

Technical Appendix 4.3: Coastal Character Areas Sensitivity

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1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Technical Appendix provides both baseline information and detailed assessment of coastal character areas (CCAs).
- 1.1.2 The Proposed Development is a renewable energy development comprised of up to eight wind turbines, a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure adjacent to Sullom Voe Oil Terminal (SVT) and the Shetland Gas Plant in Shetland, Scotland. The assessment is based on the Proposed Development as described in **Chapter 2: Proposed Development (EIAR Volume 2)**.
- 1.1.3 **Figure 4.8a: Coastal Character Areas (EIAR Volume 3a)** illustrates the location and extent of the Coastal Character Areas (CCAs) from the Shetland Coastal Character Assessment¹ (SCCA) and **Figure 4.8b: Coastal Character Areas with Tip ZTV (EIAR Volume 3a)** shows the CCAs overlaid by the Tip Height Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).
- 1.1.4 All the CCAs which are found within the Study Area are listed in **Table 4.3.1** below, ordered nearest to furthest from the Proposed Development. CCAs that have been omitted from detailed assessment, due to being highly unlikely to have significant effects, are also noted in the table. Justification for a CCA being unlikely to have significant effects include no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development, or on the basis of distance combined with highly constrained ZTV and the orientation of the primary seascape context being away from the Site. In addition, Shetland Islands Council (SIC) stated in their scoping response (**Technical Appendix 1.1: Consultation Register (EIAR Volume 4)**) that the main CCAs of relevance to the Proposed Development are CCA 3 Lunna Ness, CCA 26 Sullom Voe and CCA 27 Yell Sound. The Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) has therefore focussed on these three CCAs. Analysis of the character of these and other CCAs has also informed the assessment of effects on adjacent Landscape Character Types (LCT) and Local Landscape Areas due to intervisibility between CCAs and LCTs.
- 1.1.5 **Table 4.3.2** to **Table 4.3.4** of this Technical Appendix provides descriptions of CCAs and analysis of sensitivity against which the likely effects of the Proposed Development can be judged when combined with the assessment of magnitude of change. The descriptions are based on the key characteristics presented in the SCCA. The sensitivity of each of the three CCAs is appraised in accordance with current guidance.^{2, 3, 4}
- 1.1.6 The assessment of effects on CCAs is described in **Chapter 4: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Amenity (EIAR Volume 2)**.

Table 4.3.1: Coastal Character Areas within 45 km Study Area			
Coastal Character Area	Distance and Direction from Site	Assessed in SLVIA	Justification for Omission from Detailed Assessment
CCA 27 Yell Sound	Host CCA	Yes	Included in detailed assessment.
CCA 26 Sullom Voe	1.5 km west	Yes	Included in detailed assessment.
CCA 3 Lunna Ness	2.6 km east	Yes	Included in detailed assessment.
CCA 23 Hillswick-The Hams	9.9 km west	No	Very limited visibility mostly from the sea. Main views are away from the Site towards the west. Effects on Shetland NSA are considered in Technical Appendix 4.6:

Table 4.3.1: Coastal Character Areas within 45 km Study Area			
Coastal Character Area	Distance and Direction from Site	Assessed in SLVIA	Justification for Omission from Detailed Assessment
			Shetland National Scenic Area Special Landscape Qualities Assessment (EIAR Volume 4).
CCA 25 Ronas	8.6 km northwest	No	No visibility.
CCA 39 Muckle Roe	10.4 km southwest	No	Very limited and patchy visibility. Effects on Shetland NSA are considered in Technical Appendix 4.6: Shetland National Scenic Area Special Landscape Qualities Assessment (EIAR Volume 4).
CCA 17 East Yell	11 km northeast	No	Very limited visibility from the sea in the southeast of the CCA.
CCA 6 West Linga	13 km southeast	No	Limited visibility from the sea in the north of the CCA.
CCA 22 Eshaness	13.6 km northwest	No	Very limited and patchy visibility. Effects on Shetland NSA are considered in Technical Appendix 4.6: Shetland National Scenic Area Special Landscape Qualities Assessment (EIAR Volume 4).
CCA 24 North Roe Coast	13.9 km northwest	No	No visibility from coast and sea. Effects on Shetland NSA are considered in Technical Appendix 4.6: Shetland National Scenic Area Special Landscape Qualities Assessment (EIAR Volume 4).
CCA 14 Colgrave Sound	14.5 km northeast	No	Limited visibility, restricted to southern end of CCA along west coast of Fetlar and open sea.
CCA 21 Whalefirth	15.3 km northeast	No	No visibility.
CCA 7 Whalsay	16.3 km southeast	No	Visibility restricted to north side of the CCA. Distance to Site is over 16 km.
CCA 42 West Burrafirth	19.3 km southwest	No	Limited visibility. Distance to Site is over 19 km.
CCA 4 Nesting Bay	19.7 km southeast	No	No visibility.
CCA 15 East Fetlar	21 km northeast	No	Distance to Site is 21 km and over.
CCA 12 Bluemull Sound	22.2 km northeast	No	No visibility.
CCA 2 Eswick-Bressay	23.5 km southeast	No	No visibility.
CCA 44 Whiteness and Weisdale	24.5 km south	No	No visibility.
CCA 11 Skerries	24.6 km east	No	Distance of over 24 km to Site.
CCA 40 Skeld	25.9 km southwest	No	No visibility.
CCA 10 Papa Stour	26 km southwest	No	Distance of 26 km and greater to Site.
CCA 18 Gloup-Breckon	27.7 km northeast	No	No visibility.

¹ University of the Highlands and Islands Shetland, (2021), Shetland Coastal Character Assessment,

² Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment Third Edition, (2013), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

³ Landscape Institute, (August 2024), Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3)

⁴ Landscape Institute, (2021), Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations

Table 4.3.1: Coastal Character Areas within 45 km Study Area			
Coastal Character Area	Distance and Direction from Site	Assessed in SLVIA	Justification for Omission from Detailed Assessment
CCA 43 West Side	28.3 km southwest	No	Distance of over 28 km to Site.
CCA 38 Gruting Voe	29.3 km southwest	No	Distance of over 29 km to Site.
CCA 19 Hermaness	30 km northeast	No	Distance of over 30 km to Site.
CCA 37 West Burra and Trondra	31 km southwest	No	No visibility.
CCA 41 Waas	32.3 km southwest	No	Distance of over 32 km to Site.
CCA 1 Bressay Sound	32.5 km southeast	No	Distance of over 32 km to Site.
CCA 5 Noss	32.5 km southeast	No	Distance of over 32 km to Site.
CCA 16 East Unst	32.5 km northeast	No	Distance of over 32 km to Site.
CCA 32 Dunrossness	36.9 km southeast	No	Distance of over 36 km to Site.
CCA 28 Clift Sound	37.2 km south	No	No visibility.
CCA 34 Mousa	37.6 km south	No	No visibility.
CCA 13 Burra Firth	41 km northeast	No	No visibility.
CCA 20 Skaw	44.8 km northeast	No	No visibility.

1.2 CCA Descriptions and Sensitivity Summary

CCA 27 – Yell Sound CCA (host CCA)

- 1.2.1 This is the host CCA, and extends from the Proposed Development north, up along the western and eastern coastlines of the Yell Sound to the Point of Fethaland and Fogla-lee, respectively. A section of the northwestern end is within the Shetland National Scenic Area (NSA). The overall key characteristics of this CCA as described in the SCCA are:
 - “Large island sound with a north-south orientation;
 - North end more exposed with views to open water and Ramna Stacks, more enclosed towards the south with various islands;
 - Landscape mainly agricultural with industrial uses and a larger settlement on the northern coast of Delting;
 - Ronas Hill is a central landscape feature; and
 - Coastline is fragmented to the north with a true remote feel, becoming lower and more developed to the south.”
- 1.2.2 The CCA comprises of several Coastal Character Types (CCTs), described in the SCCA. These have all been considered in the analysis of sensitivity and the following are of most relevance:
 - CCT 2: Undeveloped Voe and Firth (Quey Firth and Colla Firth)
 - Scattered development at head of firth.
 - No aquaculture development.
 - Colla Firth had a pier and marina.

- CCT 5: Undeveloped Island Sound
 - Busy for shipping.
 - Largely undeveloped.
 - No aquaculture development.
- CCT 6: Exposed Coast - Low Rocky Shore
 - One of the dominant CCTs in this character area, along both the western and east coastline of Yell Sound.
 - Stark rocky formation on Isle of Yell.
 - Mainland more low-lying along the coast.
- CCT 9: Exposed Coast- High Cliffs
 - Mainly confined to the north of the Yell Sound
 - High rock cliffs form dramatic scenery on both sides of the sound.
- CCT 12: Large Bay
 - One large bay in the CCA, Orka Voe.
 - Already heavily influenced and altered due to the construction and operation of SVT.
- CCT 12a: Small Bay
 - There are a number of small bays in the Yell Sound including Burra Voe, West Sandwick, Bay of Ulsta and Bay of Ollaberry.

1.2.3 The overall sensitivity of the CCA is considered High/Medium, based on a High/Medium Susceptibility and Medium Value as described in **Table 4.3.2**. This is largely based on the CCA’s scenic qualities, complex coastal form and sense of remoteness, with the northern end, and more exposed areas, having a higher sensitivity due to their expansive views, and more intact coastal condition with less industrial and other human influences.

CCA 26 – Sullom Voe CCA

- 1.2.4 This CCA is located 1.5 km west of the Proposed Development. It follows the coastlines of Sullom Voe, with Trumba and Calback Ness at the mouth, all the way south down to Brae. The overall key characteristics of this CCA as described in the SCCA are:
 - “Longest voe in Shetland running north south orientation with a slight bow shape;
 - North end opens up into Yell Sound, becomes narrower towards Brae;
 - Landscape is mainly rough grazing with heather clad hills and a large industrialised area in Delting including the Sullom Voe Oil Terminal, Sella Ness port and Scatsta airport
 - Ronas Hill is a dominant feature;
 - Coastline is mainly low rocky coast with areas of salt marsh, beach and low cliffs;
 - Used recreationally and on a small scale commercially for fishing and creels; and
 - Some historic features including listed buildings and remnants from WWII. ”
- 1.2.5 The CCA comprises of several CCTs, described in the SCCA. These have all been considered in the analysis of sensitivity and the following are of most relevance:
 - CCT 2: Undeveloped Voe and Firth (Gluss Voe)
 - Smaller undeveloped voe found at the mouth of Sullom Voe.
 - Some scattered development at the head of the voe.
 - No marine development.
 - CCT 6: Exposed Coast - Low Rocky Shore
 - Most common CCT in the Sullom Voe CCA.

- Low rocky shore is similar on both sides of the voe, shifting between layers of rock flat on the shore and rocky outcrops.
 - CCT 10: Large Harbour
 - Sullom Voe is a deep water harbour with facilities for oil and gas related vessels and smaller fishing and recreational boats.
 - Busy area for vessels collecting oil and gas from the terminal.
 - CCT 12a: Small Bay
 - Five small bays within the Sullom Voe CCA; Garths Voe, Voe of Scatsta, Dales Voe, Ell Wick and the Bight of Haggrister.
 - All have shingle ayres and are backed by a low bank.
 - CCT 14a: Tidal Islands
 - Gluss Isle is an uninhabited island connected to the Mainland via a shingle ayre.
 - The isle is only cut off during extreme high tides and is used to graze sheep through the year.
- 1.2.6 As described in **Table 4.3.3**, the overall sensitivity of the CCA is considered Medium and Medium/Low in the northeast where the influence of SVT is stronger. Southern areas of the CCA have a sense of remoteness and open coastal views across the voe.
- CCA 3 – Lunna Ness CCA**
- 1.2.7 This CCA is located 2.6 km east of the Proposed Development, and runs along the east side of Shetland, from Lunning Head around the coast to Mossbank, across Yell Sound to the Ness of Copister, and along to Heoga Ness. A section of the southeastern end is within the Lunna Ness and Lunning Local Landscape Area. The overall key characteristics of this CCA as described in the SCCA are:
- *“Long, narrow voes;*
 - *Aquaculture;*
 - *Small nucleated settlements;*
 - *Inhabited for many centuries evident from the remains of cairns. Historical features also include Brochs and Listed Buildings; and*
 - *Mix of steep sided voes and firths and low-lying coastal moorland”¹.*
- 1.2.8 A large area in the southern section of the CCA would have limited to no visibility of the Proposed Development, due to the intervening landform of Swinister Peninsula, Linga Isle and Lunna Peninsula.
- 1.2.9 The CCA comprises of several Coastal Character Types (CCTs), described in the SCCA. These have all been considered in the analysis of sensitivity and the following are of most relevance:
- CCT 1: Developed Voe and Firth (Dales Voe, Swining Voe and Vidlin Voe)
 - Dales Voe and Swining Voe have little onshore development but have aquaculture development.
 - Vidlin Voe is a medium sized settlement with local amenities and a marine. There is aquaculture development in the voe.
 - CCT 3: Voe and Firth Network
 - There are eleven voes and firths within the Lunna Ness CCA. Five of which create a voe and firth network; Firths Voe, Swinister Voe, Dales Voe, Colla Firth, and Swining Voe.
 - Mainly on a north-east axis with Swining Voe being north-south.
 - CCT 6: Exposed Coast - Low Rocky Shore
 - Low rocky shore around Vidlin Voe, the west side of Lunna Ness and around Hamna Voe into Burra Voe on Yell.
- Various shingle ayres can be found in wicks and geos with a tombolo in Hamna Voe, Yell and a large spit between Hamna Voe and Boatsroom Voe in Lunna.
 - CCT11: Marina
 - Two marinas in the Lunna Ness CCA, one in Burra Voe, Yell and one in Vidlin Voe.
 - CCT 14: Offshore Coastal Islands
 - Lunna Holm, Fish Holm, Linga and Wether Holm.
- 1.2.10 The overall Sensitivity of the CCA is considered High/Medium, based on a Medium Susceptibility and High/Medium Value as described in **Table 4.3.4**.

Table 4.3.2: CCA 27 Yell Sound Sensitivity Appraisal		
Evaluation of Landscape Value		
Criterion	Description	Evaluation
Natural Heritage	Numerous overlapping SPAs and SSSIs, particularly along the southern and northern ends of the CCA on Mainland and offshore coastal islands. Variety of geology, with Yell Sound sitting between two fault lines – the Walls boundary fault and the Nesting Fault and numerous Geosites of local and national importance.	High
Cultural Heritage	Evidence of historic settlement remains within the CCA, particularly along the more sheltered bays and voes.	Medium/Low
Landscape Condition	Areas within the more developed small and large bays and voes typically along the southern end of the CCA have more human influence, both with crofting, settlement and industrial activities. However, the uninhabited offshore isles and the steeper areas along the coast are largely intact.	Medium
Distinctiveness	This CCA is relatively extensive and large within Shetland, however it has a clear relationship with settlements and several distinct CCT features, including the high cliffs and offshore isles and the Moine schist bed rock.	High/Medium
Recreational	Recreational users including recreational fishing, kayaking and sailing.	Medium
Perceptual (Scenic)	Presence of focal points, including Ronas Hill, and the visual diversity of natural lines created by the changing coastal edge. The high cliffs along the northwestern end of the CCA create a stark and dramatic natural line along the coast, adding scenic value.	High/Medium
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	The presence of expansive undeveloped areas gives a sense of remoteness and wildness in the north. In the bays and southern end, where its more settled and industrial, there is a reduced sense of remoteness.	Medium
Overall evaluation of Value		Medium

Evaluation of Landscape Susceptibility		
Criterion	Description	Evaluation
Coastal Form and Scale	The CCA has a complex coastline and forms a variable and intricate coastal edge, from stark cliffs to sandy bays. The southern end becomes less fragmented, more low-lying and smooth, reducing susceptibility to the south.	High/Medium
Existing Land Use and Context	Predominantly undeveloped coastlines in the north, offshore coastal isles and the steep banks and high cliff CCTs. However, the southern end, particularly immediately adjacent to the Site, is more developed with larger settlements, piers, ferry terminals and the presence of SVT having an influence on coastal character.	High/Medium
Landcover Complexity/Simplicity	Relatively simple consisting of traditional crofting land, peat and heather moorland.	Medium
Nature of Visual Enclosure/Openness of Views	Towards the north views are more open, long distance, and panoramic. Within the voes and firths, and further to the south, near the smaller offshore isles, views are more enclosed and short distance.	High/Medium
Landmark features or focal points	Notable cliff top features creating a distinct horizon in the north, and a strong leading line down the coast. In the the south, particularly adjacent to the Site, the landscape is generally more low-lying and creates a less distinctive horizon.	Medium
Overall evaluation of susceptibility		High/Medium

Overall Sensitivity Appraisal
High/Medium sensitivity

Table 4.3.3: CCA 26 Sullom Voe Sensitivity Appraisal		
Evaluation of Landscape Value		
Criterion	Description	Evaluation
Natural Heritage	The entirety of the CCA coincides with Sullom Voe SAC, with several relatively small SSSIs along the southeastern coast and northern coastlines. The Walls Boundary Fault runs along part of the west coast of the CCA and there are numerous Geosites of local and international importance.	High
Cultural Heritage	Some historic features including listed buildings and remnants associated with WWII.	Medium
Landscape Condition	Areas along the northeastern end are more industrialised and developed. Whilst the offshore coastal islands and other exposed coastline consist of rough grazing and heather hills with limited human influence and access.	Low to Medium
Distinctiveness	This CCA comprises of relatively extensive low-lying coastline used for grazing.	Medium/Low
Recreational	Some recreational value associated with water and fishing recreational activities and hill walking along the more elevated parts of the coast.	Medium/Low

Table 4.3.3: CCA 26 Sullom Voe Sensitivity Appraisal		
Perceptual (Scenic)	Some notable landscape features including Cliva Hill and Ronas Hill which create focal points from this CCA. The coastline creates a natural line along the Voe, fragmented by industrial development.	Medium
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Stretches of coast with lack of access creates a sense of remoteness even when views capture the more industrial areas in the distance. However more industrial areas are busy with vessels due for Sella Ness port, SVT and commercial fishing. The various voes and houbes create intimate spaces within the CCA.	Low to Medium
Overall evaluation of Value		Medium

Evaluation of Landscape Susceptibility		
Criterion	Description	Evaluation
Coastal Form and Scale	Relatively smooth low-lying banks and rocky shores.	Medium
Existing Land Use and Context	The northeastern section of the CCA is largely industrialised. Areas in the south comprise of rough grazing with limited to no access.	Low to Medium
Landcover Complexity/Simplicity	Relatively simple consisting predominantly of grazing and heather hills.	Medium
Nature of Visual Enclosure/Openness of Views	Views vary with those within small bays and voes more enclosed, and the more exposed coast with open views across the other side of Sullom Voe, however these sections of coast often have limited access.	Low to Medium
Landmark features or focal points	Low-lying and less distinctive horizons in the north. Buildings and flare stacks associated with SVT Terminal are notable features in the north of the CCA.	Low to Medium
Overall evaluation of susceptibility		Low to Medium

Overall Sensitivity Appraisal
Medium sensitivity, Medium/Low sensitivity in the north at SVT

Table 4.3.4: CCA 3 Lunna Ness Sensitivity Appraisal		
Evaluation of Landscape Value		
Criterion	Description	Evaluation
Natural Heritage	The majority of the CCA is within an SPA, with numerous small overlapping SSSIs and SPAs along the southern and northern coastal sections and some offshore isles. Complex array of different rock types and multiple Geosites with one of national importance.	High
Cultural Heritage	Diverse and frequent historical remains along the coastline including cairns, listed buildings and scheduled monuments.	High
Landscape Condition	The coastline is influenced by settlement and ferry activities. Less sheltered areas are more intact.	Medium
Distinctiveness	Diversity of historical remains found along the coast, especially at Lunna, create great interest showing the historic connection with the sea.	High/medium
Recreational	Recreational users including recreational fishing, kayaking and sailing.	Medium
Perceptual (Scenic)	Scenically appealing with its variety of geology creating textural and visual diversity. The range of voes also gives a variety of views from enclosed coastline to exposed.	High/Medium
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	The presence of aquaculture, fishing vessels and visibility of the Yell-Toft Ferry service reduce the sense of wildness and remoteness.	Medium
Overall evaluation of Value		High/Medium

Evaluation of Landscape Susceptibility		
Criterion	Description	Evaluation
Coastal Form and Scale	The CCA is predominantly a low-lying shoreline of low complexity.	Medium
Existing Land Use and Context	The CCA is used for aquaculture, fishing vessels and the Yell-Toft ferry service is visible in the adjacent CCA 26 running multiple times a day. Sheltered areas are typically settled and influenced by humans.	Medium
Landcover Complexity/Simplicity	Relatively simple consisting of predominantly coastal moorland and improved land.	Medium
Nature of Visual Enclosure/Openness of Views	Variety of views from enclosed coastline within the voes and bays to more open views of Yell, Whalsay and Out Skerries along exposed coastline.	High/Medium
Landmark features or focal points	The landscape is generally low-lying with a less distinctive horizon although Lunna Ness is a notable headland.	Medium
Overall evaluation of susceptibility		Medium

Table 4.3.4: CCA 3 Lunna Ness Sensitivity Appraisal

Overall Sensitivity Appraisal

High/Medium sensitivity