



Spiorad na Mara Offshore Wind Farm

Offshore Project

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Appendix 18.4: Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (AESLQ), Volume 2c

Document Reference No.: SNM-SNM-PAC-APP-1184

Date: February 2026



Quality Control Page

Document details	
Document title	Offshore Project Environmental Impact Assessment Report
Document subtitle	Appendix 18.4: Assessment of Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (AESLQ)
Document Reference No.	SNM-SNM-PAC-APP-1184
Date	February 2026
Version	1.0
Author	SLR Consulting Ltd
Client Name	Sporad na Mara Limited

Document history

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

Contents

1	Introduction.....	1-1
1.1	Overview	1-1
1.2	Purpose of this Appendix	1-2
1.3	South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA/Siorrachd Leòdhais a Deas, na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath – An Overview	1-2
1.4	The AESLQ Study Area and Sub-areas.....	1-2
1.5	Preliminary assessment of relevant SLQs of the NSA	1-4
1.6	Overview of the AESLQ Study Area with respect to the NSA	1-7
2	Assessment of effects on the Special Landscape Qualities (AESLQ).....	2-9
2.1	Introduction.....	2-9
2.2	Sub-area 1 - The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline.....	2-10
2.3	Sub-area 2 - Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan.....	2-16
2.4	Sub-area 3 - The Teathabhal and Uig Rocky Peatlands.....	2-23
2.5	Sub-area 4 - The Lewis/Leòdhas Hills and Mountains	2-29
2.6	Sub-area 5 - The North Harris/Na Hearadh Hills and Mountains.....	2-35
3	Glossary of terms and abbreviations.....	3-40
4	References	4-44

List of Tables

Table 1-1	Preliminary Assessment of SLQs of the NSA.....	1-4
Table 2-1	Assessment of SLQs of Sub-area 1 – The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline	2-10
Table 2-2	Assessment of SLQs of Sub-area 2 - Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan.....	2-16
Table 2-3	Assessment of SLQs of Sub-area 3 - The Teathaval/Teathabhal and Uig Rocky Peatlands	2-23
Table 2-4	Assessment of SLQs of Sub-area 4 - The Lewis/Leòdhas Hills and Mountains.....	2-29
Table 2-5	Assessment of SLQs of Sub-area 5 - The North Harris/Na Hearadh Hills and Mountains	2-35
Table 3-1	Acronyms and abbreviations.....	3-40
Table 3-2	Glossary	3-40

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

1.1.1.1 This appendix of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) presents the potential effects of the proposed Spiorad na Mara Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as 'the Offshore Project') on the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) of the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area (NSA)/*Siorrachd Leòdhais a Deas, na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath*.

1.1.1.2 This appendix should be read in conjunction with the project description provided in **Chapter 3: Project Description, Volume 1a**, and **Chapter 18: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA), Volume 2a**.

1.1.1.3 The appendix is supported by the following figures:

- **Appendix 18.6: SLVIA Figures and Photomontage Visualisations, Volume 2c - Figure 18.5: Landscape Designations;**
- **Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c - Figure 18.8: Blade Tip ZTV (A1);**
- **Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c - Figure 18.10 Blade Tip ZTV with landscape and coastal character (Larger WTG Type).**

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 km² 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 km², within the Array Area.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS APPENDIX

1.2.1.1 This appendix describes the following:

- South Lewis, Harris and North Uist Nsa/*Siorrachd Leòdhais A Deas, Na Hearadh Agus Uibhist A Tuath* – An Overview (Section 1.3);
- The AESLQ Study Area and Sub-Areas (Section 1.4);
- Preliminary Assessment of Relevant SLQS of the NSA (Section 1.5);
- Overview of the AESLQ Study Area with respect to the NSA (Section 1.6);
- Assessment of Effects on the Special Landscape Qualities (AESLQ) (Section 2).

1.2.1.2 The methodology for this Assessment of Effects on SLQs (AESLQ) follows the guidance produced jointly by NatureScot, the Cairngorm National Park Authority (CNPA) and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) (January 2025). The SLQs of the NSA are described within NatureScot (2010), which defines SLQs as '*the characteristics that, individually or combined, give rise to an area's outstanding scenery*'. The SLQs are not ranked because no single quality is more important than another. Whilst the SLQs are identified individually, it is typically the combination and integration of all the individual qualities which create the appealing landscapes deemed worthy of national designation and protection through national policy.

1.3 SOUTH LEWIS, HARRIS AND NORTH UIST NSA/SIORRACHD LEÒDHAIS A DEAS, NA HEARADH AGUS UIBHIST A TUATH – AN OVERVIEW

1.3.1.1 In the preliminary description of the NSA, the striking contrast between the subdued topography of most of Lewis/*Leòdhas* and the bold rugged hills of South Lewis/*Leòdhas* and Harris/*Na Hearadh* is described as a key factor in understanding the outstanding scenic quality of this NSA. It is around this central core of rugged hills, that a number of different contrasting lowland and coastal landscapes define the NSA. These can broadly be identified as *cnoc* and *lochan*, rocky indented coast and wide sandy *machair* beaches between rocky headlands. The distinctiveness and scenic quality of these landscapes, come from the intervisibility and contrast of experience from different combinations of elements and features with a variety of form, colour and grain, further diversified by changes of scale and aspect to the wide open waters of the Atlantic Ocean on the west, and views across the Northern and Little Minch/*Mhaoil* eastwards, to the Isle of Skye/*An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* and Mainland Scotland/*Alba*.

1.4 THE AESLQ STUDY AREA AND SUB-AREAS

1.4.1.1 The Offshore Project is located in the open waters off the coast of southwest Lewis/*Leòdhas* at a distance of 11 km (from the nearest turbine) to the coastal boundary of the NSA¹.

¹ As illustrated on South Lewis, Harris & North Uist NSA plan (and Figure 18.5, Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c), taken from The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas: NatureScot Commissioned Report No. 374.

- 1.4.1.2 As advocated by the AESLQ Guidance, a study area (AESLQ Study Area) has been defined for the assessment of effects of the Offshore Project on the SLQs, (**Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c - Figure 18.5**) informed by the extent and patterns of visibility (hub height and blade tip) and site work.
- 1.4.1.3 The Offshore Project would principally affect the north and northwest of the NSA, from the summits and slopes of the prominent Harris/*Na Hearadh* Mountains northwards. To the south and east beyond the mountains, there would be theoretical visibility, however, in both these areas it is considered that the SLQs have a far reduced association with the northwest coast and waters of the NSA, and the distances involved are too great to give rise to likely significant adverse effects on the appreciation of the SLQs of the NSA.
- 1.4.1.4 The Offshore Project consulted with NatureScot about the scope of the AESLQ and viewpoints within the NSA to represent specific locations cited within the qualities. The Offshore Project produced a review of the special qualities describing the SLQs on which the assessment would be focused and a list of the viewpoints used to inform the assessment of special qualities, and these were agreed with NatureScot during consultations (see Table 18-13 of **Chapter 18, Volume 2a**).

1.4.2 THE AESLQ STUDY AREA

- 1.4.2.1 Within the AESLQ Study Area, 5 sub-areas within have been identified for detailed assessment (**Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c - Figure 18.5**), the delineation of which are influenced by the following aspects:
- The defined Landscape Character Types (LCTs) (**Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c - Figure 18.5**);
 - The assessment of Coastal Character (**Chapter 18, Volume 2a** Section 18.8 and **Appendix 18.6 Volume 2c**);
 - The citation for the Uig/*Ùig* Hills Wild Land Area (WLA) (30) and Eiscein WLA (31) (which overlaps with and underpins the experience of the SLQs);
 - By the nature and extent of likely views of the Offshore Project, informed by Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) (**Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c - Figure 18.8: Blade Tip ZTV (A1)**) and visualisations from representative viewpoints in the NSA.
- 1.4.2.2 The sub-areas have also been defined in terms of the way the SLQs are expressed and experienced informed by field work. The 5 sub-areas are shown in **Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c - Figure 18.5** and **Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c - Figure 18.8** and comprise:
- Sub-area 1 - Outer Northwest Lewis/*Leòdhas* Coastline;
 - Sub-area 2 - Lewis/*Leòdhas* Coastal Cnoc and Lochan;
 - Sub-area 3 - The Teathaval/*Teathabhal* and Uig/*Ùige* Rocky Peatlands;
 - Sub-area 4 - The Lewis/*Leòdhas* Hills and Mountains;
 - Sub-area 5 - The North Harris/*Na Hearadh* Hills and Mountains.
- 1.4.2.3 On the basis of preliminary desk study and fieldwork 2 areas of the NSA have been scoped out of further assessment, the reasoning being:

- Southern Pairc peninsular - The NSA incorporates the southern half of the Pairc Peninsula, the qualities of which are particularly identified in relation to the connection with the Minch/*Mhaoil* and mainland Scotland/*Alba*, and the enclosure they afford to Loch Seaforth/*Shìophoirt*, the latter of which is a locational specific quality (AESLQ) of the NSA. Whilst theoretical visibility to the Offshore Project is predicted, at distances of over 40 km, it is considered that experience of the Offshore Project in views would not detract from the appreciation of the SLQ and in particular SLQs in this area;
- South Harris/*Na Hearadh* - The limited extent of theoretical visibility, and separation between this area from the Offshore Project (ranging between 45 km and 55 km), which has little or no association with the north-western coast of the NSA (and visibility to it) by virtue of the Harris/*Na Hearadh* Mountains immediately north which screen views.

1.5 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF RELEVANT SLQs OF THE NSA

1.5.1.1 A preliminary assessment was undertaken to identify the specific SLQs likely to be sensitive to changes arising from the Offshore Project, with reference to the SLQ descriptions, coastal characteristics and site surveys. Within the NatureScot Special Qualities Report, the SLQs are identified and described in 4 broad groups, and it is the first 2 groups which have been scoped into the AESLQ of the Offshore Project. The first group of SLQs are referred to here as ‘overarching’ SLQs as they can be applicable to the NSA as a whole, whilst the second group are geographically specific to South Lewis/*Leòdhas* and Harris/*Na Hearadh*. The overall SLQs of the NSA and those SLQs that apply to South Lewis/*Leòdhas* and Harris/*Na Hearadh* are defined in the baseline conditions in Table 18-13 of **Chapter 18, Volume 2a**. SLQs that are geographically specific to the Sound of Harris/*Na Hearadh* and North Uist/*Uibhist a Tuath* are scoped out of the assessment because views of the Offshore Project from southern parts of Harris/*Na Hearadh* and North Uist/*Uibhist a Tuath* are screened by the intervening prominent hills and mountains of Harris/*Na Hearadh* and South Lewis/*Leòdhas* (**Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c - Figure 18.8**). As such there is no potential for significant effects on the SLQs of The Sound of Harris/*Na Hearadh* and North Uist/*Uibhist a Tuath* areas.

1.5.1.2 A preliminary assessment of the overall SLQs of the NSA and those SLQs that apply to South Lewis/*Leòdhas* and Harris/*Na Hearadh* is set out in **Table 1-1**.

Table 1-1 Preliminary Assessment of SLQs of the NSA

SLQ	Theoretical visibility from areas of the NSA exhibiting this Special Quality	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
Overall SLQs		
<i>A rich variety of exceptional scenery</i>	Yes, visibility of the Offshore Project varies between the different landscapes within the NSA.	Yes. Potential for significant effects on rich scenic variety requiring further assessment.

SLQ	Theoretical visibility from areas of the NSA exhibiting this Special Quality	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
<i>A great diversity of seascapes</i>	Yes, but intermittent visibility due to indented coastline and arrangement of promontories and bays.	Yes. Potential for significant effects on diversity of seascape.
<i>Intervisibility between landscapes</i>	Yes, visibility of the Offshore Project in views between different landscape types.	Yes. Potential for significant effects on intervisibility between landscapes.
<i>The close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture</i>	Yes, but intermittent visibility restricted to elevated upland areas of NSA's interior, uninhabited land mass.	Yes. Potential for significant effects on interplay of natural world and culture.
<i>The indivisible linkage of landscape and history</i>	Yes, visibility of the Offshore Project from landscapes where scenery is permeated by a sense of history.	Yes. Potential for significant effects on linkage between landscape and history through new, modern structures to contribute to the scene in the context of historic landscape elements.
<i>The very edge of Europe</i>	Yes, visibility of Offshore Project from the physical edges of Lewis/ <i>Leòdhas</i> within the NSA.	Yes. Potential for significant effects on perception of remoteness experienced from coastal edges of Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> within the NSA.
<i>The dominance of the weather</i>	No, visibility of the Offshore Project will not influence the dominance of the weather.	No potential for significant effects on the dominance of the weather. No further review needed.
South Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> and Harris/<i>Na Hearadh</i> SLQs		
<i>The wild, mountainous character</i>	Yes, but intermittent visibility restricted to elevated upland, rugged areas of NSA within Lewis/ <i>Leòdhas</i> and North Harris/ <i>Na Hearadh</i> .	Yes. Potential for significant effects on wild mountainous character.
<i>Deep sea lochs that penetrate the hills</i>	Yes, but intermittent visibility due to variety of enclosure afforded by narrow steep sided fjord-like sea lochs and softer, more open sea lochs.	Yes. Potential for significant effects on enclosed sea lochs.
<i>The narrow gorge of Glen Bhaltos</i>	No visibility of Offshore Project from Gleann Bhaltos/ <i>Glen Valtos</i> .	No potential for significant effects on narrow gorge of Gleann Bhaltos/ <i>Glen Valtos</i> .
<i>The rockscapes of Harris</i>	No visibility of Offshore Project from the bays area of Harris/ <i>Na Hearadh</i> 's east coast.	No potential for significant effects on rockscapes of Harris/ <i>Na Hearadh</i> .

SLQ	Theoretical visibility from areas of the NSA exhibiting this Special Quality	Needs detailed assessment within SLVIA?
<i>Extensive machair and dune systems with expansive beaches</i>	Yes, but intermittent visibility due to low-lying beaches and dune systems amongst landscape of rocks, hills and mountains.	Yes. Potential for significant effects on distinctiveness of machair and expansive beaches at Uig/Uige in South Lewis/Leòdhas.
<i>The drama of Ceapabhal and Tràigh an Taoibh Thuath</i>	No visibility of Offshore Project from Ceapabhal and Tràigh an Taoibh Thuath.	No potential for significant effects on Ceapabhal and Tràigh an Taoibh Thuath.
<i>The landmark of Amhuinnsuidhe Castle</i>	No visibility of Offshore Project from Amhuinnsuidhe Castle.	No potential for significant effects on Amhuinnsuidhe Castle.
<i>The distinct, well-populated island of Scalpay</i>	No visibility of Offshore Project from island of Scalpay/Sgalpaigh.	No potential for significant effects on island of Scalpay/Sgalpaigh.
<i>The enclosed glens of Choisleitir, Shranndabhal and Roghadail</i>	No visibility of Offshore Project from enclosed glens of Choisleitir, Sranndabhal/Shranndabhal and Rodel/Roghadail.	No potential for significant effects on enclosed glens of Choisleitir, Sranndabhal/Shranndabhal and Rodel/Roghadail.

1.5.1.3 In summary, the following overarching SLQs are identified for further assessment in the AESLQ:

- Overarching SLQs:
 - A rich variety of exceptional scenery;
 - A great diversity of seascapes;
 - Intervisibility between landscapes;
 - The close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture;
 - The indivisible linkage of landscape and history;
 - The very edge of Europe.
- Geographically specific SLQs to South Lewis/Leòdhas and Harris/Na Hearadh:
 - The wild mountainous character (informed by the citation of the Uig Hills WLA (30) and Eisgein WLA (31));
 - Deep sea lochs that penetrate the hills;
 - Extensive machair and dune systems with expansive beaches;
 - The drama of Ceapabhal and Tràigh an Taoibh Thuath.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE AESLQ STUDY AREA WITH RESPECT TO THE NSA

- 1.6.1.1 In undertaking the preliminary desk study supported by fieldwork on site, it is considered that the northern part of the AESLQ Study Area by virtue of its north-westerly location and single main point of access and egress, has a particular combination of characteristics and features contributing to the SLQs experienced which sets it apart from, and for which it is experienced in a different way to, the rest of the NSA, and in this context it is helpful to consider the AESLQ Study Area in the context of the wider NSA.
- 1.6.1.2 Based on fieldwork with observations made on the presentation and expression of the SLQ within the AESLQ Study Area, it is considered that the northern area of the NSA (comprising the sub-areas 1-5) is experienced as a distinctive enclave reflecting the SLQs of the wider NSA in one area. Within this enclave, the diversity of scenic quality experienced (combinations of coastline, upland mountains, the contrast in character, sea lochs, the balance between sea and land, and the dominance of the natural environment over the narrow coastal strip of settlement) is acute, stemming from the concentration of character and elements into one smaller area (with respect to the NSA as a whole), where the grain of landform and main aspect of land to sea is northwards (rare in the context of the wider NSA).
- 1.6.1.3 The Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Sià* as a whole are geographically on the westernmost fringes of Europe. Frontier qualities are particularly pronounced and experienced intensely by virtue of the fact that the access road off the main circular Lewis/*Leòdhas* trunk roads leads to a dead end at this western coast. Arrival on the eastern seaboard of the Islands of Lewis/*Leòdhas* and Harris/*Na Hearadh* at any of the main seaports or Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* Airport requires a journey inland westward to Garynahine. Beyond this, to access the coastline of the northwest NSA comprises additional travel through a number of contrasting diverse landscape characters, with approximate journeys of 22 km to get to north Bernera, 32 km to Bhaltos/*Valtos* and 40 km to Ard Uig/*Ùige*. These types of 'dead-end' journeys are not unique to the NSA (for example the B887 accessing the southwest Harris/*Na Hearadh* Coastline, or the minor road to Scalpay/*Sgalpaigh*), however, when combined with the direction of travel westwards towards the Atlantic Coastline, they are scarce and accentuate the already heightened '*very edge of*' quality.
- 1.6.1.4 The AESLQ Study Area as a whole combines landscapes and waters to express many of the overarching SLQs of the NSA and those specific to South Lewis/*Leòdhas*, namely the great diversity of landscapes, rich variety of seascapes, the indelible link between the natural environment and patterns of settlement and culture, and the profound wild land and wildness qualities and character which permeate through all of the experiences of this northwest area of the NSA. The expression of SLQs is strikingly different between the sub-areas moving along the main road route (B8011), such that the intervisibility between these contrasting areas is a key part of the experience of the Study Area. Travelling into this area for the majority of people, the vastness of the Lewis/*Leòdhas* peatlands and wider northern coast of Lewis/*Leòdhas* is left behind travelling south through the rocky moorlands towards and into the NSA. Views to the Lewis/*Leòdhas* and Harris/*Na Hearadh* hills and mountains are a seemingly constant backdrop and point of focus.

- 1.6.1.5 To the north of the rocky moorland, the experience becomes more intimate and of smaller scale entering and travelling through the cnoc and lochan landscape of the NSA; there is 1 of only 2 areas defined as displaying these key characteristics in the NSA (and only 4 in the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Sià* as a whole). The containment afforded by the complex character dramatically contrasts with the wider moorland and mountainous character to the south, and upon reaching the northwest coast, the vastness of the open far-reaching waters of the Atlantic Coast. This combination of landscapes, over a relatively limited geographical area of the NSA, and their contrasting expression of SLQs is considered to capture a microcosm of the rest of the NSA in one physically and visually separated and discrete area. The nature and experience of these qualities' changes, reflect the differing balance between the ocean waters, coast, settlement and landform.
- 1.6.1.6 Core to the experiences of these SLQs is the balance of land to water and the profound perceptions of naturalness and lack of views to any large scale development (mostly settlement and infrastructure, very small in scale, and subservient to landform), with strong wild land character and qualities of remoteness and isolation, prevailing throughout, along the coast, within the archipelago, within the moorland and in the Lewis/*Leòdhas* mountains.
- 1.6.1.7 Wildness can be experienced in many parts of the NSA and it is this aspect that influences the extent to which dark sky character is experienced across this area of the NSA. Whilst not a defined SLQ, the absence of large-scale development, with only pockets of scattered settlement and crofting townships observed in fieldwork, introduce very limited artificial light and, as such, dark sky character is a quality experienced within this part of the NSA.

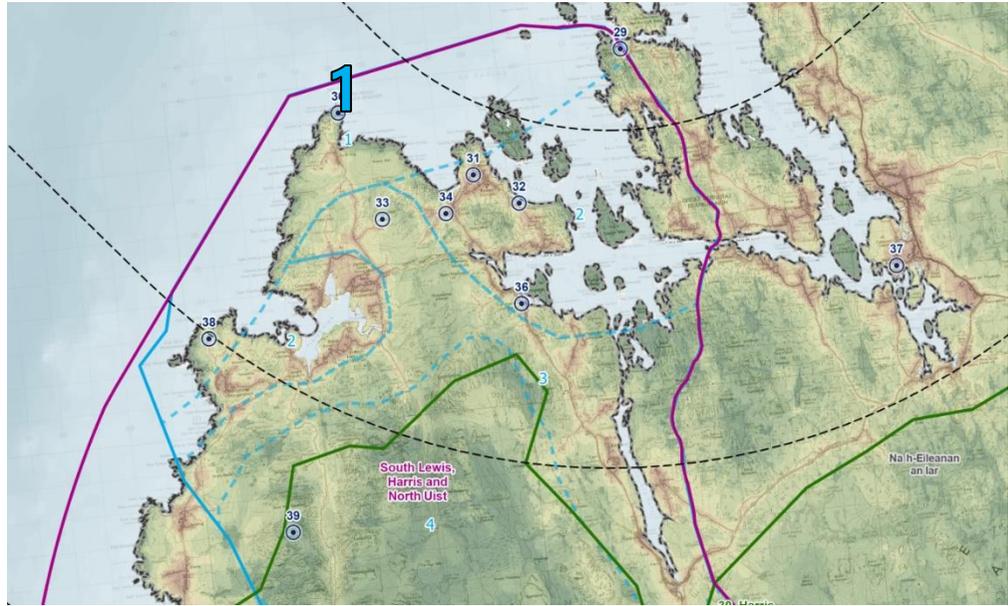
2 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON THE SPECIAL LANDSCAPE QUALITIES (AESLQ)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1.1 The detailed assessment of effects on the SLQs of the NSA for each of the 5 sub-areas is set out in **Table 2-1** to **Table 2-5**. The individual and groups of SLQs are experienced in varying degrees within each of the sub-areas defined for the assessment, depending on the nature of views and the landscape context. Elevated views, for example, from the Lewis/*Leòdhas* Hills and Mountains sub-area 4, reveal a stronger expression of the intervisibility between the SLQs than the lower typically more contained, views from Outer Northwest Lewis/*Leòdhas* Coastline sub-area 2.
- 2.1.1.2 The scenic related qualities are generally strongly expressed in all of the sub-areas but those relating to cultural attributes are stronger in some sub-areas than in others, whilst, in contrast, the appreciation of the coastal SLQs is strongly expressed both from within sub areas 1 and 2, but also from views in adjacent uplands where plan views are afforded. The assessment focuses on the SLQs which could be potentially significantly affected by the Offshore Project so not all groups of SLQs are considered in every sub-area.
- 2.1.1.3 The factors considered when making judgements on the level of effects include the susceptibility of the SLQs to the Offshore Project (considering factors such as their scale, aspect and orientation, scarcity or prevalence) and strength of the SLQs likely to be appreciated by receptors within the sub-area and how they may be affected by the Offshore Project, taking into account the distance, visible extent and prominence of Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs), the Turbine Area composition, movement and lighting. In line with the methodology summarised in Section 18.5.2 and Table 18-9 of the SLVIA, judgements (**Chapter 18, Volume 2a**) on sensitivity (combining the intrinsic high value of the SLQs with the assessed susceptibility) and magnitude of change are combined to arrive at an overall assessment as to whether the Offshore Project would have an effect that is significant or not significant on each SLQ.

2.2 SUB-AREA 1 - THE OUTER NORTHWEST LEWIS/LEÒDHAS COASTLINE

Table 2-1 Assessment of SLQs of Sub-area 1 – The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline

Sub-area 1 – The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline	
Description of the AESLQ Sub-area 1 – The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline	
<p>Sub-area 1 captures the outermost headlands of the AESLQ Study Area, principally the northern rocky coasts of Bernera/Beàrnaraigh, Pabbay, Bhaltos/Valtos, Gallan Head and Aird Mor Mangersta/Mangurstadh.</p> <p>These features form the extremities of the north and western coastline of the NSA, where the influence of the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean are most strongly expressed. The balance between land and sea along the coast of this part of the NSA, is very much one dominated by the extent of views out across the ocean. This is acutely appreciated from Gallan Head and Mangersta Head/Mangurstadh Head which are pivotal points on the coast between those views to the north and to the west.</p> <p>Whilst located within the shelter of these outer headlands, appreciable ‘edge of’ qualities are still experienced from locations such as the northern edge of Bernera/Beàrnaraigh, the northern coasts of the Uig/Ùig peninsula, at Bhaltos/Valtos and the South from Mangersta/Mangurstadh.</p> <p>Key points of focus are the wide expansive views across the open waters of the Atlantic, with the eye drawn to the coastal edge, headlands, inshore islands and skerries.</p>	<p>Figure 18.5: Map of Sub-area 1 – The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline (Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c)</p> 
Visibility	
<p>The Offshore Project would be theoretically visible from the east and northeast facing slopes of the coastal headlands, in particular at Gallan Head and Aird, Bhaltos/Valtos and Bernera/Beàrnaraigh, and at intervals along the coastline between Gallan Head and Mangersta Head/Mangurstadh Head. Viewpoint 29</p>	

Sub-area 1 – The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline		
<p>Bosta/<i>Bostadh</i>, Viewpoint 30 Gallan Head and Viewpoint 38 represent some aspects of how the Offshore Project would appear in views from these visual receptors – bearing in mind that the SLQs would be more strongly expressed from areas away from roadside and tracks – for example on the headland at Bosta/<i>Bostadh</i>. The location of the Turbine Area to the northeast means that WTGs would be lit by the sun during the middle part of the day increasing contrast against the background during certain conditions.</p>		
Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) likely to be affected	Detailed landscape and visual characteristics related to the SLQs	Significance of Effects of the Offshore Project
<p><i>The very edge of Europe</i></p>	<p>This SLQ has been singled out in sub-area 1, as, whilst the 'edge of' experience is experienced across the western seaboard and even from coastline more inshore, the overwhelming experience of these headlands is defined by their location on the western extremities of Lewis/Leòdhas. The experience of these headlands is one defined by or dominated by views along the coast out to the waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the visibility to and appreciation of the simplicity of sea-sky horizon, denoting that it is definitely the open waters of the Atlantic that can be seen (and not views over sea lochs, which still have a backdrop of land).The sea sky horizon will appear to a lesser or greater horizontal extent along the coastline, featuring as a wide open panorama in views westwards from headlands (such as Gallan Head), or framed by these headlands. The simplicity of the sea-sky horizon is visible throughout sub-area 1 and along the transition to sub-area 2 where the open water and sea to sky horizon is still clear in views above the coastal edge where the sea appears to extend to the distant sea sky horizon. The promontories of rocky coast mean that the viewer is projected out into the</p>	<p>The Offshore Project would introduce the visibility of WTGs into these areas where previously there was none, ranging at distances of between approximately 11 km at Bernera/<i>Beàrnaraigh</i>, 14 km at Gallan head and 20 km at Mangersta/<i>Mangurstadh</i>. South of Mangersta/<i>Mangurstadh</i>, visibility of WTGs reduces due to the screening afforded by the Lewis/Leòdhas Mountains and rocky moorland coastal edge. In particular from Gallan Head eastwards, the orientation of the coastal aspect northwards is well defined. The association between the north-south grain of the landform and Atlantic Ocean (and location of the Offshore Project) would affect the 'very edge of Europe' quality, by the introduction of large scale contemporary vertical structures, into the open Atlantic waters (the previously undeveloped character of which inextricably contributes to the 'edge of' quality). Stemming from these points on or in proximity to the most westerly coast in this section of the northern NSA, visibility would be to a greater proportion of the Offshore Project, and as illustrated at Gallan Head, it would be to the full array of WTGs and the Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) visible, with visibility of the Turbine Area becoming</p>

Sub-area 1 – The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline

Atlantic Ocean, away from the immediate confines of the landscape, and the perception is one very much on *'The very edge of Europe'*.

The frontier qualities are acutely experienced here, both in terms of the typically wild undeveloped coastline and experience of exposure of the landscape context and location on the western extremities of the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Sià*, but also in the extent of additional journey which is required (by the majority of travellers) to get to this section of the NSA coastal edge. Leaving the circular A858 road, requires at least another 20 km journey to get to the north of Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh*, (a boat trip to Little Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh*), whilst the journey to Gallan head is double this along minor roads, which wind through the landscape.

These outer coastlines are highly susceptible to change being introduced into the open waters or along these coastal edges.

The *'very edge of Europe'* experience relies fundamentally on intervisibility to open waters, the extent of which are perceived as infinite, with no tangible features which could interrupt or alter this perception or where the experience of open infinite water dominates but which contains infrequent offshore islands, the scale of which appear subservient to the expanse of water, such that there is the perception of *'nothing'* (no major land masses or development) and that the very edge has been reached –

more restricted further south at Mangersta/*Mangurstadh* Head. Views of any type or scale of development off these coastlines would introduce changes to the way the *'very edge of'* SLQ is appreciated. The introduction of development and a new focus would interrupt the expanse of sea, reducing the appreciation of remoteness from human influence. The appreciation of *'infinite'* sea views and *'emptiness'* and the simple balance of the wide expanse of sea to sky, changed and by turn the *'edge of'* quality would be significantly affected (the appreciation of which relies on the open undeveloped expanse of the Atlantic Ocean). The sense of anticipation, expectation and then reveal arriving at these western extremities would be affected with views of the Offshore Project at increasing frequency and intervals moving northwards to the coast). The WTGs would signify the coastal edge before views of the Atlantic Ocean are realised. On arrival at the coastal edge, where the experience of reveal and geographical remoteness from centres of population and built infrastructure is acutely expressed, would be interrupted by the location of large-scale WTGs in the coastal waters, albeit at some set back of approximately 11 km at Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh*, 14 km at Gallan Head/*Àird Uig* and 20 km at Mangersta/*Mangurstadh*, with a resulting medium to high-medium magnitude of change to this SLQ of the NSA.

The Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a **Significant (Major-Moderate to Major)** adverse effect on the appreciation of this SLQ varying somewhat with increasing

Sub-area 1 – The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline		
	<p>the open waters extending to the sea-sky horizon. The experience is one of contrasting scales, a larger more expansive scale from the immediate coastal edge emphasised by the wide expanse of ocean, where the eye scans along simplicity of sea to sky horizon around to the complexity of the fractured coastal edge to the north, and more mountainous and abrupt coastal edge to south.</p>	<p>distance, and occurring in particular from Gallan Head/Àird Uig eastwards to the edge of the NSA, and to a lesser, but still significant effect from Mangersta/Mangursthadh. Effects would be short-term during construction and decommissioning and long-term during operation and maintenance.</p>
<p><i>A rich variety of exceptional scenery</i></p> <p><i>A great diversity of seascapes</i></p> <p><i>Intervisibility</i></p> <p><i>The close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture</i></p>	<p>Typically, with the predominance of water and sky, the simplicity of this wider horizon provides a foil for the complexity of coastline and everchanging relationship between land and sea. The rich variety of exceptional scenery and the great diversity of seascapes is appreciated from these headlands, projecting further northwards away from the main land mass.</p> <p>Views are possible both inland and out over the Atlantic Ocean, but it is the interplay, the intervisibility between these 2 experiences along the coastal seascape which continually draws the eye and where the great diversity of seascapes, the exceptional scenery and the close interplay of the natural world, culture and settlement are strongly expressed. From indented coast appearing as a series of overlapping headlands extending out into the water, to other locations where the seascapes appear as a mix of flatter moorland and sea loch as backed by the mountains to the south.</p> <p>The appreciation of the natural world and environment, along the coast, balanced between the land and sea</p>	<p>From these headlands and coastal edges there would be greater visibility to the Offshore Project, both in turbine numbers and the vertical extent of the WTGs (by comparison from patterns of visibility in sub area 2, with fragments corresponding to landform screening). From Gallan Head there would be visibility to all 44 WTGs and the OSP at a distance of approximately 14 km, to parts of the Offshore Project at closer proximity from north Bernera/Beàrnaraigh. Appreciation of the exceptional scenery and diversity of seascapes would be interrupted, due to the scale of change introduced by the Offshore Project, which would likely to compete with the existing points of focus, drawing attention away from the rugged irregular qualities of the fractured coastal edge. Whilst there can be wide panoramas from many of these coastal edges encompassing a wide expanse of open water (to both east and west), the location and extent of the Offshore Project, proximal to or in juxtaposition with the coast, creates a defining new focus which competes with the appreciation of scenic coastal quality.</p>

Sub-area 1 – The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline

dominate the experience, imparting qualities of wildness, remoteness and seclusion. Settlement, land-use and the general experience of culture are small in scale and sporadic in locations, and as such, are appreciated as subservient and recessive, introducing a relatively 'light touch' of human intervention, the balance of land and sea enduring. Reflecting this relative lack of human influence, dark sky character prevails, contributes to the extent of exceptional scenery experienced (from day into night) and the interplay between the natural world and settlement SLQs. The expansive quality of these promontories is also heightened by the approach to them, typically by road through the very intimate and small-scale rocky moorland and, cnoc and lochan landscape such that there is a dramatic contrast in experience in moving from sub area 2 to sub area 1.

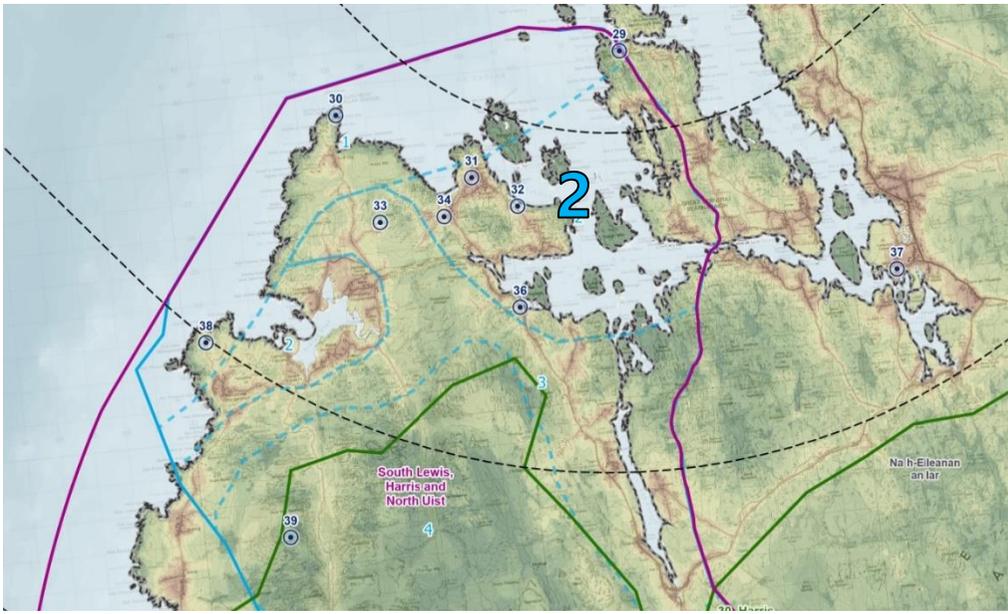
By its very nature, the Offshore Project comprises WTGs which are contemporary and functional in design, their vertical scale, uniformity and repetition within an array contrasts with the irregular rugged landform and complex, indented coastal edge detracting from the strong expression of perceived naturalness and absence of human influence which define the SLQs. The appreciation of the natural world within which settlement and culture are subservient in focus would be disrupted by views to large scale WTGs at a significant part of the coastal landscape in this area of the NSA and is assessed as introducing a medium to high-medium magnitude of change on the appreciation of these combined SLQs.

The Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a **Significant (Major-Moderate to Major)** adverse effect on the appreciation of these SLQs on the northwest coastal extremities where they are strongly expressed, varying somewhat with increasing distance, and occurring in particular from Gallan Head/*Àird Uig* eastwards to the edge of the NSA, and to a lesser, but still significant effect from Mangersta/*Mangursthadh*. Although partially visible, the intermittent visibility of WTGs reduces the distinction between the land to sea interface and existing points of foci, affects the appreciation of exceptional scenery and diverse seascape, and interrupts upon the appreciation of the balanced interplay of the natural worlds, settlement and culture. Further away along the Aird Peninsula only part of the Offshore Project is visible in conjunction with the coastal

Sub-area 1 – The Outer Northwest Lewis/Leòdhas Coastline		
		<p>edge where WTGs appear immediate to and extending above headlands.</p> <p>The Significant (Major-Moderate to Major) effects experienced during the daytime would extend into evening/night with the introduction of aviation and navigation lighting into part of the dark skies affecting the appreciation of this group of SLQs during periods of lower light at dusk and dawn. The significant effect would affect the nightscape along the coastal edge where frontier qualities are still expressed with the dark waters act as a foil to the clarity of night sky, where the visible aviation and navigation lights are likely to contrast with the remoteness of the rugged coast and headlands, and the dark profiles of headlands and islands of this part of the NSA.</p> <p>The dark sky quality of this sub-area of the NSA will however continue to be experienced despite the aviation and navigation lights, which will be viewed relatively near to or below the skyline from elevated parts of the NSA, and at a distances outside the NSA with reduced intensity, such that they are not expected to impede the expanse of night sky or be obtrusive. This group of SLQs and dark skies experienced from this part of the NSA will fundamentally continue to be experienced at night.</p>

2.3 SUB-AREA 2 - LEWIS/LEÒDHAS COASTAL CNOC AND LOCHAN

Table 2-2 Assessment of SLQs of Sub-area 2 - Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan

Sub-area 2 – Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan	
Description of the AESLQ Sub-area 2	
<p>Sub-area 2 covers 2 areas both of which strongly express the deeply indented coastal edge and the association between the fragmented coastal character and the association with the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The interplay and balance of water to land experienced defines the experience of this sub-area, in particular the small-scale fragmented landform (principally derived from the underpinning cnoc and lochan Landscape Character Type (LCT) in the east) creates an unusual seascape with outstanding scenic variety and diversity of coastline in the NSA. The underlying geology means that the landform is orientated north to south.</p> <p>This sub-area is set back from the immediate coast edge, but the proximity to and the presence of water, both sea and freshwater, is a key component contributing to scenic quality, the coming together, and balance of land to water defining this sub-area. The transition from interior moorland to open waters of the Atlantic, that extends westwards, is over several kilometres, the extent of which is facilitated by sea lochs and wide bays (notably Loch Roag/Ròg and Camas Uig/Ùige).</p>	<p>Figure 18.5: Map of Sub-area 2 – Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan (Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c)</p> 
<p>Strategically across the Outer Hebrides/<i>Na h-Eileanan Siar</i>, cnoc and lochan landscape is scarce, characterised in 4 discrete areas, 3 of which are located on the eastern coastline of Lewis/Leòdhas, Harris/<i>Na Hearadh</i> and South Uist/<i>Uibhist a Deas</i>. The complex Bernera/<i>Beàrnaraigh</i> cnoc and lochan backed by the full expanse of the Atlantic Ocean contributes significantly to the expression and appreciation of scenic quality. Whereas by comparison, the cnoc and</p>	

Sub-area 2 – Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan		
<p>lochan landscape on the east coast of Harris/<i>Na Hearadh</i> is characterised by its association with the defined waters of the Minch/Mhaoil and visual links to the Isle of Skye/<i>An t-Eilean Sgitheanach</i> and Mainland Scotland/<i>Alba</i> with less tangible frontier qualities.</p> <p>Whilst there is a similarity in the fragmented nature and balance of land to water within both areas of this sub-area, the SLQs are more strongly expressed in sub-area 2. The influence of the cnoc and lochan LCT inextricably contributes to special qualities and is one of the few instances where the small scale rocky coastal edge is orientated northwards to open water (and is more susceptible to change in these offshore waters in this northward aspect). The contrast between the expansive waters and the intricacy of coastal character also contribute to scenic quality and diversity of seascape.</p> <p>Whilst the SLQs are clearly expressed when travelling through and ‘within’ this landscape on the network of winding minor roads, arguably their strongest expression is perceived by walkers accessing remoter parts of the sub-area and where paths are aligned ‘over’ the cnocs, accessing drier terrain and views out over the seascape. The Great Bernera/<i>Beàrnaraigh Mòr</i> Trail, for example, is orientated north to south along the island, the footpath typically aligned to incorporate a series of cnocs along its route.</p>		
<p>Visibility</p> <p>Across this sub-area, the highly diverse landform influences the pattern of visibility, which appears fragmented across this sub-area, with enclosure afforded by the complex landform and containment by rugged headlands and small islands, which limits sea views particularly from the low-lying coastlines to the south of the sub-area. The Offshore Project would introduce theoretical visibility to east and northeast facing slopes and tops, with cones of visibility extending into lower areas, formed by intervening landform surrounding Loch Roag/<i>Ròg</i>. Viewpoints 31, 32, 34 and 36 are located within this sub area and illustrate the Offshore Project in views from these visual receptors.</p>		
Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) likely to be affected	Detailed landscape and visual characteristics related to the SLQs	Significance of Effects of the Offshore Project
<p><i>A rich variety of exceptional scenery</i></p> <p><i>A great diversity of seascapes</i></p> <p><i>Extensive machair and dune systems with expansive beaches</i></p> <p><i>The very edge of Europe</i></p>	<p>These SLQs have been grouped as they have been interpreted as being inextricably linked in their contribution to the scenic quality and attributes of the NSA. The cnoc and lochan imparts small scale intimate and diverse qualities to the experience of this area of the NSA, the landform of which (in addition to the rocky moorland) notably contributes to the rich variety of exceptional scenery and the great diversity of</p>	<p>The Offshore Project would be intermittently visible in views to the north and travelling northwards, at distances ranging between 7 km at Bosta/<i>Bostadh</i> (north of Bernera/<i>Beàrnaraigh</i>) and approximately 16-17 km around the southern coast of Loch Roag/<i>Ròg</i>. Views would range from occasional views of the full array of WTGs visible from the elevated</p>

Sub-area 2 – Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan

The close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture
The indivisible linkage of landscape and history

seascape. The cnocs appear broadly similar in height, with a balance of horizontal and vertical scale between these landforms and the lower spaces between them, such that no one feature dominates in the view. The rich variety of exceptional scenery is derived from the particular peculiarities and intimacy of the cnoc and lochan, the irregular repetition of cnocs and small areas of water, textures of exposed rock and differing vegetation patterns and dispersed crofting along coastal edges combine to create a great diversity of seascapes, which is contrasting in experience to the wide open simplicity of the open waters to the north and the wide expansive Lewis/Leòdhas peatlands.

There is the expression of shelter and containment, contrasting with the journey through the open peatlands, where the straight roads give wide views ahead. Winding through the cnocs, the experience of travel is one of constant changes of direction, both in the horizontal and vertical direction. There is a randomness to the patterns of landcover and visual foci and extents of freshwater and sea loch, and it is frequently difficult to orientate, with no one single point of focus due to the enclosure and containment afforded. Away from the roads, in locations with walking routes, the SLQs are strongly expressed, and there is more likelihood of stopping on the more elevated cnocs to appreciate the views.

It is a landscape appreciated by constantly changing and contrasting containment and reveal, journeying through the landscape. In relatively short sections of the route the

cnocs and the closest coastlines with wider vistas, to more limited views of only parts of the Offshore Project (in terms of turbine numbers and proportions of WTGs) visible from the lower coastlines and southern portions of the sub-area, which are more contained by intervening landform and islands.

The complexity of landform with an ever-changing series of vistas combines different arrangements of landscape features, and levels of containment and reveal, making it difficult to predict where views to the Offshore Project would appear. In closer proximity, the vertical height of the WTGs would introduce visibility above the tops of the cnocs and islands irrespective of the extent to which the foreground contains immediate views. Where viewed in juxtaposition with and above the intricate, skyline, the small landforms by comparison, would accentuate the perceived vertical scale of the WTGs. The extent of contrast and change would be heightened by the clean lines, moving components and white colours which are uncharacteristic in and therefore would contrast with the irregular terrain and ruggedness of the cnoc and lochan landscape. When viewed in juxtaposition with cnoc features and many of the offshore islands, the WTGs would be commensurate in elevation or typically larger in height, such that they would breach the immediate

Sub-area 2 – Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan

contained views within the folds of landform, immediately open out where an area of water, or change in elevation affords greater visibility. These reveals encompass richly layered scenic compositions of landform and water and create a sense of anticipation travelling towards the coast, heightening the ‘very edge of Europe’ experience.

Where the cnoc and lochan and rocky moorland transitions north towards the coast, the balance between water to land changes, with the cnocs becoming a series of skerries and small islands, contained by water. Where it is possible to travel along these coastal edges, the great diversity of seascapes is experienced over a relatively short section. The indented fractured coastline, the inshore islands and the highly natural character are present in every view, with no fixed point of focus, the combination of elements constantly changes while moving through the landscape.

The presence of sandy beaches and machair is a coastal type more associated with Harris/*Na Hearadh* and the Uists/*Uibhist* further south, than within the northwest of the NSA, their scarcity heightens the variety and diversity of coastal scenery, the whiteness of sands juxtaposed with deep aquamarine waters contributing to that quintessential idyl of ‘*unspoilt Hebridean*’ beaches, combining to create breathtaking and wide vistas.

The intimacy of these landforms strongly imparts the close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture. What limited signs of human influence there is, crofting patterns,

visual containment afforded by the cnocs, altering the balance of focus to include rotating WTGs structures with some contrast to the perceived natural landscape.

Travelling around the complex landscape with twists and turns, WTGs would breach the immediate visual containment, would introduce points of focus which ‘signpost’ the coastal edge and would reduce the sense of anticipation travelling northwards. The fragmented theoretical visibility predicted means that the turbines would be seen as sporadic, but sequentially reoccurring points of focus which would aid orientation thus reducing the sense of remoteness.

The vertical scale of the WTGs and proximity to the relatively low lying fractured coastal edge, mean in the successive views travelling northwards and closer to the WTGs from the wider flat moorland and through the cnoc and lochan, would substantially diminish the sense of anticipation and remoteness progressing towards the coast, impacting on the ‘very edge of Europe’ quality. Sequential views of the WTGs (even just a limited number of WTGs) would be likely to reduce the clarity of transitions and degree of contrast between sub-areas, such successional views of the WTGs from different landscape contexts may begin to define the journey

Sub-area 2 – Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan

inbye, field boundaries, individual buildings, narrow bands of cultivation, jetties, etc are all typically small in scale, inferior to the landform and set within the cnocs and it provides localised points of interest and focus and high scenic variety.

Small cottages scattered around a coastal edge or in places skylining against a cnoc, provide varying points of interest and foci, a cultural landscape dictated by natural environment, where human influence is recessive and subservient. The indivisible linkage of landscape and history is strongly expressed and acutely experienced when containment is afforded

There are strongly expressed characteristics of remoteness and seclusion, with prevailing dark sky character, and whilst the textures and features of the sub-area are less apparent in lower light levels, colours of evening sunsets pick out water bodies and coastline, creating a different experience of light and dark, but one that is very much scenic and derived from the pattern of landscape and water distinctive to this sub-area.

rather than the contrast in experience afforded by the changes in character.

The Offshore Project would significantly detract from the exceptional scenic quality and diversity from the layering and overlapping of the small scale cnocs, existing small scale built features, such as dwellings, stone walls and jetties would accentuate the perceived scale of the WTGs when viewed in combination in the same vistas, the WTGs detracting from the composition of views where natural features dominate.

The location of the Offshore Project north of the NSA at this location, means that the WTGs would be viewed from the south looking north. This spatial relationship means that the WTGs would be lit by the sun during midday, which may accentuate their contrast with the backcloth of darker waters.

It is assessed that the Offshore Project would result in a medium-high magnitude of change on the appreciation of the combined qualities of this sub-area, the inherent balance of land to water and the inferiority of human influence and development, will be potentially changed by the introduction of the Offshore Project into views.

Whilst the patterns of visibility predicted are fragmented and in places limited to potential

Sub-area 2 – Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan		
		<p>glimpsed views between cnochs or framed to only 1 or 2 WTGs (as opposed to seeing the full array), the experience of containment and reveal fundamental to the appreciation of the cnoc and lochan scenic qualities, would be eroded. The more varied range of views to and apparent unpredictability of the appearance of turbines would detract from the appreciation of the SLQs. The Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a Significant (Major-moderate) adverse effect on these combined SLQs experienced by the local communities, visitors to this area and people recreating in the landscapes, on the coastline and in the waters.</p> <p>The Significant (Major-moderate) effects experienced during the daytime would extend into evening/night with the introduction of aviation and navigation lighting affecting the appreciation of this group of SLQs during periods of lower light at dusk and dawn. Changes will result from a relatively small number of aviation and navigation lights visible intermittently in the southern and western end of the Turbine Area, occurring in the backdrop to views to the dark sea between headlands and dark profiles of distinctive, rocky islands that contribute to the diversity of seascape experienced, and contrast with the tranquillity experienced at night from sandy</p>

Sub-area 2 – Lewis/Leòdhas Coastal Cnoc and Lochan		
		<p>Hebridean beaches (such as Reef Beach and Cliff Beach/Camas na Clibhe).</p> <p>The dark sky quality of this sub-area of the NSA will however continue to be experienced despite the aviation and navigation lights, which will be viewed relatively near to or below the skyline from elevated parts of the NSA, and at a distances outside the NSA with reduced intensity, such that they are not expected to impede the expanse of night sky or be obtrusive. This group of SLQs and dark skies experienced from this part of the NSA will fundamentally continue to be experienced at night.</p>

2.4 SUB-AREA 3 - THE TEATHABHAL AND UIG ROCKY PEATLANDS

Table 2-3 Assessment of SLQs of Sub-area 3 - The Teathaval/*Teathabhal* and Uig Rocky Peatlands

Sub-area 3 – The Teathaval/ <i>Teathabhal</i> and Uig/ <i>Ùige</i> Rocky Peatlands	
Description of the AESLQ Sub-area 3 – The Teathaval/ <i>Teathabhal</i> and Uig/ <i>Ùige</i> Rocky Peatlands	
<p>Sub-area 3 comprises uninhabited rocky moorland interspersed with low-lying areas of boggy moorland and lochans. From lower lying areas, the appreciation of and views to the coast are limited and therefore has qualities related to the expression of landform and juxtaposition with the Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> Peatlands eastwards and south, and the Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> and Harris/<i>Na Hearadh</i> mountains to the south and west. The mountains to the west are prominent features and given their abrupt elevation, typically draw the eye in views westwards and south wards, in particular from lower lying landscapes.</p> <p>Views to the coast are gained from the elevated rocky knolls and crags, which frequently punctuate the lower lying moorland, but the rough terrain and relative lack of paths and tracks, means access to the area is difficult and less attractive to visitors, by comparison with the mountains and coast.</p>	<p>Figure 18.5: Map of Sub-area 3 – The Teathaval/<i>Teathabhal</i> and Uig/<i>Ùige</i> Rocky Peatlands (Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c)</p> 
<p>Within the context of the Outer Hebrides/<i>Na h-Eileanan Siar</i>, the underpinning rocky moorland LCT is frequently defined, typically in narrower bands, transitioning between the outer coast and seascape to the interior peatlands and mountains. Within the AESLQ Study Area, this sub area surrounds and contains the widely fragmented coastal sub-areas to the north and east from the mountains and peatlands of south Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i>.</p> <p>The sub-area, in terms of its contribution to the appreciation of scenic qualities of the NSA, is experienced as interior moorland, set back from the area of open water of Loch Roag/<i>Rog</i> and Braigh Mor transitioning in experience between the coast and interior.</p>	
Visibility	

Sub-area 3 – The Teathaval/Teathabhal and Uig/Ùige Rocky Peatlands		
<p>The Offshore Project would be theoretically visible from the east and northeast facing slopes, of the knolls and small hills which are orientated to the north and south. Views from between these landforms are more limited unless directly orientated northwards, where visibility can penetrate further inland. Due to the majority of this area being uninhabited and less accessible, with underpinning key characteristics, possibly less attractive to visitors (by comparison with the coast and mountains) no viewpoints were suggested or subsequently agreed through viewpoint consultation. The lack of habitation and rough terrain contributes to wild land and wildness character, and qualities. Perceived naturalness, seclusion and remoteness are all strongly expressed, the scenic qualities of which are fully realised when this landscape is intervisible with the mountains and coast in wide vistas. Viewpoint 33 is located within this sub area and illustrate the Offshore Project in views from this sub-area.</p>		
Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) likely to be affected	Detailed landscape and visual characteristics related to the SLQs	Significance of Effects of the Offshore Project
<p><i>A rich variety of exceptional scenery</i></p> <p><i>Intervisibility between landscapes</i></p>	<p>This sub area comprises an undulating rugged moorland with frequent pronounced knolls and rock outcrops, which imparts a roughly textured character and for this reason, the interior area is largely uninhabited landscape (roads and scattered settlement on the fringes of the sub area), the variety of landforms, the irregular rocky knolls and lochans, all contributing to qualities of wildness, isolation and seclusion.</p> <p>There is limited physical and visual association with the outer coastal edge, and views are typically westwards and southwards, where the elevated landforms of the Lewis/Leòdhas Mountains rise up and backdrop in views and provide a focus in particular the broad conical form of Suainaval/Suaineabhal, which projects into the rocky moorland and is visible slightly apart from the main extent of the Lewis/Leòdhas Mountains.</p>	<p>Across this sub-area, the highly diverse landform influences the pattern of visibility, which appears fragmented and ranges in distances between 17 km (south inland from the coastal edge of Loch Roag/Ròg) to approximately 24 km at the break of slope with Suainaval/Suaineabhal.</p> <p>Intervisibility from lower elevations to views west and south, where scenic quality and variety is most strongly expressed, would remain unchanged by the introduction of the Offshore Project (to the north), the appreciation of the scenic vistas remaining intact.</p> <p>The Offshore Project would introduce visibility of the full array of WTGs in views from the elevated rocky knolls and north facing slopes (in the event they are visited) and more intermittently from lower levels (from along the line of Loch Roag/Ròg Beag) from within the rocky moorland, where views would be framed to smaller groupings of WTGs within</p>

Sub-area 3 – The Teathaval/Teathabhal and Uig/Ùige Rocky Peatlands

Away from the seascape and pronounced landscape grain of sub area 2, the north to south orientation of the landform relaxes, giving the experience of a more undifferentiated terrain, although there is a tangible series of interlinking lochans which run north to south draining northwards into Loch Roag/Ròg. In locations a string of lochans can allow longer framed views north and south, but with a similarity of composition and elements in the view means that away from the main roads, it is very difficult to navigate through, both from a lack of formal access tracks and paths and the boggy terrain and steep knolls.

Where views from lower levels do open out between the knolls, the framed vistas are composed of a series of overlapping landforms receding into the distance, in views west and south these are backdropped by the Lewis/Leòdhas Mountains. The rich variety of exceptional scenery stemming from the intervisibility between the different scales and textures of landform comprising mountain and the variable rocky moorland in the fore and mid ground.

Notwithstanding the more interior location, the balance of land to water is still marked, although this is to the numerous lochs and lochans which sit within the hollows of the rocky knolls (which could easily deceive someone into thinking these are views along sea lochs to the coast). The combination of irregular features, textures and colours

the southern portion of the Turbine Area and the WTGs hubs and blades.

In views northwards from lower levels, where visibility is predicted, the lack of views to the coast means the WTGs would be partially screened by the foreground, with sections of WTGs interrupting the more moderate scale of landform in the views. However, the medium-low magnitude of change assessed relates to the visual juxtaposition of WTGs, where there is a strong expression of wild land and wildness character and qualities, as opposed to the strong expression of scenic qualities of the NSA (which typically are more associated with views west and south to the mountains).

In this context the Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a **Not Significant (Moderate-minor)** effect on the variety of scenery and intervisibility SLQs identified. The **Not Significant (Moderate-Minor)** effects experienced during the daytime would extend into periods of lower light at dusk and dawn with the introduction of distant aviation and navigation lighting into the seascape to the north, where the *'variety of exceptional scenery'* and *'intervisibility between landscapes'* qualities may still be appreciated during periods of lower light at dusk and dawn, from more elevated landforms of knolls and small hills orientated to the north.

Sub-area 3 – The Teathaval/ <i>Teathabhal</i> and Uig/ <i>Ùige</i> Rocky Peatlands		
	<p>imparts a dominance of natural expression of wildness character, the rugged character, relationship of lochans to rocky moorland strongly express the perceived naturalness backing the coastal fringe.</p> <p>With arguably less expression of the scenic qualities which define the mountains and coasts, this sub-area derives its scenic quality and diversity from the contrast it presents when travelling from one sub area to another, the tangible wild land qualities enhancing the anticipation of travelling towards a remote coastline. There is limited promotion of recreation in this area (in favour of the coastal and mountainous landscapes adjacent) and for the majority of visitors the scenic qualities are realised from low elevations from the roads.</p> <p>In this context, susceptibility to large scale change remains high but is in part due to the prevailing wild land qualities, which do contribute to scenic quality but at lower elevations are more strongly expressed when there is intervisibility to the mountains. The strong wild land character is susceptible to change, in particular, from built development and contemporary structures, but in terms of the contribution of this sub-area to the appreciation of scenic coastal qualities, these areas are less susceptible to changes along the coastline.</p>	
<p><i>Deep sea lochs that penetrate the hills</i></p>	<p>Within the expanse of undifferentiated moorland, the narrow linear sea loch at Loch Roag/<i>Rog</i> Beag forms a pronounced feature and focus in views, and as such is</p>	<p>Potential visibility to all or parts of the Offshore Project are illustrated on Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c - Figure 18.10 Blade Tip ZTV with landscape and coastal character</p>

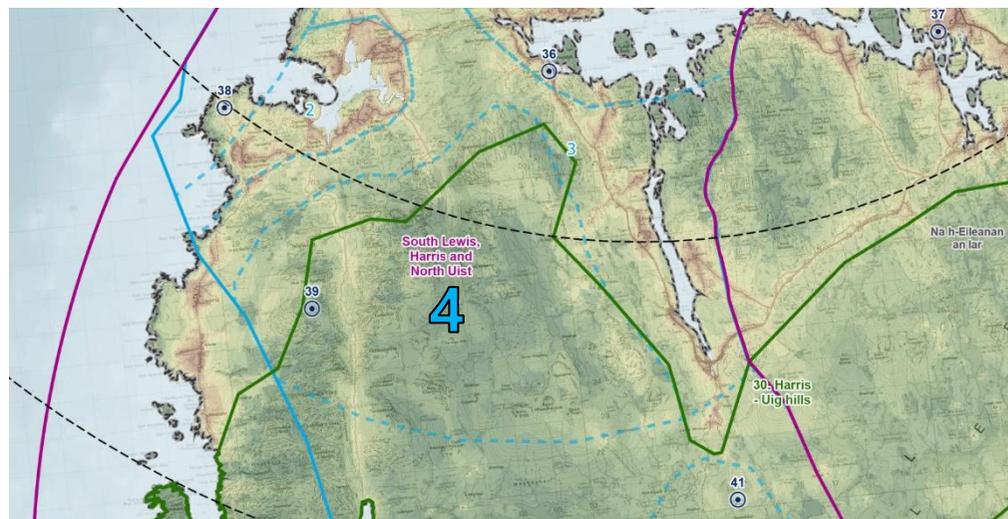
Sub-area 3 – The Teathaval/Teathabhal and Uig/Ùige Rocky Peatlands

<p><i>The close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture</i></p>	<p>considered as a separate SLQ, albeit the experience of which is partially derived from the contrast in experience and scenic quality its north-to south alignment afford in comparison to the surrounding largely uninhabited and undifferentiated rocky moorland of sub-area 3.</p> <p>The long narrow sea loch is experienced carving through the rocky terrain and enables framed views far into the adjacent landscapes (and sub-areas 2 and 4) - northwards framed vistas are comprised of the highly irregular overlapping series of cnochs and glimpses of water (the Atlantic coastline feeling deceptively close), and southwards into the more elevated interior and enclosing landform of the Lewis/Leòdhas Mountains.</p> <p>The narrow winding form of the sea loch and containment afforded by the rocky moorland surrounding it, creates a sinuous plan of water, which is revealed at intervals, such that it is difficult to ascertain whether this is a freshwater or saltwater loch. Its linearity of form providing contrasting straight flatter edges has attracted settlement and access and contains the B8011, the main route connecting the interior of Lewis/Leòdhas to the Uig/Ùige Peninsula and northwest coast. The close interplay of the natural environment settlement and culture is expressed, and the more continuous views contribute to the rich variety of scenery experienced and sense of anticipation travelling toward the coast, where many experience for the first time intervisibility with what they perceive to be the sea (which</p>	<p>(Option 2 - MDS) in a fragmented cone with greater visibility predicted at the juncture of Loch Roag/Ròg Beag with Loch Roag/Ròg (the indented character of which is captured in Sub-Area 2), and markedly less predicted visibility as Loch Roag/Rog Beag narrows southwards. There would be more limited or no visibility of the Offshore Project from the majority this narrower section of Loch Roag/Rog Beag or immediate loch side, south of Ungshader/<i>Ungaisiadar</i> where Loch narrows and the enclosing landforms of Stroacleit and Creag Ghorm would screen the extent of visibility further south along the immediate loch.</p> <p>Visibility to part of the Offshore Projects, both hubs and blades of up to 35 WTGS (limited to the higher slopes) would be introduced to western side slopes at Gisla/<i>Giosla</i> and northwards through Enacleite/<i>Einacleit</i>, at distances of between 25 km and 22 km respectively.</p> <p>Where the WTGs would be visible in the framed views they would introduce a new focus direct in the line-of-sight northwards along the Loch detracting from the appreciation of the deep-sea loch where it extends northwards into Loch Roag/Ròg. Views south, where the SLQ of the deep sea penetrates the steep hills, would be unaffected by the Offshore Project.</p> <p>The introduction of WTGs in views north along WTGs may interrupt the appreciation of the deep-sea loch SLQ and the interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture from</p>
--	---	--

Sub-area 3 – The Teathaval/Teathabhal and Uig/Ùige Rocky Peatlands		
	<p>for infrequent visitors might be mistaken for the outer Atlantic Coastline).</p> <p>Where the loch narrows considerably, there is the strong expression of the sea loch penetrating through the confining moorland knolls and hills (framed by rocky outcrops at Creag Ghorm and Stromnacleit). At this juncture, the alignment of the Loch subtly shifts bearing true north, with framed views directly focussed into small scale texture of sub-area 2 and the water of Loch Roag/Ròg increasingly revealed. From this long scenic vista, the expectation is that the coastline is revealed and in close proximity, when, it is actually over another 10 km north before the open Atlantic Waters are realised.</p> <p>The contrasting experience that the linear sea loch affords, framed with views orientated northwards, heightens the susceptibility of this SLQ where development may be viewed in the focus of the view or in juxtaposition with the view.</p>	<p>western sections of the loch sides at Gisla/Giosla and Enaclete/Einacleit, introducing an assessed low magnitude of change. Where visibility increases, and Loch Roag/Ròg Beag enters into Loch Roag/Ròg, the assessment of change is considered in sub-area 2.</p> <p>Views south along the deep-sea loch into the mountains of Lewis/Leòdhas would remain unaffected by visibility to the Offshore Project.</p> <p>There would be localised and Not Significant (Moderate) adverse effect on the appreciation of the deep-sea loch SLQ.</p>

2.5 SUB-AREA 4 - THE LEWIS/LEÒDHAS HILLS AND MOUNTAINS

Table 2-4 Assessment of SLQs of Sub-area 4 - The Lewis/Leòdhas Hills and Mountains

Sub-area 4 – The Lewis/Leòdhas Hills and Mountains	
Description of the AESLQ Sub-area 4 – The Lewis/Leòdhas Hills and Mountains	
<p>Prominent hills and mountains of Lewis/Leòdhas, form an upland spine that runs along the eastern edge of South Lewis/Leòdhas and is characterised by individual peaks with pronounced summits, long ridges and slopes, rising steadily from the surrounding terrain. Backed by the more elevated mountains of Harris/Na Hearadh to the south, where views are panoramic over these uplands, north and west out to sea and north and east over the peatlands. From these mountains, the northwest corner of the NSA is experienced in totality.</p>	<p>Figure 18.5: Map of Sub-area 4 – The Lewis/Leòdhas Hills and Mountains (Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c)</p> 
<p>Sub-area 4 corresponds to the prominent hills and mountains of South Lewis/Leòdhas, which broadly define the Mealista/Mealasta peninsular (underpinned by the Prominent Hills and Mountains LCT). The proximity of these hills to the coast creates a strong association with the western seaboard with views southwards limited by the greater massif of the Harris/Na Hearadh mountains, lending an aspect which from fieldwork is focussed northwards and westwards drawn by views out to sea and along the coast to the north.</p>	
<p>The appreciation of the large scale of this sub-area is influenced by several aspects in relation to its location in this northwest part of the NSA. The coastal context (the proximity of these uplands abruptly rising from the narrow western coast) and the adjacency of the small intimate cnoc and lochan on the one hand, tend to exaggerate the perception of scale and elevation. On the other hand, the mountains and hills feel subservient sandwiched between the wide expanse of the Atlantic Ocean and the vastness of the Lewis/Leòdhas peatlands.</p>	

Sub-area 4 – The Lewis/Leòdhas Hills and Mountains		
Visibility		
<p>The Offshore Project would be theoretically visible from the north and northeast facing slopes, summits and lower ground above the break of slope. There would be limited visibility from the lower lying peatlands to the base of slope and from the interior of the hills, apart from the northern extent of the glens where they orientate towards the Offshore Project. Patterns of visibility largely relate to the pronounced landforms of this area. Viewpoint 39 is located within this sub-area and illustrates the Offshore Project in views from these visual receptors. Viewpoint 41 is located within this sub area and illustrate the Offshore Project. Viewpoint 41 is also located further south and west within Sub-area 5 but gives an indication of the likely angle of views from the more eastern hill summits in the Sub-area 4.</p>		
Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) likely to be affected	Detailed landscape and visual characteristics related to the SLQs	Significance of Effects of the Offshore Project
<p><i>The wild mountainous character</i></p>	<p>Whilst of a more moderate scale (by comparison with the Harris/<i>Na Hearadh</i> mountains to the south), the hills of Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> are still experienced as a series of pronounced large hills. The ‘mountainous’ character and prominence of hills strongly express from the summits and within the deep glens orientated north to south. The rugged terrain and areas of exposed rock and steep slopes amplify the sense of naturalness, with the deep glens providing access into the hills containing views north and south.</p> <p>The ruggedness and absence of artefacts in the immediate and wider landscape of the uplands are strongly expressed when on site, both from within the glens and on the summits. The overwhelming perception of naturalness prevails and is further heightened by the open expanse of the sea the SLQ of wild mountainous character strongly expressed.</p>	<p>The Offshore Project would be visible in views to the north and travelling northwards, at distances ranging between 16 km from the lower slopes of <i>Suainaval/Suaineabhal</i>, to the slopes and summits of the more northerly mountains of Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i>, the tops of which curve in a broad arc eastwards (including <i>Meaisval/Mealaisbhal</i>, <i>Tahaval/Tathabhal</i>, <i>Beinns a’ Deas</i>, <i>Mheadhanach</i>, and at <i>Tuath</i> and <i>Coduinn</i> in the east at distances averaging 25 km).</p> <p>From elevated slopes and summits, views would be to the full array of the Offshore Project in views from and east. From lower slopes the visibility to the full array and elevation of WTGs would begin to reduce, with more limited visibility to hubs and blades from the break of northeast slopes along and up to <i>Allt Bealach Raonsgail</i> and <i>Loch Suainaval/Suaineabhal</i>.</p> <p>Visibility from the southern Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> mountains and peatlands, which also strongly express the wild mountainous</p>

Sub-area 4 – The Lewis/Leòdhas Hills and Mountains

When the hills are accessed off the north coast, the experience of remoteness, seclusion and wild qualities are emphasised by the distance of travel and ‘*edge of Europe*’ qualities are experienced on the extended route to access this area.

Visitor numbers are markedly less in these northern mountains, and by turn, the paths are narrower, and visitor infrastructure limited (by comparison with the proximity to main roads, car parks and general promotion of walking attracting visitors to the Harris/*Na Hearadh* Hills and Clisham/*An Cliseam*) which accentuates the sense of solitude, remoteness and perceived naturalness of the SLQ.

Reflecting the citation for the Uig/*Uige* Hills WLA (30) and Eisgein WLA (31), views from the northern margins of these mountains contain very limited signs of human artefacts or contemporary land use, and any buildings or structures in the views are typically very small in scale, such that when accessing this sub-area from the north, the sense of remoteness and sanctuary is gained after just a short distance and time, in places that are not actually physically remote.

The strongly expressed wild land character underpins the appreciation of the wild mountainous qualities of this area of the NSA. The relative lack of views to any scale of development or contemporary land use (and also other walkers), heightens qualities of remoteness, seclusion and isolation (in particular when compared to walking the

character SLQ, would reduce rapidly by the screening afforded by the curves of mountains and summits immediately north.

The Offshore Project would introduce new visibility of prominent WTGs in views from north and northeast facing slopes and in panoramas from the summits and ridges of the northern Lewis/*Leòdhas* mountains from distances between approximately 16 and 25 kms.

As illustrated in Viewpoint 39, panoramic views from the summits are extensive and whilst there is visibility to built features, these are sporadic and of a significantly smaller scale and frequency of occurrence, such that the wild mountainous character prevails. The perception of wildness is pronounced in views from every direction from these hills where scattered settlement and the limited infrastructure accessing this northwest area of the NSA is typically set within the fold of the lower lying moorland, and as such, intervening settled valleys are screened and there is a strong sense of the landscape being wild and untamed.

The Offshore Project would introduce visibility of large-scale uncharacteristic and contemporary moving structure into these panoramas, which at this distance would introduce a prominent new feature significantly detracting from the strong expression of wild mountainous character and an assessed medium magnitude of change. Whilst the steep hills, elevated and rugged terrain would still be appreciated, the perceptual qualities of perceived naturalness, lack of built

Sub-area 4 – The Lewis/Leòdhas Hills and Mountains		
	<p>Clisham/<i>An Cliseam</i> mountains). The wild land mountainous SLQs is susceptible to changes from the introduction of large-scale development into views.</p>	<p>artefacts and remoteness would be interrupted, given the scale of the Offshore Project and lateral extent of the WTGs visible.</p> <p>The experience of walkers accessing these northerly Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> mountains, with a markedly stronger expression of wild mountainous character would be principally affected, the perception of wild mountainous character would be diminished.</p> <p>There would be no visibility of the Offshore Project from the lower lying and more modified floor and lower slopes of the southern (and lower Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> mountains) from where the wild mountain character SLQ would still be appreciated.</p> <p>The Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a Significant (Moderate) adverse effect on the wild mountainous character SLQ.</p>
<p><i>A rich variety of exceptional scenery</i></p> <p><i>The great diversity of seascapes</i></p> <p><i>Intervisibility between landscapes</i></p> <p><i>The close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture</i></p>	<p>Whilst there are wide panoramas from the mountain summits and upper slopes within this sub-area, there is a strong association to and visibility with the coastline and open waters to the north and west, the intervisibility of which allows the appreciation of the rich variety of exceptional scenery, the great diversity of seascapes and the close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture. There are panoramic views across the eastern peatlands and south up to the northern jagged skyline of the Harris/<i>Na Hearadh</i> Mountains, however, it is the</p>	<p>From the north Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> Mountains and north facing slopes, the WTGs of the Offshore Project would interrupt the appreciation of the rich variety of exceptional scenery and great diversity of seascapes. By virtue to the location of the Offshore Project sitting in waters directly above the fractured seascape around Bernera/<i>Beàrnaraigh</i> and Loch Roag/<i>Rog</i>, would create a prominent new focus, the lateral spread of which and repetition of uniform large scale vertical structures and moving blades would affect the appreciation of the exceptional scenery and diverse seascapes stemming from the scare cnoc and lochan landscape.</p>

Sub-area 4 – The Lewis/Leòdhas Hills and Mountains

complexity and variety of the coastline and resulting seascape that continually draws the eye northwards.

The panoramas allow the appreciation of contrasts in the expression of SLQs of the NSA to be fully appreciated. The influence of the natural environment and natural process can be appreciated, with very limited views to settlement and other human intervention; the mountains of Harris/*Na Hearadh*, limit views further south. By turn this draw reinforces the pull of views northwards to the areas of greatest diversity and contrast backdropped by the simplicity of the wide open plain of the Atlantic Ocean and sea to sky horizon.

These elevated ‘plan views’ allow the appreciation of the intricacy and complexity of the cnoc and lochan landscape as it fragments with Loch Roag/Ròg and along the coastal edge in the foreground to the long finger of Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh*, and the extent to which it contrasts with the open expanse of water and views inland to the Lewis/Leòdhas Peatlands. Within the general focus of views northwards and westwards, features including the curved white sands of Traigh Uig/*Ùige*, and the pronounced linear forms of Lochs Suainaval/*Suaineabhal* and Roag/*Rog Beag*, draw the eye and contributed significantly to the variety and diversity of seascapes and scenery.

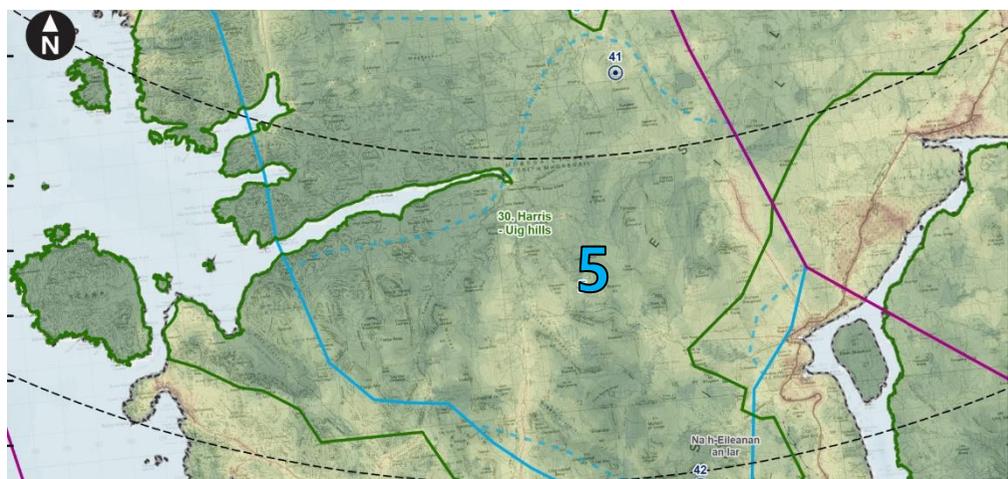
The scale and character of the Offshore Project would introduce the experience of large-scale contemporary development, significantly eroding the previous close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture, where previously the experience of built forms was very much subservient and recessive in views, the natural environment dominates. Views of the Offshore Project in comparison to other existing signs of human influence (such as the scattered crofting around Traigh Uig/*Ùige*), would differ in that the WTGs are larger structures with blades visibly moving (the scattered crofting set within and visibly inferior to the immediate landform). The Offshore Project would also be more prominently located on the presently open sea to sky horizon which forms part of the backdrop to the main aspect of views north and west. The Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a **Significant (Moderate)** adverse effect on the appreciation of this group of SLQ.

The Significant (Moderate) effects experienced during the daytime would extend into evening/night with the introduction of aviation and navigation lighting affecting the appreciation of this group of SLQs during periods of lower light at dusk and dawn from the closest parts of the north Lewis/Leòdhas mountains sub-area 4 (such as areas represented by Viewpoint 39), due to the introduction of distant aviation and navigation lighting into the seascape to the north of the NSA affecting the appreciation of this group of SLQs during periods of lower light at dusk and dawn.

Sub-area 4 – The Lewis/ <i>Leòdhas</i> Hills and Mountains		
		<p>Effects of the aviation and marine navigation lighting on the appreciation of SLQs from this sub-area are assessed as reducing to Not Significant (Moderate-Minor) from more distant parts of the north Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> mountains to the south towards their transition with the north Harris/<i>Na Hearadh</i> Hills and Mountains. The long distance and separation of the aviation and navigation lighting to the north of this sub-area of the NSA will reduce the intensity of the lights experienced and limits their potential to affect the appreciation of this group of SLQs, including the dark sky qualities of this part of the NSA. The dark sky quality of this sub-area of the NSA will however continue to be experienced despite the aviation and navigation lights, which will be viewed relatively near to or below the skyline from elevated parts of the NSA, and at a distances outside the NSA with reduced intensity, such that they are not expected to impede the expanse of night sky or be obtrusive. This group of SLQs and dark skies experienced from this part of the NSA will fundamentally continue to be experienced at night.</p>

2.6 SUB-AREA 5 - THE NORTH HARRIS/NA HEARADH HILLS AND MOUNTAINS

Table 2-5 Assessment of SLQs of Sub-area 5 - The North Harris/Na Hearadh Hills and Mountains

Sub-area 5 – The North Harris/Na Hearadh Hills and Mountains		
Description of the AESLQ Sub-area 5 – The North Harris/Na Hearadh Hills and Mountains		
<p>This sub-area is defined by the rugged massif of the Harris/Na Hearadh Mountains, which centres on Clisham/<i>An Cliseam</i>, the highest summit and easternmost mountain of a series of jagged mountains that extend west and north. The massif, comprising of 4 main mountain groups, Clisham/<i>An Cliseam</i>, Uisneabhal, Oireabhal and Tiorga Mor/<i>Tirga Mor</i>, is separated by the deep linear glens of the River Langadail, Gleann Mhaibhaig, and Gleann Chliostiar/Uladal, orientated north to south.</p> <p>The Harris/Na Hearadh Mountains, as a whole, are strategically located more centrally along the spine of the Outer Hebrides/<i>Na h-Eileanan Sia</i>, visually and physically separating the wide expansive Lewis/<i>Leòdhas</i> peatlands to the north from the rest of the Outer Hebridean/<i>Na h-Eileanan Sia</i> islands and the flatter 'tail' of the Uists/<i>Uibhist</i> narrowing to the south.</p>	<p>Figure 18.5: Map of Sub-area 5 – The North Harris/Na Hearadh Hills and Mountains (Appendix 18.6, Volume 2c)</p> 	
<p>Visibility</p> <p>The Offshore Project would be theoretically visible from the north and northeast facing slopes and summits of the Harris/Na Hearadh Mountains. Patterns of visibility are largely related to the pronounced mountainous landforms of this area. Viewpoint 41 and Viewpoint 42 are located within this sub-area and illustrate the Offshore Project in views from these visual receptors.</p>		
<p>Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) likely to be affected</p>	<p>Detailed landscape and visual characteristics related to the SLQs</p>	<p>Significance of Effects of the Offshore Project</p>

Sub-area 5 – The North Harris/Na Hearadh Hills and Mountains

<p><i>The wild mountainous character</i></p> <p><i>Intervisibility between landscapes</i></p> <p><i>A rich variety of exceptional scenery</i></p>	<p>The scale is expansive, and the perceived elevation of the mountains is heightened by their proximity to the coast and the flat expanse of the Lewis/Leòdhas peatlands to the north. This abrupt change in height, with steep slopes, exposed rock and jagged peaks, creates a strong sense of drama. The mountains form a series of pronounced rocky peaks and ridges, which are prominent and form a continuous back drop in views from the vast Lewis/Leòdhas peatlands northwards and from the Uist/Uibhist and surrounding open waters to the west and south.</p> <p>From the mountain tops, it is possible to appreciate the prevailing absence of human artefacts and contemporary land use across the interior of the mountain range where the wild mountainous character is strongly expressed. However, whilst the mountainous scenery is to be appreciated in its own right –it is the intervisibility with a variety of landscapes in the many panoramas, from which you can appreciate the rich variety of exceptional scenery of the NSA.</p> <p>By comparison, with views across the interior of these mountains, these views also reveal human elements just outside the area to the main A-road corridor, and scattered settlement along the A859 introduces introduce views to built features and infrequent block of coniferous plantation, and other evidence of human influence, including telecom masts and WTGs to the distant northeast.</p>	<p>The Offshore Project would be visible in views to the north ranging in distances between approximately 27 km at Sgalabhal mula to 41 km at Clisham/<i>An Cliseam</i>. Visibility of the Offshore Project would be primarily from the upper summits and mid to upper slopes of the mountains.</p> <p>The Offshore Project would appear in one quadrant of the wide panoramas from these mountains, and whilst it would introduce visibility, and a new feature in the views, at distances of approximately 30 km to 44 km at Clisham/<i>An Cliseam</i> from the more centrally located Harris/Na Hearadh Mountains, the level of change introduced would not be of a magnitude where it significantly competes with and detracts from the wider appreciation of SLQs, including the wild mountainous character, and the intervisibility between and appreciation of the diverse seascapes and rich variety of exceptional scenery.</p> <p>Walkers in this mountainous landscape, already have views which contain a number of built elements on their fringes. Whilst the Offshore Project would introduce the experience of wind energy into the views (visible from the northern summits, and cumulatively with views of existing WTGs to the distant northeast), the additional change is assessed as a low magnitude which does not significantly detract from the panoramic views with intervisibility of multiple SLQs. The Offshore Project is assessed as resulting in a Not Significant (Moderate-minor) effect on the appreciation of SLQs in this sub-area.</p>
---	---	---

Sub-area 5 – The North Harris/Na Hearadh Hills and Mountains

The popularity of these mountains for walking does at times reduce the sense of solitude from the summits which are often shared with other visitors. The numbers of people create wider footpaths (and in places areas of braiding which can be views as you ascend and descend) and the need for greater visitor infrastructure (for example car laybys, many of which informally use remnant sections of the previous road alignment) which can begin to erode some of the natural and remote qualities (by comparison with the way these qualities are far greater expressed in the Lewis/Leòdhas mountains).

As for the Lewis/Leòdhas mountains, the elevation afforded by the Harris/Na Hearadh mountainous allows wide panoramas to capture views north over the peatlands of Lewis/Leòdhas and the western coastline but also extend southwards across the spine of Harris/Na Hearadh and the Uists/Uibhist beyond, and eastwards over the Pairc peninsula and to the Minch/Mhaoil. The rich variety of exceptional scenery quality is clearly expressed, encompassing a much wider area of landscape and the intervisibility between these surrounding elements.

This central location and elevation afford wide panoramas encompassing a range of landscapes, such that within each angle of the view the scenery changes, but no one vista or aspect of view overwhelms or draws the eye more than the others. As such, there is a certain balance to the appreciation of the special qualities in the panorama, with

The **Not Significant (Moderate-Minor)** effects experienced during the daytime would extend into periods of lower light at dusk and dawn from the north Harris/Na Hearadh mountains sub-area 5 (such as areas represented by Viewpoint 41 and 42). The long distance and separation of the aviation and navigation lighting to the north of this sub-area of the NSA will reduce the intensity of the lights experienced and limits their potential to affect the appreciation of this group of SLQs during periods of lower light at dusk and dawn.

The dark sky quality of this sub-area of the NSA will however continue to be experienced despite the aviation and navigation lights, which will be viewed relatively near to or below the skyline from elevated parts of the NSA, and at a distances outside the NSA with reduced intensity, such that they are not expected to impede the expanse of night sky or be obtrusive. This group of SLQs and dark skies experienced from this part of the NSA will fundamentally continue to be experienced at night.

Sub-area 5 – The North Harris/<i>Na Hearadh</i> Hills and Mountains		
	the eye drawn around the full panorama rather than focussing in one particular direction.	

This page has intentionally been left blank

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
AESLQ	Assessment of effects on the Special Landscape Qualities
CNPA	Cairngorm National Park Authority
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
km	Kilometre
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LLTNPA	Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority
m	Metre
MHWS	Mean High Water Springs
NSA	National Scenic Area
OCAS	Offshore Cable Area of Search
OSP	Offshore Substation Platform
OWF	Offshore Wind Farm
SLVIA	Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
SLQ	Special Landscape Qualities
WLA	Wild Land Area
WTG	Wind Turbine Generator
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Table 3-2 Glossary

Term	Definition
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"> • Scenario 1: Array Cables will be used to connect Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) to each other, and to connect WTGs to the OSP; • Scenario 2: Array Cables will be used to connect WTGs to each other.
Array Cables to Landfall	The offshore electrical and communication cables located in the Array Area and Offshore Cables Area of Search (OCAS) that connect the WTGs directly to Landfall for Scenario 2.

Term	Definition
Combined Effects	Combined effect of the individual development on one particular receptor; for example noise, dust and visual. This includes Project-Lifetime Effects and Receptor-Led Effects.
Cumulative Effects	Considers the likely significant effects of multiple impacts and activities from several developments.
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 cables connecting the Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) to Landfall
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
Grid Substation	The onshore substation located adjacent to and connecting to the SSEN Lewis Hub. This allows the voltage to be increased to meet onward transmission requirements
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, foundation installation (action) during construction which results in habitat loss (impact).
Landfall	This consists of works from offshore Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD) exit pits (located below MLWS) to onshore at the Transition Joint Bays (TJB) (located above MHWS). 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
Lease Area	Legal agreement from the Crown Estate Scotland whereby an option over an area of foreshore or seabed is granted to a developer for an agreed purpose. If required permissions are gained, the developer exercise their rights to enter into a lease. In this case this is the same spatial area as the Array Area.
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.

Term	Definition
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 seaward of Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) within the OCAS that includes works associated with the Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD) installation, including HDD exit pit(s) (located below MLWS) 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).
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 Application	The application for consent under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended).
Onshore Cables	Electrical and communication cables located within the Onshore Cable Corridor
Onshore Cable Corridor	The area within which Onshore Cables and associated infrastructure will be located which is routed from the TJB to the SSEN Lewis Hub.
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,
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.
Onshore Transmission Works Boundary / Onshore Project Boundary	The 'red line boundary' encompassing all temporary and permanent works associated with the OTW/Onshore Project.
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.
Project-Lifetime Effects	Assessment of the scope for combined effects that occur throughout more than one phase of the project (i.e. construction, operation and maintenance, decommissioning), to interact to potentially create an effect of greater significance than if assessed just within individual/isolated project phases.
Receptor-Led Effects	Assessment of the scope for all combined effects to interact, spatially and temporally, to create an effect on a receptor of greater significance than when

Term	Definition
	the effects are considered in isolation. Receptor-led effects may be short term, temporary or transient effects, or incorporate longer term effects.
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.
SSEN Lewis Hub	This is the National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) interface. A transmission system operator substation into which the Project will connect for onward transmission through the existing grid network.
Study Areas	Study Areas are determined for each technical discipline and are described within each technical chapter.
Transition Joint Bay (TJB)	The point at which offshore cables are connected to Onshore Cables. The TJB is located onshore above MHWS.
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.

4 REFERENCES

Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities. NatureScot (January 2025). Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/guidance-assessment-effects-special-landscape-qualities-aeslq>. [Accessed 24 February 2026].

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition ('GLVIA3'). Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013).

Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland. NatureScot and The Countryside Agency (2002). Available at: <https://digital.nls.uk/pubs/e-monographs/2020/216649977.23.pdf>. [Accessed 24 February 2026].

NatureScot (2017). Guidance Note. Coastal Character Assessment. <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-02/Guidance%20Note%20-%20Coastal%20Character%20Assessment.pdf>. [Accessed 24 February 2026].

The special qualities of the National Scenic Areas. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 374. NatureScot (2010). Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-commissioned-report-374-special-qualities-national-scenic-areas>. [Accessed 24 February 2026].

This page is left intentionally blank