*unparalleled views to the Inner Hebrides, the Mull of Kintyre and beyond*." The summits of the Paps of Jura are approximately 32 km to the southeast of the WDA at its closest point. As noted in paragraph 1.28 above, there would be theoretical visibility of the Project from "*the distinctive Paps of Jura*" including the summit and west-facing slopes of Beinn an Oir and Beinn a' Chaolais, which form the central and southern Paps. The large bulk of Beinn an Oir would limit theoretical visibility from the eastern Pap, Beinn Shiantaidh, to its upper west-facing slopes and summit. While views towards the Paps of Jura are evident from the majority of the NSA and surrounding area, they are most fully experienced via an ascent of the three Paps, which is considered a "classic" and "challenging" hillwalk. The Project would affect outward views from the central and southern summit of the Paps (Beinn an Oir and Beinn a' Chaolais), as represented by Viewpoint 11: Beinn an Oir, Jura (Figure 16.2.11 of **Appendix 16.4**). In panoramic views from Beinn an Oir the Project would be seen in distant views to the northwest (approximately 32 km away). The WTGs would be seen beyond Islay and Colonsay, and mainly backclothed by the sea. The Project would affect the "*unparalleled views to the Inner Hebrides, the Mull of Kintyre and beyond*". At night, there would be visibility of turbine lighting. The physical characteristics of the Paps of Jura and their role as landmarks would not be affected. The Project would affect the "*unparalleled views to the Inner Hebrides, the Mull of Kintyre and beyond*" from the Paps, which forms part of the SLQ, but would not affect their physical characteristics or role as landmarks. The scale of change to the SLQ is judged to be medium. Views of the Project are largely limited to summits and northwest facing slopes. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
	– *Dramatic mountains, cliffs, islands, and tidal currents emphasise a sense of nature being in control.* – *Most signs of human activity are focussed within the southern part of the WLA, with few human artefacts or contemporary land use further north*." The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **medium**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **moderate and significant**.
A continually varying coast	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: "*Much of the appeal of the NSA lies in the variety of coastal scenery. There is the east coast of bays, beaches and headlands, in places settled and cultivated, and in the north with steep slopes descending straight into the sea. There is the short south coast with forestry plantations, Jura House, its associated garden, and the Singing Sands. There is the uninhabited and inaccessible west coast with its spectacular raised beaches and caves, and the remote Loch Tarbert in the north.*" This SLQ is related to "*The inaccessible Loch Tarbert*" SLQ. The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 49 - Island Mixed Farmland. – "*Indented rocky coastline with some small sandy bays*." ■ LCT 41 - Plateau Moorland – Argyll. – "*Inaccessible and relatively uninhabited, with special wildness qualities and sense of remoteness*." ■ LCT 55 - Coastal Parallel Ridges. – "*Narrow rocky ridges with a strong south-west/north-east alignment, which break down to form chains of rocky islands at the coast*.	This SLQ relates primarily to the physical characteristics of Jura's continually varying coastline and cites a number of locations from where this can be experienced. As illustrated by the ZTV in **Figure A16.2.1,** theoretical visibility of the Project is indicated from approximately 20 km of the west coast of the NSA, extending north from the offshore islet of Sgeir Traighe to much of the coastline of Loch Tarbet and the northern boundary of the NSA at Rubha an t-Sailein. The Project would be visible in the wider context of views from the west coast of Jura, which the SLQ description notes is uninhabited and inaccessible. While it is recognised that there would be some indirect effects on these aspects of the west coast (represented more specifically by the "*large tracts of wild land*" and "*inaccessible Loch Tarbert*" SLQs) there would be no effect on the physical characteristics of the raised beaches, cliffs, natural arches and caves. The Project would introduce WTGs into distant views from the NSA, approximately 28 to 30 km beyond its boundary, including visibility of turbine lighting at night. This would reduce the perception of remoteness but not the physical characteristics of the coast. The scale of change is judged to be small. Effects would be experienced in the west of the NSA. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low**.

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
	– *Horseshoe-shaped, narrow sandy bays and extensive mudflats*." The following WLA key attributes and qualities are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ WLA 05. Jura, Scarba, Lunga and Garvellachs – "*All-pervading influence of the sea and sense of being perched on the edge of the land.* – *Inaccessible and remote, with a strong sense of solitude, despite the proximity to the mainland.* – *Dramatic mountains, cliffs, islands, and tidal currents emphasise a sense of nature being in control.* – *Most signs of human activity are focussed within the southern part of the WLA, with few human artefacts or contemporary land use further north*." Sites of historic significance that contribute to this SLQ include listed buildings on the more settled east coast, including at Jura House, and a Conservation Area at Keils. The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **minor and not significant**.
Large tracts of wild land	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: "*Away from the coastal settlements of the south and east, there is little obvious sign of human impact. The moorland interior is clothed with natural vegetation of wet heath and peat, and is largely pathless.* *Whether alone on the moors, the Paps towering overhead, or wandering the uninhabited coasts of the west, or suddenly encountering a herd of deer, the sense of 'nature in charge' is overwhelming. This combination of remoteness and naturalness imbues much of the NSA with a great sense of wildness*."	This SLQ relates primarily to the physical and perceptual characteristics of remoteness, naturalness and wildness which define large parts of the NSA. The SLQ is most evident within the NSA where settlement and other signs of human impact are largely absent – namely the moorland interior that surrounds the Paps of Jura, and the west coast, including Loch Tarbert. As illustrated by the ZTV in **Figure A16.2.1**, theoretical visibility of the Project is indicated from the Paps of Jura, and intermediate height hills to the south, north and east, and from approximately 20 km of the west

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project	Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
This SLQ is related to "*The distinctive Paps of Jura*", "*An island close yet remote" and "The inaccessible Loch Tarbert"* SLQs. The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 41 - Plateau Moorland – Argyll. – "*Inaccessible and relatively uninhabited, with special wildness qualities and sense of remoteness.* – *Extensive areas of blanket bog.*" ■ LCT 35 - Rugged Mountains – "*Inaccessible and relatively uninhabited, with strong wildness qualities*." The following WLA key attributes and qualities are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ WLA 05. Jura, Scarba Lunga and Garvellachs – "*All-pervading influence of the sea and sense of being perched on the edge of the land.* – *Inaccessible and remote, with a strong sense of solitude, despite the proximity to the mainland.* – *Dramatic mountains, cliffs, islands, and tidal currents emphasise a sense of nature being in control.* – *Most signs of human activity are focussed within the southern part of the WLA, with few human artefacts or contemporary land use further north*." The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	coast of the NSA, extending north from the offshore islet of Sgeir Traighe to much of the coastline of Loch Tarbet and the boundary of the NSA at Rubha an t-Sailein. Theoretical visibility is largely absent from the moorland interior which forms the eastern extent of the NSA due to screening by a chain of hill summits to the west, including Scrinadle, the Paps of Jura, and Glas Bheinn. The Project would be seen in relatively distant views, approximately 30 km to the west of the NSA. Despite this intervening distance, the Project would affect this SLQ by introducing an obvious human impact into views, affecting the characteristics of remoteness, naturalness and wildness. This would include visibility of turbine lighting at night. The extent and experience of effects on this SLQ would vary according to the manner in which receptors move through the area. For instance, for those receptors ascending the Paps of Jura, the effects of the Project would be primarily experienced between the summits of Beinn an Oir and Beinn a' Chaolais. For those accessing the remote Glenbatrick Bay on an out-and-back hike along Evans' walk and Glen Batrick, the Project would only be visible upon reaching Loch Tarbert. For those traversing the west coast of Jura over multiple days, the Project would be seen more consistently in sequential views from approximately 20 km of the coast. The Project would introduce WTGs into distant views from the NSA, beyond its boundary. This would reduce the perception of remoteness, naturalness and wildness. The scale of change is judged to be medium. Effects would mainly be experienced in the west of the NSA. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **medium**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **moderate and significant**.

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
An island close yet remote	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: "*Although Jura is close to the mainland and has a central location within Argyll, surrounded as it is by Kintyre, Knapdale, Islay, Scarba, Colonsay and Mull, the island feels remote and inaccessible.* *It has often been described as being 'at the edge', being a long journey from the mainland; and within the island itself, away from the settlement of Craighouse, many houses and crofts exhibit a feeling of remoteness, seclusion and isolation. This is reinforced by the island's vast uninhabited interior.* *It is a place to find solitude, to be well away from the hectic life of the mainland – what George Orwell described as 'a very ungettable place.'*" This SLQ is related to the "*large tracts of wild land*", and "*the inaccessible Loch Tarbert*" SLQs. The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 41 - Plateau Moorland – Argyll. – "*Inaccessible and relatively uninhabited, with special wildness qualities and sense of remoteness.* – *Extensive areas of blanket bog*." ■ LCT 35 - Rugged Mountains – "*Inaccessible and relatively uninhabited, with strong wildness qualities.*" The following WLA key attributes and qualities are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ WLA 05. Jura, Scarba Lunga and Garvellachs – "*All-pervading influence of the sea and sense of being perched on the edge of the land.*	This SLQ is focused on the sense of remoteness, seclusion and isolation that can be experienced in the NSA, despite its proximity to neighbouring islands and the mainland. As illustrated by the ZTV in **Figure A16.2.1**, theoretical visibility of the Project is indicated from areas of the NSA where these characteristics are evident. The Project may affect the sense of the NSA as being "*at the edge*". The geographical relationship of the NSA to neighbouring islands and the mainland, and the long journey from the mainland required to reach it, would be unaffected. In summary, the Project would introduce WTGs into distant views from the NSA, beyond its boundary. This would reduce the perception of remoteness and being "*at the edge*". The Project would not affect the geographical relationship of the NSA to neighbouring islands and the mainland, and the long journey from the mainland required to reach it. The scale of change is judged to be small. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **minor and not significant**.

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
	– *Inaccessible and remote, with a strong sense of solitude, despite the proximity to the mainland.* – *Dramatic mountains, cliffs, islands, and tidal currents emphasise a sense of nature being in control.* – *Most signs of human activity are focussed within the southern part of the WLA, with few human artefacts or contemporary land use further north*." The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	
The inaccessible Loch Tarbert	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: "*Loch Tarbert is a sea loch with a complex, rock-bound shoreline that cuts across the centre of Jura. Surrounded by moorland, its shores are largely inaccessible, except by boat or long walks across boggy terrain. It is a lonely and remote place*." This SLQ is related to the "*continually varying coast*", "*large tracts of wild land*" and "*an island close yet remote*" SLQs. The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 41 - Plateau Moorland – Argyll. – *Inaccessible and relatively uninhabited, with special wildness qualities and sense of remoteness.* The following WLA key attributes and qualities are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ WLA 05. Jura, Scarba Lunga and Garvellachs – "*All-pervading influence of the sea and sense of being perched on the edge of the land.* – *Inaccessible and remote, with a strong sense of solitude, despite the proximity to the mainland.*	This SLQ is focused on the remote and inaccessible nature of Loch Tarbert, which is located in the northern extent of the NSA. The SLQ description notes the physical characteristics of the loch and its indented coastline, and the uninhabited moorland surroundings which contribute to its inaccessibility. The SLQ description also notes the perceptual characteristics of the loch as a "*lonely and remote place*". The SLQ is location specific, and as such it is experienced from the waters and/or surrounding coastline of Loch Tarbert. The loch is most easily accessed via a boat or sea kayak. To access western Loch Tarbert by foot, a long approach over moorland is necessary. The most common approach to the loch on foot is via Evan's walk, from the A846 to Glenbatrick Bay and Glenbatrick Lodge. From here, the southern coastline of the loch and its raised beaches and other geological features can be explored for several kilometres in either direction. The eastern end of the loch can be more easily accessed via the A846 at Tarbert. The northern coastline of the loch is perhaps even more remote than the southern coastline, though its inner reaches can be accessed via a rough estate track to Cruib Lodge, which continues several kilometres further west to Ruantallain Lodge, just outside the northern boundary of the NSA. As illustrated by the ZTV in **Figure A16.2.1,** theoretical visibility of the Project is indicated from almost the entirety of Loch Tarbert and its coastline, west of its central narrowing at Cumhann Mor. To the east of

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
	– *Dramatic mountains, cliffs, islands, and tidal currents emphasise a sense of nature being in control.* – *Most signs of human activity are focussed within the southern part of the WLA, with few human artefacts or contemporary land use further north*." The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	this point, theoretical visibility is limited to a narrower strip of the loch in the vicinity of Cairidh Mhor, and pocketed areas of its southern coastline. No theoretical visibility is indicated from the inner reaches of the loch, which can be seen from the A846. Viewpoint 10: Loch Tarbert, Jura (Figure 16.2.10 of **Appendix 16.4**) represents views from Loch Tarbert. The Project would be visible to the west, filling the available sea view at the end of the loch. The WTGs would contrast with the "*complex, rock-bound shoreline"* of the loch. The Project would form a distant element in views (between approximately 30 km from the WDA at the mouth of the loch to approximately 40 km further inland to the east) and only be visible in clear conditions. The NSA is likely to experience dark night skies due to the lack of habitation and other artificial light sources, which contribute to perceptions of remoteness and inaccessibility. As illustrated by the lighting ZTV in Figure 16.16 of **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, theoretical visibility of aviation lights would be available from the loch and its shorelines, particularly at its western end. Viewing distance would notably reduce perceived intensity, which is not accounted for in the ZTV. In summary, the Project would introduce human elements into distant views from the NSA, beyond its boundary. This would reduce the perception of remoteness. The Project would not affect the inaccessibility of Loch Tarbert which also contributes to this SLQ. The scale of change is judged to be medium. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **medium**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **moderate and significant**.

Step 4 - Summary of Significant Effects on SLQs

1.31 The NSA citation identifies eight SLQs, of which five were considered to be potentially affected by the Project, in agreement with stakeholders:

- "*The distinctive Paps of Jura;*
- *A continually varying coast;*
- *Large tracts of wild land;*
- *An island close yet remote;* and
- *The inaccessible Loch Tarbert.*

1.32 Effects on the Jura SLQs would be experienced from Jura's west coast, including Loch Tarbert, and along the elevated ridge in the centre of the NSA, which includes the Paps of Jura.

1.33 In relation to the "*distinctive Paps of Jura*" SLQ, the Project would affect the "*unparalleled views to the Inner Hebrides, the Mull of Kintyre and beyond*" from the Paps. The Project would not affect the physical characteristics of the Paps or their role as landmarks. The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **medium** and the effect is judged to be **moderate and significant**. The effect would be experienced by recreational receptors at the Paps, particularly on Beinn an Oir and Beinn a' Chaolais.

1.34 In relation to the "*continually varying coast"* SLQ*,* the Project would affect the sense of remoteness experienced, particularly from the closer and site-facing west coast. The Project would not affect the physical characteristics of the coast. The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low** and the effect is judged to be **minor and not significant**. The effect would be experienced by land and sea-based recreational receptors on the west coast of Jura, including around Loch Tarbert.

1.35 In relation to the "*large tracts of wild land*" SLQ the Project would reduce the perception of remoteness, naturalness and wildness experienced, particularly in the west of the NSA. The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **medium** and the effect is judged to be **moderate and significant**. The effect would be experienced by recreational receptors in the west of the NSA and along the elevated ridge, including at the Paps.

1.36 In relation to the "*an island close yet remote*" SLQ the Project would reduce the perception of remoteness and being "*at the edge*", particularly in the west of the NSA. The Project would not affect the geographical relationship of the NSA to neighbouring islands and the mainland, and the long journey from the mainland required to reach Jura. The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low** and the effect is judged to be **minor and not significant**. The effect would be experienced by recreational receptors in the west of the NSA and along the elevated ridge, including at the Paps of Jura and Loch Tarbert.

1.37 In relation to "*the inaccessible Loch Tarbert"* SLQ the Project would reduce the perception of remoteness by introducing human elements into views from and along the loch. The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **medium** and the effect is judged to be **moderate and significant**. The effect would be experienced by land and sea-based recreational receptors around Loch Tarbert.

Loch na Keal, Isle of Mull NSA

Location and Extents

1.38 Loch na Keal, Isle of Mull NSA is located approximately 31 km to the northeast of the WDA at its closest point. The NSA encompasses Loch Tuath and Loch na Keal and parts of the Isle of Mull coastline. The NSA also includes Ulva and Gometra, the Treshnish Isles, Staffa and other offshore islets. The NSA borders the Central, South & West Mull LLA to the north, east and south. WLA 08. Ben More, Mull is partly within the NSA, at its eastern edge.

Study Area, Viewpoints and ZTV

1.39 The Study Area for the assessment is the NSA boundary (see **Figure A16.2.2**).

1.40 The following viewpoints have informed the assessment:

- LVIA Viewpoint 24: Staffa (Figure 16.2.24 of **Appendix 16.4**);
- LVIA Viewpoint 25: Ulva (Figure 16.2.25 of **Appendix 16.4**);
- LVIA Viewpoint 26: B8073 Mull (Figure 16.2.26 of **Appendix 16.4**);
- LVIA Viewpoint 27: Ben More, Mull (Figure 16.2.27 of **Appendix 16.4**); and
- LVIA Viewpoint 28: Cruachan Treshnish Cairn, Mull (Figure 16.2.28 of **Appendix 16.4**).

1.41 The blade tip height ZTV in **Figure A16.2.2** illustrates theoretical visibility of the Project, at distances of between approximately 31 km and 53 km. This includes:

- Hill tops and south-facing slopes on the north side of Loch Tuath and Loch na Keal, including parts of the B8073;
- The entrance to inner Loch na Keal, including parts of Inch Kenneth;
- Parts of Ulva and Gometra including hill tops and south-facing slopes;
- The western tip of the Ardmeanach peninsula; and
- The outer loch south and west of Ulva and Gometra, and in the vicinity of the Treshnish Isles and Staffa (except where screened by the landform of the islands themselves).

1.42 There is limited or no theoretical visibility from most of inner Loch na Keal and Loch Tuath.

Assessment of Effects on SLQs

1.43 The SLQs that may be affected by the Project are set out below. These were informed by desk studies and field work, and were agreed with stakeholders as set out in **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, Table 16.2:

- *Highly distinctive seaways and shores;*
- *A voyage from enclosed sea loch to the open Atlantic;*
- *Views of an island-studded sea;*
- *A vast natural world, dwarfing human settlement;* and
- *World famous Staffa and Fingal's Cave.*

1.44 The assessment of effects on SLQs is set out in **Table 1.2** below.

Table 1.2 Assessment of Effects on the Special Landscape Qualities of Loch na Keal, Isle of Mull NSA

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
Highly distinctive seaways and shores	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: *"Loch na Keal, the major sea loch on Mull's Atlantic seaboard, is a place where ancient, horizontal lava flows have resulted in a highly distinctive landscape of coastline and seaways.* *There is a wide, outer loch divided in two by the island group of Ulva and Gometra and a narrow inner loch. This results in three distinct areas and, within each one, the scenery is composed of dramatic but complementary contrasts to north and south."* Outer Loch na Keal is noted to have *"few human elements".* This SLQ is related to the "*A voyage from enclosed sea loch to the open Atlantic*" SLQ. The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 45 - Stepped Cliffs and Terraces – Argyll – "*Sheer basalt cliffs, surrounded by vegetated scree slopes with low, flat-topped headlands at the coast.* – *Off-shore islands with a distinctive terraced form.*" ■ LCT 50 - Stepped Rocky Coastlands – "*Distinctive coastal low stepped headlands and sheltered bays.* – *Indented coastline; low headlands have a distinctive stepped profile*." The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	This SLQ relates primarily to the characteristics of the three distinct areas identified within the NSA. Most of these characteristics would not be directly affected by the Project. However, the Project has the potential to affect the perception of "*few human elements*", by introducing WTGs into distant views. These views would be experienced by people living in and visiting the NSA, including sea-based receptors. As described in paragraph 1.41 above, there would be theoretical visibility from the entrance to Loch na Keal and much of the wide, outer loch, as well as from Ulva and Gometra. Viewpoint 26: B8073 Mull (Figure 16.2.26 of **Appendix 16.4**) represents views across Loch na Keal. The Project would be visible beyond the Ross of Mull and Iona in this view. The project would introduce human elements into views beyond the "*distinctive landscape of coastline and seaways*". The Project would form a distant element in views (approximately 31 km from the WDA at its closest point). The NSA is likely to experience dark night skies due to the lack of habitation and other artificial light sources, which contribute to the lack of human elements. As illustrated by the lighting ZTV in Figure 16.16 of **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, theoretical visibility of aviation lights would be available from parts of the Mull shoreline, parts of Ulva and Gometra and outer Loch na Keal. Viewing distance would notably reduce perceived intensity, which is not accounted for in the ZTV. No theoretical visibility of aviation lights is indicated from Loch Tuath and inner Loch na Keal. In summary, the Project would introduce human elements into distant views from the NSA, beyond its boundary. The Project would not affect the physical characteristics of the three distinct areas which contribute to the SLQ. The scale of change is judged to be small. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **minor and not significant**.

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
A voyage from enclosed sea loch to the open Atlantic	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: *"The area stretches from the sheltered waters of inner Loch Keal, through the archipelago of Ulva, Gometra and their outliers, to the outer Treshnish Islands, exposed to the full fury of the Atlantic Ocean. Although covering an extensive area, the seascapes, island and coastal landscapes are an indivisible whole.* *To experience the area to the full, it is essential to travel through it by sea. Such an Atlantic voyage offers impressive and unique seascapes, together with beauty and wildlife specific to the Atlantic and Scotland's western seaboard."* This SLQ is related to the "*highly distinctive seaways and shores*" SLQ. The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 45 - Stepped Cliffs and Terraces – Argyll – "*Sheer basalt cliffs, surrounded by vegetated scree slopes with low, flat-topped headlands at the coast.* – *Off-shore islands with a distinctive terraced form.*" ■ LCT 50 - Stepped Rocky Coastlands – "*Distinctive coastal low stepped headlands and sheltered bays.* – *Indented coastline; low headlands have a distinctive stepped profile*." The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	This SLQ relates primarily to the experience of sea-based travellers. The Project has the potential to affect the "*impressive and unique seascapes*" experienced by introducing WTGs into distant views to the southwest. As described in paragraph 1.41 above, there would be theoretical visibility from the entrance to Loch na Keal and much of the wide, outer loch, as well as from Ulva and Gometra. There would be little to no theoretical visibility from inner Loch na Keal and Loch Tuath. In many views to the southwest the Project would be visible behind or alongside the Ross of Mull and Iona, including views along the Sound of Iona, as represented by Viewpoint 24: Staffa (Figure 16.2.24 of **Appendix 16.4**). The Project would form a distant element in views. Views in other directions would not be affected. This SLQ is less likely to be experienced in the hours of darkness, when the "*impressive and unique seascapes*" would be less perceptible. In summary, the Project would introduce visibility of WTGs into distant views from the entrance to inner Loch na Keal and much of the outer loch. This would affect views of the "*impressive and unique seascapes*" in views to the southwest. The Project would not affect the experience of travelling by sea. The scale of change is judged to be small. The change would be experienced across a wide area. The geographical extent is judged to be large. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **minor and not significant**.
Views of an island-studded sea	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: *"This is essentially a broad, island-studded seascape with an abundance of islands of different shapes, sizes and character,*	The physical characteristics of the islands would not be affected by the Project. The Project has the potential to affect views of the islands "*from many vantage points within Loch na Keal and Loch Tuath"* by introducing

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
	although all reflect the horizontality of the lava flows from which they are derived. Innumerable skerries pepper the whole bight with eye-catching shapes. *Views of the islands are shared from many vantage points within Loch na Keal and Loch Tuath. Views from the various islands to others in the group, and views back to the mainland are distinctive, and clearly bounded."* This SLQ is related to the "*world famous Staffa and Fingal's Cave*" SLQ. The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 45 - Stepped Cliffs and Terraces – Argyll – "*Off-shore islands with a distinctive terraced form*." ■ LCT 50 - Stepped Rocky Coastlands – "*Distinctive coastal low stepped headlands and sheltered bays."* The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	WTGs into distant views beyond the NSA. These views would be experienced by residents and visitors to the NSA, including sea-based receptors. As described in paragraph 1.41 above, the Project would be visible in the far distance of some views towards and between the islands, for example from south-facing slopes above Loch Tuath, and the south sides of Ulva and Gometra. Views from Ulva are represented by Viewpoint 25: Ulva (Figure 16.2.25 of **Appendix 16.4**). In this view the Project would be visible beyond the Ross of Mull and Iona, partially screened by these low-lying landforms. From Viewpoint 26: B8073 Mull (Figure 16.2.26 of **Appendix 16.4**) the Project would also be visible beyond the Ross of Mull and Iona, in views across "*the island-studded sea*". The Project would form a distant element in views. The Project would not affect views from the islands back to the mainland. This SLQ is less likely to be experienced in the hours of darkness, when the distinctive island groups would be less perceptible. In summary, the Project would introduce visibility of WTGs into distant views from the NSA. This would affect views out to sea from parts of mainland Mull, looking across the islands, and from some of the islands themselves. The Project would not affect the physical characteristics of the islands. The scale of change is judged to be small. Many parts of the NSA would not be affected, as demonstrated by the ZTV. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **minor and not significant**.
A vast natural world, dwarfing human settlement	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: *"Within this vast, natural landscape, ranging from the heights of Ben More to the distant Treshnish Islands, settlement is sparse. Where houses do occur, they are dwarfed by the mountainous and sea-dominant scene. The eye is swept down from the hills, along the coastline of Loch na Keal and out to sea.*	The appreciation of the NSA as a "*vast, natural landscape*" dominated by mountains and sea, would not be affected by the Project. The Project has the potential to affect views "*down from the hills, along the coastline of Loch na Keal and out to sea"* by introducing WTGs into distant views beyond the NSA. These views would be experienced by residents and visitors to the NSA, including hill walkers.

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
	This increases the drama and accentuates the feeling nature is dominant, impervious to humans and their actions." The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 35 - Rugged Mountains – "*Rugged, steep sided mountain ranges with a massive scale.* – *Inaccessible and relatively uninhabited, with strong wildness qualities.* – *Dramatic mountain scenery*." ■ LCT 45 - Stepped Cliffs and Terraces – Argyll – "*Medium to large scale landscape.* – *Sparse settlement with few buildings, settlements or fields*." ■ LCT 50 - Stepped Rocky Coastlands – "*Distinctive coastal low stepped headlands and sheltered bays.* – *Indented coastline; low headlands have a distinctive stepped profile*." The following WLA key attributes and qualities are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ WLA 08. Ben More, Mull – *"A landscape which is well defined where the dominant Munro of Ben More accentuates the rugged and remote interior.* – *Rugged summits sweeping down to steep, dramatic cliffed and scree covered hill slopes result in a surprising high sense of remoteness within relatively small extent of area.* – *A range of distinctive geological features contribute to a high sense of naturalness, distinctiveness and sense of awe*	Sweeping views "*along the coastline of Loch na Keal and out to sea*" are represented by Viewpoint 26: B8073 Mull (Figure 16.2.26 of **Appendix 16.4**). In this view the Project would be visible beyond the Ross of Mull and Iona, partially screened by the intervening landform. The introduction of WTGs would detract from the "*feeling nature is dominant, impervious to humans and their actions.*" More elevated views from the NSA are represented by Viewpoint 27: Ben More, Mull (Figure 16.2.27 of **Appendix 16.4**). The Project would be visible out to sea to the southwest, although not in views across the NSA which lies to the west and northwest. The Project would form a distant element in views. The NSA is likely to experience dark night skies due to the lack of habitation and other artificial light sources, which contributes to the perception of the NSA as a landscape where nature dominates. As illustrated by the lighting ZTV in Figure 16.16 of **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, theoretical visibility of aviation lights would be available from southwest facing slopes and summits including Ben More, parts of Ulva, Gometra, Staffa and the Treshnish Isles, and outer Loch na Keal. Viewing distance would notably reduce perceived intensity, which is not accounted for in the ZTV. In summary, the Project would introduce visibility of WTGs into distant views from the NSA. This would affect views out to sea from parts of the NSA. The Project would not affect the appreciation of the NSA as a "*vast, natural landscape*". The scale of change is judged to be small. Many parts of the NSA would not be affected, as demonstrated by the ZTV. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **minor and not significant**.

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
	– *A secluded yet open interior with a strong sense of naturalness and sanctuary."* The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	
World famous Staffa and Fingal's Cave	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: *"Staffa is world famous and has long inspired artists, writers and composers. Uninhabited, isolated and remote, it is readily accessible by boat. On arrival, basalt columns both straight and curved, some of the most impressive in the world, dominate the view. Fingal's Cave penetrates the cliffs, disappearing into the darkness, with the sound of the swell echoing back from far inside.* *The island provides an all-round experience. Visitors walk beneath the columns, perhaps surprised to see such regularity sculpted by nature, and then enter the cave itself.* *Thereafter they can climb to the top of the island, walk the length of the plateau and get excellent close-up views of puffins and other seabirds. It is also the centre of a wide and grand vista across the sea to Coll and Tiree, the Treshnish Isles, Ulva, the Ardmeanach Peninsula, Ben More, the Ross of Mull, Iona and Dun I."* This SLQ is related to the "*views of an island-studded sea*" SLQ. The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 45 - Stepped Cliffs and Terraces - Argyll – "*Sheer basalt cliffs…* – *Off-shore islands with a distinctive terraced form.* – *Sparse settlement with few buildings, settlements or fields*."	The physical characteristics of this SLQ, notably its impressive basalt columns and Fingal's Cave, would not be affected by the Project. The Project has the potential to affect the perception of Staffa as "*isolated and remote*" by introducing WTGs into views from the island. There is also the potential for the Project to affect the "*wide and grand vista across the sea*" which includes views towards the Ross of Mull, Iona and Dun I. These views would be experienced by visitors to Staffa, which is a National Nature Reserve and is accessible by tour boat from locations including Mull, Iona and Oban. The Project would be visible at a distance of approximately 35 km, particularly from the top of the island. WTGs would be visible beyond and on either side of Iona in views, as demonstrated by the wireline from Viewpoint 24: Staffa (Figure 16.2.24 of **Appendix 16.4**). WTGs would be visible beyond the Sound of Iona which separates Mull from Iona. The Project would therefore be visible in the distance of the "*wide and grand vista across the sea*" described, reducing the perception of Staffa as "*isolated and remote*". The Project would form a distant element in views. Views in other directions, including to Coll and Tiree, the Treshnish Isles, Ulva, the Ardmeanach Peninsula and Ben More, would not be affected. Staffa is likely to experience dark night skies due to the lack of habitation and other artificial light sources, which contributes to the perception of the island as "*uninhabited, isolated and remote*", although is unlikely to be visited at night. As illustrated by the lighting ZTV in Figure 16.16 of **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, theoretical visibility of aviation lights would be available from the top of the island. Viewing distance would notably reduce perceived intensity, which is not accounted for in the ZTV.

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
	The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	In summary, the Project would introduce visibility of WTGs into distant views from Staffa. This would affect the "*wide and grand vista across the sea*" in views to the southwest, and would reduce the perception of the island as "*isolated and remote*". The Project would not affect the physical characteristics of the island or the appreciation of its wildlife. The scale of change is judged to be small. Views of the Project are limited to the top of the island. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **minor and not significant**.

Step 4 - Summary of Significant Effects on SLQs

1.45 The NSA citation identifies nine SLQs, of which five were considered to be potentially affected by the Project, in agreement with stakeholders:

- *Highly distinctive seaways and shores;*
- *A voyage from enclosed sea loch to the open Atlantic;*
- *Views of an island-studded sea;*
- *A vast natural world, dwarfing human settlement; and*
- *World famous Staffa and Fingal's Cave.*

1.46 Effects on the Loch na Keal, Mull NSA SLQs would be experienced from inland areas on the north side of Loch Tuath and Loch na Keal, parts of Ulva and Gometra, the entrance to inner Loch na Keal and the outer loch, including parts of the Treshnish Isles and Staffa.

1.47 In relation to the "*highly distinctive seaways and shores"* SLQ, the Project would introduce WTGs into distant views beyond the NSA. The Project would not affect the physical characteristics of the three distinct areas which contribute to the SLQ. The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low** and the effect is judged to be **minor and not significant**. The effect would be experienced by some residents and road users, and land and sea-based recreational receptors.

1.48 In relation to the "*voyage from enclosed sea loch to the open Atlantic*" SLQ, the Project would affect the "*impressive and unique seascapes*" in views to the southwest. The Project would not affect the experience of travelling by sea and the appreciation of wildlife. The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low** and the effect is judged to be **minor and not significant**. The effect would be experienced by sea-based recreational receptors.

1.49 In relation to the "*views of an island-studded sea"* SLQ, the Project would introduce WTGs into distant views beyond the NSA. The Project would not affect the physical characteristics of the islands. The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low** and the effect is judged to be **minor and not significant**. The effect would be experienced by some residents and road users, and land and sea-based recreational receptors.

1.50 In relation to the "*vast natural world, dwarfing human settlement*" SLQ, the Project would introduce WTGs into distant views out to sea. The Project would not affect the appreciation of the NSA as a "*vast, natural landscape*". The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low** and the effect is judged to be **minor and not significant**. The effect would be experienced by some residents and road users, and land and sea-based recreational receptors.

1.51 In relation to the "*world famous Staffa and Fingal's Cave*" SLQ, the Project would introduce WTGs into the "*wide and grand vista across the sea*" in views to the southwest, and would reduce the perception of the island as "*isolated and remote*". The Project would not affect the physical characteristics of the island or the appreciation of its wildlife. The magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low** and the effect is judged to be **minor and not significant**. The effect would be experienced by visitors to Staffa.

Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs NSA

Location and Extents

1.52 Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs NSA is located approximately 41 km to the northeast of the WDA at its closest point. It encompasses a group of islands and the surrounding seascape, as shown on **Figure A16.2.3**. WLA 05. Jura, Scarba Lunga and Garvellachs encompasses part of the NSA as well as the neighbouring island of Jura.

Study Area, Viewpoints and ZTV

1.53 The Study Area for the assessment is the NSA boundary (see **Figure A16.2.3**).

1.54 The following viewpoints have informed the assessment:

- LVIA Viewpoint 18: Scarba (Figure 16.2.18 of **Appendix 16.4**);
- LVIA Viewpoint 17: Oban-Colonsay Ferry (Figure 16.2.17 of **Appendix 16.4**) - not located within the NSA, but representing open sea views in proximity;
- LVIA Viewpoint 19: Cnoc Dhomnuill, Luing (Figure 16.2.19 of **Appendix 16.4**) – not located within the NSA, but representing views across the NSA; and
- Cultural Heritage Viewpoint CH10: Eileach-an-Naoimh, monastery, Garvellachs (Figure 13 of **Appendix 14.3**).

1.55 The blade tip height ZTV in **Figure A16.2.3** illustrates theoretical visibility of the Project from the NSA, at distances of between approximately 41 km and 51 km. This includes:

- The north and west coast of Scarba, and hills in the west including Cruach Scarba (see Viewpoint 18: Scarba in Figure 16.2.18 of **Appendix 16.4**);
- The west of Lunga, and neighbouring islets of Eilan Dubh Mor and Eilean Dubh Beag; and
- The northwest facing coastline of the Garvellachs, and parts of the south facing coastline.

1.56 There is limited theoretical visibility from much of the inland areas of the islands, particularly on their eastern sides.

Assessment of Effects on SLQs

1.57 The SLQs that were scoped into the assessment are set out below. These were informed by desk studies and field work, and were agreed with stakeholders as set out in **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, Table 16.2:

- *Uninhabited, remote, wild islands;* and
- *A seascape of distinctive and contrasting island groups.*

1.58 The assessment of effects on SLQs is set out in **Table 1.3** below.

Table 1.3 Assessment of Effects on the Special Landscape Qualities of Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs NSA

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
Uninhabited, remote, wild islands	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: *"Set between the large mass of Jura and the Argyll mainland, this arc of islands presents a remote and isolated aspect. They are far removed from urban centres, accessible only when sailing conditions are favourable.* *Today there is no permanent habitation on any of the islands, although the remains of past settlement show that it has not always been so. While there is still some grazing by sheep and cattle, the islands nowadays have a wild and undeveloped appearance with an absence of overt human influence that belies their history."* The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 57 - Craggy Coast and Islands – The LCT description notes that a "*strong sense of remoteness and naturalness is experienced, especially on more exposed promontories, sparsely settled islands and the more exposed, inaccessible and rugged west-facing coasts.*" The following WLA key attributes and qualities are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ WLA 05. Jura, Scarba Lunga and Garvellachs – *"All-pervading influence of the sea and sense of being perched on the edge of the land* – *Inaccessible and remote, with a strong sense of solitude, despite the proximity to the mainland* – *Dramatic mountains, cliffs, islands, and tidal currents emphasise a sense of nature being in control*	From parts of the NSA, scattered settlement and a small wind farm on Luing immediately to the east are visible signs of human influence nearby, though "*a sense of nature being in control*" pervades. The Project has the potential to affect the "*wild and undeveloped appearance with an absence of overt human influence*" experienced by visitors to the NSA. As described in paragraph 1.55 above, there would be theoretical visibility from north and west-facing coastlines and hilltops. There would be limited theoretical visibility from inland areas including Eileach-an-Naoimh, monastery Scheduled Monument (see **Appendix 14.3 Settings Assessment**, Viewpoint CH10 in Figure 13). Viewpoint 18: Scarba (Figure 16.2.18 of **Appendix 16.4**) represents upland views from the most elevated summit in the NSA. In panoramic views from upland areas the Project would be seen in very distant views (approximately 47 km away). The WTGs would be visible on the skyline, beyond and extending to the north of Colonsay. The Project would introduce WTGs into outward views, reducing the sense of remoteness and wildness which is experienced. The Project would form a distant element in views. Views between the islands within the NSA would not be affected. The NSA is likely to experience dark night skies due to the lack of habitation and other artificial light sources, which contribute to the baseline of wildness and remoteness, although the NSA is less likely to be experienced during hours of darkness due to its relative inaccessibility. As illustrated by the lighting ZTV in Figure 16.16 of **Chapter 16 SLVIA**, theoretical visibility of aviation lights would be available from west and northwest facing coastlines and upland areas including Cruach Scarba. Viewing distance would notably reduce perceived intensity, which is not accounted for in the ZTV. From more elevated locations such as Viewpoint 18: Cruach Scarba (Figure 16.2.18 of **Appendix 16.4**), the aviation lights would be seen in the wider context

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
	– *Most signs of human activity are focussed within the southern part of the WLA, with few human artefacts or contemporary land use further north"* Sites of historic significance that contribute to this SLQ include the Eileach-an-Naoimh, monastery, Garvellachs Scheduled Monument and Belnahua, slate quarries and settlement Scheduled Monument, which provides evidence of "*the remains of past settlement*." There are also listed buildings on Scarba and Lunga. The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	of artificial lighting at scattered properties on Seil and Luing to the north and east of the NSA. In summary, the Project would introduce visibility of WTGs into distant views southwest from the NSA. This would reduce the perception of the islands as "*remote*" and "*wild*" from parts of the NSA. The Project would not affect the "*wild and undeveloped appearance*" of the islands themselves (only outward views), nor their relative inaccessibility. The scale of change is judged to be small. Views of the Project are limited to north and west coastlines of the islands and hill summits and west-facing slopes. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **minor and not significant**.
A seascape of distinctive and contrasting island groups	The NSA citation describes this SLQ as follows: *"These island groups are distinctive in the south-west Argyll seascape, all with interesting but contrasting rock formations. There is great variety in their individual shapes, sizes and colours, and in their relationships to off-shore islets and skerries. The pyramidal mass of Scarba contrasts with the more horizontal, irregularly profiled Lunga, which in turn contrasts with the wedge-shaped Garvellachs.* *The west-facing shores of these islands are exposed to the full fury of the Atlantic Ocean, with steeper cliffs, whereas their eastern shores are gentler, opening out onto the Sound of Luing. Hence the islands tend to slope downwards, west to east.* *The archipelago is conspicuous in many of the breathtaking views from the nearby islands and the mainland."* The following characteristics of relevant underlying LCTs are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ LCT 57 - Craggy Coast and Islands – **"*Distinct seascape context*.**	The Project has the potential to affect the "*breathtaking views*" experienced by people looking towards the NSA from nearby islands and the mainland, and views between the island groups experienced by visitors to the NSA. The Project would be visible in some of the "*breathtaking views*" experienced of the archipelago. Viewpoint 19: Cnoc Dhomnuill, Luing (Figure 16.2.19 of **Appendix 16.4**) represents views towards the NSA from a slightly elevated location on Luing. The Project would be theoretically visible over 50 km away, on the skyline beyond the Garvellachs and Eilean Dubh Mor, and would detract from the distinctive rock formations of these islands. Similar views would be available from hill summits and west-facing slopes on the mainland in views towards the NSA, although at a greater distance. The Project would form a distant element in views. Views towards the archipelago from the nearby islands of Jura and Mull would not be affected. From within the NSA, including high points such as Viewpoint 18: Cruach Scarba (**F**igure 16.2.18 of **Appendix 16.4**), the focus of views tends to be across the "*distinctive and contrasting island groups*" that make up the NSA, as opposed to the open sea views to the west towards the WDA.

Step 2: Identify the SLQs that may be affected by the Project		Step 3 - Assessment of effects on SLQs
	– *Undulating, low moorland with low coastal cliffs and **distinctive dark ledges of slate jutting into the sea**.* – *Intricate, deeply indented coastline of narrow sea lochs, long fragmented peninsulas and **chains of rocky off-shore islands**.* – *Slanting rock strata are prominent and are reflected in the **wedge-shaped form of the outlying islands**.*" The following WLA key attributes and qualities are judged to contribute to this SLQ: ■ WLA 05. Jura, Scarba Lunga and Garvellachs – "*All-pervading influence of the sea and sense of being perched on the edge of the land.* – *Dramatic mountains, cliffs, islands, and tidal currents emphasise a sense of nature being in control*." The susceptibility of this SLQ to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be high, and overall sensitivity is judged to be **high**.	This SLQ is less likely to be experienced in the hours of darkness, when the distinctive island groups would be less perceptible. In summary, the Project would introduce very distant visibility of WTGs into some of the "*breathtaking views*" towards the NSA, including from Luing and parts of the mainland. Views towards the NSA from nearby Jura and Mull would not be affected. The Project would not affect the physical characteristics of the "*distinctive and contrasting island groups*" which underpin this SLQ, or the focused views between these island groups from within the NSA. The scale of change is judged to be small. The geographical extent is judged to be medium. Effects are judged to be long-term and reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change to the SLQ is judged to be **low**. Taking account of the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of change, the effect on this SLQ would be **minor and not significant**.

Step 4 – Summary of Effects on SLQs

1.59 The NSA citation identifies nine SLQs, of which two were considered to be potentially affected by the Project, in agreement with stakeholders:

- "*Uninhabited, remote, wild islands*"; and
- "*A seascape of distinctive and contrasting island groups*".

1.60 There is theoretical visibility of the Project from northwest and west-facing coastlines and hills within the NSA, at distances of between approximately 41 km and 51 km. The Project would introduce WTGs into outward views from the NSA, reducing the sense of remoteness and wildness experienced, though scattered settlement and a small wind farm on Luing exert an existing influence on this SLQ from parts of the NSA. WTG lighting may also be perceptible at night. The Project would be very distant in views. The magnitude of change on the "*Uninhabited, remote, wild islands*" SLQ is judged to be low and the effect is judged to be **minor and not significant**. The effect would be experienced by visitors to the islands.

1.61 The Project would also be visible in views towards the NSA from the mainland and nearby islands including Luing, particularly from hill summits and west-facing slopes. The Project would affect some of the "*breathtaking views*" views available towards the NSA, and would be seen to detract from the distinctive rock formations of the archipelago in some views. The Project would be very distant in views, and would not affect the physical characteristics of the "*seascape of distinctive and contrasting island groups*" which underpin this SLQ, or the focused views between these island groups from within the NSA The magnitude of change is judged to be low and the effect is judged to be **minor and not significant**. The effect would be experienced by residents and recreational receptors on the mainland and neighbouring islands, and visitors to the NSA.

Conclusion

1.62 NSAs are deemed to be of national importance for their scenic quality and value, and are afforded the highest level of protection within NPF4. Although NPF4 is clear that windfarm development will not be acceptable within National Parks and NSAs (Policy 11, page 53), development which is sited outside of an NSA can be considered (albeit with the potential to indirectly affect its SLQs). As per NPF4 Policy 4, development should only be permitted if "*the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised*" or "*any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area was designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance*".

1.63 As part of the design process, the Applicant has considered embedded mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the WDA on seascape, landscape and visual receptors. Factors such as the distance from shore and the horizontal extent of the WDA were key considerations. Further information is set out in **Chapter 3 Project Description** and **Chapter 4 Site Selection and Alternatives**. This assessment takes these embedded design measures into account.

1.64 This assessment has identified a **moderate and significant** adverse effect on the "*distinctive Paps of Jura*", "*large tracts of wild land*" and "*inaccessible Loch Tarbert*" SLQs within the Jura NSA. For the remaining SLQs of Jura NSA and other NSAs considered, the adverse effects identified within the assessment are judged to be no greater than **minor** and **not significant**.

Detailed Design Objectives

1.65 The Applicant has worked with NatureScot to identify detailed design objectives which respond to key seascape, landscape and visual sensitivities, with a particular focus on protecting the special qualities of relevant NSAs. These objectives frame the consenting applications for the WDA and will guide the detailed design of the windfarm, which will follow if the Project is consented. The Applicant has drafted a proposed condition to apply these design objectives in the detailed design phase, as detailed in **Section 2.4.2** of the **Planning Statement**. Adherence to these design objectives may reduce the effects on SLQs identified within this assessment. Further detail is provided in **Appendix 15 Design Strategy**.

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Annex A

Fieldwork Photography

Jura NSA

Annex Image 1: Beinn a' Chaolais from Beinn an Oir, illustrating how the "*Paps of Jura tower over the whole landscape. Their steep, rounded cones rise out of the surrounding moorland, and their summits of silvery rock and scree provide unparalleled views to the Inner Hebrides, the Mull of Kintyre and beyond*."

Annex Image 2: Loch Tarbert as seen from its southern shoreline at Glenbatrick Bay. The loch was accessed by a "*long walk across boggy terrain*" from the south. The image illustrates the "*inaccessible Loch Tarbert*", "*large tracts of wild land*" and "*continually varying coast*" SLQs.

Loch na Keal, Isle of Mull NSA

Annex Image 3: Inner Loch Na Keal from Killiemor, looking towards Ben More. The image illustrates the "*sheltered waters of inner Loch Keal*" and the "vast natural landscape" experienced within the NSA.

Annex Image 4: Outer Loch na Keal, from Ormaig on Ulva. The image illustrates the "*broad, island-studded seascape with an abundance of islands of different shapes, sizes and character, although all reflect the horizontality of the lava flows from which they are derived*".

Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs NSA

Annex Image 5: View northeast from Cruach Scarba to the "*irregularly-shaped Lunga, and its attendant islands and reefs*", and the island of Luing beyond the NSA boundary and the Sound of Luing. The white water of the "*notorious*" Grey Dogs tidal race is visible along the narrow channel between Scarba and Lunga. The image illustrates the "*Uninhabited, remote, wild islands"* SLQ, underpinned by a "*remote and isolated aspect…accessible only when sailing conditions are favourable*". Settlement and a small wind farm on Luing are visible signs of human influence nearby, though "*a sense of nature being in control*" pervades.

Annex Image 6: View southeast from Eithne's grave on Eileach an Naoimh towards Lunga and the "*pyramidal island of Scarba*". The image illustrates the "*seascape of distinctive and contrasting island groups*" SLQ which is evident in views towards and across the NSA.