



## **Hywind Scotland Pilot Park Project**

### **Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology**

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## 1 Introduction

The aim of the Seascape, Landscape and Visual Assessment process is to identify, predict and evaluate significant effects on particular elements of the seascape, landscape and visual resources arising from the proposed development.

Landscape is defined in the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe 2000) as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. The term does not mean just special or designated landscapes and it does not only apply to the countryside. Landscape can mean a small patch of urban wasteland as much as a mountain range and an urban park as much as an expanse of lowland plain. It results from the way that different components of our environment - both natural (the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna) and cultural (the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) - interact together and are perceived by us.’

“Offshore Renewables – guidance on assessing the impact on coastal landscape and seascape” SNH (2012a) defines seascape as relating ‘to the visual and physical conjunction of land and sea which combines maritime, coast and hinterland character.’

## 2 SLVIA methodology

The methodology for the current study is based primarily on “Offshore Renewables – guidance on assessing the impact on coastal landscape and seascape” (SNH 2012a) which outlines a coherent approach building on a number of earlier existing sources including “Guidance for Landscape/Seascape Capacity for Aquaculture” (SNH 2008).

These in turn are founded on the principles of landscape and visual assessment established in the seminal series of guidance publications produced under the joint auspices of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. A third edition of these has recently been published: “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment 3rd Edition” Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013 (GLVIA3), and this updated guidance is reflected in the methods outlined below. GLVIA3 stresses that the definition of landscape from the European Landscape Convention includes seascapes and marine environments; accordingly the fundamental process of assessment is unaltered.

In summary, this process includes the following key stages:

- Definition of Study Area;
- Confirmation of Scope;
- Description of Baseline;
- Assessment of Effects;
- Design input and Mitigation;
- Reporting of significant residual effects.

The stages are described in further detail below.

### **3 STAGE 1: DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA**

The proposed Study Area on which the will SLVIA focus will extend to include all areas from within which significant seascape, landscape and visual effects (as defined by EIA Regulations) are most likely to occur (this area will change as final sites are identified). The boundary which defines the Study Area was selected on a realistic and pragmatic basis, based on Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping.

The Study Area boundary has been provisionally determined as: 35 km radius from the edge of the offshore development site boundary (current base case is for the Pilot Park to be located in the northern section of the Agreement for Lease (AfL) area (north of the BP pipelines).

It should be noted that this methodology is applicable to the assessment of potential effects from the presence of the offshore wind turbines only. Statoil is currently negotiating the scope of the environmental studies that are required to support the onshore planning application (minor application) and any required onshore work will be undertaken separately to the offshore impact assessment.

### **4 STAGE 2: CONFIRMATION OF SCOPE**

This stage includes:

- Summary of the key points that Marine Scotland (MS), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Aberdeenshire Council (AC) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) wish to see addressed by the SLVIA, including meeting to agree viewpoints if required.

### **5 STAGE 3: DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE**

This stage includes:

- A desk study to establish the existing conditions, including the seascape, landscape and visual resources of the study area, and initial mapping of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs) for the offshore Project components;
- Field survey work, initially at strategic/reconnaissance level and later at detailed level, to verify the important seascape, landscape, and visual characteristics of the area highlighted by the desk study; and
- Identification of key seascape, landscape, and visual receptors.

#### **5.1.1 Seascape Baseline**

Baseline seascape character will be described by reference to:

- Seascape Character Types: as already identified at national level, derived from SNH Commissioned Report No.103 (1997) and No. 102 (1998);
- Coastal Character Areas (CCAs): to be identified in accordance with the method in SNH Commissioned Reports No. 37 (2007), reflecting both a consistency in overall character at a broad scale or known geographical area; and
- Coastal Character Areas (CCAs): to be identified in accordance with the method in SNH Commissioned Report No.215 (2007), by further subdivision into areas of Local Coastal Character Areas (LCCAs) with distinct coastal character, by examining coastal characteristics and issues which may include: maritime influences, character of the coastal edge and immediate hinterland, and experience of wildness.

The key seascape receptors (the components of the seascape that are likely to be affected by the proposal) will be identified from the above descriptions and will include:

- Overall seascape character and key characteristics;
- Particular coastal elements and features; and
- Specific aesthetic or perceptual qualities.

### 5.1.2 Landscape Baseline

- Baseline landscape character will be described by reference to the Landscape Character Types identified in the existing published SNH assessment reports.
- Designated landscapes within the Study Area will be identified and described.
- The landscape baseline information will reflect a full understanding of the historic characteristics of the landscape, in consultation with the cultural heritage specialists ORCA.

The key landscape receptors (the components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the proposal) will be identified from the above descriptions and will include:

- Overall landscape character and key characteristics;
- Individual landscape elements or features; and
- Specific aesthetic or perceptual qualities.

The scale of mapping to be used in the assessment process has been determined as 1:50000, in accordance with guidance in SNH 2008.

## Visual Baseline

The baseline studies for visual effects will establish:

- The area in which the development (i.e. offshore wind turbines only) will be visible;
- The different groups of people who may experience views of the development (visual receptors);
- The viewpoints where they will be affected; and
- The nature of the views at those points.

The key visual receptors are the people within the area who will be affected by the changes in views and visual amenity and will include:

- People living in the area (residents);
- People working in the area (on sea and land);
- People travelling through the area on roads, ferries, or by air;
- People visiting the area (including tourists); and
- People engaged in recreation.

Viewpoints which fall within the ZTVs and Cumulative ZTVs (CZTVs) which are representative of these different groups will be identified and selected. They will be selected in accordance with criteria in GLVIA3 and specific guidance in SNH 2012, (p.4.15) as agreed with MS and statutory consultees, principally JNCC, AC and SNH. The selection criteria for viewpoints will include the following:

- A range of different types of views, e.g. popular hilltops, footpaths and other recreational routes, key transport routes (on and offshore where relevant), minor roads where the Pilot Park will be the focus of the view, settlements, cultural and recreational foci, and so on;
- Views from areas of high landscape or scenic value; both designated and non-designated, tourist routes and local amenity spaces;
- A representation of views from a range of distances out to the edge of the 35 km study area, aspects, landscape character types and visual receptors; to include coastal views looking offshore;
- All aspects of the proposed development, i.e. illustrate it "in the round" to help in the design development and assessment processes. This will also enable assessment of a range of light conditions e.g. side-lit, back-lit and front-lit;
- Visual composition. For example focussed or panoramic views, simple or complex;

- The variety of images that the Wind Turbine Generator (WTG) Units and associated infrastructure (e.g. navigation / aviation requirements buoys and / or lights) will present from coastal and inland areas.
- A range of distances and elevations out to the edge of the Study Area;
- Sequential views along specific routes; and
- Viewpoints that are already important vantage points within the landscape, for example local visitor attractions, scenic routes, or places with cultural landscape associations.

Key Design Viewpoints (as suggested in SNH 2012 “*Offshore Renewables – guidance on assessing the impact on coastal landscape and seascape*”) will be selected and agreed from the above list.

## 6 STAGE 4: ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

The assessment of effects includes:

- Identification and evaluation of potential effects on seascape. ‘Seascape effects are effects on seascape as a resource and affect seascape receptors as defined in the baseline study’. (SNH 2012a);
- Identification and evaluation of potential landscape effects. Landscape effects are effects on landscape as a resource and affect landscape receptors as defined in the baseline study;
- Identification and evaluation of potential visual effects. Visual effects are effects on views and visual amenity as experienced by people and affect visual receptors as defined in the baseline study; and
- Identification and evaluation of cumulative effects. Cumulative effects may occur to the seascape, landscape, or visual resource and are defined as “the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together.” (SNH 2012b). In keeping with guidance, this section **does not** include consideration of ‘any effects on the settings and views for historic buildings...and other heritage assets’ (GLVIA3, p.77), which are covered in Section 4 below.

### 6.1.1 Assessment Criteria

#### 6.1.1.1 Sensitivity to Change of Seascape

The relative sensitivity of the seascape within the Local Coastal Character Areas is specific to the proposed change and depends upon a range of criteria which take account of the coastline, and both landward and seaward perspectives. The published guidance (SNH 2012, SNH 2008, GLVIA3) has been referred to in developing and applying the criteria. For the purposes of this assessment the following definitions have been applied as noted in 0 below. It is stressed that in the assessment of a specific receptor/effect, the actual criteria applied may differ from the

Typical Criteria noted below. In all cases a clear explanation of the reasons for the judgement of sensitivity will be given.

**Table 1 Sensitivity of seascape receptors**

Sensitivity of receptor	Typical Criteria
Very High	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>  Seascapes with very distinctive physical characteristics including shape, enclosure, fragmentation, and prominent historic, cultural, or geological features.  Seascapes with spectacular views, very complex visual composition, very high diversity of detail, and aesthetic qualities which are intact and uncompromised.</p> <p><b>Value</b>  Seascapes located within and which contribute to the value of landscapes designated at national and international level.  Seascapes with a very high degree of relative wildness*, with strong evidence of and exposure to natural forces.  Seascapes where there is evidence of high or very high value associated with natural heritage, recreational activity, cultural associations, or other special interests.</p>
High	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>  Seascapes with distinctive physical characteristics including shape, enclosure, fragmentation, and specific historic, cultural, geological features.  Seascapes with striking/expansive views, diverse visual composition and aesthetic qualities which are predominantly intact.</p> <p><b>Value</b>  Seascapes located within and which contribute to landscapes of high value, recognised at regional or local level.  Seascapes with a high degree of relative wildness*.  Seascapes where there is evidence of value associated with natural heritage, recreational activity, cultural associations, or other special interests.</p>
Medium	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>  Seascapes with relatively unremarkable physical characteristics including linear shape, large-scale, and little fragmentation,  Seascapes with relatively simple visual composition.  Seascapes where settings of key views include some developed features and shipping or other maritime activity.</p> <p><b>Value</b>  Seascapes with a degree of relative wildness*, which may be compromised by factors including existing development and accessibility.  Seascapes with few specific features of natural heritage, cultural associations, or other special interest.</p>

Sensitivity of receptor	Typical Criteria
Low	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b> Seascapes comprising well-settled and readily accessible coastlines and hinterlands. Seascapes with prominent and frequent shipping or other maritime activity.</p> <p><b>Value</b> Seascapes with no specific features of natural heritage, cultural associations, or other special interest.</p>
Negligible	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b> Seascapes comprising urban coastlines and hinterlands dominated by development. Seascapes with seaward views dominated by shipping or other maritime activity.</p> <p><b>Value</b> Seascapes with no specific features of natural heritage, cultural associations, or other special interest.</p>

\*The level or degree of relative wildness will be assessed taking account of the existing SNH methodology as set out in "Mapping Scotland's Wildness Phase 1 – Identifying Relative Wildness Non –Technical Methodology, revised October 2012". The reasons for the judgements on levels of wildness will be clearly set out and justified in the assessment. We intend to support these judgements by building on the existing methodology, using more detailed datasets and additional parameters, which we believe will give a more accurate assessment in the specific context of this Study Area.

#### 6.1.1.2 *Magnitude of Change to Seascapes*

The magnitude of change to seascapes is assessed in terms of 3 sets of criteria: (GLVIA3)

- Size or scale;
- Geographical extent; and
- Duration and reversibility

For the purposes of this assessment the following definitions have been applied as noted in 0 below. It is stressed that in the assessment of a specific receptor/effect, the actual criteria applied may differ from the Typical Criteria noted below. In all cases a clear explanation of the reasons for the judgement of magnitude will be given.



**Table 2 Definitions of magnitude of change to seascape**

Magnitude of change to receptor	Typical Criteria
Severe	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>            Very high proportion of seascape unit affected            Very high proportion of seascape elements affected            Complete loss of, or fundamental change to, the key characteristics of the seascape.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>            Very large number of seascape units affected throughout the study area; very large area affected of the seascape unit(s) within which the development will sit; fundamental change to the immediate setting; fundamental change to the site of the proposed development.</p> <p><b>Duration and reversibility</b>            Permanent change to seascape            Change not reversible.</p>
Major	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>            High proportion of seascape unit affected            High proportion of seascape elements affected.            Substantial change to key characteristics of seascape.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>            Large number of seascape units affected in the majority of the study area; large area affected of the seascape unit(s) within which the development will sit; considerable change to the immediate setting; considerable change to the site of the proposed development.</p> <p><b>Duration and reversibility</b>            Long term change to seascape (25 or more years)            Change difficult to remove or reinstate</p>
Moderate	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>            Moderate proportion of seascape unit affected            Moderate proportion of seascape elements affected.            Material change to key characteristics of the seascape.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>            Several seascape units affected over part of the study area; medium area affected of the seascape unit(s) within which the development will sit; noticeable change to the immediate setting; noticeable change to the site of the proposed development.</p> <p><b>Duration and reversibility</b>            Medium term change to seascape (5-24 years)            Change that can be partially removed or reinstated.</p>

Minor	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>  Small proportion of seascape unit affected  Small proportion of seascape elements affected.  Discernible changes to key characteristics of the seascape.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>  Few seascape units affected over a small part of the study area; small area affected of the seascape unit(s) within which the development will sit; insignificant change to the immediate setting; insignificant change to the site of the proposed development.</p> <p><b>Duration and reversibility</b>  Short term change to seascape (up to 5 years)  Change that can be fully removed and reinstated</p>
Negligible	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>  Changes which are not discernible or have no effect on the integrity of seascape elements or seascape unit.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>  Few seascape units affected over part of the study area; very small area affected of the seascape unit(s) within which the development will sit; imperceptible change to the immediate setting; imperceptible change to the site of the proposed development.</p>

### 6.1.1.3 *Landscape Sensitivity to Change*

The relative sensitivity of the landscape character within each character area is specific to the proposed change and is assessed in terms of 2 sets of criteria: (GLVIA3):

- Susceptibility to the change; and
- Value of the receptor

For the purposes of this assessment the following definitions have been applied as noted in 0 below. It is stressed that in the assessment of a specific receptor/effect, the actual criteria applied may differ from the Typical Criteria noted below. In all cases a clear explanation of the reasons for the judgement of sensitivity will be given.

**Table 3 Definitions of landscape sensitivity**

Sensitivity of receptor	Typical Criteria
Very High	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>            Landscapes of very high quality and condition: with consistent, intact, well-defined, and distinctive attributes, well-managed, in exceptional state of repair.            None of the key characteristics of the landscape relate well to the proposed development</p> <p><b>Value</b>            Landscapes located within and which contribute to the value of landscapes designated at national and/or international level: e.g. designated National Scenic Area, National Park, and World Heritage Site. Landscapes with a very high degree of relative wildness*            Landscapes where there is evidence of very high value associated with natural heritage, recreational activity, cultural associations, or other special interests.</p>
High	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>            Landscapes of high quality and condition.            Few of the key characteristics of the landscape relate well to the proposed development</p> <p><b>Value</b>            Landscapes located within and which contribute to the value of landscapes designated or recognised at regional or local level e.g., Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, AGLV, SLLC, AASL. Landscapes with a high degree of relative wildness*.            Landscapes where there is evidence of high value associated with natural heritage, recreational activity, cultural associations, or other special interests.</p>
Medium	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>            Landscapes of moderate quality and condition.            Some of the key characteristics of the landscape relate well to the proposed development</p> <p><b>Value</b>            Landscapes may be locally valued but with no explicit designation or recognition of value.            Landscapes dominated by agricultural or other man-modified land uses, although with some degree of relative wildness*.            Landscapes where there is evidence of some value associated with natural heritage, recreational activity, cultural associations, or other special interests.</p>

Sensitivity of receptor	Typical Criteria
Low	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>  Landscapes of low or poor quality and condition, attributes poorly-managed, in poor condition and state of repair  Settled landscapes, with complex land use patterns where built elements and structures are already a strong part of the landscape character.  Landscape intrinsically able to accommodate proposed change with many of the key characteristics relating well to the proposed development, or unlikely to be diminished.</p> <p><b>Value</b>  Landscapes with few specific features of natural heritage, cultural associations, or other special interest.</p>
Negligible	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>  Heavily developed, industrial landscapes.  Landscapes of very low or very poor quality and condition, attributes very poorly-managed, in very poor condition and state of repair.  None of the key characteristics are likely to be diminished by the proposed change.</p> <p><b>Value</b>  Landscapes with no specific features of natural heritage, cultural associations, or other special interest.</p>

\* The level or degree of relative wildness will be assessed taking account of the existing SNH methodology as set out in "Mapping Scotland's Wildness Phase 1 – Identifying Relative Wildness Non –Technical Methodology, revised October 2012". The reasons for the judgements on levels of wildness will be clearly set out and justified in the assessment. We intend to support these judgements by building on the existing methodology, using more detailed datasets and additional parameters, which we believe will give a more accurate assessment in the specific context of this Study Area.

#### 6.1.1.4 *Magnitude of Landscape Change*

The magnitude of change to landscapes is assessed in terms of 3 sets of criteria: (GLVIA3)

- Size or scale;
- Geographical extent; and
- Duration and reversibility

For the purposes of this assessment the following definitions have been applied as noted in Table 4 below. It is stressed that in the assessment of a specific receptor/effect, the actual criteria applied may differ from the Typical Criteria noted below. In all cases a clear explanation of the reasons for the judgement of magnitude will be given.

**Table 4 Definitions of magnitude of Landscape change**

Magnitude change	of Typical Criteria
Severe	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>            Very high proportion of landscape unit affected            Very high proportion of landscape elements affected            Complete loss of, or fundamental change to, the key characteristics of the landscape.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>            Very large number of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) affected throughout the study area; very large area affected of the LCT(s) within which the development will sit; fundamental change to the immediate setting; fundamental change to the site of the proposed development.</p> <p><b>Duration and reversibility</b>            Permanent change to landscape            Change not reversible.</p>
Major	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>            High proportion of landscape unit affected            High proportion of landscape elements affected.            Substantial change to key characteristics of landscape.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>            Large number of LCTs affected in the majority of the study area; large area affected of the LCT(s) within which the development will sit; considerable change to the immediate setting; considerable change to the site of the proposed development.</p> <p><b>Duration and reversibility</b>            Long term change to landscape (25 or more years)            Change difficult to remove or reinstate</p>
Moderate	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>            Moderate proportion of landscape unit affected            Moderate proportion of landscape elements affected.            Material change to key characteristics of the landscape.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>            Several LCTs affected over part of the study area; medium area affected of the LCT(s) within which the development will sit; noticeable change to the immediate setting; noticeable change to the site of the proposed development.</p> <p><b>Duration and reversibility</b>            Medium term change to landscape (5-24 years)            Change that can be partially removed or reinstated.</p>

Minor	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>  Small proportion of landscape unit affected  Small proportion of landscape elements affected.  Discernable changes to key characteristics of the landscape.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>  Few LCTs affected over a small part of the study area; small area affected of the LCTs(s) within which the development will sit; insignificant change to the immediate setting; insignificant change to the site of the proposed development.</p> <p><b>Duration and reversibility</b>  Short term change to landscape (up to 5 years)  Change that can be fully removed and reinstated</p>
Negligible	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>  Changes which are not discernible or have no effect on the integrity of landscape elements or landscape unit.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>  Very few LCTs affected over part of the study area; very small area affected of the LCTs (s) within which the development will sit; imperceptible change to the immediate setting; imperceptible change to the site of the proposed development.</p>

#### 6.1.1.5 *Sensitivity of Visual Receptors to change*

All visual receptors are people. The relative sensitivity of the visual receptors is specific to the proposed change and is assessed in terms of two sets of criteria (GLVIA3):

- Susceptibility of visual receptors to the proposed change; and
- Value attached to views experienced by receptors

For the purposes of this assessment the following definitions have been applied as noted in 0 below. It is stressed that in the assessment of a specific receptor/effect, the actual criteria applied may differ from the Typical Criteria noted below. In all cases a clear explanation of the reasons for the judgement of sensitivity will be given.

**Table 5 Definitions of visual sensitivity**

Sensitivity of receptor	Typical Criteria
Very High	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>                      Users of strategic outdoor recreational facilities (including national long distance footpaths, national cycle routes).                      Visitors to important mountain summits, landmarks, heritage assets or other attractions, where views are an essential contributor to the experience                      Residents at home with views of the development*</p> <p><b>Value Attached to Views</b>                      Very high value placed on the View: celebrated viewpoint included in tourist guides, view located within a landscape designated at national or international level.</p>
High	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>                      Users of outdoor recreational facilities (including local Core Paths and other recreational footpaths, cycle routes or rights of way)                      Special interest groups to whom landscape setting is important.                      Residents of communities/settlements where views are an important contributor to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area</p> <p><b>Value Attached to Views</b>                      High value placed on the View: recognised viewpoint marked on maps, views within landscapes designated at regional or local level, views from recognised scenic routes/designated tourist routes, views of (or from) landscape or built features with important physical, cultural or historic attributes. View protected at local or regional level by Development Plan</p>
Medium	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>                      People engaged in outdoor sports or recreation where appreciation of the landscape setting contributes to the experience                      People at places of work, whose attention may be focused on their activity rather than the wider landscape. but where the setting is recognised as an important contributor to the quality of working life                      Travellers on road, rail, ferry or other transport routes</p> <p><b>Value Attached to Views</b>                      Some evidence of value placed on view, view may contribute to setting of activity</p>
Low	<p><b>Susceptibility to Proposed Change</b>                      People at places of work, whose attention may be focused on their activity rather than the wider landscape.                      People engaged in outdoor sports or recreation which does not involve or depend on appreciation of views of the landscape</p> <p><b>Value Attached to Views</b>                      No evidence of value placed on view</p>
Negligible	<p>Susceptibility to change of viewers and value attached to views are of a level not considered relevant to the assessment</p>

\* Where agreed with the Planning Authority

### 6.1.1.6 Magnitude of Change to Views and Visual Amenity

The magnitude of change to views and visual amenity experienced by the receptor is assessed in terms of 3 sets of criteria: (GLVIA3)

- o Size or scale;
- o Geographical extent; and
- o Duration and reversibility

For the purposes of this assessment the following definitions have been applied as noted in Table 6 below. It is stressed that in the assessment of a specific receptor/effect, the actual criteria applied may differ from the Typical Criteria noted below. In all cases a clear explanation of the reasons for the judgement of magnitude will be given.

**Table 6 Definitions of magnitude of visual change**

Magnitude of change	Definition
Severe	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>  Proposed change will define view.  All of development visible.  Very strong contrast with key visual characteristics of the baseline view e.g. scale, horizontality, composition.  Duration of view long, view studied/enjoyed for considerable time.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>  Angle of view to development directly coincides with focus of receptor activity/viewpoint/road alignment, etc.  Very short distance from viewpoint to development  Development occupying the majority of the view.</p> <p><b>Duration and Reversibility</b>  Permanent change to view  Change not reversible</p>
Major	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>  Development will be the dominant feature in the view.  High proportion of development visible, no significant screening effects.  Strong contrast with key visual characteristics of the baseline view e.g. scale, horizontality, composition.  Duration of view not curtailed by physical parameters.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>  Angle of view to development coincides with focus of receptor activity/viewpoint/road alignment, etc.  Short distance from viewpoint to development  Development occupying a high proportion of the view.</p> <p><b>Duration and Reversibility</b>  Long term change to view (25 or more years)  Change difficult to remove or reinstate</p>



Moderate	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>  Development will be a noticeable component of the view  Development partially screened by topography, vegetation, etc.  Some conflicts with key visual characteristics of the baseline view e.g. scale, horizontality, composition.  Duration of view relatively short. Time to absorb or contemplate view curtailed by physical parameters.</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>  Angle of view to development does not coincide with focus of receptor activity/viewpoint/road alignment, etc.  Moderate distance from viewpoint to development  Development occupying part of the view.</p> <p><b>Duration and Reversibility</b>  Medium term change to view (5-24 years)  Change that can be partially removed or reinstated.</p>
Minor	<p><b>Size or Scale</b>  Development is a minor component of view  Development substantially screened by topography, vegetation, etc.  Development compatible with key visual characteristics of the baseline view e.g. scale, horizontality, composition.  Duration of view short or transient. Glimpse or interrupted views</p> <p><b>Geographical Extent</b>  Angle of view predominantly away from development  Long distance from viewpoint to development  Development occupying a small part of the view.</p> <p><b>Duration and Reversibility</b>  Short term change to view (up to 5 years)  Change that can be fully removed and reinstated</p>
Negligible	Changes which are not discernible.

#### 6.1.1.7 *Environmental Consequence: Seascape, Landscape and Visual effects*

The sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of effect are combined to define the environmental consequence of the effect.

A clear explanation of how each judgement has been reached will be given in narrative form in the text, supported by reference to an impact matrix. It is important to note that with regard to Seascape, Landscape and Visual effects this matrix has been used as a guide only. The matrix is not used as a prescriptive tool, and the analysis of specific effects must make allowance for the exercise of professional judgement. Therefore, in some instances, a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis at the expense of the matrix. It should also be noted that likelihood of impact is not considered a relevant parameter for landscape, seascape and visual effects and has not been included in the assessment.

The impact matrices will need to show consistency throughout the EIA. However, there may be individual chapters that need to be addressed slightly differently.

For the purposes of the SLVIA methodology, the impact matrix is presented in 0.

**Table 7 Determination of consequence of effect**

<b>SENSITIVITY</b>	VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
<b>MAGNITUDE</b>					
SEVERE	Severe	Severe	Major	Moderate	Minor
MAJOR	Severe	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
MODERATE	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
MINOR	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible
NEGLIGIBLE	Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

### 6.1.2 Significance of Landscape, Seascape and Visual Effects

Again, the determination of the level of significance of the effect will need to be consistent throughout the EIA. However, there may be individual chapters that need to be addressed slightly differently

The table of significance of effects is shown below. Please note that this may change slightly in line with the overall EIA.

**Table 8 Determination of significance of effect**

<b>Consequence of Impact</b>	<b>Significance under EIA Regulations</b>
<b>Severe</b>	<b>Significant</b> Intolerable risk and / or significance. Effects to be avoided at all costs.
<b>Major</b>	<b>Significant</b> Highly significant and requires immediate action. Effects to be avoided rather than managed.
<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Significant</b> Requires additional control measures and/or active management
<b>Minor</b>	<b>Not Significant</b> May require some management to ensure remains within acceptable levels
<b>Negligible</b>	<b>Not Significant</b> Difficult to detect or measure.
<b>Neutral</b>	<b>No significance</b> No action required
<b>Beneficial</b>	<b>Positive</b> To be encouraged

### 6.1.3 Cumulative Seascape Landscape and Visual Effects

The Methodology for the assessment of Cumulative Seascape and Landscape Effects will accord with key guidance in:

- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013 “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment 3rd Edition” (in particular Chapter 7 pp120-134);
- SNH 2012a “Offshore Renewables – guidance on assessing the impact on coastal landscape and seascape” (in particular pp33-35); and
- SNH 2012b “Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments” (in particular pp10-21).

Outputs will be in accordance with the Advice Note included at Annex 2 of SNH 2012a.

Cumulative impacts will be defined as “the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together.” (SNH 2012b) p4)

The assessment will include cumulative effects associated with the development proposal in combination with a list of developments to be agreed with statutory consultees which will include:

- existing development, either built or under construction;
- approved development, awaiting implementation; and
- proposals awaiting determination within the planning process with design information in the public domain.

A checklist list will be provided with the list of projects to be assessed to explain the reasons for inclusion: e.g. setting the projects against a “menu” of priorities, including distance from the proposal, certainty of construction, etc. The relevant receptors (landscape character areas, designated landscapes, designed landscapes, visual receptors, including sequential routes through the study area) will also be listed.

The projects may include the following categories of development:

- Buildings;
- Onshore wind farms;
- Offshore wind farms;
- Harbour, port, waterfront and other related coastal development;
- Grid electricity connector/link projects ;

A list of projects to be included in the assessment will be agreed between the developer and statutory consultees.

## **7 STAGE 5 DESIGN INPUT AND MITIGATION**

The assessment of environmental effects is regarded as an integral part of the design process. Design iteration and mitigation, including input to siting and layout, has been informed iteratively by on-going assessment of seascape, landscape and visual effects, resulting in an optimised design solution.

In this regard, specific guidance in SNH 2012 with respect to Layout and Design, and Siting and Design (Sections 5 and 6 respectively) has been taken into account.

## **8 STAGE 6 REPORTING OF SIGNIFICANT RESIDUAL EFFECTS**

The assessment report (written up in an Environmental Statement chapter) will refer exclusively to the residual effects of an agreed final scheme.