



# **Spiorad na Mara Offshore Wind Farm**

## **Offshore Project**

### **Environmental Impact Assessment Report**

#### **Appendix 18.3: Assessment of Effects on Coastal Character, Volume 2c**

Document Reference No.: SNM-SNM-PAC-APP-1183

Date: February 2026



## Quality Control Page

Document details	
Document title	Offshore Project Environmental Impact Assessment Report
Document subtitle	Appendix 18.3: Assessment of Effects on Coastal Character
Document Reference No.	SNM-SNM-PAC-APP-1183
Date	February 2026
Version	1.0
Author	SLR Consulting
Client Name	Spiorad na Mara Limited

Document history						
Version	Revision	Issued	Checked	Approved	Date	Comments
1.0	A	SLR Consulting	WSP	SnM Ltd	February 2026	Final for submission

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 OVERVIEW

1.1.1.1 This appendix of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) presents the assessment of effects on coastal character during construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the offshore activities associated with the proposed Spiorad na Mara Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as 'the Offshore Project').

1.1.1.2 This appendix should be read in conjunction with the project description provided in **Chapter 3: Project Description, Volume 1a** and the relevant parts of the following chapters and appendices:

- **Chapter 18: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA), Volume 2a;**
- **Appendix 18.1: SLVIA Methodology, Volume 2c;**
- **Appendix 18.2: Assessment of Effects Viewpoints, Volume 2c;**
- **Appendix 18.4: Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (AESLQ), Volume 2c;**
- **Appendix 18.5: Visibility of Aviation Warning Lights, Volume 2c;**
- **Appendix 18.6: SLVIA Figures and Photomontage Visualisations, Volume 2c**

### 1.1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1.2.1 Spiorad na Mara Limited (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') is proposing to develop the Project. The Project is an offshore wind farm (OWF) that will consist of up to 60 fixed-bottom wind turbine generators (WTGs).

1.1.2.2 The Project will include both offshore and onshore infrastructure. This Offshore EIAR supports the application for the offshore components of the Project as outlined in **Chapter 1: Introduction, Volume 1a**. The offshore components of the Project (the Offshore Project) includes all infrastructure and activities located seaward of Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) within the Array Area and Offshore Cable Area of Search (OCAS) (**Figure 1.2: Offshore Project Location, Volume 1b**). Further detailed information is provided in **Chapter 3, Volume 1a**.

1.1.2.3 The Offshore Project is situated off the northwest coast of Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the Array Area is located approximately 5-13 km offshore and is approximately 161 km<sup>2</sup> in size. It will comprise WTGs, foundations, Offshore Cables, Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) (if required), and Landfall. The Array Area combined with the OCAS is defined as the Offshore Project Boundary. The water depths across the Turbine Area range from 37 m-67 m with the southwest corner of the Array Area reaching 72 m. The proposed WTGs and fixed foundations will be located within a Turbine Area of approximately 140 km<sup>2</sup>, within the Array Area.

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS APPENDIX

- 1.2.1.1 Regional Coastal Character Areas (CCAs) have been defined along the relevant section of coastline in the SLVIA study area between the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* and Mangersta/*Mangursth* Head (**Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c- Figure 18.4: Landscape and Coastal Character**). This approach to undertake a regional scale coastal character assessment between Aird Mhor Mhangarstaidh and the Butt of Lewis was agreed with NatureScot and Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar (CnES) during Scoping. Regional CCAs are defined along the coastline, together with the immediately adjacent Landscape Character Type (LCT) covering its hinterland, where there is a strong visual relationship with the sea/tidal waters and coastal landscapes. A total of 17 regional CCAs, as listed in **Table 1-1** and mapped in **Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c- Figure 18.4** form the baseline coastal characterisation and mapping for the SLVIA.
- 1.2.1.2 Views from within these CCAs are illustrated in **Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c** and assessed as part of the viewpoint assessment in **Appendix 18.2, Volume 2c**.
- 1.2.1.3 A preliminary assessment of the effects of the Offshore Project on regional CCAs (and their associated coastal LCTs) is presented in **Table 1-1**. The preliminary assessment identifies CCAs where there is no potential for significant effects on coastal character, and CCAs where there is potential for the Offshore Project to result in significant effects requiring further assessment. Full baseline descriptions and assessment of CCAs with potential for significant effects needing further assessment are then set out in full in Section 2 of this appendix. The findings of which are also summarised in **Chapter 18, Volume 2a**.

Table 1-1 Preliminary Assessment of Regional CCAs

ID	CCA	Location	Associated LCTs	Approx distance to closest WTG	Subject to theoretical visibility	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
CCA1	Butt of Lewis/ <i>Rubha Robhanais</i>	Between Port of Ness/ <i>Port Nis</i> and Roinn a' Roidh including the Butt of Lewis/ <i>Rubha Robhanais</i> headland	317 – Gently Sloping Crofting	19.8 km	Yes. Visibility across the northwest facing stretch of coastline between Butt of Lewis/ <i>Rubha Robhanais</i> and Eoropie/ <i>Eòrapaidh</i> but limited/no visibility from coast between Butt of Lewis / <i>Rubha Robhanais</i> and Port of Ness/ <i>Port Nis</i> .	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.
CCA2	Eoropie/ <i>Eòrapaidh</i>	Between Roinn a' Roidh and Cobha Sgeir including Eoropie/ <i>Eòrapaidh</i> beach.	317 – Gently Sloping Crofting 321 - Machair	15.4 km	Yes. Visibility along coastal edge and hinterland of the CCA.	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.
CCA3	Borve/ <i>Borgh</i> , Shader/ <i>Siadar an Rubha</i> and Galston/ <i>Gàbh sann</i> low rocky coast	Between Cobha Sgeir in the north and Rubhan a Callich in the south	317 – Gently Sloping Crofting 322 – Boggy Moorland	7.2 km	Yes. Visibility along coastal edge and hinterland of the CCA.	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.
CCA4	Barvas/ <i>Barabhas</i> Sands Àird Bharabhais	Between Rubhan a Callich, Barvas/ <i>Barabhas</i> Sands and Mollerap (near Brue/ <i>Brù</i> ),	317 – Gently Sloping Crofting 321 – Machair	7.0 km	Yes. Visibility along coastal edge and hinterland of the CCA.	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.

ID	CCA	Location	Associated LCTs	Approx distance to closest WTG	Subject to theoretical visibility	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
		including Loch Mor Barvas/ <i>Bharabais</i> and Loch Wind Turbine Generator Ereray/ <i>Èirearaigh</i>	322 – Boggy Moorland			
CCA5	Bragar/ <i>Bhràd hagair</i> and Port Arnol/ <i>Àrnoil</i>	Between Mollerap (near Brue/ <i>Brù</i> ), Port Arnol/ <i>Àrnoil</i> and Aird Mor Bragar/ <i>Àird Mhòr Bhràdhagair</i> including the beaches at Port Arnol/ <i>Àrnoil</i> and Bragar/ <i>Bhràdhagair</i> .	318 – Linear Crofting	6.0 km	Yes. Visibility along coastal edge and hinterland of the CCA.	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.
CCA6	Loch Shiaboist	Between Aird Mor Bragar/ <i>Àird Mhòr Bhràdhagair</i> and Aird Dalbeg/ <i>Àird Dhail Beag</i> including Loch Shiaboist.	318 – Linear Crofting	6.0 km	Yes. Visibility along coastal edge and hinterland of the CCA.	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.

ID	CCA	Location	Associated LCTs	Approx distance to closest WTG	Subject to theoretical visibility	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
CCA7	Dalbeg/ <i>Dhail Beag</i> and Dalmore/ <i>Dail Mhor</i> coast to Aird Laimishader / <i>Àird Laimisiadair</i>	Between Aird Dalbeg/ <i>Àird Dhail Beag</i> and Aird Laimishader/ <i>Àird Laimisiadair</i> including the bays at Dalmore/ <i>Dhail Mhor</i> and Dalbeg/ <i>Dhail Beag</i> , and Loch Garenin/ <i>Na Gearrannan</i> .	323 – Rocky Moorland 318 – Linear Crofting	6.0 km	Yes. Visibility along coastal edge and hinterland of the CCA.	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.
CCA8	Loch Carloway/ <i>Càrlabhadh</i>	Between Aird Laimishader/ <i>Àird Laimisiadair</i> and A' Chreag Mhòr, the headlands of Loch Carloway/ <i>Càrlabhadh</i> , extending into Carloway/ <i>Càrlabhadh</i> .	323 – Rocky Moorland	8.4 km	No visibility from the coastal edge or waters of Loch Carloway/ <i>Càrlabhadh</i> due to containment by landform and aspect to the west. Restricted/intermittent visibility at headlands and elevated rocky hinterland of southern coastline of Loch Carloway/ <i>Càrlabhadh</i> .	No. There is no potential for significant effects on coastal character, due to their being no visibility from the coastal edge or waters of Loch Carloway/ <i>Càrlabhadh</i> . Visual effects from elevated hinterland assessed as Viewpoint 28 Doune Carloway/ <i>Càrlabhadh</i> .
CCA9	Eastern Loch Ròg An Ear	Between A' Chreag Mhòr, near Doune Carloway/ <i>Càrlabhadh</i> and Àird na Mòine near Tolsta/ <i>Tolastadh</i> .	323 – Rocky Moorland	9.7 km	Limited theoretical visibility of 1-7 turbines from some west facing coastlines, which are oblique to the Offshore Project, intermittent with areas of coast with no visibility. Scattered, intermittent	No. There is no potential for significant effects on coastal character. Visibility is contained by the Aird Laimishader/ <i>Àird Laimisiadair</i> headland and the orientation of coastline, which

ID	CCA	Location	Associated LCTs	Approx distance to closest WTG	Subject to theoretical visibility	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
					visibility from elevated rocky hinterland. Majority of coast with no visibility due to containment by landform and the aspect of Loch Ròg An Ear.	faces to the west and southwest away from the Offshore Project such that visibility from the coastal edge is very limited. Majority of coast will not be affected due to containment by landform and the aspect of Loch Ròg An Ear.
CCA10	Inner Loch Ròg An Ear and Loch Hulabhaig	The inner areas of Inner Loch Ròg An Ear and Loch Hulabhaig, approximately between Àird na Mòine near Tolsta/Tolastadh, Callanish/Calanais and the bridge across the loch at Earshader/Iarsiadar, and the pier at Kirkibost/Chirceaboist on Great Bernera/Beàrnaraigh Mòr. Includes the islands of Ceabhagh, Eilean Kearstay/ Chearstaigh	323 – Rocky Moorland 318 – Linear Crofting	13.9 km	No visibility from eastern coastal edge of CCA between Àird na Mòine near Tolsta/Tolastadh, Breasclete/Brèascleit and Loch Hulabhaig, where views towards the Offshore Project are contained by intervening landform. No visibility from south coast of Great Bernera/Beàrnaraigh Mòr. Theoretical visibility of 1-7, 8-14 and 15-21 WTGs intermittently from parts of the water of Loch Ròg An Ear and from restricted parts of coastal edge with north facing coast and more elevated rocky hinterland. Potential for	No. There is no potential for significant effects on coastal character. Visibility is contained by landform, intervening islands and rocky terrain. The orientation of much of the coastline is inward facing into inner areas of Inner Loch Ròg An Ear and Loch Hulabhaig. CCA is located at long distance over 14 km from the Turbine Area. The Offshore Project would not be viewed in the immediate seascape context of the CCA and, although it may be occasionally and partially visible, it would appear as a

ID	CCA	Location	Associated LCTs	Approx distance to closest WTG	Subject to theoretical visibility	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
		and the islands within Loch Ceann Hùlabhaig			intermittent views along Loch Ròg An Ear across intervening complex landform of Great Bernera/ <i>Beàrnaraigh Mòr</i> and islands within Loch Ròg An Ear, to a small number of WTGs, framed between depressions in the landform and across views of the enclosed seascape of Loch Ròg An Ear. A small number of WTGs may be partially visible from limited parts of the CCA, with rotors/blade tips seen between depressions in the landform.	small number of WTGs partially visible from limited parts of the CCA, with rotors/blade tips seen between depressions in the landform, removed from the coastal context of Inner Loch Ròg An Ear and Loch Hulabhaig, such that there is no potential for significant effects on coastal character. Views from the CCA are illustrated from Viewpoint 37 Callanish/ <i>Calanais</i> ( <b>Figure 18.61: Viewpoint 37, Volume 2c</b> ) and assessed as part of the visual assessment in <b>Appendix 18.2, Volume 2c</b> .
CCA11	Bernera Islands	Great Bernera/ <i>Beàrnaraigh Mòr</i> , Little Bernera/ <i>Beàrnaraigh Beag</i> and associated islands. Between Sgeir Charach and Leac nan Cudaigean on Great Bernera/ <i>Beàrnaraigh Mòr</i> , the northern part of	324 – Cnoc and Lochan 319 – Dispersed Crofting	7.9 km	Yes. Visibility along coastal edge and hinterland of the CCA.	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.

ID	CCA	Location	Associated LCTs	Approx distance to closest WTG	Subject to theoretical visibility	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
		<p>Vuia Mor/<i>Fuaigh Mòr</i>, and Little Bernera/<i>Beàrnaraigh Beag</i>, Eilean Vacsay/<i>Bhacasaigh</i>, and isles north within Poll Gainmhich north of Little Bernera/<i>Beàrnaraigh Beag</i>.</p>				
CCA12	Loch Roag/ <i>Ròg Beag</i>	Between Na Clèirich and Gob Sgrithir and the isles within this sea loch.	323 – Rocky Moorland	19.2 km	Limited theoretical visibility of 1-7 WTGs at the head of the loch and western coastline but almost all of the coastline and water of Loch Roag/ <i>Ròg Beag</i> affords no visibility of the Offshore Project.	No. There is no potential for significant effects on coastal character. Visibility is contained by landform, intervening islands and rocky terrain. The orientation of much of the coastline is inward facing into Loch Roag/ <i>Ròg Beag</i> . CCA is located at long distance over 19 km from the Turbine Area.
CCA13	Loch Roag/ <i>Ròg</i>	Between the bridge over the straight at Earshder/ <i>Iarsiadar</i> and Na Clèirich, between Gob Sgrithir and Rubha Sheotharaid, the islands	323 – Rocky Moorland	16.5 km	Limited theoretical visibility of restricted number of WTGs from coastal edges with north facing aspect through the gaps between Great Bernera/ <i>Beàrnaraigh Mòr</i> and Vuia Mor/ <i>Fuaigh Mòr</i> . Much	No. There is no potential for significant effects on coastal character. Visibility is contained by landform, intervening islands and rocky terrain, such that much of the CCA coastline has

ID	CCA	Location	Associated LCTs	Approx distance to closest WTG	Subject to theoretical visibility	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
		<p>of Flodaigh and Fuaigh Beag and the southern part of Vuia Mor/<i>Fuigh Mòr</i>, Caitasaigh, Glas Eilean, Linngeam, Eilean nam Feannag and other small islands with Loch Roag/<i>Ròg</i>.</p>			<p>of the CCA coastline has no visibility due to the position of the intervening island of Great Bernera/<i>Beàrnaraigh Mòr</i> and scattered smaller island. Theoretical visibility of 1-7, 8-14 and 15-21 WTGs intermittently from parts of the water of Loch Roag/<i>Ròg</i> and from restricted parts of coastal edge with north facing coast and more elevated rocky hinterland. Potential for intermittent, framed views across Loch Roag/<i>Ròg</i> and intervening landforms to small number of turbines, framed between depressions in the landform and across views of the enclosed seascape of Loch Roag/<i>Ròg</i>. A small number of WTGs may be partially visible from limited parts of the CCA, with rotors/blade tips seen between depressions in the landform.</p>	<p>no visibility due to the position of the intervening island of Great Bernera/<i>Beàrnaraigh Mòr</i> and scattered smaller islands such as Vuia Mor/<i>Fuigh Mòr</i> and Flodaigh in Loch Roag/<i>Ròg</i>. CCA is located at long distance over 16.5 km from the Turbine Area. Potential for intermittent, framed views across Loch Roag/<i>Ròg</i> and intervening landforms to small number of turbines, however, these are unlikely to significantly change the coastal character as the Offshore Project would not be viewed in the immediate seascape context of the CCA. Although it may be occasionally and partially visible, it would appear as a small number of WTGs partially visible from limited parts of the CCA, with rotors/blade tips seen between depressions in the landform,</p>

ID	CCA	Location	Associated LCTs	Approx distance to closest WTG	Subject to theoretical visibility	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
						removed from the coastal context of Loch Roag/Ròg. Views from the CCA are illustrated from Viewpoint 36 Carishader/Cairsiadar ( <b>Figure 18.59: VP 36, Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c</b> ) and assessed as part of the viewpoint assessment in <b>Appendix 18.2, Volume 2c</b> .
CCA14	Caolas/ <i>An Caolas</i> including Reef Beach and Cliff Beach/ <i>Camas na Clibhe</i>	The coastline around Caolas/ <i>An Caolas</i> , including Reef beach, Caolas Pabay/ <i>Phabaigh</i> , the islands of Pabay Mor/ <i>Phabaigh Mòr</i> and Vacsay/ <i>Bhacasaigh</i> , as well as Cliff Beach/ <i>Camas na Clibhe</i> between the headlands at Bhaltos/ <i>Valtos</i> and Rhubha Mòr.	324 – Cnoc and Lochan 321 - Machair 319 – Dispersed Crofting	13.4 km	Yes, scattered areas of visibility along coastal edge and hinterland of the CCA.	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.
CCA15	Gallan Head/ <i>Gallan Beag</i>	The headland at Gallan Head/ <i>Gallan Beag</i> , between Rhubha Mòr,	323 – Rocky Moorland	14.1 km	Yes. Visibility along north facing coastal edge and hinterland of the CCA. Limited/no visibility	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.

ID	CCA	Location	Associated LCTs	Approx distance to closest WTG	Subject to theoretical visibility	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
		Gallan Head/ <i>Gallan Beag</i> and Uig Bay/ <i>Camas Ùig</i> in the south.	322 – Boggy Moorland 318 – Linear Crofting		from coast to south of Gallan Head/ <i>Gallan Beag</i> to Uig Bay/ <i>Camas Uig</i> , due to the intervening headland at Gallan Head/ <i>Gallan Beag</i> restricting views northeast to the Offshore Project.	
CCA16	Uig Breach/ <i>Tràigh h Ùige</i> and Uig Bay/ <i>Camas Ùige</i>	The area around Uig Beach/ <i>Tràigh Uig</i> and Uig Bay/ <i>Camas Ùig</i> , between the Sgeir Sheilibhig and Glas Eilean headlands of the Uig cove and Uig beach/dunes.	321 - Machair 319 – Dispersed Crofting	18.9 km	Limited theoretical visibility of restricted number of WTGs (1-7) from coastal edge near Carnish/ <i>Càrnais</i> , however almost all of the coastal edge and hinterland has no visibility of the Offshore Project due to the containment by intervening landform..	No. There is no potential for significant effects on coastal character. Majority of the coastal edge and hinterland has no visibility of the Offshore Project, except for small area of restricted visibility near Carnish/ <i>Càrnais</i> , which is located over 20 km from the Turbine Area.
CCA17	Mangersta/ <i>Mangurstadh</i> Head	Mangersta/ <i>Mangurstadh</i> Head Between Glas Eilean (Uig Bay/ <i>Camas Uig</i> ) and Àird Feinis in the south.	323 – Rocky Moorland 321 - Machair	20.9 km	Yes. Visibility along north facing coastal edge and hinterland of the CCA. Limited/no visibility from coast to south of Mangersta/ <i>Mangurstadh</i> Head, due to the intervening headland at Gallan Head/ <i>Gallan Beag</i>	<b>Yes.</b> Potential for significant effects requiring further assessment.

ID	CCA	Location	Associated LCTs	Approx distance to closest WTG	Subject to theoretical visibility	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
					restricting views northeast to the Offshore Project.	

## 2 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON COASTAL CHARACTER

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1.1 The Offshore Project would have effects on coastal character during the construction and decommissioning phases, as well as during the operation and maintenance (O&M) phase. This section assesses the potential effects on each regional CCA identified in the preliminary assessment as having potential for significant effects (**Table 1-1**). Effects arising during construction and decommissioning, and effects arising during O&M, are assessed in turn for each CCA.

### 2.2 ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL CCA

#### 2.2.1 CCA1: BUTT OF LEWIS/RUBHA ROBHANAIS

##### Introduction

##### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.1.1 This CCA covers the northernmost shore of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* around the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais*, from Port of Ness/*Port Nis* to Roinn a' Roidh. It includes skerries and small islands off the coast.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317);
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 1 Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais*.

2.2.1.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- Indented coastline of rocky cliffs, caves and natural arches;
- Clarity of northern light, sense of exposure, sea spray from waves continually crashing into cliffs and calls from seabird colonies provide distinctive experience;
- Backed by large scale, gently undulating hinterland which restricts long-distance views inland and along the coast;
- Open seaward views across the Atlantic;
- Key landmarks include the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* lighthouse.

##### *Maritime influences*

2.2.1.3 This stretch northwest and northeast facing the coastline is under the continual force and dynamic coastal influences of the Atlantic Ocean. The cliffs and hinterland are exposed to the full force of elements. Strong currents drive waves into cliffs resulting in sea spray along cliff tops and the continual sound of crashing waves. The calls of seabirds nesting in the cliffs adds to these experiential qualities. There are relatively low levels of marine traffic including vessels nearer to

shore navigating around the Butt of Ness and fishing vessels offshore from this coastline, but otherwise there are no man-made elements within seaward views.

#### *Character of coastal edge*

2.2.1.4 Indented dark, rocky cliffs form a medium-to-large scale coastal edge. Cliffs range from a few meters and rise to 35 m at the Butt of Ness and 30 m at A' Bheirghe north of the Port of Ness/*Port Nis*, but are generally 20 m high. There are occasional small beaches of light-coloured sand at the head of small coves which contrast with the dark, nearly black cliffs of Lewisian gneiss. Wind-trimmed and grazed grass covers the cliff tops. Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* lighthouse is a prominent landmark along this coastline and a popular visitor attraction. Other attractions include the beach at Port Stoth which has remains of slipway used to build the lighthouse, and the archaeological site at Dun Eistean.

#### *Character of immediate hinterland*

2.2.1.5 Hinterland is formed by Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) associated with the crofting communities at the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais*. Open grazing outside the post-and-wire enclosed linear field parcels extends to the coastal edge. There is evidence of rig and furrow land cultivation across the headland. The landform is gently undulating with some areas reverting to grassy moorland. There are a number of cultural heritage features including St Moluag's church/*Teampall Mholuaidh*, church ruins and standing stones across the landscape.

#### *Human activity (presence or absence)*

2.2.1.6 While the coastal edge appears to be natural, there is evidence of long-standing human interventions throughout the CCA. Much of the shoreline is inaccessible due to the rugged cliff landscape, except the cove at Port Stoth and other small coves along the eastern coast. The headland and coastal edge are easily accessible with a road leading to the lighthouse from the B8014, with a cliff top walk from the lighthouse to Eoropie/*Eòrapaidh* beach. The Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* West Coast Path (Core Path 1) provides access to walkers along the coastal edge.

#### *Views and visibility*

2.2.1.7 Due to the undulating form of the landscape, views inland and along the coastline are often enclosed. The steep and often dramatic cliffs restrict views down to the coastal edge, with seaward vistas forming the focal point of views. Seaward views are open and extend to the horizon with an edge-of-the-world feeling. Due to the length of field parcels and the slightly domed landscape, croft houses become visible from the coast at Knockaird/*An Cnoc Àrd* and the Port of Ness/*Port Nis*.

## Sensitivity to change

- 2.2.1.8 This CCA is not located within a designated landscape, so is not afforded formal recognition for its value, however, the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* is well known and valued at the northern extremity of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, for its exposure and landmark lighthouse, and the perceptual responses it evokes, and the cultural associations of the landscape, which overall, add value. There are areas that are valued and visited by tourist visitors including the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* lighthouse, St Moluag's church/*Teampall Mholuidh* and Dun Eistean along this stretch of coastline. The coast of around the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* has a strong sense of place and scenic value, as well as perceptual qualities associated with its cliffs and exposure to the Atlantic. The overall value is considered to be Medium.
- 2.2.1.9 The medium-to-large scale cliffs have a strong association with the Atlantic to the northeast, north, west and southwest. The CCA is characterised by a sense of exposure to the influences of the Atlantic, relatively simple landscape elements of high, dark cliffs and grazed clifftops and open seaward vistas. The small-scale and self-reliance of the crofting settlements are susceptible to changes associated with the Offshore Project. These characteristics are susceptible to changes in seaward views by the introduction of large man-made structures into an otherwise empty seascape.
- 2.2.1.10 Susceptibility to change is, however, moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast, but would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal character, forming a new feature in expansive seaward views to the west. The CCA has a relatively simple form, large scale, and exposed to the Atlantic swells and winds, with which the Offshore Project could relate well, yet it also may also contrast with the wild and untamed sea. On balance, the susceptibility to change is assessed as Medium.
- 2.2.1.11 In combining the Medium value with the Medium susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* CCA is assessed as **Medium**.

## Magnitude of change

- 2.2.1.12 The closest point of this CCA is located 19.8 km from the Turbine Area. **Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.10: Blade Tip Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) with landscape and coastal character** illustrates there is theoretical visibility of the Offshore Project along the coastline of rocky cliffs between the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* and the headland at Roinn a' Roidh. The predicted view of the Offshore Project from this part of the CCA is shown in Viewpoint 1: Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* ( **Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.24: Viewpoint 1**). There is no visibility of the Offshore Project from the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* lighthouse or the northern coastline of the CCA between the lighthouse and Port of Ness/*Port Nis*.

### *Construction and decommissioning*

- 2.2.1.13 During the construction and decommissioning phases, the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when

there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and support vessels). Open seaward views to the southwest would be partially changed through the introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area, which would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views. The large scale and modern technology of such structures and vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the coastline of the CCA.

2.2.1.14 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by its separation from the CCA (nearly 20 km away) and the expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. Long-distance views along the coast and open seaward views to the west and north across the Atlantic would remain without offshore wind farm construction influences outside the Turbine Area. There would also be no visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from the north coast of the CCA and visibility from parts of the hinterland is restricted by the intervening landform.

2.2.1.15 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a **medium-low** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA.

*Operation and maintenance*

2.2.1.16 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce an array of modern man-made elements within seaward views to the southwest of the CCA. The large scale, layout of the array and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness gained from the rugged, rocky coastline of caves and rock arches. The open seaward views across the Atlantic would be partially changed, with the introduction of WTGs on the horizon introducing a new focal point to the southwest along the coast into the mainly empty seaward views, which is likely to partially diminish the 'edge-of-the-world' feeling associated with this north western extremity of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and Europe.

2.2.1.17 Long-distance views along the coast and open seaward views to the west and north across the Atlantic would, however, continue to be experienced in the wider panorama outside the Turbine Area. The influence of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by its separation from the CCA (nearly 20 km away) and the expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. The grouping of operational WTGs in a regular layout is also likely to have a simple relationship to the form of the linear coastal edge of the CCA. The offshore WTGs are likely to relate to the sense of exposure and the concept of harnessing the power of the elements that prevail along this coast, which is exposed to the wind and waves. The sense of exposure,

naturalness and remoteness of the CCA would fundamentally continue to be experienced in the presence of the Offshore Project. There would also be no visibility of the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project from the north coast of the CCA and visibility from parts of the hinterland is restricted by the intervening landform.

2.2.1.18 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **medium-low** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA.

### **Significance of effect**

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.1.19 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA1: Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* during construction and decommissioning is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)** adverse and short-term along the coastal edge between the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* and the headland at Roinn a' Roidh; and **Not Significant (None)**, neutral, short-term and temporary along the north coast of the CCA between Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* and Port of Ness/*Port Nis*.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.1.20 The potential effect on the Offshore Project coastal character of CCA1: Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* during the operation and maintenance of the Project is assessed as **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)** adverse and long-term along the coastal edge between the Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* and the headland at Roinn a' Roidh; and **Not Significant (None)**, neutral and long-term along the north coast of the CCA between Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* and Port of Ness/*Port Nis*.

## 2.2.2 CCA2: EOROPIE/EÒRAPAIDH

### Introduction

#### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.2.1 This CCA covers a broad bay with a number of coves, and Eoropie/Eòrapaidh beach on the northwestern coast of Lewis/Eilean Leòdhais, between Roinn a' Roidh and Cobha Sgeir. The long beach at Eoropie/Eòrapaidh, fringed with high sand dunes, low cliffs, reefs and small islands along the shoreline, make it distinctive.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Machair (321) and Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317);
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 1 Butt of Lewis/Rubha Robhanais overlooks this stretch of coast and Viewpoint 2 Cross/Cros is located inland from the CCA.

#### *Key Characteristics*

2.2.2.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- Low rocky cliffs of small headlands slump to meet coastal edge interspersed with sandy beaches and coves;
- Long beach at Eoropie/Eòrapaidh, fringed with high sand dunes and low cliffs;
- Open views northwest towards Atlantic with headlands at Roinn a' Roidh and Cobha Sgeir enclosing view to north and south respectively;
- Land rises gently inland restricting views;
- Sense of being more remote than in reality due to the limited visibility of man-made features from the shoreline.

#### *Maritime influences:*

2.2.2.3 The headlands at Roinn a' Roidh and Cobha Sgeir provide some limited shelter from full force of the Atlantic, however, dynamic coastal influences of the Atlantic Ocean are evident along the shoreline including shifting sand and stones of beaches, and dunes during storms. The headlands also enclose views of the Atlantic to north and south, however the sea extends to the horizon. There are relatively low levels of marine traffic offshore from this coastline, with vessels nearer to shore navigating around the Butt of Ness but otherwise there are few man-made elements within the seaward views. Eoropie/Eòrapaidh beach is a popular surfing and tourist destination.

#### *Character of coastal edge:*

2.2.2.4 Rocky, low cliffs of Lewisian gneiss form small headlands with reefs and small rocky islets extending into the sea. Light coloured sandy beaches, some with rounded stone and pebbles in places, occur between the headlands. Beaches are often at the outlet of small burns forming channels and often associated with smooth stones and pebbles on beaches. Dunes extend inland at Tràigh Chumail and Eoropie/Eòrapaidh Beach.

*Character of immediate hinterland:*

2.2.2.5 Hinterland is formed by Machair LCT (323) at Eoropie/*Eòrapaidh* Beach and Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317). Linear crofting strips often extend to the coastal edge along the hinterland of the LCT between Ness/*Nis* and South Dell/*Dail-bho-Dheas*, with evidence of rig and furrow common. The coastal edge appears to be grazed. A number of historic landmarks, including cemeteries, duns and remains of churches (many of which are scheduled monuments) sit between crofting inbye and the coast. Burns running from inland moorland create relatively steep, shallow valleys along the coastline.

*Human activity (presence or absence):*

2.2.2.6 Crofting land extends from coastal edge to A857 approximately 1 km inland. The slight rise to the coast before the land slumps down towards the sea restricts visibility of the crofting townships from much of the coastal edge. Except at Tràigh Shanndaigh where the settlement of Eoropie/*Eòrapaidh* is visible, from the shoreline there is very limited evidence of any man-made structures.

*Views and visibility:*

2.2.2.7 The low cliffs and slight rise of landscape from the clifftops restricts views inland. The headlands enclose the view north and south, such that the focus of the view is out across the Atlantic. These features combine to create medium to large scale sea views. The sea extends towards the horizon creating an edge-of-the-world feeling.

**Sensitivity to change**

2.2.2.8 This CCA is not located within a designated landscape so is not afforded formal recognition for its value, however, Eoropie/*Eòrapaidh* beach is well known for its sands and swells, and is valued for surfing, walking and beach recreation, with a car park and Eoropie/*Eòrapaidh* Dunes play park nearby. The value is considered to be Medium.

2.2.2.9 The coastline has a strong association with the Atlantic to the northwest. There is some sense of enclosure from the smaller beaches forming coves between the low cliffs of headlands to the south of the CCA, however, Eoropie/*Eòrapaidh* Beach is large scale and more open to the sea and the elements. There is limited visibility of man-made structures from the coastal edge and sandy beaches such that it feels more remote than it is. These characteristics are susceptible to changes in seaward views by the introduction of large man-made structures into an otherwise empty and apparently naturalistic coastal edge and seascape.

2.2.2.10 Susceptibility to change is moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast and would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal character, forming a new feature in expansive seaward views to the west. Susceptibility is assessed as High.

2.2.2.11 In combining the Medium value with the High susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of Eoropie/Eòrapaidh Beach CCA is assessed as **High-Medium**.

#### **Magnitude of change**

2.2.2.12 The closest point of this CCA is located 15.4 km from the Turbine Area. **Figure 18.10, Volume 2c** illustrates there is theoretical visibility of the Offshore Project from the coastline and hinterland of the CCA. Visibility of the Offshore Project is restricted from the southern part of the CCA due to the intervening headland at Cobha Sgeir, but there is fairly consistent visibility between Tràigh Chumail and Eoropie/Eòrapaidh. Viewpoint 1 Butt of Lewis/*Rubha Robhanais* (**Figure 18.25: Viewpoint 1, Volume 2c**) overlooks this stretch of coast and Viewpoint 2 Cross/*Cros* (**Figure 18.26: Viewpoint 2, Volume 2c**) is located inland from the CCA.

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.2.13 During the construction and decommissioning phases, the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and support vessels). Open seaward views to the southwest would be partially changed through the introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area, which would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views. The large scale and modern appearance of the WTGs/Offshore Substations Platform (OSP) and vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the long Hebridean beaches of the CCA and may contrast with the small-scale, traditional crofting character in its hinterland.

2.2.2.14 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by its separation from the CCA (approximately 15 km away) and the expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. Long-distance views along the coast and open seaward views to the west and north across the Atlantic would remain without offshore wind farm construction influences outside the Turbine Area. There would also be restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from the southern coast of the CCA due to the intervening headland at Cobha Sgeir.

2.2.2.15 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential medium magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along the coastal edge and immediate hinterland of the CCA between Eoropie/Eòrapaidh and Tràigh Chrois; reducing to medium-low with restricted visibility further inland into the Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) at Nis around the crofting areas of Habost/*Tàbost*, Swainbost/*Suaineabost* and Cross/*Cros*.

### *Operation and maintenance*

- 2.2.2.16 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce an array of modern man-made elements within seaward views to the southwest of the CCA. The large scale, layout of the array and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness gained from the long Hebridean beaches of the CCA and may contrast with the small-scale, traditional crofting character in its hinterland. The open seaward views across the Atlantic from the beaches, dunes and low rocky coast of the CCA would be partially changed, with the introduction of WTGs on the horizon introducing a new focal point to the southwest along the coast into the mainly empty seaward views, which is likely to partially diminish the 'edge-of-the-world' feeling associated with this north-western extremity of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and Europe.
- 2.2.2.17 Long-distance views along the coast and open seaward views to the west and north across the Atlantic would, however, continue to be experienced in the wider panorama outside the Turbine Area. The influence of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by its separation from the CCA (approximately 15 km away) and the expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. The grouping of operational WTGs in a regular layout is also likely to have a simple relationship to the form of the linear coastal edge of the CCA. The offshore WTGs are likely to relate to the sense of exposure and the concept of harnessing the power of the elements that prevail along this coast, which is exposed to the wind and waves. The sense of exposure, naturalness and remoteness of the CCA would fundamentally continue to be experienced in the presence of the Offshore Project. There would also be restricted visibility of the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project from the southern coast of the CCA due to the intervening headland at Cobha Sgeir.
- 2.2.2.18 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **Medium** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along the coastal edge and immediate hinterland of the CCA between *Eorapie/Eòrapaidh* and *Tràigh Chrois*; reducing to **Medium-low** with restricted visibility further inland into the Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) at *Nis* around the crofting areas of *Habost/Tàbost*, *Swainbost/Suaineabost* and *Cross/Cros*.

### **Significance of effect**

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

- 2.2.2.19 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA2: *Eorapie/Eòrapaidh* during construction and decommissioning is assessed as **Significant (Moderate)** adverse and short-term along the coastal edge and immediate hinterland of the CCA between *Eorapie/Eòrapaidh* and *Tràigh Chrois*; including the area of *Machair* LCT (321) at *Eorapie/Eòrapaidh*; which reduces to **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)** with restricted visibility further inland into the Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) at *Nis* around the crofting areas of *Habost/Tàbost*, *Swainbost/Suaineabost* and *Cross/Cros*.

*Operation and maintenance*

2.2.2.20 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA2: Eoropie/Eòrapaidh during operation and maintenance of the Project is assessed as **Significant (Moderate)** adverse and long-term along the coastal edge and immediate hinterland of the CCA between Eoropie/Eòrapaidh and Tràigh Chrois; including the area of Machair LCT (321) at Europie; which reduces to **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)** with restricted visibility further inland into the Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) at Nis around the crofting areas of Habost/Tàbost, Swainbost/Suaineabost and Cross/Cros.

## 2.2.3 CCA3: BORVE/BORGH, SHADER/SIADAR AN RUBHA AND GALSTON/GÀBHSANN LOW ROCKY COAST

### Introduction

#### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.3.1 This CCA covers coastline along the northwest coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* between Cobha Sgeir in the north and Rubhan a Callich in the south and comprises the low rocky coastline with crofting settlements at the coastal edge, backed by moorland.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) and Boggy Moorland LCT (322);
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 3: South Galston/*Gàbhsann bho Dheas*, Viewpoint 4: Melbost Borge/*Mealabost Borgh* and Viewpoint 5: Shader/*Siadar an Rubha* Core Path are located along the coast within this CCA. Viewpoint 6: Borge/*Borgh* and Viewpoint 7: Clach an Trushal/*Clach an Truiseil* are in its hinterland.

2.2.3.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- Northwest facing coastline exposed to full force of the Atlantic;
- Indented coastline of low cliffs with small beaches at the head of the narrow inlets or within small coves;
- Gentle rise of landform from coastal edge restricts visibility inland from coastal edge and views of the sea from inland;
- Majority of hinterland of moorland with small lochs and relatively difficult to access coastal edge;
- Hinterland of crofting land at Borge/*Borgh*, Shader/*Siadar an Rubha* and Galston/*Gàbhsann* separated by moorland. Small crofting townships associated with burns that run down to sea at Melbost Borge/*Mealabost Borgh*, South Galston/*Gàbhsann bho Dheas* and North Galston/*Gabh sunn Bho Tuath*;
- Open expanse of sea visible from gently undulating landform and linear coast along full length of coastline;
- Number of historic landmarks located along coast including Clach an Trushal/*Clach an Truiseil*.

#### *Maritime influences*

2.2.3.3 Northwest facing section of coastline exposed to full force of Atlantic and dynamic coastal influences. There are relatively low levels of marine traffic offshore from this coastline, including vessels navigating around Lewis and fishing vessels, otherwise there are no man-made elements within seaward views.

#### *Character of coastal edge*

2.2.3.4 Indented coastline of low dark-coloured Lewisian gneiss cliffs with small beaches common at the head of the narrow inlets, particularly within the Àird Bharabhais part of the CCA. Small coves are

common features with sand or grey coloured beaches. A longer beach is found at South Galston/*Gàbhsann bho Dheas* which connects with coves at either side. Reefs and small rocky islets are a common feature offshore, with wave-cut platforms along the base of the rocky cliffs. Cliffs range in height from 10-20 m and are generally higher within the southern part of the CCA.

- 2.2.3.5 Relatively open stretch of coastline lined by narrow beaches of rounded pebbles of grey and pink gneiss with patches of sand. Black coloured reefs and small rocky islets common along length of coast with wavecut platforms associated with low cliffs. Shallow coves are located to the south of cliffs at Melbost Borge/*Mealabost Borgh*, Upper Shader/*Siadar Uarach* and Ballantrushal/*Baile an Truiseil*. The remains of a small jetty are found at Shader beach as are the ruins of St. Peter's Church/*Teampall Pheadair*. Crofting fields extend to the coastal edge at Borge/*Borgh*, and Sharder/*Siadar an Rubha* with moorland between them.

*Character of immediate hinterland*

- 2.2.3.6 Hinterland is formed by Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) at Borge/*Borgh*, Shader/*Siadar an Rubha* and Galston/*Gàbhsann*, interspersed with Boggy Moorland LCT (322), which extends up to the coastal edge between the crofting areas. There is evidence of historic peat cutting along much of the coastal edge. Small, rounded lochs are common with some within a few hundred metres of the coast. The landform is gently undulating and rises before reaching the coastal edge.
- 2.2.3.7 There are areas of crofting at South Galston/*Gàbhsann bho Dheas*, North Galston/*Gabh sunn Bho Tuath*, Melbost Borge/*Mealabost Borgh* and Upper Barvas/*Barabhas Uarach*. These small linear crofting townships are associated with burns that have gradually eroded shallow valleys through the moorland. The green pasture of crofting land contrasts against the dull brown of the moorland. Rig and furrow land management is evident throughout the crofting inbye. There are small areas of patchy, stunted and windblown coniferous forestry near Melbost Borge/*Mealabost Borgh*. A number of archaeological remains are found along the Toa Galston/*Tobha Ghabhsainn* part of the CCA including duns, church ruins and cemeteries.
- 2.2.3.8 Crofting settlement centred around Borge/*Borgh* and Shader/*Siadar an Rubha*, commonly arranged in a grid pattern with two rows of crofting houses separated by a short linear field with crofts lining the interconnecting roads in some places. The linear field patterns, often of pasture, are separated by post-and-wire fences and gradually transition to moorland. Small, rounded lochs are dotted across the moorland including at Shader, around which a number of historic landmarks are located. South of this the standing stone of Clach an Trushal/*Clach an Truiseil* is located approximately 600 m inland at Ballantrushal/*Baile an Truiseil*. The landform is relatively flat with gentle undulations often associated with burns or lochs forming shallow valleys or depressions.

*Human activity (presence or absence)*

- 2.2.3.9 There are a number of interlinked crofting settlements in clusters, at Borge/*Borgh*, Shader/*Siadar an Rubha* and Galston/*Gàbhsann*. Ruins of earlier linear crofting settlements are found at the edges of existing crofts, indicating larger and more populous settlement previously. Rig and furrow land

management is evident across the crofting land with peat cutting banks notable across the strip of moorland between these areas of settlement. The coastal edge is potentially accessible, however the boggy terrain particularly within moorland areas makes it more difficult to reach. A number of tracks and paths provide access to the shoreline.

2.2.3.10 Pockets of crofting land are dotted along the coast connected by the A857 which runs approximately 1 km inland. At these locations it is generally easier to access the shoreline via a path down to the beach at the outlet of the nearby burn. The transition from crofting inbye to moorland is gradual. Where there is moorland abutting the coastal edge, access is more difficult due to the boggy terrain that often ends in low cliffs. Although the coastline is generally inaccessible with a sense of remoteness due to the large-scale moorland, evidence of long-standing historic human activity on the peat banks reduces the sense of wildness.

#### *Views and visibility*

2.2.3.11 There are open and expansive seaward views from the coastal edge, particularly from cliff tops. From beaches (where accessible) views are framed by low cliffs. Views of the sea extend to the horizon giving an edge-of-the-world feeling. The gently undulating coastal edge affords long views along the coast often with the rise of the next undulation restricting views in places. The linear arrangement of croft houses creates a 'toothed' appearance along the horizon or against the seascape backdrop. Views inland are often restricted by the gentle rise of moorland. Views of the sea from inland are often visible along the shallow valley within which crofting townships are located. The cliff landscape is often not visible from inland. South of Ballantrushal/*Baile an Truiseil* 3 onshore wind turbines are located in close proximity to the coastal edge that form a notable focal point in views inland. The sea is visible as a long narrow band above moorland or crofting land along the full length of this coastline.

#### **Sensitivity to change**

2.2.3.12 This CCA is not located within a designated landscape, so is not afforded formal recognition for its value, and there are some detracting aspects of the experience of the crofting areas, however, the crofting landscape resource is valued in the local/immediate environment and there is a strong sense of place and distinctiveness associated with the crofting landscapes of the west coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. The value is considered to be Medium.

2.2.3.13 This undulating, open and exposed landscape has strong association with the Atlantic, particularly from the coastal edge and at the shallow valleys where crofting townships are located. The CCA is characterised by simple landcover of moorland or crofting inbye, exposure to the sea and a relatively difficult to access coastline, as well as narrow beaches and shallow sandy coves separated by low, indented cliffs with a gently undulating hinterland of crofting land and moorland with open views of the sea. These characteristics would be susceptible to changes in seaward views by the introduction of large man-made structures into an otherwise empty seascape. The position and

orientation of this stretch of coastline, particularly to the south, has a relatively direct relationship with the Offshore Project.

2.2.3.14 Susceptibility to change is moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast and would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal character, forming a new feature in expansive seaward views to the west. The coastline has a relatively simple form, and the hinterland is relatively flat with a strong linear edge, to which the Offshore Project could have simple relationship. The hinterland is also flattish and open with wide views of the open sea, with relatively few focal points or complexity, such that the WTGs could relate clearly and simply to this scale and openness. On balance, susceptibility is assessed as Medium.

2.2.3.15 In combining the Medium value with the Medium susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of the Borge/Borgh, Shader/Siadar an Rubha and Galston/Gàbhshann Low Rocky Coast CCA is assessed as **Medium**.

#### Magnitude of change

2.2.3.16 The closest point of this CCA is located 7.2 km from the Turbine Area. **Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.10** illustrates there is fairly consistent theoretical visibility of the Offshore Project from the coastline and hinterland of the CCA. There are some small ridges which run perpendicular to the coast that provide some limited containment, such as at South Galston/Gàbhshann bho Dheas and Borge/Borgh. The predicted view of the Offshore Project from the coastal edge of the CCA is shown in Viewpoint 3: South Galston/Gàbhshann bho Dheas (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.27: Viewpoint 3**), Viewpoint 4: Melbost Borge /Mealabost Borgh (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.28: Viewpoint 4**) and Viewpoint 5: Shader/Siadar an Rubha Core Path (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.29: Viewpoint 5**) Viewpoint 6: Borge/Borgh (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.30: Viewpoint 6**) and Viewpoint 7: Clach an Trushal/Clach an Truiseil (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.31: Viewpoint 7**) are in its hinterland.

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.3.17 During the construction and decommissioning phases, the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and support vessels). Open seaward views to the west would be partially changed through the introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area, which would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views. The large scale and modern appearance of the WTGs/OSP and vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from low rocky coastline and cliffs, and may contrast with the small-scale, traditional crofting character in its hinterland.

2.2.3.18 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated to some degree by its separation from the CCA (approximately 7 km away) and the expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. Long-distance views along the coast and open seaward views to the north across the Atlantic would remain without offshore wind farm construction influences outside the Turbine Area. There would also be restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from areas contained by small ridges perpendicular to the coast that provide some containment, such as at Borge/*Borgh* and South Galston/*Gàbhsann bho Dheas*.

2.2.3.19 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential high magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) and Boggy Moorland LCT (322) extending down to the coast in places; only reducing to medium-low within localised areas with restricted visibility, such as at Borge/*Borgh* and South Galston/*Gàbhsann bho Dheas* where landform partially screens views of the Offshore Project.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.3.20 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce an array of modern man-made elements within seaward views to the southwest of the CCA. The large scale, layout of the array and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from low rocky coastline and cliffs of the CCA and may contrast with the small-scale, traditional crofting character in its hinterland. The open seaward views across the Atlantic from the low rocky coast of the CCA would be substantially changed, with the introduction of WTGs in the seascape introducing a main focal point to the west in the mainly empty seaward views for large stretches of the coastline of this CCA. The large scale of the WTGs is likely to be apparent and there will be a relatively direct scale comparison with the relatively low cliffs. The WTG rotors would add visual movement to a seascape in which movement is currently most influenced by the dynamism of the sea.

2.2.3.21 Long-distance views along the coast and open seaward views to the north across the Atlantic would continue to be experienced in the wider panorama outside the Turbine Area. The influence of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated to some degree by its separation from the CCA (approximately 7 km away) and the expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. The grouping of operational WTGs in a regular layout is also likely to have a simple relationship to the form of the linear coastal edge of the CCA. The offshore WTGs are also likely to relate to the sense of exposure and the concept of harnessing the power of the elements that prevail along this coast, which is exposed to the wind and waves. The sense of exposure, naturalness and remoteness of the CCA would fundamentally continue to be experienced in the presence of the Offshore Project. There would also be restricted visibility of the construction and

decommissioning of the Offshore Project from areas contained by small ridges perpendicular to the coast that provide some containment, such as at Borge/Borgh and South Galston/Gàbhsann bho Dheas.

2.2.3.22 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential high magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) and Boggy Moorland LCT (322) extending down to the coast in places; only reducing to medium-low within localised areas with restricted visibility, such as at Borge/Borgh and South Galston/Gàbhsann bho Dheas where landform partially screens views of the Offshore Project.

### Significance of effect

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.3.23 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA3: Borge/Borgh, Shader/Siadar an Rubha and Galston/Gàbhsann Low Rocky Coast during construction and decommissioning is assessed as **Significant (Major-moderate)** adverse and short-term on the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) and Boggy Moorland LCT (322); only reducing to **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)** within localised areas with restricted visibility, such as at Borge/Borgh and South Galston/Gàbhsann bho Dheas where landform partially screens views of the Offshore Project.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.3.24 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA3: Borge/Borgh, Shader/Siadar an Rubha and Galston/Gàbhsann Low Rocky Coast during operation and maintenance is assessed as **Significant (Major-moderate)** adverse and long-term on the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) and Boggy Moorland LCT (322); only reducing to **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)** within localised areas with restricted visibility, such as at Borge/Borgh and South Galston/Gàbhsann bho Dheas where landform partially screens views of the Offshore Project.

## 2.2.4 CCA4: BARVAS SANDS AND ÀIRD BHARABHAIS

### Introduction

#### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.4.1 This CCA is located between Rubhan a Callich/Àird Bharabhais, Barvas/*Barabhas* Sands and the more elevated containing landform of Mollerap near Brue/*Brù*, and includes the distinctive beaches backed by Loch Mor Bharabhais and Loch Ereray/*Èirearaigh* at the coast.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Machair (321), Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) and Boggy Moorland LCT (322);
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 8: Upper Barvas/*Barabhas Uarach* Cemetery, Viewpoint 10: Barvas/*Barabhas* Beach and Viewpoint 11: North of Brue/*Brù* area located along the coast within this CCA. Viewpoint 9: Upper Barvas/*Barabhas Uarach* (2 km) and Viewpoint 13: Barvas/*Barabhas* (2.2 km) are in its hinterland.

2.2.4.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- North and northwest facing coastline exposed to full force of Atlantic;
- Open, broad bay with indented cliffs to the north and south;
- Dunes and machair found at Barvas/*Barabhas* beach are distinctive in the context of the wider, low rocky coastline;
- Beaches are backed by lochs at the coast, including Loch Mor Bharabhais and Loch Ereray/*Eirearaigh*, which contributes to the distinctiveness of the coast;
- Crofting land extends to coastal edge at Barvas/*Barabhas* and Brue/*Brù*;
- Ministry of Defence (MOD) range at Barvas/*Barabhas* Beach is an active live firing range.

#### *Maritime influences:*

2.2.4.3 North and northwest facing section of coastline exposed to full force of the Atlantic and dynamic coastal influences. Barvas/*Barabhas* beach is afforded some protection being eroded into the coastal edge. Barvas/*Barabhas* beach is a popular surfing location. There are relatively low levels of marine traffic offshore from this coastline, including vessels navigating around Lewis and fishing vessels, otherwise there are no man-made elements within seaward views.

#### *Character of coastal edge:*

2.2.4.4 The coastline is relatively open with broad coves some which have formed eroded to form wide inlets. The long, narrow beaches of sand and rounded stones within coves shift during storms and strong weather creating a dynamic coastal edge in these locations. Extensive dunes and machair are found at Barvas/*Barabhas* beach, with the MOD rifle range at the southern end of the dunes. Locally distinctive small to medium sized lochs sit behind the coves and drain onto the beach, in some places only separated by a shingle spit at the beach itself. Black coloured gneiss, indented

cliffs separate the coves and range from 30-40 m to 10 m high. Generally low-lying with low, rocky coast rising to the north at Àird Bharabhais and south at Mollerap provide containment.

*Character of immediate hinterland:*

2.2.4.5 Hinterland is formed by Machair LCT (321) at Barvas/*Barabhas* beach, flanked by Gently Sloping Crofting LCT (317) and Boggy Moorland LCT (322), which extends up to the coastal edge outside these crofting areas. The landscape is gently undulating with small, rounded knolls, small-to-medium sized lochs within depressions and shallow valleys formed by burns which interconnect them. Overall, the landform has a low relatively flat, profile. Crofting inbye extends to the coastal edge with remains of crofting houses common; inhabited crofts are found slightly further inland. Evidence of rig and furrow cultivation is common across the narrow crofting parcels. There are two linear crofting townships: Barvas/*Barabhas* and Brue/*Brù*.

*Human activity (presence or absence):*

2.2.4.6 Cemeteries, burial grounds and church ruins hint at long-standing human occupation. The full length of coastal hinterland shows evidence of human cultivation and interaction, whereas the shoreline appears more natural due to the strong coastal forces that shape it. Core paths follow the coastal edge, with much of the shoreline being accessible. Barvas/*Barabhas* Beach is a popular area for recreation, with surfing on the exposed reef break and camping at the beach.

*Views and visibility:*

2.2.4.7 Seaward views from the shoreline are more enclosed from within the coves but generally open and expansive. Views of the sea extend to the horizon giving an edge-of-the-world feeling. The undulating landform restricts views of the sea from inland, with the sea being visible where the landform dips down at coves. Except from the coastal edge, there are generally not views of beaches or cliffs. From high points there are views inland southwest to the hills of Harris, with views north and west of gently rising moorland. In views north from Barvas/*Barabhas*, the onshore wind turbines of Drum nan Clachan are visible along the skyline.

### **Sensitivity to change**

2.2.4.8 This CCA is not located within a designated landscape, so is not afforded formal recognition for its value, and there are some detracting aspects of the experience of the crofting areas and MOD rifle range, however, the Barvas/*Barabhas* beach is well known for its sands and swells, and is valued for surfing, walking and beach recreation. The nearby crofting landscape resource is also valued in the local/immediate environment and there is a strong sense of place and distinctiveness associated with the crofting landscapes of the west coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. The value is considered to be Medium.

2.2.4.9 The coastal edge has a strong association with the Atlantic. The CCA is characterised by wide coves with sandy and pebbly beaches backed by freshwater lochs, undulating landform with extensive crofting land associated with these beaches. Barvas/*Barabhas* Beach is valued and its sandy dunes

and Machair is locally distinctive amongst the wider stretch of low, rocky coastline. These characteristics would be susceptible to changes in seaward views by the introduction of large man-made structures into an otherwise empty seascape. Although there are views of onshore wind turbines from the northern part of the CCA, their location within moorland mean they are visually separate from the seascape and views of the Offshore Project.

2.2.4.10 Susceptibility to change is moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast, but would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal character, forming a new feature in expansive seaward views to the west. The position and orientation of this stretch of coastline has a relatively direct relationship with the Offshore Project, which is immediately offshore the west of this CCA. Susceptibility is assessed as High.

2.2.4.11 In combining the Medium value with the High susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of the Barvas/*Barabhas* Sands and Àird Bharabhais CCA is assessed as **High-Medium**.

### Magnitude of change

2.2.4.12 The closest point of this CCA is located 7.0 km from the Turbine Area. **Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.10** illustrates there is fairly consistent theoretical visibility of the Offshore Project from the coastline and hinterland of the CCA. There are some small ridges which run perpendicular to the coast that provide some limited containment, such as between Brue/*Brù* and Lower Barvas/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*, and at Gleann Ereray/*Èirearaigh*. The predicted view of the Offshore Project from the coastal edge of the CCA is shown in Viewpoint 8: Upper Barvas/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* Cemetery (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.32: Viewpoint 8**), Viewpoint 10: Barvas/*Barabhas* Beach (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.34: Viewpoint 10**) and Viewpoint 11: North of Brue/*Brù* (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.35: Viewpoint 11**) located along the coast within this CCA. Viewpoint 9: Upper Barvas/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.33: Viewpoint 9**) and Viewpoint 13: Barvas/*Barabha* (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.37: Viewpoint 13**) illustrate views from its hinterland.

### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.4.13 During the construction and decommissioning phases, the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and support vessels). Open seaward views to the west would be partially changed through the introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area, which would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views. The large scale and modern appearance of the under-construction WTGs and large vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the distinctive broad bay/dunes at

Barvas/*Barabhas* beach backed by Loch Mor Bharabhas, and may contrast with the small-scale, traditional crofting character in its hinterland around Barvas/*Barabhas* and Brue/*Brù*.

2.2.4.14 The physical characteristics of the CCA, would however, remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated to some degree by its separation from the CCA (approximately 7 km away) and the expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. There would also be restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from areas contained by small ridges perpendicular to the coast that provide some containment, such as between Brue/*Brù* and Lower Barvas/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*, and at Gleann Ereray/*Èirearaigh* .

2.2.4.15 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential high magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Machair LCT (321), Gently Sloping Crofting (317) and Boggy Moorland (322) in places extending the coast; only reducing to medium-low within localised areas with restricted visibility, such as between Brue/*Brù* and Lower Barvas/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*, where landform partially screens views of the Offshore Project.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.4.16 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce an array of modern man-made elements within seaward views to the west of the CCA. The large scale of the WTGs, layout of the array and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the distinctive broad bay/dunes at Barvas/*Barabhas* beach backed by Loch Mor Bharabhas and may contrast with the small-scale, traditional crofting character in its hinterland. The open seaward views across the Atlantic from the broad bay/dunes at Barvas/*Barabhas* beach and the hinterland around Loch Mor Bharabhas would be substantially changed, with the introduction of WTGs in the seascape introducing a main focal point to the west in the mainly empty seaward views, with the lateral spread of the Turbine Area partially enclosing the seascape of the broad bay and the vertical scale of the WTGs contrasting with the horizontal emphasis of the bay and Loch Mor Bharabhas. The large scale of the WTGs is likely to be apparent and there will be a relatively direct scale comparison with the relatively low lying coast against which they will be viewed.. The WTG rotors would add visual movement to a seascape in which movement is currently most influenced by the dynamism of the sea.

2.2.4.17 The influence of the Offshore Project on coastal character is moderated to some degree by its separation from the CCA (approximately 7 km away) and the expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. The grouping of operational WTGs in a regular layout is also likely to have a simple relationship to the form of the broad bay and linear coastal edge of the CCA. The offshore WTGs are also likely to relate to the sense of exposure and the concept of harnessing the

power of the elements that prevail along this coast, which is exposed to the wind and waves. The sense of exposure, naturalness and remoteness of the CCA would fundamentally continue to be experienced in the presence of the Offshore Project. There would also be restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from localised areas contained by small ridges perpendicular to the coast that provide some containment, such as between Brue/Brù and Lower Barvas/Beàrnaraigh Beag, and at Gleann Ereray/Èirearaigh.

2.2.4.18 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **High** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Machair LCT (321), Gently Sloping Crofting (317) and Boggy Moorland (322) in places extending the coast; only reducing to **Medium-low** within localised areas with restricted visibility, such as between Brue/Brù and Lower Barvas/Beàrnaraigh Beag, where landform partially screens views of the Offshore Project.

### Significance of effect

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.4.19 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA4: Barvas/Barabhas Sands and Àird Bharabhais, during construction and decommissioning is assessed as **Significant (Major)** adverse and short-term on the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland, formed by Machair LCT (321), Gently Sloping Crofting (317) and Boggy Moorland (322) in places extending the coast; only reducing to **Not Significant (Moderate)** within localised areas with restricted visibility, such as between Brue/Brù and Lower Barvas/Beàrnaraigh Beag where landform partially screens views of the Offshore Project.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.4.20 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA4: Barvas/Barabhas Sands and Àird Bharabhais, during operation and maintenance is assessed as **Significant (Major)** adverse and long-term on the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland, formed by Machair LCT (321), Gently Sloping Crofting (317) and Boggy Moorland (322) in places extending the coast; only reducing to **Not Significant (Moderate)** within localised areas with restricted visibility, such as between Brue/Brù and Lower Barvas/Beàrnaraigh Beag where landform partially screens views of the Offshore Project.

## 2.2.5 CCA5: BRAGAR/BHRÀDHAGAIR AND PORT ARNOL/ÀRNOIL

### Introduction

#### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.5.1 This CCA is located between Mollerap (near Brue/Brù), Port Arnol/Àrnoil and Àird Mhòr Bhràgair, including the beaches of Port Arnol/Àrnoil and Bragar/Bhràdhagair, on the west coast of Lewis/Eilean Leòdhais.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Linear Crofting (318), Boggy Moorland LCT (322);
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 12: Loch na Muilne; Viewpoint 14: Arnol/Àrnoil Blackhouse (450 m) and Viewpoint 16: Bragar/Bhràdhagair Beach are located along the coast within this CCA. Viewpoint 15: Arnol/Àrnoil Village; Viewpoint 17: Sheiling near Loch Urghag (between Brue/Brù and Arnol/Àrnoil); Viewpoint 19: A858 Abhainn Arnol/Àrnoil; Viewpoint 20: Bragar/Bhràdhagair are in its hinterland.

2.2.5.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- North and northwest facing coastline exposed to full force of the Atlantic;
- Small, enclosed coves separated by indented cliffs;
- Beaches at Port Arnol/Àrnoil and Bragar/Bhràdhagair beach are backed by lochs (Loch Arnol/Àrnoil and Loch Ordais), which are distinctive elements along this section of coast;
- Crofting land extends to coastal edge at Arnol/Àrnoil, Bragar/Bhràdhagair and Labost;
- Arnol/Àrnoil Blackhouse museum and RSPB Loch na Muilne Reserve are located within this CCA.

#### *Maritime influences:*

2.2.5.3 North and northwest facing section of coastline exposed to full force of the Atlantic and dynamic coastal influences. The headlands surrounding Bragar/Bhràdhagair beach enclose the view and provide some protection from strong currents and storm events, with the headlands of Arnol/Àrnoil beach providing slightly less protection. There are relatively low levels of marine traffic offshore from this coastline, including vessels navigating around Lewis and fishing vessels, otherwise there are no man-made elements within seaward views.

#### *Character of coastal edge:*

2.2.5.4 The coastline is relatively open with small more enclosed coves which have eroded to form small inlets. The beaches of sand and rounded stones within coves shift during storms and strong weather, creating a dynamic coastal edge in these locations. There is a jetty located at the eastern side of Bragar/Bhràdhagair beach. Small to medium sized lochs sit behind the coves at Bragar/Bhràdhagair Beach and Port Arnol/Àrnoil and drain onto the beach, in some places only separated by a shingle spit on the beach itself. Black coloured gneiss, indented cliffs separate the

coves and range from 30-40 m to 10 m high. Reefs and rocky offshore islets such as Eilean Arnol/Àrnoil are found at the base of the wave-cut platforms of the cliffs.

*Character of immediate hinterland:*

2.2.5.5 Hinterland is formed mainly by Linear Crofting LCT (318) flanked by Boggy Moorland LCT (322) to the north, outside the crofting area. The landscape is gently undulating with small, rounded knolls, small-to-medium sized lochs within depressions and shallow valleys formed by burns which interconnect them. Overall, the landform has a low relatively flat, profile. Crofting inbye extends to the coastal edge with remains of crofting houses common; inhabited crofts are found slightly further inland. Evidence of rig and furrow cultivation is common across the narrow crofting parcels. There are linear crofting townships at Bragar/Bhràdhagair, Arnol/Àrnoil and Labost. Arnol/Àrnoil Blackhouse museum is a popular tourist visitor location. Between Arnol/Àrnoil and Brue/Brù moorland extends to the medium-scale cliffs and is the location of the RSPB Loch na Muilne Reserve. Tracks lead from the crofting townships into the moorlands where peat cutting banks are located.

*Human activity (presence or absence):*

2.2.5.6 The coastal hinterland shows evidence of human cultivation and interaction, whereas the shoreline appears more natural due to the strong coastal forces that shape it. A core path follows the coastal edge, with parts of the shoreline being accessible.

*Views and visibility:*

2.2.5.7 Seaward views from the shoreline are more enclosed from within some coves but generally open and expansive out to the Atlantic. Views of the sea extend to the horizon giving an edge-of-the-world feeling. The undulating landform restricts views of the sea from inland, with the sea being visible where the landform dips down at coves. Except from the coastal edge, there are generally no views of beaches or cliffs. From high points there are views inland southwest to the hills of Harris/Na Hearadh, with views north and west of gently rising moorland.

### **Sensitivity to change**

2.2.5.8 This CCA is not located within a designated landscape, so it is not afforded formal recognition for its value, and there are some detracting aspects of the experience of the crofting areas, however, the hinterland includes valued cultural heritage assets, such as Arnol/Àrnoil Blackhouse, and there is an RSPB Nature Reserve at Loch na Muilne. The nearby crofting landscape resource is also valued in the local/immediate environment and there is a strong sense of place and distinctiveness associated with the crofting landscapes of the west coast of Lewis/Eilean Leòdhais. The overall value is considered to be Medium.

2.2.5.9 The coastal edge has a strong association with the Atlantic. The CCA is characterised by wide coves with sandy and pebbly beaches backed by small to medium lochs, undulating landform with extensive crofting land associated with these beaches. Moorland separating the two clusters of

crofting settlement is an RSPB reserve. These characteristics would be susceptible to changes in seaward views by the introduction of large man-made structures into an otherwise empty seascape. Although there are views of onshore wind turbines from the northern part of the CCA, their location within moorland mean they are visually separate from the seascape and views of the Project.

- 2.2.5.10 Susceptibility to change is moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast but would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal character, forming a new feature in expansive seaward views to the west. The position and orientation of this stretch of coastline has a relatively direct relationship with the Offshore Project, which is immediately offshore to the west of this CCA. Susceptibility is assessed as High.
- 2.2.5.11 In combining the Medium value with the High susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of the Bragar/*Bhràdhagair*, and Port Arnol/*Àrnoil* CCA is assessed as **High-Medium**.

### Magnitude of change

- 2.2.5.12 The closest point of this CCA is located 6 km from the Turbine Area, which makes it one of the closest sections of coastline to the Turbine Area. **Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.10** illustrates there is fairly consistent theoretical visibility of the Offshore Project from the coastline and hinterland of the CCA. There are some areas that are slightly shielded by headlands or small ridges that provide some limited containment, such as at Port Mhòr Bhragair and between Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* and Loch Arnol/*Àrnoil*. The predicted view of the Offshore Project from the coastal edge of the CCA is shown in Viewpoint 12: Loch na Muilne (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.36: Viewpoint 12**); Viewpoint 14: Arnol/*Àrnoil* Blackhouse (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.38: Viewpoint 14**) and Viewpoint 16: Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* Beach (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.40: Viewpoint 16**) are located along the coast within this CCA. Viewpoint 15: Arnol/*Àrnoil* Village; Viewpoint 17: Sheiling near Loch Urghag (between Brue/*Brù* and Arnol/*Àrnoil*); Viewpoint 19: A858 Abhainn Arnol/*Àrnoil*; Viewpoint 20: Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* illustrate views from its hinterland.

### *Construction and decommissioning*

- 2.2.5.13 During the construction and decommissioning phases, the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and support vessels). Open seaward views to the northwest would be partially changed through the introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area, which would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views. The large scale and modern appearance of the under-construction WTGs and large vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the low rocky coast and distinctive

coves with sandy and pebbly beaches backed by small to medium lochs, and may contrast with the small-scale, traditional crofting character in its hinterland around Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* and Arnol/*Àrnoil*.

2.2.5.14 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated to some degree by its separation from the CCA (approximately 6 km away) however, this is part of the closest section of the Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* coastline. The expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located also moderates the change, however, the wide lateral spread of the construction of the WTGs would almost fill the sea view component in views from the coves at the coast and hinterland. There would be some localised areas with restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from localised areas contained by headlands or small ridges that provide some limited containment, such as at Port Mhòr Bhragair and between Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* and Loch Arnol/*Àrnoil*.

2.2.5.15 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **high** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Linear Crofting (318) and Boggy Moorland (322) in places extending the coast.

*Operation and maintenance*

2.2.5.16 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce an array of modern man-made elements within seaward views to the northwest of the CCA. The large scale of the WTGs, layout of the array and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the low rocky coast and distinctive coves with sandy and pebbly beaches backed by small to medium lochs and may contrast with the small-scale, traditional crofting character in its hinterland. The open seaward views across the Atlantic from the bays at Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* beach and Port Arnol/*Àrnoil*, together with the linear coast and its hinterland near or Arnol/*Àrnoil* or Loch na Muilne, would be substantially changed, with the introduction of WTGs in the seascape introducing a main focal point to the northwest in the mainly empty seaward views, with the wide lateral spread of the Turbine Area enclosing the seascape and the vertical scale of the WTGs contrasting with the horizontal emphasis of the bays. The large scale of the WTGs is likely to be apparent and there will be a relatively direct scale comparison with the low-lying coast against which they will be viewed. The WTG rotors would add visual movement to a seascape in which movement is currently most influenced by the dynamism of the sea.

2.2.5.17 The influence of the Offshore Project on coastal character is moderated to some degree by its separation from the CCA (approximately 6 km away) however, this is part of the closest section of the Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* coastline. The expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be

located also moderates the change, however, the wide lateral spread of the construction of the WTGs would almost fill the sea view component in views from the coves at the coast and hinterland. The grouping of operational WTGs in a regular layout is also likely to have a simple relationship to the form of the broad bay and linear coastal edge of the CCA. The offshore WTGs are also likely to relate to the sense of exposure and the concept of harnessing the power of the elements that prevail along this coast, which is exposed to the wind and waves. The sense of exposure, naturalness and remoteness of the CCA would fundamentally continue to be experienced in the presence of the Offshore Project. There would also be restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from localised areas contained by headlands or small ridges that provide some limited containment, such as at Port Mhòr Bhragair and between Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* and Loch Arnol/*Àrnoil*.

2.2.5.18 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **High** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Linear Crofting (318) and Boggy Moorland (322) in places extending the coast.

#### **Significance of effect**

##### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.5.19 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA5: Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* and Port Arnol/*Àrnoil*, during construction and decommissioning is assessed as **Significant (Major)** adverse and short-term on the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Linear Crofting LCT (318) and Boggy Moorland (322) in places extending the coast.

##### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.5.20 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA5: Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* and Port Arnol/*Àrnoil*, during operation and maintenance is assessed as **Significant (Major)** adverse and long-term on the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Linear Crofting LCT (318) and Boggy Moorland (322) in places extending the coast.

## 2.2.6 CCA6: LOCH SHIABOIST

### Introduction

#### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.6.1 This CCA is located between Àird Mhòr Bhràgair and Àird Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag*, and includes Loch Shiaboist and the crofting communities of Shawbost/*Siabost* on this west coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Linear Crofting LCT (318).
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 18: Shawbost/*Siabost* Core Path is located close to the costal edge and Viewpoint 23: Shawbost/*Siabost* is located approximately 1 km inland.

2.2.6.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- North and northwest facing coastline exposed to full force of the Atlantic;
- Medium-scale, indented cliffs often with small coves;
- Broad inlet at Loch Shiaboist with wide beach backed by Loch a' Bhaile;
- Crofting land extends along coastal edge and hinterland;
- Undulating landform with sinuous lochs in depressions.

#### *Maritime influences*

2.2.6.3 North and northwest facing section of coastline exposed to dynamic coastal influences and processes under continual force of the Atlantic Ocean. Open and exposed to sea along clifftops, with a sense of enclosure within coves and within Loch Shiaboist.

#### *Character of coastal edge*

2.2.6.4 Indented, rocky cliffs of dark coloured gneiss range between 10-30 m with reefs, small sea stacks and rocky islets common offshore from the cliffs. Small coves with sandy and pebbly beaches dot the coastline. A broad inlet with a wide sandy beach with rounded stones is found at Shawbost/*Siabost*, including a jetty at the eastern end. A narrow strip of land separates Loch a' Bhaile and Loch Shiaboist.

#### *Character of immediate hinterland*

2.2.6.5 Hinterland consists primarily of Linear Crofting LCT (318), which are laid out in a linear pattern in plan. The landscape undulates with small hills and valleys, and sinuous lochs within depressions. Crofting land covers much of the hinterland with small rocky outcrops and rocks littering the tussocky pasture. Rig and furrow banks cover areas of the inbye surrounding the linear crofting townships of Labost, North Shawbost/*Siabost bho Thuath*, Shawbost/*Siabost* and South Shawbost/*Siabost bho Dheas*. The bright green of improved pasture is interspersed by the browns of more boggy ground, transitioning to moorland which is more common along the coastal edge.

#### *Human activity (presence or absence)*

2.2.6.6 The coastal edge is generally accessible; however, cliffs make the shoreline difficult to reach in most places. Shawbost/*Siabost* beach can be reached from the west and the east. Most of the land is crofting inbye, with areas of moorland north of Labost and northwest of South Shawbost/*Siabost bho Dheas*.

#### *Views and visibility*

2.2.6.7 There are open seaward views from cliff tops, with the sea stretching to the horizon giving an edge-of-the-world feeling. Views are contained by headlands within coves and within Loch Shiaboist. Inland, due to the undulating landform the sea is visible as a narrow band from the coastal edge and from high points further inland. Views inland are enclosed by the knolly hills with views of the Beinn Bhragair hills to the south.

#### **Sensitivity to change**

2.2.6.8 This CCA is not located within a designated landscape, so is not afforded formal recognition for its value, and there are some detracting aspects of the experience of the crofting areas. However, the hinterland includes valued cultural heritage assets, such as Shawbost/*Siabost* Norse Mill and Kiln. The nearby crofting landscape resource is also valued in the local/immediate environment and there is a strong sense of place and distinctiveness associated with the crofting landscapes of the west coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. The value is considered to be Medium.

2.2.6.9 The coastal edge has a strong association with the Atlantic. The CCA is indented cliffs with small sandy coves, the broad inlet at Loch Shiaboist and crofting land which extends to the coastal edge. These characteristics would be susceptible to changes in seaward views by the introduction of large man-made structures into an otherwise empty seascape. Susceptibility to change is moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast, but would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal character, forming a new feature in expansive seaward views to the west. The position and orientation of this stretch of coastline has a relatively direct relationship with the Offshore Project, which is immediately offshore to the west of this CCA. Susceptibility is assessed as High.

2.2.6.10 In combining the Medium value with the High susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of the Loch Shiaboist CCA is assessed as **High-Medium**.

#### **Magnitude of change**

2.2.6.11 The closest point of this CCA is located 6.0 km from the Turbine Area, which makes it one of the closest sections of coastline to the Turbine Area. CCA6 Loch Shiobost is similar in character to CCA5 to the north, but is distinguished by the crofting communities around Shawbost/*Siabost* (made up of distinct communities - North Shawbost, Shawbost/*Siabost*, New Shawbost/*Pàirc Shiaboist* and South Shawbost/*Siabost bho Dheas*) and the increasing influence of rocky moorland terrain to the south. **Figure 18.10, Volume 2c** illustrates there is fairly consistent theoretical visibility of the

Offshore Project from the coastline and hinterland of the CCA. There are some areas that are slightly shielded by headlands or small ridges that provide some limited containment, such as the low-lying areas between Loch Raoinnebhat, Loch na Muilne and Loch a' Bhaile. The predicted view of the Offshore Project from the coastal edge of the CCA is shown in Viewpoint 18: Shawbost/Siabost Core Path (**Figure 18.42: Viewpoint 18, Volume 2c**) and Viewpoint 23: Shawbost/Siabost (**Figure 18.47: Viewpoint 23, Volume 2c**) illustrates the view from its hinterland.

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.6.12 During the construction and decommissioning phases, the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and support vessels). Open seaward views to the northwest would be partially changed through the introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area, which would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views. The large scale and modern appearance of the under-construction WTGs and large vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the low rocky coast and distinctive coves backed by small to medium lochs (such as at Loch Shiabost), and may contrast with the small-scale, traditional crofting character in its hinterland around Shawbost/Siabost.

2.2.6.13 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated to some degree by its separation from the CCA (approximately 6 km away), however, this is part of the closest section of the Lewis/Eilean Leòdhais coastline. The expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located also moderates the change, however, the wide lateral spread of the construction of the WTGs would fill the majority of the sea view component in views from the coast and hinterland. There would be some localised areas with restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project, such as the low-lying areas between Loch Raoinnebhat, Loch na Muilne and Loch a' Bhaile.

2.2.6.14 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential high magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Linear Crofting (318) and transitioning to Rocky Moorland (323) to the south.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.6.15 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce an array of modern man-made elements within seaward views to the northwest of the CCA. The large scale of the WTGs, the layout of the Turbine Area and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the low rocky coast, and distinctive coves, such as Loch Shiaboist, backed by small to medium

lochs may contrast with the small-scale, traditional crofting character of Shawbost/*Siabost* in its hinterland. The open seaward views across the Atlantic from the small bay at Loch Shiaboist, together with the linear coast and its hinterland around Shawbost/*Siabost*, would be substantially changed, with the introduction of WTGs in the seascape introducing a main focal point to the northwest in the mainly empty seaward views, with the wide lateral spread of the Turbine Area enclosing the seascape, and the vertical scale of the WTGs contrasting with the horizontal emphasis. The large scale of the WTGs is likely to be apparent and there will be a relatively direct scale comparison with the low-lying coast against which they will be viewed.. The WTG rotors would add visual movement to a seascape, in which movement is currently most influenced by the dynamism of the sea.

2.2.6.16 The influence of the Offshore Project on coastal character is moderated to some degree by its separation from the CCA (approximately 6 km away), however, this is part of the closest section of the Offshore Project to Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* coastline. The expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located also moderates the change, however, the wide lateral spread of the construction of the WTGs would fill the majority of the sea view component in views from the coast and hinterland. The coastal edge is more indented and less regular/linear than the coastline further north, and as such, the grouping of operational WTGs in a regular layout is likely to contrast with the more intended form of the coast. The offshore WTGs are also likely to relate to the sense of exposure and the concept of harnessing the power of the elements that prevail along this coast, which is exposed to the wind and waves. The sense of exposure, naturalness and remoteness of the CCA would fundamentally continue to be experienced in the presence of the Offshore Project. There would be some localised areas with restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project, such as the low-lying areas between Loch Raoinebhat, Loch na Muilne and Loch a' Bhaile.

2.2.6.17 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **High** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed by Linear Crofting (318) and transitioning to Rocky Moorland (323) to the south.

### **Significance of effect**

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.6.18 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA6: Loch Shiabost, during construction and decommissioning is assessed as **Significant (Major)** adverse and short-term on the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed mainly by Linear Crofting LCT (318) and transitioning to Rocky Moorland LCT (323) to the south.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.6.19 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA6: Loch Shiabost, during operation and maintenance is assessed as **Significant (Major)** adverse and long-term on the

character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed mainly by Linear Crofting LCT (318) and transitioning to Rocky Moorland LCT (323) to the south.

## 2.2.7 CCA7: DALMORE/DAIL MHOR AND DALBEG/DHAIL BEAG COAST TO AIRD LAIMISHADER/ÀIRD LAIMISIADAIR

### Introduction

#### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.7.1 This CCA is located between Àird Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* and Aird Laimishader/*Àird Laimisiadair* on the west coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and includes the distinctive bays at Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag*, and Loch Garenin/*Na Gearrannan*. The lighthouse at Aird Laimishader/*Àird Laimisiadair* marks the western extent of the CCA and the start of Loch Carloway/*Càrlabhadh*.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Rocky Moorland LCT (323) and Linear Crofting (318);
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 24: Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* Beach, Viewpoint 25: Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* Beach and Viewpoint 27: Garenin/*Na Gearrannan* Blackhouse are located close to the coastal edge within this CCA. Viewpoint 26: Beinn na Cloich is in its hinterland.

2.2.7.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- Northwest facing coastline exposed to full force of the Atlantic;
- Medium, rocky, indented cliffs with distinctive coves at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag*, Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and Garenin/*Na Gearrannan* contained by headlands;
- Loch Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* set back from coastal edge further creates sense of distinctiveness at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag*;
- Rocky moorland with stepped topography and hills extending to coastal edge;
- Crofting land concentrated at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* and Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and along road leading to Garenin/*Na Gearrannan* from Carloway/*Càrlabhadh*;

#### *Maritime influences*

2.2.7.3 Northwest facing section of coastline exposed to the continuous force and dynamic coastal influences of the Atlantic Ocean. There are strong currents along this coastline, with surfing being popular at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* beach. There are relatively low levels of marine traffic including fishing vessels offshore from this coastline, and vessels navigating around Lewis, but otherwise there are no man-made elements within seaward views.

#### *Character of coastal edge*

2.2.7.4 Indented coastline with dark, rocky cliffs range between 20-60 m, with sea stacks, rocky islets and small islands. The Stac a' Phris natural arch is located at the eastern end of the CCA and noted on Ordnance Survey (OS) maps. There are coves with beaches of sand and rounded stones at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag*, Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and Garenin/*Na Gearrannan*, which are popular visitor locations. There are cemeteries at both Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* and Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* beaches.

#### *Character of immediate hinterland*

2.2.7.5 Hinterland is formed by Rocky Moorland LCT (323) interspersed with areas of Linear Crofting LCT (318) at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag*, Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and Garenin/*Na Garrannan*. The land rises from the cliffs becoming rocky moorland of knolly hills with rocky outcrops and stepped topography forms the hinterland. There are hills over 100 m within 1 km of the coast, including Ben Tuishaval (127 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)), Cleit Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* (11 m AOD) and Ben Laimishader/*Laimishadair* (115 m AOD). Sinuous lochs and small rounded lochans are common within depressions. Single track roads lead from the A858 to the beaches at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag*, Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and Garenin/*Na Garrannan*. At Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* and Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* there are a handful of houses within rectangular crofting parcels, with rig and furrow bands extending beyond the existing pasture with stone walls and house ruins of earlier crofts dotted throughout the hillsides. Within moorland there is evidence of peat cutting banks. The road leading down to Garenin/*Na Garrannan* passes through the linear crofting settlement of Carloway/*Càrlabhagh* and culminates at the Blackhouse Village Museum, a popular tourist destination.

#### *Human activity (presence or absence)*

2.2.7.6 Much of the coastline is difficult to access due to the ruggedness of the rocky moorland terrain. Human activity is found along the valleys that lead down to Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag*, Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and Garenin/*Na Garrannan* beaches, however there is evidence of historic human activity across a wider area. Taken together this CCA gives the perception of a natural and wild coastline, however long-standing human interventions in the landscape are present on closer inspection.

#### *Views and visibility*

2.2.7.7 There are open and exposed seaward views from cliff tops, with views extending to the horizon giving an edge-of-the-world feeling. Within the coves views are enclosed by the high cliffs of headlands and there is an absence of modern development in views out to sea. The wider views include traditional crofts and some modern housing set amongst rocky moorland. There are also views of the sea along the roads leading down to the coves.

#### **Sensitivity to change**

2.2.7.8 This CCA is not located within a designated landscape, so is not afforded formal recognition for its value, however this is a regionally distinctive coastline with rocky, indented cliffs with distinctive coves at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag*, Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and Garenin/*Na Garrannan* contained by headlands and backed by a hinterland of rocky moorland and some dispersed crofting with lesser influence than the coastline further north.

2.2.7.9 Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* and Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* beaches are valued by visitors and have strong sense of local distinctiveness, arising from the interplay of the small sandy beaches contained by rocky headlands with framed views of the sea and rocky moorland hinterland. Garenin/*Na Garrannan*

Blackhouse village is a conservation area, preserving a traditional style of house building on Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and is well visited by tourist visitors. The value is considered to be High.

2.2.7.10 The coastal edge has a strong association with the Atlantic. The CCA is characterised by indented, rocky cliffs with popular sandy coves framed by cliffs at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag*, Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and Garenin/*Na Gearrannan*. The framed views from these enclosed beaches out to the open sea between the containing rocky headlands are susceptible to changes associated with the Offshore Project. These characteristics would be susceptible to changes in seaward views by the introduction of large man-made structures into an otherwise empty and undeveloped seascape. Susceptibility to change is moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast and would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal character, forming a new feature in expansive seaward views to the west. The position and orientation of this stretch of coastline has a relatively direct relationship with the Offshore Project, which is immediately offshore the north of this CCA. Susceptibility is assessed as High.

2.2.7.11 In combining the High value with the High susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of the Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* Coast to Aird Laimishader/*Àird Laimisiadair* CCA is assessed as **High**.

#### Magnitude of change

2.2.7.12 The closest point of this CCA is located 6 km from the Turbine Area, which makes it one of the closest sections of coastline to the Turbine Area. CCA7 Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* and Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* Coast has a more indented coastline, with particularly distinctive coves at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* and Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* contained by headlands, and a rockier moorland hinterland, compared to the coastline further north. **Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.10** illustrates there is fairly consistent theoretical visibility of the Offshore Project from the coastline of the CCA, however, visibility becomes much more fragmented moving inland away from the coast, with restricted views of lesser numbers of WTGs from the rocky terrain. The predicted view of the Offshore Project from the coastal edge of the CCA is shown in Viewpoint 24: Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* Beach (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.48: Viewpoint 24**), Viewpoint 25: Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* Beach (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.49: Viewpoint 25**) and Viewpoint 27: Garenin/*Na Gearrannan* Blackhouse (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.51: Viewpoint 27**) are located close to the coastal edge within this CCA. Viewpoint 26: Beinn na Cloich (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.50: Viewpoint 26**) illustrates the view from further inland in its hinterland.

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.7.13 During the construction and decommissioning phases the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and

support vessels). Open seaward views to the northwest from the rocky coastline and enclosed bays would be partially changed through the introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area, which would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views. The large scale and modern appearance of the under-construction WTGs and large vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the distinctive enclosed beaches such as Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* and Dalmore/*Dail Mhor*, and its rocky hinterland.

2.2.7.14 The physical characteristics of the CCA would however remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated to some degree by its separation from the CCA (approximately 6 km away) however, this is part of the closest section of the Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* coastline. There would also be restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from within the rugged, rocky terrain of its hinterland.

2.2.7.15 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **High** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along the rocky coastline and enclosed bays at the coastal edge, existing along the coastal extremities of Linear Crofting (LCT 318) perpendicular to the coast and elevated areas of Rocky Moorland (LCT 323) hinterland.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.7.16 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce an array of modern man-made elements within seaward views to the northwest of the CCA. The large scale of the WTGs, layout of the array and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the distinctive rocky coves, 'unspoilt' sandy beaches, small-scale traditional crofting character and rugged hinterland. The seaward views from the coastal edge and enclosed bays at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* and Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* would be substantially changed, with the introduction of WTGs in the seascape introducing a main focal point to the northwest in the mainly empty seaward views. The wide lateral spread of the WTG would extend across the full extent of the open sea between the headlands of Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* and Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* bays, creating a sense of enclosure by built elements offshore and in the seascape framed by the distinct, rocky headlands. The large scale of the WTGs is likely to be apparent and there will be a relatively direct scale comparison with the headlands and sea stacks against which they will be viewed. The Offshore Project would contrast with the sense of seclusion within the bays at Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* and Dalmore/*Dail Mhor*, and their elemental qualities that result from the combination of distinctive characteristics, and the WTG rotors would add visual movement to a seascape in which movement is currently most influenced by the dynamism of the sea.

2.2.7.17 The influence of the Offshore Project on coastal character is moderated to some degree by its separation from the CCA (approximately 6 km away), however, this is part of the closest section of

the Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* coastline. The expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located also moderates the change, however the wide lateral spread of the construction of the WTGs would fill the majority of the sea view component in views from the coast and hinterland. The coastal edge is more indented and less regular/linear than the coastline further north, and as such, the grouping of WTGs within the Turbine Area in a regular layout is likely to contrast with the more intended form of the coast. The offshore WTGs are also likely to relate to the sense of exposure and the concept of harnessing the power of the elements that prevail along this coast, which is exposed to the wind and waves. The sense of exposure, naturalness and remoteness of the CCA would fundamentally continue to be experienced in the presence of the Offshore Project. There would be some localised areas with restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project, such as from within the rugged, rocky terrain of its hinterland.

2.2.7.18 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **High** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along the rocky coastline and enclosed bays at the coastal edge, existing along the coastal extremities of Linear Crofting (LCT 318) perpendicular to the coast and elevated areas of Rocky Moorland (LCT 323) hinterland.

#### **Significance of effect**

##### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.7.19 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA7: Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* to Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* coast, during construction and decommissioning is assessed as **Significant (Major)** adverse and short-term on the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed mainly by Linear Crofting LCT (318) and transitioning to Rocky Moorland LCT (323) to the south.

##### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.7.20 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA7: Dalmore/*Dail Mhor* to Dalbeg/*Dhail Beag* coast, during operation and maintenance is assessed as **Significant (Major)** adverse and long-term on the character of the CCA along its coastal edge and hinterland formed mainly by Linear Crofting LCT (318) and transitioning to Rocky Moorland LCT (323) to the south.

## 2.2.8 CCA11: BERNERA/BEÀRNARAIGH ISLANDS

### Introduction

#### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.8.1 This CCA consists of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*, Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag* and associated islands. The coastline of the CCA extends between Sgeir Charach and Leac nan Cudaigean on Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*, the northern part of Vuia Mor/*Fuaigh Mòr*, Vacsay/*Bhacasaigh*, Pabay Mor/*Pabaigh Mòr* and Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*, Eilean Vacsay/*Bhacasaigh*, and isles to the north within Poll Gainmhich (north of Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*) on the northwest coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Cnoc and Lochan LCT (324), Dispersed Crofting (319) and Rocky Moorland LCT (323);
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 29: Bosta/*Bostadh* is located at Bosta/*Bostadh* beach on Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*.

2.2.8.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* and the islands surrounding it appear to have been a headland, now separated from the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* by Loch Ròg An Ear to the northeast, Loch Roag/*Ròg* to the southwest and the narrow sound of Loch Barraglom to the south where a bridge connects it to the main island;
- Narrow, and in some places long, sea lochs create a complex, indented coastal edge to Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*;
- Often narrow and indented lochs on Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* echo these forms such that it is difficult to discern what is sea and what is freshwater;
- Small islands with islets surround Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* and Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*, and their location within Loch Ròg An Ear and Loch Roag/*Ròg* forms a complex seascape;
- Low rocky moorland hills and areas of grass at lower levels cover the islands and slope down to meet the shoreline. On Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* these grassy areas have been expanded to form crofting inbye;
- Dispersed crofting settlements with evidence of rig and furrow land management are found on Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*;
- There is evidence of long-standing human habitation on Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* including the remains of an iron age village at Bosta/*Bostadh*.

#### *Maritime influences*

2.2.8.3 Strong coastal currents of the Atlantic sweep along the northwestern coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* past Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* providing some protection for the waters within Loch Ròg An Ear and Loch Roag/*Ròg*.

- 2.2.8.4 The seaward side of islands are more exposed to storms and strong weather, with sea lochs providing some protection. The islands north of Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag* within Pol Gainmich are exposed to the full force of the Atlantic. Localised and in some locations strong currents occur in narrow sounds between islands.
- 2.2.8.5 Within Loch Ròg An Ear and Loch Roag/*Ròg* a number of fishing vessels and supporting vessels are common due to fish farms found throughout these sea lochs. The area is also popular with recreational craft.

*Character of coastal edge*

- 2.2.8.6 Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* has a complex indented coastal edge of inlets and small, narrow sea lochs. Shallow coves with sandy or pebbly beaches are dotted along coastlines of the larger islands. Numerous small islands, rocky islets and reefs are found offshore from the low rocky shoreline of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* and Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*. There is a jetty and slipways at Black Bay/*Dubh Thòb* with some private jetties associated with coastal properties, and a bridge across the sea loch at Valasay/*Bhalasaigh*.

*Character of immediate hinterland*

- 2.2.8.7 Hinterland consists mainly of Cnoc and Lochan LCT (324), interspersed with areas of Dispersed Crofting (319) and a small area of Rocky Moorland LCT (323) to the south of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*. The landcover of the islands is of undulating grassy, rocky moorland with steep sided cnocs and rocky outcrops. Long and often narrow lochs with sinuous edges are found within depressions across Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* with smaller lochans on smaller islands. Along south facing parts of the coastline and the southern lee of hills are areas of crofting inbye, in some areas extending up lower hills. Rig and furrow land management and peat cutting banks are evident across the crofting inbye and peatlands across Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* and Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*.
- 2.2.8.8 There are dispersed crofting townships at Barraglom, Kirkibost/*Chirceaboist*, Hacklete, Breacleite/*Brèascleit*, Valasay, Tobson and Croir on Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*. Sheep graze freely across the island.

*Human activity (presence or absence)*

- 2.2.8.9 There is evidence of long-standing human settlement and land cultivation across Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* and Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag* with settlement found close to the sheltered southern coastlines of the islands. The remains of an iron age village, and a modern cemetery are found at Bosta/*Bostadh* beach on Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*. Other landmarks include a Norse Mill near Loch Riosaigh, church ruins at Leur Thòb and a broch and standing stones near Barraglom.
- 2.2.8.10 The rocky moorland and shoreline are difficult to cross and access, however sandy beaches within coves allow for easy access to the sea.

### Views and visibility

2.2.8.11 The complex coastal edge and numerous lochs on Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* create intimate and enclosed views that open up to long distance views of the sea, islands and headlands. Due to the layering of lochs, islands and sea it can be difficult to discern what is sea and what is freshwater, and which direction the open sea lies. Views of the hills of mainland Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and Harris are visible to the east, south and west. From the northern coastlines of islands the open Atlantic is visible beyond smaller islands and islets.

### Sensitivity to change

2.2.8.12 The western part of this CCA is within the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area (NSA)/*Siorrachd Leòdhais a Deas, na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath*. The boundary to the NSA runs largely north-south across Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* from west of the bridge to the main island north to Bosta/*Bostadh*. Some of the special qualities of the NSA may be experienced from the rocky indented coasts of this CCA, including its 'sea views enclosed by narrow frame of rock, beach or bay'; 'panoramas over peninsulas, islands, islets and skerries to distant shores'; 'intricate arrangement of islands, promontories and bays'; and a remoteness that provides as sense of being at the 'very edge of Europe'. Due to the proximity and similarity of the coast and hinterland of the CCA to that within the NSA, it is considered that the value across the CCA is High.

2.2.8.13 The intimate, complex coastline of this CCA has a strong association with the seascapes of Loch Ròg An Ear and Loch *Roag/Ròg*, and with the Atlantic beyond them. The CCA is characterised by the complex seascape of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* and its surrounding archipelago, with pockets ofcrofting settlements concentrated on the southern side of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*. The complex small-scale coastal landscape, with its mix of enclosed views and intermittent longer distance views of the sea, islands and headlands is susceptible to changes by the introduction of the Offshore Project in seaward views, in an otherwise underdeveloped seascape. The enclosure afforded by the complex landform and containment by rugged headlands and small islands does, however, also limit sea views and moderates the susceptibility to external changes, particularly from more enclosed areas to the south. Susceptibility to change is also moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast and would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal character, forming a new feature in seaward views to the north that is outwith the CCA. Susceptibility is assessed as High.

2.2.8.14 In combining the High value with the High susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of the Bernera Islands CCA is assessed as **High**.

### Magnitude of change

2.2.8.15 The closest point of this CCA is located 7.9 km from the Turbine Area. **Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.10** illustrates that there is complex pattern of intermittent theoretical visibility of the Offshore Project from the coastline and hinterland of the CCA, with fuller visibility on the northern fringes of the CCA that have a more open northerly aspect to sea, and more fragmented visibility

with restricted views of lesser numbers of WTGs moving south along Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*, as the rocky terrain intervenes locally and the headland at Aird Laimishader/*Àird Laimisiadair* restricts views of the Turbine Area. The predicted view of the Offshore Project from the northern edge of the CCA is shown in Viewpoint 29: Bosta/*Bostadh* (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.53: Viewpoint 29**).

*Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.8.16 During the construction and decommissioning phases the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and support vessels). Open seaward views to the north from the rocky coastline and enclosed bays of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* and Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag* would be partially changed through the introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area, which would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views. The large scale and modern appearance of the under-construction WTGs and large vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the distinctive enclosed beaches such as Bosta/*Bostadh*, its cnoc and loch hinterland and the small-scale and traditional character of dispersed crofting in its hinterland.

2.2.8.17 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by its separation from the CCA, which is approximately 8 km away at its closest point, extending to 17 km away at the southern end of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*. There would also be restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from within the rugged, cnoc and lochan terrain of its hinterland, which is a contained, intimate landscape in places with short, internal views, which is reflected in the fragmented visibility shown in the ZTV, with restricted views of lesser numbers of WTGs moving south along Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*. Much of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is likely to be screened behind the intervening terrain around Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*, its outlying islands around Poll Gainmhich and the headland at Aird Laimishader/*Àird Laimisiadair*, with only the construction of the WTGs to the southern and western part of the Turbine Area likely to be visible, as is evident in the view from Viewpoint 29 Bosta/*Bostadh*.

2.2.8.18 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **Medium** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along the northern coastal edges of the CCA that have a more open northerly aspect to the sea and more elevated hinterland areas of the Cnoc and Lochan LCT (324); reducing to **Low** magnitude of change from the

Loch Rog An Ear coastline, where views of the Offshore Project are restricted by the intervening headland and terrain; and **Negligible** on the western side of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* where there is little to no visibility of the Offshore Project.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.8.19 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce a number of modern man-made WTGs within seaward views to the north of the CCA. The large scale of the WTGs, layout of the array and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the complexity of the seascape, with its indented coastal edge, narrow, indented lochs/sea lochs and small rocky islands that surround Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* and Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*. The seaward views from the coastal edge and small bays such as Bosta/*Bostadh* would be changed, with the introduction of WTGs in the seascape introducing a main focal point to the north in the seaward views. Although it tends to be a reduced number of WTGs in the southern and western end of the Turbine Area that would be visible in the context of the CCA, these WTGs would extend across the backdrop to views over Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag* and the open sea between headlands and distinct, rocky islands off Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*. These rocky islands (such as Bearasay/*Bearasaigh*) form distinct focal points and contribute to a timeless quality associated with the offshore islands and the sense of being at the north-western frontier of Europe with the Atlantic beyond. The introduction of the modern, man-made WTGs is likely to contrast with these elemental qualities, while also creating a sense of enclosure by built elements offshore and in the seascape framed by the distinct, rocky headlands and islands. The large scale of the WTGs is likely to be apparent and there will be a relatively direct scale comparison with the rocky headlands and sea islands against which they will be viewed. The Offshore Project would contrast with the sense of seclusion within sheltered bays and the WTG rotors would add visual movement to a seascape in which movement is currently most influenced by the dynamism of the sea.

2.2.8.20 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by its separation from the CCA, which is approximately 8 km away at its closest point, extending to 17 km away at the southern end of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*. There would also be restricted visibility of the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project from within the rugged, cnoc and lochan terrain of its hinterland, which is a contained, intimate landscape in places with short, internal views, which is reflected in the fragmented visibility shown in the ZTV, with restricted views of lesser numbers of WTGs moving south along Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr*. Much of the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is likely to be screened behind the intervening terrain around Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Beag*, its outlying islands around Poll Gainmhich and the headland at Aird Laimishader/*Aird Laimisiadair*, with only the construction of the WTGs to the southern and western part of the Turbine Area likely to be visible, as is evident in the view from Viewpoint 29

Bosta/*Bostadh*. The offshore WTGs are also likely to relate to the sense of exposure and the concept of harnessing the power of the elements that prevail along this coast, which is exposed to the wind and waves. The sense of exposure, naturalness and remoteness of the CCA would fundamentally continue to be experienced in the presence of the Offshore Project.

2.2.8.21 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **Medium** magnitude of change to the character of the CCA along the northern coastal edges of the CCA that have a more open northerly aspect to the sea and more elevated hinterland areas of the Cnoc and Lochan LCT (324); reducing to **low** magnitude of change from the Loch Rog An Ear coastline, where views of the Offshore Project are restricted by the intervening headland and terrain; and **Negligible** on the western side of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* where there is little to no visibility of the Offshore Project.

### Significance of effect

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.8.22 The potential effect on the character of CCA11: Bernera Islands during construction and decommissioning of the Project is considered to be **Significant (Major-moderate)**, adverse and short-term on the character of the CCA along the northern coastal edges of the CCA that have a more open northerly aspect to the sea and more elevated hinterland areas of the Cnoc and Lochan LCT (324); reducing to **Not Significant (Moderate)**, adverse and short-term from the Loch Rog An Ear coastline, where views of the Offshore Project are restricted by the intervening headland and terrain; and **Not Significant (Minor)**, neutral and short-term on the western side of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* where there is little to no visibility of the Offshore Project.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.8.23 The potential effect on the character of CCA11: Bernera Islands during operation and maintenance of the Project is considered to be **Significant (Major-moderate)**, adverse and long-term to the character of the CCA along the northern coastal edges of the CCA that have a more open northerly aspect to the sea and more elevated hinterland areas of the Cnoc and Lochan LCT (324); reducing to **Not Significant (Moderate)**, adverse and long-term from the Loch Rog An Ear coastline, where views of the Offshore Project are restricted by the intervening headland and terrain; and **Not Significant (Minor)**, neutral and long-term on the western side of Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* where there is little to no visibility of the Offshore Project.

## 2.2.9 CCA14: CAOLAS/AN CAOLAS (INCLUDING REEF BEACH AND CLIFF BEACH/CAMAS NA CLIBHE)

### Introduction

#### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.9.1 This CCA includes the coastline around An Caolas including Reef Beach, Caolos Pabay/*Phabaigh*, the islands of Pabay Mor/*Phabaigh Mòr* and Vacsay/*Bhacasaigh*. The coastline is located between Rubha Sheotharaid and Gob Geodha nam Bradan on the west coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Cnoc and Lochan LCT (324), Dispersed Crofting (319) and Machair LCT (321);
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 31: Bhaltos/*Valtos*, Viewpoint 32: Reef Beach and Viewpoint 34: Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe*, which are located on or in close proximity to the coastal edge within this CCA.

2.2.9.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- Headland extending into Caolas/*An Caolas*;
- Indented rocky cliffs at Bhaltos/*Valtos* with wide, sweeping sandy beaches at Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* and Reef backed by dunes and machair;
- Dispersed crofting settlements at Cliff, Cnip/*Kneep* and Reef, and a popular camping site at Reef beach;
- Hinterland of rocky, grassy moorland hills with lochs in depressions.

#### *Maritime influences:*

2.2.9.3 Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, the headland at Bhaltos/*Valtos*, the islands Pabay Mor/*Phabaigh Mòr* and Vacsay/*Bhacasaigh* provide some protection from continuous and dynamic forces of the Atlantic Ocean. From the headland at Bhaltos/*Valtos* and from Cliff beach the sea appears open and expansive. Along the eastern side of the CCA including at Cnip/*Kneep* and Reef beaches the sea is enclosed by successive islands and headlands. There are relatively low levels of marine traffic including fishing vessels and recreational craft offshore from this coastline but otherwise there are no man-made elements within seaward views.

#### *Character of coastal edge:*

2.2.9.4 The character of the coastal edge is indented, with a steep rocky granite coastline with occasional cliffs at the headland at Bhaltos/*Valtos*, on the western side of Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe*, the headland south of Cnip/*Kneep* and to the south of Reef. Between these headlands are wide, sandy beaches at Cliff, Reef and two smaller beaches at Cnip/*Kneep*. They are backed by dunes, and machair at Reef and Cliff beaches. There is a popular camping and caravanning site at Reef beach. Along the eastern side of the CCA are a number of islands (part of Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* Islands

CCA). There are rocky islets and reefs associated with the rocky headlands. There is a pier at Cnip/Kneep.

*Character of immediate hinterland:*

2.2.9.5 Hinterland consists of Cnoc and Lochan LCT (324) with Machair LCT (321) at Reef Beach and Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* and areas of Dispersed Crofting LCT (319). Along the coastal edge behind the beaches, a crofting inbye is found extending over the hills at Bhaltos/*Valtos* from Cnip/*Kneep* and down to Cliff. There is evidence of rig and furrow land management across this land and peat cutting banks within nearby moorland. There are cemeteries at Cliff beach. Rocky and grassy moorland with steeply rising cnocs covers the rest of the hinterland. Lochs are found within depressions across the moorland.

*Human activity (presence or absence):*

2.2.9.6 Human influenced land management is evident across much of coastal landscape including machair and crofting inbye. There is easy access to the shoreline at these locations in contrast to the hilly moorland and cliffs at headlands.

*Views and visibility:*

2.2.9.7 Views from eastern side of coastline are across successive islands within Caolas/*An Caolas* and Loch Roag/*Ròg*, with views towards the Atlantic limited to the southern end of Reef beach. Views from Cliff beach are enclosed by headlands. Views from this northern part of the CCA including the headland at Bhaltos/*Valtos* look across the open and expansive Atlantic. At these locations the sea extends towards the horizon, giving an edge-of-the-world feeling.

### **Sensitivity to change**

2.2.9.8 This CCA is located within the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA/*Siorrachd Leòdhais a Deas, na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath*. Some of the special qualities of the NSA may be experienced from the rocky indented coast and wide sandy machair beaches/sand dune systems of this CCA, including an '*Intricate arrangement of islands, promontories and bays*'; '*confusion of sea and land*'; '*intervisibility between landscape such as the cliff top views from Cliff Beach/Camas na Clibhe*'; and views of '*extensive machair and dune systems with expansive beaches*' (such as Reef Beach). The value is considered to be is High.

2.2.9.9 The coastline of this CCA has a strong association with the seascapes of Caolas/*An Caolas* and Loch Roag/*Ròg* to the east and with the Atlantic to the north. The CCA is characterised by wide sweeping beaches backed by dunes and machair, separated by indented rocky headlands and hilly, rocky moorland hinterland. There is scattered settlement throughout including a popular camping site at Reef Beach. These characteristics would be susceptible to changes in seaward views by the introduction of large man-made structures into an otherwise empty seascape. Susceptibility to change is also moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast and would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal

character, forming a new feature in seaward views to the north that is outwith the CCA. Susceptibility is assessed as High.

2.2.9.10 In combining the High value with the High susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of the An Caolos including Reef Beach and Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* CCA is assessed as **High**.

#### Magnitude of change

2.2.9.11 The closest point of this CCA is located 13.4 km from the Turbine Area. **Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.10** illustrates that there is complex pattern of intermittent theoretical visibility of the Offshore Project from the coastline and hinterland of the CCA, with fuller visibility on the northern edges of the CCA that have a more open northerly aspect to sea, and more fragmented visibility with restricted views of lesser numbers of WTGs moving south, as the rocky terrain intervenes locally and the landform of offshore islands such as Pabay Mor/*Phabaigh Mor* and Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh Mòr* restrict views of the Turbine Area. The predicted view of the Offshore Project from the northern edge of the CCA is shown in Viewpoint 31: Bhaltos/*Valtos* (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.55: Viewpoint 31**), Viewpoint 32: Reef Beach (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.56: Viewpoint 32**) and Viewpoint 34: Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.58: Viewpoint 34**).

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.9.12 During the construction and decommissioning phases, the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and support vessels). The introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area would partially change the seaward views from the rocky coastline and sandy beaches at Reef Beach and Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe*, which are framed by rocky islands and headlands to the north. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views between offshore islands or extend beyond intervening headlands. The large scale and modern appearance of the under-construction WTGs and large vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from these distinctive Hebridean beaches at Reef Beach or Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* and their Machair LCT (321) hinterland. More elevated hinterland areas formed by the Cnoc and Lochan LCT (324) would also experience changes resulting from glimpsed views across this rocky terrain to the construction of the Offshore Project in their seascape setting, which would contrast with the small-scale and traditional character of the Dispersed Crofting LCT (319) such as around Bhaltos/*Valtos* or Cnip/*Kneep*.

2.2.9.13 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of

perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by its separation from the CCA, which is approximately 13.4 km away at its closest point on the island of Pabay Mor/*Phabaigh Mòr*, however accessible areas of the CCAs are set back slightly further to the south beyond 15 km. There would also be restricted visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from areas within the rugged 'cnoc and lochan' terrain, and due to the presence of headlands and islands off the coast (such as Pabay Mor/*Phabaigh Mòr* and Vacsay/*Bhacasaigh*). These landform features combine to contain the seascape and shorten views internally within the seascape of Caolas Pabay/*Phabaigh* and Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* which is reflected in the fragmented visibility shown in the ZTV, with restricted views of lesser numbers of WTGs from contained areas and occasional places with visibility of more WTGs framed to the seascape between offshore islands. Much of the construction and decommissioning within the northern part of the Array Area is likely to be screened behind the intervening terrain, headlands and outlying islands, with the construction and decommissioning of the WTGs to the southern and western part of the Turbine Area likely to have more influence on coastal character, as is evident in the view from Viewpoint 32 Reef Beach and Viewpoint 34: Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe*.

2.2.9.14 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential High-medium magnitude of change to the distinctive Hebridean character of Reef Beach and its Machair LCT (321) hinterland; reducing to medium magnitude of change from elevated hinterland areas of Cnoc and Lochan (LCT 324) such as elevated areas around Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* (near Cliff) and the areas of Dispersed Crofting LCT (319) such as around Bhaltos/*Valtos* or Cnip/*Kneep*. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as reducing to a low magnitude of change from beach level at Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* beach (where 1-7 turbines may be seen from the southern end of the beach) and low from contained areas of the coastal edge along Caolas Pabay/*Phabaigh*, which are contained by Pabay Mor/*Pabaigh Mòr* or Vacsay/*Bhacasaigh* islands and limited visibility of the Offshore Project.

#### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.9.15 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce a number of modern man-made WTGs within seaward views to the north of the CCA. The large scale of the WTGs, layout of the array and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the complexity of the seascape, with its indented coastal edge, narrow, indented lochs/sea lochs and small rocky islands within the Caolas/*An Caolas* area. The introduction of the operational WTGs within the Turbine Area would partially change the seaward views from the rocky coastline and sandy Hebridean beaches at Reef Beach and Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe*, which are framed by rocky islands and headlands to the north, introducing an array of large scale WTG in framed seaward views between offshore islands or extend beyond intervening headlands. The large scale and modern appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from these distinctive Hebridean beaches at Reef Beach or Cliff

Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* and their Machair LCT (321) hinterland. More elevated hinterland areas formed by the Cnoc and Lochan LCT (324) would also experience changes resulting from glimpsed views across this rocky terrain to the Offshore Project in the seascape setting, which would contrast with the small-scale and traditional character of the Dispersed Crofting LCT (319) such as around Bhaltos/*Valtos* or Cnip/*Kneep*.

2.2.9.16 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by its separation from the CCA, which is approximately 13.4 km away at its closest point on the island of Pabay Mor/*Pabaigh Mòr*, however accessible areas of the CCAs are set back slightly further to the south beyond 15 km. There would also be restricted visibility of the Offshore Project from areas within the rugged 'cnoc and lochan' terrain and due to the presence of headlands and islands off the coast (such as Pabay Mor/*Pabaigh Mòr* and *Vacsay/Bhacasaigh*). These landform features combine to contain the seascape and shorten views internally within the seascape of Caolas Pabay/*Phabaigh* and Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe*, which is reflected in the fragmented visibility shown in the ZTV, with restricted views of lesser numbers of WTGs from contained areas and occasional places with visibility of more WTGs framed to the seascape between offshore islands. Much of the northern part of the Turbine Area is likely to be screened behind the intervening terrain, headlands and outlying islands, with the WTGs to the southern and western part of the Turbine Area likely to have more influence on coastal character, as is evident in the view from Viewpoint 32 Reef Beach and Viewpoint 34: Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe*.

2.2.9.17 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential High-medium magnitude of change to the distinctive Hebridean character of Reef Beach and its Machair LCT (321) hinterland; reducing to medium magnitude of change from elevated hinterland areas of Cnoc and Lochan (LCT 324) such as elevated areas around Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* (near Cliff) and the areas of Dispersed Crofting LCT (319) such as around Bhaltos/*Valtos* or Cnip/*Kneep*. The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as reducing to a low magnitude of change from beach level at Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* beach (where 1-7 turbines may be seen from the southern end of the beach) and low from contained areas of the coastal edge along Caolas Pabay/*Phabaigh*, which are contained by Pabay Mor/*Phabaigh Mòr* or *Vacsay/Bhacasaigh* islands and limited visibility of the Offshore Project.

### Significance of effect

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.9.18 The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **Significant (Major)**, adverse and short-term effect on the distinctive Hebridean character of Reef Beach and its Machair LCT (321) hinterland; reducing to **Significant (Major-moderate)**

from elevated hinterland areas of Cnoc and Lochan (LCT 324) such as elevated areas around Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* (near Cliff) and the areas of Dispersed Crofting LCT (319) such as around Bhaltos/*Valtos* or Cnip/*Kneep*; only becoming **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)** from beach level at Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* beach and from contained areas of the coastal edge along Caolas Pabay/*Phabaigh*.

*Operation and maintenance*

2.2.9.19 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential **Significant (Major)**, adverse and long-term effect on the distinctive Hebridean character of Reef Beach and its Machair LCT (321) hinterland; reducing to **Significant (Major-moderate)** from elevated hinterland areas of Cnoc and Lochan (LCT 324) such as elevated areas around Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* (near Cliff) and the areas of Dispersed Crofting LCT (319) such as around Bhaltos/*Valtos* or Cnip/*Kneep*; only becoming **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)** from beach level at Cliff Beach/*Camas na Clibhe* beach and from contained areas of the coastal edge along Caolas Pabay/*Phabaigh*.

## 2.2.10 CCA15: GALLAN HEAD/GALLAN BEAG

### Introduction

#### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.10.1 This CCA focuses on the headland of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, between Rhubha Mòr, Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* and Camas Uig/*Ùig* in the south.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Boggy Moorland LCT (322), Rocky Moorland LCT (323) and Linear Crofting LCT (318);
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 30: Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* is located on the coastal edge within this CCA. Viewpoint 33: Forsnaval/*Forsnabhal* is located approximately 1.7 km from the coastal edge.

2.2.10.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- Exposed headland with medium-to-high cliffs and promontory at Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*;
- Indented, rocky cliffs with limited accessibility to shoreline except a cove at Àird Uig/*Ùig*;
- Moorland hinterland covers majority of headland;
- Small linear crofting township at Àird Uig/*Ùig* and disused RAF radar base.

#### *Maritime influences:*

2.2.10.3 The headland extends north into the sea and is under the continual force and dynamic coastal influences of the Atlantic Ocean. The cliffs and hinterland are exposed to the full force of elements. Strong currents drive waves into cliffs resulting in sea spray along cliff tops and the continual sound of crashing waves. There are relatively low levels of marine traffic, including fishing vessels and vessels navigating around Lewis offshore from this coastline, but otherwise there are no man-made elements within seaward views.

#### *Character of coastal edge:*

2.2.10.4 Indented, granite cliffs are lower on the western side of the headland range from 10 m at Seilebhidh Hill to 70 m at Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, and are generally higher on the eastern side, rising to 150 m at Rubha Mòr. There are small rocky islets and stacks along the coastline, the largest of which, Sgeir Sheilibhidh, is found on the western end of the CCA. There is a sandy cove at Àird Uig/*Ùig* and a handful of small sandy coves on the western coastline.

#### *Character of immediate hinterland:*

2.2.10.5 Hinterland consists of Rocky Moorland LCT (323) and there is an area of Linear Crofting LCT (318) at Àird Uig/*Ùig*. Undulating moorland with steep sided valleys and small burns running along the bottom covers most of the headland. Small to large lochs are found within depressions across the headland. There are rocky outcrops, loose rocks and boulders dotted across Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, at Forsnaval/*Forsnabhal* and the headland at Sgeir Sheilibhidh. Elsewhere, the moorland is boggy with peat hags centred around Loch Mheacleit.

2.2.10.6 There is a small linear crofting settlement at Àird Uig/Ùig, with rig and furrow and peat cutting banks evident across the inbye and nearby moorland. North of the township, a cluster of military buildings of the former military camp is found. Close to the summit at Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* is the former RAF radar station.

*Human activity (presence or absence):*

2.2.10.7 The crofting township at Aird Uig/Àird Ùig was founded relatively recently (1825), however, the surrounding land has long-standing human history. The headland is exposed to maritime influences, with much of the shoreline difficult to access due to the high cliffs. The moorland terrain covering much of the headland is rough, in some places boggy and difficult to traverse.

*Views and visibility:*

2.2.10.8 There are expansive, panoramic views from clifftops out across the Atlantic Ocean and along coastlines, with the focal point of views, including the archipelago of Loch Roag/Ròg to the northeast and the hills of Harris/*Na Hearadh* to the southeast. Views from within coves as at Àird Uig/Ùig are framed by headlands. The Flannan Isles are visible on clear days along the horizon to the west.

### Sensitivity to change

2.2.10.9 This CCA is located within the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA/*Siorrachd Leòdhais a Deas, na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath*. Some of the special qualities of the NSA may be experienced from the rocky indented coastline at Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, where there are '*grand, open seascapes with islands*'; '*panoramas over peninsulas and islands*'; and views that take in the '*expansiveness of the Atlantic ocean*' and '*edge of Europe character*'. The value is considered to be is High.

2.2.10.10 The coastline of this CCA has a strong association with the Atlantic. The CCA is characterised by high cliffs and the promontory at Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, open and exposed hinterland with limited settlement, including the disused RAF radar station. These characteristics would be susceptible to changes in seaward views by the introduction of large man-made structures into an otherwise empty seascape. Susceptibility to change is also moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast and would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal character, forming a new feature in seaward views to the north that is outwith the CCA. Susceptibility is assessed as High.

2.2.10.11 In combining the High value with the High susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of the Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* CCA is assessed as **High**.

### Magnitude of change

2.2.10.12 The closest point of this CCA is located 14.1 km from the Turbine Area. **Figure 18.10, Volume 2c** illustrates that there would be fairly consistent visibility along the exposed headland with medium-

to-high cliffs and caves around Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* and Rubha Mor, where there are open, panoramic views of the seascape to the north. Visibility of the Offshore Project drops off quickly with distance away from the coastline, due to elevated terrain intervening locally, and there would be limited to no visibility from the coastal edge along the western side of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, extending south to Uig Beach/*Tràigh Uig*, where views of the Turbine Area are restricted by the headland. The predicted view of the Offshore Project from Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* is shown in Viewpoint 30: Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.54: Viewpoint 30**) and Viewpoint 33: Forsnaval/*Forsnabhal* (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.57: Viewpoint 33**), which illustrates views from elevated areas of the rocky moorland set back from the coast.

#### *Construction and decommissioning*

- 2.2.10.13 During the construction and decommissioning phases, the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and support vessels). Open seaward views to the north/northeast would be partially changed through the introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area, which would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views. The large scale and modern technology of such structures and vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the coastline of the CCA and compete with existing focal points such as the archipelago of Loch Roag/*Ròg* or Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* Islands to the northeast, the steep cliff edge at Rubha Mor and the hills of Harris to the southeast. The introduction of modern, man-made WTGs is likely to contrast with the elemental qualities and sense of being at the north-western frontier of Europe with the Atlantic beyond.
- 2.2.10.14 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by the separation from the CCA (approximately 14 km away), the open sea separation and expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. Long-distance open seaward views to the west across the Atlantic to the Flannan Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* and beyond, and views south along the coastline of the NSA, would remain without offshore wind farm construction influences outside the Turbine Area. There would also be no visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from the western side of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, extending south to Uig Beach/*Tràigh Uig*, where views of the Turbine Area would be restricted by the headland and visibility from much of the hinterland areas of Boggy Moorland LCT (322) and Rocky Moorland LCT (323) would be restricted by the intervening landform.

2.2.10.15 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential High-medium magnitude of change to the character of the CCA around the coastline of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* and Rubha Mor; reducing to negligible to the south of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* from the coastal edge along the western side of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, extending south to Uig Beach/*Tràigh Uig*.

*Operation and maintenance*

2.2.10.16 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce a number of modern man-made WTGs within seaward views along the coast to the north of the CCA. The large scale of the WTGs, layout of the array and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the complexity of the seascape in parts of the view along the coast, with its indented coastal edge and small rocky islands within the Caolas/*An Caolas* or Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* archipelago. The large scale and modern technology of such structures and vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the coastline of the CCA and compete with existing focal points such as the archipelago of Loch Roag/*Ròg* or Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* Islands to the northeast, the steep cliff edge at Rubha Mor and the hills of Harris to the southeast. The introduction of modern, man-made WTGs is likely to contrast with the elemental qualities and sense of being at the north-western frontier of Europe with the Atlantic beyond.

2.2.10.17 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by the separation from the CCA (approximately 14 km away), the open sea separation and expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. Long-distance open seaward views to the west across the Atlantic to the Flannan Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* and beyond, and views south along the coastline of the NSA, would remain without offshore wind farm influence outside the Turbine Area. There would also be no visibility of the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project from the western side of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, extending south to Uig Beach/*Tràigh Uig*, where views of the Turbine Area are restricted by the headland and visibility from much of the hinterland areas of Boggy Moorland LCT (322) and Rocky Moorland LCT (323) is restricted by the intervening landform.

2.2.10.18 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential medium magnitude of change to the character of the CCA around the coastline of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* and Rubha Mor; reducing to negligible to the south of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* from the coastal edge along the western side of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, extending south to Uig Beach/*Tràigh Uig*.

## Significance of effect

### *Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.10.19 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA15: Gallan Head during construction and decommissioning is assessed as **Significant (Major)** adverse and short-term around the coastline of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* and Rubha Mor; reducing to **Not Significant (Minor)**, neutral and short-term to the south of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* from the coastal edge along the western side of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, extending south to Uig Beach/*Tràigh Uig*.

### *Operation and maintenance*

2.2.10.20 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA15: Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* during operation and maintenance is assessed as **Significant (Major)** adverse and long-term around the coastline of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* and Rubha Mor; reducing to **Not Significant (Minor)**, neutral and short-term to the south of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag* from the coastal edge along the western side of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, extending south to Uig Beach/*Tràigh Uig*.

## 2.2.11 CCA17: MANGERSTA/MANGURSTADH HEAD

### Introduction

#### *Baseline conditions*

2.2.11.1 This CCA is located around Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head between Glas Eilean (Uig Bay/*Camas Uig*) and Àird Feinis on the west coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*.

- Associated coastal LCT(s): Rocky Moorland LCT (323);
- Representative viewpoints: Viewpoint 38: Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head is located on the coastal edge within this CCA.

2.2.11.2 The key characteristics of the CCA are as follows:

- Broad headland extending northwest into the Atlantic;
- Indented, rocky cliffs and sandy cove at Mangersta/*Mangurstadh*;
- Dune and machair backed beach at Mangersta/*Mangurstadh*;
- Rocky moorland with lochs leading up to coastal edge with small, dispersed crofting township at Mangersta/*Mangurstadh*;
- Radio station at Mangersta/*Mangurstadh*.

#### *Maritime influences*

2.2.11.3 The headland extends into the sea and is under the continual force and dynamic coastal influences of the Atlantic Ocean. The cliffs and hinterland are exposed to the full force of elements. Strong currents drive waves into cliffs resulting in sea spray along cliff tops and the continual sound of crashing waves. Calls from nesting seabirds in the cliffs of this coastline add to these experiential qualities. There are relatively low levels of marine traffic, including fishing vessels and vessels navigating around Lewis offshore from this coastline but otherwise there are no man-made elements within seaward views.

#### *Character of coastal edge*

2.2.11.4 Indented granite cliffs, approximately 50 m, often with sea stacks, caves, arches and small islands form a dramatic edge to this coastline, including the Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* sea stacks. At the northern end of the CCA, the rocky landform slopes down to the shore. Sandy beaches within small coves and inlets are dotted along the coastline. At Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* cove, the sandy beach extends deep into the inlet with dunes and machair at the head of it. Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* radio Station is located on the northwest point of Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* head. The fortified promontory (now inaccessible) at Stac Domhnuill Chaim/*Stac Dhòmhnail Chaim* is located on west of the Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* township.

#### *Character of immediate hinterland*

2.2.11.5 Hinterland consists of Rocky Moorland LCT (323). Grass and peat moorland with rocky outcrops extending to the coastal edge. This undulating landform is boggy in places with small-to-medium

sized lochs in depressions. The dispersed crofting township at Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* is located within the valley that leads down to the Unsure cove. There is evidence of rig and furrow land cultivation across the crofting inbye and peat cutting banks across peat moorland.

*Human activity (presence or absence)*

2.2.11.6 This rugged coastal landscape is accessible by the coast road with branches leading to Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* township and the radio station. This exposed and relatively remote headland has evidence of long-standing human habitation. The shoreline is accessible at Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* and other small coves.

*Views and visibility*

2.2.11.7 There are open and expansive views from clifftops across the Atlantic Ocean, with views of the sea extending to the horizon giving an edge-of-the-world feeling. The dramatic cliff landscape is visible in views along the coast and from inland. The Harris hills are visible above the undulating and hilly moorland to the southeast. Views from coves are framed by headlands.

### Sensitivity to change

2.2.11.8 This CCA is located within the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA/*Siorrachd Leòdhais a Deas, na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath*. Some of the special qualities of the NSA may be experienced from the rocky indented coastline at Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head, from where a diversity of seascapes can be experienced, including inland areas with '*wild, mountainous character*' and '*grand, open seascapes*' and '*panoramas over peninsulas and islands*'; with views that take in the '*expansiveness of the Atlantic ocean*' and '*edge of Europe character*'. The value is considered to be High.

2.2.11.9 The coastline of this CCA has a strong association with the Atlantic. The CCA is characterised by dramatic granite cliffs and sea stacks with a simple landcover of grassy clifftops and small, sandy beaches with limited settlement and modern human influences. These characteristics would be susceptible to changes in seaward views by the introduction of large man-made structures into an otherwise empty seascape. Susceptibility to change is also moderated by the fact that the Offshore Project would not physically change the pattern or elements of the coast, but would change the visual/perceptual aspects of coastal character, forming a new feature in seaward views to the north that is out with the CCA. Susceptibility is assessed as High.

2.2.11.10 In combining the High value with the High susceptibility, the sensitivity to change of Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head CCA is assessed as **High**.

### Magnitude of change

2.2.11.11 The closest point of this CCA is located 20.9 km from the Turbine Area. **Figure 18.10, Volume 2c** illustrates that there would be fairly consistent visibility along the coastal edges of the exposed headland of indented, rocky cliffs around Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head, where there are open,

panoramic views over the seascape to the north. Visibility of the Offshore Project drops off quickly with distance away from the coastline, due to the elevated terrain intervening locally, and there would be limited to no visibility from the coastal edge along the western side of Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head, extending south to Àird Feinis, where views of the Turbine Area are restricted by the headland. The predicted view of the Offshore Project from Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head is shown in Viewpoint 38: Mangerta/*Mangurstadh* Head (**Appendix 16.8, Volume 2c - Figure 18.62: Viewpoint 38**).

*Construction and decommissioning*

- 2.2.11.12 During the construction and decommissioning phases, the influence of the Offshore Project on the perceived character of the CCA would be greatest towards the end of the construction phase, when there is likely to be a mix of constructed and partially constructed WTGs/jacket foundations present in the sea, together with large WTG installation vessels (such as jack up installation vessels) and other vessels being used for other offshore construction activities (such as cable laying, drilling and support vessels). Open seaward views to the north/northeast would be partially changed through the introduction of the construction and decommissioning works within the Array Area, which would introduce man-made elements and construction activities in seaward views. The large scale and modern technology of such structures and vessels would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the coastline of the CCA and compete with existing focal points such as Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, Forsnaval/*Forsnabhal* and Uig Beach/*Tràigh Uig* to the northeast, and the steep, dramatic uplands of Harris within the NSA to the east. The introduction of modern, man-made WTGs is likely to contrast with the elemental qualities and sense of being at the north-western frontier of Europe with the Atlantic beyond.
- 2.2.11.13 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by the separation from the CCA (approximately 21 km away), the open sea separation and expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. Long-distance open seaward views to the west across the Atlantic to the Flannan Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* and beyond, and views south along the coastline of the NSA, would remain without offshore wind farm construction influences outside the Turbine Area. There would also be no visibility of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project from the western side of Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head, extending south to Àird Feinis, where views of the Turbine Area would be restricted by the headland, and visibility from much of the hinterland areas of Rocky Moorland LCT (323) and Machair LCT (321) (at Mangersta/*Mangurstadh*) would be restricted by the intervening landform.
- 2.2.11.14 On balance, the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential medium magnitude of change to the character of the CCA; reducing to low to the

south of Àird Mhòr Mhangarstaidh from the coastal edge along the western side of Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head, extending south to Àird Feinis.

*Operation and maintenance*

2.2.11.15 The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would introduce a number of modern man-made WTGs within seaward views along the coast to the north of the CCA. The array of WTGs within the Turbine Area would be viewed partially behind the landform of Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, with the towers/jackets of much of the array screened behind the landform, with the WTGs in the western/southern part of the Turbine Area see in full extending out to sea beyond Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*. The large scale of the WTGs, layout of the array and modern 'technological' appearance of the WTGs would contrast with the strong sense of naturalness and remoteness experienced from the coastline of the CCA and compete with existing focal points such as Gallan Head/*Gallan Beag*, Forsnaval/*Forsnabhal* and Uig Beach/*Tràigh Uig* to the northeast, and the steep, dramatic uplands of Harris within the wider view of the NSA to the east. The introduction of modern, man-made WTGs is likely to contrast with the elemental qualities and sense of being at the north-western frontier of Europe with the Atlantic beyond.

2.2.11.16 The physical characteristics of the CCA would, however, remain unchanged. The operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project would only result in changes to the visual aspects of perceived character of the CCA. The influence of the construction and decommissioning of the Offshore Project on coastal character is also moderated by the separation from the CCA (approximately 21 km away), the open sea separation and expansive, large-scale seascape in which it would be located. Long-distance open seaward views to the west across the Atlantic to the Flannan Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* and beyond, and views south along the coastline of the NSA, would remain without offshore wind farm influence outside the Turbine Area. There would also be no visibility of the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project from the western side of Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head, extending south to Àird Feinis, where views of the Turbine Area would be restricted by the headland, and visibility from much of the hinterland areas of Rocky Moorland LCT (323) and Machair LCT (321) (at Mangesta/*Mangurstadh*) would be restricted by the intervening landform.

2.2.11.17 On balance, the operation and maintenance of the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a potential medium magnitude of change to the character of the CCA; reducing to low to the south of Àird Mhòr Mhangarstaidh from the coastal edge along the western side of Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head, extending south to Àird Feinis.

**Significance of effect**

*Construction and decommissioning*

2.2.11.18 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA17: Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head during construction and decommissioning is assessed as **Significant (Major-moderate)** adverse and short-term along the coastal edge of

Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head; reducing to **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)**, neutral and short-term from the western side of Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head, extending south to Àird Feinis.

*Operation and maintenance*

2.2.11.19 The potential effect of the Offshore Project on the coastal character of CCA17:

Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head during operation and maintenance is assessed as **Significant (Major-moderate)** adverse and long-term along the coastal edge of Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head; reducing to **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)**, neutral and long-term from the western side of Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head, extending south to Àird Feinis.

### 3 GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

3.1.1.1 A list of key terms and acronyms used in this appendix are provided in **Table 3-1** and **Table 3-2**.

Table 3-1 Acronyms and abbreviations

Term	Definition
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
CCA	Coastal Character Area
CnES	Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
km	Kilometre
LCT	Landscape Character Type
m	Metre
MHWS	Mean High Water Springs
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NSA	National Scenic Area
OCAS	Offshore Cable Area of Search
OS	Ordnance Survey
OSP	Offshore Substations Platform
OWF	Offshore Wind Farm
SLVIA	Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
WTG	Wind Turbine Generator
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Table 3-2 Glossary

Term	Meaning
The Applicant	Spiorad na Mara Limited (the Project owner)
Array Area	The offshore area within which the offshore wind turbine generators (WTGs), associated foundations, Offshore Cables, and Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) (if required), will be located. This area encompasses the Turbine Area that will contain all above water surface infrastructure (WTGs/OSP) and an additional area within which further below water infrastructure (foundations and cables) may also be located.
Array Cables	The offshore electrical and communication cables that connect infrastructure located within the Array Area, for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenario 1: Array Cables will be used to connect Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) to each other, and to connect WTGs to the OSP;</li> <li>Scenario 2: Array Cables will be used to connect WTGs to each other.</li> </ul>
Array Cables to Landfall	The offshore electrical and communication cables located in the Array Area and Offshore Cables Area of Search that connect the wind turbine generators (WTGs) directly to Landfall for Scenario 2.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
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.
EIAR	The Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) prepared to assess the likely significant effects of the Project on the environment.
Export Cables	The offshore electrical and communication cables located in the Array Area and Offshore Cables Area of Search that connect the Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) (if required) to Landfall for Scenario 1.
Embedded or 'Designed-in' Mitigation	Mitigation measures to avoid or reduce environmental effects that are directly incorporated into the preferred design for the Project. This can include standard practice in accordance with or without guidance. Embedded mitigation is considered as part of the impact assessment, before effect significance is identified.
Future Baseline	Refers to the situation in future years without the Offshore Project.
Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD)	A trenchless crossing engineering technique using a drill steered underground without the requirement for open trenches. This method is able to carry out the underground installation of pipes and cables with minimal surface disruption.
Impact	Change that is caused by an action; for example, land clearing (action) during construction which results in habitat loss (impact)
Landfall	This consists of works from offshore Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD) exit pits to onshore at the Transition Joint Bays (TJB). The infrastructure and installation methods associated with the Landfall involves both onshore and offshore components.
Landfall Substation	The optional onshore substation located on the west side of the Isle of Lewis/ <i>Eilean Leòdhais</i> . Includes the platform, buildings and associated components which allows the voltage to be increased to meet onward transmission requirements
Onshore Landfall Area	The area which includes both the Landfall above Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and Landfall Substation (as defined separately), cabling from the Transition Joint Bays (TJB) to the Landfall Substation (if required) and construction related compounds and working areas.
Offshore Application	The application for Marine Licences under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 (between 0 and 12nm) and a Section 36 consent under the Electricity Act 1989.
Offshore Cables	Electrical and communication cables located within the Offshore Cable Area of Search and Array Area. The Offshore Cables consist of Array Cables, Array Cables to Landfall, and Export Cables.
Offshore Cable Area of Search (OCAS)	The area within which the offshore electrical and communication cables between the Array Area and Landfall up to Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) will be located.
Offshore Landfall Area	The area below Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) within the Offshore Cable Area of Search that includes works associated with the Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD) installation, including HDD exit pit(s) and offshore cable connection to the onshore (TJB) (located above MHWS).
Offshore Project	The offshore components of the Spiorad na Mara offshore wind farm (the Project) located seaward of Mean High Water Springs (MHWS).

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Offshore Project Boundary	The 'red line boundary' encompassing the Offshore Project.
Offshore Substation Platform (OSP)	The optional offshore substation located within the Turbine Area. Includes the platform and associated components which allows the voltage to be increased to meet onward transmission requirements.
Onshore Transmission Works (OTW)/ Onshore Project	The onshore components of the Spiorad na Mara offshore wind farm (the Project) located landward of Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS).  The Applicant will seek consent for the OTW Project through a separate application and so does not form part of this application.
The Project	The Spiorad na Mara offshore wind farm development. This term describes the whole development, including all offshore and onshore components.
Project Boundary	The 'red line boundary' encompassing all offshore and onshore components of the Project.
Project Design Envelope	A description of the range of possible components that make up the Project design options under consideration when the exact engineering parameters are not yet known.
Scoping Opinion	A report presenting the written opinion of the Scottish Ministers, with input from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) for the OTW, as to the scope and level of detail of information to be provided in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Project.
Turbine Area	A reduced area within the Array Area where above water surface infrastructure would be located i.e. wind turbine generators (WTG) or Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) (if required). This area has been developed and refined through stakeholder consultation and environmental assessment.
Wind Turbine Generator (WTG)	The wind turbines that generate electricity consisting of tubular towers and blades attached to a nacelle housing mechanical and electrical generating equipment.