Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual

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7 Landscape and Visual

7.1 Executive Summary

7.1.1 This Chapter presents the findings of a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) undertaken for the Proposed Development. The assessment considers the degree and significance of potential changes resulting from the construction and long term presence of the Proposed Development to the landscape character, and views from properties, routes and locally popular vantage points within a 2 km study area for the Proposed Development.

7.1.2 The LVIA has been carried out by ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), Chartered Landscape Architects.

7.1.3 The assessment has concluded that, with the implementation of mitigation measures, there would be no long term significant landscape or visual effects arising from the Proposed Development. However, temporary significant effects are anticipated during the construction phase.

Landscape Effects

7.1.4 The landscape assessment has considered potential effects on Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and on the Weisdale candidate Local Landscape Area (cLLA).

7.1.5 The assessment of landscape character has identified that there would be potentially significant effects during the construction period for the Proposed Development for LCA D4 – Peatland and Moorland Inland Valleys. This relates to the direct effects which would occur within this LCA due to the extent of movement and activity taking place within a concentrated area which is considered likely to conflict with the existing rural and undeveloped character.

7.1.6 During the operational phase for the Proposed Development, with the implementation of mitigation measures comprising sensitive design and construction techniques, all effects on landscape character are anticipated to be not significant.

7.1.7 No significant effect is anticipated to the Weisdale cLLA during either construction or operation.

Visual Effects

7.1.8 The visual assessment has considered the potential for views of the Proposed Development to be significant from five property groups and four routes.

7.1.9 The visual assessment has established that, during the construction of the Proposed Development, there would be temporary significant effects to visual amenity for individuals at two building receptor locations and travellers on three routes, as follows:

- Receptor Group B2: Setter;
- Receptor Group B5: Sandwater;
- Route Receptor R1: A970;
- Route Receptor R3: B9075 Weisdale to Sandwater (the existing road); and
- Route Receptor R4: Sand Water Core Path (CPPTWW05).

7.1.10 However, with the implementation of mitigation measures, all of the above effects are anticipated to reduce to levels which are not significant during the operation of the Proposed Development.

7.2 Introduction

7.2.1 This chapter presents the findings of a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) undertaken for the Proposed Development. The purpose of the LVIA is to identify and describe potential significant effects which may occur as a result of the Proposed Development to views obtained by those living and working in, and visiting the area, and the wider landscape resource.

7.2.2 The assessment has been undertaken by ASH design + assessment Ltd, Chartered Landscape Architects.

7.3 Scope of Assessment

7.3.1 The LVIA considers all aspects of the Proposed Development during the construction phase and during operation. It gives consideration to potential effects on the character of the landscape and also the visual amenity of those present within the landscape.

7.3.2 Where operational effects are considered, these are assessed at an assumed 10 years post construction, to allow reinstatement and any proposed mitigation measures to fully establish.

Study Area

7.3.3 Following site survey, a 2 km study area (as shown on Figures 7.1 and 7.2) has been adopted for the LVIA which is considered to be a sufficient area to accommodate any potentially significant effects.

Consultation

7.3.4 A Pre-Application briefing note was prepared and submitted to Shetland Islands Council (SIC) to agree the scope of the EIA prior to a telecom meeting with SIC in October 2018 (see Appendix 6.1 and 6.2). SIC confirmed at this telecom meeting that LVIA should form a focus of the application and include assessment of visual effects as well as landscape mitigation measures.

LVIA Background

7.3.5 An LVIA was undertaken by Jacobs for a previous iteration of the Proposed Development and formed part of a planning application which was submitted in 2016 and subsequently withdrawn (the 2016 LVIA). Desk studies for this LVIA have included review of the 2016 LVIA. However, as the Proposed Development has now changed, this current LVIA has been carried out as an independent exercise and is not based on the 2016 LVIA.

7.3.6 An LVIA for the consented Viking Wind Farm was undertaken in 2009 and reviewed in 2018 for the Section 36C Variation. This did not include any consideration of the proposed works to the B9075 (Sandwater Road). These studies have been referred to as part of the desk study for this LVIA but should be considered as a separate exercise.

Associated Developments and Assumptions

7.3.7 The Proposed Development forms part of the associated works for the consented / proposed Viking Wind Farm. As the upgrade of the road is integral to the development of the wind farm, for the purposes of this assessment the following assumptions have been made in relation to the programme of works and the likely landscape and visual baseline.

7.3.8 Construction based effects are considered to include:

- Effects occurring in relation to the initial construction of the Proposed Development for Viking Wind Farm construction access, including all cuttings, embankments, structures and bell-mouths and areas associated works;
- Continued use of the Proposed Development by construction traffic throughout the construction period for the Viking Wind Farm (whilst the existing B9075 remains in public use); and
- Works to bring the Proposed Development to SIC adopted roads standard once construction of the Viking Wind Farm is complete, including associated landscape reinstatement.

7.3.9 Operational effects are considered to include:

- The presence and use of the Proposed Development within the landscape after 10 years post completion. It is assumed that the Viking Wind Farm would be fully operational in the form proposed for the Section 36C Variation at this point.

Cumulative Effects

7.3.10 There is the potential for cumulative effects to occur due to the likely timescale of the Proposed Development in relation to the construction of the Viking Wind Farm. This could relate to:

- The combined appearance of construction activities for the Proposed Development together with those for the Viking Wind Farm and other associated developments such as the upgrading of the access track to Kergord; and
- The combined appearance of the completed road in association with similar features including wind farm access tracks and other public road improvements, including the upgraded access track to Kergord.

7.3.11 These aspects have been considered where relevant within the LVIA.

Issues Scoped Out of the Assessment

7.3.12 The Proposed Development is considered to include the construction and operation of bellmouths for the Viking Wind Farm access track and upgraded Kergord Valley road to the proposed Converter Station. However, the assessment does not include the construction and use of these roads.

7.4 Planning Context

7.4.1 The assessment has taken account of national, regional and local policy and guidance relating to landscape character and visual amenity relevant to the Proposed Development. The following have been referred to in carrying out this assessment:

7.4.2 National Context

- The Third National Planning Framework for Scotland (NPF3);
- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP);
- Planning Advice Note 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (PAN 60), 2000; and
- Fitting Landscapes (Scottish Government's Policy for landscape design and management of transport corridors), 2014.

7.4.3 Regional Context

- The Shetland Local Development Plan 2014 (Shetland LDP); and
- Shetland LDP Supplementary Guidance: Local Landscape Areas (Consultation Draft 2014).

7.4.4 The Shetland LDP forms the key element of spatial planning policy for the Proposed Development. The Shetland LDP does not have any specific policy in relation to Landscape or Visual amenity. However, the following policies are of relevance:

- Policy GP3 - All Development: Layout and Design. This requires all new development to be sited and designed to respect the character and local distinctiveness of the site and its surroundings.
- Policy NH4 - Local Designations. This policy aims to protect the integrity of locally designated sites including Local Landscape Areas unless effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits.
- Policy HE5 - Gardens and Designed Landscapes. This policy aims to protect, preserve and enhance gardens and designed landscapes in terms of their character, important views and setting.
- Policy HE6 – Trees and Woodlands. This policy requires the planning authority to protect trees, groups of trees and areas of woodland by Tree Preservation Order where required in the interests of amenity or where of cultural or historical significance.

7.4.5 The Shetland LDP Supplementary Guidance for Local Landscape Areas identifies areas considered to be of regional importance and which should therefore be protected as Local Landscape Areas (cLLAs). This document still has draft status and has not been fully adopted by SIC. However, as the cLLAs identified are relevant to Policy NH4 of the Shetland LDP, they have been fully considered in this assessment.

7.5 Methodology

Assessment Guidance

7.5.1 The LVIA has been prepared with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), 2013, published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA3) and Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (SNH / The Countryside Agency).

Professional Judgement

7.5.2 GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and designing the significance of landscape and visual effects. As part of this assessment, professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate value, sensitivity and magnitude and significance of

effect. The assessment has been undertaken and verified by two Landscape Professionals (Chartered Landscape Architects) to provide a robust and consistent approach.

Key Stages of Assessment

7.5.3 The GLVIA methodology involves an appreciation of the existing landscape and visual resource and the ability of its key components to accept potential change; and an understanding of the proposed changes which could occur and the degree to which these could alter these key components. The assessment considers the potential for these changes to result in significant effects and considers the potential to mitigate these effects. There are five key stages to the assessment:

- Establishment of the baseline;
- Appreciation of the development proposed;
- Identification of key landscape and visual receptors;
- Identification of potential effects and mitigation measures; and
- Assessment of effect significance.

7.5.4 Further detail on specific activities undertaken for landscape and visual assessment and criteria used are contained within the relevant sections of this Chapter.

Establishment of the Baseline

7.5.5 Establishment of the baseline conditions has been undertaken through combination of desk study and site appraisal. The following specific tasks have been undertaken:

- A review of the relevant development plans and supplementary planning guidance as described in Section 7.4;
- A review of 'A Landscape Assessment of the Shetland Isles' (Gillespies, 1998) from the SNH suite of landscape character assessment documents;
- Review of the 2016 LVIA as contained within the B9074 Sandwater Road Environmental Statement 2016;
- Review of the Viking Wind Farm Environmental Statement 2009 and Viking Wind Farm Section 36C Variation EIA Report 2018;
- Review of other desk sources including Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping and aerial photography to identify potential receptors; and
- Field Survey to further identify and appraise individual landscape and visual receptors in terms of their contribution to and relationship with the baseline situation.

7.5.6 Establishment of the baseline includes the consideration of the baseline landscape value. The relative value of the landscape is an important consideration in informing later judgement of the significance of effects. Landscape value concerns the perceived importance of the landscape when considered as a whole, and within the context of the study area and is established through consideration of the following factors:

- Presence of landscape designations, other inventory or registered landscapes / landscape features or identified planning constraints;
- The scenic quality of the landscape;
- Perceptual aspects, such as wildness or tranquillity;

- Conservation interests such as cultural heritage features or associations, or if the landscape supports notable habitats or species;
- Recreational value; and
- Rarity, either in the national or local context, or if it is considered to be a particularly important example of a specific landscape type.

7.5.7 It should be noted that absence of a designation does not necessarily mean that a landscape or component is not highly valued, as factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality highly valuable as a local resource.

7.5.8 Criteria for the allocation of perceived landscape value are outlined in Table 7.1 below:

Table 7.1: Landscape Value Criteria

Landscape Value	Criteria
High	• The landscape is closely associated with features of international or national importance which are rare within the wider context; • The landscape is of high scenic quality and forms a key part of an important designated landscape or planning constraint; and/or • The landscape is an example of a scarce resource within the local context and is of considerable local importance for its, scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.
Medium	• The landscape is associated with features of national or regional importance which are relatively common within the wider context; • The landscape forms part of a designated landscape or is associated with other features of importance but is not rare or distinctive within the local context; and/or • The landscape is one of a number within the local context appreciated for its scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.
Low	• The landscape characteristics are common within the local and regional context and the landscape is not associated with any particular features or attributes considered to be important; and/or • The landscape is of poor scenic quality and is not appreciated for any recreational or cultural associations.

Appreciation of the Development Proposed

7.5.9 Appreciation of the Proposed Development involves the accumulation of a thorough knowledge of the proposal, its nature, scale and location within the baseline landscape, and any peripheral or ancillary features proposed. Analysis of the proposed activities and changes which would take place leads to an understanding of the potential effects that may occur to the landscape and visual resource.

Identification of Key Landscape and Visual Receptors

7.5.10 The identification of landscape and visual receptors is the first step in the analysis of the potential for significant effects to occur. Landscape and visual receptors can be described as follows:

- **Landscape receptors** comprise key characteristics or individual features which contribute to the value of the landscape and have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. Landscape receptors are identified through analysis of baseline characteristics when considered in relation to the impacts which might result from a development of the type proposed.
- **Visual receptors** comprise individuals experiencing views from locations such as buildings, recognised routes and popular viewpoints used by the public. Potential visual receptors are identified through analysis of desk resources, mapping and field survey, as described under 'Establishment of the Baseline' above.

Identification of Potential Effects and Mitigation Measures

7.5.11 The second step in the assessment process involves the identification of potential effects which may occur as a result of the interaction of the effects of the Proposed Development with the identified landscape and visual receptors.

7.5.12 The assessment takes into account direct effects upon existing views, landscape elements, features and key characteristics and also indirect effects which may occur secondarily to changes affecting another landscape component or area. The identification of potential effects is a two-fold process, giving consideration to how these effects may arise from aspects of the Proposed Development and how they may be accommodated by the existing baseline features.

7.5.13 Where it is established that potential effects could be limited by mitigation measures, these are also given consideration.

7.5.14 Potential effects are evaluated through the allocation of criteria for sensitivity and magnitude. Criteria for these subjects are presented in Table 7.2 and Table 7.3 below:

Table 7.2: Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Criteria

Sensitivity Rating	Landscape Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity
High	A highly valued landscape of particularly distinctive character susceptible to relatively small changes of the type proposed.	• Views from dwellings where the changes form part of a valued view; and • Views from footpaths, tracks and vantage points where the changes form part of a valued view.
Medium	A reasonably valued landscape with a composition and characteristics tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed.	• Views from dwellings where the changes form a part of a less valued view; • Views from footpaths, tracks and vantage points where the changes form a part of a less valued view; • Views from roads where the changes form part of a valued view; and • Views from farm buildings not used as dwellings and Industrial buildings where the changes form part of a valued view.

Sensitivity Rating	Landscape Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity
Low	A relatively unimportant landscape which is potentially tolerant of a large degree of change of the type proposed.	• Views from dwellings where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view; • Views from footpaths, tracks and vantage points where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view; • Views from roads where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view; and • Views from farm buildings not used as dwellings and industrial buildings where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view.

Table 7.3: Landscape and Visual Magnitude of Change Criteria

Magnitude Rating	Landscape	Visual
High	Notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to a very intensive change over a more limited area.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a very noticeable change in the existing view.
Medium	Perceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to notable change in a localised area.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a noticeable change in the existing view.
Low	Virtually imperceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area or perceptible change in a localised area.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view.
Negligible	No discernible change in any landscape characteristics or components.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view.

Assessment of Effect Significance

7.5.15 Evaluation of the predicted significance of effect has been carried out through the analysis of the anticipated magnitude of change in relation to the landscape or visual sensitivity, taking into account any proposed mitigation measures, and is established using professional judgement. The significance of effect for landscape and visual elements is considered as follows:

- **Landscape Effects:** The assessment takes into account identified effects upon existing landscape receptors and assesses the extent to which these would be lost or modified in the context of their importance in determining the existing baseline character.
- **Visual Effects:** The assessment takes into account likely changes to the visual composition, including the extent to which new features would distract or screen existing elements in the view or disrupt the scale, structure or focus of the existing view.

7.5.16 Effect significance has been evaluated using the following criteria:

Table 7.4: Effect Significance Criteria

Effect Significance	Landscape Effects	Visual Effects
Major	The Proposed Development would be at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and may become an influential feature, resulting in considerable alteration to scenic quality and large scale change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would become a prominent and very detracting feature and would result in a very noticeable deterioration to an existing highly valued and well composed view.
Moderate	The Proposed Development would be inconsistent with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and may become locally influential and/or result in a noticeable alteration to scenic quality and a degree of change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would introduce some detracting features to an existing highly valued and well composed view, or would be prominent within a pleasing or less well composed view, resulting in a noticeable deterioration of the view.
Minor	The Proposed Development would not quite fit with the scale, landform or local pattern of the landscape and may become locally influential but would result in an inappreciable alteration to scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would form a perceptible but not detracting feature within a pleasing or valued view or would be a more prominent feature within a poorly composed view of limited value, resulting in a small deterioration to the existing view.
Negligible	The Proposed Development sits well within the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and would not result in any discernible reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would form a barely perceptible feature within the existing view and would not result in any discernible deterioration to the view.

7.5.17 The above criteria and levels of effect represent points on a continuum. Where required, interim ratings, such as Minor-Moderate, have been used to indicate the anticipated level of effect. For the purposes of this assessment, effects with a rating of Moderate or above are considered to be significant.

Limitations of the Assessment

7.5.18 The assessment of visual effects has been undertaken from the nearest public road, footpath or open space to each property and assumptions have been made about the types of rooms and about the types and importance of views obtained from these rooms.

7.6 Baseline Conditions

Overview

7.6.1 The Proposed Development would comprise a realignment of the existing B9075 between Burn of Weisdale and its junction with the A970, located within the central Mainland of Shetland. This is a large scale landscape patterned by broad, linear ridges (known as Kames) and open, trough-like valleys in a north-south orientation. Finger-like fjiords reach up the long valleys with settlement and infrastructure largely concentrated around their heads and communication corridors reaching deeper into or through the valleys. The landscape is generally open, clothed by short grasses and heather. However, Weisdale

valley, on the western side of the study area, has a pattern of scattered and wind pruned shelterbelt woodland, which is rare within Shetland. The long ridges are generally undeveloped. However, this situation is anticipated to change with the development of the Viking Wind Farm which would result in wind turbines and access tracks forming a prominent new feature characterising parts of the landscape.

The Existing Road

7.6.2 Travelling east to west, commencing at the junction with the A970, the road travels through a low, wetland valley, crossing the Burn of Pettawater and running around the north of Sand Water, a shallow loch. It then ascends to loop around the lower, southern end of the Mid Kame ridge at Lamba Scord. This part of the route provides extensive elevated views, particularly to the east over Sand Water and towards South Nesting. The road then descends the western side of the Mid Kame ridge providing views towards the fertile valleys of Weisdale and Kergord. The final section of the route towards Weisdale Burn runs again through a low valley floor. Just prior to reaching the burn a junction leads to a narrow single track road leading to Upper Kergord (due to be upgraded as part of a separate development for the Viking Wind Farm).

Landscape Designations – Weisdale Proposed LLA

7.6.3 One proposed LLA is located within the Study Area, identified within the Shetland LDP Draft Supplementary Guidance (2014): Weisdale cLLA. The following key characteristics and features are identified for the Weisdale cLLA:

- Unique in Shetland as the location of the only substantial woodlands, giving a sheltered character not found other parts of the islands;
- An enclosed valley landscape of pastoral enclosure and large farm buildings, opening out to a wide voe;
- Panoramic views across Weisdale Voe to the south, taking in an attractive composition of the islands and sea towards Fitful Head; and
- The open and undeveloped moorland provide an important setting to the lower-lying settled valley and shore.

Landscape Character Assessment

7.6.4 Scottish Natural Heritage, in conjunction with partner Councils, has undertaken detailed review and classification of various landscape areas and types of Scotland. Within this context, the landscape of the Shetland Isles is covered by the document 'A Landscape Assessment of the Shetland Isles' (Gillespies, 1998). This document divides the Shetland Isles into seven Landscape Character Types (LCTs). It provides a description of the specific characteristics and sensitivities relevant to each landscape type, outlines the key forces for change acting upon these characteristics and provides guidance related to the potential impact of the forces for change on the key landscape characteristics.

7.6.5 The study area for the Proposed Development falls within four of these LCTs (see Figure 7.1), as follows:

- A – Major Uplands;
- B – Peatland and Moorland;
- D – Inland Valleys; and
- F – Farmed and Settled Voes and Sounds.

7.6.6 Due to the location of LCT F (Farmed and Settled Voes and Sounds) in relation to the Proposed Development, it is considered intervisibility would be very unlikely due to intervening topography. In addition, very limited intervisibility is anticipated with LCT B (Peatland and Moorland). These LCTs have therefore been scoped out of further assessment.

7.6.7 The Landscape Assessment document further divides the identified LCTs into Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) which are more specific to the local context. LCTs and LCAs within the study area are shown on Figure 7.1 and described below.

Table 7.5: LCA A2 – East and West Kames (LCT A - Major Uplands) Landscape Baseline

LCA Description	This LCA takes the form of a distinct series of rounded north-south ridges located in the central part of the mainland. It is an uninhabited, large scale and largely inaccessible landscape, open in nature, of peaty mires, standing water and heather moorland. There is a uniformity of colour and texture through the landscape formed by a generally unbroken land cover of heathers and rough grasses. The open and exposed landscape character is affected by the siting of various MOD and telecommunications structures and the main north-south road, which is routed through the linear valleys defined by the ridges. The character of this LCA is anticipated to change with the introduction of turbines for the Viking Wind Farm which are likely to comprise prominent new features.
Principal Landscape Components	• Distinctive rounded north-south ridged landform; • Open, large scale character with expansive views over the ridges; • Dominant vegetation cover of short grasses and heather giving uniformity of colour and texture; • Transport routes through valleys; • A number of telecommunication masts on prominent hills present man-made features in an otherwise uninhabited landscape; and • Wind turbines and access tracks of the Viking Wind Farm once built will become a prominent feature of this landscape.
Landscape Value	This open and undeveloped landscape is likely to have some value for its remote qualities and as a setting for lowland areas, although this is a common landscape type across Shetland. However, it is due to experience change associated with the Viking Wind Farm which may reduce this perceived value. Landscape value is considered to be **Low - Medium**.

Table 7.6: LCA D1 – Farmed and Settled Inland Valleys: Tingwall and Weisdale (LCT D - Inland Valleys) Landscape Baseline

LCA Description	These areas comprise attractive long, linear valleys, characterised by their exploitation by man over time. Valleys are used for crofting and farming in their more sheltered parts resulting in great diversity of colour through the contrast in areas of improved land, water and rare areas of woodland shelterbelts, with rough grassland and heather on higher ground. Views are contained to east and west by the ridges of high ground but are extensive to north and south. The character of this LCA is anticipated to change with the introduction of turbines for the Viking Wind Farm which are likely to comprise noticeable new features within the surrounding backdrop.
Principal Landscape Components	• Long, sheltered and fertile improved inland valleys in contrast to surrounding more common moorland and coast; • Diversity of colour and texture formed by different land uses and management techniques; • Rare areas of woodland shelterbelt on the Kergord Estate; • Contained views north and south along valleys; and • Wind turbines of the Viking Wind Farm once built will become a noticeable feature of the upland backdrop to this landscape.

Landscape Value	This area is valued for its pastoral character and woodland which is rare on Shetland. This value is recognised through its inclusion in the Weisdale cLLA. Landscape value is considered to be **High**.

Table 7.7: LCA D4 – Peatland and Moorland Inland Valleys (LCT D - Inland Valleys) Landscape Baseline

LCA Description	This is a large scale unenclosed landscape of inland valleys characterised by peatland and heather moorland. There is little diversity in colour and texture with variation provided by areas of standing water and small lochs and areas of eroded and exposed peatland. The few areas of improved land stand out sharply against the muted colours of the peatland. Extensive views are afforded along the valley, sometimes extending to settled areas or the coast. This is a generally uninhabited landscape with human influence limited to electricity transmission lines and roads. The character of this LCA is anticipated to change with the introduction of turbines for the Viking Wind Farm which are likely to comprise prominent new features.
Principal Landscape Components	• Large scale landscape with limited human influence and subtle colours and variations; • Extensive views along the valley to the sea and coastal settlements; • Uniform land cover gives little diversity in colour and texture; • Human influence generally limited to areas of improved grassland, roads and electricity transmission lines; and • Wind turbines and access tracks of the Viking Wind Farm once built will become a prominent feature of this landscape.
Landscape Value	This open and undeveloped landscape is likely to have some value for its remote qualities and as a setting for lowland areas, including the Weisdale cLLA. However, it is due to experience change associated with the Viking Wind Farm which may reduce this perceived value to some extent. Landscape value is considered to be **Medium**.

Visual Receptors

7.6.8 Potential visual receptors within the study area can be classified into two groups:

- Individuals obtaining views from building locations; and
- Individuals obtaining views from routes.

Building Receptor Locations

7.6.9 Building receptor locations within the study area have been arranged into five groups considered likely to experience a similar range of effects. The receptor groups are shown on Figure 7.2 and described as follows:

- **Receptor Group B1 - Upper Kergord:** This comprises a 1.5 storey farmhouse with outbuildings. The existing view is predominantly southerly down Kergord valley;
- **Receptor Group B2 – Setter:** This receptor group comprises two 1 – 1.5 storey houses with outbuildings with easterly and southerly views across and down Weisdale valley;
- **Receptor Group B3 – Kergord:** This comprises a group of 1 – 2 storey houses set in the edge of a small woodland area. These properties have a generally easterly orientation, with views across Weisdale valley;
- **Receptor Group B4 – Weisdale:** The group comprises a range of 1 to 2 storey properties with views generally east or west across Weisdale valley and a café in a converted mill with a southerly aspect; and
- **Receptor Group B5 – Sandwater:** This comprises one 1.5 storey property with predominant easterly views over the A970 and towards East Kame.

Route Receptor Locations

7.6.10 With the inclusion of the existing road, four route receptor locations are contained within the study area as shown on Figure 7.2. These are described as follows:

- **Route Receptor R1 – A970**: This is the main A route north and south through the Shetland mainland. Views are predominantly orientated south and north by the ridged landform of the Kames. However, within the study area, open views are afforded across Sand Water;
- **Route Receptor R2 – B9075 through Weisdale (Heglibister to Burn of Weisdale):** This route has generally north and south facing views contained by the valley and occasionally filtered by trees;
- **Route Receptor R3 – B9075 Weisdale to Sandwater (the existing road):** From the higher sections of the route skirting crossing Lamba Scord and descending into Weisdale there are elevated views overlooking the fertile valleys of Weisdale to the south and Kergord to the north. From the eastern part descending to Sandwater there are extensive views over Sand Water towards South Nesting. The lower parts of the route offer a different visual experience with smaller scale contained views north and south along the valleys from the western end of the route, close to Weisdale Burn, and low vantage, expansive views over the open water of Sand Water from the eastern end; and
- **Route Receptor R4 – Sand Water Core Path (CPPT WW05):** This core path is routed around Sand Water. Views are considered likely to be focussed across the loch but the open landscape character allows expansive views in all directions.

7.7 Mitigation Measures

7.7.1 Landscape and visual mitigation is recommended to help minimise potential effects of the Proposed Development.

7.7.2 Sensitive detailed design is the primary method for mitigating potential landscape and visual effects. These principles are set out in the Scottish Government policy document 'Fitting Roads: Securing More Sustainable Landscapes' (Transport Scotland, 2014).

7.7.3 The following mitigation measures are proposed:

7.7.4 Detailed design development:

- The gradient of cuttings should be modified to tie into the adjacent landscape where appropriate and top and bottoms should be rounded out to form a smooth transition;
- Other than when in hard bedrock, cuttings and embankments should be at a gradient suitable for the placement of excavated peat turves in order to allow regeneration of the native heather and grass species, prevent erosion and reduce the appearance of contrast with the surrounding moorland landscape;
- Where drainage or SUDs features are required their appearance should be designed to reflect the natural lochs and pools found within the landscape; and
- The requirement for fencing should be minimised and, where required, this should be of post and wire construction to reflect the character of surrounding fencing and minimise visibility.

7.7.5 Programming and construction phase mitigation measures:

- Construction activities should be carefully planned in advance to minimise the footprint required and the duration between site strip and reinstatement;
- Peat and peaty topsoils should be stripped, stored and handled in accordance with best practice avoiding compaction and mixing of horizons and subsoils. Site storage areas should be identified in advance of works commencing and protected during use;
- The reinstatement of peat on cut slopes and embankments should occur as soon as possible after construction. This will give the greatest chance for vegetation to re-establish and help prevent erosion and runoff during this interim phase; and
- Programming should take consideration of all aspects of the development to ensure that requirements for re-excavation or multi-handling of peat are minimised.

7.7.6 Unless otherwise stated, for the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that these measures would be implemented. Therefore, the effects ratings identified are dependent upon these measures being carried out.

7.8 Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

Potential Landscape Effects

7.8.1 Impacts to landscape character may arise through the introduction of new components which are out of keeping with established landscape patterns and features. The scale and form of new development can prove inappropriate and intrusive in the context of existing landform, settlement and planting structure. Development may also result in the loss or fragmentation of important and distinctive landscape components. The purpose of the landscape assessment is to determine the extent to which the Proposed Development would affect the landscape character of the area and the elements which contribute to the quality and sensitivity of the landscape.

7.8.2 In the context of the Proposed Development, the following potential effects have been considered:

- Direct effects from modifications to landform including cuttings and embankments;
- Appearance and movement of construction plant and activities within the rural landscape may be out of keeping with the existing remote qualities;
- Potential changes to vegetation types resulting from new cuttings and alteration of drainage may contrast with existing muted colours of moorland vegetation;
- Effects relating to larger and more robust road construction and anticipated faster traffic speeds compared to the existing single track road may reduce sense of remoteness and rural feel;
- Potential effects relating to the appearance of the Proposed Development on the upland slopes and skylines which form the setting to valley landscapes; and
- Potential cumulative effects with features of the Viking Wind Farm during construction and operation.

Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character Areas

7.8.3 The anticipated effects on the LCAs which have been scoped into the assessment are presented in Table 7.8 to Table 7.10 below:

Table 7.8: LCA A2 – East and West Kames (LCT A - Major Uplands) Landscape Assessment

Sensitivity to change of the type proposed	This is a moderately valued landscape. The open and uninhabited qualities of the LCA makes it susceptible to new development which would be potentially widely visible, particularly from the higher slopes. The sensitive soil types and elevation are also susceptible to development of this type with disturbance or changes to drainage liable to lead to different vegetation types which may contrast with the muted colour pallet. However, the presence of the existing road reduces sensitivity in the local area and the introduction of the Viking Wind Farm is also likely to reduce sensitivity to new development to some extent. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium.
Magnitude of change	There would be no direct impacts to this LCA, although there is a similarity of character between this LCA and the ridge of Mid Kame and Lamba Scord which the Proposed Development would cross. This high part of the route and associated cuttings would be seen within this similar landscape context from some higher areas and facing slopes. However, although smaller, the existing road already creates a feature within this context and it is also affected directly and indirectly by the main A970 route. During construction, works would be clearly evident from higher ridges and slopes within the study area. However, during some of this time, they would be seen in the context of the Viking Wind Farm construction works which would be likely to appear greater in extent and would directly affect the LCA. Magnitude during construction is anticipated to be Medium to Low. During operation, the road would appear in addition to the existing road. It would be evident as a larger feature within the landscape from elevated areas and facing slopes, but would be a relatively small feature within an extensive wider context. Magnitude during operation is anticipated to be Low.
Significance of Effect	During construction, the Proposed Development would be evident within the context of this landscape from a relatively small part of the LCA overall. The large scale construction activities and ground works would be likely to reduce the sense of remoteness and create a distraction within this context. However, within the context of the Viking Wind Farm construction, its influence would be a relatively small addition. During operation, the Proposed Development would form a new, more robust feature within the wider context which may be less in character with the rural landscape. However, when considering its scale in relation to the extensive wider context and the likely influence of the Viking Wind Farm on the landscape, the effect is considered unlikely to result in any noticeable alteration of landscape characteristics. With the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Section 7.7, particularly those designed to soften and minimise visibility of cut slopes, the Proposed Development is considered unlikely to form a new intrusive feature within the landscape context. Significance of Effect is anticipated to be **Minor to Moderate** during construction and **Minor** during operation (both not significant).

Table 7.9: LCA D1 – Farmed and Settled Inland Valleys: Tingwall and Weisdale (LCT D - Inland Valleys) Landscape Assessment

Sensitivity to change of the type proposed	This LCA is small scale and rural in character and highly valued for the rarity of its character within Shetland. Although it has existing small scale development, the character is considered susceptible to a larger scale or heavily engineered road structure which would conflict with the rural character, or larger visible cuttings or embankments which could draw the eye away from the small scale patterns of the valley. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium - High.
Magnitude of Change	There would be a small degree of direct impact on this LCA at the western end. In addition, the construction of the new road would be evident on the enclosing valley side at the head of the valley to the north-east, including formation of cuttings and embankments and may result in some indirect effect. This would be seen, within the context of Viking Wind Farm construction works for some of the construction period, although these works would be less evident on this lowland valley landscape than the upland landscapes, and also some of the Kergord access track upgrade works if these happen concurrently.

	Magnitude during construction is anticipated to be Low. During operation, the Proposed Development would be seen in addition to the existing road structure forming a noticeably more robust construction at the head of the valley. However, its prominence would be reduced within the core of the LCA further south. Magnitude during operation is anticipated to be Low.
Significance of Effect	Construction activities associated with the Proposed Development would influence the northern part of this landscape with an increase in movement and noise and the appearance of site establishment and laydown which may be inconsistent with the existing rural character. This would affect an area where the existing road is already present, although would be noticeably greater in extent. It would also be seen within a context of similar works for the Viking Wind Farm. However, it would bring the appearance of construction works closer and more directly into the LCA. This effect would be limited from the majority of the LCA, however, and is considered unlikely to significantly affect the key characteristics of the LCA overall. During operation, the Proposed Development would combine with the existing road, likely to give the appearance of a single, larger road corridor, likely to be visually associated with the turbines of the Viking Wind Farm. At close vantage, the greater scale and engineered nature of the road would be evident and may appear somewhat out of scale with the existing rural and small scale character. However, this would affect a relatively small area, being less evident further to the south of the LCA. As the Proposed Development would disappear into cut sooner than the existing road, less movement of traffic would be likely to be discernible on the higher enclosing slopes, assuming that the existing road is no longer used by vehicles. Assuming the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Section 1.7, the effect to landscape character is anticipated to be small and localised. Significance of Effect is anticipated to be **Minor to Moderate** during construction and **Minor** during operation (both not significant).

Table 7.10: LCA D4 – Peatland and Moorland Inland Valleys (LCT D - Inland Valleys) Landscape Assessment

Sensitivity to change of the type proposed	This is a moderately valued landscape and the extensive views and general lack of human influence makes it very susceptible to the introduction of new development which could be widely visible, particularly from the higher slopes. The sensitive soil types and elevation are also susceptible to development of this type, with disturbance of changes to drainage liable to lead to different vegetation types which may contrast with the muted colour pallet. However, the presence of the existing road reduces sensitivity in the local area and the introduction of the Viking Wind Farm is also likely to reduce sensitivity to new development to some extent. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium.
Magnitude of Change	The Proposed Development would directly affect this LCA. During construction, there would be an increase in activity and movement along the proposed road alignment. Although close to the existing road, this would be much greater in extent and would be in addition to the existing road use. Although this would take place alongside (for some of this time period) the Viking Wind Farm construction, the concentrated level of activity associated with the Proposed Development is considered likely to form a noticeable feature in its own right. Magnitude during construction is anticipated to be Medium. During operation, the Proposed Development would be seen in addition to the existing road forming a double road corridor (subject to the outcome of the Recreational Management Plan, see para. 4.3.3 of this EIA Report). It would be likely to appear noticeably more robust with visible cuttings and embankment slopes creating notable new ground modifications. From some areas, particularly to the east of the Mid Kame ridge, this would visibly alter the crest of the ridge. Magnitude during operation is anticipated to be Low - Medium.
Significance of Effect	During construction the noticeable increase in activity and movement along the route of the Proposed Development would be in contrast to the existing remote and undeveloped character. Although this would be seen for some of this period in combination with the Viking Wind Farm construction, the degree of activity is

	considered likely to be a prominent and distracting feature both alone and in addition to the wind farm works and would spread the influence of this activity to a greater area, including the low lying valley around Sand Water. Although sensitivity is reduced slightly in this area due to the existing A970, the level of activity would be much greater than that experienced through existing traffic. During operation, there would be a reduction in effect as activity would reduce to the levels of existing traffic movements. However, the presence of the double road corridor (subject to the outcome of the Recreational Management Plan, see para. 4.3.3 of this EIA Report) would form a much wider transport corridor cutting across this landscape. The introduction of new cuttings and embankments would create new modifications to this landscape, along with the new bridge in Pettadale, giving a more strongly engineered appearance when compared to the existing minor road and soft lines of the landscape. This is likely to increase the prominence of the new road, particularly where the new cuttings would be seen to break the ridge crest from Pettadale, and may appear slightly incongruous with the rural and remote character. The implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Section 7.7 would help to reduce this effect however, and the effects would be seen in the context of the operational Viking Wind Farm turbines and access tracks. Significance of effect is anticipated to be **Moderate** (significant) during construction, and **Minor to Moderate** (not significant) during operation.

Assessment of Effects on the Weisdale cLLA

7.8.4 Within the Study Area the Weisdale cLLA covers a similar extent to LCA D1 (Farmed and Settled Inland Valleys: Tingwall and Weisdale), although extends slightly further north. The assessment has identified a potential Minor to Moderate effect on this LCA during construction, and a Minor effect during operation. The effect on the cLLA is anticipated to be similar, with localised effects from construction activities at its north-east edge. However, the boundary of the cLLA continues a little further north and appears to follow the edge of the existing road. This is the very periphery of the cLAA. However, it is likely that the elevated views from this part of the road are considered to contribute to the value of the cLLA. As the new road construction is to the north of the existing road, these views would be unimpeded during construction, although the nearby works may be disruptive to the rural character in this area. During operation, it is likely that similar views would be obtained from the Proposed Development, but would be slightly less elevated and therefore potentially less extensive. Overall, this is considered unlikely to lead to any notable detrimental effect to the character and value of the cLLA, in addition to those outlined in Table 7.5 for LCA D1.

7.8.5 The significance of effect on the Weisdale cLLA is therefore anticipated to be **Minor to Moderate** during construction, and **Minor** during operation. These effects are considered to be not significant.

Assessment of Visual Effects

7.8.6 Visual amenity relates to the way in which people visually experience the surrounding landscape. Adverse visual effects may occur through the intrusion into established views of new features, out of keeping with the existing structure, scale and composition of the view. However, visual effects may also be beneficial where an attractive focus is created in a previously unremarkable view or the influence of previously detracting features is reduced. The significance of effects will vary, depending on the nature and degree of change experienced and the perceived value and composition of the existing view.

7.8.7 In the context of the Proposed Development, the following potential effects have been considered:

- The appearance of construction activities and construction access traffic and potential for these to be distracting within existing views of the upland and rural landscape;
- The appearance of new cuttings and embankments and potential for change in vegetation types to form a visual contrast between the upland landscape and the new, modified landscape;
- During operation, the potential for new features to create distraction within established views or form a new focus;
- During operation, the potential introduction or increased prominence of traffic movement within the view, or removal or reduction in prominence of traffic within the view; and
- Potential cumulative effects with features of the Viking Wind Farm during construction and operation.

7.8.8 The assessment of visual effects is detailed in Table 7.11 and Table 7.12 below:

Table 7.11: Visual Effects from Building Receptor Locations

Route Receptor	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Magnitude	Significance of Effect
B1 **Upper Kergord**	Located over 1 km from the western end of the Proposed Development but with views predominantly towards it. Medium	Possible limited visibility of the extreme western end of the Proposed Development including embankments. Generally likely to be minimal view of the operational road. Any glimpsed traffic would appear indistinguishable from the existing situation. During construction: Negligible During operation: Negligible	It is unlikely that there would be any discernible reduction in visual amenity from this property. During construction: **Negligible** During operation: **Negligible** (both not significant)
B2 **Setter**	Views from these properties would be directed towards the Proposed Development at relatively close proximity. High	There would be views from these properties of construction works and the new road construction on the descent of the Mid Kame ridge including new cuttings and embankments, likely to be very noticeable during construction. The Proposed Development would increase the appearance of the road corridor, in combination with the existing road during operation due to the increased height of cuttings and embankments with a possible notch appearing on the skyline. This would be seen in the context of the Viking Wind Farm during construction and operation. During construction: High During operation: Low-Medium	The appearance of the road construction works on the hill beyond is anticipated to be prominent and detracting in the main views from these properties. During operation, the increased scale of the road construction would be a noticeable change in combination with the existing road but, assuming implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Section 7.7, is considered unlikely to lead to a noticeable deterioration in the view. During construction: **Major (significant)** During operation: **Minor-Moderate** (not significant)
B3 **Kergord**	More distant from the Proposed Development with the Proposed	Oblique within the main view, construction activities would be seen through the trunks of deciduous trees on the valley side and would be noticeable where open views are obtained. These	Construction of the Proposed Development would be evident in oblique views where trees allow and may be distracting in views in this direction. However, the main view would

Route Receptor	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Magnitude	Significance of Effect
	Development area oblique in main views and filtering by wind pruned groups of deciduous trees. Low - Medium	activities would be likely to mostly precede the Viking Wind Farm works, but when seen in combination would be likely to appear associated due to the angle of view. During operation, the more robust road structure and cuttings and embankments may be a perceptible change in a very small part of the oblique view. During construction: Low-Medium During operation: Low	be generally unaffected. During operation, the new road would be perceptible within the view but unlikely to form a distracting feature. During construction: **Minor** During operation: **Minor-Negligible** (both not significant)
B4 Weisdale	These properties lie relatively distant and with predominant orientation away from the Proposed Development. Low	Potential views would be very oblique and relatively distant with intervening vegetation providing filtering in some areas. Construction of the Proposed Development is likely to be perceptible on the enclosing hill slopes at the head of the valley. However, during operation it is considered likely to form a barely perceptible change. During construction: Low During operation: Negligible	Whilst works to construct the Proposed Development may be a perceptible feature during construction, they are unlikely to be detracting any part of the view from these properties. The Proposed Development is considered likely to be barely perceptible from any of these properties during operation and would be a small feature in relation to the Viking Wind Farm turbines seen from these areas. During construction: **Minor** During operation: **Negligible** (both not significant)
B5 Sandwater	This property lies very close to the Proposed Development. Although its main orientation is away from the Proposed Development it remains sensitive due to its proximity. Medium - High	Potential for construction works to be prominent in side (northerly) and rear (westerly) views and from the outside parts of the property. Construction activities would be very noticeable in these open views although the main (easterly) view would be unaffected. During construction, there would be some combining with views of the Viking Wind Farm construction. However, the Proposed Development is likely to form a highly visible feature in its own right. During operation, the more robust and higher road structure to the north would be perceptible in less important side views in combination with the existing road. The new cuttings and road alignment would be perceptible to the rear, in addition to the existing road, although the traffic would be partially concealed by the cuttings. The main view would remain unaltered. During construction: High During operation: Low	The appearance of construction works, whilst only affecting rear and peripheral views, is anticipated to be of sufficient magnitude to result in a noticeable reduction in the visual amenity from this property. However, during the operation of the road, assuming mitigation outlined in Section 7.7 were implemented, the effect would be reduced. Longer term effects are anticipated to be adverse, but would not result in a noticeable deterioration to the existing view. During construction: **Moderate-Major (significant)** During operation: **Minor-Moderate** (not significant)

Table 7.12: Visual Effects from Route Receptor Locations

Route Receptor	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Magnitude	Significance of Effect
R1 **A970**	Although passing in nature, the open views up and down the valley and across Sand Water are likely to be valued by travellers. The route passes close to the eastern end of the Proposed Development and the simple landscape structure seen in the view is highly susceptible to change. Travellers on this route would experience construction activities and operation of the Viking Wind Farm along much of the route reducing sensitivity slightly. Medium	Travellers would obtain views of construction at the junction with the Proposed Development, the elevated section of road across the valley floor and the construction of the road including substantial cuttings on the east side of Mid Kame. This would be very noticeable in the view, although affecting a relatively short section of this fast, main route. During operation, these sections of the Proposed Development would remain very visible but the magnitude would be less following reinstatement and without the additional activities of construction works. During construction: High During operation: Low	Construction activities would be very prominent and distracting from around 2 – 2.5 km of this route although would be seen in context with other Viking Wind Farm construction. However, the views would be short term and passing. During operation, with the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Section 7.7 the visual effect would be reduced. However, the Proposed Development would appear more prominent than the existing road and deep cuttings would remain a potentially briefly distracting feature with a possible visible notch on the ridgeline of Mid Kame, although this would affect travellers on only a short section of the road. During construction: **Moderate (significant)** During operation: **Minor** (not significant)
R2 **B9075 (Heglibister to Burn of Weisdale)**	There is a greater sensitivity for viewers on the northern section of this route which approaches the Proposed Development. Further south, the view is filtered by trees and more distant, although when travelling north, is directed towards the Proposed Development. The Viking Wind farm would also be visible in this view and would reduce sensitivity somewhat. Low-Medium	From the northern section of the route, construction would be noticeable on the hill slope to the north-east including construction of cuttings and embankments, mostly occurring in advance of Viking Wind Farm works. During operation, new embankments of the Proposed Development would remain perceptible from the more northern parts of the route, in combination with the existing road but the visual appearance of traffic would be slightly reduced as the new road moves into cut sooner than the existing. The Proposed Development would be much less perceptible from the southern part of the route due to distance and screening effects of trees. During construction: Low-Medium During operation: Negligible-Low (varying from south to north)	The Proposed Development may be detracting from a short section towards the north of this route but the filtering effects of trees would reduce effects further south. During construction this may result in a small deterioration to the overall view. During operation, with a reduction in activities and movement, the effect would be less, and is considered unlikely to lead to a noticeable deterioration to the visual amenity of this route, especially when the likely effects of the Viking Wind Farm are taken into account. During construction: **Minor-Moderate** During operation: **Minor** (both not significant)
R3 **B9075 Weisdale to Sandwater**	As this is the route to be upgraded, users of this route are	During construction, works would be evident along most of this route, alongside it, particularly crossing Pettadale, and overlooking the	During construction, the extent of works nearby would result in noticeable deterioration to the visual amenity along this route,

Route Receptor	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Magnitude	Significance of Effect
(the existing road)	considered to be sensitive to the Proposed Development. Medium	lower sections from more elevated sections. However, the longer distance views across to South Nesting and down Weisdale would be largely unaffected. During operation, travellers would be moved onto the new road. These travellers would obtain similar views to the existing route. However, the road is more often in cut and the sections of road obtaining the extensive elevated views would be likely to be more limited. During construction: High During operation: Low	particularly the low lying section crossing Pettadale which would be higher than the existing route, interrupting northerly views, and the western end. However, whilst being used by Viking Wind Farm traffic, this effect may reduce slightly crossing Lamba Scord, where construction traffic may be hidden in cut. During operation, the view would be similar to that obtained from the existing road but the larger road construction may lead to views being considered less 'rural' than from the narrow single track route due to faster travel and increased cuttings, embankments and roadside features such as signage in foreground views. The reduction in availability of elevated views may slightly reduce the overall visual appeal. During construction: **Moderate (significant)** During operation: **Minor** (not significant)
R4 **Sand Water Core Path (CPPT WW05)**	Users of this path are likely to be very susceptible to changes in visual amenity around Sand Water and Mid Kame although already experience views of traffic on the existing road and A970. The Viking Wind Farm would slightly reduce visual sensitivity. Medium - High	Construction of the Proposed Development is likely to be very noticeable from parts of this route including the establishment of deep cuttings ascending the east side of Mid Kame and at the north end of the route where construction of the bridge over Burn of Pettawater would take place. During operation, the road would remain a visible feature although with the movement of most traffic crossing Pettadale further away from Sand Water, the visibility of traffic would be reduced. These views would be experienced in combination with views of the Viking Wind Farm construction and operation. During construction: High During operation: Low	During construction, the proposed changes are likely to result in noticeable adverse effects to the view with construction activities being prominent at the northern end of the route and on the enclosing slopes to the west. During operation, with mitigation, the effect would be reduced. Although the new road structure would remain noticeable in places, forming a double road corridor in combination with the existing road, the movement of the road further from the core path and reduction in visible prominence of traffic would slightly offset the effect. During construction: **Major (significant)** During operation: **Minor** (not significant)

7.9 Summary and Conclusions

Landscape Assessment Summary

7.9.1 The predicted effects to LCAs and designated landscapes are summarised in Table 7.13 below:

Table 7.13: Summary of Landscape Assessment Results

LCA / Designated Landscape	Effect During Construction	Effect During Operation
LCA A2 – East and West Kames	Minor to Moderate (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
LCA D1 – Farmed and Settled Inland Valleys: Tingwall and Weisdale	Minor to Moderate (not significant)	Minor (not significant)
LCA D4 – Peatland and Moorland Inland Valleys	**Moderate (significant)**	Minor to Moderate (not significant)
Weisdale cLLA	Minor to Moderate (not significant)	Minor (not significant)

7.9.2 As detailed in Table 7.13 above, the assessment of landscape character has identified that there would be potentially significant effects during the construction period for the Proposed Development for LCA D4 – Peatland and Moorland Inland Valleys (Moderate). This relates to the direct effects which would occur within this LCA due to the extent of movement and activity taking place within a concentrated area which is considered likely to conflict with the existing rural and undeveloped character. Landscape effects during construction for other LCAs are anticipated to be Minor - Moderate. Whilst these effects are considered to be not significant, they are dependent on the careful implementation of the Proposed Development, taking account of the mitigation measures outlined in Section 7.7.

7.9.3 During operation, the effect on all LCAs would be reduced and is anticipated to be not significant, as the movement of traffic and activity would return to levels which reflect existing use. However, the more robustly engineered road construction and greater cuttings and embankments, seen in combination with the existing road in places, are considered likely to lead to some degree of effect, although not significant. The effect would be Minor to Moderate on LCA D1, where direct effects would occur, and Minor on all other LCAs where the effects would be indirect.

7.9.4 The effect on the Weisdale cLLA is anticipated to be not significant during construction and operation, although localised effects at its north-eastern end would result in a temporary Minor – Moderate effect during construction. This would reduce to Minor in the longer term.

Visual Assessment Summary

7.9.5 The predicted visual effects are summarised in Table 7.14 below:

Table 7.14: Summary of Visual Assessment Results

LCA / Designated Landscape	Effect During Construction							Effect During Operation						
	Negligible	Minor - Negligible	Minor	Minor - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major	Negligible	Minor - Negligible	Minor	Minor - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Major	Major
Building Receptor Locations	1		2			**1**	**1**	1	1	1	2			
Route Receptors Locations				1	**2**		**1**			4				
Total	1		2	1	**2**	**1**	**2**	2	1	5	1			

7.9.6 The visual assessment has established that, during the construction of the Proposed Development, there would be likely temporary significant effects to visual amenity for individuals at two building receptor locations and travellers on three routes, as follows:

- Receptor Group B2: Setter (Major);
- Receptor Group B5: Sandwater (Moderate – Major);
- Route Receptor R1: A970 (Moderate);
- Route Receptor R3: B9075 Weisdale to Sandwater (the existing road) (Moderate); and
- Route Receptor R4: Sand Water Core Path (CPPTWW05) (Major).

7.9.7 Significant effects would relate to the appearance of an intensive area of construction works within existing valued views and at close proximity within less valued views, including the formation of large sections of cutting and embankment. This would be seen within a context of other construction activities occurring for the Viking Wind Farm. Whilst this may in some instances, reduce the sensitivity of the viewer to the appearance of further construction activities, it would also be seen to extend both the area affected by construction works and the period of construction within these views.

7.9.8 During operation, however, it is anticipated that all visual effects would reduce to non-significant levels. The greatest long term effect is anticipated for Receptors B3 (Setter) and B5 (Sandwater), predicted to be Minor - Moderate for both locations, as the Proposed Development is likely to form a larger, more robust and engineered road structure within main (Receptor B3), and rear (Receptor B5) views when compared to the existing road. The visual effect for all other receptors would reduce to Minor, or Negligible.

Conclusions

7.9.9 The assessment has concluded that, whilst significant landscape and visual effects would be experienced within the local area close to the Proposed Development during the construction phase, these effects are all expected to reduce to non-significant levels

following completion. This assumes the implementation of mitigation measures comprising sensitive design and construction techniques (see Section 7.7). It is therefore concluded that the long term landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development would be not significant.