Dualchas.

IONAD HIORT

THE ST. KILDA CENTRE

VOLUME 2: MAIN ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
FEBRUARY 2024

Contents

[Note: The above Chapter numbers refer to the Sections in Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary]

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CHAPTER 5: SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

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5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the potential effects of Ionad Hiort on the local and regional economy and tourism sector, local recreation amenity, community, population, and human health.

The chapter starts with an overview of the strategic context surrounding Ionad Hiort and a baseline description of the socio-economic profile of the local economy, in comparison to that of the regional and national economies. A baseline of the local tourism economy, including attractions and recreational routes, is also provided.

The chapter then provides an assessment of the potential effects of Ionad Hiort on the economy, considering the direct, indirect and induced sources of economic activity during the construction and operation phases.

The effect of Ionad Hiort on the tourism industry was assessed qualitatively, based on the expectation that it will welcome 40,000 visitors by its 5th year of operation. A qualitative assessment was also conducted to determine the significance of the presence of Ionad Hiort on existing tourism and recreation attractions in the area.

The chapter then provides a qualitative assessment of the potential effects of Ionad Hiort on community, population, and human health, using the Community Wealth Building framework.

The effects of Ionad Hiort on the local community were also qualitatively assessed against the National Performance Framework outcomes, with a particular focus on culture, education, international, human rights, environment and communities.

This chapter was written by BiGGAR Economics, an independent economic consultancy agency based in Edinburgh, Scotland. BiGGAR Economics has over twenty years of experience of conducting socio-economic impact assessments, with extensive experience of rural economic development. This experience includes working with the Developer on the initial business plan for Ionad Hiort in 2020.

5.1.1 Legislation, Policy and Guidelines

There is no specific legislation, policy or guidance available on methods that should be used to assess the socio-economic impacts of a development like Ionad Hiort.

The method adopted in this assessment is however based on the National Planning Framework 4, and the Community Wealth Building (policy 25). Policy 25 ensures that developments benefit the local population and aims to place community benefit as the primary consideration, through supporting local employment and supply chains, community ownership, and local management of buildings and land. The effect of Ionad Hiort was assessed against these five Community Wealth Building pillars.

The assessment undertaken in this chapter is also underpinned by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, Section 1 of which defined the purpose of planning as being "to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest". In defining the public interest, the Act made specific reference Scotland's national outcomes. As such, the effect of Ionad Hiort has been qualitatively assessed against these outcomes.

5.1.2 Basis for Assessment

The project development process for Ionad Hiort has involved extensive engagement with the local community to explore how the potential socio-economic benefits of the project could be maximised. As such it was not necessary to undertake further consultation to inform this assessment. Instead, a workshop was undertaken with the Developer to discuss changes to the project since 2020 and the steps that have been taken to enhance the potential benefits of the development and mitigate any potential adverse effects.

5.2 Assessment, Methodology, and Significance Criteria

This section outlines the approach used to undertake the assessment. It identifies the study areas used in the assessment, provides an overview of relevant receptors and potential effects, and explains the assessment process.

5.2.1 Study Areas

This chapter considers potential effects on three study areas:

- Sgir'Uige agus Ceann a Tuath nan Loch ('Mid Lewis') or 'the local area';
- Na h-Eileanan Siar ('the Outer Hebrides'); and
- Scotland.

5.2.2 Baseline Conditions

To enable an assessment of the socio-economic impacts of Ionad Hiort, the first step was to identify the baseline conditions. This includes:

- a review of economic strategies for Na h-Eileanan Siar and Scotland;
- an analysis of socio-economic statistics for the Local Area, Na h-Eileanan Siar, and Scotland;
- an analysis of tourism statistics for the Local Area, Na h-Eileanan Siar, and Scotland; and
- identification of local tourism and recreation assets.

The above tasks were carried out using a desk-based study of publicly available documents and statistics.

5.2.3 Assessment of Socio-Economic Impacts

This assessment considers four main types of potential effects, those relating to:

- the economy;
- the tourism industry;
- recreation and leisure assets; and
- community, population, and human health.

Economic Impact Assessment

The assessment of quantifiable economic effects was undertaken using a bespoke Excel based model developed by BiGGAR Economics specifically for this project.

The units of measurement used to quantify these effects include:

- Gross Value Added (GVA): a measure of the economic value added by an organisation or industry;
- years of employment: this is a measure of employment equivalent to one person being employed for one year. It is typically used when considering the temporary employment impacts (e.g. during construction); and
- jobs: this is a measure of headcount employment in an organisation or industry.

Due to data limitations it was not possible to provide a quantitative estimate of the economic impact of Ionad Hiort for the Local Area. To ensure localised effects were properly reflected, localised economic effects were therefore considered with reference to the five pillars of the Community Wealth Building model (see below).

Tourism and Recreation

Tourism and recreation effects were assessed qualitatively based on BiGGAR Economics professional judgement on the nature and extent to which the presence of Ionad Hiort might be expected to affect the local tourism industry. This part of the assessment is based on the team's experience of assessing comparable developments elsewhere. Factors considered as part of this assessment included the nature and scale of the local tourism offer and other existing visitor attractions.

Community Benefits and Opportunities

The assessment of localised economic effects was undertaken using the Community Wealth Building model.

Community Wealth Building is however primarily a model of local economic development. The Scottish Government has also made it clear that in building a wellbeing economy it is important to take a holistic approach, that considers a wide range of societal outcomes. To achieve this, this assessment also includes an assessment of the contribution Ionad Hiort could make to Scotland's national outcomes.

5.2.4 Assessment of Potential Effect Significance

The significance of effects identified in the assessment was assessed using a three-stage process.

First relevant receptors (the things that could be affected by the proposed development) were identified and the sensitivity of each receptor to change was determined with reference to current baseline conditions. The receptors were identified with reference to the issues raised in scoping and those taken forward for assessment are identified in section 5.4.6. The criteria used to determine the sensitivity of each receptor are outlined in Table 5.2.1.

Table 5.2.1 Socio-Economic Sensitivity Criteria

Sensitivity	Description
Very high	The asset has little or no capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering its present character and/or is of very high tourism, recreational or socio-economic value, or of national importance. For example, it is a destination in its own right (for attractions), with a substantial proportion of visitors on a national level.
High	The asset has low capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering its present character and/or is of high tourism, recreational or socio-economic value, or of importance to Scotland.
Medium	The asset has moderate capacity to absorb change without substantially altering its present character, has some tourism, recreational or socio-economics value and/or is of regional importance. For example, it is a popular destination among current visitors, with a significant contribution to the regional economy.
Low	The asset is tolerant to change without detriment to its character, has low tourism, recreational and/or socio-economic value, or is of local importance. For example, it is an incidental destination for current visitors.
Negligible	The asset is resistant to change and/or is of little tourism, recreational or socio-economic value. For example, an incidental destination with low visitor numbers.

The next step was to assess the magnitude of any potential effects on each receptor. Potential effects are identified in section 5.4.7 and the magnitude of these effects was assessed using the criteria set out in section Table 5.2.2.

The magnitude of changes on Na h-Eileanan Siar and Scotland economies was assessed using BiGGAR Economics economic model and professional judgement. The magnitude of socio-economic changes on the Local Area was assessed based on professional judgement and experience of comparable developments elsewhere. The magnitude of change on tourism and recreation assets was assessed with reference to published research evidence and experience of comparable developments elsewhere. The criteria used to do this are provided in Table 5.2.2.

Table 5.2.2 Socio-Economics Magnitude Criteria

Magnitude	Description
High	Major loss/improvement to key elements/features of the baselines conditions such that post development character/composition of baseline condition will be fundamentally changed.
Medium	Loss/improvement to one or more key elements/features of the baseline conditions such that post development character/composition of the baseline condition will be materially changed.
Low	Changes arising from the alteration will be detectable but not material; the underlying composition of the baseline condition will be similar to the pre-development situation. For example, a small alteration of the socio-economic conditions, a small reduction/improvement in the recreational asset, or a small change in tourism spend.
Negligible	Very little change from baseline conditions. Change is barely distinguishable, approximating to a "no change" situation.

Finally, the significance of any effects identified was assessed. This was done with reference to the effect significance matrix at Table 5.2.3. Moderate or major effects were assessed as significant in EIA terms.

Table 5.2.3 Significance Matrix

	Sensitivity				
Magnitude of Change	**Very High**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Negligible**
High	**Major**	**Major**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	Minor
Medium	**Major**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	Minor	Negligible
Low	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

5.2.5 Requirements for Mitigation

For each of the effects identified, potential mitigation requirements were considered. This included both measures needed to mitigate any potentially adverse effects and steps that could be taken to enhance any beneficial effects.

5.2.6 Limitations to Assessment

Limitations in data availability mean that it is not always possible to provide robust baseline evidence at the local level. However, there is a significant degree of overlap between localised socio-economic conditions and those prevailing across Na h-Eileanan Siar. Discussion with the developer was also used to identify any important localised variation. For these reasons any such limitations are not expected to have a material effect on the analysis.

5.3 Strategic Context

5.3.1 National Planning Framework 4

The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) sets out a vision for ensuring places in Scotland are sustainable, liveable, and productive. It provides a statutory framework for long-term spatial development, setting out the Scottish Government's spatial development priorities for the next 20 to 30 years. The NPF4 seeks to respond to a growing nature crisis, and to enable people to work together to enable social and economic development.

The NPF4 highlights the St Kilda World Heritage Site as a key cultural and heritage asset. More generally it emphasises the general need for the careful planning and management of natural and cultural assets, so they continue to form a strong foundation for future development and investment.

Although protection of a key natural and cultural asset is a key motivation for Ionad Hiort, there are also other specific policies outlined in the NPF4 that are of direct socio-economic relevance.[1] These include Community Wealth Building (policy 25), Rural Development (policy 29), and Tourism (policy 30).

Policy 25 and policy 29 are aimed at ensuring that developments benefit local populations overall. Community Wealth Building aims to place community benefits as a central and primary consideration, by supporting local employment and supply chains, community ownership, and local management of buildings and land. The NPF4 states that "development proposals which contribute to local or regional community wealth building strategies and are consistent with local economic priorities will be supported", and that "development proposals linked to community ownership and management of land will be supported."

Policy 29 on Rural Development aims to encourage rural economic activity, innovation and diversification whilst ensuring that the distinctive character of rural areas and small towns, natural assets and cultural heritage are safeguarded and enhanced. The NPF4 outlines that "development proposals that contribute to the viability, sustainability and diversity of rural communities and local rural economy will be supported". The NPF4 also highlights support for proposals in rural areas that are in keeping with the character of the area, consider how the development will contribute towards local living and consider the transport needs. There is also emphasis on supporting developments in remote rural areas that would support fragile communities.

Policy 30 on Tourism confronts the tension between environmental concerns and development. It specifies the need to encourage, promote, and facilitate tourism development that benefits local people, is consistent with net zero commitments, and inspires people to visit Scotland. Particularly important to Ionad Hiort with respect to socio-economic impact is that the policy states that proposals for tourism related development should consider their contribution to the local economy, impacts on communities, and opportunities to provide access to the natural environment.

Policies 25, 29, and 30 are all areas that Ionad Hiort has the potential to contribute.

5.3.2 National Strategy for Economic Transformation

Planning, via the NPF4, plays a crucial role in delivering Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET). NSET has a 10-year vision that by "2032 Scotland's economy will significantly outperform the last decade,

[1] There are other relevant policies to Ionad Hiort in the NPF4, including Biodiversity (policy 3) and Natural Place (policy 4), but these are about protecting natural assets and not relevant to a socio-economic assessment of Ionad Hiort.

both in terms of economic performance and tackling structural economic inequalities." NSET sets out a need for a new culture of delivery that transforms the Scottish economy to one that prioritises wellbeing.

There are six programmes of action outlined within NSET. One of these is to promote productive business and regions and in part involves regions realising the potential of their different economic and community assets and strengths. Of particular relevance to Ionad Hiort, Community Wealth Building and social enterprise initiatives supporting regional regeneration are highlighted as key to achieving this vision.

5.3.3 Community Wealth Building

Over the past 10 years there has been a substantial policy emphasis within Scotland on community empowerment, which the Scottish Government describes as "communities doing things for themselves" and making their voices heard in the planning and delivery of local services.

The aspiration to empower communities found legislative expression in the 2015 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, the objective of which was to empower community bodies by making it easier for them to acquire ownership or control of land and buildings and strengthening their voices in decisions about public services.

Recently the Scottish Government's commitment to community empowerment has been further strengthened through its endorsement of the Community Wealth Building model of economic development. Community Wealth Building is an approach to local economic development that aims to keep wealth circulating locally to ensure more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable local economic development.

There are five pillars to Community Wealth Building:

- plural ownership of the economy;
- ensuring financial power works for local places;
- fair employment and just labour markets;
- progressive procurement of goods and services; and
- socially productive use of land and property.

The Scottish Government have adopted Community Wealth Building as a practical means to achieve their objectives outlined in NSET. It is also favoured in planning proposals as per the NPF4's Policy 25 (see 5.3.1 above). Within Scotland, Community Wealth Building has been explored by various local authorities. This includes Na h-Eileanan Siar, who have developed a Community Wealth Building action plan[2], which includes various strategies around each of the five pillars such as on implementation, training, and analysis of opportunities.

5.3.4 Scotland's National Performance Framework and the Wellbeing Economy

Underpinning the National Planning Framework 4, the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, and Community Wealth Building, are aspirations for Scotland as a wellbeing economy. A wellbeing economy is an economy that seeks to prioritise the wellbeing of people and planet, and Scotland is leading the way in making the transition to such an economy.

Scotland's National Performance Framework is a multidimensional wellbeing framework that measures wellbeing progress and supports its ambitions to be a wellbeing economy. It sets out 11 national outcomes that align with

[2] Community Wealth Building in the Outer Hebrides, Centre for Local Economic Strategies, 2021.

the UN Sustainable Development Goals and is underpinned by 81 indicators that are used to track how the country is progressing towards these goals.

The 11 national outcomes are:

- Children and young people
- Communities
- Culture
- Economy
- Education
- Environment
- Fair work and business
- Health
- Human rights
- International
- Poverty

The national outcomes have strong links with spatial planning. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, which defined the purpose of planning for the first time, did so in terms of Scotland's national outcomes. The national outcomes are also closely linked to the spatial principles outlined in the NPF4, are a key feature of NSET and are increasingly being embedded in government policy. The national outcomes and their corresponding indicators are also being used by organisations throughout Scotland to gauge their own progress.

Ionad Hiort has the potential to contribute to several of these outcomes, particularly those relating to culture, community, the economy and fair work and business.

5.3.5 Highland and Island Enterprise Strategy, 2023-2028

The Highland and Island Enterprise Strategy is also guided by the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, as well as aspirations towards a wellbeing economy, including making use of Community Wealth Building to achieve this end. It takes account of the leading role the Highlands and Islands plays in developing sectors such as energy, life sciences, creative industries, tourism, food and drink, and space. Relevant for Ionad Hiort is the emphasis of the strategy on attracting and retaining the working age population, leveraging regional advantages to attract investment, building resilient communities, and ensuring equity by targeting infrastructure developments.

5.3.6 The National Islands Plan, 2019

The National Islands Plan sets out objectives and strategy of the Scottish Government in relation to improving outcomes for island communities. There are 13 strategic objectives (SO) in all, and the most relevant to Ionad Hiort are: population levels (SO1), sustainable economic development (SO2), environmental wellbeing and biosecurity (SO8), empowered island communities and strong local partnerships (SO10), and arts, culture, and language (SO11). The evaluation of the 13 Strategic Objectives and the short, medium, and long-term aims

provided for in the Plan are underpinned by indicators in the National Performance Framework (see 5.3.4, above) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Plan was published in 2019 and therefore links with the earlier National Planning Framework 3, the NPF4's predecessor. Nevertheless, ties with policies relating to spatial planning outlined in the later NPF4 are easy to make. These include policies, as highlighted in 5.2.1, directed at rural development, Community Wealth Building, and tourism.

5.3.7 Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership

The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership is of the opinion that there is a window of opportunity for action and investment in key areas of Na h-Eileanan Siar. There is a unique opportunity to revitalise the islands and to transform Na h-Eileanan Siar into a net contributor to the national economy, while simultaneously rebuilding confidence in communities and an in the distinctly Gaelic culture and heritage.

'Creating Communities of the Future' is a strategy for action. It provides a shared vision for the regeneration of the Na h-Eileanan Siar, based on six inter-related economic drivers. The strategy provides a long-term regeneration vision for Na h-Eileanan Siar, which is supported by a detailed Action Plan. With appropriate support the strategy believes that Na h-Eileanan Siar will be characterised by:

- a diverse and growing population with a balanced demographic structure allowing young people to move freely as lifestyles change and allowing effective public services;
- a dynamic renewable energy sector of international renown providing the base for new forms of economic activity;
- a high-quality environment, which maintains bio-diversity;
- a private sector that is a high-level economic contributor;
- a tourism industry, which has developed Na h-Eileanan Siar as a world-class destination;
- communities which are globally connected through a high-quality transport infrastructure and leading-edge communications systems;
- Stornoway has grown significantly and has been developed as an important entry-point to Na h-Eileanan Siar; and
- UHI Millennium Institute provides a university campus, a network of learning centres and numerous students who are part of the community a diverse range of quality, modern, social and leisure facilities, with a high value placed on Gaelic culture and heritage.

Ionad Hiort fits with the priorities of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership, most notably with regards to developing tourism and the value placed on Gaelic culture and heritage.

The Community Planning Partnership predicts a need for a minimum of 1,500 jobs for sustainable population to prevent the ongoing decline, with the reversal of population decline and retention of young people being the primary aim of local development plans. Ionad Hiort has the potential to contribute to this through the creation of local employment.

5.3.8 Scotland Outlook 2030 and the Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership Group

Scotland Outlook 2030 is Scotland's national tourism strategy. Following on from the Tourism Scotland 2020 strategy (Scottish Tourism Alliance, 2012), a collaborative network of industry experts created Scotland's Outlook 2030, which focuses on creating a world-leading tourism sector in Scotland that is sustainable in the long-term.

The strategy focuses on four key priorities: people, places, businesses, and experiences. The strategy recognises the effects of climate change, technological advancements, Brexit and changing consumer behaviour on tourism and highlights the need for collaboration between government, communities, and the public and private sectors.

There are six conditions that the strategy has highlighted as being crucial for success:

- using technological advancements and information to understand changes and trends in
- tourist behaviours;
- ensuring policies are in place that support the vision;
- enabling investment opportunities into Scotland's tourism market;
- improving transport and digital infrastructure;
- greater collaboration between businesses in the industry; and,
- positioning Scotland as a great place to live and visit locally and globally.

The Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership Group (THILG) was set up to champion the national tourism strategy, Scotland Outlook 2030 and help drive Scotland's ambition to be a world leader in 21st century tourism. The THILG will also look at how tourism fits into the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET).

5.3.9 Na h-Eileanan Siar Tourism

Na h-Eileanan Siar is a well-known tourism destination, and its future growth is guided by Outer Hebrides Tourism's (OHT) Tourism Strategy 2030, which was developed in response to Scotland Outlook 2030. OHT aims are to positively enhance the benefits of tourism across Na h-Eileanan Siar by delivering an outstanding experience for visitors, and the very best for businesses, people, communities, and environment. To do this the strategy seeks to maximise the economic benefits afforded by tourism through a range of strategic objectives.

5.3.10 Outer Hebrides Destination Development Project

The Outer Hebrides Destination Development Project aims to support tourism on Na h-Eileanan Siar by building on its rich environment and cultural heritage. This involves focusing on key aspects of island heritage, such as St Kilda, the world renowned Callanish standing stones and experiences based on the history of the islanders.

Continued investment in the tourism infrastructure of the islands is highlighted as being vital to maintain and grow the value of the tourism economy. This fits with the purpose of Ionad Hiort.

5.3.11 Important Considerations Emerging from the Strategic Context

This review of the strategic context within which Ionad Hiort would take place has helped to identify a number of important factors that should be factored into this assessment.

At the national level, Scotland's wellbeing economy ambitions suggests considering the contribution Ionad Hiort could make to Scotland's national outcomes, particularly those relating to culture, community, the economy and fair work and business, is likely to be particularly important. The emphasis placed on community empowerment

and Community Wealth Building in both local and national policy suggests contributions to the five pillars of Community Wealth Building are also likely to be particularly relevant.

At a more local level population retention and the importance of enhancing community resilience emerge as particularly important themes. Related to this is the need for high-quality, secure local jobs (and the potential role of the tourism sector for helping to achieve this) and the importance of preserving and enhancing the area's distinctive Gaelic culture.

5.4 Socio-Economic and Tourism Baseline

5.4.1 Socio-Economic Baseline

Population Estimates

As shown in Table 5.4.1, in 2021, the population of the Local Area was 7,566, accounting for 28% of the total population of Na h-Eileanan Siar, and 0.1% of Scotland. The region Na h-Eileanan Siar accounts for 0.5% of the total population of Scotland.

In the same year, 57% of the population in the Local Area was of working age (16-64 years old), slightly lower than the share across Na h-Eileanan Siar (58%) and substantially lower than Scotland (64%).

The share of the population in the Local Area aged 65 and over (30%) was greater than the population share of this age group across Na h-Eileanan Siar (27%) and Scotland as a whole (20%).

Table 5.4.1 Population Estimates, 2021

	Local Area	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Scotland
Total	7,566	26,600	5,479,900
0-15	13%	15%	17%
16-64	57%	58%	64%
65+	30%	27%	20%

Source: ONS (2021), Annual Population Survey

Population Projections, 2021 – 2043

National Records of Scotland provide population projections at the local authority and Scottish geographic levels. While information is not available at the electoral ward level, current population estimates and future trends at the local authority level can be used to form a view of more localised trends. These projections are shown in Table 5.4.2.

Over the period between 2021 and 2043 the population in Na h-Eileanan Siar is projected to decrease by 15%, falling from 26,600 to 22,542. This trend is in stark contrast to the Scottish figures, which project a 0.4% increase over the same period.

The share of the working-age population in Na h-Eileanan Siar is also expected to fall, with projections estimating a reduction of around 4,000 people of working age. Over the same period, the share of the population aged 65+ is projected to rise from 27% to 34%. Scotland is predicted to follow a similar but less marked trend. In Scotland, the share of the population aged 16-64 is projected to fall from 64% to 62% and the share of the population aged 65 and over is projected to increase from 20% to 25%. These projections show that the decline of the working age population is happening faster in Na h-Eileanan Siar than elsewhere in Scotland.

These projections suggest that fewer people of working age will have to support an increasingly ageing population. The combination of depopulation and an ageing demographic in Na h-Eileanan Siar will affect the long-term sustainability of many communities in the region, and it will be increasingly important to attract and retain people of working age.

Table 5.4.2 Population Projections, 2021-2043

	Na h-Eileanan Siar		Scotland	
Year	2021	2043	2021	2043
Total	26,600	22,542	5,479,900	5,503,019
0-15	15%	15%	17%	13%
16-64	58%	51%	64%	62%
65+	27%	34%	20%	25%

Source: National Records of Scotland (2020), Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2018-based) and ONS (2022), 2020-based Interim National Population Projections.

Economic Activity

In 2022, the unemployment rate in Na h-Eileanan Siar (2.6%) was below the Scottish average (3.4%). Na h-Eileanan Siar also has a greater share of its working age population that was economically active (84.1%) compared to Scotland as a whole (77.1%). This is likely to reflect the demographic profile of the area described in the previous section and suggests that the labour market in the area is likely to be relatively tight, meaning that it can be difficult to find people to fill jobs.

However, in the same year, the median annual gross income for Na h-Eileanan Siar (£24,666) was lower than that of Scotland as a whole (£27,698). This suggests the Local Area has a lower wage economy than Scotland as a whole.

Table 5.4.3 Economic Activity Rates, 2022

	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Scotland
Economic Activity Rate	84.1%	77.1%
Unemployment Rate	2.6%	3.4%
Median Annual Gross Wage (resident)*	£24,666	£27,698

Source: ONS (2022), Annual Population Survey and ONS (2022), Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

Industrial Structure

The employment structure in the Local Area, Na h-Eileanan Siar and Scotland is considered in Table 5.4.4.

Manufacturing is the largest employer in the Local Area, employing 18% of those in work, compared to 5% in Na h-Eileanan Siar and 7% in Scotland. Food products, particularly seafood, accounts for most of this employment.

Accommodation and food services, often associated with the tourism sector, is also overrepresented in the Local Area, accounting for 8% of employment, one percentage point greater than Scotland as whole (7%). Many crofters in the area rely on the money that tourists spend on accommodation as a secondary source of income.

Table 5.4.4 Industrial Structure, 2021

	Local Area	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Scotland
Manufacturing	18%	5%	7%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	17%	29%	3%
Transportation and storage	11%	4%	4%
Education	9%	7%	8%
Human health and social work activities	9%	13%	15%
Accommodation and food service activities	8%	6%	7%
Real estate activities	8%	1.5%	1.5%
Wholesale and retail trade	6%	9%	14%
Administrative and support service activities	6%	3%	8%
Public administration and defence	3%	11%	6%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	2%	2%	6%
Construction	1%	6%	6%
Information and communication	1%	1%	3%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1%	1%	2%

Source: ONS (2022), Business Register and Employment Survey 2020

Education

The population of Na h-Eileanan Siar is less well qualified on average than that of Scotland as a whole. In Na h-Eileanan Siar, 44% of those ages 16-64 hold NVQ4+ qualifications, compared to 50% in Scotland as a whole. There are also fewer residents in Na h-Eileanan Siar (58%) qualified to NVQ3+ level compared to Scotland (65%).

Na h-Eileanan Siar does however have a lower proportion of residents aged 16-64 years old with no qualifications (5%) compared to the national average (8%).

Table 5.4.5 Education Levels, 2021

	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Scotland
NVQ4+	44%	50%
NVQ3+	58%	65%
NVQ2+	79%	80%
NVQ1+	91%	86%
other qualifications (NVQ)	5%	6%
no qualifications (NVQ)	5%	8%

Source: ONS (2022), Annual Population Survey and ONS (2022)

Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a relative measure of deprivation which ranks small areas across seven dimensions: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. These areas can be ranked based on which quintile (fifth of the distribution) they belong to, with a small area in the first quintile being in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.

Na h-Eileanan Siar has 36 small areas, all of which are clustered in the second and third quintiles of the distribution.

Table 5.4.6 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

	Proportion
1 (most deprived quintile)	0%
2	17%
3	83%
4	0%
5 (least deprived quintile)	0%

Source: Scottish Government (2020), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020.

5.4.2 Wellbeing and Community Baseline

The following indicators are relevant to assessing the extent to which wealth is retained within the local community and controlled by local people.

Na h-Eileanan Siar has many social enterprises, at 47 per 10,000 of the population compared with 11 Scotland-wide, and people feel they have an influence over local decisions (28% versus 24% Scotland-wide).[3]

Na h-Eileanan Siar also has the highest proportion of land in community ownership in Scotland. In December 2022, this was 50% of all land from 69 assets across 35 groups. This represents 72% of all the community owned land in Scotland.[4]

However, with regard to the gender pay gap the pay difference between men and women in 2019 was 16.4%, compared with 14.4% Scotland-wide[5] and there is no data on the proportion of individuals receiving the living wage.

This illustrates not only that the community is strong and vibrant, but that any investment in the local area is likely to remain in the community.

Wellbeing-Adjusted Life Years - (WELLBYs)

The social welfare of a local area can be gauged by calculating the Wellbeing-Adjusted Life Years, known as WELLBYs. WELLBYs are calculated by multiplying life expectancy of an area by its average self-reported life satisfaction on a 0 to 10 scale[6]. WELLBYs can be compared across Scotland and the UK.

Underpinning this approach is the 2021 World Happiness Report, Layard and Oparina[7], which makes the case that people want to experience lives that are both long and happy. With that in mind, they advocate that a society should aim to maximise the number of WELLBYs across their population both now and in the future. That is, maximising a combination of both life expectancy and self-reported wellbeing.

As shown in Table 5.4.7, Na h-Eileanan Siar (80.8) has a higher life expectancy than the Scottish average (78.0). The region also experiences a greater level of life satisfaction than Scotland as a whole (8.1 versus 7.5). This gives Na h-Eileanan Siar an overall WELLBY score of 653, which is higher than both the Scottish (601) and UK averages (614).

Other Indicators of Wellbeing

Self-reported life satisfaction, and consequently WELLBY scores, are dependent upon a variety of factors, including local economic conditions, community vitality and involvement, as well as culture and the natural environment.

Although the WELLBY score demonstrates a better quality of life in Na h-Eileanan Siar than in Scotland as a whole, it is also important to consider other indicators of wellbeing in the area. For example, in line with the WELLBY score, 79.4% percentage of adults consider themselves to have good or very good health, which is higher than the national average at 72%.[8] Further, relatively few people report loneliness (17.2% compared to 21.3% Scotland-wide), and there is also good access to green and blue spaces (80% of the population being within a 5 minute walk of a green or blue space).

Nevertheless, there are other indicators of wellbeing in which Na h-Eileanan Siar does not do so well. For example, suicide rates per 100,000 are significantly higher in Na h-Eileanan Siar (19.9) compared to Scotland as a whole (14.3).[9] Greenhouse gas emissions are the highest in Scotland (44.5 tonnes of CO2 per capita), as is the percentage of people living in fuel poverty (39.8%). Further, participation in cultural activity is low relative to the rest of Scotland (79% versus 84%), as is attendance at cultural events or places of culture (39% compared to 59% nationwide). As such, improvements to wellbeing within this region are still important.

More generally, with respect to the National Performance Framework, Scotland's wellbeing framework, Na h-Eileanan Siar exhibits a strong wellbeing performance on poverty, communities, health, and human rights. However, it lags behind other local authorities in Scotland with regard to culture, as gauged by data on people participating in cultural events and activity.

Table 5.4.7 WELLBYs

	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Scotland
Life Expectancy (Years)	80.8	78.0
Life Satisfaction	8.1	7.5
WELLBYs	**653**	**601**

Source: BiGGAR Economics (2023). Toward a Wellbeing Economy: The Distribution of Wellbeing in the UK.

5.4.3 Tourism and Recreational Baseline

In its 2015 economic strategy[10] the Scottish Government identified six sectors as growth sectors, that is, economic sectors where Scotland had a comparative advantage. Sustainable tourism was one of the sectors identified.

In 2019, the sector generated £11.8 million GVA in Na h-Eileanan Siar, equivalent to 0.6% of the total £4,503.7 million GVA generated by the sector across Scotland that year.

The sector also employed 1,500 people in Na h-Eileanan Siar, accounting for 0.7% of the total employment of 229,000 in the sustainable tourism sector in Scotland. With the region only accounting for 0.5% of the total population of Scotland (Table 5.4.1), these proportions indicate that tourism is more important for Na h-Eileanan Siar than Scotland as a whole.

Table 5.4.8 Tourism Employment and GVA, 2019

	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Scotland
GVA (£ million)	11.8	4,503.7
Employment	1,500	229,000

Source: Scottish Government (2023), Growth Sector Statistics

[3] Wellbeing Economy Monitor: Excel Tool – Updated July 2023 - https://www.gov.scot/publications/wellbeing-economy-toolkit-supporting-place-based-economic-strategy-policy-development/documents/
[4] Community Ownership in Scotland 2022, Scottish Government (2022) - https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-ownership-in-scotland-2022/documents/
[5] https://statistics.gov.scot/
[6] BiGGAR Economics (2023). Toward a Wellbeing Economy: The Distribution of Wellbeing in the UK.
[7] Layard, R. and Oparina, E (March 2021)., Living Long and Living Well: The WELLBY Approach, Chapter 8 of World Happiness Report 2021 (Sustainable Development Solutions Network).
[8] https://statistics.gov.scot/
[9] Zero Suicide Alliance (2022): National Suicide Rates.
[10] Scottish Government (2015), Scotland's Economic Strategy.

Visitors

In 2019, there were 1.4 million annual day visitors to Na h-Eileanan Siar, spending £71.4 million in total, an average of £52 per trip. Na h-Eileanan Siar accounted for 1.0% of day visits to Scotland, where 144.9 million visitors spent a total of £5,186.6 million, averaging £36 per trip.

In the same year, the overnight domestic visitor market accounted for a further 201,000 visits to Na h-Eileanan Siar, or 1.6% of domestic overnight visits across Scotland. Overnight domestic tourists spent £62 million in Na h-Eileanan Siar, accounting for 2.1% of total spending in Scotland.

Although it is difficult to separate the value and volume of tourism to Na h-Eileanan Siar, the Outer Hebrides Visitor Survey[11] estimates that Lewis accounts for 45% of tourist activity in the region.

Table 5.4.9 Number of Visitors and Visitor Spending in Na h-Eileanan Siar and Scotland

Visitors (hundred thousand)	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Scotland
Day Visitors	13.8	1,449.1
Domestic Overnight Visitors	2.0	124.3
Spend (£ million)		
Day Visitors	71.4	5,186.6
Domestic Overnight Visitors	62.0	2,989.3

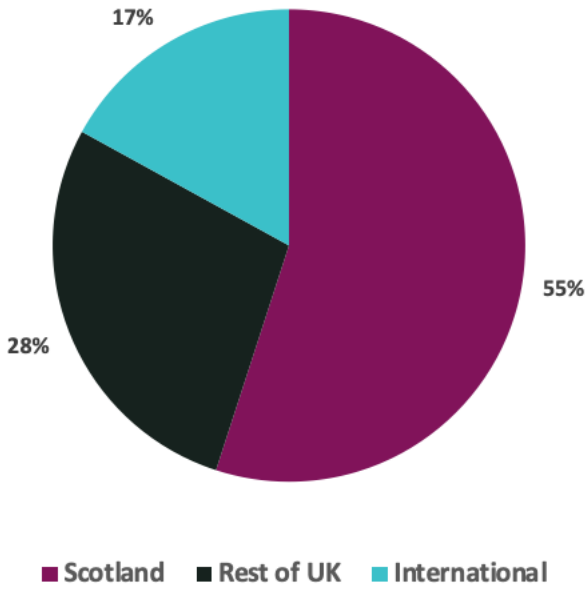
Source: Kantar (2020), Great Britain Day Visitor Survey, Kantar (2020), Great Britain Tourist Survey, NISRA (2020), Domestic Overnight Trips to Northern Ireland and NISRA (2020), External Overnight Tourism Trips to Northern Ireland

The most recent Outer Hebrides Visitor Survey also provides an insight into the profile and behaviour of visitors to Na h-Eileanan Siar for the year 2017. Through the process of Computer Aided Personal Interviewing at key exit points from the islands (ferry terminals and airports) and follow up surveys online, the survey gathered detailed information about the nature of tourism visits to the region and the characteristics of people travelling to Na h-Eileanan Siar.

As shown in, Figure 5.4.1, the survey found that the majority (55%) of visitors to Na h-Eileanan Siar were from Scotland. Of those travelling from elsewhere, 28% had travelled from elsewhere in the UK, and 17% had travelled internationally. The survey also estimated that the average spend per trip was just under £310 (excluding transportation to the island).

[11] Visit Scotland (2018) The Outer Hebrides Visitor Survey 2017.

Figure 5.4.1 Nationality of Visitors to Na h-Eileanan Siar, 2017



Source: Visit Scotland (2018) The Outer Hebrides Visitor Survey 2017.

Motivations to Visit the Area

The Isle of Lewis is commonly described as possessing both natural beauty and a rich history, and these attributes frequently serve as the driving force behind tourists' visits. According to Outer Hebrides Islands Visitor Survey, 71% of respondents were motivated to visit Na h-Eileanan Siar for its scenery and landscape, and 32% for its history and culture.

Na h-Eileanan Siar is well known for its dramatic landscapes, wild mountains, beautiful beaches and rugged coastlines, often being described as showcasing elemental views. Visit Scotland (2018) found that the majority of respondents took part in walking (83%) and enjoying scenery (79%), particularly focused around beaches and the coast, whilst they visited Na h-Eileanan Siar.

Those with an appetite for history and heritage are also likely to be drawn to Lewis, an area rich in unique Gaelic culture and fascinating history. The Calanais Standing Stones is amongst the most popular attraction in Lewis, with Visit Scotland (2018) estimating that almost 80% of visitors visit it during their stay. Gearrannan Blackhouse Village and Carloway Broch were also identified as popular attractions for visitors, demonstrating that cultural heritage may be a key part motivation for visitors.

Visitor Attractions

Using a web search of VisitScotland, several key visitor attractions on the Isle of Lewis were located. These attractions, and their location on Lewis, are included in Table 5.4.10. Calanais Stones, Gearrannan Blackhouse and Carloway Broch, make up the West Coast Loop, and attract tourists to the West of Lewis.

Table 5.4.10 Visitor Attractions

	Description	Location
Calanais Standing Stones	cross-shaped setting of stones erected 5,000 years ago	West coast
Gearrannan Blackhouse Village	restored coastal crofting village to recreate the authentic settlement	West coast
Carloway Broch	persevered Iron Age broch	West coast
Butt of Lewis	the most northernly point of Lewis in Na h-Eileanan Siar	North coast
Lews Castle	a gothic style castle built in the mid 1800's overlooking Stornoway harbour	East Coast
Traigh Ghearadha	golden beach with beach stacks in the northeast part of Lewis	North-East Coast
Bosta Beach (Traigh Bhostadh)	picturesque beach with white sands and hidden coves	West Coast
Dalmore Beach (Traigh Dhail Mhor)	surfers beach with incredible waves and small sea stacks to the north	West coast
Uig Sands	a beach nestled in Uig Bay offering beautiful views	West coast
Norse Mill and Kiln	historical remnants of small horizontal wheel mills	West coast
Abhainn Dearg Distillery	the first legal distillery of Na h-Eileanan Siar, distilling single malt whisky	West coast
The Island Darkroom	gallery showcasing photographs of Na h-Eileanan Siar	East Coast
Tiumpan head Lighthouse	active lighthouse next to Stornoway Harbour	East coast
The Bridge to Nowhere	scenic pathway highlighting the landscape of Lewis	North-East Coast
Mangersta Sea Stacks	sea stacks providing dramatic views	West coast
The Trussel Stone	largest standing stone in Scotland	North-West Coast
Eaglais na h-Aoidhe	sacred burial site near the town of Stornoway, also known as St. Columba's Church or Ui Church	East Coast
Ness Historical Society	celebrating the culture and history of Lewis	North coast
Kinloch Historical Centre	showcases genealogy and artefacts found in Lewis	East coast
Sea Lewis Boat Trips	showcasing the wildlife and coastal scenery	n/a
An Lanntair	a gallery hosting art, music events and Gaelic language performances	East coast
Eoropie Beach (Traigh Shanndaigh)	a beach with views of the Arctic North	North coast

Comunn Eachdraidh Nis	a museum, genealogical archives, cafè and gift shop	North coast
Hebridean Way	a 184-mile cycle route through Na h-Eileanan Siar	West coast

Source: VisitScotland (2023), My Voyage Scotland (2023).

Recreational Trails

Several trails were identified on Walkhighlands (2023) on the Isle of Lewis. These are shown in Table 5.4.11.

Table 5.4.11 Recreational Trails

Name of Trail	Description
Tiumpan head circuit, Point	2km circular coastal route to Tiumpan Lighthouse
Ui Church and Broad Bay Beach, near Stornoway	2km walk passing Eaglais na h-Aoidhe
The Callanish Stones	4km circuit passing the Standing Stones of Callanish and two further stone circles nearby
Uig Sands	4km out-and-back route crosses Uig beach
Eilean Chaluim Chille, Cromor, South Lochs	4km walk onto a tidal island
Lews Castle Grounds, Stornoway	7km walk from the centre of Stornoway to the coastal grounds of Lews Castle
Filiscleitir chapel, Sgiorgarstaigh, Ness	11km route with views of dramatic clifftop ruins of a chapel
Garrabost archaeology walk, Point	3km route passing hidden archaeological sites in Lewis
Mangurstadh beach and cliffs, Uig	3km walk with views of dramatic sea cliffs
Stiomrabhaigh, Orasaigh, South Lochs	5km route visiting Stiomrabhaigh, one of many abandoned villages
Dùn Carloway Broch and moorland circuit	5km circuit passing the Carloway Broch and two moorland lochs
Butt of Lewis circuit, Eoropie, Ness	6km circular route visiting the lighthouse, with views of the dramatic northern extremity of Lewis
Beinn Bhragair, Pairc Shiaboist	7km hillwalk summiting Beinn Bhragair
Three Lochs Circuit, Barabhas	8km circuit visiting the coastal Loch Mòr Bharabhais

Aird Laimisiadair circuit, Na Gearrannan	8km circular route with views of the rocky headland, visiting the Garenin Blackhouse Village
Forsnabhal and Clibh circuit, Uig	10km circuit exploring Uig
Great Bernera Trail	11km exploration of the island Great Bernera
Bonnet Laird Walk: Carloway to Callanish	15km route from Carloway to Callanish, with views of moors and coastline
Lewis West Side coastal walk	19km route following the west coast clifftops of Lewis
Mealaisbhal from Breanais, Uig	7km summiting Mealaisbhal, the highest of the Uig hills on Lewis
Tolsta Head and Tràigh Mhòr	10km route with coastal cliff scenery
Heritage Trail: Tolsta to Lional	20km trail from Tolsta to Lional along the east coast of north Lewis
The Hebridean Way	51km stretch of the longer 253km route across Na h-Eileanan Siar

Source: https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/

5.4.4 Important Considerations Emerging from the Socio-Economic and Tourism Context

This review of prevailing socio-economic conditions confirms that population decline is one of the most pressing issues facing the local economy. The working age population of Na h-Eileanan Siar is projected to decrease over the next two decades, whilst the proportion of those aged 65+ is projected to increase. Developments that could help to address this by enabling working age people to remain in or move to the local area are therefore likely to have a beneficial effect at the local level, by helping support economic resilience and community sustainability.

This review has also shown that tourism related employment is particularly important to the local economy, but that wages and skill levels are both relatively low. This suggests that although tourism related employment could play an important role in supporting population retention in the local area, it will be important that any new employment opportunities created are of a high quality.

The main tourism assets in the area are associated with the natural beauty the island possesses, including its beaches and coastline, and its rich cultural heritage. Development that helps to enhance these assets or enable more people to enjoy them are therefore likely to be beneficial.

Quality of life in Na h-Eileanan Siar is higher than the Scottish average, demonstrated by the WELLBY score. This score is supported by a generally strong performance on several wellbeing indicators, yet there are areas of wellbeing where Na h-Eileanan Siar underperforms. Developments that help to maintaining this level of performance are likely to have a beneficial effect on the local area.

5.4.5 Sensitivity of Receptors

There are seven main receptors that could be considered in this assessment: the local, regional and national economy, the local regional and national tourism sector and community health and wellbeing.

The Scottish economy is diverse and extensive relative to Ionad Hiort, so the sensitivity of this receptor was assessed as negligible. This implies that even changes with a high magnitude would not be sufficient to generate

effects that would be considered significant in EIA terms. For this reason, the remainder of this assessment focuses on effects at the regional (Na h-Eileanan Siar) and local level.

Na h-Eileanan Siar's economy, being less extensive and less diverse than the Scottish economy, has a limited economic base, meaning it relies more heavily on a small number of seasonal sectors. These characteristics, coupled with the demographic trends projected for the region, mean that the local economy is considered more fragile than Scotland's, and its sensitivity was therefore assessed as medium. The relative scale and fragility of the economy of the Local Area in relation to the Ionad Hiort is more pronounced, suggesting the sensitivity of this receptor should be considered high.

The importance of tourism on Na h-Eileanan Siar is high compared with other areas of Scotland. Given that the development in question is a tourism development, the sensitivity of this receptor to change was therefore assessed as high. Tourism statistics do not allow a robust assessment of the volume or value of tourism activity in the local area however, the close proximity of St Kilda (which is one of only 39 dual UNESCO heritage sites in the world) suggest the sensitivity of this receptor should be considered as high.

On account of the size and fragility of the local community, community health and wellbeing were identified as a receptor with very high sensitivity.

5.4.6 Receptors Brought Forward for Assessment

The receptors brought forward for assessment are therefore:

- the economy of Na h-Eileanan Siar;
- the economy of the Local Area;
- the tourism sector in Na h-Eileanan Siar;
- the tourism sector in the local area; and
- community health and wellbeing in the local area.

5.4.7 Potential Effects

The economic effects of Ionad Hiort could include:

- temporary effects on the local and regional economy arising due to expenditure during the construction phase of the development;
- ongoing effects on the local and regional economy arising from expenditure on goods and services for the new visitor centre and the jobs directly supported by it and the expenditure of visitors elsewhere in the economy; and

The tourism and leisure related effects of Ionad Hiort could include:

- changes to the number of people visiting the local area each year and/or the amount of money spent by these visitors;
- changes to the quality of the visitor offering arising from the new services provided by Ionad Hiort; and
- changes in the recreational amenity of the local area either during the construction of Ionad Hiort (e.g. due to noise or disruption) or once the new facilities are operational.

The community effects of Ionad Hiort could include:

- effects on population trends in the local area;

- changes in demand for services and facilities, including housing and accommodation by staff and visitors;
- changes in overall levels of community wealth in the local area; and
- effects on important societal outcomes including culture, the environment and community cohesion.

5.5 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

5.5.1 Regional Economic Effects

The potential economic effects of Ionad Hiort include:

- temporary effects during the construction phase;
- ongoing effects during operations; and
- wider effects on the local tourism economy.

Each of these effects will include:

- direct impacts: the economic value generated through the contracts associated with the Ionad Hiort;
- indirect impacts: the impact from the spending of contractors within their supply chains; and
- induced impacts: the impact from the spending of those workers carrying out contracts for the Proposed Development and on behalf of its contractors.

Method

Limitations in data availability mean it is not possible to provide a quantitative assessment of economic effects at the sub-regional level, so this section focuses on effects on the Na h-Eileanan Siar economy.

To estimate the economic activity supported by Ionad Hiort, it was first necessary to calculate expenditure during each phase of the development (construction and development, and operations). This estimate was then divided into its main component parts to enable an estimate to be made of how much spending could be secured in each study area. Appropriate turnover/GVA and turnover/employee ratios for relevant sectors of the economy were then applied to determine the economic activity (GVA) and jobs likely to be directly supported in each study area.

It is likely that if Ionad Hiort does not proceed then some of the visitor expenditure associated with the new facility would be spent elsewhere in the Islands or elsewhere in Scotland. To account for this, appropriate assumptions were then made about the extent to which activity associated with Ionad Hiort could be considered additional within each study area.

Finally, appropriate multipliers from the Scottish Government input/output tables were then applied to capture indirect and induced effects.

Development and Construction

The development and construction of Ionad Hiort is expected to generate a series of temporary economic benefits. In particular, it was estimated that total costs for development and construction could be around £8.1 million. This expenditure would generate economic activity in the companies that secure the contracts.

The developer hopes to assign contracts locally wherever possible. The assumption of the share of the contracts that could be secured in each area was estimated based on experience of comparable developments elsewhere.

Adding up direct, indirect and induced benefits, it was estimated that the construction of Ionad Hiort could generate **£3.8 million GVA and 60 years of employment in Na h-Eileanan Siar.**

Operations

The direct economic contribution of a business is defined as the difference between its turnover and its operational non-staff costs, and the employment it supports. Based on information provided by the developer, staff costs were assumed to be around £200,300 in Year 1, increasing to over £309,000 by year ten.

Based on the expected turnover of Ionad Hiort, it was estimated that by year ten, Ionad Hiort could be generating **£0.4 million GVA/year for the Na h-Eileanan Siar economy and supporting 19 jobs.**

Supply Chain

The spending on goods and services required for the operation of Ionad Hiort is expected to support those businesses benefiting from supply chain contracts. It was estimated that by year ten, supply chain expenditure could be around £0.2 million. This encompasses the main items of expenditure, including administration costs, marketing, and utilities.

To estimate the economic impacts associated with this expenditure, it was first necessary to estimate the share of spending across each of the study areas considered. The assumption of the expenditure in each area has been estimated based on experience of comparable developments elsewhere. It was estimated that by year ten of operations supply chain expenditure could generate **£0.1 million GVA and two jobs in Na h-Eileanan Siar.**

Tourism Activity

Ionad Hiort will welcome visitors, generating an economic impact through tourist expenditure during their visit to Na h-Eileanan Siar.

To estimate the economic impact associated with visits to Ionad Hiort, it was necessary to have an understanding of how many visitors may visit each year. It was assumed that around 35,000 visitors could visit Ionad Hiort in its first year of operation, rising steadily to 40,000 visitors by Year 5.

Not all the spending associated with visitors to Ionad Hiort can, however, be considered as additional. For instance, it was assumed that the majority of the visitors to Ionad Hiort would likely have visited the island anyway. In that case, their spending could not be wholly attributed to their visit to Ionad Hiort.

Ionad Hiort will attract different types of visitors. It is assumed that the vast majority (80%) of visitors to Ionad Hiort will be those who had already planned to visit the island and Ionad Hiort will be one of several attractions they visit, but not a driving force for their visit. The remaining 20% of visitors will be particularly interested in the cultural heritage of St Kilda and will be particularly attracted to the island as a result of Ionad Hiort. These are more likely to be additional to the island. In total it is assumed that there will be an additional 8,000 visitors to the island as a result of Ionad Hiort by year ten.

Table 5.5.1 Summary of Visitors and Additionality

	Visitors driven by Ionad Hiort	Tourists already in Na h-Eileanan Siar	Total
Visitors	8,000	32,000	40,000
Additionality to Na h-Eileanan Siar (%)	20%	0%	

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis

To estimate the total additional expenditure associated with visits to Ionad Hiort, it was necessary to make assumptions based on the average expenditure of tourists to Na h-Eileanan Siar. Their spending pattens were estimated based on the latest Visit Scotland Outer Hebrides Visitor Survey (2017). On average, it was assumed that these visitors would be around £305 per visit outside the Ionad Hiort centre. On this basis, it was estimated that Ionad Hiort could attract an additional £2.9 of million visitor expenditure in Na h-Eileanan Siar, which would equate to **£1.6 million GVA and support 55 jobs.**

Total Economic Activity Supported

Combining all these sources of economic impact, it was estimated that once fully operational, by year ten, Ionad Hiort could be generating £2.1 million GVA/year for the regional economy and supporting 75 jobs. A breakdown of this effect is provided in Table 5.5.2.

Table 5.5.2 Regional Economic Effect

	GVA (£ million)	Jobs
Direct effect	0.4	19
Supply chain effect	0.1	2
Wider tourism effect	1.6	55
Total operational effect	**2.1**	**75***

Source: BiGGAR Economics analysis. *numbers may not sum due to rounding

The economic activity supported once Ionad Hiort is fully operational will occur as a direct result of the jobs created by the new facility and the economic activity it sustains, expenditure in local businesses on goods and services for the new facility and by the expenditure of visitors to the new facility in other nearby tourism businesses. The magnitude of this effect at the regional level was therefore assessed as medium. As such, the overall **significance of this effect was assessed as moderate.**

Activity during the construction phase will be temporary and therefore the magnitude of this effect will be somewhat lower than the magnitude of the effects during the ongoing operational phase. This implies that the magnitude of this effect would be low at the regional level. When coupled with the sensitivity of the regional economy this implies the overall **significance of this effect would be minor at the regional level.**

5.5.1 Local Economic Effects

Data limitations means that it can be difficult to provide a robust assessment of economic effects at the sub-regional level. This assessment therefore utilises the Community Wealth Building model to provide a more nuanced understanding of localised economic effects of Ionad Hiort. To achieve this, the effects of Ionad Hiort on are assessed in relation to each of the five Community Wealth Building pillars.

Plural ownership of the economy

This pillar is about understanding the ownership model for Ionad Hiort and the extent to which ownership is inclusive. The emphasis in this pillar is about creating an inclusive economy that has democratic and social forms of ownership which generate community wealth, including social enterprises, employee-owned firms, and cooperatives. This means that communities can not only influence decisions about the project, but that they may directly own important assets.

Ionad Hiort is a community interest group, being operated by the community and made up of a diverse and highly experienced Board of Directors drawn from the community and specialist skilled individuals with a specific interest in Ionad Hiort. Ionad Hiort operates a community membership model where board members are elected by the community membership or co-opted by existing board members. The board meets every month to make decisions. Members of Ionad Hiort helped develop the Uig Community Centre, which was established in 1995, demonstrating their embeddedness in the community.

Ionad Hiort have carried out extensive community consultations over the development, including carrying out presentations to the community at each stage of the process. They have also continuously assessed from the perspective of the community, including a self-assessment appraisal to determine that the project is meeting the needs of the community. They also have a bi-monthly publication that provides updates to the community. They also work with a local school and will be engaging with school children to help them develop some of the content.

In addition, Ionad Hiort own the land for the intended location of the Visitor Centre.

Based on the ownership model of Ionad Hiort, the decision-making processes, the ownership of the land, and the involvement of the community, the magnitude of the effect of Ionad Hiort on this pillar is likely to be high. Given the high sensitivity of this receptor the overall **significance of this effect was assessed as major.**

Progressive procurement of goods and services

This pillar is about local procurement and encouraging commissioning that shortens supply chains and maximises community benefits. The purpose that underlies this pillar is to consider how money is spent to acquire necessary goods and services for a business's operation, and whether it helps to grow enterprises and bring additional benefits to the community than if goods and services were purchased elsewhere.

The contract to develop Ionad Hiort was put out for tender on Public Contracts Scotland. Three responses have been received including two from local contractors on the island and one in Inverness. While decisions about procurement will be ultimately taken by contractors it is expected that where possible supplies will be procured locally. It is for example expected that heavy quarried materials will be sourced on the island. The Developer is also in the process of finalising an agreement with the Council to repurpose stone from an old school three miles from the intended site.

With regard to operation and maintenance, Ionad Hiort intends to source all necessary services, such as the plumbing and electrical systems maintenance locally. Once the café is up and running, Ionad Hiort also intends to source food as locally as possible.

Whilst it is impossible to say for certain at this point how much local supply chains will be used; the applicant has expressed a clear intention to prioritise local suppliers and has made initial attempts to ensure short supply chains. As such, this suggests the magnitude of this effect is likely to be medium. With sensitivity of this receptor considered high, the overall **significance of this effect was therefore assessed as moderate.**

Fair employment and just labour markets

This pillar is about ensuring local labour markets are just and fair. An assessment of this pillar entails understanding whether the project will lead to opportunities for fair work that will benefit the community, including promoting fair work standards and inclusive recruitment practices that will reverberate through the community.

In the long run, Ionad Hiort is expected to create 19 jobs to support ongoing operations and maintenance. This will include a mixture of full time and part time positions, including in catering, retail, cleaning, technical support, curating, and managerial. These are all skills that are present in the community. The managerial position will be of particular value to the local area, where there is a lack of skilled and well-paid jobs. Whilst most of these positions will be contractually secure, some will be causal owing to the seasonal nature of the tourism economy. All the positions will pay at least the living wage.

There will also be opportunities for skills development, and there are intentions to have apprenticeships relating to digital skills, Gaelic language and culture, drystone dyking, and joinery. Ionad Hiort are currently in discussion with the council and the University of the Highlands and Islands to develop these.

From a construction perspective, although the benefits will be temporary, it will lead to a total of 100 years of employment, of which 60 are expected to be based directly in Na h-Eileanan Siar. It is not yet possible to confirm the exact details of employment conditions as this will depend on the contractor appointed. However, the jobs created will be skilled and, although temporary, will therefore offer some contribution to this pillar.

A distinctive feature of the island's crofting heritage is that there are a high number of people doing more than one job. This is a traditional characteristic of crofting communities where agricultural incomes have always been a component of rather than the main source of family income. The jobs created through the Ionad Hiort, whether temporary or not, will therefore help sustain this way of life by offering roles that can supplement existing incomes.

Ionad Hiort, both in the construction phase and operation, will bring good quality jobs to the local community. The jobs necessary to operate Ionad Hiort will be both secure and pay the living wage. As such the magnitude of Ionad Hiort's contribution to this pillar is likely to be high. When combined with the high sensitivity of this receptor the overall **significance of this effect was therefore assessed as major.**

Socially productive use of land and property

This pillar is about understanding whether land and property generates wealth for the people who live there. That is, that local communities gain from land and property assets financially and that the land is put to socially productive use. The land is already owned by the applicant. It was gifted by the previous landowner, having been decrofted and local crofters duly compensated. Previously, the site was a World War II radio station, and although the site has now been substantially re-naturalised, the remnants of previous uses are still very much in evidence. The applicant intends to repurpose parts of the site, including the remains of the radio station, which will help improve the appearance of the site to the benefit of visitors and residents alike.

At present the land is used for grazing and since there is an abundance of land for grazing in the local area there is not a significant opportunity lost from the development. The magnitude of the contribution to this pillar was therefore assessed as high. When combined with the high sensitivity of this receptor the overall **significance of this effect was assessed as major.**

Since the NPF4 states that "development proposals linked to community ownership and management of land will be supported" this contribution is particularly important.

Ensuring financial power works for local places

This pillar is about ensuring local and financial power institutions work for local places, people, and the planet. This requires understanding the finances that support the investment and whether it works for local people, communities, and local businesses. This includes harnessing wealth that exists locally, such as anchor institutions, national investment banks, regional cooperative banks, community banks, credit unions and non-profit institutions.

Anchor institutions are place-based, mission-driven entities seeking to improve the long-term health and social welfare of their communities. They are typically large public institutions such as hospitals, universities, and government agencies, that can leverage their economic power alongside their human and intellectual resources.

This assessment was unable to identify any important sources of socially controlled financial power or anchor organisations, however Ionad Hiort has the potential to change this.

While the Developer of this project was originally established with the specific remit of developing Ionad Hiort, should the project proceed this remit is likely to evolve and has the potential to become an important source of local financial power in the future. Given the right support, this organisation could become an important anchor organisation for the local community in the future with the potential to leverage in additional funding and investment.

Realising this opportunity is however likely to require investment in organisational capacity. It is not clear to what extent this could be achieved organically and if the benefits of this project are to be maximised this would be an issue that would merit further investigation by the appropriate authorities.

For these reasons the potential contribution of Ionad Hiort to this pillar at the time of writing was considered largely latent. In the absence of any proactive measures to help realise this latent potential the magnitude of this effect was therefore assessed as low, when combined with the high sensitivity of the receptor this implies the overall **significance of this effect would be minor.**

Summary of Ionad Hiort's Community Wealth Building Contributions

The analysis above suggests Iona Hiort will contribute in some way to all five Community Wealth Building pillars. While the significance of the contributions to each pillar varies, at least three contributions are considered major. **The overall significance of the contribution of Ionad Hiort to the local economy was therefore assessed as major.**

Table 5.5.3 Summary of Ionad Hiort's Community Wealth Building Impact

Community Wealth Building Pillars	Key source(s) of effects	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude	Significance
Plural ownership of the economy	Community interest group who owns the land set for development	High	High	Major
Progressive procurement of goods and services	Intentions to source local whenever possible in construction phase and for operation.	High	Medium	Moderate
Fair employment and just labour markets	Local jobs with skills present in the community; mostly contractually secure and paying the living wage; apprenticeship possibilities	High	High	Major
Socially productive use of land and property	Developer owns land, alternative use of land is grazing which is not in short supply.	High	High	Major
Ensuring financial power works for local places	Limited opportunities identified but may be some scope to act as an anchor institution.	High	Low	Minor

5.5.2 Tourism and Recreation Effects

Ionad Hiort has the potential to generate three main types of tourism and recreational effect:

- changes to the number of people visiting the local area each year and/or the amount of money spent by these visitors; and
- changes to the quality of the visitor offering arising from the new services provided by Ionad Hiort;
- changes in the recreational amenity of the local area either during the construction of Ionad Hiort (e.g. due to noise or disruption) or once the new facilities are operational.

Changes to Visitor Numbers and Expenditure

It is expected that Ionad Hiort will welcome around 35,000 visitors in its first year of operation, rising to 40,000 visitors by year five. The level of additionality of these visitors was estimated at 20% in Na h-Eileanan Siar and 5% in Scotland. This means it is expected that around 20% of visitors to Ionad Hiort would not otherwise have visited Na h-Eileanan Siar and 5% of visitors would not otherwise have visited Scotland.

As such, it was estimated that Ionad Hiort will encourage an additional 8,000 annual visitors to the region. The expenditure generated by these visitors will support industries, such as accommodation, food and beverage service activities, transport and retail. The expenditure of these additional visitors will help support jobs and economic activity across Na h-Eileanan Siar. Given the scale of additional visitors anticipated each year, the magnitude of this effect was assessed as medium. When combined with the high sensitivity of the regional tourism economy the **significance of this effect at the regional level was therefore assessed as moderate.**

However, the magnitude of this effect could be more important at the local level. The development of Ionad Hiort is expected to play an important role in attracting tourists to Uig, which is currently often bypassed by tourists following the Hebridean Way, which stretches from the south of the island to the north of Lewis, and the West Coast Loop, which is a common route for tourists in this area. In this way it is expected that Ionad Hiort could stimulate an important change in visitor behaviour. For this reason, the magnitude of this change was assessed as high at the local level. When combined with the high sensitivity of the local tourism economy the **overall significance of this effect was assessed as moderate.**

Changes to Visitor Experience

It is likely that Ionad Hiort will affect not only the volume of tourism activity in the region, but also the quality of the visitor offering. There are several reasons for this.

Firstly, Ionad Hiort will directly enhance the cultural offering of the regional tourism offer. As discussed elsewhere in this report, the distinctive Gaelic culture of the region is an important reason why many people choose to visit the region. By providing people with more of an opportunity to experience this culture Ionad Hiort will directly enhance this offer and help improve overall visitor experience.

Ionad Hiort will also help to address the lack of indoor visitor facilities in the local area and complement existing attractions in Na h-Eileanan Siar. Weather conditions in the area are frequently inclement so the availability of high-quality indoor visitor attractions is an important factor in the overall quality of the visitor offering. By providing visitors with somewhere else to go, particularly during bad weather, Ionad Hiort should help to encourage visitors to spend longer in the local area, increasing their economic benefit to the region.

It is also expected that Ionad Hiort will add valuable capacity to the existing tourism offer, helping alleviate pressure on existing attractions in the area, such as Carloway Broch and Gearrannan Blackhouse, particularly during peak times. Spreading the load of tourism activity more evenly should help limit the potential for visitor congestion, which can be detrimental to visitor experience. Ultimately this should help extend dwell times at all attractions, helping to generate additional expenditure across the local tourism economy.

Ionad Hiort will be a prominent destination for the region so the magnitude of its potential effect on the quality of the visitor offering at the reginal level was assessed as medium. As such, the overall **significance of the effect of Ionad Hiort on the visitor offering in the region was assessed as moderate.** The magnitude of this effect is however likely to be greater in the local area (i.e. high) so the **significance of this effect at the local level was assessed as major.**

Changes to Recreational Amenity

Ionad Hiort has the potential to affect the recreational amenity of the local area both during the construction phase and once operational. Effects during the construction phase have the potential to be detrimental if construction operations impede local access or enjoyment of important leisure assets. Once operational it is also possible that any delays caused by increased visitor movements could have a detrimental effect on the amenity of residents, particularly at peak operating times. These effects have been considered as part of the transport assessment

undertaken as part of this EIA. Providing this assessment does not identify any significant residual effects of this nature then the magnitude of these effects on the amenity of the local area will be negligible, which implies these effects would not be significant from a tourism and leisure perspective.

Ionad Hiort is however also expected to have longer term beneficial effects on recreational amenity. These effects will arise because the new facility will provide a warm, welcoming and dry environment for visitors and residents to congregate. The beneficial effects of this for visitors have been addressed above and the beneficial effects for residents are addressed in the next section.

5.5.3 Community Health and Wellbeing Effects

The National Performance Framework is a wellbeing framework and composed of 11 National Outcomes and this helps to gauge the effects on community health and wellbeing, a receptor considered to have high sensitivity. Those likely to be affected, in addition to communities, economy, and fair work and business, as implied by the community wealth building assessment in 5.5.6, include culture, education (including children and young people), international, human rights, environment (from a wellbeing perspective rather than an ecological perspective) and communities (from a wellbeing perspective rather than economic perspective). These effects are described and assessed below.

Effects on the economy and fair work and business outcomes were assessed in section 5.5.6 and are therefore not reconsidered below. However, based on that assessment it is reasonable to conclude that the magnitude of Ionad Hiort's contribution to these outcomes will be high and that the overall significance of the effect on these outcomes will be major.

Culture

This national outcome is about ensuring Scotland's vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely. Being primarily a cultural and heritage endeavour, Ionad Hiort is well placed to support this national outcome. It will bring people into contact with a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offering a unique perspective on a way of life on St Kilda. Further, in becoming a centre where Gaelic is promoted and practised it will offer an opportunity for locals and visitors to connect with the Gaelic language and hear it spoken naturally, helping to preserve it in active use for future generations. There will also be connections to other cultural sites across the island.

There are four indicators used to gauge progress on this national outcome. These are attendance at cultural events or places of culture, participation in cultural activity, growth in the cultural economy, and people working in arts and culture. Ionad Hiort will offer a strong local contribution across all these indicators, which will feed into a stronger overall national performance. The magnitude of the effect is therefore expected to be high. When coupled with the high sensitivity of the receptor, this implies the **significance of this contribution is likely to be major.**

Education (including Children and Young People)

In addition to the potential for skills development, identified earlier in assessing Ionad Hiort from a Community Wealth Building perspective, there will be opportunities for learning local history and culture for all. There will be a dedicated discovery zone for children. Overall, it is expected that there will be a positive overall impact across these two national outcomes, education and children and young people, and that these benefits will be both local and national. The magnitude of the effect is expected to be medium and, coupled with the high sensitivity of the receptor, is likely to generate an **effect of moderate significance.**

International

This national outcome is about whether Scotland is open, connected, and makes a positive contribution internationally. As addressed within 5.6, Ionad Hiort is expected to become a major tourist destination within the island, drawing additional visitors to the area. Key indicators as to whether Scotland is performing well in this national outcome include a positive experience for people coming to Scotland and Scotland's reputation. The magnitude of the effect is expected to be medium and, coupled with the high sensitivity of the receptor, is likely to give rise to an **effect of moderate significance.**

Human Rights

The aspect of human rights that Ionad Hiort contributes to is with regard to people feeling like they have influence over local decisions. This is already high on Na h-Eileanan Siar, but in being a community centred project that involves the community in its objectives and decision-making process, the magnitude of the effect is expected to be medium and, coupled with the high sensitivity of the receptor, is likely to generate an **effect of moderate significance.**

Environment

From a human wellbeing and socio-economic perspective there are environmental benefits to consider. For example, progress on the national outcome is tracked by several indicators, one of which is the number of visits to the outdoors. It is likely that Ionad Hiort will bring benefits locally and nationally, encouraging people to explore their environment and experience the associated wellbeing benefits with being outdoors. The magnitude of the effect is expected to be low but when coupled with the high sensitivity of the receptor is still likely to generate an **effect with moderate significance.**

Communities

The non-economic indicators to gauge progress on this national outcome that are relevant to Ionad Hiort from a wellbeing perspective include, perceptions of the local area, loneliness, community land ownership, access to green and blue space, places to interact, and social capital. Of particular importance is that Ionad Hiort will be an important community hub, by providing a much-needed café and space for the community to meet and socialise.

There are very few options for people to meet in the local area and none that are open throughout the week. The presence of a local café which is open at regular hours, sustained through visitors coming to the area, will bring substantial benefits to the community and contribute to this national outcome. In addition, the café may contribute to general attractiveness of the area, bringing in people to the area, who may for example find it easier to work from home if the café exists.

Further, there can be benefits to the community of attracting new people coming to the area. Even if only temporary, having a regular influx of visitors can breathe new life into communities, give young people a reason to remain on the island, and make a difference to the quality of life for those who live there. There are also benefits to the islands through ensuring the viability of local services and contributing to community life.

The magnitude of the effect was therefore assessed as high. When coupled with the high sensitivity of the receptor this implies the overall **significance of this effect is likely to be major.**

Relatedly, since the NPF4 outlines in Policy 29 on Rural Development that “development proposals that contribute to the viability, sustainability and diversity of rural communities and local rural economy will be supported” the contribution to this national outcome is particularly important.

Summary of Ionad Hiort’s Contribution to the National Outcomes

There will be a ‘major’ contribution to at least four national outcomes, including communities, culture, economy, fair work and business. Children and young people, education, environment (from a wellbeing perspective) human rights, and international will also be positively contributed to a ‘moderate’ degree. No direct impacts were identified for either health or poverty, nevertheless given all the other positive impacts it is likely that these may be indirectly contributed towards. A summary of Ionad Hiort’s contribution to the national outcomes is shown in Table 5.5.4.

There are no non-negligible negative effects requiring mitigation. However, some benefits could be enhanced by ensuring good access to nature and encouraging the community to engage in this important cultural asset.

This assessment has shown Ionad Hiort is expected to make a major contribution to at least four of Scotland’s national outcomes and a moderate contribution to a further five. **Overall, the significance of this effect on local community wellbeing was therefore assessed as major.** A summary of the contributions to individual national outcomes is provided in Table 5.5.4.

Table 5.5.4 Summary of Ionad Hiort's Contribution to National Outcomes

National Outcomes	Key source(s) of impact	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance
Children and young people	Learning opportunities, children directly involved in contributing ideas	High	Medium	Moderate
Communities	Places to meet and socialise, makes the area more attractive	High	High	Major
Culture	Encourages sustainable use of a UNESCO heritage site; preserves and encourages Gaelic language use; increase engagement in cultural activity.	High	High	Major
Economy	Sustained local economic benefits via contribution to community wealth pillars	High	High	Major
Education	Learning opportunities	High	Medium	Moderate
Environment	Encourages outdoor activity	High	Low	Moderate
Fair work and business	Sustained local economic benefits via community wealth building pillars	High	High	Major
Health		High	Negligible	Negligible
Human rights	Increases peoples influence over local decisions	High	Medium	Moderate
International	Positive visitor experience; adds to Scotland's reputation.	High	Medium	Moderate
Poverty		High	Negligible	Negligible

5.5.4 Summary of Significant Effects

This assessment has identified several potentially significant effects associated with Ionad Hiort. These are summarised below.

- a moderate effect on the regional economy arising from the direct operations of Ionad Hiort, and the wider effect of the attraction's supply chain and expenditure of visitors elsewhere in the economy;
- a major effect on the local economy, arising primarily from the plural ownership created by Ionad Hiort's operating structure, the progressive approach taken toward procurement, the contribution of the attraction to local employment and skills and the socially productive use of land;
- a moderate effect on the local and regional tourism economy from increased visitor numbers and expenditure;
- a moderate improvement to the quality of the regional visitor experience and a major improvement at the local level; and
- a major contribution to important societal outcomes, primarily arising due to contributions to community, economic, fair work and cultural outcomes.

5.5.5 Required Mitigation and Enhancement

This assessment has not identified any significant adverse effects associated with Ionad Hiort, therefore there is no need to consider mitigation, however, there may be scope to enhance some of the beneficial effects identified.

The most important of these opportunities relates to the economic benefits the Developer could bring to the local area over and above the immediate benefits from the project. These benefits could arise if the Developer evolves into an important anchor institution for the area, capable of leveraging in additional funding and encouraging wider community action.

To realise this opportunity, it will be necessary to devote time and resources to developing new projects and revenue streams. Experience elsewhere in Scotland suggests that this can be very difficult, particularly for a relatively young organisation (like Ionad Hiort) where the day-to-day operation of a new facility is likely to take up a high proportion of organisational capacity.

Elsewhere revenue support for core operations and specialist advice has played an important role in developing the capacity of such organisations. If such support could be provided to Ionad Hiort it may be possible to increase the magnitude of the contribution to the fifth Community Wealth Building pillar relating to local financial power from low to medium. Should this occur then the overall significance of this effect would shift from minor (and not significant in EIA terms) to moderate (and significant). This could have far-reaching benefits for the local economy.

5.6 Cumulative Effects

5.6.1 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects could arise in relation to Ionad Hiort if the development were to coincide with other important tourism developments in the region. This assessment has identified proposed developments that could give rise to cumulative effects: the Iolaire Centre in Stornoway and the prospective St Kilda Centres on Harris and North Uist.

The Iolaire Centre

The Iolaire Centre is a project currently under development, with the purpose to share the story of the 1919 Iolaire sinking less than a mile from the Stornoway harbour, in honour of the 201 men returning from war who tragically lost their lives[12]. From a tourism perspective it is likely that the cumulative effect of both visitor centres in the region will encourage visitors to visit both sites, encouraging overnight stays and generate a greater level of spending in the local economy. This could enhance the beneficial effect of Ionad Hiort on the local and regional economies.

There could also be potential for cumulative adverse effects arising from these two developments. Such effects could arise if the two developments taking place in parallel with one another were to give rise to significant disruption for residents and/or visitors. Transport effects are considered elsewhere in this EIA. Providing no significant residual effects are identified then there is no reason to expect any significant cumulative effects on either the local tourism sector or community.

St Kilda Trail

It has previously been proposed that Ionad Hiort could be part of a wider St Kilda Trail, consisting of multiple visitor centres dedicated to telling part of the St Kilda story, including facilities on Harris and North Uist. At the time of writing the status of these other centres was uncertain, however should one or more of them proceed in the future the resulting trail would be likely to result in positive cumulative effects. These effects would arise because it is likely that the trail would incentivise visitors to prolong their stay on Na h-Eileanan Siar and to travel around the region to visit the centres, leading to increased spending in local accommodation and the wider tourism economy.

[12] The Iolaire Centre (2023) Iolaire Centre Project Overview.

5.7 Conclusions

Ionad Hiort will generate economic activity, create jobs, and attract visitors to the local area, supporting the tourism sector and the wider local economy.

This assessment has shown that Ionad Hiort could generate:

- £3.8 million GVA for Na h-Eileanan Siar and support 60 jobs during the construction phase; and
- £2.1 million GVA/year and support 75 jobs once fully operational.

The employment opportunities generated by Ionad Hiort could play an important role in combating depopulation in Na h-Eileanan Siar, by offering sustainable and high-quality jobs. Ionad Hiort will also serve as a vibrant hub of activity, addressing the need for an indoor tourist attraction in Uig. The wider benefit of staff and tourist spending, and support for local supply chains supported by Ionad Hiort, will enhance the sustainability of the local economy, and help to build a more resilient community.

Although many of these immediate economic and tourism impacts will be experienced locally, the applicant is committed to ensuring these immediate benefits circulate around the community to further support local economic and social objectives. This includes ensuring the project contributes to Community Wealth Building, several of Scotland's national outcomes, and that the impacts are sustainable in the long term.

Ionad Hiort is more than a tourism project, seeking to not only establish itself as a world-class visitor attraction, but also to serve the local community. Ionad Hiort was conceived and developed by local volunteers and receives substantial support from within the local community. The project is directed and controlled entirely by local people, and is designed to support the economic and cultural survival of one of Scotland's most fragile rural communities.

This assessment has considered the contributions Ionad Hiort could make to the five pillars of Community Wealth Building and has found that the contribution is likely to be substantial, particularly to the pillars relating to ownership, employment, land use, and supply chains.

Ionad Hiort also offers a strong contribution to nine of Scotland's national outcomes. This contribution is particularly strong for the outcomes relating to communities, culture, economy and fair work and business, but is also significant in relation to the outcomes relating to children and young people, international, human rights, education, and the environment.

In summary, this assessment has identified five significant effects:

- a **moderate positive effect on the regional economy** arising from the direct operations of Ionad Hiort, and the wider effect of the attraction's supply chain and expenditure of visitors elsewhere in the economy;
- a **major positive effect on the local economy**, arising primarily from the plural ownership created by Ionad Hiort's operating structure, the progressive approach taken toward procurement, the contribution of the attraction to local employment and skills, and the socially productive use of land;
- a **moderate positive effect on the local and regional tourism economy** arising from increased visitor numbers and expenditure;
- a **moderate positive effect to the quality of the regional visitor experience** and a **major positive effect at the local level**; and
- a **major positive effect on important societal outcomes**, primarily arising due to contributions to community, economic, fair work and cultural outcomes.

5.8 Acknowledgments

BiGGAR Economics is grateful to the volunteers of Ionad Hiort and staff from Highlands and Islands Enterprise who supported the completion of this assessment.

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5.10 Glossary

Acronym	*Definition*
GVA	Gross Value Added
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
NSET	National Strategy for Economic Transformation
SO	Strategic Objectives
THILG	Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership Group
OHT	Outer Hebrides Tourism
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
WELLBYs	Wellbeing-Adjusted Life Years
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Dualchas.

IONAD HIORT
THE ST. KILDA CENTRE

VOLUME 2: MAIN ASSESSMENT
CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORT IMPACTS

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
FEBRUARY 2024

Contents

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter considers the transport issues associated with the Proposed Development. It is supported by an accompanying Transport Statement and an outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

This Chapter considers the effects during the construction and operational phase of the Proposed Development, when volumes of traffic generation are anticipated to be at their greatest. In line with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) Guidelines, severance, driver delay, pedestrian delay, pedestrian amenity, fear and intimidation, and road safety, have been evaluated in isolation for the Proposed Development. Additionally, these receptors were evaluated cumulatively considering other committed and in-planning developments in the general area, to produce a worst-case scenario.

This Chapter has been prepared by Allan Spence and Hugh Mulholland, of Tetra Tech, in line with best practices. Allan Spence is a Chartered Engineer through the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, with over 27 years' experience. Hugh Mulholland is a Civil Engineer with over 12 years' experience. Allan and Hugh both have experience of similar projects, throughout Scotland.

6.2 Methodology and Approach

6.2.1 Planning Policy and Guidance

Planning Policy

National Planning Framework (NPF)

The Scottish NPF is a long-term plan looking to 2045 that guides spatial development, sets out planning policies, designates national developments and highlights spatial priorities, setting out where development and infrastructure is needed. Scotland's fourth NPF was laid in the Scottish Parliament on February 13th, 2023.

Scottish Planning Policy (2014)

In relation to transport matters, Scottish Planning Policy notes:

"286. Where a new development or a change of use is likely to generate a significant increase in the number of trips, a transport assessment should be carried out. This should identify any potential cumulative effects which need to be addressed; and

290. Development proposals that have the potential to affect the performance or safety of the strategic transport network need to be fully assessed to determine their impact. Where existing infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate a development without adverse impacts on safety or unacceptable impacts on operational performance, further investment in the network is not likely to be required. Where such investment is required, the cost of the mitigation measures required to ensure the continued safe and effective operation of the network will have to be met by the developer."

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Local Development Plan (2018)

The plan sets out the Comhairle's land-use planning policies to facilitate sustainable economic growth in the Outer Hebrides and fulfil the aspirations of the 'Outer Hebrides Single Outcome Agreement' and the 'Our Islands Our Future' initiative.

Guidance

Planning Advice Note (PAN) 75

PAN75: 'Planning for Transport' provides advice on the requirements for Transport Assessments as follows:

"40. …requires a transport assessment to be produced for significant travel generating developments. Transport Assessment is a tool that enables delivery of policy aiming to integrate transport and land use planning; and

"41. All planning applications that involve the generation of person trips should provide information which covers the transport implications of the development. The level of detail will be proportionate to the complexity and scale of the impact of the proposal. For smaller developments the information on transport implications will enable local authorities to monitor potential cumulative impact and for larger developments it will form part of a scoping exercise for a full transport assessment. Development applications will therefore be assessed by relevant parties at levels of detail corresponding to their potential impact."

Transport Assessment Guidance (2012)

Transport Scotland's (TS) Transport Assessment (TA) Guidance was published in 2012. It aims to assist in the preparation of a TA for development proposals in Scotland such that the likely transport impacts can be identified and dealt with as early as possible in the planning process. The document sets out requirements according to the scale of development being proposed.

The document notes that a TA will be required where a development is likely to have significant transport impacts but that the specific scope and contents of a TA will vary for developments, depending on location, scale and type of development.

Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement, IEMA Guidelines (2023)

The document includes guidance on how the sensitivity of receptors should be assessed, contains rules to help determine which links in the study area should be considered for detailed assessment and identifies the key impacts that are most important when assessing the magnitude of traffic effects from an individual development.

6.2.2 Consultation

Table 6-1 provides details of consultations undertaken with relevant regulatory bodies, together with action undertaken by the Applicant in response to consultation feedback.

Table 6-1: Consultation Responses

Consultee	Summary of Consultee Response	Where Addressed within Chapter
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's is satisfied with using the traffic survey data obtained in May 2022.	Section 6.3.1

6.2.3 Assessment Methodology

Overview

The methodology adopted in this assessment has involved the following key stages:

- Determine baseline conditions;
- Review the Proposed Development to identify potential effects including any cumulative effects;
- Evaluate significance;
- Identify mitigation; and
- Access residual effects.

Study Area

The transport study area is defined as the lengths of public road that will be used to access the Proposed Development and be most impacted during the construction phase. The study area has been identified through a review of the likely routes between suppliers of equipment and materials to the site.

The focus of the study area is the road that will provide direct access to the development, which is an unclassified single-track road with passing places, subject to the national speed limit.

Desk Study

The baseline review focuses on the nature of the surrounding road infrastructure and the level of traffic that uses it. It has been informed by the following:

- Review of responses from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's to the scoping email;
- Collection of traffic flow data;
- Review of roads hierarchy;
- Identification of areas of road safety concerns;
- Identification of other traffic sensitive receptors in the area (routes, communities, buildings etc.);
- Review of online mapping to derive the study area; and
- Consideration of potential supply locations for construction materials to inform the extent of the road network to be considered in the assessment.

A review of relevant applications in the general vicinity of the study area was also undertaken as part of the desk top study.

Site Visit

A site visit was not undertaken due to the remoteness of the Proposed Development site.

Limitations of Assessment

Traffic for future year baseline flows at 2024, 2026 and 2031 are based on the 2022 Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) data with high National Road Traffic Forecast (NRTF) growth applied. The detail is provided in Section 6.3.1.

This covers baseline traffic flows for the current year (2024), when construction traffic is expected to peak (2026), and the year that peak operational flows will be reached (2031).

For the purposes of this assessment, it is assumed that all staff, visitors, construction and operational traffic will be generated from outside the study area, since the study area is rural in nature and likely to be sparsely populated.

6.2.4 Significance Criteria

Criteria for Assessing the Sensitivity of Receptors

In terms of traffic and transport effects, the receptors are the users of the roads within the study area and the locations through which these roads pass.

Table 3.2N of LA 104 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) describes the sensitivity of receptors that shall be applied. This receptor sensitivity classification is summarised in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2: Classification of Receptor Sensitivity (Source LA 104 Table 3.2N)

Value (Sensitivity) of Receptor / Resource	Typical Description
Very High	Very high importance and rarity, international scale and very limited potential for substitution.
High	High importance and rarity, national scale, and limited potential for substitution
Medium	Medium or high importance and rarity, regional scale, limited potential for substitution
Low	Low or medium importance and rarity, local scale
Negligible	Very low importance and rarity, local scale

Criteria for Assessing Magnitude of Change

The following rules, also taken from the IEMA Guidelines, were used to determine which links within the study area should be considered:

- Rule 1 – include highway links where traffic flows are predicted to increase by more than 30% (or where the number of HGVs is predicted to increase by more than 30%).
- Rule 2 – include any other specifically sensitive areas (such as schools, hospitals, congested junctions etc) where traffic flows are predicted to increase by 10% or more.

The IEMA Guidelines identify the key impacts that are most important when assessing the magnitude of traffic impacts from an individual development. The effects and levels of magnitude are discussed below:

- Severance – the IEMA Guidance states that "severance is the perceived division that can occur within a community when it becomes separated by major transport infrastructure." Further, "Changes in traffic of 30%, 60% and 90% are regarded as producing 'slight', 'moderate' and 'substantial' [or minor, moderate and major] changes in severance respectively". However, the Guidelines acknowledge that "the measurement and prediction of severance is extremely difficult" (Para 3.14).
- Driver delay – the IEMA Guidelines note that these delays are only likely to be "significant [or major] when the traffic on the network surrounding the development is already at, or close to, the capacity of the system" (Para 3.20).
- Pedestrian Delay – the IEMA Guidance states that "given the range of local factors and conditions that can influence pedestrian delay (e.g. a discrete delay may have a lesser impact in an urban environment than a rural setting), it is not considered wise to set down definitive thresholds. Instead, it is recommended that the competent traffic and movement expert use their judgement to determine whether pedestrian delay constitutes a significant effect" (Para 3.26).
- Non-Motorised User Amenity – the IEMA Guidelines suggest that a tentative threshold for judging the significance of changes in non-motorised users' amenity is where the traffic flow (or its lorry component) is halved or doubled (Para 3.30). Therefore, it is considered that a change in the traffic flow of -50% or +100% would produce a 'major' change in non-motorised users' amenity.
- Fear and Intimidation – the IEMA Guidance states that "there are no commonly agreed thresholds for estimating these levels of danger – hence of fear and intimidation – from known traffic and physical conditions" (Para 3.34). However, the Guidelines outlines a scoring system that can rate the changes in fear and intimidation as 'small', 'moderate', 'great' and 'extreme'.
- Road Safety – professional judgement would be used to assess the implications of local circumstances, or factors which may elevate or lessen risks of accidents.

Criteria for Assessing the Magnitude of Change

Table 3.4N of LA 104 of the DMRB describes the magnitude of impact that shall be applied. This magnitude of impact classification is summarised in Table 6-3.

Table 6-3: Magnitude of Impact (Source LA 104 Table 3.4N)

Magnitude of Impact (change)		**Typical Description**
Major	Adverse	Loss of resource and/ or quality and integrity of resource; severe damage to key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Large scale or major improvement of resource quality; extensive restoration; major improvement of attribute quality.
Moderate	Adverse	Loss of resource, but not adversely affecting the integrity; partial loss of/damage to key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Benefit to, or addition of, key characteristics, features or elements; improvement of attribute quality.
Minor	Adverse	Some measurable change in attributes, quality or vulnerability; minor loss of, or alteration to, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Minor benefit to, or addition of, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements; some beneficial impact on attribute or a reduced risk of negative impact occurring.
Negligible	Adverse	Very minor loss or detrimental alteration to one or more characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Very minor benefit to or positive addition of one or more characteristics, features or elements.
No Change		No loss or alteration of characteristics, features or elements; no observable impact in either direction.

Criteria for Assessing the Significance of Effect

To determine the overall significance of the effects, the results from the receptor sensitivity and magnitude assessment are correlated and classified using a scale set out in Table 3.8.1 of LA 104 of the DMRB and summarised in Table 6-4.

Table 6-4: Significance Matrix (Source LA 104 Table 3.8.1)

		Magnitude of impact (degree of change)				
		No Change	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
Environmental value (sensitivity)	Very High	Neutral	Slight	**Moderate or large**	**Large or very large**	**Very large**
	High	Neutral	Slight	**Slight or moderate**	**Moderate or large**	**Large or very large**
	Medium	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Slight	**Moderate**	**Moderate or large**
	Low	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Neutral or slight	Slight	**Slight or moderate**
	Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral or slight	Neutral or slight	Slight

Note 3 of LA104 states that effects are considered significant where they are assessed to be moderate, large or very large (shown as bold in Table 6-4).

The description for significance is set out in Table 3.7 of LA 104 of the DMRB and summarised in Table 6-5.

Table 6-5: Significance Categories (Source LA 104 Table 3.7)

Value (Sensitivity) of Receptor / Resource	Typical Description
Very large	Effects at this level are material in the decision-making process
Large	Effects at this level are likely to be material in the decision-making process
Moderate	Effects at this level can be considered to be material decision-making factors
Slight	Effects at this level are not material in the decision-making process
Neutral	No effects or those that are beneath levels of perception, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error

6.2.4 Receptors Brought Forward for Assessment

From a review of all receptors within the study area, Table 6-6 provides a summary of the receptors identified as being sensitive to the Proposed Development and which have been 'Scoped-In' to the assessment, together with a justification for their inclusion.

Table 6-6: Classification of Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor (Users of Road(s) or Location(s))	Sensitivity	Justification (description from Table 6-2)
Unclassified Road (form the exit off the B8011 to Uig village, to the Proposed Development)	Negligible	Very low importance and rarity, local scale

6.3 Baseline Conditions

6.3.1 Existing Traffic Conditions

To determine the existing road usage, historic 7-day ATC data was used. This was recorded between 22nd – 28th of May 2022 at a location on the Unclassified access road to the north of the development site. It had been collected to inform another element of these proposals.

The NRTF high growth factor for 2022 to 2024 is 1.024346 and this factor was applied to the 2022 ATC count data.

Table 6-7 summarises the 24-hour average daily traffic data collected at the ATC site with High NRTF growth applied.

Table 6-7: Existing (2024) Traffic Flows (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

Survey Location	Cars & LGVs	HGVs	Total
ATC Site	101	6	107

6.3.2 Accident Data

Road traffic accident data was obtained from the web resource CrashMap (http://www.crashmap.co.uk/), along the length of road that connects the Proposed Development to the A858, covering the five years to the end of 2022. Data reviewed for the five-year period indicates that:

- over the 38.6km network reviewed, a total of 4 personal injury accidents were recorded for the five-year period;
- 4 (or 100%) were slight and none were serious or fatal; and
- all involved a single vehicle.

6.3.3 Footway and Cycleway Network

A review of the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar website does not identify any designated core paths or cycle routes in the area.

6.3.4 Future Baseline

Construction of the Proposed Development is likely to take 13 months with construction traffic expected to peak in early 2026 depending on when consent permission for the Proposed Development is granted. The assessment year of 2026 was used to take account of any “creep” in the construction start date.

Future year baseline traffic flows were determined by applying a NRTF 2026 high growth factor (the year when construction traffic is expected to peak) to the existing traffic flows within the study area.

The NRTF high growth factor for 2024 to 2026 is 1.024346 and this factor was applied to ATC count data.

Table 6-8 summarises the resulting future year baseline traffic flows (note: table contains rounding errors).

Table 6-8: Future Year (2026) Traffic Flows (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

Survey Location	Cars & LGVs	HGVs	Total
ATC Site	103	6	110

6.4 Embedded Mitigation

6.4.1 Construction Phase

During the construction period the following measures will be implemented, through the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will be a conditioned requirement attached to the planning permission:

- All construction deliveries will be undertaken at appropriate times, with the aim to minimise the effect on the local road network;
- All material delivery lorries (dry materials) will be sheeted to reduce dust and stop spillage on public roads;
- Specific training and disciplinary measures will be established to ensure the highest standards are maintained to prevent construction vehicles from carrying mud and debris onto the carriageway;
- A wheel wash facility will be established in the vicinity of the site entrance, if required;
- Working hours will be limited to between 0700 – 1900 Monday to Friday, and 0700 – 1600 on Saturday, although these may be extended in the lighter summer months. There shall be no HGV construction traffic movements to or from the Proposed Development out with these hours. In the event of work being required out with these hours (e.g., commissioning works, or emergency mitigation works), the Planning Authority will be notified prior to them taking place;
- Appropriate traffic management measures will be put in place at the site entrance, to avoid conflict with general traffic, subject to agreement with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's;
- All delivery vehicles will enter and exit the construction sites in a forward gear;
- No delivery vehicles will be allowed to park/ dwell in the vicinity of the site entrance. A waiting area (exclusion zone), will be left clear so that vehicles arriving can drive directly onto the site and not have to wait on the public road; and
- Typical measures will include implementing a site speed limit, HGV crossing signage and/ or marshals in the vicinity of the site entrance.

All drivers involved in the works will be required to attend an induction to include:

- A safety briefing;
- The need for appropriate care and speed control;
- A briefing on driver speed reduction agreements (to slow Proposed Development traffic at sensitive locations);
- Identification of specific sensitive areas;
- Identification of the specified access route; and
- The requirement not to deviate from the specified route.

Video footage of the pre-construction condition of the Unclassified Road, between the site entrance and the exit to Uig village, a distance of approximately 9.5km, will be recorded to provide a baseline of the condition of the road prior to construction work commencing. The extents of this monitoring area will be agreed with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's. This baseline will allow identification of changes in the road condition during the construction stage of the Proposed Development. All necessary repairs will be coordinated with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's, and all damage caused by traffic associated with the Proposed Development, that will be hazardous to public traffic, will be repaired as soon as possible.

There will be regular road inspections in the vicinity of the site entrance. Debris and mud will be removed from the carriageway using a road sweeper, if required.

6.4.2 Operational Phase

Site entrance roads and car park will be well maintained and monitored.

6.4.3 Decommissioning Phase

Prior to the decommissioning of the Proposed Development, a traffic assessment will be undertaken, and appropriate traffic management procedures followed.

6.5 Assessment of Likely Effects

6.5.1 Construction Traffic Movement

The assessment is based upon information provided by the Applicant and developed from experience of other construction projects of a similar scale.

To enable comparison of the estimated future year baseline traffic movements with total volumes, including predicted construction traffic, average daily two-way movements for each month for deliveries was determined; this is based on a 22-day working month. Traffic movements were also split by vehicle type in line with the baseline data and the peak period for construction traffic determined. The final daily construction profile by activity is summarised in Table 6-9 and Table 6-10 (note: tables contain rounding errors).

Table 6-9: Daily Construction Traffic Movements Months 1 – 6 (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

	Month					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Total Estimated Movements	158	158	158	158	180	180
Working Days	22	22	22	22	22	22
Cars & LGVs	5	5	5	5	5	5
HGVs	3	3	3	3	4	4
Total	8	8	8	8	9	9

Table 6-10: Daily Construction Traffic Movements Months 7 – 13 (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

	Month						
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Total Estimated Movements	180	180	180	421	421	351	143
Working Days	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
Cars & LGVs	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
HGVs	4	4	4	15	15	11	2
Total	9	9	9	20	20	16	7

The maximum traffic movements associated with construction of the Proposed Development are predicted to occur during months 10 and 11 of the programme. This spike in movements is related to works associated with the car park and access road, and is comprised predominantly of tipper wagons. During these months, an average of 15 HGV two-way movements are predicted per day and it is estimated that there will be a further 5 car or LGV two-way movements per day to transport construction workers to and from the Proposed Development.

6.5.2 Development Traffic Routing/ Distribution

The origin of vehicle traffic will depend on the location of staff accommodation and the source of materials being imported for the superstructure and external works. It is likely that staff will have accommodation across a wide area. There are several potential sources of quarried material (aggregate) and batching plants (concrete) situated in the greater Stornoway area. All other construction materials will be sourced from mainland Scotland and arrive by ferry.

6.5.3 Predicted Effect

To estimate the total trips on the road network within the study area during the construction phase, daily construction traffic flows were combined with the future year baseline traffic conditions. The resulting figures were compared with the daily future year baseline traffic.

Table 6-11 summarises the daily peak construction traffic (month 10 and 11) and Table 6-12 (note: table contains rounding errors) summarises the future year baseline plus peak construction traffic (total) flows. Table 6-13 shows the resulting percentage increase.

Table 6-11: Peak Construction Traffic Flows (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

Survey Location	Cars & LGVs	HGVs	Total
ATC Site	5	15	20

Table 6-12: Future Year Baseline Plus Peak Construction Traffic Flows (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

Survey Location	Cars & LGVs	HGVs	Total
ATC Site	108	21	130

Table 6-13: Percentage Increase: Total vs Future Year Baseline (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

Survey Location	Cars & LGVs	HGVs	Total
ATC Site	4.8%	244.1%	18.2%

The results in Table 6-13 indicate that during the construction of the Proposed Development, only HGV traffic flows are predicted to increase by more than 30%, with an increase > 200%. It should be noted that this high percentage increase is a function of the existing low levels of traffic flows on the Unclassified Road.

Based on Table 6-3 and 6-4, the increased flow of HGVs will have a slight effect on users of the Unclassified Road. Table 6-5 describes a slight impact as “Effects at this level are not material in the decision-making process". This slight impact on the users of the Unclassified Road will be short lived (i.e. months 10 and 11 of the programme) and can be mitigated, if required, through amendments to the CTMP associated with the Proposed Development.

6.5.4 Operational Effects

The Proposed Development is expected to reach its peak visitor/ vehicle arrivals five years after opening, in July 2031.

The NRTF high growth factor for 2026 to 2031 is 1.061982 and this factor was applied to 2026 data.

Table 6-14 summarises the resulting future year baseline traffic flows (note: table contains rounding errors).

Table 6-14: Future Year (2031) Traffic Flows (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

Survey Location	Cars & LGVs	HGVs	Total
ATC Site	110	7	116

To estimate the total trips on the road network within the study area during July 2031, daily visitor/ vehicle traffic flows were combined with the future year baseline traffic conditions. The resulting figures were compared with the daily future year baseline traffic.

Table 6-15 summarises the daily peak visitor/ vehicle traffic flows (July 2031) and Table 6-16 (note: table contains rounding errors) summarises the future year baseline plus peak visitor/ vehicle traffic (total) flows. Table 6-17 shows the resulting percentage increase.

Table 6-15: Peak Visitor/ Vehicle Traffic Flows (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

Survey Location	Cars & LGVs	HGVs	Total
ATC Site	162	0	162

Table 6-16: Future Year Baseline Plus Peak Visitor/ Vehicle Traffic Flows (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

Survey Location	Cars & LGVs	HGVs	Total
ATC Site	272	7	278

Table 6-17: Percentage Increase: Total vs Future Year Baseline (Daily Average Two-Way Flows)

Survey Location	Cars & LGVs	HGVs	Total
ATC Site	147.4%	0.0%	139.2%

The results in Table 6-17 indicate that during the operational phase of the Proposed Development, car and LGV flows are predicted to increase by more than 30%, with an increase > 100%. It should be noted that this high percentage increase is a function of the existing low levels of traffic flows on the Unclassified Road.

Based on Table 6-3 and 6-4, the increased flow will have a slight effect on users of the Unclassified Road. Table 6-5 describes a slight impact as “Effects at this level are not material in the decision-making process". The actual number of vehicles associated with the Operational phase is relatively low i.e. <200 veh/day in the peak month, which confirms the impact will be slight.

6.5.5 Decommissioning Effects

It is anticipated that the number of associated movements will be less than during the construction or operation phase of the Proposed Development.

As decommissioning will result in fewer vehicle trips on the road network than the construction or operation phase, assuming the baseline has not substantially changed, the significance of any effects will not be greater during this phase. Therefore, it can be assumed that the assessment of the construction and operation phases covers the worst-case scenario, and the decommissioning effects are not considered any further.

6.5.6 Cumulative Effects

Consideration was given to the cumulative effect of the Proposed Development with other surrounding developments, that are the subject of valid or approved planning applications, and which will impact on the study area due to the potential for proposed construction activities to coincide with the construction period of the Proposed Development.

No cumulative developments have been identified for consideration in this assessment.

6.5.7 Residual Effects

Due to the remoteness of the Proposed Development, the volume of additional traffic during the construction and operation phases of the Proposed Development is not considered to present a concern in relation to perceived severance, driver delay, pedestrian delay, non-motorised user amenity, increase fear and intimidation or affect the frequency of road accidents on any link within the study area.

6.5.7 Monitoring

No further mitigation measures were identified.

6.6 Summary

The results indicate that during the construction phase of the Proposed Development, only HGV traffic flows are predicted to increase by more than 30% on the Unclassified Road. However, the impact on the users will be relatively short lived due to the limited construction period, and the link has been classified as a receptor of negligible significance. Any impacts can be mitigated through amendments to the CTMP as required. In summary, no significant effects are anticipated during the construction phase.

The results indicate that during the operational phase of the Proposed Development, only car and LGV traffic flows are predicted to increase by more than 30% on the Unclassified Road. However, the peak two-way operational flow is <200 vehicles/day, which cannot be considered as significant. Since it can be classified as a receptor of negligible significance, and the high percentage increase is based on the low levels of traffic flows on the Unclassified Road, no significant effects are anticipated.

Dualchas.

IONAD HIORT
THE ST. KILDA CENTRE

VOLUME 2: MAIN ASSESSMENT
CHAPTER 7: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
FEBRUARY 2024

Ionad Hiort

St Kilda Visitor Centre, Isle of Lewis

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Final report
Prepared by LUC
December 2023

Ionad Hiort

St Kilda Visitor Centre, Isle of Lewis
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1.	Final	LUC	LUC	LUC	15/12/2023

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Purpose of the Report

1.1 Ionad Hiort are seeking consent for a proposed visitor centre on the south-west coast of the isle of Lewis, at Mangersta.

1.2 The proposal is for a new visitor centre building, with associated car parking and access arrangements. The proposal is hereafter referred to in this report as 'the proposed development'.

1.3 LUC was appointed to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) of the proposed development.

1.4 The LVIA was undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects at LUC. It examines the effects of the proposed development on:

- Landscape as a resource in its own right (including coastal landscape), caused by changes to its constituent elements, its specific aesthetic or perceptual qualities, and/or its character; and
- Views and visual amenity as experienced by people, resulting from changes in the appearance of the landscape.

1.5 The LVIA also considers the implications of the proposed development for the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area (NSA), in which the development is located.

Structure of the Report

1.6 The LVIA report comprises the following sections:

- **Chapter 2** presents the scope and approach to the assessment, policy and guidance, and a summary of the methodology, which is detailed in **Appendix A**;
- **Chapter 3** describes the baseline conditions against which the assessment is made, including details of landscape and coastal character, landscape designations and visual receptors;
- **Chapter 4** sets out the details of the proposed development, and the effects that it may have on the baseline environment;

- **Chapter 5** presents the assessment of effects on landscape and coastal character across the study area, and on views as experienced by people across the study area; and
- **Chapter 6** presents a summary of the LVIA.

1.7 The LVIA report is supported by the following appendices:

- **Appendix A** describes the methodology used for the LVIA and production of the supporting ZTV; and
- **Appendix B** presents the figures and visualisations.

Chapter 2
Approach and Methodology

Scope of the Assessment

2.1 Ionad Hiort submitted a Screening Application to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CNES) in December 2022 (planning reference 222/00540).

2.2 A Scoping Opinion was issued by CNES in February 2023 confirming that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would be required, including consideration of landscape and visual impacts.

Effects Assessed in Full

2.3 This assessment considers changes that will occur in the landscape and coastal environment during the construction and operation of the proposed development. The LVIA also considers effects on the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA. The assessment also examines the effects of the proposed development on views, as perceived by people.

Effects Scoped Out

2.4 On the basis of the desk based and field survey work undertaken, the professional judgement of the LVIA team, experience from other relevant projects, and feedback received from consultees, the following effects have been 'scoped out' of detailed assessment:

- Effects on landscape and visual receptors that are outside the 3km radius study area, and/or that are outside the zone of theoretical visibility of the proposed development, as significant effects on these receptors are not likely;
- Effects on 'residential visual amenity' since, due to the nature and location of the proposed development, and offset to the nearest properties (properties with potential visibility at approximately 2km distant, in township of Mangersta to the north) there will be no effects which are likely to breach the residential visual amenity threshold; and
- Cumulative effects in conjunction with other planned development, as no other proposals have been identified within the study area.

Policy and Guidance

2.5 National and local planning policies relevant to landscape and visual matters are briefly reviewed below, as well as available guidance on undertaking LVIA.

National Planning Policy

2.6 NPF4 sets out national planning policy. Policy 4, Natural Places, sets out policy in relation to NSA, and states:

"c) Development proposals that will affect a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve will only be supported where:

i. The objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or

ii. Any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance."

2.7 The proposed development site is located within the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA. As such, the LVIA includes consideration of effects on the special qualities of the NSA, and effects on the overall integrity of the designation.

Local Planning

2.8 CNES's Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan (OHLDP, 2018)[1] includes Policy NBH1: Landscape. Relevant aspects of Policy NBH1 to this LVIA include:

- *"Development proposals should relate to the specific landscape and visual characteristics of the local area, ensuring that the overall integrity of landscape character is maintained.*
- *The Western Isles Landscape Character Assessment (WI-LCA) will be taken into account in determining applications and developers should refer to Appendix 1 of this Plan for a summary of this guidance.*
- *Development proposals should not have an unacceptable significant landscape or visual impact. If it is assessed that there will be a significant landscape or visual impact, the applicant will be required to provide mitigation measures demonstrating how a satisfactory landscape and visual fit can be achieved.*
- *Development that affects a National Scenic Area (NSA) will only be permitted where:*

  a) the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised; or

  b) any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance."

2.9 The LVIA includes an assessment of effects on landscape character, and outlines embedded mitigation measures which have informed the building design and design of external areas.

Guidance

2.10 This assessment has been carried out in accordance with the principles contained within the following documents:

- Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.* 3rd Edition ('GLVIA3');
- SNH (2018) *Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities*. Working Draft 11; and
- Landscape Institute (2019) *Visual Representation of Development Proposals*. Technical Guidance Note 06/19.

Consultation

2.11 The scope and approach of the LVIA was informed by the views of key stakeholders, particularly CNES and NatureScot within the pre-application phase.

2.12 A Scoping Opinion was provided on 20th February 2023. Further consultation was carried out to confirm the detailed scope of the LVIA. Consultee comments and responses are summarised in **Table 2.1** below.

[1] Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (2018) Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan, Adopted Plan

Table 2.1: Consultation Responses

Consultee	Response and date	Issue Raised	Response/Action Taken
CNES	Scoping Opinion, dated 20th February 2023	*"(i) A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, undertaken in accordance with the methodology within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), including in relation to the landscape character of the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area and existing important views within the vicinity of the site. The LVIA shall characterise the landscape type and its associated scenic and visual qualities, and assess both the landscape and visual impact of the proposals to ensure that they do not detract from the quality or character of the landscape.* *(ii) Key viewpoints and receptors should be identified, which should be chosen to reflect the area, such as those associated with the key summits of the Uig Hills. Prior to undertaking the work, the choice of these representative viewpoints and receptors shall first be agreed with the Comhairle as local planning authority, in consultation with NatureScot.* *(iii) The LVIA should contain clear details of the design and scale of different elements of the proposal, as well as materials to be used and any final finish. The design approach should be sympathetic, to complement the landscape in which it sits. The location, scale and design of buildings and infrastructure should ensure integration of the scheme into the landscape and avoid adversely affecting the otherwise natural qualities associated with this landscape type.* *(iv) The development of access roads and 'future landscape path network and structures' need to be sensitively considered and sufficient detail should be provided about these potential future elements of the project with the submission, to enable their likely significant effects to be evaluated."*	(i)This LVIA includes consideration of effects on landscape character and the NSA. (ii) Viewpoints have been agreed through consultation. See below. (iii) The LVIA includes details of mitigation which has been embedded into the design process, for the budling and external areas. (iiii) The LVIA includes an assessment of effects associated with proposed access roads and the path network.
CNES	Post Scoping Consultation dated 08/12/23	*"Cursory overview of the viewpoints appear suitable – but I wonder if you should seek an additional point form the popular Mangersta Beach to show the view of the building from a lower vantage point also. Have you discussed these with NatureScot? Their input from a landscape perspective will be important here.* *I note from the special qualities for the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area that the following is specifically singled out: "On South Lewis views vary greatly to include narrow, enclosed views across Loch Ròg and wild, exposed seascapes seen from high cliffs along Mangurstadh*	The ZTV (refer to **Figure 1**) demonstrates that visibility from the lower lying Mangersta Beach is very limited. Architect model views have also been explored from here and confirm these findings. Intervening landform will screen views to Site. NatureScot have been consulted with regard to the proposed viewpoints, see below.

Consultee	Response and date	Issue Raised	Response/Action Taken
		Head." and also references to the visibility of St Kilda and it will be important to demonstrate how the development, including carpark etc, sit within these interplays of land, sea, and distant views of St Kilda, and to ensure you can demonstrate that the development would not inhibit or degrade these unduly."	The LVIA includes an assessment of effects on the special qualities of the NSA.
NatureScot	Post Scoping Consultation dated 04/12/23	Context with scope of LVIA as proposed, including viewpoints.	N/a

Assessment Methodology

Study Area

2.13 The study area for the LVIA has been defined as a 3km radius around the proposed development, as it was considered unlikely that the proposed development would have any significant impacts on landscape or visual receptors beyond this distance, due to its size and scale. The study area is shown in **Figure 1**.

2.14 The study area was further refined through generation of a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV), discussed in **Chapter 3** and shown in **Figure 1**.

Data Sources

2.15 The following data sources have informed the assessment:

- Nature Scot (2019) National Landscape Character Assessment;
- Nature Scot (2010) The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas;
- Ordnance Survey (OS) maps at a range of scales; and
- OS Terrain 5 height data used for ZTVs.

Field Survey

2.16 Field survey work was carried out over 2 days in November 2023, during clear weather conditions. The coastal and landward parts of the study area were visited, including the assessment viewpoints. Records were made in the form of field notes at viewpoints, and baseline photography captured.

Methodological Overview

2.17 The assessments have been carried out in line with guidance referred to in **Chapter 2**. The methodology is set out in detail in **Appendix A**. The key steps for assessing landscape and visual effects are as follows:

- The landscape of the study area was analysed and landscape receptors identified;
- The area over which the proposed development will be visible was established through creation of a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV);
- The visual baseline was recorded in terms of the different groups of people who may experience views of the development and the nature of their existing views and visual amenity;
- Viewpoints were selected (including representative viewpoints, specific viewpoints and illustrative viewpoints);
- Likely significant effects on landscape and visual resources were identified; and
- The level (and significance) of landscape and visual effects was judged with reference to the sensitivity of the resource/receptor (its susceptibility and value) and magnitude of effect (a combination of the scale of effect, geographical extent and duration/reversibility).

Judging the Levels of Effects

2.18 The predicted significance of the effect is determined through a standard method of assessment based on professional judgement and guidance, considering both sensitivity and magnitude of change. A numerical or formal weighting system was not applied. Instead, consideration of the relative importance of each aspect fed into the overall decision.

2.19 The levels of effect used in this LVIA are defined as shown in **Table 2.2** for landscape effects and **Table 2.3** for visual effects. The descriptions are provided as examples, and each effect is judged individually.

Table 2.2: Levels of Landscape Effect

Level	Effect Description
Major	The proposed development will result in an obvious and widespread change in landscape characteristics, such as introduction of overriding new key characteristics, likely affecting a highly-valued landscape with a medium or high susceptibility to that type of change.
Moderate	The proposed development will result in a noticeable change in landscape characteristics, potentially altering secondary key characteristics, likely affecting a landscape with a medium susceptibility to that type of change. This level of effect may also occur when a smaller scale of change acts on a more highly valued landscape.
Minor	The proposed development will result in a small change in landscape characteristics, not affecting key characteristics, such as a localised effect occurring over a long duration, or a larger-scale effect on an area of lower susceptibility and/or value.
Negligible	The proposed development will not result in a noticeable change in landscape characteristics.

Table 2.3: Levels of Visual Effects

Level	Effect Description
Major	The proposed development will result in an obvious and widespread change in the visual amenity experienced by the receptor(s), who are likely to have medium or high susceptibility to that type of change. For example, this level of effect may arise from the permanent obstruction or interruption of a highly valued view.
Moderate	The proposed development will result in a noticeable change in the visual amenity experienced by the receptor(s), who are likely to be of medium susceptibility to that type of change. For example, this level of effect may arise from a large-scale but temporary change in a view, or a smaller change affecting a highly valued view.
Minor	The proposed development will result in a small change in the visual amenity experienced by the receptor(s), who may be of lower susceptibility to that type of change. For example, this level of effect may arise from a larger-scale but temporary change in a view that is not highly valued, or a very small change experienced by higher-susceptibility receptors.
Negligible	The proposed development will not result in a noticeable change in the visual amenity experienced by the receptor(s).

2.20 For the purposes of this LVIA, effects that are assessed as **moderate or major are considered to be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations**.

Direction of Effects

2.21 The direction of effect (positive, negative or neutral) is determined in relation to the degree to which the proposal fits with landscape character and the contribution to the landscape or visual amenity that the development makes. For the purposes of this assessment, and taking a precautionary approach, any development in the context of this scenic and nationally protected landscape has the potential for adverse effects. However, it is recognised that many people are likely to view a sensitively designed visitor centre as a positive addition to the landscape and views.

Assumptions and Limitations

2.22 This LVIA has been undertaken based on development information provided by Dualchas Architects. Visualisations have been prepared by aligning baseline views (gathered through fieldwork) with renders from the architects 3D model. Whilst these are not photorealistic photomontages, the visualisations (combined with baseline views) provide

sufficient information to clearly understand the location, massing, form and finish of the proposed development.

Chapter 3
Existing Conditions

3.1 This section provides a description of the LVIA study area and sets out the landscape and visual baseline against which the proposed development is assessed.

The Study Area

3.2 The LVIA study area is defined as a 3km radius around the proposed development site. The site is situated on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis. The site is located along the sea cliffs approximately 2km south of the township of Mangersta. St Kilda is visible on clear days to the south-west, at just over 90km distance.

3.3 The sea cliffs stretch from north and south through the centre of the study area. The Lewisian gneiss rock sea cliffs are rugged and varied, up to approximately 50m in height, with outcrops and sea stacks creating a complex coastal edge. There is a sandy bay to the south of Mangersta, to the north of the study area. Beyond this the coastal edge is less accessible, with the North Atlantic Sea swelling below the complex rocky coastal edge, and waves crashing into the cliffs.

3.4 Across inland areas to the east of the study area, the terrain is undulating and irregular, and rises towards the Uigg Hills and the minor summit of Brinneabhal (213m AOD). The landcover generally comprises boggy moorland with rocky outcrops. The landscape is open in nature, with very little woodland cover. In terms of the hydrology, there are a large number of lochans and small lochs. Small tributaries link these features and drain west, towards the sea.

3.5 In terms of human influences, a minor road passes from north to south, broadly following the alignment of the coastal edge, and linking the small settlement of Mangersta, to the north, and Islibhig, to the south. A small wood pole telegraph line also passes through the study area and post and wire fence field boundaries also indicate human influences over the landscape.

3.6 The site itself also has some relics from its former use as a radar station. There are access roads, concrete pads and abandoned structures are apparent. There is also a water treatment plant which serves the nearby townships. However, and despite these features, the site has a very remote and

exposed character, in part due to its strong relationship with the rugged coastal edge and the sea.

3.7 Views across the study area are strongly influenced by the varied terrain. The lack of built form and vegetation cover means that views tend to be open in nature. From areas of higher ground views are larger scale and long distance. Views tend to be oriented to the west, looking out to sea, or north and south along the coastal edge. In views looking north and south, along the coastal edge, abandoned structures associated with the radar station, and wood pole telegraph lines, are often just apparent on the undulating horizon behind the sea cliffs. The character of the landscape is also strongly influenced by light conditions and the weather, which can change dramatically.

Plate 3.1 – View looking north over the proposed site of the visitor centre

Plate 3.2 – View from site looking east, towards the abandoned radar station (Mealaisbhal visible on horizon to the south-east)

Landscape and Coastal Character

3.8 This section provides a description of the landscape and coastal character across the study area, drawing on published studies. The onshore landscape character is described in the Scottish Natural Heritage (2019) *National Landscape Character Assessment*.

SNH National Landscape Character Assessment

3.9 The national programme of landscape character assessment was re-published by SNH in 2019 and defines 390 distinct landscape character types (LCT) that occur across Scotland, some of which have a strong coastal component.

3.10 Five LCTs occur within the study area, as shown on **Figure 2**. These are:

- LCT 322 - Boggy Moorland - Outer Hebrides, and in which the development is proposed (the 'host' LCT);
- LCT 323 - Rocky Moorland - Outer Hebrides, located to the immediate north of the site:
- LCT 321 - Machair;
- LCT 318 - Linear Crofting;
- LCT 326 - Prominent Hills and Mountains, and incorporates higher ground which offers views over the site, and out to sea.

3.11 Though the study area includes the five LCTs noted above, the ZTV (refer to **Figure 1**) highlights a very limited pattern of theoretical visibility from LCT 321 – Machair. Indirect effects on this LCT have not been considered further.

3.12 From LCT 321 - Linear Crofting, the ZTV pattern is more intermittent. This LCT has already been influenced by development, through the township of Mangersta, which sits to the west of the unit in the LVIA study area. Effects on this LCT would also be indirect and from limited areas with visibility. Views of a building which sits low in the landscape; seen in the context of other development around the site (abandoned radar station structures and the water treatment plant); and at over 1km distant, are unlikely to result in significant effects on landscape character.

3.13 As such, the LVIA focuses on identifying effects from the other three LCTs. The key characteristics for each are presented in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1: Landscape Character Types

LCT	Key Characteristics
322 - Boggy Moorland - Outer Hebrides (the 'host' LCT)	■ *"Large scale, gently undulating peat moorlands.* ■ *Relatively few landscape elements.* ■ *Numerous large and small rounded lochs, interconnected by narrow, slow-moving rivers.* ■ *Occasional small, shallow-sided hills.* ■ *Sea cliffs with eroded gullies at the coast.* ■ *Remote upland character.* ■ *Predominantly uninhabited.* ■ *Visible cultural elements dominated by shielings and township boundary dykes.* ■ *Expansive horizontal scale and remoteness."* [2]
323 - Rocky Moorland - Outer Hebrides	■ *"Rocky, stepped landscape with irregular topography.* ■ *Rocky knolls interlocked with peaty moorland vegetation and small lochans.* ■ *Considerable diversity of form and texture.* ■ *Occasional areas of forestry, small woodlands and shelter planting* ■ *Medium scale.* ■ *Predominantly uninhabited and sense of remoteness."* [3]
326 - Prominent Hills and Mountains	■ *"Individual peaks with pronounced summits, long ridges and slopes.* ■ *Rises steadily from surrounding terrain, contrasting in character between the open remote character of the uplands, and the more diverse patterns of settlement of the coastal crofting areas.* ■ *Massive vertical scale.* ■ *Irregular rock buttresses, ledges, shelves and deep gullies on upper slopes.* ■ *Lower slopes of windswept heather moorland.* ■ *Uninhabited."* [4]

[2] LCT 322 - Boggy Moorland - Outer Hebrides - final pdf.pdf (nature.scot)
[3] LCT 323 - Rocky Moorland - Outer Hebrides - final pdf.pdf (nature.scot)
[4] LCT 326 - Prominent Hills and Mountains - final pdf.pdf (nature.scot)

Landscape Designations and Wild Land

3.14 The proposed development is not located within any National Parks, area of Wild Land or locally designated landscapes.

3.15 The proposed development is located within the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA. This national level landscape designation covers the coastal edge and inland areas across the extents of the study area, covering a large area across the southern extent of Lewis, and continuing further north across Harris and northern parts of North Uist.

3.16 The special qualities of the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA set out in the Nature Scot (2010) The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas report, as follows:

- *"A rich variety of exceptional scenery.*
- *A great diversity of seascapes.*
- *Intervisibility.*
- *The close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture.*
- *The indivisible linkage of landscape and history.*
- *The very edge of Europe.*
- *The dominance of the weather.*

South Lewis and Harris

- *The wild, mountainous character.*
- *Deep sea lochs that penetrate the hills.*
- *The narrow gorge of Glen Bhaltos.*
- *The rockscapes of Harris.*
- *Extensive machair and dune systems with expansive beaches.*
- *The drama of Ceapabhal and Tràigh an Taoibh Thuath.*
- *The landmark of Amhuinnsuidhe Castle.*
- *The distinct, well-populated island of Sgalpaigh.*
- *The enclosed glens of Choisleitir, Shranndabhal and Roghadail."*

3.17 The LVIA includes an assessment of the proposed development against these special qualities, and concludes with an overarching statement with regard to potential effects on the overall integrity of the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA.

Visual Baseline

3.18 This section identifies the extent of possible visibility of the proposed development within the study area, and identifies visual receptors that will be assessed.

3.19 This section also introduces the viewpoints that will be used to assess effects on receptors, including reasons for their selection.

Analysis of Visibility

3.20 The ZTV for the proposed development was generated based on a maximum building height of up to 70.1m AOD. The maximum height of the building is approximately 12m at its western extents, however the terrain on which the budling sits varies, and at the eastern extents the building is approximately 2.25m high. The ZTV is illustrated in **Figure 1** and indicates the maximum extent of theoretical visibility of the proposed visitor centre building across the study area.

3.21 The ZTV is based on a bare earth digital terrain model (OS Terrain 5 data) and does not take into account surface features such as trees and buildings when calculating theoretical visibility. That said, the landscape of the study area is very open and undeveloped in nature, so theoretical visibility will closely reflect actual. The ZTV takes also takes no account of variations in visibility arising from weather conditions.

3.22 In the landward part of the study area, theoretical visibility of the proposed development is more intermittent. Undulations in the terrain combined with the low-lying nature of the proposed visitor centre combine to create notable pockets of 'visual shadow' (locations where there will be no views) beyond 500m from the proposed development site. This includes the lower western flank of Mealaisbhal and around the settlement of Islibhig; around the lochans to the north-west of Brinneabhal; the bay to the south of Mangersta; and south of the headland at Aird Feinis and Aird Bhreinis. As the landform rises to the east of the study area, views over the site, and out to sea to the west, become more widely available, as highlighted in the ZTV.

3.23 The height of the coastal cliffs creates areas of visual shadow along the coastal edge. Due to the flat nature of the sea, theoretical visibility extends across the open water to the west, and covering areas used by recreational boats.

Key Visual Receptors

3.24 Key visual receptors have been identified by examining the ZTVs as described above, and by determining the

locations where susceptible receptors may be located, drawing on desk-based and field-based observations. The number and variety of visual receptors is relatively limited due to the location of the proposed development on the western coastline of Lewis. Key receptors with potential visibility of the proposed development are limited to:

- Residents in the township of Mangersta to the north of the study area:
- Recreational and transport receptors on the minor road which links Mangersta to Islibhig;
- Recreational boat users (kayaks, sailing boats, boat tours etc.) travelling around the coastline in the vicinity; and
- Walkers in the Uig Hill to the east, and exercising their right to roam (there are no Core Paths (with theoretical visibility) across the study area).

Selection of Viewpoints for Assessment

3.25 This section sets out the viewpoints selected to represent views of the receptors identified above from publicly accessible areas. They have been used to inform the assessment of visual effects on the potential receptors identified.

3.26 The selection of viewpoints was informed by field work and desk-based research (including a consideration of access and recreation across the local area, points of interest, and the distribution of settlement). These viewpoints are representative of the range of views, viewing experiences and types of viewer which may potentially be affected by the project.

3.27 A total of four representative viewpoints were selected. These viewpoints were agreed through consultation (see **Table 2.1**). Details of the viewpoints are provided in **Table 3.4** and their locations are shown in **Figure 1**.

Table 3.2: Viewpoint Selection

Viewpoint	Grid Reference	Direction of view	Reason for Selection
Viewpoint 1 - Minor road to north-east	100243, 929560	South-west	To represent road users and tourists travelling south towards the site.
Viewpoint 2 - Aired Feinis	099370, 929332	North-east	To represent views as experienced by recreational receptors on the coastal edge, looking north-east towards the site.
Viewpoint 3 - Brinneabhal	102757, 928880	East	To represent recreational receptors in the Uig Hills to the east, from a minor summit within the LVIA study area, looking west over the site and out to sea.
Viewpoint 4 - Mangersta	101059, 931458	South-east	To represent residents in the township of Mangersta, to the north.

Chapter 4
The Proposed Development

4.1 Ionad Hiort are seeking consent for a proposed visitor centre on the south-west coast of the Isle of Lewis, at Mangersta. The site provides an accessible location on the existing road network, with views to St Kilda. The coastline at the site also reflects the rugged character of St Kilda.

4.2 The following sections provide an overview of the proposed development.

Project Description

4.3 The proposed development will consist of:

- The Ionad Hiort visitor centre, containing a variety of exhibition areas, a café, shop and supporting spaces, and an accessible roof terrace;
- Ancillary external store buildings; and
- Visitor and staff car parking and service bay, including provisions for electric vehicles and coaches.

Mitigation

4.4 Due to the open, exposed and harsh nature of the landscape on the western edge of Lewis, which is not conducive for growing trees, all mitigation is embedded in the design of the proposed development.

4.5 Embedded mitigation includes the siting of the proposed development, on an accessible part of the western coastline of Lewis which minimises the level of access infrastructure required. The proposed development is also located in an area which is influenced by exiting built form, through a water treatment plant and an abandoned radar station.

4.6 The form and detailed siting of the proposed building has been designed to sit low in the landscape, and use the local undulations in the topography to further screen and assimilate the building into the landscape and views.

4.7 The palette of materials used is also simple and responds to the local vernacular. The main elevations of the building are made from locally reclaimed stone and newly quarried stone from Luskentyre Quarry. The stonework on the elevations will be articulated to highlight this distinction. The stonework will also draw inspiration from St Kilda, where

buildings on the island display interesting and subtle variations in the size and coursing of stonework over larger expanses of walling.

4.8 The design of the external areas also responds to the form, simplicity and former uses of the landscape. The car parking area is located in an area of concrete pads, associated with accommodation and support buildings for the abandoned radar station. Locating the car parking here limits the amount of landscape disturbance.

4.9 Access roads and tracks link into the existing and abandoned road network as far as possible. New sections follow the undulating grain of the landscape, and are sinuous in nature.

Future Baseline in the Absence of the Proposals

4.10 In the absence of gaining planning consent the coastline in the vicinity of the site is likely to remain in the same state as the existing baseline conditions.

Construction Phase Sources of Effects

4.11 The following activities will give rise to effects during the construction stage of the project:

- Transport and storage of materials, movement of construction machinery and storage thereof.
- Temporary works including construction traffic management at the junction(s) with the minor road.
- The removal and alteration of existing landscape elements (landcover/ field boundaries/ topography) across the site as a result of construction activities.
- Localised and direct changes to the Boggy Moorland – Outer Hebrides LCT and the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA. Also, indirect effects on surrounding and adjacent LCT, as a result of disturbance to the landscape, construction activity and the presence of partially constructed buildings and infrastructure.
- Site restoration after completion of the works.

Operational Phase Sources of Effects

4.12 The following activities will give rise to effects during the operational stage of the project:

- Alteration and removal of landscape elements (land cover/ field boundaries/ topography) across the site as a result of the proposed development. This includes some loss of boggy moorland vegetation and rocky outcrops.
- Localised and direct changes to the Boggy Moorland – Outer Hebrides LCT and the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA. Also, indirect effects on surrounding and adjacent LCT, as a result of the proposed development.
- Additional human activity and parking at the site.
- External lighting (to be kept to a minimum and is anticipated to be limited to low level bollards to illuminate the car parking areas and pedestrian access footpaths) and subdued internal lighting from the new buildings.

Chapter 5
Assessment of Effects

Assessment of Effects Landscape Character

5.1 The components of the landscape which may potentially be affected by a development are known as the landscape receptors. These are identified in Chapter 3 and illustrated on **Figure 1**.

5.2 Judging the significance of effects requires consideration of the nature of the landscape receptor (sensitivity) and the nature of the effect on those receptors (magnitude), as set out in detail in the methodology (**Appendix A**).

Effects on Landscape Character

5.3 Five LCTs occur within the study area, as described in **Chapter 3** and shown on **Figure 1**. Of these, three have been carried forward for detailed assessment, as outlined in **Chapter 3**. The assessment of effects on these LCT is presented in the following tables.

Table 5.2: Effects on LCT 322 – Boggy Moorland – Outer Hebrides

Key Characteristics
There are two units of this LCT in the LVIA study area. The one in which the development is proposed, and a further unit to the west of Islibhig. The key characteristics of this LCT are as follows: ■ *"Large scale, gently undulating peat moorlands.* ■ *Relatively few landscape elements.* ■ *Numerous large and small rounded lochs, interconnected by narrow, slow-moving rivers.* ■ *Occasional small, shallow-sided hills.* ■ *Sea cliffs with eroded gullies at the coast.* ■ *Remote upland character.* ■ *Predominantly uninhabited.* ■ *Visible cultural elements dominated by shielings and township boundary dykes.* ■ *Expansive horizontal scale and remoteness."* [5]
Viewpoints within the LCT
Viewpoint 2: Aird Feinis
Landscape Sensitivity
Susceptibility This is an open, large scale and gently undulating landscape. It has a remote character with few landscape elements. The area around the site is influenced by exiting development, through a water treatment plant and abandoned radar station. The susceptibility of this LCT to changes of the type proposed is judged to be medium-high. **Value** The LCT is located within an NSA, indicating a higher value. **The overall landscape sensitivity is judged to be high.**
Construction Effects
Construction activities will result in direct landscape effects on the site. Changes primarily relate to the removal and alteration of existing landscape elements including boggy moorland vegetation and rocky outcrops; changes to the topography to provide suitable building platforms for building footprints and access arrangements; the introduction of partially constructed infrastructure; transport and storage of materials; additional movement and activity through construction vehicles and plant; and a perceived change from an area of remote boggy moorland, on the coastal edge, to a construction site. In terms of wider effects on landscape character the ZTV (refer to **Figure 1**) indicates a very limited pattern of theoretical visibility, from an area within approximately 500m of the proposed development site at the northern extents of the host LCT; on the eastern facing ground from Aird Feinis; areas of higher ground to the east of the host LCT, and the northing facing slopes of the unit to the west of Islibhig (between 2km to 3km distant). Due to the open nature of the landscape, actual visibility will closely reflect theoretical. When visible, construction activity/ a partially constructed visitor centre will be seen in close proximity to middle distance views. This will influence certain perceptual characteristics of the wider LCT, including the sense of remoteness. However, construction activity will be seen in the context of existing development near the site, and activity associated with the minor road and operational use of the water treatment plant.

[5] LCT 322 - Boggy Moorland - Outer Hebrides - final pdf.pdf (nature.scot)

Magnitude of change

The scale of change will be high at the site and within approximately 500m, reducing to medium within 1km (from eastern facing ground on Aird Feinis) and then reducing with distance. A similar scale of change will be experienced from offshore areas in the vicinity, due to the strong relationship between the coastal edge and the sea.

Operational Effects

Direct landscape effects will relate to the permanent alteration and loss of landscape elements across the site as a result of the proposed development, including some boggy moorland vegetation and some rocky outcrops. There will also be permanent changes to the topography; the introduction of a new visitor centre building, external areas of parking, site and internal access roads; areas of new hard and soft landscaping; and additional human activity.

In terms of wider operational effects on landscape character the proposed development will be visible in close proximity to middle distance views from an area within approximately 500m of the proposed development site at the northern extents of the host LCT; on the eastern facing ground from Aird Feinis; areas of higher ground to the east of the host LCT, and the northing facing slopes of the unit to the west of Islibhig (between 2km to 3km distant). Additional activity through accessing the facility will also be apparent. This will influence certain perceptual characteristics of the wider LCT, including the sense of remoteness. However, the proposed building will be seen in the context of existing development near the site, including larger structures associated with the abandoned radar station. The proposed building has also been designed to sit low in the landscape, as it is cut into the coastal edge terrain, which falls from east to west. The palette of materials used for the visitor centre is also simple and responds to the local vernacular. The main elevations of the building are made from locally reclaimed stone and new locally quarried stone. The use of local stone will help the building marry into wider views, where available, from the LCT and in which the greys, browns and reds of the rocky outcrops and costal cliffs strongly contribute to the colour palette of the landscape and the landscape character.

Magnitude of change

The scale of change will be medium at the site and within approximately 500m, reducing to small beyond this. A similar scale of change will be experienced from offshore areas in the vicinity, due to the strong relationship between the coastal edge and the sea.

Level of Effect

During construction, and combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, a **major (significant)** effect at the site and within approximately 500m, reducing to **moderate (significant)** within 1km (from eastern facing ground on Aird Feinis) is predicted. Beyond this, effects will be no greater than **minor (not significant)**. A similar scale of change will be experienced from offshore areas in the vicinity, due to the strong relationship between the coastal edge and the sea.

During operation, and combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, a **moderate (significant)** effect at the site and within approximately 500m is predicted. Beyond this, effects will be no greater than **minor (not significant)**. A similar scale of change will be experienced from offshore areas in the vicinity, due to the strong relationship between the coastal edge and the sea.

Table 5.3: Effects on LCT 323 – Rocky Moorland - Outer Hebrides

Key Characteristics

There are two units of this LCT in the LVIA study area, a unit to the immediate north of the site and a unit to the north of Mangersta. The key characteristics of this LCT are as follows:

- *"Rocky, stepped landscape with irregular topography.*
- *Rocky knolls interlocked with peaty moorland vegetation and small lochans.*

- *Considerable diversity of form and texture.*
- *Occasional areas of forestry, small woodlands and shelter planting*
- *Medium scale.*
- *Predominantly uninhabited and sense of remoteness."*[6]

Viewpoints within the LCT

Viewpoint 1: Minor road to north-east

Landscape Sensitivity

Susceptibility

This is an open, medium scale landscape with complex terrain and a remote character.

The susceptibility of this LCT to changes of the type proposed is judged to be medium-high.

Value

The LCT is located within an NSA, indicating a higher value.

The overall landscape sensitivity is judged to be high.

Construction Effects

The proposed development is located outside of this LCT, so effects will be indirect.

The ZTV (refer to **Figure 1**) indicates a limited and fragmented pattern of visibility, across both units of this LCT. The terrain is irregular, with local undulations and knolls, and the proposed visitor centre will sit low in the landscape. As such, local undulations in the terrain create notable and widespread areas of visual screening. When visible, construction activity/ a partially constructed visitor centre will be seen in close proximity to middle distance views. This will influence certain perceptual characteristics of the wider LCT, including the sense of remoteness. However, the pattern of visibility is fragmented and limited across the two units of the LCT. Furthermore, construction activity will typically be seen in the context of existing development near the site, and activity associated with the minor road and operational use of the water treatment plant.

Magnitude of change

The scale of change will be high to medium from limited areas of visibility within 1km. This will further reduce with distance. A similar scale of change will be experienced from offshore areas in the vicinity, due to the strong relationship between the coastal edge and the sea.

Operational Effects

The proposed development is located outside of this LCT, so effects will be indirect.

As noted above, the ZTV (refer to **Figure 1**) indicates a limited and fragmented pattern of visibility, across both units of this LCT. Local undulations in the terrain, combined with the siting of the building (which sits low in the landscape) create notable and widespread areas of visual screening. When visible, the proposed development will be seen in close proximity to middle distance views. Additional activity through accessing the facility will also be apparent. This will influence certain perceptual characteristics of the wider LCT, including the sense of remoteness. However, the pattern of visibility is fragmented and limited in nature. Furthermore, the proposed development will typically be seen in the context of existing development near the site, including a larger structure associated with the abandoned radar station. The use of local stone will also help the building marry into wider views.

Magnitude of change

[6] LCT 323 - Rocky Moorland - Outer Hebrides - final pdf.pdf (nature.scot)

The scale of change will be medium within approximately 500m, reducing to small beyond this. A similar scale of change will be experienced from offshore areas in the vicinity, due to the strong relationship between the coastal edge and the sea.
Level of Effect
During construction, and combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, a **major to moderate (significant)** effect from the limited areas with visibility within 1km is predicted. Beyond this, effects will be no greater than **minor (not significant)**. A similar scale of change will be experienced from offshore areas in the vicinity, due to the strong relationship between the coastal edge and the sea. During operation, and combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, a **moderate (significant)** effect within approximately 500m is predicted. Beyond this, effects will be no greater than **minor (not significant)**. A similar scale of change will be experienced from offshore areas in the vicinity, due to the strong relationship between the coastal edge and the sea.

Table 5.4: Effects on LCT 326 – Prominent Hills and Mountains

Key Characteristics
There is one unit of this LCT, located on high ground to the south-east of the LVIA study area. The key characteristics are as follows. ■ *"Individual peaks with pronounced summits, long ridges and slopes.* ■ *Rises steadily from surrounding terrain, contrasting in character between the open remote character of the uplands, and the more diverse patterns of settlement of the coastal crofting areas.* ■ *Massive vertical scale.* ■ *Irregular rock buttresses, ledges, shelves and deep gullies on upper slopes.* ■ *Lower slopes of windswept heather moorland.* ■ *Uninhabited."*[7]
Viewpoints within the LCT
Viewpoint 3: Brinneabhal
Landscape Sensitivity
Susceptibility This is an uninhabited upland landscape, which is of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed. **Value** The LCT is located within an NSA, indicating a higher value. **The overall landscape sensitivity is judged to be high.**
Construction Effects
The proposed development is located outside of this LCT, so effects will be indirect. The ZTV (refer to **Figure 1**) indicates widespread visibility across this LCT in the LVIA study area, from the site facing hill flanks, between 2km to 3km approximately. Due to the open nature of the landscape, theoretical visibility will closely reflect actual. When visible, construction activity/ a partially constructed visitor centre will be seen in middle distance and elevated views. This will influence certain perceptual characteristics of the LCT, including the uninhabited character and sense of

[7] LCT 326 - Prominent Hills and Mountains - final pdf.pdf (nature.scot)

remoteness. Construction activity will be seen in large scale views, where the focus is likely to remain looking over activity at the site towards the sea. Furthermore, construction activity will be seen in the context of existing development near the site, and activity associated with the minor road and operational use of the water treatment plant.

Magnitude of change

Due to viewing distance; the large scale nature of views; and influence of exiting development near the site, the scale of change is judged will be small.

Operational Effects

The proposed development is located outside of this LCT, so effects will be indirect.

The ZTV (refer to **Figure 1**) indicates widespread visibility across this LCT in the LVIA study area, from the site facing hill flanks, between 2km to 3km approximately. Due to the open nature of the landscape, theoretical visibility will closely reflect actual. When visible, the proposed development will be seen in middle distance and elevated views. This will include activity associated with accessing the facility. This will influence certain perceptual characteristics of the LCT, including the uninhabited character and sense of remoteness. However, the proposed development will be seen in large scale views, where the focus is likely to remain looking over the proposed development (which sits low in the landscape) towards the sea. Furthermore, the proposed development will be seen in the context of existing development near the site, and activity associated with the minor road and operational use of the water treatment plant.

Magnitude of change

Due to viewing distance; the large scale nature of views; and influence of exiting development near the site, the scale of change is judged will be small.

Level of Effect

Minor (not significant)

Assessment of Effects on Views

5.4 This section sets out the assessment of the predicted visual effects that will occur as a result of the proposed development. The relevant visual receptors are identified in **Chapter 3**.

5.5 Judging the significance of visual effects requires consideration of the nature of the visual receptors (sensitivity) and the nature of the effect on those receptors (magnitude).

Viewpoint Assessment

5.6 To help inform the assessment, a viewpoint assessment was undertaken, focusing on sensitive receptors at four representative locations with theoretical visibility of the proposed development. These viewpoints have been agreed with consultees. The viewpoint assessment is set out in the table below.

Table 5.5: Viewpoint Assessments

Viewpoint 1 – Minor road to northeast			
Grid Reference	**Figure**	**Direction of Views**	**Approximate Distance to Proposed Development**
100243, 929560	Figure 2	South-west	200m
Description of Baseline Views			
This viewpoint is located on the minor road between Mangersta, to the north, and the site. It is representative of road users travelling south at the point where closer range views of the site open up. The view looks south-west, along the minor road and with undulating moorland/ rocky outcrops to either side of the road. The terrain falls in elevation from west to east, towards the coast and the sea cliffs. The undulating terrain rises towards the close proximity horizon, in views to the south-west. Structures associated with the water treatment plant, abandoned radar station and wood pole telegraph lines are visible on close proximity the horizon. Longer distance views to the east look out to sea. To the west the more dramatic profile of Mealaisbhal, and the surrounding hills, contain middle distance views.			
Sensitivity			
Susceptibility Recreational receptors and road users are considered to be of medium susceptibility. **Value** The viewpoint is in an NSA, indicating a higher value. **The overall visual sensitivity is judged to be medium-high.**			
Construction effect			
During construction, construction activity (including earthworks) and construction plant will be apparent in close proximity views (within 500m). Construction activity will be seen on the horizon, above the gently rising terrain to the east of the sea cliffs, and in the context of large scale coastal views. Disturbance to the open boggy moorland/ rocky outcrops; construction security fencing and compounds; a partially constructed building and access arrangements; and construction activity will be apparent. Lighting associated with construction activity will also be apparent during hours of darkness. Close proximity views of construction activity and disturbance of this nature will result in a medium scale of change. The intervening undulating landform will partially screen some views of lower lying construction activity and earthworks. The geographical extent will be small, as this represents quite a localised views from a short section of the road on the southern approach to the site. Effects will be short-term and partially reversible. **The overall magnitude of effect is judged to be medium.**			

Viewpoint 1 – Minor road to northeast
Operational effect
During operation, the new visitor centre will be apparent in close proximity views (within 500m), seen above the gently undulating close proximity horizon. It will be seen in the context of large scale coastal views, on the gently rising terrain to the east of the sea cliffs. Access activity associated with car parking will also be apparent, seen in the foreground and in front of the water treatment plant/ abandoned radar station on slightly higher ground to the east of the proposed visitor centre. The new visitor centre will be seen in the context of other built form near the site, including abandoned structures associated with the radar station, the water treatment plant and a wood pole telegraph line. The proposed building has been designed to sit low in the landscape, as it is cut into the coastal edge terrain behind the sea cliffs. The undulating landform between the viewpoint and the proposed building helps to screen parts of the northern façade of the building. The palette of materials used for the visitor centre is also simple and responds to the local vernacular. The main elevations of the building are made from locally reclaimed stone and new locally quarried stone. The use of local stone will help the building marry into the view, in which the greys, browns and reds of the rocky outcrops and costal cliffs strongly contribute to the colour palette of the view. During the hours of darkness subdued lighting from the visitor centre, including pavilion structures of the roof, will be apparent. Once operational, the scale of change will be medium-small as the building sits low in the landscape; the close proximity horizon has been influenced by built form; coastal edge views are large scale; and the materials used respond to the colours of the landscape. The geographical extent is judged to be small. Effects will be long-term and permanent. **The overall magnitude of effect is judged to be medium-small.**
Level of effect
During construction, and combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, a **moderate (significant)** effect is predicted. During operation, and combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, a **minor (not significant)** effect is predicted.

Viewpoint 2 – Aird Feinis			
Grid Reference	**Figure**	**Direction of Views**	**Approximate Distance to Proposed Development**
099370, 929332	Figure 3	North-east	700m
Description of Baseline Views			
This viewpoint is located on the coastal headland at Aird Feinis, to the south-west of the site. It is representative of recreational receptors exercising their right to roam, along the coastal edge. Walkers typically park at a passing bay on the minor road and then walk out to the headland. There is a small style crossing the fence on approach to the viewpoint. To view looks north-west, over the waters of the coastal edge and towards the rugged sea cliffs and sea stacks between Aird Feinie and Rubha an Taroin. The sea cliffs vary in height, up to approximately 50m high. Behind the coastal cliffs undulating moorland with rocky outcrops gently rises to the east towards the more dramatically rising slopes of Mealaisbhal, and the surrounding hills. Structures associated with the water treatment plant and abandoned radar station are apparent, with some parts seen on lower sections of the horizon to the north-east. The stone clad nature of these structures helps them to recede into the view, matching the colours of the rocky outcrops and sea cliffs. Wood pole telegraph lines and post and wire field boundaries add further human influences into the view. Traffic moving along the minor road will also be apparent. However, the view is very exposed, rugged and otherwise quite remote in character.			

Viewpoint 2 – Aird Feinis
Sensitivity
Susceptibility Recreational receptors at the costal edge are considered to be of medium-high susceptibility. **Value** The viewpoint is in an NSA, indicating a higher value. **The overall visual sensitivity is judged to be high.**
Construction effect
During construction, construction activity (including earthworks) and construction plant will be apparent in close proximity views (within 1km). Construction activity will be seen in the context of large scale coastal views, on the gently rising terrain behind the sea cliffs. Disturbance to the open boggy moorland/ rocky outcrops above the sea cliffs; construction security fencing and compounds; a partially constructed building and access arrangements; and construction activity will be apparent. Taller construction components are likely to be visible above lower lying sections of the horizon, in views to the north-east. Lighting associated with construction activity will also be apparent during hours of darkness. Due to the proximity of the viewpoint; views of construction based disturbance; and currently limited nature of human activity in the view, the scale of change will be medium. The geographical extent will be small, as this represents quite a localised view from the headland at Aird Feinis, from north-eastern facing slopes. Effects will be short-term and partially reversible. **The overall magnitude of effect is judged to be medium.**
Operational effect
During operation, the new visitor centre will be apparent in close proximity (within 1km), in the context of large scale coastal views, and seen on the gently rising terrain behind the sea cliffs. From this location the building will be contained below the longer distance horizon. The area of car parking sits behind the building on slightly higher ground in views from this location. Access arrangements and activity associated with accessing the building, on its southern façade, will also be apparent. The new visitor centre will be seen in the context of other built form near the site, including abandoned structures associated with the radar station, the water treatment plant and a wood pole telegraph line. The proposed building has been designed to sit low in the landscape, as it is cut into the coastal edge terrain behind the sea cliffs. The palette of materials used for the visitor centre is also simple and responds to the local vernacular. The main elevations of the building are made from locally reclaimed stone and new locally quarried stone. The use of local stone will help the building marry into the view, in which the greys, browns and reds of the rocky outcrops and costal cliffs strongly contribute to the colour palette of the view. During the hours of darkness subdued lighting from the visitor centre, including the larger viewing window on the western façade, will be apparent. Once operational, the scale of change will be medium-small as the building sits low in the landscape; coastal edge views are large scale; the building represents a smaller feature in the overall view; and the materials used respond to the colours of the landscape. The geographical extent is judged to be small. Effects will be long-term and permanent. **The overall magnitude of effect is judged to be medium-small.**
Level of effect
During construction, and combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, a **moderate (significant)** effect is predicted. During operation, and combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, a **minor (not significant)** effect is predicted.

Viewpoint 3 – Brinneabhal			
Grid Reference	**Figure**	**Direction of Views**	**Approximate Distance to Proposed Development**
102757, 928880	Figure 4	West	2.8km

Description of Baseline Views

This viewpoint is located on the minor summit of Brinneabhal, to the east of the site. It is representative of recreational receptors, exercising their right to roam, with elevated views from the hills to the east of the study area. There is a core path through the glen to the east of the hills. As such, this summit is more likely to be accessed from the east, with views opening up towards the site (to the west) from the summit area.

From this elevated vantage point, and in views to the west, the terrain steeply falls away from the viewpoint. Lochs and lochans set in undulating moorland with rocky outcrops characterise the lower ground between the hills and the coastal edge. Through this landscape the winding minor road between Mangersta and Islibhig it just apparent, when traffic is moving along it. Structures associated with the water treatment plant and abandoned radar station near the site are also just apparent. In coastal views further north-west and south-west, the rugged and varied nature of the coastal edge is legible, with bays, coves and sea stacks contributing to its distinctive character. Long distance views over the Atlantic to the west also strongly influence the remote character and large scale nature of this view.

Sensitivity

Susceptibility

Recreational receptors at this minor summit are considered to be of medium-high susceptibility.

Value

The viewpoint is in an NSA, indicating a higher value.

The overall visual sensitivity is judged to be high.

Construction effect

During construction, construction activity (including earthworks) and construction plant will be apparent in middle distance (beyond 2.5km) and large scale views, seen on the gently rising terrain in front of the coastal edge. Disturbance to a very localised area of open boggy moorland/ rocky outcrops; construction security fencing and compounds; a partially constructed building and access arrangements; and construction activity will be apparent. Construction activity will all be contained below the long distance horizon form by the sea. Lighting associated with construction activity will also be apparent during hours of darkness.

Construction activity will be very localised in this large scale view, and the scale of change will be small. The geographical extent will be small, as this represents quite a localised view from the summit area of this minor hill, which is typically accessed from the glen to the east. Effects will be short-term and partially reversible. **The overall magnitude of effect is judged to be small.**

Operational effect

During operation, the new visitor centre will be apparent in middle distance and large scale views, seen on the gently rising terrain in front of the coastal edge. The proposed visitor centre will sit behind the water treatment plant/ abandoned structures associated with the radar station, in views from this direction. Certain parts of the building roofline, and pavilion structures on the roof, will be visible above the coastal edge but contained below the long distance horizon formed by the sea. Activity associated with car parking, which is located to the north of the abandoned radar station/ water treatment plant, will also be just apparent. However, all these features will represent a very small element in the overall view. They will also be seen in a part of the view which has been locally influenced by built form, through the water treatment plant and abandoned radar

Viewpoint 3 – Brinneabhal
station. During the hours of darkness subdued lighting from the visitor centre, including windows and doors in the roof pavilions, will be apparent. Once operational, the scale of change will be small. The geographical extent is judged to be small. Effects will be long-term and permanent. **The overall magnitude of effect is judged to be small.**
Level of effect
During construction and operation, and combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, a **minor (not significant)** effect is predicted.

Viewpoint 4 - Mangersta			
Grid Reference	**Figure**	**Direction of Views**	**Approximate Distance to Proposed Development**
101059, 931458	Figure 5	South-east	2.4km
Description of Baseline Views			
This viewpoint is located in the small township of Mangersta, to the north of the site. It is representative of residential receptors in the settlement, with more open views south along the coastal edge. The view looks south-east, over rough grazing, rocky outcrops, stone walls, post and wire fences and dispersed housing and abandoned structures which characterise the settlement edge. Further south the landcover is characterised by undulating moorland/ rocky outcrops above the rugged coastal edge. Structures associated with the water treatment plant, abandoned radar station and wood pole telegraph lines are just apparent on the lower lying middle distance horizon. Longer distance views to the east look out to sea. To the west the more dramatic profile of Mealaisbhal, and the surrounding hills, contain middle to longer distance views.			
Sensitivity			
Susceptibility Residential receptors are considered to be of high susceptibility. **Value** The viewpoint is in an NSA, indicating a higher value. **The overall visual sensitivity is judged to be high.**			
Construction effect			
During construction, construction activity (including earthworks) and construction plant will be apparent in middle distance (beyond 2km) and large scale views, seen above the gently rising terrain to the east of the coastal edge. Disturbance to a very localised area of open boggy moorland/ rocky outcrops; construction security fencing and compounds; a partially constructed building and access arrangements; and construction activity will be apparent. Lighting associated with construction activity will also be apparent during hours of darkness. Construction activity will be localised in this large scale view, and the scale of change will be small. The geographical extent will be medium-small, as this represents a reasonably localised view for certain residents in the township, with more open			

Viewpoint 4 - Mangersta
views to the south. Effects will be short-term and partially reversible. **The overall magnitude of effect is judged to be small.**
Operational effect
During operation, the new visitor centre will be apparent in middle distance and large scale views, seen partially above the horizon on the gently rising terrain to the east of the coastal edge. The proposed visitor centre will be seen on middle distance horizons which have been locally altered by built form, including the water treatment plant/ abandoned structures associated with the radar station to the east of the site. The proposed building has been designed to sit low in the landscape, as it is cut into the coastal edge terrain behind the sea cliffs. The palette of materials used for the visitor centre is also simple and responds to the local vernacular. The main elevations of the building are made from locally reclaimed stone and new locally quarried stone. The use of local stone will help the building marry into the view, in which the greys, browns and reds of the rocky outcrops and costal cliffs strongly contribute to the colour palette of the view. Activity associated with car parking, which is located to the north of the abandoned radar station/ water treatment plant, will also be just apparent. However, all these features will represent a very small element in the overall view. They will also be seen in a part of the view which has been locally influenced by built form, through the water treatment plant and abandoned radar station. During the hours of darkness subdued lighting from the visitor centre, including windows on the northern façade of the building and pavilion structure on the roof, will be apparent. Once operational, the scale of change will be small. The geographical extent is judged to be small. Effects will be long-term and permanent. **The overall magnitude of effect is judged to be small.**
Level of effect
During construction and operation, and combining judgements on sensitivity and magnitude, a **minor (not significant)** effect is predicted.

Assessment of Effects on Designated Landscapes

5.7 The proposed development is located in the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA. The following section provides a detailed assessment of the effects of the proposed development on the special qualities of the NSA, as set out in the Nature Scot (2010) 'The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas' report, and as follows:

- *"A rich variety of exceptional scenery.*
- *A great diversity of seascapes.*
- *Intervisibility.*
- *The close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture.*
- *The indivisible linkage of landscape and history.*
- *The very edge of Europe.*
- *The dominance of the weather.*

South Lewis and Harris

- *The wild, mountainous character.*
- *Deep sea lochs that penetrate the hills.*
- *The narrow gorge of Glen Bhaltos.*
- *The rockscapes of Harris.*
- *Extensive machair and dune systems with expansive beaches.*
- *The drama of Ceapabhal and Tràigh an Taoibh Thuath.*
- *The landmark of Amhuinnsuidhe Castle.*

- *The distinct, well-populated island of Sgalpaigh.*
- *The enclosed glens of Choisleitir, Shranndabhal and Roghadail."*

5.8 The NSA is a large scale designation, which covers the full extents of the onshore and offshore landscapes/ seascapes of the LVIA study area. The NSA extents a considerable distance beyond the LVIA study area to the north, east and south.

5.9 There will be some very localised and direct effects on the NSA, relating to the permanent alteration and loss of landscape elements across the site. This will include some localised loss of boggy moorland vegetation and rocky outcrops. There will also be permanent changes to the topography; the introduction of a new visitor centre building, external areas of parking and access roads; areas of new hard and soft landscaping; and additional human activity. The design of the external areas responds to the form, simplicity and former uses of the landscape in this part of the NSA. The existing and abandoned road network is used for access as far as possible. The car parking area is located in an area of concrete pads, associated with former accommodation and support buildings for the abandoned radar station. Locating the car parking here locally limits the amount of landscape disturbance in this part of the NSA.

5.10 In terms of wider effects on the NSA, the ZTV (refer to **Figure 1**) highlights that from landward parts of the study area theoretical visibility of the proposed development is somewhat intermittent. Undulations in the terrain combined with the low lying nature of the proposed visitor centre combine to create notable pockets of visual shadow beyond 500m from the proposed development site and including the lower western flank of Mealaisbhal and around the settlement of Islibhig; around the lochans to the north-west of Brinneabhal; the bay to the south of Mangersta; and south of the headland at Aird Feinis and Aird Bhreinis. As the landform rises to the east of the study area views over the proposed development, and out to sea to the west, become more widely available. These views are large scale and long distance in nature, and due to the increased viewing distance the proposed development will form a small feature in the overall view.

5.11 In terms of offshore visibility across the NSA, the height of the coastal cliffs creates areas of visual shadow along the coastal edge. Due to the flat nature of the sea, theoretical visibility extends across the open water to the west, and covering areas used by recreational boats.

5.12 From areas with visibility, the proposed development will be visible in close proximity to middle/ longer distance views. Additional activity through accessing the facility will also be apparent. This will influence certain perceptual characteristics of the NSA, including:

- *A rich variety of exceptional scenery.*
- *A great diversity of seascapes.*
- *The close interplay of the natural world, settlement and culture.*
- *The indivisible linkage of landscape and history.*
- *The very edge of Europe.*
- *The wild, mountainous character.*

5.13 However, and when visible from very localised areas of the NSA, the proposed building will be seen in an area of the NSA which has been locally influenced by existing development, due to the water treatment works and the abandoned radar station. The proposed building has also been designed to sit low in the landscape, as it is cut into the coastal edge terrain. Changes to the character of exposed seascapes and long views to St Kilda will be limited.

5.14 The palette of materials used for the visitor centre is also simple and responds to the local vernacular. The main elevations of the building are made from locally reclaimed stone and new locally quarried stone. The use of local stone will help the building marry into wider views, where available, and in which the greys, browns and reds of the rocky outcrops and costal cliffs contribute to the landscape character of this part of the NSA.

5.15 In summary, whilst significant landscape and visual effects are predicted from a very localised area around the proposed development, and within the NSA, this is not judged to compromise the overall integrity of the NSA. Effects will be very localised to an area which has been influenced by existing development. Once constructed, the proposed visitor centre will sensitively respond to the local vernacular. External access arrangements will also make use of the existing and abandoned road network, helping to minimise disturbance. It will also be possible to continue to experience the unaltered special qualities of the NSA from across much of this large scale designated area.

Chapter 6
Residual Effects and Conclusions

6.1 The LVIA has assessed the potential effects on landscape and visual receptors of the proposed development, taking into account embedded mitigation. There are no additional mitigation measures associated with the proposed development. The exposed western coastline of Lewis is not an appropriate location for tree planting. As such, operational effects as identified in this assessment are residual.

Summary of Effects

Effects on Landscape Character

6.2 During construction, a localised **major (significant)** effect at the site and within approximately 500m, reducing to **moderate (significant)** within 1km is predicted across the host LCT (322 Boggy Moorland – Outer Hebrides) and the adjacent LCT (Rocky Moorland – Outer Hebrides) from limited areas with visibility.

6.3 During operation, a localised **moderate (significant)** effect at the site and within approximately 500m is predicted.

6.4 These effects will be limited to a small area of the host and adjacent LCT, in an area which has been influenced by existing development through the water treatment plant and abandoned radar station.

6.5 A similar scale of change will be experienced from offshore areas in the vicinity (up to 1km for construction stage effect), due to the strong relationship between the coastal edge and the sea.

6.6 Beyond this landscape (and seascape) effects will be no greater than **minor (not significant)**.

Effects on Views

6.7 In the landward part of the study area theoretical visibility of the proposed development is somewhat intermittent. Undulations in the terrain combined with the low lying nature of the proposed visitor centre combine to create notable pockets of visual shadow beyond 500m from the proposed development site. These include the lower western flank of Mealaisbhal and around the settlement of Islibhig; around the lochans to the north-west of Brinneabhal; the bay to the south of Mangersta; and south of the headland at Aird Feinis and

Aird Bhreinis. As the landform rises to the east of the study area views over the site, and out to sea to the west, become more widely available, as highlighted in the ZTV.

6.8 The height of the coastal cliffs creates areas of visual shadow along the coastal edge. Due to the flat nature of the sea, theoretical visibility extends across the open water to the west, and covering areas used by recreational boats.

6.9 Significant visual effects **(moderate)**, during construction, are predicted from:

- Viewpoint 1 – Minor road to north-east; and
- Viewpoint 2 – Aired Feinis (construction stage only).

6.10 Both of these viewpoints are located within 1km of the proposed development represent close proximity views where effects associated with construction activity/ disturbance, although short term, will result in significant effects.

6.11 Once operational, effects from all assessment viewpoints are not judged to be not significant. The new visitor centre will typically be seen in the context of other built form near the site, including abandoned structures associated with the radar station, the water treatment plant and a wood pole telegraph line. The proposed building has been designed to sit low in the landscape, as it is cut into the coastal edge terrain behind the sea cliffs. The palette of materials used for the visitor centre is also simple and responds to the local vernacular. The main elevations of the building are made from locally reclaimed stone and new locally quarried stone. The use of local stone will help the building marry into the view, in which the greys, browns and reds of the rocky outcrops and costal cliffs strongly contribute to the colour palette of the view.

Effects on the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA

6.12 There will be some very localised and direct effects on the NSA, relating to the permanent alteration and loss of landscape elements across the site. This will include some localised loss of boggy moorland vegetation and rocky outcrops. There will also be permanent changes to the topography; the introduction of a new visitor centre building, external areas of parking and access roads; areas of new hard and soft landscaping; and additional human activity. The design of the external areas responds to the form, simplicity and former uses of the landscape in this part of the NSA. The existing and abandoned road network is used for access as far as possible. The car parking area is located in an area of concrete pads, associated with former accommodation and support buildings for the abandoned radar station. Locating the car parking here limits the amount of landscape disturbance in this part of the NSA.

6.13 In terms of wider effects on the NSA, the ZTV (refer to **Figure 1**) highlights the intermittent nature of visibility. Undulations in the terrain combined with the low lying nature of the proposed visitor centre combine to create notable pockets of visual shadow beyond 500m from the proposed development site. When visible, from very localised areas of the NSA, the proposed building will be seen in an area of the NSA which has been influenced by existing development, due to the water treatment works and the abandoned radar station. The proposed building has also been designed to sit low in the landscape, as it is cut into the coastal edge terrain. The palette of materials used for the visitor centre is also simple and responds to the local vernacular. The main elevations of the building are made from locally reclaimed stone and new locally quarried stone. The use of local stone will help the building marry into wider views, where available, and in which the greys, browns and reds of the rocky outcrops and costal cliffs contribute to the landscape character of this part of the NSA.

6.14 In summary, whilst significant landscape and visual effects are predicted from a very localised area around the proposed development, and within the NSA, this is not judged to compromise the overall integrity of the NSA.

Conclusion

6.15 In summary, landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed development are very localised in nature. Localised effects on the landscape and views will not extend to effects which affect the overall integrity of the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA.

6.16 The direction of effect (positive, negative or neutral) is determined in relation to the degree to which the proposal fits with landscape character and the contribution to the landscape or visual amenity that the development makes. For the purposes of this assessment, and taking a precautionary approach, any development in the context of this scenic and nationally protected landscape has the potential for adverse effects. However, it is recognised that many people are likely to view a sensitively designed visitor centre as a positive addition to the landscape and views.

Appendix A

LVIA and ZTV Production Methodology

Guidance

A.1 This methodology has been developed by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) at LUC, who have extensive experience in the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

A.2 The methodology has been developed primarily in accordance with the principles contained within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)[8].

Method for Assessing Landscape Effects

A.3 Judging the significance of landscape (which includes coastal landscape) effects requires consideration of the nature of the landscape receptors (sensitivity) and the nature of the effect on those receptors (magnitude).

Nature of Receptors (Sensitivity)

A.4 GLVIA3 states that the nature of landscape receptors, commonly referred to as their sensitivity, should be assessed in terms of the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change proposed and the value attached to the resource. The sensitivity of a landscape receptor to change is defined as **high**, **medium** or **low**, and is based on weighing up professional judgements regarding susceptibility and value.

Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors

A.5 Susceptibility means "*the ability of the landscape receptor […] to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies*" (GLVIA3 para 5.40).

A.6 Judgements on susceptibility of receptors (which may include individual features or areas) are recorded as **high**, **medium** or **low** according to **Table A.1**.

Table A.1: Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors

Susceptibility	Definition
High	The landscape receptor is less able to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape offer limited opportunities for accommodating the change without key characteristics being fundamentally altered, leading to a different landscape character.
Medium	The landscape receptor is partly able to accommodate the development without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape offer some opportunities for accommodating the change without key characteristics being fundamentally altered.
Low	The landscape receptor is more able to accommodate the development without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape are resilient to being changed by the type of development proposed.

Value of the Landscape Resource

A.7 The European Landscape Convention advocates that all landscape is of value, whether it is the subject of defined landscape designation or not: "*The landscape is important as a component of the environment and of people's surroundings in both town and country and whether it is ordinary landscape or outstanding landscape."*[9] The value of the landscape resource is recognised as being a key contributing factor to the sensitivity of landscape receptors.

A.8 Value of the landscape resource is determined with reference to:

[8] The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition

[9] Council of Europe, (2000). The European Landscape Convention – Council of Europe Treaty Series No. 176.

- a review of designations, and the level of policy importance that they signify (such as landscapes designated at international, national or local level); and
- application of criteria that indicate value (such as landscape quality, scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interests, recreation value, perceptual aspects, associations e.g. with artists or writers).

A.9 National-level landscape designations, such as National Scenic Areas, generally indicate landscape of higher value. There is, however, variation across both designated and undesignated areas, and so judgements regarding value are also informed by fieldwork and by the defined special qualities of the designated area.

A.10 Judgements on value are recorded as of **high**, **medium** and **local** value according to **Table A.2**.

Table A.2: Definitions of Landscape Value

Value	Definition
High	Areas or features designated at a national level e.g. National Scenic Areas, and which contribute to the defined special qualities of the area. Landscapes with high scenic/ recreational value, and/or high conservation interest. Landscapes that are rare or unique.
Medium	Areas or features designated at a local level e.g. local authority designated landscapes, or areas/features within national designations that do not contribute to their special qualities. Landscapes with some scenic/ recreational value, or cultural associations, or features which are rare at a local level.
Local	Areas or features that are not formally designated but may be valued at a local level. Landscapes which may have limited aesthetic qualities, or are of a character that is widespread.

A.11 It should be noted that whilst landscape designations at an international or national level are likely to be accorded the highest value, it does not necessarily follow that such landscapes all have a high susceptibility to change. There may be a complex relationship between the value attached to a landscape and its susceptibility to change. Therefore, the rationale for judgements on the sensitivity of the landscape is clearly set out for each receptor based on these components.

Nature of Effect (Magnitude)

A.12 The nature of the effect on each landscape receptor (magnitude) is reported in terms of its scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility. Judgements on magnitude are recorded as **high**, **medium** or **low**, and are based on weighing up professional judgements regarding these components, as set out below.

Scale

A.13 For landscape character areas, the scale of change depends on the degree to which the character of the landscape is changed through removal of existing landscape components or addition of new ones. Of particular concern is how the changes affect the key characteristics of the landscape.

A.14 In this assessment scale is described as being **large, medium, small or imperceptible**, with reference to the definitions set out in **Table A.3.**

Table A.3: Scale of Landscape Change

Scale	Definition
Large	Extensive loss or modification of landscape elements or addition of new elements and features which alter the key characteristics and perceptual character of the landscape to a large extent.
Medium	Loss of landscape elements and features or addition of new ones which result in discernible and distinct changes to landscape characteristics and character.

Scale	Definition
Small	A perceptible but small change to landscape characteristics and character as a result of the loss of landscape elements and features or addition of new ones.
Imperceptible	A change to landscape character or characteristics that is barely detectable.

Geographical Extent

4.1.1 The geographical extent over which the landscape effect would arise is described as being **large** (scale of the LCT, or widespread, affecting several landscape types or character areas), **medium** (more immediate surroundings) or **small** (site level). Geographical extent is always referenced to actual areas over which an effect would occur.

Duration

4.1.2 GLVIA3 states that *"Duration can usually be simply judged on a scale such as **short term, medium term or long term**"* (GLVIA3, Page 91). For the purposes of this assessment, duration is determined in relation to the phases of the proposed development, as follows:

- **Short-term** effects are those that occur during construction;
- **Medium-term** effects are those that occur during part of the operational phase; and
- **Long-term** effects are those which occur throughout the operational phase.

Reversibility

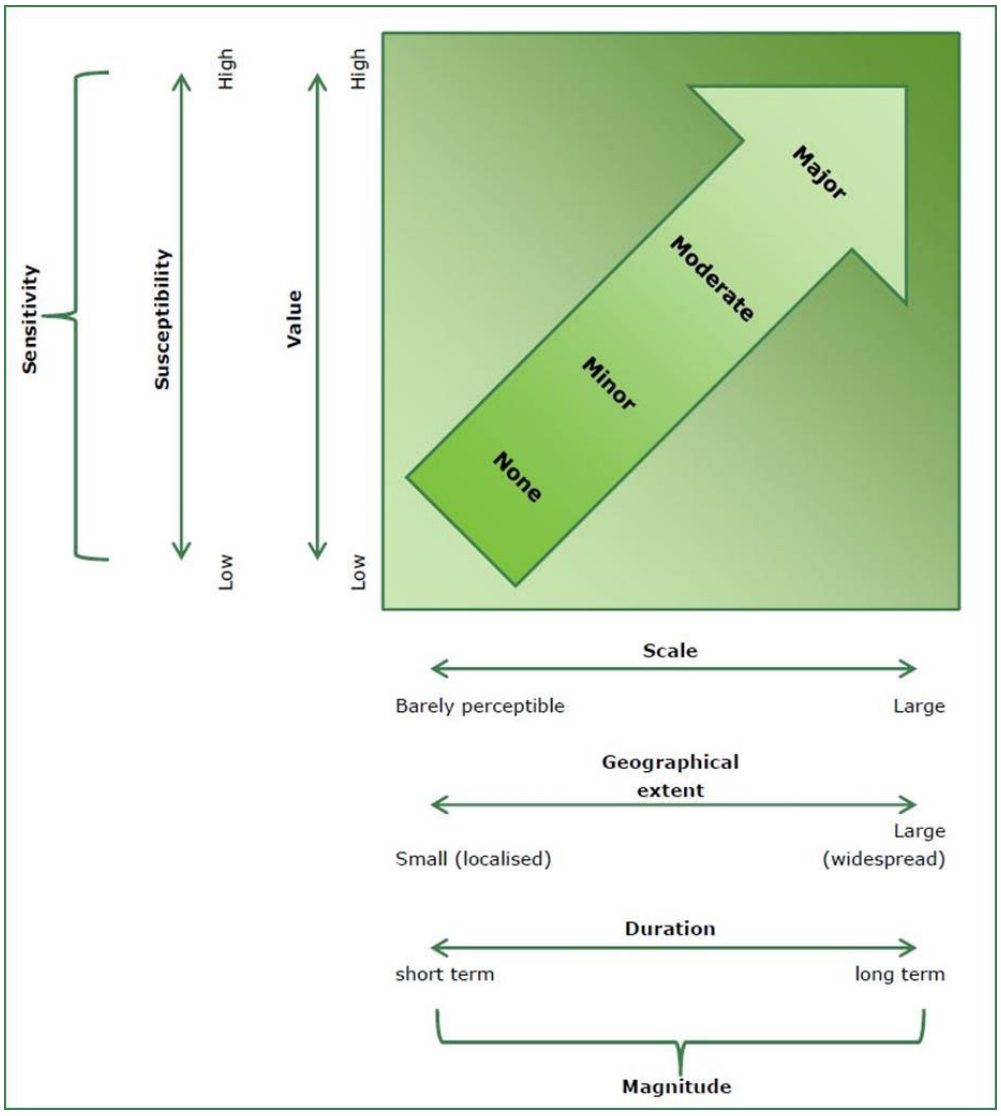
4.1.3 In accordance with the principles contained within GLVIA3, reversibility is reported as **reversible**, **partially reversible** or **irreversible** (i.e. permanent), and is related to whether the change can be reversed at the end of the phase of development under consideration (i.e. at the end of construction or at the end of the operational lifespan of the development). Operational landscape effects are generally considered to irreversible, as there is no defined operational period for the proposed development.

Judging the Levels of Effect

A.15 The final step in the assessment requires the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of effect to be combined to make an informed professional assessment on the significance of each landscape effect (GLVIA3, Figure 5.1, Page 71).

A.16 Levels of effect are identified as **negligible, minor, moderate or major. Diagram A.1** indicates how these various components are combined to inform the overall level of effect.

Diagram A.1 Judging Levels of Effect



A.17 The levels of effect used in this LVIA are defined in **Table A.4.**

Table A.4: Levels of Landscape Effect

Level	Effect Description
Major	The development will result in an obvious and widespread change in landscape character, such as permanent loss of key characteristics, likely affecting a highly-valued landscape with a high susceptibility to that type of change.
Moderate	The development will result in a noticeable change in landscape character, such as a large-scale but temporary change in landscape features, likely affecting a landscape with a medium susceptibility to that type of change. This level of effect may also occur when a smaller scale of change acts on a more highly valued landscape.
Minor	The development will result in a small change in landscape character, such as a localised effect occurring over a long duration, or a larger-scale effect on an area of lower susceptibility and/or value.
Negligible	The development will not result in a noticeable change in landscape characteristics.

Direction of Effects

A.18 The direction of effect (positive, negative or neutral) is determined in relation to the degree to which the proposal fits with landscape character and the contribution to the landscape that the development makes.

6.17 For the purposes of this assessment, and taking a precautionary approach, any development in the context of this scenic and nationally protected landscape has the potential for adverse effects. However, it is recognised that many people are likely to view a sensitively designed visitor centre as a positive addition to the landscape and views.

Method for Assessing Visual Effects

A.19 Visual effects are experienced by people at different locations around the study area. Visual receptors are the people who will be affected by changes in views at different places, and they are usually grouped by what they are doing at that place (residents, recreational users, etc.).

A.20 Judging the significance of visual effects requires consideration of the nature of the visual receptors (sensitivity) and the nature of the effect on those receptors (magnitude).

Nature of Receptors (Sensitivity)

A.21 GLVIA3 states that the nature of visual receptors, commonly referred to as their sensitivity, should be assessed in terms of the susceptibility of the receptor to changes in the views they experience, and the value attached to those views. The sensitivity of a visual receptor to change is defined as **high**, **medium** or **low**, and is based on weighing up professional judgements regarding susceptibility and value.

Susceptibility of Visual Receptors

A.22 The susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views/visual amenity is a function of their occupation or activity, and the extent to which their attention is focussed on views (GLVIA3, para 6.32). This is recorded as **high**, **medium** or **low** according to **Table A.5.**

Table A.5: Susceptibility of Visual Receptors

Susceptibility	Receptor Group
High	Viewers whose attention or interest is focussed on their surroundings, including: ■ Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents.

Susceptibility	Receptor Group
	■ Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions/ landscape features where views of surrounding are a very important contributor to experience (such as promoted viewpoints and very popular hill summits).
Medium	■ People engaged in outdoor recreation (for example users of rights of way whose interest is likely to be focused on the landscape). ■ People travelling on scenic routes and tourist routes, where attention is focused on the surrounding landscape.
Low	■ People travelling more rapidly on major road, rail or transport routes (not recognised as scenic routes). ■ People travelling on local road routes, where attention may be focused on the surrounding landscape, but is transitory. ■ People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape. ■ People at their place of work whose attention is not on their surroundings (and where setting is not important to the quality of working life).

Value of the View

A.23 Recognition of the value of a view is determined with reference to:

- recognised importance in relation to heritage assets or planning designations;
- the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guide books or on tourist maps, or provision of facilities such as interpretation boards; and/or
- references to the view in literature and art.

A.24 Judgements on value of views are recorded as of **high**, **medium** and **low** value according to **Table A.6.**

Table A.6: Definitions of Value Attached to Views

Value	Definition
High	Views associated with nationally designated landscapes (perhaps identified in special qualities), or a view promoted as particularly scenic and which may be regularly used in guide books for that part of the country.
Medium	Views associated with locally designated landscapes, or which are locally promoted perhaps through the provision of seating or interpretation.
Low	Views associated with core paths or scenic views within undesignated landscapes.

Nature of Effect (Magnitude)

A.25 The nature of the effect on visual receptors (magnitude) is reported in terms of its scale, geographical extent, and duration/reversibility. Judgements on magnitude are recorded as **high**, **medium** or **low**, and are based on weighing up professional judgements regarding these components, as set out below.

Scale of Effect

A.26 The scale of change depends on:

- the extent of the loss or addition of features within the view, and changes in its composition including the proportion of the view occupied by the development;
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture; and/or
- the nature of the view of the development, in terms of whether views will be full, partial or glimpsed.

A.27 In this assessment scale is described as being **large**, **medium**, **small** or **barely perceptible,** with reference to the definitions set out in **Table A.7**.

Table A.7: Scale of Visual Change

Scale	Definition
Large	Large change in view, perhaps where the development is in close proximity in a direct line of vision, or affecting a substantial part of the view, or providing contrast with the existing view.
Medium	Clearly perceptible change in view, perhaps where the development is relatively close but at an oblique angle or further away in the direct line of vision, creating a distinct new element in the view.
Small	Small change in view, perhaps where the development is at a distance or oblique angle, or where the scale of the landscape absorbs the development well.
Barely perceptible	Change in view which is barely perceptible. Very small scale.

Geographical Extent of Effect

A.28 This records the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible e.g. whether there is only one point from where the development can be glimpsed, or whether similar views can be gained from large areas. In this assessment of geographical extent is described as being **small**, **medium** or **large**.

Duration of Effect

A.29 The duration of visual effects is reported as **short-term**, **medium-term** or **long-term**, as defined for the duration of landscape effects.

Reversibility of Effect

4.1.4 Reversibility is reported as **irreversible** (i.e. permanent), **partially reversible** or **reversible**, and is related to whether the visual change can be reversed at the end of the phase of development under consideration (i.e. at the end of construction or at the end of the operational lifespan of the development). Operational visual effects are generally considered to irreversible, as there is no defined operational period for the proposed development.

Judging the Levels of Effect

A.30 The final step in the assessment requires the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of effect to be combined to make an informed professional assessment on the significance of each landscape effect (GLVIA3, Figure 5.1, Page 71).

A.31 A numerical or formal weighting system is not applied, instead consideration of the relative importance of each aspect feeds into the overall decision. Levels of effect are identified as **negligible**, **minor**, **moderate** or **major**. **Diagram A.1** indicates how these various components are combined to inform the overall level of effect.

A.32 The levels of effect used in this LVIA are defined as shown in **Table A.8.**

Table 6.1: Levels of Visual Effect

Level	Effect Description
Major	The development will result in an obvious and widespread change in the visual amenity experienced by the receptor(s), who are likely to have high susceptibility to that type of change. For example, this level of effect may arise from the permanent obstruction or interruption of a highly valued view.
Moderate	The development will result in a noticeable change in the visual amenity experienced by the receptor(s), who are likely to be of medium susceptibility to that type of change. For example, this level of effect may arise from a large-scale but temporary change in a view, or a smaller change affecting a highly valued view.
Minor	The development will result in a small change in the visual amenity experienced by the receptor(s), who may be of lower susceptibility to that type of change. For example, this level of effect may arise from a larger-scale but temporary change in a view that is not highly valued, or a very small change experienced by higher-susceptibility receptors.
Negligible	The development will not result in a noticeable change in the visual amenity experienced by the receptor(s).

Direction of Effects

A.33 The direction of effect (positive, negative or neutral) is determined in relation to the degree to which the proposed development fits with the existing view, and the contribution to the view that the development makes.

6.18 For the purposes of this assessment, and taking a precautionary approach, any development in the context of this scenic and nationally protected landscape has the potential for adverse visual effects. However, it is recognised that many people are likely to view a sensitively designed visitor centre as a positive addition to the landscape and views.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility Production

A.34 A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) describes the area over which a development can theoretically be seen, from a two-metre eye level. The ZTV shows the maximum visibility of the proposed development and is shown in **Figure 1**.

A.35 The ZTV was calculated based on the corner points of the visitor centre (66.9m AOD) and pavilion roof heights (between 68.3 and 70.1m AOD).

A.36 The ZTV was processed using a digital terrain model based on Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data (obtained from Ordnance Survey in March 2023), and produced using ArcGIS Pro 3.0.3 software. Earth curvature and atmospheric refraction have been taken into account.

Appendix B

Figures and Visualisations

St. Kilda Visitor Centre
for Dualchas

LUC

Figure 1 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility, Viewpoints, Landscape Character, Designations and Viewpoints

- Proposed building
- Site boundary
- 1km radii
- 3km study area
- South Lewis, Harris & North Uist NSA
- Core path
- Landscape Character Assessment
  - 318: Linear crofting
  - 321: Machair
  - 322: Boggy moorland - Outer Hebrides
  - 323: Rocky moorland - Outer Hebrides
  - 326: Prominent hills & mountains

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- Proposed development theoretically visible
- Viewpoint location
  1. Minor road to northeast
  2. Aired Feinis
  3. Brinneabhal
  4. Mangersta

Note:
The ZTV indicates the theoretical visibility of the proposal from a viewing height of 2m above ground level. The proposed building has been modelled to a maximum parapet height as detailed below:
Main building: 66.9m AOD
Pavilion roof range: 68.3m-70.1m AOD
The terrain model is based on Ordnance Survey (OS) Terrain 5 digital terrain model (DTM) data (5m grid, obtained from Ordnance Survey in March 2023).
The ZTV assumes bare earth and has not been edited include any screening effect of vegetation and other buildings.
Earth curvature and atmospheric refraction have been taken into account. The ZTV was calculated using ArcGIS Pro 3.0.3 software.

0 0.5 1 km

Map scale 1:25,000 @ A3

Dualchas.

IONAD HIORT
THE ST. KILDA CENTRE

VOLUME 2: MAIN ASSESSMENT
CHAPTER 8: CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
FEBRUARY 2024

Contents

8.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the Cultural Heritage element of the Environmental Impact Assessment for Ionad Hiort: The St Kilda Centre (hereafter 'the proposed development'). The assessment has been undertaken by Lynne McKeggie of Highland Archaeology Services Ltd. It will consider the potential for direct, indirect, or setting impacts to heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development.

A heritage asset (or historic asset) is any element of the historic environment which has cultural significance. This may include extant or buried remains, as well as areas of landscape defined by a specific historic event, process, or theme.

Cultural Heritage includes archaeological and historical assets of various designations, including:

- World Heritage Sites;
- Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes;
- Inventory Historic Battlefields;
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Listed Buildings;
- Historic Marine Protected areas or wrecks;
- Conservation Areas; and
- Other non-designated historic environment assets.

However, many heritage assets are currently unrecorded, and the information contained in Historic Environment Records and Site and Monument Records is not definitive, since they may include features which, for instance, have been entirely removed, or are of uncertain location, dubious identification, or negligible importance. The identification of undesignated heritage assets is therefore to some extent a matter of professional judgement.

This assessment seeks to establish the potential for direct, indirect, or setting effects on the cultural significance of the surrounding cultural heritage assets by the proposed development and to avoid or mitigate possible negative effects.

8.2 Policy and Guidance

8.2.1 Policy

The Scottish Government's planning policies in relation to the historic environment are set out in Policy 7 of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). This sets out the principles of promoting the enhancement and protection of designated and non-designated assets, enabling positive change and the preservation of historic assets in situ, wherever possible.

Planning Advice Note (PAN) 1/2013 lays out the key principles of Environmental Impact Assessment. Planning Advice Note (PAN) 2/2011 'Planning and Archaeology' provides technical advice to planning authorities and developers on dealing with archaeological remains.

'Our Past, Our Future' 2023 is an updated strategy for Scotland's historic environment. It sets out the part that heritage sites may play in delivering the transition to net zero, empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places, and building a wellbeing economy including sustainable tourism. It aims to sustain and enhance the benefits of Scotland's historic environment.

The Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan (OHLDP 2018) sets out the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) policies for development proposals that have the potential to affect Built Heritage, Archaeology and Historic Areas. It commits to supporting applications which preserve, protect, or enhance heritage assets, whilst avoiding substantial adverse impacts on their historic significance.

8.2.2 Guidance

The Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook 2018 (Historic Environment Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage) provides detailed guidance on the principles and preparation methods for EIAs.

Standards and Guidance published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) have been followed in preparing the baseline assessment, in particular the 'Standard and guidance for commissioning work or providing consultancy advice on archaeology and the historic environment' (2014) and the 'Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment' (2014).

8.3 Methodology

8.3.1 Baseline Assessment

The baseline data in relation to Cultural Heritage has been derived from a desk-based assessment undertaken by Highland Archaeology Services Ltd (HAS) in October 2023, which considered the following sources:

- The CnES Historic Environment Record (HER);
- The National Monuments Record for Scotland (Canmore) as presented on Pastmap;
- Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) databases of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Inventories;
- Geological data available online from the British Geological Survey;
- Historic maps available on the online mapping resource provided by the National Libraries of Scotland;
- Ordnance survey Name Books; and
- The 'Old' and 'New' Statistical Accounts of Scotland.

A total of eight undesignated assets were identified within 1km of the proposed development area during the desk-based assessment. This confirmed the presence of a mid-20th century radar base (DBA1) with upstanding structures within the proposed development area.

A walkover survey was undertaken on 13th and 14th November 2023 by a qualified and experienced HAS Archaeologist (Lynne McKeggie). The survey started within the radar base (DBA1) area with all visible concrete bases and connecting features. Other upstanding features around the edges of this were recorded as they were seen. Finally, the proposed development areas to the west and east of the existing road were inspected for signs of upstanding archaeological or historic features.

All features were recorded by survey-grade GPS, photography (using a digital SLR with scales), and written description. Over 200 photographs were taken, and these will be provided to the HER to add to the public record.

8.3.2 Predicting Effects

Effects on the historic environment can arise through direct physical impacts, indirect impacts, impacts on setting or cumulative impacts:

- Direct physical impacts are those where the fabric of a heritage asset is removed or damaged as a direct result of the proposal. Typically, these activities are related to construction works and will only occur within the proposed development area. They are permanent changes.
- Indirect impacts describe secondary processes, triggered by the development, that lead to the degradation or preservation of heritage assets. For example, changes to hydrology may affect archaeological preservation.
- An impact on the setting of a heritage asset occurs when the presence of a development changes the surroundings of a heritage asset in such a way that it affects (positively or negatively) the cultural significance of that asset. Visual impacts are the most commonly encountered but other environmental factors such as noise, odours and emissions can also occur. Impacts may be encountered at all stages in the life cycle of a development from construction to decommissioning but they are only likely to lead to significant effects during the prolonged operational life of the development.
- Cumulative impacts can relate to the physical fabric or setting of assets. They may arise as a result of impact interactions, either of different impacts of the proposal itself or between the impacts of

other projects, or additive impacts resulting from incremental changes caused by the proposal together with other projects that have been granted consent or that are operational.

The assessment considers the potential for direct and indirect physical impacts to all identified receptors (and potential buried archaeological layers) within the boundary of the proposed development site, as well as setting impacts to upstanding remains. There are no other identified projects located within the vicinity of this development, and therefore cumulative impacts are not considered further within this report.

In order to assess the Impact Significance, the 'Value' of the asset will be considered against the Magnitude of the impact in accordance with the EIA handbook matrices. The 'Value' is directly related to the designation of the asset. The 'Magnitude' of change is assessed against the 'do nothing' alternative, and will be categorised as 'substantial', 'moderate', 'slight' or 'no change'. Changes may be considered positive or negative.

The significance of an effect on the cultural significance of a heritage asset, resulting from a direct or indirect physical impact, or an impact on its setting, is assessed by combining the magnitude of the impact and the importance of the heritage asset. The matrix within Table 11.4 has been used to arrive at an overall Impact Significance.

Table 8.3.1: Matrix Showing Impact Significance Related to Value and Magnitude of Impact

Value of asset	Magnitude of Impact			
	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible

Major and Moderate effects that can be considered 'negative' will be considered 'significant'. This will then trigger a consideration for how mitigating measures and enhancement could be used to reduce the Magnitude of Impact.

8.4 Baseline Conditions

8.4.1 Archaeological and Historical Overview

An area of around 1km has been researched around the proposed development in order to ascertain its character and the potential for archaeological or historic remains. Eight sites have been identified on the HER and Canmore databases. All these sites are undesignated. They are set out in the table below.

Table 8.4.1: DBA Assets

DBA No.	Description	Easting	Northing	Canmore	HER
DBA 1	Druim Grunavat Chain Home Radar Station	100132	929397	139435	MWE146612
DBA 2	Mangersta and Mullach An Taroin cluster of buildings and mound	100248	929839	334377, 334378, 334379	MWE140172, MWE140171, MWE140170
DBA 3	Abhainn Mhor Shieling	100421	930139	134993	MWE134993
DBA 4	Loch Melavat Shieling	100900	929698	134947	MWE134947
DBA 5	Grupag Shieling	100712	929120	134956	MWE134956
DBA 6	Abhainn Chleidir settlement: 9 shielings and lazy beds	99708	928622	134094	MWE134094
DBA 7	Promontory Fort	99505	928693	334376	MWE140168
DBA 8	Aird Feinis Enclosure: Turf dyke for stock	99249	929394	311137	MWE140169

The oldest of these assets is likely to be the Promontory Fort DBA7. Although there are a number of promontory forts along this coastline (including Scheduled Monument Stac Dhomnuill Chaim SM5327 located 2.3km to the north) this is the closest of these features and lie around 1km to the south of the proposed development. Although it is undated it is likely to be late prehistoric or early medieval in origin.

Most of the assets are post-medieval, including shielings, settlements, and agricultural features. This attests to the long history of the area as a marginal agricultural landscape with well scattered settlement and large areas of moorland. This is reinforced by the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps which depicts a road along much the same line as its modern equivalent, but no active settlements or industrial activity in the vicinity of the development. The only named entities are landscape features.

8.4.2 Undesignated Assets

Of the assets identified in the DBA only DBA1, the Druim Grunavat Chain Home Radar Station (sometimes called Islivig), is located within the proposed development area. This site comprises a plethora of structures and features used during Word War II to detect low flying aircraft that may have threatened Britain's north coast. It became operational in November 1941 and was placed on care and maintenance exactly 4 years later. However, it may have also been utilised at times during the Cold War.

The Desk-Based Assessment suggested that some features of DBA1 were likely to survive within the Proposed Development Area and that there was the potential for these to suffer Direct, Indirect and Setting impacts from the Proposal. A Walkover Survey was commissioned in order to clarify this, and the results are presented below.

The other assets identified during the Desk-Based Assessment were all found to be sufficiently distant from the Proposed Development and existing access routes that they will not be impacted directly, indirectly or by significant changes to setting. They have therefore been scoped out of the remaining assessment.

8.4.3 Walkover Survey

The survey was undertaken on 13th and 14th November 2023 with the aim of recording all features associated with Druim Grunavat Chain Home Radar Station as well as any previously unrecorded heritage assets within or close to the Proposed Development. A total of 45 features were recorded. Of these 39 are likely to relate directly to the Radar Station, whilst six may pre-date this and survive from earlier phases of use.

The 39 wartime features include nine Nissen hut bases, eight footpaths, a bunker, the footings of the mast, blast walls around the transmitter building, a generator building, 'Friend or Foe' building and mast base, a likely guard room and a toilet block. Whilst the bunker, blast walls, generator building and Friend-or-Foe building are upstanding, most of the features are concrete footings or flooring only, with no walls or roofing present. The remains are in reasonable condition with some visible construction features such as bolts visible but have some visible degradation. They are expected to continue degenerating steadily over time. This is especially true of the concrete bases which are particularly vulnerable to damage by foliage, frost and undermining by water erosion which was apparent in some areas. The blast walls have some damage to the external stonework which is likely to degenerate without intervention.

The six other features are of dry-stone construction and comprise the footings of a bothy, a possible dyke, a roughly circular cobbled area, a stone-lined square recess, a possible hut-circle, and a small turf-covered mound. They appear reasonably stable. These are all located outside the Proposed Development area but are close enough that they may suffer accidental direct or indirect impacts.

The full results from the walkover survey are presented in Appendix VI.

8.5 Predicted and Potential effects

8.5.1 Direct Impacts

In the current plans for the proposed development, many of the distinctive buildings and structures will be on the periphery of the site and will not be directly affected by the installation or use of the building, carparks, footpaths, or services. There are no identified features in the location of the proposed visitor centre building.

However, the main group of Nissen hut bases (F2, F5, F8, F12, F15, F17, F22 and F24), their associated paths (F3, F4, F6, F9, F13. F23 and F25), the drain F14 and the surviving track F26 will all be directly impacted by the development, as the carpark and access road are directly overlaying these features. These are all undesignated assets of Local significance and therefore of Low Value. The Magnitude of impact will be a Substantial adverse impact for the majority of these features as they will be completely removed, and a Moderate adverse impact for F9 which will have a portion destroyed (see Table 8.5.1).

Table 8.5.1 Predicted Direct Impacts to Heritage Assets prior to Mitigation

Feature No's	Description	Value	Magnitude of impact	Impact Significance
2, 5, 8, 12, 15, 17, 22, 24	Destruction of Nissen hut bases during construction	Low	Substantial	Moderate
3,4, 6, 13, 23, 25	Destruction of Concrete paths during construction	Low	Substantial	Moderate
9	Destruction of part of Stone and concrete path during construction	Low	Moderate	Minor
14	Destruction of most of Drain during construction	Low	Substantial	Moderate
26	Destruction of most of Track during construction	Low	Substantial	Moderate
43	Alterations to or destruction of Concrete pad during construction	Low	Substantial or Moderate	Moderate or Minor

The position of the carpark and its access is constrained by a lack of available level areas within the landscape whilst also avoiding peatland and environmentally sensitive moorland. There is no area within a reasonable distance of the proposed visitor centre which can be reasonably converted into a safe, level parking area whilst having only a minor impact upon heritage and environmental assets. This predicted impact cannot, therefore, be avoided by design.

The loss of these features can be offset by the creation and curation of a record of the features. As these are principally surface features and there are not anticipated to be any associated buried remains, excavation of these features is unlikely to provide further information of benefit to our understanding of them. A detailed survey has now been undertaken, and this can be considered a record of the layout, character and appearance of these features which will be preserved through the HER and national archive. This mitigation by record reduces the Magnitude of Impact to Moderate and the resulting Impact Significance to Minor.

There are a number of features on the periphery of the site which could be vulnerable to accidental damage by uncontrolled machinery movement during the construction phase (see Table 8.5.2). The bothy (F16) and cobbled area (F34&5) as dry-stone structures would be particularly sensitive to disturbance and have the potential to be Substantially impacted. These potential impacts can be easily avoided by Marking Off these assets prior to and during construction works. This Mitigation would reduce the potential Impact to Negligible.

The concrete pad (F43) observed near the site of the proposed visitor centre may cover a septic tank servicing part of the radar station. If the development proposes to re-utilise this feature, then further study into the suitability and potential impact upon this feature should be explored, and ways to utilise it carefully considered. Preservation in situ is always the preferred approach but if that site must be used and the feature is likely to be damaged or destroyed then basic further recording should take place in order to understand its character below the surface. If the feature can be avoided, then no further action would be required.

Table 8.5.2 Potential Direct Impacts to Heritage Assets prior to Mitigation

Feature No's	Descriptions	Value	Magnitude of impact	Impact Significance
16, 34, 35	Accidental damage to Bothy, cobbled area, and recess during construction	Low	Substantial	Moderate
7, 18, 19, 20, 21, 31, 32	Accidental damage to Remains of structure, concrete pads, guard room, path during construction	Low	Moderate	Minor
10, 38, 39, 40	Accelerated degradation caused by increased footfall to prominent Radar base structures	Medium	Slight	Minor

Some of the other prominent features, including the Blast Walls (F38), Standby Set House (F39), artillery/searchlight footing (F40) and Bunker (F10) are likely to benefit from increased access and footfall to the site. This presents an opportunity to provide interpretation and manage access to these structures. They are reasonably substantial but may suffer some erosion or accelerated degradation caused by increased footfall. This possible Minor adverse impact can be avoided by considering access arrangements and a programme of monitoring to introduce additional measures if damage becomes apparent. This mitigation would enhance the Impact significance to a Moderate Beneficial impact.

8.5.2 Indirect Impacts

Although many features of the radar base are a sufficient distance from the proposed development to avoid indirect impacts during construction or operation, there are some features that may suffer indirect negative impacts if mitigation is not undertaken. Changes to drainage and waterflow in surfaced areas (such as footpaths and parking areas) have the potential to cause water build-up or increased water-erosion in features close to the surfaced areas. This could substantially accelerate the degradation of these features, compared to the 'do nothing' alternative. This impact can be reduced by managing drainage so that these features are not likely to receive increased water ingress. This mitigation measure would reduce the indirect Impact to negligible.

Table 8.5.2 Potential Indirect Impacts to Heritage Assets prior to Mitigation

Feature No's	Descriptions	Value	Magnitude of impact	Impact Significance
7, 13, 14, 16, 19-21	Water damage to remains of structure, drain, path and concrete pads during construction and operation	Low	Moderate	Minor
43	Water damage to concrete pad during construction and operation	Low	Moderate	Minor

8.5.3 Setting Impacts

The setting of each individual feature of the radar station is related to the understanding of the radar station as a whole. Therefore, the setting has been considered for these features as a single entity.

The setting of the radar station has some significance to how it is understood. Principally this encompasses its relationship to the coast, appreciating its elevation, and the internal relationship of the buildings that make up the site. The proposed development will not have an impact upon the views to the sea or the elevation of the site. Visitors should benefit from increased awareness and appreciation of the location of this site and its significance for wartime history. At present, the area of the Nissen huts is experienced as a relatively level area with visible concrete pads which allow the layout of the buildings to be noted. Locating a carpark here is unlikely to have a significant detrimental effect to the experience of visiting upstanding buildings across the site. However, it will have an impact upon a visitor's ability to understand the layout of the radar station.

It would, therefore, be beneficial for there to be a way of continuing to appreciate and understand the layout of those Nissen hut bases that will be destroyed partially or totally by the formation of access and a carpark at this site. This may be achieved through interpretation lines set into the carpark surface, or similar as an offsetting measure.

8.6 Conclusions

8.6.1 Summary of Residual Effects

The proposed mitigation measures in the sections above will allow for potential effects upon heritage assets to be mitigated by preservation by record, avoidance and offsetting measures. These are set out in the table below.

Table 8.6.1 Residual effects of proposed Mitigation measures

Impact	Mitigation	Significance of Residual effect
Risk of direct adverse impact occurring from construction of carpark and access	Preservation by record of features likely to be destroyed or disturbed by construction works.	Minor
Potential risk of direct adverse impact occurring from stray machinery movement	Marking off of assets located within 20m of construction works.	Negligible
Potential risk of direct adverse impact occurring from increased footfall	Access management plan and programme of monitoring	Negligible
Risk of indirect adverse impact occurring from water erosion	Water drainage in surfaced areas to drain away from identified features	Negligible
Changes to setting of Radar Station causing inability to understand layout	Layout preserved through visual or physical interpretation on site.	Minor

8.6.2 Conclusion

The assessment has considered the potential for Direct, Indirect, Cumulative and Setting impacts upon heritage assets within the vicinity of the proposed development site. Risk of direct construction impacts, direct operational impacts and indirect operational impacts upon heritage assets have been identified and mitigation measures proposed in order to reduce the significance of any residual effects to negligible or minor.

8.7 Glossary

Acronym	*Definition*
CnES	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
OHLDP	Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan
PAN	Planning Advice Note