

Agenda Item	6.1
Report No	PLN/047/25

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** North Planning Applications Committee

**Date:** 06 August 2025

**Report Title:** 24/05124//S36 : Caledonia North Offshore Ltd.  
Land 50 KM SE of Wick Harbour, Harbour Road, Wick

**Report By:** Area Planning Manager - North

### Purpose/Executive Summary

**Description:** Caledonia North Offshore Wind Farm - construction and operation of an offshore wind farm comprising up to 77 turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 355m, subsea interconnector and export cabling and associated infrastructure

**Ward:** 03 – Wick and East Caithness

**Development category:** National Development

**Reason referred to Committee:** Area Manager's Request

All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to agree the recommendation to **RAISE NO OBJECTION** to the application as set out in section 11 of the report

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council has been consulted by the Scottish Government's Marine Directorate on an application submitted under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and for accompanying Marine Licenses in accordance with the Marine and Coast Access Act 2009 and the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, to construct and operate an offshore wind farm 25km off the coast of Caithness.
- 1.2 The current application for the Caledonia North development for 77 x 355m turbines (24/05124/S36, MS-00011014 / MS-00011015) forms one of two standalone applications, the other being for Caledonia South for 63 x 355m and 325m turbines (24/05129/S36, MS-00011012/MS-00011013), which collectively make up the Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm.
- 1.3 The Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm, which is owned and operated by the same developer as the neighbouring Moray East and Moray West offshore schemes, was awarded the lease to develop Option Area NE4 in the 2022 ScotWind leasing round.
- 1.4 Members will be aware of the history of offshore wind energy development in the Moray Firth with the 84 x 198m tip height turbines of the Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm, and the 100 x 187m turbines of the Moray East Offshore scheme. These developments are now complemented by the substantially completed larger 58 x 285m turbines of the Moray West Offshore Wind Farm.
- 1.5 This consultation is for the Caledonia North proposal for 77 x 355m maximum tip height turbines, which represents the next wave of offshore energy development in Scotland in terms of scale and generation capacity. Indeed, the substantial investment in the four Cromarty Firth Green Free Port sites at Invergordon, Nigg, Inverness, and Ardersier is intended to facilitate the delivery of offshore energy of this nature.
- 1.6 Both the Caledonia North and the Caledonia South application areas are being considered individually however the Caledonia South array area is not being presented to either area committee due to its distance from the Council's coastline. This is because the Caledonia South array area is located 40km at its closest point to the Highland area and beyond the array of the Moray East Offshore Wind Farm. As such, that aspect of the development will not result in significant seascape, landscape, or visual effects within Highland.
- 1.7 Conversely, the closest of the up to 77 x 355m turbines of the Caledonia North array area is located 25km from the Highland shoreline and 28km from the centre of Wick.
- 1.8 The Section 36 and the Marine Licence applications will be determined by Scottish Ministers and Members are advised that the consultation request was submitted 04 December 2024 with deadline given for 03 February 2025 which, due to resourcing

issues, was missed. However, it is the understanding of Council Officers that there is no automatic PLI trigger following a Council objection for offshore Section 36 applications where there is no direct terrestrial interest. Should Members decide to object to the development against the Officer recommendation, the need for any further procedure would be at Scottish Ministers' discretion. Further guidance on this procedure is set out in Section 4.11 of the Offshore wind, wave and tidal energy applications: consenting and licensing manual, Scottish Government, published 15 October 2018.

- 1.9 In addition to the above, the traffic, transport and roads issues covered in this report, along with the conditions proposed at the end of the report, will be reiterated in the Council's response to the Marine Directorate.

## **2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 2.3 The Caledonia North Offshore Wind Farm development comprises:

- Up to 77 Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs), with an anticipated generating capacity between 15MW and 25MW each, maximum blade tip height of 355m (above MSL), and substructures;
- Up to two Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs);
- Up to two offshore export cables connecting to the Aberdeenshire coast; and,
- Subsea inter array and inter connector cables.

- 2.4 The turbines will have a maximum rotor blade tip height of 355m when measured from Mean Sea Level (MSL), a maximum rotor blade diameter of 310m and a minimum blade clearance of 35 m (above MSL).

- 2.5 The Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm is anticipated to have a maximum generating capacity of 2GW and will be connected via subsea cables landing in Aberdeenshire. Consideration of the onshore connecting infrastructure is a matter for Aberdeenshire Council with the authority having already approved the proposals for planning permission in principle under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (As Amended).

- 2.6 Offshore wind developments share similar characteristics and environmental effects as onshore wind and as such, this report only considers only those effects that relate to the interests of the Highland Council. Specifically, effects relating to onshore sea and landscape and visual effects. Impacts on the marine environment are the remit of the Marine Directorate through consultation with NatureScot and are not considered in this report.

- 2.7 Given many of the uncertainties around this type of development within what is a challenging marine environment, as well as the long lead time in which the project is likely to commence on site, the exact layout, design, number, height and support structure requirements for each phase of the development is yet to be determined. For each element of the project there are a range of options for deployment. The Environment Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is therefore based on a principle known as the 'Rochdale Envelope'; a term deriving from established case law, which means that consideration is given to the maximum and minimum extents of the project in order to establish a 'worst case scenario'. Work continues on refining the project concepts and the exact final design is unlikely to be known until prior to the commencement of construction.
- 2.8 If the development is consented by Scottish Ministers, it is anticipated that offshore construction would commence no earlier than 2028 and the site will be commissioned in the early 2030s. Thereafter, it is anticipated the Proposed Development would have an operational life of up to 35 years from the date of first commissioning. At the end of the life of the development a decision will be taken on whether to extend its life or decommission the generating station, or indeed re-power the site. In accordance with the provisions of the Energy Act 2004, the applicant will be required to prepare a Decommissioning Programme for approval by Scottish Ministers. The applicant has outlined the decommissioning measures required in the EIAR, but a detailed programme would only be required should the development gain consent.
- 2.9 In addition to the above, the applicant is considering a number of different locations for onshore servicing of the development. A final 'Operations and Maintenance' (O and M) strategy will be confirmed post-consent, with decision on location of O and M base yet to be finalised.
- 2.10 The Council provided its pre-application technical EIA Scoping response to the applicant in November 2022. The applicant has also undertaken a series of pre-application consultation events in line with the provisions of the Marine Licensing (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Regulations 2013. 88 hours of direct public engagement over 12 public exhibitions at venues in Highland, Moray and Aberdeenshire between November 2022 and June 2024 including in Wick and John O'Groats in November 2022 and April 2024.
- 2.11 The application is supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), with chapters relevant to offshore receptors including:
- Policy and Legislation;
  - Offshore Proposed Development Description;
  - Onshore Proposed Development Description;

- Proposed Development Phasing;
- Site Selection and Alternatives;
- EIA Methodology;
- Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation;
- Marine and Coastal Processes;
- Water and Sediment quality;
- Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology;
- Fish and Shellfish Ecology;
- Offshore Ornithology;
- Marine Mammals;
- Commercial Fisheries;
- Shipping and Navigation;
- Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage;
- Military and Civil Aviation;
- Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Other Human Activities;
- Socioeconomics, Tourism and Recreation;
- Climate Change Resilience;
- Greenhouse Gases; and
- Intertidal Assessment.

2.12 The proposal has not been amended since it was submitted for consideration.

### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

3.1 The proposal site is wholly contained within the outer Moray Firth with Caledonia North array area sited 25km off the Caithness coast at its closest point with no onshore infrastructure proposed within The Highland Council (THC) area. The site is east of and behind the Beatrice, Moray East, and Moray West Offshore Wind Farms relative to the Highland shoreline, with only the tapered north tip of the array area exposed directly to the Highland without intervening turbines.

2.2 The seabed within the application site contains both sedimentary and coarse sand habitats. Survey work undertaken to date, the applicant has identified the presence of: ocean quahog, scallops, skate, sand eel, cod, herring, mackerel, haddock and Atlantic salmon. Common dolphins, orca (killer whales), harbour porpoise, and

other cetacean species have been recorded within the offshore site and surrounding waters, alongside seals and basking sharks.

- 3.3 The applicant has undertaken a series of ornithological surveys during the preparation of the application. It has identified and considered the effects on: kittiwake, common gull, arctic tern, great black-backed gull, lesser black-backed gull, herring gull, common tern, guillemot, black guillemot, razorbill, puffin, fulmar, red-throated diver, great northern diver, Manx shearwater, gannet, great skua, and arctic skua. The closest Natural Heritage designations to THC area are the offshore Moray Firth Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and the East Caithness Cliffs SPA.
- 3.4 In terms of THC sea- and land- scape interests, the proposal will be visible from the Dunnet Head, the Duncansby Head, and The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast Special Landscape Areas. The proposal will also have influence on Wild Land Area 36 Causeymire - Knockfin Flows as well as various Regional Coastal Character Areas as described by NatureScot along the north and east coasts of Caithness.
- 3.5 There are no historic Marine Protected Areas, Protected Places, or Controlled Sites designated under the Protection Military Remains Act 1986 however 17 recorded wrecks or obstruction sites within the Marine Sturdy Area, including two designated sites, have been identified.

#### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- |     |             |  |                                  |
|-----|-------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 4.1 | 14 Feb 2025 | 24/05131/MAR, MS-00011013 - Marine Licence - Transmission Infrastructure - Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm - South  | THC Consultation Response Issued |
| 4.2 | 14 Feb 2025 | 24/05130/MAR, MS-00011012 - Marine Licence - Construction And Operation Of Generating Station - Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm – South                   | THC Consultation Response Issued |
| 4.3 | 14 Feb 2025 | 24/05128/MAR, Ms-00011015 - Marine Licence - Transmission Infrastructure - Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm - North (24/05125/MAR and 24/05124/S36)        | THC Consultation Response Issued |
| 4.4 | 14 Feb 2025 | 24/05125/MAR, MS-00011014 - Marine Licence - Construction And Operation Of Generating Station - Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm - North (24/05128/MAR and | THC Consultation Response Issued |

24/05124/S36)

- 4.5      22 Nov 2022      22/04494/SCOP, Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm - Erection and Operation of an Offshore Wind Farm comprising up to 150 wind turbines of up to 350m to blade tip height, offshore substation platforms, inter-array cables, export cables and associated infrastructure.      THC Scoping Response Issued

## **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

### **5.1      Advertised: EIA Development**

Date Advertised:

- The Press and Journal 12 December 2024;
- The Press and Journal 19 December 2024;
- The Scotsman 12 December 2024; and
- Edinburgh Gazette 20 December 2024.

Representation deadline: 19 January 2025

5.2      THC:      3 timeous objections

5.3      Marine Directorate:      1 timeous objection (clarified by the applicant)

5.4      Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

- a) Impacts on marine ecology, marine mammals protected species and ornithology;
- b) Impacts on military and civil aviation;
- c) Impacts on tourism;
- d) Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impacts;
- e) Cumulative environmental impacts with other large developments in the area; and,
- f) Potential construction noise.

5.5      All letters of representation are available for inspection via the Council's eplanning portal which can be accessed through the internet [www.wam.highland.gov.uk/wam](http://www.wam.highland.gov.uk/wam).

5.6      Representations received by the Marine Directorate will be made available on the Marine Directorate's website <https://marine.gov.scot/marine-licence-applications>.

## 6. CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The following Community Councils did not respond to the consultation request:

- Ardersier and Petty, Avoch and Killen;
- Balintore and Hilton;
- Berriedale and Dunbeath;
- Brora, Auldearn;
- Balloch;
- Cromarty and District;
- Croy and Culloden Moor;
- Cawdor and West Nairnshire;
- Dornoch;
- Dunnet and Canisbay;
- Fearn;
- Fortrose and Rosemarkie;
- Golspie;
- Helmsdale;
- Inver;
- Knockbain;
- Latheron, Lybster and Clyth;
- Nairn West and Suburban;
- Nairn River;
- Nigg and Shandwick;
- Sinclair Bay;
- Tain;
- Tannach and District;
- Tarbat; and,
- Watten.

6.2 **Ecology Team** does not object and has no specific comments to make on the application noting that NatureScot are the lead consultees for ecological matters.

6.3 **Transport Planning** does not object but notes that there is potential for the construction and/or operational phases to impact THC transport infrastructure. As such, Transport Planning requests that any traffic and transport conditions imposed on a subsequent permission includes a requirement to notify THC of any impacts on its roads and include clauses to allow THC to agree to traffic management and abnormal load plans with mitigation, if relevant.

6.4 **No Objection from the following consultees:**

- British Telecom (BT);



- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA);
- Historic Environment Scotland (HES);
- Joint Nature Conservation (JNCC);
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA);
- Scottish Water;
- Sports Scotland; and,
- Transport Scotland.

**6.5 No objection subject to conditions from the following consultees:**

- Aberdeenshire Council;
- Chamber of Shipping;
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA);
- Marine Directorate - Marine Analytical Unit;
- Marine Directorate – Science, Evidence, Data and Digital (MD-SEDD);
- Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB);
- Orkney Islands Council (OIC);
- Royal Yachting Association (RYA);
- Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks – Transmission (SSEN-T); and,
- United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO).

**6.6 Unresolved objections from the following consultees:**

- Aberdeen Airport;
- Highlands and Islands International Airports (HIAL) pending further information and mitigation measures in line with its safeguarding criteria;
- Joint Radio Company (JRC);
- National Air Traffic Services (NATS) pending further information and measures to mitigate potential conflicts with the safe operation of its Allanshill Radar station;
- NatureScot pending further information and measures to mitigate impacts on the qualifying interests of several SPAs and SACs as well as fish and shellfish ecology. NatureScot's response also advises that due to the location of the proposal and its distance from the shore, it is not providing comments relating to seascape, landscape and visual impacts;

- Ministry of Defence (MOD) pending further refinement of mitigations measures to safeguard the continued operation of national defence radars;
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) pending further refinement of compensation of impacts on seabirds; and,
- Scottish Fisherman's Federation (SFF).

6.7 All consultee comments submitted to the MD will be made available on its website in due course.

## **7. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY**

7.1 The planning appraisal below provides a summary of the pertinent legislation as well as national and THC planning policies relevant to THC's consideration of the application. It is not the intention of this report to provide a detailed policy assessment given that the proposal is not within its jurisdiction. There are however indirect terrestrial impacts arising from this proposal that need to be considered and are addressed within the planning appraisal section of this report.

## **8. PLANNING APPRAISAL**

8.1 The key considerations for THC in this case are:

- a) Legislation, Government and Development Plan Policy;
- b) Energy and Economic Benefits;
- c) Landscape and Visual Impacts;
- d) Roads, Traffic and Transport; and,
- e) Other Material Considerations.

### **Legislation, Government and Development Plan Policy**

8.2 The application has been submitted to the Scottish Government for approval under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended) and for a Marine Licence under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010.

8.3 It should be noted that for applications under the Electricity Act 1989 that the Development Plan is just one of a number of considerations and Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 which requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, is not engaged. However, while not a planning application, Section 36 approvals come with Deemed Planning Permission under Section 57 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) and as such the Council processes Section 36 applications within its boundary in a similar manner. In this instance however, the proposal is outwith

THC's boundary and therefore this assessment is limited to those cross boundary effects as set out in Paragraph 7.1 above.

8.4 Schedule 9 of The Electricity Act 1989 contains tests in relation to the impact of proposals on amenity, heritage, and fisheries, requiring proposals to:

- have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and,
- reasonably mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects.

8.5 Section 27 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that 'in determining an application for a marine licence (including the terms on which it is to be granted and what conditions, if any, are to be attached to it), the Scottish Ministers must have regard' to:

- The need to protect the environment;
- The need to protect human health;
- The need to prevent interference with legitimate users of the sea;
- Any representations received from any person having an interest in the outcome of the application;
- Such other matters as the Scottish Ministers consider relevant;
- The practical availability of alternative methods;
- The effects of any use intended to be made of the works; and,
- Giving the applicant the opportunity to make representations to them about observations made by consultees.

8.6 A suite of Scottish Government policy documents are relevant to the proposal including the Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan of 2023, the Offshore Wind Policy Statement 2020 (which identifies a target of 8 – 11GW of installed offshore wind energy capacity in Scottish waters by 2030), the National Marine Plan (NMP) of 2015 (as reviewed in 2018 and 2021), the Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy in Scotland (2020) (SMP), and the forthcoming National Marine Plan 2. The documents set out the Scottish Government's strong in principle support for offshore renewable projects and provide a national strategy for the growth of marine industries. Such strategies include establishing option areas for offshore generating stations (SMP), with the application site corresponding with Draft Plan Option Area NE4, and setting policies to ensure offshore renewables

contribute to sustainable economic growth as well as social benefits and environmental objectives.

- 8.7 In addition, the proposed development is of national importance for the delivery of the national Spatial Strategy set out in NPF4, whereby in principle support for the development is established. As the proposed development consists of renewable energy generation well in excess of 50MW, as well as new high voltage electricity transmission lines, cables and interconnectors of 132kV or more, it is of a type and scale that constitutes NPF4 National Development 3 - Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure.
- 8.8 NPF4 Policies 1, 2, and 3 apply to all development proposals Scotland-wide, which means that significant weight must be given to the global climate and nature crises when considering all development proposals, as required by NPF4 Policy 1. To that end, development proposals must be sited and designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as is practicably possible in accordance with NPF4 Policy 2, while contributing to the enhancement of biodiversity, as required by NPF4 Policy 3. Given that the proposal is offshore and outwith THC's boundary however, matters relating to ecology and biodiversity compensation and enhancement are not for THC to consider in this instance.
- 8.9 Nevertheless, sites designated in Local Development Plans for local nature conservation or Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are protected in NPF4 under Policy 4d), which only allows development that will not result in significantly adverse effects on the integrity of the SLA or the special qualities for which it is designated. Any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the designation must be clearly outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits of at least local importance.
- 8.10 NPF4 Policy 11 Part e) sets out the additional project design and mitigation requirements for energy proposals, which includes a broad range of matters akin to those to be assessed under HwLDP Policy 67, whereby consideration of landscape and visual impacts are most pertinent to this assessment. To that end, NPF4 Policy 11e) advises that where significant landscape and visual impacts are localised and / or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, such effects will generally be considered acceptable. Whilst this development proposal is offshore it will result in a number of onshore environmental effects, such as landscape and visual, meaning that the policy tests established in NPF4 remain applicable.
- 8.11 Paragraph 74 of the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan sets out that the Special Landscape Area (SLA) boundaries have been revised to ensure 'key designated landscape features are not severed and that distinct landscapes are preserved'. The boundaries set out in the CaSPlan are supported by a background paper that includes citations for each of the SLAs. Policies 28, 57, 61

and 67 of the HwLDP also seek to safeguard these regionally important landscapes and are generally considered consistent with NPF4.

### **Energy and Economic Benefits**

- 8.12 The proposed development would have an indicative maximum electricity generating capacity of 2GW, which would make a significant contribution to Scottish and UK Government policy targets, British energy security, and the international commitments for renewable energy and electricity generation to facilitate net zero by 2045.
- 8.13 The electricity generated would be exported to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS). The project's onshore connection and substation at New Deer in Aberdeenshire, has received Planning Permission In Principle from Aberdeenshire Council.
- 8.14 The applicant has submitted a Greenhouse Gases (GHG) Assessment which considers the combined impacts associated with the proposed offshore wind farm, as well as the associated consented project's specific grid connection and substation. This assesses the GHG emissions and uses carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) where equivalence means having the same warming effect as CO<sub>2</sub> over 100 years. The majority of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions are associated with the offshore construction stage. The GHG emissions for Caledonia North and single phase of the Proposed Development (Onshore) were 2,049,718 tCO<sub>2</sub>e for construction, 150,517 tCO<sub>2</sub>e for operation and 423,107 tCO<sub>2</sub>e for decommissioning. The conclusion for the operation of Caledonia North is that the proposal will be significantly beneficial in reducing GHG emissions due to the generation of low carbon electricity by virtue of the proposal being calculated to avoid the emission of 617,650 – 692,651 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year over its 35 year operational lifetime.
- 8.15 In terms of economic benefits, economic impacts of Caledonia North are expected to be positive, with peak employment supported across Scotland of up to 1,898 jobs during construction and 228 jobs during the operational phase. Such a project can offer significant investment/opportunities to the local Highland, Aberdeenshire, and Scottish economy including for businesses ranging across construction, haulage, electrical and service sectors through the supply chain, with opportunities in research and development, design, project management, civil engineering, component fabrication / manufacture, installation, and maintenance. Members will be aware of the benefits to the Wick economy and Pulteney Town Conservation Area and Wick Harbour resulting from the investment for Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm previously as well as the continuous use of Highland ports and the ongoing build out of off shore wind off the coastline. The application is accompanied by a socio-economic assessment that looks at both the construction and operational phases for the development.

- 8.16 The applicant submitted a Supply Chain Development Statement as part of the ScotWind leasing process, which sets out a commitment to invest in developing supply chain capacity within the UK. The investment strategy includes a commitment to spend £46 million of enabling investment in the supply chain, leading to a potential investment of £3.5 billion across all its stages. As part of the Supply Chain Development Statement, Caledonia has committed to support the development of the Scottish supply chain and maximise the potential economic benefits to Scotland, though this is contingent on the activities of a range of stakeholders and developers. Caledonia has also committed to a number of activities to support the supply chain, and to invest in capacity and skills from planning to decommissioning, with supply chain commitments set out in EIAR Volume 6: Chapter 2 which contains the socio-economic impact assessment of the development.
- 8.17 The Applicant has made commitments to nurture the local Scottish and UK supply chain through investment, targeting enhancement in capacity, capability, and workforce development. Initiatives already supported include:
- supporting the successful Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport bid;
  - funding Scottish colleges to provide augmented reality systems for state-of-the-art welding skills training;
  - establishing a STEM Leadership Award for schools and colleges to encourage excellence in STEM education; and,
  - engagement with global Original Equipment Manufacturers to attempt to bring manufacturing facilities for wind farm components to Scotland.
- 8.18 The Applicant has also committed to facilitating the skills transition in the North of Scotland, and supports the education sector via local outreach and skills development programmes such as pre-apprenticeships, scholarship funds, and Launch Academy Scotland.

### **Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impacts**

- 8.19 The applicant has undertaken a Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA), including a night time assessment, to determine the likely significant effects of the wind farm and offshore transmission infrastructure (EIAR Volume 3). As agreed with THC during consultation, the assessment is based on a 'worst case' scenario of turbines with a maximum tip height of 355m and a maximum extent based on current knowledge of such factors as wind resource, water depths, ground and wind, wave and tidal conditions, other offshore infrastructure, ferries, cargo vessels, military activities and commercial fisheries activities.

- 8.20 Additionally, the assessment of seascape, landscape and visual impacts of aviation lighting during the hours of darkness is based on all perimeter turbines being lit for aviation safety purposes. EIAR Volume 7C Appendix 12-1 Night Time Assessment (Caledonia North) advises that these turbines will be lit with medium intensity, flashing lights in accordance with Civil Aviation Authority requirements. The lights will be dimmed from 2000cd intensity to 200cd during periods of clear visibility (over 5km range). That means that the highest 2000cd lighting intensity would only be used during periods of high humidity/fog and therefore, flashing red aviation lighting of 2000cd would never be visible to its full intensity from the shore. As described, this reduced intensity lighting is the proposed mitigation within the EIAR.
- 8.21 On the basis of the above, the final layout and design are subject to further refinement. Consequently, the height and layout of turbines and associated infrastructure as assessed in the EIAR is accepted as being the maximum extent of impacts and therefore within the Rochdale Envelope, with the final development likely to result in reduced effects once built out.
- 8.22 However, it should be borne in mind that, as mentioned in Paragraph 3.1 above, the turbines will mostly be viewed behind the Beatrice, Moray East, and Moray West Offshore Wind Farms from the Highland shoreline. On that basis, only the tapered north tip of the array area would be exposed directly to the Highland area without intervening turbines. The assessment of the seascape, landscape, and visual effects therefore, is for the most part a cumulative assessment of the anticipated additional effects brought about by Caledonia North.
- 8.23 Within the EIAR, only 11 of the 22 viewpoints (VPs) included with the EIAR are relevant to the assessment of impacts within the Highland context (VPs 2 -12). Appendix 2 of this report sets out the officer appraisal of the EIAR VP assessment.
- 8.24 In order to understand the impacts on coastal and landscape character, the applicant has undertaken assessments of impacts on the Regional Coastal Character Areas (RCCAs) of Brough Ness and Barth Head (Pentland Skerries) RCCA, Duncansby Head RCCA, Freswick Bay and Nybster Coast RCCA, Sinclair's Bay RCCA, Noss Head RCCA, Wick Bay RCCA, Sarclet Head RCCA, and Lybster Bay RCCA.
- 8.25 Each of the above assessments includes consideration of the relevant Landscape Character Types within the Landscape Character Type, which includes LCT144 Coastal Crofts and Small Farms, LCT143 Farmed Lowland Plain, LCT140 High Cliffs and Sheltered Bays, and LCT140 Sandy Beaches.
- 8.26 The EIAR has also assessed impacts on one Special Landscape Area (SLA) within the THC area, namely Duncansby Head SLA. Significant effects on Dunnet Head SLA and Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA have been scoped out in large

part due to the relative positioning of the development behind existing and approved turbines when viewed from within these SLAs.

- 8.27 In general terms, the offshore marine location of the wind farm means that there will be no direct physical impacts on any RCCA or corresponding LCTs within the Highland area. The proposal will not change the features or characteristics of the RCCAs or LCTs directly, which will still be appreciable from within, while the interaction of sea and shoreline features (cliffs, coves, stacks, beaches etc.) will remain largely unaffected.
- 8.28 Rather, the proposal will result in additional turbines being visible in seaward views as experienced from within each of the RCCAs with the highest visibility of the development. This additional visibility of turbines will be experienced as an external influence on the seaboard setting of the RCCAs and corresponding LCTs. This setting is already characterised by offshore wind farm developments, which form a visually separate focus in the background of seaward views from the land. The greater part of the effect on this seaboard setting will therefore be experienced from within those RCCAs with outward North Sea views where the proposal results in a greater extension to the horizontal spread of offshore turbine development and/or where the upscaled turbine heights are most apparent. These effects are most notable at Duncansby Head, Freswick Bay and Nybster Coast, Sinclair's Bay, Wick Bay, and Sarclet Head (north of Skerry Mor) RCCAs.
- 8.29 Notwithstanding the above, the proposal is predicted to result in no more than Medium-Low Magnitudes of Change and no greater than Moderate-Minor Scales of Effect on coastal or landscape character at each of the above RCCAs, which are not significant effects. The assessment on the special qualities of the Duncansby Head SLA follows the same format and reaches the conclusion that its 'commanding views and 'end of the road' experience", and, 'striking and diverse coastal landforms' special qualities will not be significantly impacted, nor its integrity overall, with these finding being agreed by officers.
- 8.30 With regards impacts on the visual amenity of visual receptors, Appendix 2 of this report sets out the officer appraisal of the applicant's VP assessment, which are in general agreement on the overall significance of effects at each VP (with the exception of VP7 (Yarrows Archaeological Trail) which appears to be an error within the EIAR). The appendix, like the EIAR, sets out that significant visual impacts are expected to occur along the coastal fringe of Caithness, including nearby higher ground such as the Yarrows Archaeological Trail, between approximately the Hill of Harley (approximately 5km north of Keiss) and around Whaligoe Steps.
- 8.31 The significant visual effects occur at VPs 4 to 8 inclusive (Keiss, Wick (path south of South View, Sarclet, Yarrows Archaeological Tral, and Whaligoe Steps respectively); all at locations up to approximately 34km from the nearest turbine with outward North Sea views. From these locations, the proposal results in a



greater extension to the horizontal spread of offshore turbine development in combination with and/or the upscaled turbine heights result in some visual dissonance when viewed behind existing smaller offshore turbines.

- 8.32 These effects may extend into the hours of twilight and darkness due to turbines extending the horizontal and vertical spread of existing aviation lighting in seaward views during the hours of darkness. However, the impact from aviation lighting is unlikely to be significant provided the stated mitigation to reduce the intensity of the lighting in clear conditions is implemented. Significant visual effects will be experienced by sensitive receptors such as residents in settlements, recreational users of the outdoors including walkers along core paths, and beaches). There will be some additional cumulative effect for road users on the A9(T) (NC500), A99 (NC500), A882 and B874, but these are not anticipated to be so significantly detrimental owing to the set back from the coastline and relationship to the existing off shore wind farms. Given that the significant visual effects are experienced along a specific section of the coast in the context of existing offshore development, they are not considered unacceptable overall.

### **Roads, Traffic, Transport and Construction Impacts**

- 8.33 THC's Transport Planning has identified that there is potential for the construction and/or operational phases to impact THC transport infrastructure depending on the port of entry of offshore components and where turbines will be assembled. As such, Transport Planning requests that any traffic and transport conditions imposed on a subsequent permission includes a requirement to notify THC of any impacts on its roads and include clauses for a suite of information (see Section 11 below) to allow THC to assess such impacts and agree traffic management and abnormal load plans with mitigation with the developer prior to commencement of construction traffic using THC adopted roads, if relevant. Similarly, any construction management information should be accompanied with an assessment and subsequent mitigation of amenity impacts including from construction traffic noise.

### **Other Material Considerations**

- 8.34 The following matters are material to the assessment of the application however are matters for the Scottish Ministers, through the Marine Directorate, as the decision maker in consultation with the relevant consultees including Aberdeenshire Council, SEPA, and NatureScot, to assess:
- a) Impacts on marine ecology, marine mammals, protected species, and ornithology (including the qualifying interests of SPAs and SACs;
  - b) Energy and economic benefits;
  - c) Impacts on military and civil aviation;
  - d) Built and cultural heritage;

- e) Cumulative environmental impacts with other large developments in the area; and,
- f) Potential construction effects where these do not directly impact THC's area or may require to be assessed through separate planning application.

8.35 Additionally, while tourism impacts are relevant to THC, the proposal is not anticipated to result in significantly detrimental impacts on the sector given the distances from the shoreline and the subsequent seascape, landscape and visual impact assessment above.

### **Non-Material Considerations**

8.36 The issues of establishing the need for further wind energy development in the North of Scotland and community benefit are not material to the planning assessment.

### **Matters to be Secured by Legal Agreement**

8.37 A decommissioning and restoration financial guarantee can be secured by condition. No legal agreement is required should consent be granted.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 National and THC planning policy are supportive of renewable energy development and in particular for offshore wind. The anticipated 2GW maximum generating capacity of the Caledonia North Offshore Wind Farm (up to approximately 3.5GW in total for the Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm) would significantly contribute to Scottish and UK Government policy targets, British energy security, and the international commitments for renewable energy and electricity generation to facilitate net zero by 2045.

9.2 Moreover, up to 1,898 jobs during construction and 228 operational phase jobs are anticipated to be created by the development across Scotland while the applicant has committed to spending £46 million of enabling investment in the supply chain to maximise the potential economic benefits of the development.

9.3 Although onshore cabling and electricity transmission aspects of the proposal will largely affect the Aberdeenshire Council area, there is significant potential for the development to utilise Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport sites and other ports within Highland during the construction, operational, and decommissioning phases of the development. This activity could bring direct economic investment to the Highland region, which has been the case for the build out of offshore wind in the North Sea to date. Further schemes may assist in maintaining continuity of supply chains and ongoing growth of this sector.

- 9.3 In this instance the location of the proposal has been established through the Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy in Scotland, which formed the basis of the subsequent ScotWind Leasing Cycles, for which the proposal corresponds with Plan Option Area NE4. This process establishes that the location has been identified as a sustainable site for a commercial-scale wind energy development subject to be satisfactory in all other aspects.
- 9.2 This report has focussed on the impacts within THC area including impacts to the character and amenity of the seascape, landscape, and views as experienced from the north and northeast coasts from Dunnet Head to Navidale and some higher interior locations (see VPs 7 (Yarrow Archaeological Trail) and 11 (Morven)).
- 9.3 No significant effects are anticipated on the seascape and landscape character of several Regional Coastal Character Areas, special qualities of regionally designated Special Landscape Areas, or amenity and character of any Landscape Character Types with visibility of the development. While significant visual effects on the amenity of views are anticipated along the coastal fringe of Caithness between north of Keiss and Whaligoe, over a length of some 27km, including nearby higher ground such as the Yarrow Archaeological Trail, these impacts are considered to be within acceptable limits. It is acknowledged the northern extent leg of this proposal will increase the presence of turbines on the distant horizon and there will be a step change between the existing turbines at BOWL and the proposed one. However in view of the increased distance from the coastline whilst noticeable they will not be uncharacteristic of existing wind farm development on the horizon. This is because the proposal would be seen in the context of the existing offshore wind farm cluster within the Moray Firth whereby the significant visual effects are limited to a specific section of the coastal fringe.
- 9.5 Having assessed the terrestrial effect of the proposed development, it is considered that all environmental matters of particular interest to Highland Council can be appropriately addressed through conditions. Officers are also satisfied all other environmental considerations can be addressed by way of mitigation, which will be a matter for the Scottish Ministers through the Marine Directorate to address in consultation with the relevant consultees.
- 9.6 All matters relevant to the proposal's impacts on the Highland Council area have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations in so far as they apply to the Council, and that there are no reasonable grounds to Raise an Objection to the application.

## **10. IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Resource: There are significant staffing and financial resource implications if the application is to be subject to a Public Local Inquiry.
- 10.2 Legal: Not applicable
- 10.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Not applicable
- 10.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: The proposed development would generate a significant amount of renewable energy and make a meaningful contribution towards achieving net zero.
- 10.5 Risk: Not applicable
- 10.6 Gaelic: Not applicable

## **11. RECOMMENDATION**

### **Action required before decision issued: N**

It is recommended to **RAISE NO OBJECTION** to the application subject to:

- A. Members grant delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager – North to respond to the Marine Directorate regarding any future Further / Supplementary Environmental Information, where that does not: i) materially increase the scale of the proposed development; and ii) result in any additional significant adverse environmental effects; and iii) does not undermine or remove mitigation which was secured within the Council previous consultation response on the application;
- B. Members granting delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager- North to agree the finished condition wording, with any substantive amendments to be subject to prior consultation with the Chair of the North Planning Applications Committee; and
- C. Officers informing the Marine Directorate that the following is included within the relevant conditions if the application is approved:

### **Conditions and Reasons**

- 1. The Development must be constructed and operated in accordance with the Application and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) submitted by the Company on 26 September 2023 and the EIA Additional Information submitted by

the Company on 18 October 2024, unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing with Scottish Ministers.

**Reason:** To ensure that the Development is carried out in accordance with the approved details.

2. No development shall commence until the finalised layout and design of the development has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Marine Directorate, the neighbouring Planning Authorities of The Highland Council and Moray and Aberdeenshire Councils, and, in consultation with NatureScot. The details must include, but not be limited to the following:
  - a) A plan showing the location of each individual Wind Turbine Generator (WTG) (subject to any required micro-siting), including information on WTG spacing, WTG identification/numbering, and any key constraints recorded on the site;
  - b) A list of latitude and longitude co-ordinates accurate to three decimal places of minutes of arc for each WTG. This should also be provided as a Geographic Information System shape file using WGS84 format;
  - c) A table or diagram of each WTG dimensions including - height to blade tip (measured above Lowest Astronomical Tide ("LAT")) to the highest point, height to hub (measured above LAT to the centreline of the generator shaft), rotor diameter and maximum rotation speed;
  - d) The finishes for each WTG; and
  - e) The length and proposed arrangements on the seabed of all inter-array cables.

Thereafter the development shall be built out in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason:** To ensure that the Development's environmental, seascape, landscape and visual impacts are suitably mitigated.

3. No development shall commence until a Decommissioning Programme ("DP") has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Scottish Ministers. Such approval may only be granted following consultation by the Scottish Ministers with Scottish Environmental Protection Agency ("SEPA") and any such other advisors or organisations as may be required at the discretion of the Scottish Ministers. The DP must outline measures for the decommissioning of the Development, proposals for the removal of the Development, the management and timing of the works and, environmental management provisions.

The Development must be decommissioned in accordance with the approved DP, unless otherwise agreed in writing in advance with the Scottish Ministers.

**Reason:** To ensure the decommissioning and removal of the Development in an appropriate and environmentally acceptable manner, and in the interests of safety and environmental protection.

4.
  - (1) No wind turbines shall be erected until a scheme for aviation lighting for the Development has been submitted to, and approved by, the Scottish Ministers in consultation with the neighbouring Planning Authorities of The Highland Council and Orkney Council and the Civil Aviation Authority. The scheme shall include details of aviation lighting which is to be applied.
  - (2) No later than the first, third and fifth anniversary of the date of First Commissioning and every five-year anniversary thereafter, the Company shall submit a written review of the Aviation Lighting Scheme to Scottish Ministers and the neighbouring Planning Authorities of The Highland Council and Orkney Council. Each review shall include:
    - a. An assessment of options available for the reduction in the number of visible lights installed on turbines and the time period when lights are visible;
    - b. An assessment of the potential for installation of an Aircraft Detection Lighting System (“ADLS”), including a statement setting out the current and anticipated regulatory environment in relation to ADLS; and
    - c. An assessment of whether, in the Company’s view, it is reasonably practicable to install an ADLS at the Development.
  - (3) The review may propose amendment of the Aviation Lighting Scheme. If a review assesses that it is reasonably practicable to install ADLS, provided that such installation shall not require planning permission, such review shall also include the Company’s proposals for installation of ADLS together with a proposed timetable for installation. Any proposed amendment shall be compliant with the then current aviation lighting requirements of the Civil Aviation Authority and the Ministry of Defence.
  - (4) Any proposed amendment to the Aviation Lighting Scheme shall be subject to the written approval of the Scottish Ministers in consultation with the neighbouring Planning Authorities of The Highland Council and Orkney Council, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Ministry of Defence and shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.
  - (5) The Aviation Lighting Scheme, or such alternative scheme as may be approved under part (4), shall thereafter be maintained throughout the operational life of the Development.
  - (6) No lighting other than that described in the approved scheme for aviation lighting shall be applied within the site, other than that required for health and safety purposes, unless otherwise approved in writing by Scottish Ministers in consultation with the neighbouring Planning Authorities of The Highland Council and Moray and Aberdeenshire Councils, or required by law.

- (7) The Development shall be operated in accordance with the approved scheme, or any alternative scheme as may be approved under part (4), as a result of a periodic review.

**Reason:** In the interests of aviation safety and to minimise visual effects of the Development.

5. Prior to the Commencement of Development, a Local Employment Scheme for the construction of the development shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Scottish Ministers, after consultation with the neighbouring Planning Authorities of The Highland Council and Orkney Council. The submitted Scheme shall make reference to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) submitted by the Company on 26 September 2023 and the EIA Additional Information submitted by the Company on 18 October 2024. The Scheme shall include the following:
- a) details of how the staff/employment opportunities at the development will be advertised and how liaison with the Council and other local bodies will take place in relation to maximising the access of the local workforce to information about employment opportunities;
  - b) details of how sustainable training opportunities will be provided for those recruited to fulfil staff/employment requirements including the provision of apprenticeships or an agreed alternative;
  - c) a procedure setting out criteria for employment, and for matching of candidates to the vacancies;
  - d) measures to be taken to offer and provide college and/or work placement opportunities at the development to students within the locality;
  - e) details of the promotion of the Local Employment Scheme and liaison with contractors engaged in the construction of the development to ensure that they also apply the Local Employment Scheme so far as practicable having due regard to the need and availability for specialist skills and trades and the programme for constructing the development;
  - f) a procedure for monitoring the Local Employment Scheme and reporting the results of such monitoring to the Scottish Ministers and the neighboring Planning Authorities of The Highland Council and Orkney Council; and
  - g) a timetable for the implementation of the Local Employment Scheme.

Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

**Reason:** In order to ensure compliance with NPF4 Policy 11c) and to maximise the local socio-economic benefits of the development to the wider community. To make provision for publicity and details relating to any local employment opportunities.

6. No development shall commence unless and until a Community Liaison Plan has been approved in writing by Scottish Ministers, after consultation with the neighbouring Planning Authorities of The Highland Council and Moray and Aberdeenshire Councils, relevant local community councils and affected businesses. This plan shall include the arrangements for establishing a Community Liaison Group to act as a vehicle for the community to be kept informed of project progress by the Company. The terms and condition of these arrangements must include that the Community Liaison Group will have timely dialogue in advance on the provision of all transport-related mitigation measures and keep under review the timing of the delivery of turbine components. The terms and conditions shall detail the continuation of the Community Liaison Group until the wind farm has been completed and is fully operational. The approved Community Liaison Plan shall be implemented in full.

**Reason:** To assist with the provision of mitigation measures to minimise potential hazards to surrounding sea and land users.

7. (1) There shall be no Commencement of Development until a Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the relevant Roads Authorities The Highland Council, Moray and Aberdeenshire Councils, and Transport Scotland. The Traffic Management Plan shall provide:
- (a) the phasing and duration of the construction period;
  - (b) details of sources of bulk materials and components;
  - (c) identification of ports for transporting materials and components;
  - (d) the routeing of all traffic associated with the Development on public roads with up-to-date details current traffic flows on the impacted routes;
  - (e) details of the likely traffic generation of HGVs and all other vehicles using public roads based on accurate forecasts for quantities of materials to inform an Impact Assessment including a Cumulative Impact Assessment of construction traffic on impacted roads;
  - (f) an updated Schedule of Mitigation Measures on public roads where there is an extraordinary increase in HGV traffic volumes;
  - (g) measures to ensure that the specified routes are adhered to, including monitoring procedures;
  - (h) details of all signage and lining arrangements to be put in place;
  - (i) provisions for emergency vehicle access;
  - (j) provision for the submission and agreement of a roads condition survey pre-and post-construction accompanied by an appropriate agreement between the Planning Authority and the Company to



ensure the delivery of any post-construction public road restoration that may be required; and

(k) identification of a nominated person to whom any road safety issues can be referred.

(2) The approved Traffic Management Plan shall be implemented in full, unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In the interests of road safety.

8. (1) There shall be no abnormal load deliveries to the site until an Abnormal Load Route Assessment Report, including proposed trial runs, has been submitted to and approved in writing in consultation with the relevant Roads Authorities The Highland Council, Moray and Inverness Councils and Transport Scotland. The Abnormal Load Route Assessment Report shall provide:

(a) Details of a communications strategy to inform the relevant communities of the programme of abnormal load deliveries;

(b) Details of any accommodation measures required for the local road network including the removal of street furniture, junction widening and traffic management;

(c) Any additional signing or temporary traffic control measures deemed necessary on the trunk road network due to the size or length of any loads being transported must be undertaken by a recognised QA traffic management consultant, to be approved by Transport Scotland.

(d) Details of the route for abnormal loads on the local and trunk road networks and any recommendations for delivery of abnormal loads;

(e) An assessment of the capacity of any bridge crossings on the route to cater for abnormal loads, and details of proposed upgrades and mitigation measures required for any bridge crossings; and

(f) A plan for access by vehicles carrying abnormal loads, including but not limited to the number and timing of deliveries and the length, width and axle configuration of all such traffic associated with the Development;

(g) A Schedule of Mitigation measure for impacts on roads and structures identified in a swept path analysis.

(2) Prior to the first delivery of an abnormal load, a programme for abnormal load deliveries shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland. Prior to any movement of abnormal loads (including trial runs) the Company must complete any mitigation works set out in the scheme approved under part (1) of this condition, and maintain such measures during the period of abnormal load deliveries.

- (3) The trial-run shall be undertaken in accordance with the details approved under part (1) prior to the movement of any abnormal loads.
- (4) The details in the approved report shall thereafter be implemented in full prior the first delivery of an abnormal load.

**Reason:** In the interest of road safety and to ensure that abnormal loads access the site in a safe manner.

Signature: Dafydd Jones

Designation: Area Planning Manager - North

Author: Mark Fitzpatrick

Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans: Plan 1 - Figure 1-1: Caledonia North Application Area

Plan 2 - Figure 12-7 SLVIA Worst Case Scenario Caledonia North (Site Layout Plan)

Plan 3 - Figure 3-7: Indicative design of a jacket with pin piles WTG foundation.

## Appendix 2 – Visual Impact, Viewpoint Assessment Appraisal

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration)	Scale of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Additional Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
Viewpoint 2: Dunnet Head  Distance 54km	App	Medium-High	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not significant	Not significant		
	THC	Medium-High	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not significant	Not significant		
	<p>Baseline is as described in EIAR Volume 3 Caledonia North Chapter 12 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - North, Paragraphs 12.7.3.40 - 12.7.3.49.</p> <p><u>Sensitivity Considerations</u></p> <p>Represents views experienced by visitors to the Dunnet Head SLA.</p> <p>Susceptibility: Medium (for sea- and land- scape, agreed) however visual receptors will have a High Susceptibility</p> <p>Value: Medium-High (regional designation)</p> <p>Can agree an overall sensitivity for visual receptors of Medium-High</p> <p><u>MoC considerations</u></p> <p>The applicant's assessment of low magnitude of change is reasonable, although turbines will appear wide on the horizon, they are behind the operational Stroupster and Lochend onshore Wind Farms, and the Moray East and BOWL offshore Wind Farms, the operational single turbine of Taigh na Muir, and the approved onshore Hollandmey and Slickly Wind Farms.</p>							



			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration)	Scale of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Additional Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	<p>Can agree an overall sensitivity for visual receptors of Medium-High</p> <p><u>MoC considerations</u></p> <p>The applicant's assessment of medium-low magnitude of change is reasonable. Although turbines will appear wide on the horizon, they will be viewed successively with Moray East and BOWL offshore Wind Farms with some overlap of the more distant turbines with the former. The development will extend the horizontal spread, and noticeably upscale the size, of turbines but from a distance and within a relatively contained section of the view.</p> <p><u>Duration and reversibility of effect</u></p> <p>Long-term and reversible</p> <p><u>Scale and significance of the effect</u></p> <p>A moderate scale of effect is predicted, which the applicant does not consider significant overall, which can be agreed for the 360° panorama, although it will be a significant effect in the portion of the view effected.</p> <p><u>Future baseline effects</u></p> <p>No further additional cumulative effects anticipated.</p>							
Viewpoint 4: Keiss	App	Medium-High	Medium-Low	Moderate	<b>Significant</b>	Not significant		
	THC	Medium-High	Medium-Low	Moderate	<b>Significant</b>	Not significant		



			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration)	Scale of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Additional Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
<p><u>Future baseline effects</u></p> <p>No further additional cumulative effects anticipated.</p>								
Viewpoint 5: Wick (path south of South View)	App	Medium-High	Medium	Moderate	<b>Significant</b>	Not significant		
	THC	Medium-High	Medium	Moderate	<b>Significant</b>	Not significant		
Distance 25km	<p>Baseline is as described in EIAR Volume 3 Caledonia North Chapter 12 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - North, Paragraphs 12.7.3.123 - 12.7.3.136</p> <p><u>Sensitivity Considerations</u></p> <p>Represents views experienced by residents, visitors and recreational receptors of Core Path CA15.01).</p> <p>Susceptibility: Medium-high for sea- and land- scape, consider High for visual receptors as well.</p> <p>Value: the applicant's assessment of medium is agreed.</p> <p>Overall sensitivity of medium-high is agreed.</p> <p><u>MoC considerations</u></p> <p>The applicant's assessment of medium magnitude of change is reasonable overall given the reduced separation distances between the viewer and the larger scale turbines in comparison to VPs 3 and 4. Although turbines are already characteristic of the sea view as channelled through Wick Bay, the horizontal spread is increased such that the majority of the bay will be occupied by offshore wind farms while the height differences between existing and proposed turbines is discernible. In addition, turbines will bookend successive sea, coastal, and townscape views from this location.</p>							











			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration)	Scale of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Additional Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	<p>Susceptibility: agree that the susceptibility of sea- and land- scape receptors is medium but visual receptors will have a medium-high susceptibility to wind farm development if their focus is on the attraction rather than the views.</p> <p>Value: agree that the value of the view is medium as there are no scenic designations.</p> <p>Overall, consider the sensitivity of visual receptors to be medium-high as opposed to the applicant's medium.</p> <p><u>MoC considerations</u></p> <p>The applicant's assessment of medium is justified, proposal will notably extend the horizontal spread of turbines northward, although it is agreed that the difference of turbine scales will be less apparent.</p> <p><u>Duration and reversibility of effect</u></p> <p>Long-term and reversible</p> <p>The applicant's assessment of moderate and significant scale of visual effect is agreed.</p> <p><u>Future baseline effects</u></p> <p>No further additional cumulative effects anticipated.</p>							
	App	Medium	Low	Minor	Not significant	Not significant		
	THC	Medium-High	Low	Minor	Not significant	Not significant		



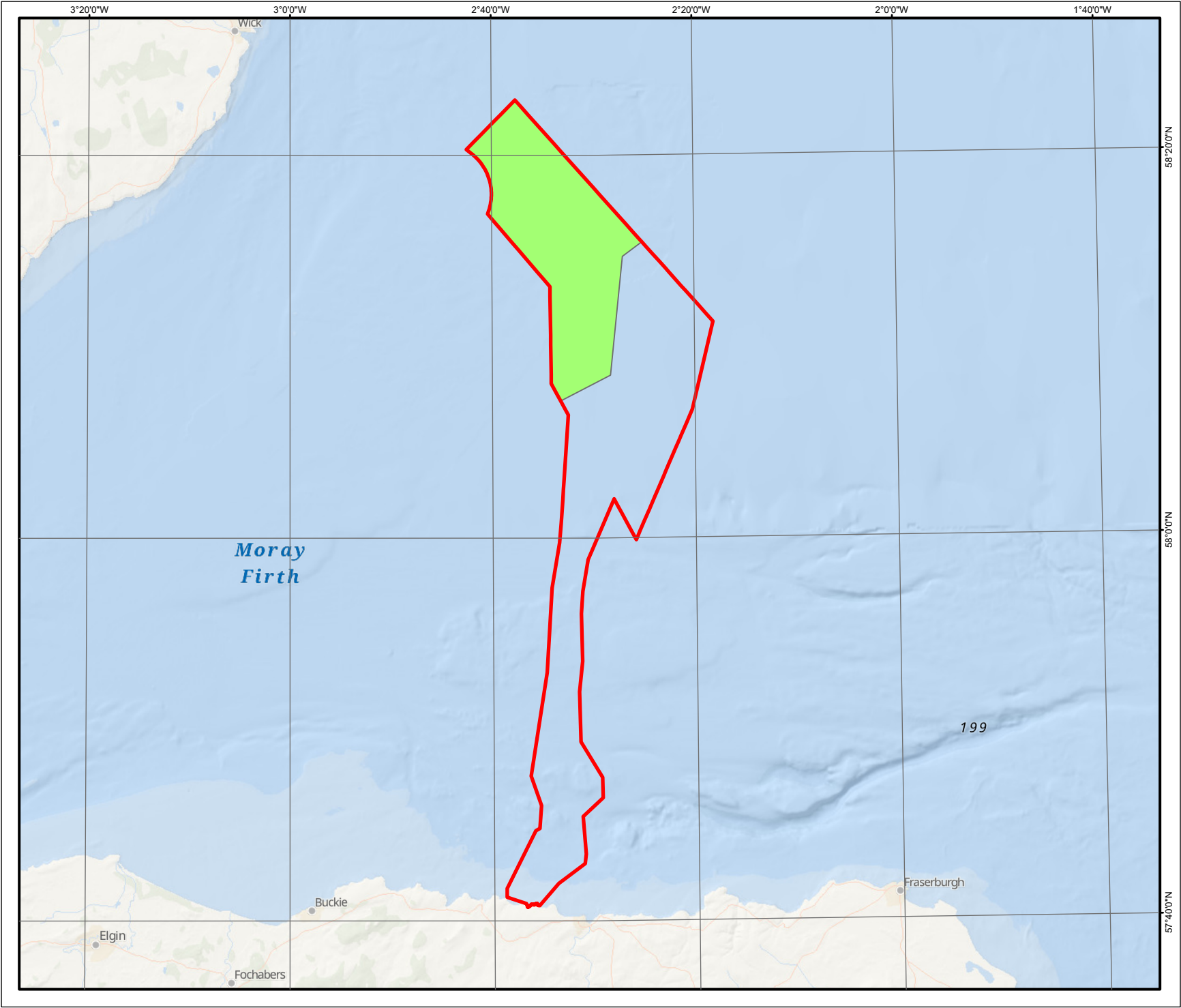
			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration)	Scale of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Additional Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	<u>Future baseline effects</u> - No further additional cumulative effects anticipated in the applicant's assessment, however, the consented and planned extension to Golticlay Wind Farm may result in perceived increased encirclement of wind farm development for this settlement.							
Viewpoint 10: Dunbeath (near Heritage Centre)	App	Medium	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not significant	Not significant		
	THC	Medium-High	Low	Moderate-Minor	Not significant	Not significant		
Distance 45km	Baseline is as described in EIAR Volume 3 Caledonia North Chapter 12 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - North, Paragraphs 12.7.3.253 - 12.7.3.263.  <u>Sensitivity Considerations</u> Represents views experienced by residential and recreational and tourist receptors visiting the heritage centre and using Core Paths CA04.12 Old Road Link and CA04.18 Camel Humps. Susceptibility: medium susceptibility is agreed for sea- and land- scape receptors but high is considered more appropriate for visual receptors. Value: medium value is agreed Overall, sensitivity is judged to be medium-high for visual receptors.							
	<u>MoC considerations</u>							



			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration)	Scale of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Additional Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
	<p>Represents views experienced by recreational hillwalkers on Morven within the Causeymire – Knockfin Flows Wild Land Area (WLA36) and the regionally designated The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast Special Landscape Area (SLA).</p> <p>Susceptibility: high</p> <p>Value: high</p> <p>Overall sensitivity of visual receptors is considered high from this VP.</p> <p><u>MoC considerations</u></p> <p>Turbines will increase the horizontal spread of turbines by a small factor (3°) but in a specific portion of the view and at a distance from the receptor. The applicant's judgement of low MoC is reasonable.</p> <p><u>Duration and reversibility of effect</u></p> <p>Long-term and reversible</p> <p>The applicant's judgement of moderate-minor and not significant scale of effect can be agreed.</p> <p><u>Future baseline effects</u></p> <p>No further additional cumulative effects anticipated.</p>							
	App	-	-	-	Not significant	Not significant		
Viewpoint 12: Navidale	THC	-	-	-	Not significant	Not significant		



			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration)	Scale of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale / Extent / Duration)	Additional Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor)	Significance
Distance 60km	<p>Baseline is as described in EIAR Volume 3 Caledonia North Chapter 12 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - North, Paragraphs 12.7.3.306 - 12.7.3.314.</p> <p>There is a negligible change to the baseline view.</p>							



Proposed Development (Offshore)  
Application Area

Extent of Caledonia North Array Area  
Section 36 and Generation Marine Licence

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km

03	30/08/2024	Approved	CW	GS	EC
02	20/07/2024	For Review	CW	GS	EC
01	17/05/2024	For Review	CE	GS	EC
REV	DATE	DOC STATUS	ORIGIN	REVIEW	APP

CALEDONIA

Offshore Wind Farm

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CONTRACTOR REV  
03

GEODETIC PARAMETERS  
WGS 84 / UTM Zone 30N (EPSG:32630)

DRAWING TITLE  
Figure 1-1:  
Caledonia North  
Application Area

STATUS  
Approved

DRAWING NUMBER  
N/A

SCALE  
1:500,000

SHEET NO  
01 of 01

REV  
N/A







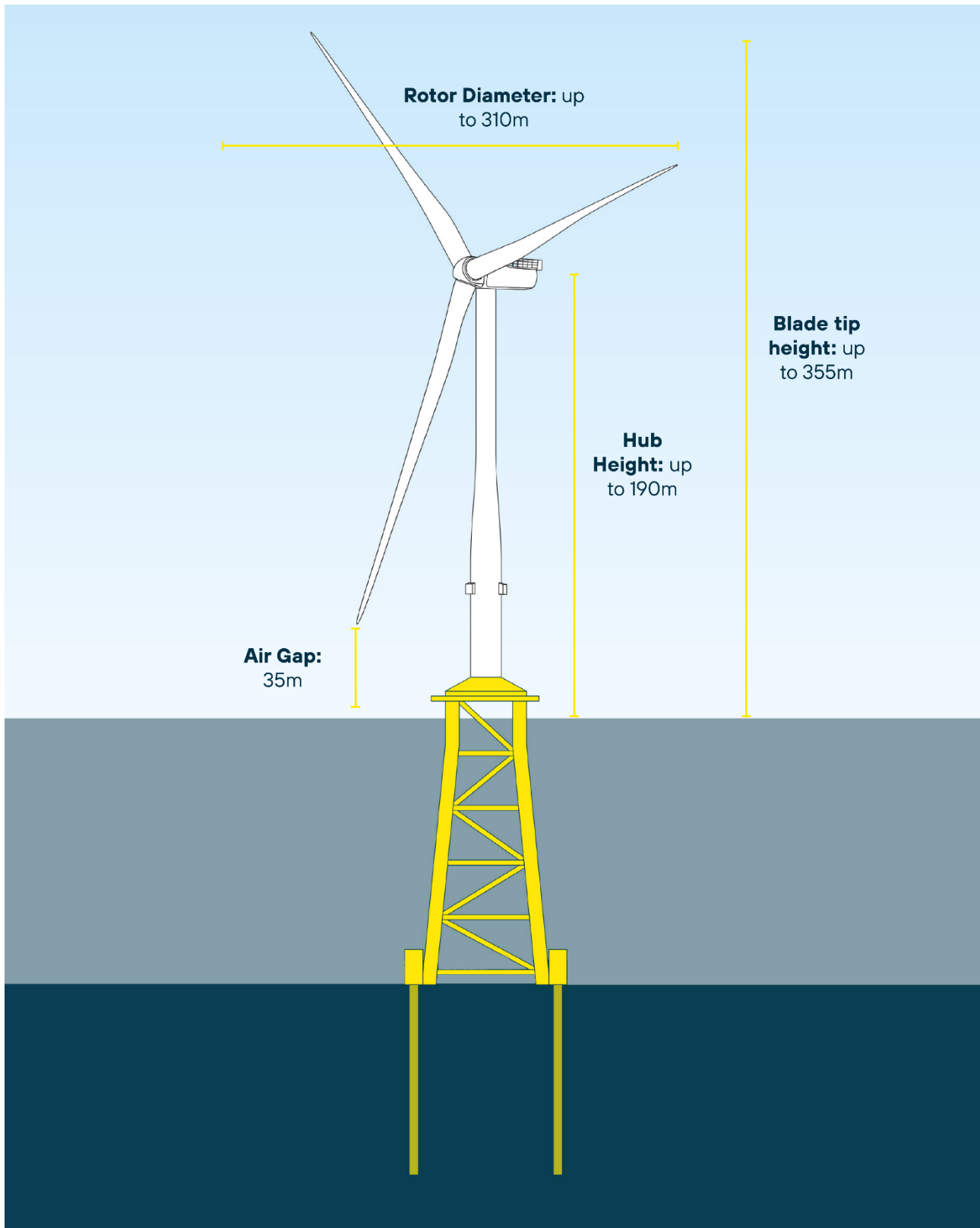


Figure 3-4: Indicative design of a WTG.