

A photograph of an offshore wind farm at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and grey, with a few clouds. The sea is dark with white-capped waves in the foreground. Several wind turbines are visible, their silhouettes against the bright sky. The overall mood is serene and powerful.

Salamander Offshore Wind Farm

Onshore EIA Report

Volume ER.B.4, Annex 12.1: Landscape and Visual Impact
Assessment Methodology



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Glossary

Term	Definition
Viewpoint	A place from where a view is gained, and that represents specific conditions or viewers (visual receptors).

Acronyms

Term	Definition
DTM	Digital Terrain Model
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EBI	Energy Balancing Infrastructure
FFL	Finished Floor Level
GLVIA3	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
km	Kilometre
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
m	Metre
OS	Ordnance Survey
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

12 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1.1 This annex of the Onshore Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) presents the methodology used within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the potential impacts of the Onshore Development of the Salamander Project ('the Onshore Development') on Landscape and Visual Amenity receptors (see Volume ER.B.3, Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Amenity).

12.2 Overview of Landscape and Visual Impact Methodology

12.2.1.1 The Landscape and Visual Amenity chapter has followed the methodology set out here, which accords with the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) and other best practice guidance.

12.2.1.2 The LVIA is undertaken using the following steps:

- The features of the Onshore Development that may result in landscape and / or visual effects are described;
- The overall scope of the assessment is defined, including the Study Area and range of possible landscape and visual effects;
- The landscape baseline is established using Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping, to identify landscape receptors that may be affected and published landscape character assessments, to identify their key characteristics and value;
- The visual baseline is established by identifying the extent of possible visibility, identifying the people who may be affected, identifying visual receptors and selecting viewpoints;
- A preliminary assessment of landscape and visual receptors is undertaken to identify which landscape and visual receptors are unlikely to be significantly affected, and those that are more likely to be significantly affected and require more detailed assessment;
- Interactions are identified between the Onshore Development and landscape and visual receptors to predict potentially significant effects arising, and measures are proposed to mitigate effects;
- An assessment of the susceptibility of landscape and visual receptors to specific change and the value attached to landscape receptors and views is undertaken, combining these judgements to assess the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors to the Onshore Development;
- An assessment of the size / scale of landscape effect, the degree to which landscape elements are altered and the degree to which the effects change the key characteristics of the landscape is undertaken, combining these judgements to assess the magnitude of change on the landscape receptor;
- An assessment of the size / scale of visual effect, the degree to which the change would affect views, whether this is unique or representative of a wider area, and the position of the Onshore Development in relation to the principal orientation of the view and activity of the receptor. These judgements are combined to assess the magnitude of change on the visual receptor; and
- The assessments of sensitivity to change and magnitude of change are combined to assess the significance of landscape and visual effects.

12.2.1.3 GLVIA3 set out an approach to the assessment of magnitude of change in which three separate considerations are combined within the magnitude of change rating. These are the size or scale of the effect,

its geographical extent and its duration and reversibility. Notably GLVIA3 is not a prescriptive methodology but guidance. The guidance suggests that this approach is to be applied in respect of both landscape and visual receptors. It is considered that the process of combining all three considerations in one rating can distort the aim of identifying potential significant effects of development. For example, a high magnitude of change, based on size or scale, may be reduced to a lower rating if it occurred in a localised geographical area and for a short duration. This might mean that a potentially significant effect would be overlooked if effects are diluted down due to their limited geographical extents and / or duration or reversibility.

- 12.2.1.4 As advocated by GLVIA3 the assessment has used professional judgement in defining the methodology for the LVIA. Page 21 of GLVIA3 states:

"Professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA.....Professional judgements must be based on both training and experience and in general suitably qualified and experienced landscape professionals should carry out Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments. Even with qualified and Experienced professionals there can be differences in the judgements made. This may result from using different approaches or different criteria, or from variation in judgements based on the same criteria".

- 12.2.1.5 In this LVIA, the consideration of the size or scale of the effect, its geographical extent and its duration and reversibility has been undertaken separately, by basing the magnitude of change on size or scale to determine where significant and not significant effects occur, and then describing the geographical extents of these effects and their duration and reversibility separately. Duration and reversibility are stated separately in relation to the assessed effects (i.e., as short-, medium- or long-term and temporary or permanent) and are considered as part of drawing conclusions about likely significance, combining with other judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, to allow a final judgement to be made on whether each effect is significant or not significant.

- 12.2.1.6 The assessment methodology utilises six scales of magnitude of change - high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, low and negligible / none; which are preferred to the 'maximum of five categories' suggested in GLVIA3 as a means of clearly defining and summarising magnitude of change judgements.

12.3 Approach to Assessment and Assessment Criteria

12.3.1 Effects on Physical Landscape Elements

- 12.3.1.1 The sensitivity of a physical landscape element is an expression of its ability to accommodate the Onshore Development. This is dependent on the value of the landscape element and its susceptibility to the change that would arise from the addition of the Onshore Development.

Value of the Landscape Element

- 12.3.1.2 The value of a landscape element is a reflection of its importance in the pattern of elements which constitute the landscape character of the area. For example, the value of woodland is likely to be increased if it provides an important component of the local landscape character. If a landscape element is particularly rare - as a remnant of a historic landscape layout for example - its value is likely to be increased.

Landscape Element Susceptibility to Change

- 12.3.1.3 The susceptibility of a landscape element is a reflection of the degree to which the element can be restored, replaced or substituted. For example, it may be possible to restore ground cover following the excavation required for the building of turbine foundations, and this would reduce the susceptibility of this element.

Landscape Element Sensitivity Rating

12.3.1.4 The sensitivity of each landscape element is a product of the specific combination of value and susceptibility to the Onshore Development as evaluated by professional judgement. The evaluation of sensitivity is described for each receptor in the assessment, and levels of sensitivity - high, medium or low - are applied. Interim levels of sensitivity – medium-high and medium-low - may also be applied where appropriate for the combination of value and susceptibility.

Landscape Elements Magnitude of Change

12.3.1.5 The magnitude of change on landscape elements is quantifiable and is expressed in terms of the degree to which a landscape element would be removed or altered by the Onshore Development. Definitions of magnitude of change are applied in order that the process of assessment is made clear.

- High where the Onshore Development would result in the complete or substantial removal of a key landscape element;
- Medium where the Onshore Development would result in the removal of or major alteration to a notable part of a key landscape element;
- Low where the Onshore Development would result in the removal of or alteration to a minor part of a key landscape element; and
- Negligible where the alteration to the landscape element is barely discernible.

12.3.1.6 There may also be intermediate levels of magnitude of change – medium-high, medium-low and low-negligible - where the change falls between two of the definitions.

Evaluating Effects on Landscape Elements and their Significance

12.3.1.7 The significance of the effect on landscape elements is dependent on all of the factors considered in the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change upon it. A significant effect would occur where the degree of removal or alteration of a key landscape element is such that the form of this element would be redefined. If the landscape element is of a high sensitivity, a significant effect can occur with a relatively limited degree of removal or alteration. A not significant effect would occur where the landscape element is not a key landscape element, and/or is not redefined as a result of the Onshore Development. If the landscape element is of lower sensitivity, it may undergo a higher level of removal or alteration yet remain as a not significant effect.

12.3.2 Landscape Character Effects

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptor

12.3.2.1 The sensitivity of a landscape character receptor is a combination of the judgements made about the value associated with that receptor and the susceptibility of the receptor to the development proposed.

Value of the Landscape Receptor

12.3.2.2 The value of a landscape character receptor reflects the value that society attaches to that landscape. The assessment of the landscape value is classified as high, medium-high, medium, medium-low or low and the basis for this assessment is made clear using evidence and professional judgement, based on the following range of factors.

- Landscape designations - A receptor that lies within the boundary of a recognised landscape related planning designation is of increased value, depending on the proportion of the receptor within it and the level of importance of the designation which may be international, national,

regional or local. The absence of designations does not however preclude value, as an undesignated landscape character receptor may be valued as a resource in the local or immediate environment.

- Landscape quality - The quality of a landscape character receptor reflects its attributes, such as scenic quality, sense of place, rarity and representativeness and the extent to which its valued attributes have remained intact. A landscape with consistent, intact, well-defined and distinctive attributes is considered to be of higher quality and, in turn, higher value, than a landscape where the introduction of elements has detracted from its character.
- Landscape experience - The experiential qualities that can be evoked by a landscape receptor can add to its value and relates to a number of factors including:
 - the perceptual responses it evokes;
 - the cultural associations that may exist in literature or history, or the iconic status of the landscape in its own right;
 - the recreational value of the landscape; and
 - the contribution of other values relating to the nature conservation or archaeology of the area.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

12.3.2.3 The susceptibility of a landscape character receptor to change reflects its ability to accommodate the changes that would occur as a result of the addition of the Onshore Development. Some landscape receptors are better able to accommodate change as a result of the development than others due to certain characteristics that are indicative of capacity to accommodate change. These characteristics may or not also be special landscape qualities that underpin designated landscapes.

12.3.2.4 The assessment of the susceptibility of the landscape receptor to change is classified as high, medium-high, medium, medium-low or low, and the basis for this assessment has been made clear using evidence and professional judgement. The following indicators of landscape susceptibility are considered in the context of the Onshore Development:

- Overall strength and robustness: Collectively the overall characteristics and qualities of a particular landscape result in a strong and robust landscape that is capable of reasonably accommodating the influence of the Onshore Development without undue adverse effects on the special landscape qualities (in the case of a designated landscape) or the key characteristics.
- Landscape scale and topography: The scale and topography are large enough to physically accommodate the influence of the Onshore Development. Topographical features such as more complex, distinctive or small-scale coastal landforms are likely to be more susceptible than simple, broad and homogenous coastal landforms.
- Openness and enclosure: Openness in the landscape may increase susceptibility to change because it can result in wider visibility, however an open landscape may also be larger scale and simple, which would decrease susceptibility. Conversely, enclosed landscapes can offer more screening potential, limiting visibility to a smaller area, however they may also be smaller scale and more complex which would increase susceptibility.
- Skyline: Prominent and distinctive skylines and horizons with important landmark features that are identified in the landscape character assessment, are generally considered to be more susceptible to development in comparison to broad, simple skylines which lack landmark features or contain other infrastructure features.
- Relationship with other development and landmarks: Contemporary landscapes where there are existing similar developments or other forms of development (industry, mineral extraction,

masts, urban fringe / large settlement, major transport routes) that already have a characterising influence result in a lower susceptibility to development in comparison to areas characterised by limited development or smaller scale, historic development and landmarks.

- Perceptual qualities: Notable landscapes that are acknowledged to be particularly scenic, wild or tranquil are generally considered to be more susceptible to development in comparison to ordinary, cultivated or farmed / developed landscapes where perceptions of 'wildness' and tranquillity are less tangible. Landscapes which are either remote or appear natural may vary in their susceptibility to development.
- Landscape context and association: the extent to which the Onshore Development would influence the character of landscape receptors across the study area relates to the associations that exist between the landscape receptor within which the Onshore Development is located and the landscape receptor from which the Onshore Development is experienced. In some situations, this association is strong, where the landscapes are directly related, and in other situations weak, where the landscape association is weak. The context and visual connection to areas of adjacent landscape character or designations has a bearing on the susceptibility to development.

Landscape Sensitivity Rating

12.3.2.5 An overall sensitivity assessment of the landscape receptor is made by combining the assessment of the value of the landscape character receptor and its susceptibility to change. The evaluation of landscape sensitivity has been applied for each landscape receptor - high, medium-high, medium, medium-low and low - by combining individual assessments of the value of the receptor and its susceptibility to change.

Landscape Magnitude of Change

12.3.2.6 The magnitude of change affecting landscape receptors is an expression of the scale of the change that would result from the Onshore Development and is dependent on a number of variables regarding the size or scale of the change and the geographical extent over which the change would be experienced.

Size or Scale of Change

12.3.2.7 This criterion relates to the size or scale of change to the landscape that would arise as a result of the Onshore Development, based on the following factors:

- Landscape elements: The degree to which the pattern of elements that makes up the landscape character is altered by the Onshore Development, by removal or addition of elements in the landscape. The magnitude of change will generally be higher if the features that make up the landscape character are extensively removed or altered, and / or if many new elements are added to the landscape.
- Landscape characteristics: The extent to which the effect of the Onshore Development changes, physically or perceptually, the key characteristics of the landscape that may be important to its distinctive character. This may include, for example, the scale of the landform, its relative simplicity or irregularity, the nature of the landscape context, the grain or orientation of the landscape, the degree to which the receptor is influenced by external features and the juxtaposition of the Onshore Development in relation to these key characteristics. If the Onshore Development is located in a landscape receptor that is already affected by other similar development, this may reduce the magnitude of change, particularly if there is a high level of integration and the developments form a unified and cohesive feature in the landscape.
- Landscape designation: In the case of designated landscapes, the degree of change is considered in light of the effects on the special landscape qualities which underpin the designation and the effect on the integrity of the designation. All landscapes change over time and much of that change is managed or planned. Often landscapes will have management objectives for 'protection' or 'accommodation' of development. The scale of change may be localised, or

occurring over parts of an area, or more widespread affecting whole landscape receptors and their overall integrity.

- Distance: The size and scale of change is also strongly influenced by the proximity of the Onshore Development to the receptor. Distance may be an influential factor to the extent that over a long range the scale of the influence on landscape receptors may be small or very limited. Conversely, landscapes closest to the Proposed Development are likely to be most affected. Where the development is located within a 'host' landscape character area this would be directly affected whilst adjacent areas of landscape character would be indirectly affected.
- Amount and nature of change: The amount of the Onshore Development that is seen. Generally, the greater the amount of the Onshore Development that can be seen, the higher the scale of change. Generally, the magnitude of change is likely to be lower where the Onshore Development is largely perceived to be at a distance, rather than 'within' the landscape being considered.

Geographical Extent

12.3.2.8 The geographic extent over which the landscape effects are experienced is also assessed, which is distinct from the size or scale of effect. This evaluation is not combined in the assessment of the level of magnitude, but instead expresses the extent of the receptor that will experience a particular magnitude of change and therefore the geographical extents of the significant and non-significant effects.

12.3.2.9 The extent of the effects will vary depending on the specific nature of the Onshore Development and is principally assessed through analysis of the extent of perceived changes to the landscape character through visibility of the Onshore Development.

Duration and Reversibility

12.3.2.10 The duration and reversibility of landscape effects is based on the period over which the Onshore Development is likely to exist (during construction, operation and decommissioning).

12.3.2.11 Long-term, medium-term and short-term landscape effects are defined as follows:

- long-term - more than 10 years (or defined as permanent / irreversible);
- medium-term - 5 to 10 years; and
- short-term - 0 to 5 years.

Landscape Magnitude of Change Rating

12.3.2.12 The 'magnitude' or 'degree of change' resulting from the Onshore Development is described as 'high', 'high-medium', 'medium', 'medium-low', 'low' or 'negligible'. In assessing magnitude of change, the assessment focuses on the size or scale of change, the geographical extent, duration and reversibility are stated separately in relation to the assessed effects.

12.4 Evaluating Landscape Effects and Significance

12.4.1.1 The level of landscape effect is evaluated primarily through the combination of landscape sensitivity and magnitude of change. Once the level of effect has been assessed, a judgement is then made as to whether the level of effect is 'significant' or 'not significant'. This process is assisted by the matrix in **Table 12.1-1** which is used to guide the assessment. Geographical extent and duration and reversibility are considered relevant in drawing conclusions about significance, combining with other judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, to allow a final judgement to be made on whether each effect is significant or not significant.

12.4.1.2 Further information is also provided about the nature of the effects (whether these would be direct or indirect; temporary / permanent / reversible; beneficial / neutral / adverse or cumulative).

12.4.1.3 A significant effect occurs where the combination of the variables results in the Onshore Development having a defining effect on the landscape receptor, or where changes of a lower magnitude affect a landscape receptor that is of particularly high sensitivity. A major loss or irreversible effect over an extensive area or landscape character, affecting landscape elements, characteristics and / or perceptual aspects that are key to a nationally valued landscape are likely to be significant, particularly if they are of long duration and irreversible.

12.4.1.4 A non-significant effect would occur where the effect of the Onshore Development is not defining, and the landscape character of the receptor continues to be characterised principally by its baseline characteristics. Equally a small-scale change experienced by a receptor of high sensitivity may not significantly affect the special landscape quality or integrity of a designation. Reversible effects, on elements, characteristics and character that are of small-scale or geographical extent or affecting lower value receptors, are unlikely to be significant.

12.4.2 Visual Effects

12.4.2.1 Visual Effects are concerned wholly with the effect of the Onshore Development on views, and the general visual amenity. Visual Effects are defined by the Landscape Institute in GLVIA3, paragraphs 6.1 as follows:

"An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on views available to people and their visual amenity. The concern is with assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the context and character of views."

12.4.2.2 Visual effects are identified for different receptors (people) who would experience the view at their place of residence, within their community, during recreational activities, at work, or when travelling through the area. The visual effects may include the following:

- Visual effect: a change to an existing static view, sequential views, or wider visual amenity as a result of development or the loss of particular landscape elements or features already present in the view; or
- Cumulative visual effects: the cumulative or incremental visibility of similar types of development may combine to have a cumulative visual effect.

12.4.2.3 The level of visual effect (and whether this is significant) is determined through consideration of the sensitivity of the visual receptor and their view and the magnitude of change that would be brought about by the Onshore Development.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

12.4.2.4 Plans mapping the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) are used to analyse the extent of theoretical visibility of the Onshore Development. The ZTVs provide a starting point in the assessment process and tend towards giving the greatest calculation of the theoretical visibility. ZTV production for the LVIA, including limitations, is described in **Section 12.8** of this annex.

Viewpoint Analysis

12.4.2.5 Viewpoint analysis is used to assist the assessment and is conducted from selected viewpoints within the study area. The purpose of this is to assess both the level of visual effect for particular receptors and to help guide the design process and focus of the assessment. A range of viewpoints are examined in detail and analysed to determine whether a significant visual effect would occur.

12.4.2.6 The assessment involves visiting the viewpoint location and comparing visualisations prepared for each with the existing view. Field survey is generally conducted in periods of fine weather with good visibility and considers seasonal changes such as reduced leaf cover or hedgerow maintenance. The viewpoint analysis is used to assist in the assessment of effects on visual receptor locations as well as landscape character effects reported in the LVIA.

Evaluating Visual Sensitivity to Change

12.4.2.7 In accordance with paragraphs 6.31-6.37 of GLVIA3, the sensitivity of visual receptors is determined by a combination of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the visual receptors to the change likely to result from the Onshore Development on the view and visual amenity.

Value of View

12.4.2.8 The value of a view or series of views reflects the recognition and the importance attached either formally through identification on mapping or being subject to planning designations, or informally through the value which society attaches to the view(s). The value of a view has been classified as high, medium-high, medium, medium-low or low, and the basis for this assessment has been made clear using evidence and professional judgement, based on the following criteria.

- Formal recognition - The value of views can be formally recognised through their identification on Ordnance Survey (OS) or tourist maps as formal viewpoints, sign-posted and with facilities provided to add to the enjoyment of the viewpoint such as parking, seating and interpretation boards. Specific views may be afforded protection in local planning policy and recognised as valued views. Specific views can also be cited as being of importance in relation to landscape or heritage planning designations, for example the value of a view has been increased if it presents an important vista from a designed landscape or lies within or overlooks a designated area, which implies a greater value to the visible landscape.
- Informal recognition - Views that are well-known at a local level and / or have particular scenic qualities can have an increased value, even if there is no formal recognition or designation. Views or viewpoints are sometimes informally recognised through references in art or literature and this can also add to their value. A viewpoint that is visited or appreciated by a large number of people will generally have greater importance than one gained by very few people.

Susceptibility to Change

12.4.2.9 Susceptibility relates to the nature of the viewer experiencing the view and how susceptible they are to the potential effects of the Onshore Development. A judgement to determine the level of susceptibility therefore relates to the nature of the viewer and their experience from that particular viewpoint or series of viewpoints, classified as high, medium-high, medium, medium-low or low and based on the following criteria:

- Nature of the viewer - The nature of the viewer is defined by the occupation or activity of the viewer at the viewpoint or series of viewpoints. The most common groups of viewers considered in the visual assessment include residents, motorists, and people taking part in recreational activity or working. Viewers, whose attention is focused on the landscape, or with static long-term views, are likely to have a higher susceptibility. Viewers travelling in cars or on trains will tend to have a lower susceptibility as their view is transient and moving. The least sensitive viewers are usually people at their place of work as they are generally less susceptible to changes in views.
- Experience of the viewer - The experience of the visual receptor relates to the extent to which the viewer's attention or interest may be focused on the view and the visual amenity they experience at a particular location. The susceptibility of the viewer to change arising from the

Onshore Development may be influenced by the viewer's attention or interest in the view, which may be focused in a particular direction, from a static or transitory position, over a long or short duration, and with high or low clarity. For example, if the principal outlook from a settlement is aligned directly towards the Onshore Development, the experience of the visual receptor is altered more notably than if the experience relates to a glimpsed view seen at an oblique angle from a car travelling at high speed. The visual amenity experienced by the viewer varies depending on the presence and relationship of visible elements, features or patterns experienced in the view and the degree to which the landscape in the view may accommodate the influence of the Onshore Development.

Visual Sensitivity Rating

12.4.2.10 An overall level of sensitivity is applied for each visual receptor or view - high, medium-high, medium, medium-low or low by combining individual assessments of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change. Each visual receptor, meaning the particular person or group of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint, is assessed in terms of their sensitivity.

Visual Magnitude of Change

12.4.2.11 The visual magnitude of change is an expression of the scale of the change that will result from the Onshore Development and is dependent on a number of variables regarding the size or scale of the change. A separate assessment is also made of the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of visual effects.

Size or Scale of Change

12.4.2.12 An assessment is made regarding the size or scale of change in the view that is likely to be experienced as a result of the Onshore Development, based on the following criteria:

- Distance: the distance between the visual receptor / viewpoint and the Onshore Development. Generally, the greater the distance, the lower the magnitude of change, as the Onshore Development will constitute a smaller scale component of the view.
- Size: the amount and size of the Onshore Development that is seen. Visibility may range from small or partial visibility of the Onshore Development to wider visibility of the onshore elements. Generally, the larger and greater number of elements of the Onshore Development that appear in the view, the higher the magnitude of change. This is also related to the degree to which the Onshore Development may be wholly or partly screened by landform, vegetation (seasonal) and / or built form. Conversely open views are likely to reveal more of the Onshore Development, particularly where this is a key characteristic of the landscape context.
- Scale: the scale of the change in the view, with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition. The scale of the Onshore Development may appear larger or smaller relative to the scale of the receiving landscape.
- Field of view: the vertical / horizontal field of view (FoV) and the proportion of the view that is affected by the Onshore Development. Generally, the more of the proportion of a view that is affected, the higher the magnitude of change. If the Onshore Development extend across the whole of the open part of the outlook, the magnitude of change is higher as the full view has been affected. Conversely, if the Onshore Development covers just a narrow part of an open, expansive and wide view, the magnitude of change is likely to be reduced as it will not affect the whole open part of the outlook. This can in part be described objectively by reference to the horizontal / vertical FoV affected, relative to the extent and proportion of the available view.
- Contrast: the character and context within which the Onshore Development are seen and the degree of contrast or integration of any new features with existing landscape elements, in terms of scale, form, mass, line, height, colour, luminance and motion. Developments which contrast

or appear incongruous in terms of colour, scale and form are likely to be more visible and have a higher magnitude of change.

- Consistency of image: the consistency of image of the Onshore Development in relation to other developments. The magnitude of change of Onshore Development is likely to be lower if its layout design is broadly similar to other developments in the landscape, in terms of its scale, form and general appearance. New development is more likely to appear as logical components of the landscape with a strong rationale for their location.
- Skyline / background: Whether the Onshore Development would be viewed against the skyline or a background landscape may affect the level of contrast and magnitude. If the Onshore Development add to an already developed skyline the magnitude of change would tend to be lower.
- Number: generally, the greater the number of separate elements of the Onshore Development seen simultaneously or sequentially, the higher the magnitude of change. Further effects could also occur in the case of separate developments and their spatial relationship to each other would affect the magnitude of change. For example, development that appears as an extension to an existing development would tend to result in a lower magnitude of change than a separate, new development.
- Nature of visibility: the nature of visibility is a further factor for consideration. The Onshore Development may be subject to various phases of development change and the manner in which the Onshore Development may be viewed could be intermittent or continuous and / or vary seasonally, due to periodic management or leaf fall.

Geographical Extent

12.4.2.13 The geographic extent over which the visual effects has been experienced is also assessed, which is distinct from the size or scale of effect and is described in terms of the physical area or location over which it is experienced (described as a linear or area measurement). The extent of the effects varies according to the specific nature of the Onshore Development and is principally assessed through ZTV, field survey and viewpoint analysis of the extent of visibility likely to be experienced by visual receptors.

Visual Magnitude of Change Rating

12.4.2.14 The 'magnitude' or 'degree of change' resulting from the Onshore Development is described as 'High', 'High-medium', 'Medium', 'Medium-low' 'Low' and 'Negligible'. In assessing the magnitude of change the assessment focuses on the size or scale of change and its geographical extent. The duration and reversibility are stated separately in relation to the assessed effects (i.e. as short / medium / long-term and temporary / permanent). The basis for the assessment of magnitude for each receptor is made clear using evidence and professional judgement.

Evaluating Visual Effects and Significance

12.4.2.15 The level of visual effect and whether it is 'significant' or 'not significant' is made using a similar process to that undertaken for the assessment of landscape effects and is based on professional judgement, the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change the receptor would undergo, as guided by the matrix in **Table 12.1-1**. It considers the geographical extent, duration, reversibility and the nature of the effects.

12.4.2.16 A significant effect is more likely to occur where the Onshore Development would have a defining effect on the view or visual amenity or where changes affect a visual receptor that is of high sensitivity.

12.4.2.17 A non-significant effect is more likely to occur where the Onshore Development would have a non-defining effect on the view or visual amenity or where changes affect a visual receptor that is of low sensitivity.

12.5 Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

12.5.1 Approach to Cumulative Effects

12.5.1.1 NatureScot's guidance, 'Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments' (2021) is widely used across the UK to inform the specific assessment of the cumulative landscape and visual effects of different types of development. Whilst the focus of the NatureScot guidance relates to wind farm development, both GLVIA3 and NatureScot's guidance provides the basis for the methodology for the cumulative LVIA and so it is relevant to this LVIA.

12.5.1.2 The Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) considers the impacts associated with the Onshore Development together with other relevant plans, projects and activities. Cumulative effects are therefore the effects of the Onshore Development in combination with the effects from a number of different projects, on the same receptor or resource.

12.5.1.3 GLVIA3 (Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013, p120) defines cumulative landscape and visual effects as those that:

"result from additional changes to the landscape and visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future."

12.5.1.4 Other proposed developments that have the potential for cumulative effects in combination with the Onshore Development are considered to be those developments that are found within the 5 kilometre (km) study area. This 5 km study area for the assessment of cumulative effects covers the same area as the study area in the main assessment and extends to a 5 km buffer around the maximum footprint of the Onshore Substation and Energy Balancing Infrastructure compounds. The 5 km study area extends to define a limit beyond which professional judgement considers it would be unlikely for significant cumulative effects to arise. This judgement is based on knowledge of similar projects, an understanding of the character of the local landscape, as well as an understanding of the scale of the construction and development of the Onshore Development.

12.5.1.5 Adjacent developments may complement one another, or may be discordant with one another, and it is the increased or reduced level of significance of effects which arises as a result of this change that is assessed. Where this occurs, the magnitude of change varies according to cumulative effect factors such as its consistency of image and degree of contrast or integration with the onshore elements of the Onshore Development, as well as other 'non-cumulative' factors, such as its distance, lateral spread and amount of visibility.

12.5.1.6 NatureScot's guidance (NatureScot 2021, p8) highlights that:

"The purpose of a Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) is to describe, visually represent and assess the ways in which a proposed wind farm would have additional impacts when considered with other consented or proposed wind farms. It should identify the significant cumulative impacts arising from the proposed wind farm. The assessment should be proportionate to the likely impacts and all CLVIA should accord with the guidelines within GLVIA3. The emphasis should be on the production of relevant and useful information, highlighting why the proposals assessed have been included and why others have been excluded, rather than the provision of a large volume of information."

- 12.5.1.7 NatureScot's guidance (NatureScot 2021, p7) states that: "*Cumulative impacts can change either the physical fabric of character of the landscape, or any special values attached to it*", and that: "*Cumulative impacts on visual amenity can be caused by 'combined visibility' and / or 'sequential impacts'*".
- 12.5.1.8 GLVIA3, p120 also highlights that: "*the focus of the cumulative assessment will be on the additional effect of the project in conjunction with other developments of the same type (as for example, in the case of wind farms)*".
- 12.5.1.9 In line with NatureScot guidance and GLVIA3, cumulative effects are assessed in this LVIA as the additional changes caused by the Onshore Development in conjunction with other similar developments (not the totality of the cumulative effect). The CEA assesses the cumulative effect of the Onshore Development with other projects against the baseline, with the assessment of significance apportioning the amount of the effect that is attributable to the Onshore Development. Adjacent developments may complement one another, or may be discordant with one another, and it is the increased or reduced level of significance of effects which arises because of this change that is assessed in the CEA, such as through design discordance or proliferation of multiple developments affecting characteristics or new geographic areas, and ultimately if character changes occur because of multiple developments becoming a prevailing characteristic of the landscape or view.

Cumulative Effects Assessment of Projects at Different Development Stages

- 12.5.1.10 In accordance with NatureScot guidance and GLVIA3 (para 7.13), existing projects have been included in the LVIA baseline and described as part of the baseline conditions, including the extent to which these have altered character and views, and affected sensitivity to the Onshore Development. There are no relevant developments under construction with the 5 km study area. An assessment of the additional effect of the Onshore Development has been undertaken in conjunction with a baseline that includes operational energy projects as part of the main assessment **Section 12.11 in Volume ER.B.3, Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Amenity**. This includes assessment of the Onshore Development against magnitude factors such as its size, scale and landscape context, as well as cumulative effect factors relating to the operational energy projects, such as its aesthetic relationship, and contrasts of size and design with these projects.
- 12.5.1.11 An assessment of the additional cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Onshore Development with other potential future projects at different development stages is undertaken in the CEA presented within **Volume ER.B.3, Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Amenity, Section 12.13**.
- 12.5.1.12 The CEA only considers plans or projects that are operational or under construction, or those that have been granted a consent. **Volume ER.B.5, Visualisations 12.1: LVIA Visualisations; Figure 12-9** shows that the 5 km study area only includes operational or consented energy projects.
- 12.5.1.13 The impacts of the Onshore Development and all relevant projects that are operational or under construction (at least six months before the Onshore Development's application submission) have been assessed as part of the main assessment in **Volume ER.B.3, Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Amenity, Section 12.11**.
- 12.5.1.14 The impacts of the Onshore Development, all relevant operational or under construction projects and those which have been granted consent (at least six months before the Onshore Development's application submission) have been assessed in the CEA, in **Volume ER.B.3, Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Amenity, Section 12.13**.

Cumulative Sensitivity of Landscape and Visual Receptors

12.5.1.15 In evaluating cumulative sensitivity, the value component of the assessments of sensitivity would not change, however, in an evolving development context, the susceptibility of a landscape and visual receptor to the introduction of the Onshore Development may increase or decrease. This is based on the criteria contained in the landscape and visual susceptibility criteria sections of this methodology.

Cumulative Magnitude of Change

12.5.1.16 The cumulative magnitude of change is an expression of the degree to which landscape character receptors and visual receptors or views would be changed by the addition of the Onshore Development to other relevant developments that are already operational, consented or at application stage. Where required, scoping stage developments may exceptionally be included. The cumulative magnitude of change is assessed according to a number of criteria, described as follows:

- **The location of the Onshore Development in relation to other relevant developments.** If the Onshore Development is seen in a part of the view or setting to a landscape receptor that is not affected by other development, this would generally increase the cumulative magnitude of change as it would extend influence into an area that is currently unaffected by development. Conversely, if the Onshore Development is seen in the context of other sites, the cumulative magnitude of change may be lower as development is not being extended to otherwise undeveloped parts of the outlook or setting. This is particularly true where the scale and layout of the Onshore Development is similar to that of the other sites as where there is a high level of integration and cohesion with an existing site the various developments may appear as a single site.
- **The extent of the developed skyline.** If the Onshore Development would add notably to the developed skyline in a view, the cumulative magnitude of change would tend to be higher as skyline development can have a particular influence on both views and landscape receptors.
- **The number and scale of developments seen simultaneously or sequentially.** Generally, the greater the number of clearly separate developments that are visible, the higher the cumulative magnitude of change would be. The addition of the Onshore Development to a view or landscape where a number of smaller developments are apparent would usually have a higher cumulative magnitude of change than one or two large developments as this can lead to the impression of a less co-ordinated or strategic approach.
- **The scale comparison between developments.** If the Onshore Development is of a similar scale to other visible developments, particularly those seen in closest proximity to it, the cumulative magnitude of change would generally be lower as it would have more integration with the other sites and would be less apparent as an addition to the cumulative situation.
- **The consistency of image of the Onshore Development in relation to other developments.** The cumulative magnitude of change of the Onshore Development is likely to be lower if its turbine height, arrangement and layout design are broadly similar to other developments in the landscape, as they are more likely to appear as relatively simple and logical components of the landscape.
- **The context in which the developments are seen.** If developments are seen in a similar landscape context, the cumulative magnitude of change is likely to be lower due to visual integration and cohesion between the sites. If developments are seen in a variety of different landscape settings, this can lead to a perception that wind farm development is unplanned and uncoordinated, affecting a wide range of landscape characters and blurring the distinction between them; and
- **The magnitude of change of the Onshore Development as assessed in the main assessment.** The lower this is assessed to be, the lower the cumulative magnitude of change is likely to be.

Where the Onshore Development itself is assessed to have a negligible magnitude of change on a view or receptor there would not be a cumulative effect as the contribution of the Onshore Development would equate to the 'no change' situation.

Evaluating Cumulative Effects and Significance

- 12.5.1.17 The level of visual effect is evaluated through the combination of receptor sensitivity and cumulative magnitude of change. Once the level of effect has been assessed, a judgement is then made (using professional judgement) as to whether the level of effect is 'significant' or 'not significant'. This process is assisted by the matrix in **Table 12.1-1** which is used to guide the assessment. Further information is also provided about the nature of the effects (whether these would be direct or indirect; temporary / permanent / reversible; beneficial / neutral / adverse).
- 12.5.1.18 Significant cumulative effects are considered likely to occur where the addition of the Onshore Development to the baseline under consideration (which may include other developments), leads to these developments becoming a prevailing landscape and visual characteristic or where the Onshore Development adversely contrasts with the scale or design of an existing or proposed cumulative development. A non-significant cumulative effect is more likely to occur where the Onshore Development would have a non-defining effect on the receptor or where changes affect a receptor that is of low sensitivity.

12.6 Evaluation of significance

Table 12.1-1 Matrix Used for the Assessment of the significance of the Effect

Significance of effect		Magnitude of change					
		<i>Negligible</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium-low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium-high</i>	<i>High</i>
Sensitivity	<i>Low</i>	Negligible (Not Significant)	Negligible (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)	Moderate / minor (Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant or Not Significant)
	<i>Medium-low</i>	Negligible (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)	Moderate / minor (Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant or Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant or Not Significant)
	<i>Medium</i>	Minor (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)	Moderate / minor (Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant or Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant or Not Significant)	Major / Moderate (Significant)
	<i>Medium-high</i>	Minor (Not Significant)	Moderate / minor (Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant or Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant or Not Significant)	Major / Moderate (Significant)	Major (Significant)
	<i>High</i>	Minor (Not Significant)	Moderate / minor (Significant / Not Significant)	Moderate (Significant or Not Significant)	Major / Moderate (Significant)	Major (Significant)	Major (Significant)

12.6.1.1 The matrix in **Table 12.1-1** is used as a guide to help inform the threshold of significance when combining sensitivity and magnitude to assess significance. On this basis potential effects are assessed as 'Negligible', 'Minor', 'Moderate-Minor', 'Moderate', 'Moderate-Major' and 'Major'. In those instances where the magnitude has been assessed as 'no change', the level of effect is recorded as 'no effect'.

For the purposes of this assessment, any effects with a significance level of Major and Moderate-Major have been deemed significant in EIA terms (dark shaded boxed in **Table 12.1-1**). 'Moderate' levels of effect have the potential, subject to the assessor's professional judgement, to be considered as significant or not significant, depending on the sensitivity and magnitude of change factors evaluated. The use of professional

judgement is advocated throughout GLVIA3 and in relation to significance of effects, paragraph 3.23, page 37 of GLVIA3 states that: *"This is a key part of the LVIA process and is an evidence-based process combined with professional judgement."*

12.6.1.2 Significance can therefore occur at a range of levels depending on the magnitude and sensitivity, however in all cases, a significant effect is considered more likely to occur where the Onshore Development would have a defining effect on the landscape / seascape character or view. Definitions are not provided for the individual categories of significance shown in the matrix and the reader should refer to the detailed definitions provided for the factors that combine to inform sensitivity and magnitude.

12.6.1.3 Effects assessed as being either Moderate-Minor, Minor or Negligible level are assessed as not-significant (white shaded boxes in **Table 12.1-1**).

12.6.1.4 In line with the emphasis placed in GLVIA3 upon the application of professional judgement, an overly mechanistic reliance upon a matrix is avoided through the provision of clear and accessible narrative explanations of the rationale underlying the assessment made for each landscape and visual receptor.

12.7 Nature of Effects

12.7.1.1 The EIA Regulations 2017 state that the EIA should define *"the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development."*

12.7.1.2 In accordance with the EIA Regulations 2017, in this assessment the nature of effects refers to whether the landscape and / or visual effect of the Onshore Development is positive or negative (herein referred to as 'beneficial', 'neutral' or 'adverse').

12.7.1.3 Guidance provided in GLVIA3 on the nature of effect states that: *"in the LVIA, thought must be given to whether the likely significant landscape and visual effects are judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in their consequences for landscape or for views and visual amenity"*, but it does not provide guidance as to how that may be established in practice. The nature of effect is therefore one that requires interpretation and, where applied, this involves reasoned professional opinion.

12.7.1.4 In this LVIA a precautionary approach has been adopted, which assumes that significant landscape and visual effects are weighed on the adverse side of the planning balance, unless otherwise stated. Beneficial or neutral effects may, however, arise in certain situations and are stated in the assessment where relevant, based on the following definitions.

- Beneficial effects - contribute to the landscape and visual resource through the enhancement of desirable characteristics or the introduction of new, beneficial attributes. The development contributes to the landscape by virtue of good design or the introduction of new landscape planting. The removal of undesirable existing elements or characteristics can also be beneficial, as can their replacement with more appropriate components.
- Neutral effects - occur where the development fits with the existing landscape character or visual amenity. The development neither contributes to nor detracts from the landscape and visual resource and can be accommodated with neither beneficial or adverse effects, nor where the effects are so limited that the change is hardly noticeable. A change to the landscape and visual resource is not considered to be adverse simply because it constitutes an alteration to the existing situation.
- Adverse effects - are those that detract from the landscape character or quality of visual attributes experienced, through the introduction of elements that contrast, in a detrimental way,

with the existing characteristics of the landscape and visual resource, or through the removal of elements that are key in its characterisation.

12.8 Zone of Theoretical Visibility Analysis

12.8.1.1 The ZTVs (**Volume ER.B.5, Visualisations 12.1: LVIA Visualisations; Figure 12-6 and Figure 12-7**) have been generated using Geographic Information Systems software to demonstrate the extent to which the Onshore Development may theoretically be seen from any point within the 5 km study area. ZTV analysis has been carried out for a maximum parameter model based on the maximum footprint and height of the Onshore Substation, EBI and Battery Storage Location (this maximum height being 15 metre (m) applied to a Finished Floor Level (FFL) of 17 m Above Ordnance Datum based on an approximate average of the existing ground level across the OnSS/EBI compounds).

12.8.1.2 ZTVs are primarily calculated based on the visibility at 2 m above the height of the landform (i.e. viewer height of 2 m), relative to the height of the Onshore Development. The ZTV shown in **Volume ER.B.5, Visualisations 12.1: LVIA Visualisations; Figure 12-6** reflects bare ground theoretical visibility. There are limitations in the production of the ZTV and these should be borne in mind in its consideration and use:

- The ZTVs are based on 5 m data grid (OS Terrain 5) with a viewer height of 2 m above ground level;
- The bare ground ZTV does not consider the screening effects of woodlands, vegetation, buildings, or other local features that may prevent or reduce visibility;
- The ZTV does not indicate the decrease in visibility that occurs with increased distance from the Onshore Substation. The nature of what is visible from 1 km away would differ markedly from what is visible from 3 km away, although both are indicated on the ZTV as having the same level of visibility; and
- There is a wide range of variation within the visibility shown on the ZTV. For example, an area shown as having visibility of the Onshore Development may only gain views of the slightest extremity rather than all of it as may be the case elsewhere.

12.8.1.3 These limitations mean that while the ZTV is used as a starting point in the assessment, providing an indication of where the Onshore Development would theoretically be visible, the information drawn from the ZTV is not the sole factor relied upon to accurately represent its visibility.

12.8.1.4 **Volume ER.B.5, Visualisations 12.1: LVIA Visualisations; Figure 12-7** presents the modified theoretical visibility of the Onshore Development, taking consideration of the screening effects of woodlands, vegetation, buildings, or other local features that may prevent or reduce visibility. Areas of existing woodland have been modelled at an indicative height of 10 m above the underlying Terrain 5 Digital Terrain Model (DTM), on the basis of 1:25,000 scale OS mapping. ZTVs have been prepared in line with guidance presented in GLVIA3.

12.9 Visualisations

12.9.1.1 The viewpoint assessment of the Onshore Development is informed by a range of visualisations, including baseline photographs and photomontages, which are in line with current best practice and the guidance provided in 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals' (Landscape Institute, 2019). Visualisations have a number of limitations when used to form a judgement on a proposed development. These include:

- The images provided give a reasonable impression of the scale and distance to the Onshore Development, but can never be 100% accurate;
- The viewpoints illustrated are representative of views in the area but cannot represent visibility at all locations;

- To form the best impression of the visual impacts of the Onshore Development these images are best viewed at the viewpoint location shown; and
- The visualisations must be printed at the correct size to be viewed properly (A1 width) and viewed at a comfortable arm's length viewing distance;
- The first visualisation sheets for each of the viewpoints illustrate the existing views using baseline photography presented cylindrically in 90-degree field of view increments; and
- Visual representations (photomontages) illustrate the Onshore Development Project Design Envelope as a transparent, purple coloured box based on the maximum footprint of the OnSS/EBI compounds and the maximum height of the OnSS/EBI infrastructure, with the maximum height of lightning protection masts also shown as a dashed line. The photomontages show an indicative 3D model representation of the OnSS/EBI within the context of a Maximum Parameter Envelope representing their maximum height and footprint. The EIA assesses the Maximum Parameter Envelope with the 3D model provided for illustration only. The layout and form of the OnSS and EBI 3D model shown is an example; it does not include details such as building colour or materiality and could differ from the eventual design of the OnSS/EBI.
- Areas of woodland and hedgerows proposed to be planted as part of the Indicative Landscaping Strategy (**Volume ER.B.5, Visualisations 12.1: LVIA Visualisations; Figure 12-3**) are illustrated where visible in the viewpoint photomontages, at approximately 15 years post planting. For the purposes of the photomontage modelling, after 15 years, a cautious approach to growth rates has been adopted, with faster growing trees assumed to have heights of 5.1 m (planted at 60 cm and then 30 cm growth per year). Slower growing trees are assumed to have heights of 3.6 m (planted at 60 cm and then 20 cm growth per year). Smaller trees/shrubs are assumed to have heights of 2 m – 3 m to form an understorey. A variation tolerance is applied to all trees in the modelling to allow for some variation in growth and to provide a variable canopy height in the photomontage visualisations.

12.9.1.2 The photographs used to produce the photomontages have been taken using Canon EOS 5D and 6D Digital SLR cameras, with a fixed lens and a full-frame (35 millimetre negative size) Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor sensor. The photographs were taken on a tripod with a panoramic head at a height of approximately 1.5 m above ground. To create the baseline panorama, the frames were individually cylindrically projected, digitally joined and then modified to create a planar projected panorama with a 53.5-degree field of view. Tonal alterations were made using Adobe software to create an even range of tones across the photographs once joined.

12.9.1.3 The photographs and photomontages used in this assessment are for illustrative purposes only and, whilst useful tools in the assessment, are not considered to be completely representative of what will be apparent to the human eye. The assessments are carried out from observations in the field and therefore may include elements that are not visible in the photographs.

12.10 References

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