Chapter 9 – Seascape, Landscape and Visual

Neven Point Pier EIA Report

Neven Point Wind Limited

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Revision Record

Revision	Date	Prepared By	Checked By	Authorised By
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
AOD	*Above Ordnance Datum*
CAA	*Civil Aviation Authority*
CCA	*Coastal Character Assessment*
CLVIA	*Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*
GLVIA3	*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition*
ISEP	*Institute of Sustainability & Environmental Professionals (formerly Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment)*
LCA	*Landscape Character Assessment*
LCCA	*Local Coastal Character Area*
LCT	*Landscape Character Type*
LI	*Landscape Institute*
LVIA	*Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*
NS	*NatureScot*
NSA	*National Scenic Area*
OLDP	*Orkney Local Development Plan*
OIC	*Orkney Islands Council*

9. Seascape, Landscape and Visual

9.1 Executive Summary

9.1.1 The Proposed Development would introduce small-scale pier infrastructure at the south east coast of Eday, adjacent to the existing Backaland Pier. The temporary floating pier/transfer barge and the permanent new marine landing point would result in a small physical change to the landscape fabric and character of the rocky foreshore coastline. These changes would be perceived within a very limited geographical area, similar in nature and adjacent to existing ferry linkspan / terminal infrastructure.

9.1.2 There would be **no significant effects** on landscape and coastal character during the construction phase. There would be **Moderate/Minor** adverse effects on the host Local Coastal Character Area 5g: Eday Sound, which is considered to be **Not Significant**. There would be **no significant visual effects** during the construction phase. Residential and recreational receptors in the Bay of Backaland and Veness would experience Moderate adverse and **Not Significant** effects on views. Effects on recreational users of the Northern Isles Ferry would be Minor adverse limited to within 500m during the construction phase.

9.1.3 During the operational phase, effects on the host Local Coastal Character Area 5g: Eday Sound would be Minor adverse, which is considered to be **Not Significant**. In terms of visual effects during the operational phase, there would be Minor adverse and **Not Significant** effects on the residentials within the Bay of Backaland and Veness and recreational users of the Northern Isles Ferry route to the east of Eday within 1km of the Proposed Development.

9.1.4 Effects on designated landscapes would be considered **Not Significant**.

9.1.5 The Proposed Development is associated with the planning application for Neven Point Wind Farm (‘the wider project’). The greatest potential for any significant inter-project landscape and visual effects is included within the Neven Point Wind Farm EIA Report, Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA); notably within the Viewpoint Analysis and Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (Technical Appendices 6.4 and 6.5).

9.2 Introduction

9.2.1 Stephenson Halliday was commissioned to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Development at Neven Point on behalf of the Applicant. This assessment forms part of a suite of documents supporting the application for a new marine landing point near the existing Backaland Pier at Backaland Bay (‘the Proposed Development’).

9.2.2 This assessment defines the existing landscape and visual baseline environments; assesses their sensitivity to change; describes the key landscape and visual-related aspects of the Proposed Development; describes the nature of

the anticipated changes; and assesses the effects arising during construction and operation.

9.2.3 This Chapter is supported by the following Figures and Appendices:

- Figures (Volume 2)
  - **Figure 9.1:** Landscape Context
  - **Figure 9.2:** Zone of Theoretical Visibility
  - **Figure 9.3:** Landscape and Coastal Character
  - **Figure 9.4:** Key Routes
- Landscape and Visual Photosheets (Volume 3)
  - **Viewpoint 1:** Northern Isles Ferry- Eday
  - **Viewpoint 2:** Backaland Pier
  - **Viewpoint 3:** Minor Road near Rebanks
  - **Viewpoint 4:** B9603 near Stenaquoy
- Technical Appendices (Volume 4)
  - **Technical Appendix 9.1** LVIA Methodology
  - **Technical Appendix 9.2** Visuals Methodology
  - **Technical Appendix 9.3** Viewpoint Analysis
  - **Technical Appendix 9.4** Landscape Sensitivity

9.2.4 Where there would be inter-project landscape and visual effects in combination with the Neven Point Wind Farm, cross-reference should be made to Neven Point Wind Farm EIA Report, Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), notably, the Viewpoint Analysis and Residential Visual Amenity Assessment Technical Appendices 6.4 and 6.5.

9.3 Legislation, Policy & Guidance

Legislation

9.3.1 Relevant legislation is set out in **Chapter 5: Planning Policy.**

National Planning Policy

9.3.2 Relevant national planning policy is set out in **Chapter 5: Planning Policy**.

Local Planning Policy

9.3.3 The Planning Statement associated with this planning and marine licence application sets out the planning policy framework that is relevant to the EIA. This section considers the relevant aspects of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)[0], Planning Advice Notes, the Orkney Islands Council Local Development Plan (LDP)[0] and other relevant guidance. Since the adoption of NPF4, which in this

case is the latest policy document, it will prevail where there are inconsistencies with local planning policies. The overall relevance of Local Development Plan policies will be considered in the separate Planning Statement. For the purposes of this EIA assessment, the following LDP policies have been considered from the adopted and emerging local policy documents:

Orkney Local Development Plan 2017-2022 (OLDP) (adopted April 2017)[0]

9.3.4 The OLDP covers the whole of Orkney Islands Council (OIC) area and contains development management policies. The following key policies of the OLDP have been considered in this chapter:

- Policy 9: Natural Heritage and Landscape sets out the requirements of development within National and Local Designated landscapes. It also sets out the requirements of development in the Orkney Islands landscape and the use of the Orkney Landscape Character Assessment.

Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan (OIRMP) (emerging)[0].

9.3.5 The emerging Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan "*sets out an integrated planning policy framework to guide marine development and activities, whilst ensuring the quality of the marine environment is protected, and where appropriate, enhanced. It supports the delivery of a vision for Orkney's coastal and marine environment, economy, and communities.*"[0]

9.3.6 The draft OIRMP is currently under review by the Orkney Marine Planning Advisory Group, but the expected key policies will be considered in this chapter:

- General Policy 10: Seascape and Landscape sets out guidance on how to protect and enhance the distinctiveness and qualities of seascape and landscape.

Local Guidance

9.3.7 In addition to the policy documents identified above, there are relevant local guidance and baseline documents as follows:

- Orkney Islands Council Supplementary Guidance: Energy.[0]
- Orkney Islands Council Supplementary Guidance: Aquaculture.[0]
- Orkney Islands Council Supplementary Guidance: Natural Environment[0].

9.4 Consultation

9.4.1 No consultation has been undertaken specifically for the landing point SLVIA, however, the scope of assessment takes into account consultation undertaken as part of the Neven Point Wind Farm LVIA.

9.5 Assessment Methods & Significance Criteria

Site and Proposals

9.5.1 The Proposed Development entails the construction of a new marine landing point to allow the transportation of materials, plant and wind turbine components by transfer barge to the island of Eday. The Proposed Development site is located adjacent to the existing ferry pier on the south east coast of the island of Eday and is illustrated in **Figure 9.1.** Parts of the Proposed Development fall both above Mean High-Water Springs (MHWS) and below Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS).

9.5.2 As noted in **Chapter 3: Proposed Development**, the new marine landing point consists of a permanent aggregate causeway with rock armour revetments of approximately 37m (the 'permanent causeway'), which would support a hinged ramp and temporary floating pier (c. 72m) and transfer barge (c. 90m).

9.5.3 The use of the floating pier/transfer barge will be limited to the period of construction of the wind farm and for operational maintenance as required. It will be actively managed during storms and throughout the winter period to ensure safe operation and prevent any issues arising as a result of higher water levels.

9.5.4 To inform the assessment, site visits were made to various locations within the Study Area, including but not restricted to representative viewpoints, by Stephenson Halliday's assessment team during March 2025.

Neven Point Wind Farm Application

9.5.5 This EIA Report and application for the proposed Neven Point Marine Landing Point is associated with that for Neven Point Wind Farm (the 'wider project'). The LVIA for the associated wind farm (Neven Point Wind Farm, EIA Report, Chapter 6: LVIA) considers where there would be the greatest potential for any significant inter-project landscape and visual effects between the Proposed Development and Neven Point Wind Farm, most notably within the Viewpoint Analysis and Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) (Technical Appendices 6.4 and 6.5). Refer to the LVIA undertaken as part of the Neven Point Wind Farm EIA for further considerations on landscape and visual impacts of the wind farm. With regards to the potential inter project effects considered in the RVAA, all of the residential properties within the Study Area for the Neven Point Marine Landing Point would experience views of the proposed wind turbines which is likely to be significant. However, the interaction between the Neven Point Marine Landing Point and the proposed wind farm at operation would not result in any additional

landscape and visual effects due to the limited footprint and surrounding context of the Marine Landing Point.

Competence

9.5.6 This Chapter, along with the design and mitigation of the Proposed Development, has been prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects at Stephenson Halliday. The Practice has nearly 25 years of experience working on wind energy proposals and associated infrastructure for over two hundred developments throughout the UK. Key individuals working on this project have over 25 years of experience as landscape architects. The Practice is a Landscape Institute (LI) and ISEP (formerly IEMA) registered practice.

Methodology

9.5.7 The detail of the methodology is described in **Technical Appendix 9.1**. A summary of the primary judgements is provided below.

Sensitivity

9.5.8 Sensitivity is judged considering the component judgments about the value and susceptibility of the receptor as illustrated by **Tables 9-1 and 9-2** below. Where sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted. A slightly greater weight is given to susceptibility in judging sensitivity of visual receptors as indicated below.

Table 9-1 Landscape Sensitivity

		Susceptibility		
		High	**Medium**	**Low**
Value	**National**	High	High/Medium	Medium
	Regional	High/Medium	Medium	Medium/Low
	Community	Medium	Medium/Low	Low

Table 9-2 Visual Sensitivity

		Susceptibility		
		High	**Medium**	**Low**
Value	**National**	High	High/Medium	Medium
	Regional	High/Medium	High/Medium	Medium/Low
	Community	High/Medium	Medium	Low

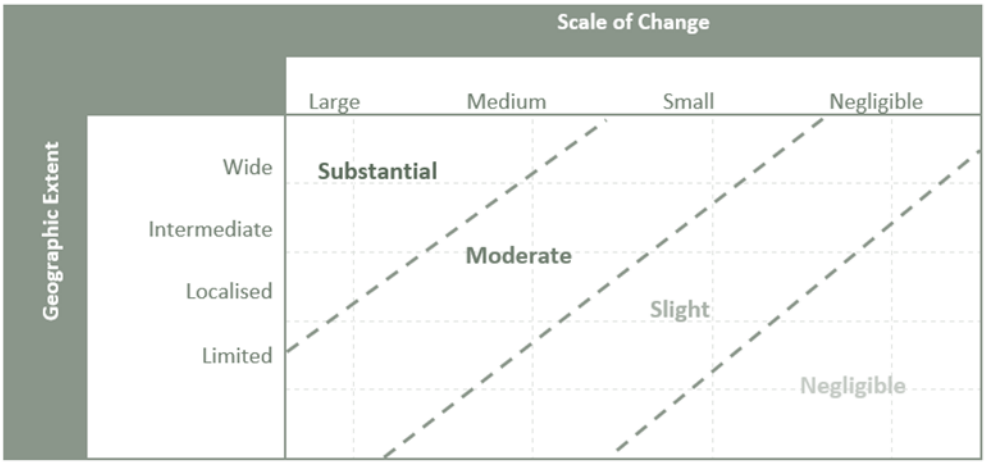
Magnitude

9.5.9 Scale of change is the first and primary factor in determining magnitude. Geographical extent and duration of the effect are modifying factors which contribute to the overall magnitude judgement which may be higher if the effect is particularly widespread and/or long lasting, or lower if it is constrained in

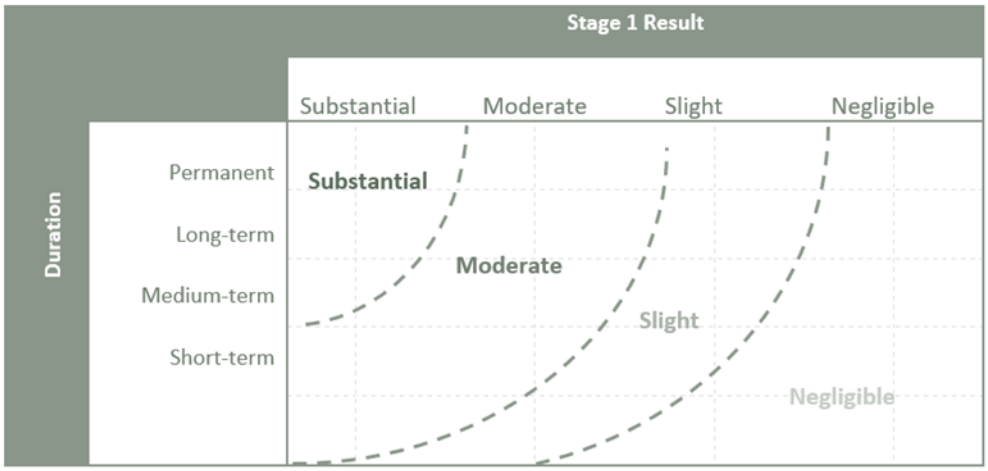
geographic extent and/or duration (timescale/ frequency). **Table 9-3** below illustrates how this judgement is considered as a two-step process.

Table 9-3 Magnitude of Change

Stage 1 – Modifying Influence of Geographic Extent of Magnitude of Effect



Stage 2 – Modifying Influence of Duration on Magnitude of Effect



9.5.10 Where magnitude is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted.

Significance of Effects

9.5.11 The significance of any identified landscape or visual effect is assessed as major, moderate, minor, or negligible. These categories are based on the consideration of sensitivity with the predicted magnitude of change. **Table 9-4** below is not used as a prescriptive tool and illustrates the typical outcomes, allowing for the exercise

of professional judgement. In some instances, a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis.

Table 9-4 Significance of Effects

		Magnitude of Change			
		Substantial	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**
Receptor Sensitivity	**High**	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor/ Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible

9.5.12 Where the effect has been classified as Major or Major/Moderate this is considered to be equivalent to likely significant effects referred to in the EIA Regulations. Where 'Moderate' effects are predicted, professional judgement is applied to determine whether the effect is significant or not, ensuring that the potential for significant effects to arise has been thoroughly considered and justification is provided for the judgement reached as appropriate. Effects of Moderate/ Minor, Minor, Minor/ Negligible or Negligible significance are considered to be not significant. The conclusion that some effects are 'significant' should not be taken to imply that they should warrant refusal in any decision-making process.

Beneficial/Adverse

9.5.13 Landscape and visual effects can be beneficial or adverse and, in some instances, may be considered neutral. Neutral effects are those that overall are neither adverse nor positive but may incorporate a combination of both. Taking a precautionary stance, changes to rural landscapes involving the construction of manufactured objects of a large scale are generally considered to be adverse.

Cumulative Assessment

9.5.14 Cumulative assessment relates to the assessment of the effects of more than one development. The approach to cumulative assessment is set out within **Technical Appendix 9.1.** There are no cumulative schemes either consented or pending determination. Scenario one considers the Proposed Development with

operational development i.e. the effects of the Proposed Development compared to the current baseline as described in the main LVIA.

Site Visit

9.5.15 A site visit and viewpoint photography were conducted in March 2025 by a Chartered Landscape Architect with experience of similar projects.

Distances

9.5.16 Where distances are given in the assessment, these are approximate distances between the Proposed Development, unless stated differently, and the nearest part of the receptor in question, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Visual Aids

9.5.17 Annotated photographs of the existing view are included in **Volume 3, Photosheets**. The method of visualisation selected has been informed by LI Technical Guidance Note 06/19 - Visual Representation of Development Proposals[0] . The methodology of production for the visualisations is described in **Technical Appendix 9.2**.

Limitations to Assessment

9.5.18 Limitations to the assessment include:

- Viewpoint photography from the Northern Isles Ferry was subject to the ferry timetable and weather/ maritime conditions. The capture and post-production of viewpoint photography, and from moving vessels, is also technically challenging and is therefore presented as a single frame image rather than a stitched panorama.

9.6 Baseline Conditions

Introduction

9.6.1 An overview of the baseline study is provided in this section with the full baseline description of the individual landscape and visual receptors being provided alongside the assessment in **Section 9.8** for ease of reference.

9.6.2 This section provides a review of the key local baseline studies and guidance documents. It identifies those landscape and visual receptors that merit detailed consideration in the assessment of effects, and those that are not taken forward for further assessment as effects "*have been judged unlikely to occur or so insignificant that it is not essential to consider them further*".[0]

9.6.3 Both this baseline section and the effects section describe landscape character and visual receptors before considering designated areas, as it is common for

designations to encompass both character and visual considerations within their special qualities or purposes of designation.

Local Guidance and Baseline Studies

9.6.4 The following guidance documents provide advice relevant to this assessment:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3) (2013). Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment;
- Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01: Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (2024) Landscape Institute;
- Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals (TGN 06/19) (2019) Landscape Institute;
- Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (TGN 02/21) (2021) Landscape Institute; and
- Technical Guidance Note 02/19: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (TGN 02/19) (2019) Landscape Institute.

ZTV Study

9.6.5 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) studies have been undertaken for the layout of the Proposed Development. **Figure 9.2** illustrates theoretical visibility based on a 'bare earth' model of the temporary floating pier/ transfer barge and permanent causeway.

9.6.6 The ZTV illustrates widespread theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development across the Bay of Backaland to the north and east and the Sound of Eday. There would be little or no visibility of the Proposed Development to the south and south west beyond 1km due to intervening landform at Ward Hill and Leeniesdale Hill to the west and Veness to the south. Considering the low height and limited extents of the proposed components, views of the Proposed Development beyond 2km from Sanday (north east) and Stronsay (east, south east) would be barely distinguishable on the coastline.

9.6.7 Once the temporary floating pier/transfer barge is demobilised, visibility of the permanent causeway of the marine landing point would be much reduced by localised landform, adjacent buildings including residential properties and outbuildings at Stackald immediately south, and pier infrastructure at Backaland Pier.

Coastal Character and Landscape

9.6.8 Landscape character types in the Study Area are shown in **Figure 9.3**. Coastal Character is described in the Orkney and North Caithness Coastal Character Assessment (2016).**Error! Reference source not found.** The document used existing published information on coastal character assessment and landscape character

assessment in addition to further survey work and identified Regional Coastal Character Areas and Local Coastal Character Areas.

9.6.9 Regional Coastal Character Area (RCCA) 5: Eday, includes all of the coastline of the island of Eday. The Proposed Development is situated within Local Coastal Character Area (LCCA) 5g: Eday Sound. There would be no visibility from the Proposed Development within LCCA 5f: Warness to Veness or LCCA 5e: Fersness Bay, therefore these LCCAs are not considered further.

9.6.10 The landscape character for the Study Area is described in the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment (2019)[0]. The Proposed Development is situated adjacent to Landscape Character Type 298 - Low Island Pasture. Landscape effects on LCTs 302 – Inclined Coastal Pastures, 314 Moorland Hills – Orkney, and 307 Cliffs – Orkney are predicted to be Not Significant, therefore these LCCAs are not considered further.

9.6.11 Effects on LCCA 5g: Eday Sound and LCT 298 - Low Island Pasture are considered in **Section □.** The baseline description is provided alongside the assessment of effects, for ease of reference. The combination of intervening distance, landform and limited visibility means that effects would diminish rapidly with distance. Landscape effects on other LCTs and LCCAs are predicted to be Not Significant, therefore these LCCAs are not considered further.

Visual Receptors

9.6.12 Visual receptors are "*the different groups of people who may experience views of the development*"[0] (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 6.3). The bare earth ZTV study in **Figure 9.2**, baseline desk study, and site visits have been used to identify those groups who may be significantly affected.

9.6.13 The different types of groups assessed within this report encompass: local residents; people using key routes such as ferries, roads, and cycleways; people within accessible or recreational landscapes; people using core paths; and people visiting key viewpoints. In dealing with areas of settlement and local roads, receptors are grouped into areas where effects might be expected to be broadly similar in the nature of change or areas which share particular factors in common such as the existing features and proposed elements within the view.

9.6.14 Representative viewpoints have been selected to aid the assessment of effects on visual receptors.

Baseline Visual Environment

9.6.15 As shown in **Figure 9.1**, the Proposed Development is located in the Bay of Backaland, immediately to the east of the existing ferry terminal.

9.6.16 Landform across the site comprises of a gradual slope from east to west, from sea level to approximately 5m above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Landform within the Study Area gently rises inland to 70m AOD. The coastal edge of the site is defined by low wavecut, exposed bedrock, shingles and red sandstone bouldering.

Infrastructure at Backaland Pier and a cluster of outbuildings and sheds border the site to the west and south, respectively, screening views of the ground plane of the site.

9.6.17 There are more open views along the coastline to the north of the site across the Bay of Backaland. The southern part of Eday, near the site, is lightly settled with rural farmsteads, isolated properties, and a concentration of buildings, sheds, pier and associated infrastructure at Backaland Pier. The ferry terminal and the fish farm are the two more notable elements in contrast with the farmed coast, along the coastline and within the bay.

9.6.18 The existing ferry terminal is lit at night and across expanses of dark sea and against a backdrop of landform on the horizon, is one of the more notable light sources within the southern part of Eday. There are also lights on five turbines at Spurness Wind Farm across the sound.

Visual Receptor Groups

9.6.19 The following visual receptor groups are located within the Study Area, are likely to have visibility of the Proposed Development, as shown on the ZTV study in **Figure 9.2**, and are considered further in **Section** □:

- Bay of Backaland within 2km north; and
- Veness within 1km south.

Key Routes

9.6.20 There are no A-class roads within 2km of the Proposed Development. All B-class roads and unclassified roads are assessed as part of the relevant local community visual receptor groups.

9.6.21 The assessment of transport routes within the Study Area is limited to the North Isles Ferry Route, 0.5km – 2km.

Specific Viewpoints

9.6.22 There are no specific viewpoints within the 2km Study Area. Vinquoy Hill, Eday is located over 8km north. The Proposed Development would result in very limited discernible change, and any potential effects would be Not Significant.

Designated and valued landscapes

9.6.23 The site does not coincide with any nationally designated landscapes. There are no nationally or locally designated landscapes in the Study Area.

Future Baseline

9.6.24 The future baseline would be similar to the current baseline. Pastoral coastal farming would remain the predominant land use. The range of watercraft movements within the Bay of Backaland, Backaland Pier and across Eday Sound

would remain a commonplace activity. Pastoral farming would remain the predominant land use within the hinterland.

9.7 Scope of the Assessment

Spatial Scope/ Study Area

9.7.1 It is accepted practice in landscape and visual assessment that the extent of the Study Area for a development proposal is broadly defined by its visual envelope. In this case, a Study Area of 2km has been used (as shown in **Figure 9.1**). This Study Area is adequate to identify all non-negligible effects on landscape and visual receptors, given the surrounding topography, and generally low height of the Proposed Development components (as outlined in **Chapter 3: Proposed Development**).

Temporal Scope

9.7.2 Landscape and visual effects can differ from one stage of the Proposed Development to the next, and may change over time. The assessment, therefore, considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development at each of the respective stages:

- Construction/Decommissioning: consideration of all temporary structures and works, including reclamation works, temporary lighting, construction and use of the temporary floating pier/transfer barge, and demobilisation of the temporary floating pier/transfer barge. The construction phase is anticipated to be 17 weeks.
- Operation: consideration of potential long-term effects associated with the Proposed Development (permanent causeway) following completion of the construction phase, removal of the temporary pier/ transfer barge and associated reinstatement.

Receptors Requiring Assessment

9.7.3 The following landscape and visual receptors have been assessed in detail in **Section** □:

- LCCA 5g: Eday Sound;
- LCT 298: Low Island Pastures;
- Bay of Backaland within 2km north;
- Veness within 1 km south; and
- North Isles Ferry Route, 0.5km–2.5km east.

9.7.4 Other receptors have been scoped out for the detailed reasons set out in **Section 9.6**.

Environmental Measures Embedded into the Development Proposals

9.7.5 Embedded mitigation proposals are those mitigation measures that are inherent to the Proposed Development. Embedded mitigation includes all mitigation usually assumed to be in place during construction, operation, and decommissioning, and

is generally regarded as industry standard or Best Practice. Construction and environmental management plans are introduced in **Chapter 3: Project Description,** with an outline CEMP provided in **Technical Appendix 3.1: Outline CEMP**.

9.7.6 Key mitigation measures related to landscape and visual comprise:

- Siting of the proposed marine landing point in close proximity to the existing Backaland Pier. This would limit the extent of landscape and visual change to within a coastal area already affected by similar development, avoiding fragmentation of the more intact coastline qualities.
- The construction methods limit the scale and durations of works within the sea, and most land reclamation activities would be accessed on land.
- Once the temporary floating pier/transfer barge is no longer required, it will be demobilised, leaving only the permanent causeway and no additional infrastructure protruding into the sea, which would limit the appearance of infrastructure in views.
- The proposed lighting tower will be limited to 15m and will be in-keeping with the existing lighting at Backaland Pier.

9.7.7 No additional mitigation is proposed, and all landscape and visual mitigation measures are embedded.

9.8 Assessment of Potential Effects

Introduction

9.8.1 This section sets out the effects that the Proposed Development would have on landscape and visual receptors.

9.8.2 Effects during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development are considered for each receptor. The effect of decommissioning would be equal to, or less than, the effects during construction. Therefore, they have been considered together.

9.8.3 All mitigation measures are embedded, and therefore, the effects assessed in this section are considered to be the residual effects during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.

Effects on Site Fabric

9.8.4 Changes to landscape fabric occur where there would be physical changes to the landscape. In this instance, changes to landscape fabric would predominantly occur within the site.

9.8.5 As a result of infrastructure associated with the permanent causeway including the rock armour revetments, access track and area of hard standing, there would be Long Term loss of landscape elements; mainly very limited areas of tussock grassland and narrow shingle beach at the low rocky foreshore. Material for the construction of the causeway will predominantly be imported by sea. Any

construction related works such as set-down areas or compound, would be restored to previous land cover after construction.

Viewpoint Analysis

9.8.6 Viewpoint analysis has been undertaken from a total of four viewpoints. The viewpoint locations are illustrated in **Figures 9.1- 9.4.** The photosheets (comprising annotated photographs of the existing view) are presented in **Volume 3, Photosheets**.

9.8.7 The full viewpoint analysis is contained in **Appendix 9.3**. The findings are summarised below in **Table 9.5.** In each case, distances are listed in relation to the nearest part of the permanent causeway.

9.8.8 Please note that **Appendix 9.3** considers only the nature of changes to character and views at each viewpoint location. The sensitivity of receptors and wider extent of the effect (beyond the individual viewpoint location) and its duration are considered in the main body of the assessment text below as part of the consideration of the magnitude and significance of effects.

Table 9-5 Viewpoint Analysis Summary

VP	Viewpoint	Distance and direction from proposed development	Scale of visual change at viewpoint	Scale of landscape change at viewpoint
1	Northern Isles Ferry-Eday	310m, East	Construction: Large/Medium Operation: Small	Construction: Medium Operation: Small
2	Backaland Pier	160m, West	Construction: Medium Operation: Small/Negligible	Construction: Small Operation: Negligible
3	Minor road near Redbanks	125m, South	Construction: Small Operation: Negligible	Construction: Small Operation: Negligible
4	B9063 near Stenaquoy	1.42km, South West	Construction: Small Operation: Negligible	Construction: Small Operation: Negligible

9.8.9 Each of the viewpoints is a ‘sample’ of the potential effects, representing a wide range of receptors, including not only those actually at the viewpoint, but also those nearby, at a similar distance and/or direction. In consideration of the ZTVs and these viewpoints, it can be seen that the distribution of effects would be as follows:

- The Medium scale of change for visual receptors would be restricted to visual receptors on recreational watercraft to the east within 500m of construction activities within the site. The scale of change would be reduced to Small at most during operation, from recreational receptors of Ferries.

- The Medium/Small scale of change for landscape receptors would be located at the site and within 500m during construction, reducing to Small at operation.
- There would be no greater than a Small scale of change for both landscape and visual receptors during operation beyond 200m.

Construction and Decommissioning Effects

Landscape effects

LCCA 5g: Eday Sound

9.8.10 Landscape sensitivity to construction is judged to be Medium/Low as described in **Technical Appendix 9.4**. This LCCA 5g: Eday Sound does not coincide with any designations. It comprises typical coastal rocky foreshore, and well-settled agricultural hinterland, and is judged to be of Community value. The LCCA is low lying with open and expansive views influenced by activities within, such as the movement of watercraft within the Bay of Backaland and at the Backaland Pier. Landscape susceptibility is Medium/Low.

9.8.11 The construction of the Proposed Development, as well as the decommissioning stage at the end of the life, would result in Short Term effects within LCCA 5g: Eday Sound. The effects would mainly result from the construction of new landing point infrastructure and the construction activities, which would include land reclamation works, watercraft activity, temporary lighting, construction compound, and the movement of plant and vehicles within and along the proposed site access route. These activities would result in physical change to the shingle beach and low rocky foreshore and contrast with the quieter qualities of coastal character. The movement of watercraft associated with the delivery of plant and materials for the permanent causeway/temporary floating pier would result in an increase in the frequency of watercraft movements to and from the site. **Figure 9.2** illustrates the extent of theoretical visibility of the temporary floating pier/transfer barge. **Viewpoint 1** annotates the extent of the temporary floating pier/transfer barge within the context of the low rocky foreshore and existing infrastructure.

9.8.12 The landscape character of the host LCCA is considered to be of Medium/Low sensitivity to construction activity. The effects of construction activity are considered to be Medium in scale but only over a Limited extent of the host LCCA, and in the Short Term. Accordingly, the magnitude of change is considered to be Slight, which gives rise to **Moderate/Minor** adverse effects which are considered to be **Not Significant** for LCCA 5g Eday Sound during the construction phase.

LCT 298 Low Island Pastures

9.8.13 As shown in **Figure 9.3,** this LCT occurs in the south east of Eday. It also occurs across large areas of Sanday, Stronsay, the north of Westray, Rousay, and the east Mainland. There are no local or national landscape designations coinciding with the LCT. Extensive views, framed by curved beaches, from one side of the island or headland to another are recognised as important, as are views to other islands. Value is assessed as Community. Susceptibility is assessed as

Medium/Low due to the simplicity of the landscape, the low-lying terrain, and open views of activity within the Bay of Backaland and Backaland Pier. Taking this into account, overall sensitivity to construction is assessed as Medium/Low.

9.8.14 The construction of the Proposed Development and decommissioning would result in Short Term effects on LCT 298: Low Island Pastures. Landscape effects on the physical character of this LCT would result from land reclamation works, temporary lighting, and the movement of plant and materials along the access and at the temporary compound at the northern edge of the LCT. The movement of watercraft associated with the delivery of plant and materials to the temporary floating pier/transfer barge would appear in views out to sea experienced from this LCT. **Figure 9.2** illustrates the extent of theoretical visibility of the temporary floating pier/ transfer barge and the horizontal extent is annotated on **Viewpoint 2 and 3**. Construction activity would result in some limited influence on the scenic qualities within 500 m due to increased activities at the coastal edge and views out to sea from this LCT.

9.8.15 The scale of change would be Small over a Localised extent of this LCT in the Short Term. Accordingly, the magnitude of change is considered to be Slight/Negligible, which gives rise to **Minor** adverse effects, which would be **Not Significant** for LCT 298: Low Island Pastures during the construction phase.

Visual effects

9.8.16 This assessment focuses on effects during construction on groups of visual receptors, incorporating those on views from public spaces and streets within settlements. The assessment of effects focuses on publicly accessible locations, although views from groups of dwellings will also be noted in the descriptions.

9.8.17 Unless noted differently, these visual receptors and key transport routes are considered to be of High/medium sensitivity to construction due to High susceptibility to change from the Proposed Development and a Community value of the views they experience.

Bay of Backaland within 2 km north

9.8.18 (0-2 km west and north) This receptor group comprises sparsely settled residents, users of local roads including the B9063, and core path Leenisdale Hill ED7. There would be views of construction activities within this group within the context of existing watercraft activity and pier infrastructure. Some ground-level construction activity would be screened by the intervening infrastructure at Backaland Pier. Transport of plant and materials via watercraft to the temporary floating pier/ transfer barge and its subsequent demobilisation would increase the influence of watercraft activity within the same part of views. As annotated in the photosheets for **Viewpoints 2 and 4,** construction activity within the site would be perceived as a slight increase to the normal land and water-based activity including the temporary increase in lighting.

9.8.19 Visual sensitivity to construction activity is considered to be High/Medium. The scale of change would be Small at most across an Intermediate extent of this

group. In the Short Term, changes during the construction phase would lead to a Slight magnitude. Accordingly, this would lead to a **Moderate** adverse effect, which is considered to be **Not Significant.**

Veness within 1 km south

9.8.20 (0-1 km south) Localised landform would restrict views of construction activity beyond 500m south. Intervening buildings would screen most ground-level construction activities as illustrated by **Viewpoint 3**. There would be close-range views of construction activities from the closest residential property (at Stackald) within 60m, but outbuildings within the property boundary would truncate views from most aspects. There are more open views from more distant properties approximately 0.8km south and south west. Construction activity including the movement of plant and land-based vehicles, lighting, watercraft and the construction and use of the temporary floating pier/transfer barge would extend the influence of activity across a small part of views out to sea already affected by activities at the existing pier. The temporary increase in activity out to sea would be visible and most land reclamation works would be heavily screened beyond 50m to the south. Temporary lighting would add to the existing lighting levels at the existing pier.

9.8.21 Visual sensitivity to construction activity is considered to be High/Medium. The scale of change would be Medium over a Localised extent of the receptor group. In the Short Term, changes in the construction phase would lead to a Moderate/Slight magnitude. This would lead to a **Moderate** adverse effect, which is considered to be **Not Significant.**

Transport Routes and Water-Based Receptors

9.8.22 This section describes effects on ferry routes and water-based receptors. Views are evaluated as being of Regional value, considering the likely use by tourists visiting the islands. Those on the ferry routes using them as main transport routes are considered to be of Medium susceptibility. However, recreational receptors using the ferries on these routes in the summer would be of High susceptibility. Receptors using ferries and other water-based receptors are therefore considered as of High/ Medium sensitivity to construction.

Northern Isles Ferry Route- Eday

9.8.23 (0-2.5 km east) Transport and recreational users would experience sequential views of construction activity from ferries to the east of Eday. Construction activity across the site would be perceived as an increase in movement compared to the normal activity at the existing pier. From close-range views, land reclamation works, and the construction of the temporary floating pier/transfer barge would become an additional focal point in views. **Viewpoint 1** illustrates views from the ferry on approach to the terminal, and the extent of the temporary infrastructure is

annotated. However, the route to / in close proximity to Eday would be partially diverted during the construction phase to avoid activity within the site.

9.8.24 Visual sensitivity to construction activity is considered to be High/Medium. The scale of change would be Large/Medium across a Limited extent of this route within 2.5 km east of Eday. This Short Term change would lead to a Moderate/Slight magnitude. For these receptors of High/medium sensitivity, this would lead to a **Moderate** adverse effect, which is considered to be **Not Significant.**

Operational Effects

Effects on Landscape and Coastal Character

9.8.25 Descriptions for each of the assessed LCCA and LCTs are briefly summarised below, along with further observations from site-based work.

LCCA 5g: Eday Sound

9.8.26 As shown in **Figure 9.2,** this LCCA extends from the headland of Veness in the south to the headland of the Castles in the north. This LCCA is characterised by rocky, low-lying cliffs, wave-cut platforms, stretches of bedrock and narrow shingle beaches. The host unit of LCCA 5g: Eday Sound is broadly typical of the key characteristics described by the NatureScot Coastal Character Assessment (CCA) 2016.

9.8.27 As described in **Technical Appendix 9.4**, the sensitivity of LCCA 5g: Eday Sound is Medium/Low. There are no local or national landscape designations coinciding with the LCCA, and the rocky foreshore within the study is a commonplace feature along the coastline. Numerous ferry routes and local boat traffic access Backaland Pier, which is the main route to and from the island. Taking this into account, value is assessed as Community. Susceptibility is assessed as Medium due to the simplicity of the low-lying nature of the coastal farmland, rocky foreshore. Open views are focused east over Eday Sound and north along the Bay of Backaland, where the fish farm and ferry linkspan / terminal infrastructure at Backaland Pier locally influence character.

9.8.28 **Figure 9.3** illustrates the extent of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development indicating that there would be widespread visibility within 1 km. However, the permanent causeway in isolation, intervening buildings, and infrastructure would restrict visibility of the Proposed Development within the hinterland south and west. **Table 9.6** outlines the effects of the Proposed Development would have on the key characteristics of Eday Sound LCCA, as stated in the NatureScot Coastal Character Assessment 2016.

Table 9-6 Effects on Key Characteristics of LCCA 5g Eday Sound

Key Characteristic	Effect of the Proposed Development
East facing onto the narrow Eday Sound, with some enclosure provided by Sanday and Stronsay.	The permanent causeway would result in a very small physical change, but there would be

Key Characteristic	Effect of the Proposed Development
	no change to the sense of enclosure within the landscape as a whole.
Rocky and largely low-lying coast formed of low cliffs, wave-cut platforms, sweeping stretches of bedrock and narrow shingle beaches.	The Proposed Development would introduce pier infrastructure, including engineered rock armour on the coastline. There would be a limited loss of shingle beach and exposed bedrock. The permanent causeway would result in a very slight increase in the presence of pier infrastructure immediately adjacent to a part of the coastline already affected by similar coastal pier development.
Small sandy bays of Mill Bay and the Bay of London are significant indentations.	No effect
Hinterland of smooth pasture rising to moorland in the island's central ridge.	No effect
Views focused east over the Eday Sound, with the horizon formed by the flat relief of Sanday and Stronsay.	The Proposed Development would not interrupt views across Eday Sound to Sanday and Stronsay. There would be views of the permeant causeway adjacent to the existing infrastructure at Backaland Pier and from water based routes in Eday Sound.

9.8.29 The Proposed Development would introduce additional pier infrastructure within this LCCA. There would be a limited change to the physical landscape of the shingle beach and rocky foreshore. Initially, the introduction of engineered rock armour would contrast with the existing narrow shingle beach. However, the area of coastline directly affected is not strongly representative of the wave-cut platforms or sandy beaches. The permanent causeway would be visible in close-range views within, from the existing pier and part of the coastline to the north and south of the site. **Viewpoint 1** illustrates views of the coastline on the southern approach to Eday from the Northern Isles Ferry; perceived as a slight extension of Backaland Pier and the influence of coastal pier infrastructure.

9.8.30 Where changes in character would be perceived, they would be limited to within less than 500m. The scale of change would be Small across a Localised extent of this receptor. This Long Term change would result in a Slight magnitude of change for LCCA 5g Eday Sound. For this coastal landscape of Medium/Low sensitivity, this would result in a **Minor** adverse effect on coastal character in the southern part of this LCCA, which is considered to be **Not Significant**.

LCT 298 Low Island Pastures

9.8.31 As shown in **Figure 9.2** this LCT occurs in the southeast of Eday. It also occurs in large areas of Sanday, Stronsay, Rousay, the north of Westray and the east Mainland, but on these LCTs, effects would not be significant due to the

separation distances and, therefore, they are not assessed in detail. This section describes the potential effects on the LCT where it occurs in the south of Eday.

9.8.32 The baseline landscape character description by NatureScot describes the landscape of LCT 298 as very low-lying, gently sloping or undulating, with flat coastal areas. There are no local or national landscape designations coinciding with the LCT. Extensive views from one side of the island or headland to another are recognised as important, as are views to other islands and skerries framed by curved beaches. Value is assessed as Community. Susceptibility is assessed as Medium due to the presence of existing pier infrastructure, the simplicity of the landscape, the low-lying terrain, and open views across and beyond the LCT. Overall landscape sensitivity is evaluated as Medium/Low.

9.8.33 **Table 9.7** outlines the effect of the Proposed Development would have on the key characteristics of the Eday unit of Low Island Pasture, as stated in the NatureScot LCA 2019.

Table 9-7 Effects on Key Characteristics of LCT 298 Low Island Pasture

Key Characteristic	Effect of the Proposed Development
Very low lying, very gentle sloping, or undulating, with flat coastal areas often formed over blown sand.	No effect
Coastline of beaches, low headlands and wave cut platforms.	No effect
Mainly cultivated grasslands and pastures, with machair and links grasslands.	No effect
Agricultural land use on large regular fields mainly dating from 18th -19th Century improvements, some edged with stone or flag walls.	No effect
Scattered farms and crofts regularly spaced along straight or angular minor roads and tracks, rarely running along the coast.	No effect
Wide-spread crofting landscape on North Ronaldsay with many traditional features.	No effect
Abundant archaeology providing evidence of human settlement for 6,000 years, most evident along the coast and backshore.	No effect
Local features appear prominent in the low, open landscape, including farm mounds, Treb-dykes, settlements, farmsteads, lighthouses, and sand dunes.	No effect
Open and extensive views with dominant skies and a sense of exposure and vulnerability to the weather and sea.	The Proposed Development would be a limited addition in views at the edge of this LCT and within the same context as the existing Backaland Pier. However, any change to the dominant skies and sense of exposure would be barely discernible.

Key Characteristic	Effect of the Proposed Development
Wide, bright shell sand beaches and coastal rock strata contrasting with smooth, close-grazed grasslands and machair.	The Proposed Development would be located on the coastline where the effects are considered in the assessment of LCCA 5g: Eday Sound. There would be no change to the shell sand beaches of this landscape.

9.8.34 The Proposed Development would be located in the neighbouring LCCA 5g: Eday Sound, immediately south of the Eday unit of the LCT. There would be no change to the physical character of this landscape. The Proposed Development would result in a slight increase to the presence of pier infrastructure in views along the coastline experienced from the LCT. **Viewpoints 2 and 3** are located within this LCT, and the nature of the change at the viewpoints is described in detail in **Technical Appendix 9.4**. The permanent causeway would result in a small extension to the existing pattern of development across a very small area with limited change in views west and north within 500m.Where these changes to the key characteristics could be perceived, they would result in a Small/ Negligible scale of change across a Limited extent of this occurrence. This Long Term change would result in a Negligible magnitude of change on the Eday unit of Low Island Pasture LCT. For this landscape of Medium/Low sensitivity, this would result in a **Minor**/**Negligible** adverse effect on landscape character, which would be considered to be **Not Significant**.

Visual Receptor Groups

9.8.35 This assessment focuses on effects on groups of visual receptors, incorporating effects on views from public spaces and streets within settlements. The assessment of effects focuses on publicly accessible locations, although views from groups of dwellings would also be noted in the descriptions.

9.8.36 Unless noted differently, these visual receptors are considered to be of **High/Medium** sensitivity due to High susceptibility to change from the Proposed Development and a Community value of the views they experience.

Bay of Backaland, within 2 km north

9.8.37 (0-2 km west and north) This receptor group comprises sparsely settled residents, users of local roads including the B9063, and core path ED7. Residential properties within this group are accessed via local roads. The ZTV, shown in **Figure 9.3**, indicates widespread visibility. However, visibility of the ground plane of the permanent causeway in isolation would be reduced by intervening buildings and infrastructure at the existing pier. There would be more open views from the more distant and elevated part of this group to the north. **Viewpoint 2** is situated west of Backaland Pier and the site, and the scale of change is described in **Appendix 9.4**. The permanent causeway would be partially screened by intervening development at the existing pier. **Viewpoint 4** is situated towards the north of this group and illustrates views from more elevated vantage points across the Bay of Backaland. The permanent causeway would be visible in the same part of the view as Backaland Pier and would appear as a very limited extension of

pier infrastructure and there would be no change to the focus of views. The scale of change would be Negligible across a Wide extent of this receptor group. These Long Term changes would result in a Negligible magnitude of change, leading to a **Minor** adverse effect, which would be **Not Significant**.

Veness within 1 km south

9.8.38 (0-1 km south) This receptor group comprises sparsely settled residents and users of local roads. Views are predominantly open across the low-lying pastures with long-range views out to sea across the Bay of Backaland. **Viewpoint 3** is situated in this group and illustrates the screening effect of intervening localised landform and buildings near the existing pier. However, there would be more open views of the permanent causeway from the closest residential property within 60m. Changes in views would be perceived as a limited extension to pier infrastructure and would not alter the overall composition or focus of views from this group. The scale of change would be Small/Negligible across a Localised extent of this receptor group. These Long Term changes would result in a Negligible magnitude of change, leading to a **Minor** adverse effect, which would be **Not Significant**.

Transport Routes and Water-Based Receptors

9.8.39 As set out in section 9.4 receptors using ferries and other water-based receptors are therefore considered as of High/ Medium sensitivity to construction.

Northern Isles Ferry Route

9.8.40 (0-2.5 km east) The ferry routes from Kirkwall to Eday, Stronsay, and Sanday are the same until a point to the east of Veness, Eday, where the routes diverge. The sections of the routes with the potential for effects are limited to within 3km east and south east of Eday. The Ferry routes are shown in **Figure 9.4**.

9.8.41 Visibility of the Proposed Development would vary subject to the route alignment, but the most open view would be at the final stages of approach to Backaland Pier, similar to **Viewpoint 1**. The permanent causeway would be visible on the coastline adjacent to the existing pier infrastructure. The Proposed Development would appear as a limited extension to coastal infrastructure in views. Initially, the new rock armour would draw the eye, but it would weather over time and become inconspicuous. The extent of visibility would be very limited, diminishing with distance, and screened by intervening landform to the south of Eday.

9.8.42 Along this route, the scale of change would be Small, across a Limited extent of this ferry route. These Long Term changes would result in a Slight/Negligible magnitude of change, leading to a **Minor** adverse effect, which would be **Not Significant**.

9.9 Summary

9.9.1 There would be no significant effects on landscape and coastal character during the construction phase. There would be Moderate/Minor adverse effects on the

host Local Coastal Character Area 5g: Eday Sound, which is considered to be Not Significant. There would be no significant visual effects during the construction phase. Residential and recreational receptors in the Bay of Backaland and Veness would experience Moderate adverse and Not Significant effects on views. Effects on recreational users of the Northern Isles Ferry would be Minor adverse limited to within 500 m during the construction phase.

9.9.2 During the operational phase, effects on the host Local Coastal Character Area 5g: Eday Sound would be Minor adverse, which is considered to be Not Significant. In terms of visual effects during the operational phase, there would be Minor adverse and Not Significant effects on the residentials within the Bay of Backaland and Veness and recreational users of the Northern Isles Ferry route to the east of Eday within 1 km of the Proposed Development.

9.9.3 Effects on designated landscapes would be Not Significant.

9.9.4 The Proposed Development is associated with the application for Neven Point Wind Farm. The greatest potential for any significant inter-project landscape and visual effects is included within the Neven Point Wind Farm EIA Report, Chapter 6: LVIA; notably within the Viewpoint Analysis and Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (Technical Appendices 6.4 and 6.5).

9.9.5 **Table 9-8** provides a summary of the receptors, sensitivity, residual effects and conclusions of significance considered within the Chapter.

Table 9-8 Effects on Key Characteristics of LCT 298 Low Island Pasture

Receptor	Sensitivity	Level of Effect	Significant
Construction/ Decommissioning			
LCCA 5g: Eday Sound	Medium/Low	Moderate/Minor Adverse	Not Significant
LCT 298 Low Island Pastures	Medium/Low	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Bay of Backaland, within 2 km north	High/Medium	Moderate Adverse	Not Significant
Veness within 1 km south	High/Medium	Moderate Adverse	Not Significant
Northern Isles Ferry Routes	High/Medium	Moderate Adverse	Not Significant
Operational Phase			
LCCA 5g: Eday Sound	Medium/Low	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
LCT 298 Low Island Pastures	Medium/Low	Minor/Negligible Adverse	Not Significant
Bay of Backaland, within 2 km north	High/Medium	Minor Adverse	Not Significant

Receptor	Sensitivity	Level of Effect	Significant
Veness within 1 km south	High/Medium	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
Northern Isles Ferry Routes	High/Medium	Minor Adverse	Not Significant

9.10 References

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