

MONA OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT

Environmental Statement

Volume 6, Annex 8.1: Seascape and visual resources legislation and planning policy context

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Image of an offshore wind farm

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
Landscape	An area, as perceived by people, the character of which is a result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.
Landscape character	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.
Landscape character areas	These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.
Seascape	The visual and physical conjunction of land and sea which combines maritime, coast and hinterland character.
Seascape and landscape character assessment	The process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the seascape and landscape and using this information to assist in managing change in the seascape and landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make the seascape and landscape distinctive. The process results in the production of a seascape and landscape character assessment.
Special qualities	A term usually used in relation to National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is given to those qualities for which the area is designated.

Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AOB	Area of Outstanding Beauty
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
GLVIA	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
LDP	Local Development Plan
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
SLVIA	Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Units

Unit	Description
km	Kilometre

1 SEASCAPE AND VISUAL RESOURCES LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1.1 This technical report provides a summary of the planning policy relating to seascape and visual resources which has been used to inform the baseline characterisation and assessment reported in Volume 2, Chapter 8: Seascape, landscape and visual resources of the Environmental Statement.

1.1.1.2 A separate landscape, seascape and planning annex accompanies Volume 3, Chapter 8: Landscape, seascape, and visual resources and is provided in Volume 7, Annex 6.1: Landscape, seascape and visual resources planning policy context of the Environmental Statement.

1.2 Study area

1.2.1.1 The Mona Offshore Wind Project seascape, landscape and visual impact assessment (SLVIA) offshore study area (hereafter referred to as 'the SLVIA offshore study area') is illustrated in Appendix A. The SLVIA offshore study area has been based on the findings of an analysis of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).

1.2.1.2 The SLVIA offshore study area comprises the area of land and seabed to be temporarily and permanently occupied during construction, operations and maintenance, and decommissioning of the Mona Offshore Wind Project and is based on a 50 kilometre (km) buffer from the Mona Array Area. This incorporates the Mona Offshore Cable Corridor and Access Areas. This distance threshold aligns with recommendations set out in section 9.19 of the White Consultants report for Natural Resources Wales (NRW) 'Seascape and Visual Buffer Study for Offshore Wind Farms' (NRW, 2020).

1.2.1.3 As the SLVIA offshore study area extends into both England and Wales, both English and Welsh planning policies relevant to the SLVIA have been referenced in this technical report, where appropriate.

1.3 Planning Policy

1.3.1 Introduction

1.3.1.1 The SLVIA has been undertaken based on the guidance on landscape and visual impact assessment set out within the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) publication: Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013).

1.3.2 National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure

1.3.2.1 There are currently six energy National Policy Statements (NPSs), three of which contain policy relevant to offshore wind development and the Mona Offshore Wind Project.

Overarching National Planning Policy for Energy (EN-1)

1.3.2.2 The Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1) specifically discusses the landscape and visual effects of energy projects, however, where appropriate, references to landscape should also be interpreted in a seascape context (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2023a).

1.3.2.3 EN-1 states the following with respect to SLVIA:

- *'The applicant should carry out a landscape and visual impact assessment and report it in the ES, including cumulative effects'* (paragraph 5.10.15, EN-1).
- *'The landscape and visual assessment should include reference to any landscape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing landscape impacts relevant to the proposed project'* (paragraph 5.10.16, EN-1). *'For seascapes, applicants should consult the Seascape Character Assessment and the Marine Plan Seascape Character Assessments'* (Natural England, 2012) (paragraph 5.10.17, EN-1).
- *'The assessment should make reference to relevant planning policies'* (paragraph 5.10.16, EN-1).
- *'The applicant should consider landscape and visual matters in the early stages of siting and design, where site choices and design principles are being established'* (paragraph 5.10.18, EN-1).
- *'The assessment should include the effects on landscape components and character during construction and operation'* (paragraph 5.10.19, EN-1).
- *'For projects which may affect a National Park or an Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty the assessment should include effects on the natural beauty and special qualities of these areas'* (paragraph 5.10.19, EN-1).
- *'The assessment should include the visibility and conspicuousness of the project during construction and of the presence and operation of the project and potential impacts on views and visual amenity. This should include light pollution effects, including on local amenity, and nature conservation'* (paragraph 5.10.20, EN-1).
- *'The assessment should also demonstrate how noise and light pollution, and other emissions from construction and operational activities on residential*

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amenity and on sensitive locations, receptors and views, will be minimised (paragraph 5.10.21, EN-1).

- *'Applicants should consider how landscapes can be enhanced using landscape management plans, as this will help to enhance environmental assets where they contribute to landscape and townscape quality'* (paragraph 5.10.23, EN-1).

1.3.2.4 In considering seascape, EN-1 discusses that *'coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to visual intrusion because of the potential high visibility of development on the foreshore, on the skyline and affecting views along stretches of undeveloped coast'* (paragraph 5.10.14, EN-1).

1.3.2.5 EN-1 states that *'virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on the landscape, but there may also be beneficial landscape character impacts arising from mitigation. Projects need to be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape. Having regard to siting, operational and other relevant constraints the aim should be to minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate'*. (paragraphs 5.10.5 – 5.10.6, EN-1).

1.3.2.6 EN-1 also states that the scale of energy projects means that they will often be visible within many miles of the site of the proposed infrastructure. The Secretary of State *'should judge whether any adverse impact on the landscape would be so damaging that it is not offset by the benefits'* (including need) of the project (paragraph 5.10.34, EN-1)

1.3.2.7 Furthermore, the Secretary of State will have to consider *'whether any adverse impact is temporary, such as during construction, and/or whether any adverse impact on the landscape will be capable of being reversed in a timescale that the Secretary of State considers reasonable'* (paragraph 5.10.35, EN-1) and *'whether the project has been designed carefully, taking account of environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to minimise harm to the landscape, including by appropriate mitigation'* (paragraph 5.10.36, EN-1).

National Planning Policy for Renewable Energy (EN-3)

1.3.2.8 EN-3 (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2023b) outlines seascape and visual effects specific to offshore wind proposals.

1.3.2.9 *'Where a proposed offshore wind farm will be visible from the shore and would be within the setting of a nationally designated landscape with potential effects on the area's statutory purpose, a seascape, landscape and visual impact assessment (SLVIA) should be undertaken'* (paragraph 3.8.224, EN-3).

1.3.2.10 *'The SLVIA should be proportionate to the scale of the potential impacts. This will always be the case where a coastal National Park, the Broads or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), or a Heritage Coast or their setting is potentially affected'* (paragraph 3.8.224, EN-3).

1.3.2.11 *'Assessment of the seascape should include an assessment of four principal considerations on the likely effect of offshore wind farms on the coast:*

- *the limit of visual perception from the coast under poor, good and best lightening conditions;*
- *the effects of navigation and hazard prevention lighting on dark night skies;*

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- *individual landscape and visual characteristics of the coast and the special qualities of designated landscapes, such as World Heritage Sites, which limits the coasts capacity to absorb a development; and*
- *how people perceive and interact with the coast and natural seascape’ (paragraph 3.8.225, EN-3).*

1.3.2.12 *‘As part of the SLVIA, photomontages will be required. Viewpoints to be used for the SLVIA should be selected in consultation with the statutory consultees at the EIA Scoping stage’ (paragraph 3.8.226, EN-3)*

1.3.2.13 *‘Applicants should assess the magnitude and significance of change to both the identified seascape receptors (such as seascape and landscape units, visual receptors and the special qualities of designated landscapes) in accordance with the standard methodology for SLVIA’ (paragraph 3.8.227, EN-3).*

National Planning Policy for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)

1.3.2.14 In relation to landscape, seascape and visual impacts, NPS EN-5 (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2023c) primarily deals with overhead lines, which are not relevant to the Mona Offshore Wind Project as the onshore and offshore export cables will be buried below ground.

1.3.3 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

1.3.3.1 Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 (Welsh Government, 2021) is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

1.3.3.2 The spatial strategy separates Wales into four regions. With regards to the North region, Policy 22 – Green Belts in the North states the following:

- *‘Managing the North’s outstanding historic and natural resources is a priority for the region. Outstanding places include the coast and the Llŷn peninsula, Snowdonia National Park, and the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal and the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward World Heritage Site. They should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations and help to provide economic benefits for the region’s communities. The region’s distinctive heritage should be preserved and enhanced by high quality development.’ (Policy 22 – Green Belts in the North, Future Wales: the National Plan 2040).*

1.3.4 UK Marine Policy Statement (2011)

1.3.4.1 Section 2.6.5 Seascape of the UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS) (Defra, 2011) states that:

- *‘The effects of activities and developments in the marine and coastal area on the landscape, including seascape, will vary on a case-by-case basis according to the type of activity, its location and its setting. There is no legal definition for seascape in the UK but the European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscape as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. In the context of this*

document, references to seascape should be taken as meaning landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coasts and the adjacent marine environment with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other.' (Paragraph 2.6.5.1, MPS).

- *'When developing Marine Plans, marine plan authorities should consider at a strategic level visual, cultural, historical and archaeological impacts not just for those coastal areas that are particularly important for seascape, but for all coastal areas, liaising with terrestrial planning authorities as necessary. In addition, any wider social and economic impacts of a development or activity on coastal landscapes and seascapes should be considered'* (Paragraph 2.6.5.2, MPS).
- *'In considering the impact of an activity or development on seascape, the marine plan authority should take into account existing character and quality, how highly it is valued and its capacity to accommodate change specific to any development. Landscape Character Assessment methodology may be an aid to this process'* (Paragraph 2.6.5.3, MPS).

1.3.5 Welsh National Marine Plan

1.3.5.1 The Welsh National Marine Plan (Welsh Government, 2019) sets out the following policy relevant to the SLVIA.

SOC 06: Designated landscapes

1.3.5.2 *'Proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on the purposes and special qualities for which National Parks or AONBs have been designated have been taken into consideration and should, in order of preference:*

- a) avoid adverse impacts on designated landscapes and/or*
- b) minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided and/or*
- c) mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.*

- *If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding*
- *Opportunities to enhance designated landscapes are encouraged'.*

SOC 07: Seascapes

1.3.5.3 *'Proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on seascapes have been taken into consideration and should, in order of preference:*

- a) avoid adverse impacts on seascapes and/or*
- b) minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided and/or*
- c) mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.*

- *If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding*
- *Opportunities to enhance seascapes are encouraged'.*

1.3.6 Planning Policy Wales 11 Edition

1.3.6.1 Key planning principles of Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11 (Welsh Government, 2021) are summarised below.

Maximising environmental protection and limiting environmental impact

1.3.6.2 *'Natural, historic and cultural assets must be protected, promoted, conserved and enhanced'.*

1.3.6.3 Paragraph 6.3.3, Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11 confirms that *'all the landscapes of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place, and local authorities should protect and enhance their special characteristics, whilst paying due regard to the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits they provide, and to their role in creating valued places and that considering landscape at the outset when proposing development is key to sustaining and enhancing their special qualities and delivering the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations. This means (inter alia):*

- *ensuring statutorily designated sites are properly protected and managed*
- *ensuring that the value of all landscapes for their distinctive character and special qualities is protected*
- *ensuring the opportunities landscapes provide for tourism, outdoor recreation, local employment, renewable energy and physical and mental health and well-being are taken into account and multiple well-being benefits for people and communities secured'.*

1.3.6.4 Paragraph 6.3.4, Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11 states that, *'where adverse effects on landscape character cannot be avoided, it will be necessary to refuse planning permission'.*

National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

1.3.6.5 Paragraph 6.3.5, Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11 states that *'the statutory landscape designations that apply in Wales are National Parks and AONBs. Planning authorities have a statutory duty to have regard to National Parks and AONB purposes. This duty applies in relation to all activities affecting National Parks and AONBs, whether those activities lie within, or in the setting of, the designated areas. The designated landscapes should be drivers of the sustainable use and management of natural resources in their areas, and planning authorities should have regard to their identified special qualities in the exercise of their functions and any relevant management plans'.*

1.3.6.6 Paragraph 6.3.8, Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11 states that *'National Parks and AONBs are of equal status in terms of landscape and scenic beauty and must both be afforded the highest status of protection from inappropriate developments'.*

Coastlines

1.3.6.7 Paragraph 6.5.7, Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11 states that *'areas subject to constraints or considered unsuitable for development may include those where:*

- *conservation or enhancement of the natural and historic environment requires development to be limited*

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- *visual intrusion and inter-visibility between land and sea will need to be carefully considered*
- *there are specific policies to be pursued in Heritage Coast areas’.*

1.3.6.8 Paragraph 6.5.12, Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11 states that ‘*development proposals should aim to protect or enhance the natural or historic character and landscape of undeveloped coastlines. The particular landscapes of the coastline should be recognised and protected where they represent significant characteristics of place. Designation as a heritage coast does not directly affect the status of the area in planning terms, however, the features which contributed to the designation of such areas will be important considerations in development plans and in making development management decisions’.*

1.3.7 North West Inshore and North West Offshore Marine Plan (2021)

1.3.7.1 NW-SCP-1 states that ‘*proposals should ensure they are compatible with their surroundings and should not have a significant adverse impact on the character and visual resource of the seascape and landscape of the area. The location, scale and design of proposals should take account of the character, quality and distinctiveness of the seascape and landscape. Proposals that may have a significant adverse impact on the seascape and landscape of the area should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:*

- *a) avoid*
- *b) minimise*
- *c) mitigate adverse impacts.*

If it is not possible to mitigate the public benefits for proceeding with the proposal must outweigh significant adverse impacts to the seascape and landscape of the area.

Proposals within or relatively close to nationally designated areas should have regard to the specific statutory purposes of the designated area. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and AONBs.

1.3.7.2 NW-TR-1 states that ‘*proposals that promote or facilitate sustainable tourism and recreation activities, or that create appropriate opportunities to expand or diversify the current use of facilities, should be supported. Proposals that may have significant adverse impacts on tourism and recreation activities must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:*

- *a) avoid*
- *b) minimise*
- *c) mitigate*
- *d) adverse impacts so they are no longer significant’.*

1.3.7.3 NW-CBC-1 states that ‘*proposals must consider cross-border impacts throughout the lifetime of the proposed activity. Proposals that impact upon one or more marine plan areas or terrestrial environments must show evidence of the relevant public authorities (including other countries) being consulted and responses considered’.*

1.3.8 Conwy County Borough Council

Conwy Local Development Plan 2007-2022 (adopted 2013)

1.3.8.1 Conwy Council is preparing a new local development plan (LDP) to run from 2018-2033. The Preferred Strategy Consultation occurred between the 29th of July 2019 and the 12th of September 2019. Adoption of the new LDP was expected in September 2021, however due to the coronavirus pandemic, this has been delayed and Conwy Council are currently revising their Delivery Agreement which is to be agreed by the Welsh Government soon.

1.3.8.2 The following planning policies set out in the Conwy LDP 2007 -2022 (Conwy County Borough Council, 2013) are of relevance to the SLVIA:

Strategic policy NTE/1 – The natural environment

1.3.8.3 *'In seeking to support the wider economic and social needs of the Plan Area, the Council will seek to regulate development so as to conserve and, where possible, enhance the Plan Area's natural environment, countryside and coastline. This will be achieved by (inter alia):*

- *Safeguarding the Plan Area's biodiversity, geology, habitats, history and landscapes through the protection and enhancement of sites of international, national, regional and local importance, in line with Policy DP/6 – National Planning Policy and Guidance*
- *Where appropriate and necessary, improving the quality of statutory and non-statutory landscapes and areas of biodiversity value affected by development, through management agreements, habitat connectivity, improved planting, landscape and maintenance specifications, in line with the Development Principal Policies and Policy NTE/3 – 'Biodiversity'*
- *Respecting, retaining or enhancing the local character and distinctiveness of the individual Special Landscape Areas in line with Policy NTE/4 – 'The Landscape and Protecting Special Landscape Areas' and as shown on the Proposals Map'.*

NTE/4 - The landscape and protecting Special Landscape Areas

1.3.8.4 *'1. Special Landscape Areas are shown on the proposal map and designated in the following locations:*

- *Great Orme and Creuddyn Peninsula*
- *Conwy Valley*
- *Abergele hinterland*
- *Elwy and Aled Valleys*
- *Hiraethog*
- *Cerrigydrudion and the A5 corridor.*

2. In order to conserve the attributes of the Special Landscape Areas development proposals will have to show particular regard to the character of each locality in order to minimise their impact. Development will only be permitted if it is shown to be capable of being satisfactorily integrated into the landscape. In appropriate cases planning

applications should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to assess the visual and landscape impacts of the development.

3. All proposals, both within and outside Special Landscape Areas, will be considered against the Development Principles and other policies in the Plan designed to protect the environment and landscape character’.

NTE/5 - The Coastal Zone

1.3.8.5 *‘A Coastal Zone is defined on the Proposals Map. Development in the Coastal Zone, outside settlement boundaries, will only be permitted where the development:*

- *Specifically requires a coastal location*
- *Does not adversely affect the open character of the zone*
- *Does not adversely affect the nature conservation value of the zone with any effects identified mitigated for*
- *Does not detract from the tourism value or facilities*
- *Does not interfere with natural coastal processes*
- *Does not impede the function of any existing coastal defence structures*
- *Accords with the Development Principles of the Plan’.*

1.3.9 Denbighshire County Council

Denbighshire County Council Adopted Local Development Plan 2006-2021 (adopted 2013)

1.3.9.1 Denbighshire County Council is preparing a new LDP to run from 2018-2033. The Preferred Strategy was published in May 2019 and due to be adopted in Autumn 2021 however due to the coronavirus pandemic, the has not been able to be adopted. The Delivery Agreement was revised and published in December 2022, forecasting that the LDP will be submitted for examination in May 2024 and is expected to be adopted in September 2025.

1.3.9.2 The follow planning policies set out in the Denbighshire County Council Adopted Local Development Plan (Denbighshire County Council, 2013) are of relevance to the SLVIA:

Policy RD1 – Sustainable development and good standard design

1.3.9.3 *‘Development proposals will be supported within development boundaries provided that all the following (relevant) criteria are met:*

- *Respects the site and surroundings in terms of the siting, layout, scale, form, character, design, materials, aspect, micro-climate and intensity of use of land/buildings and spaces around and between buildings*
- *Does not unacceptably affect prominent public views into, out of, or across any settlement or area of open countryside*
- *Incorporates existing landscape or other features, takes account of site contours and changes in levels and prominent skylines*

- *Incorporates suitable landscaping measures, including where appropriate hard and soft landscaping treatment, the creation and/or protection of green and blue corridors, mature landscaping, and arrangements for subsequent maintenance. Landscaping should create a visually pleasant, sustainable and biodiversity rich environment that protects and enhances existing landscape features and also creates new features and areas of open space that reflect local character and sense of place’.*

Policy VOE2 – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Outstanding Beauty

- 1.3.9.4 *‘In determining development proposals within or affecting the AONB and Area of Outstanding Beauty (AOB), development that would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the landscape and the reasons for designation will not be permitted’.*

1.3.10 Flintshire County Council

Flintshire Local Development Plan (adopted January 2023)

- 1.3.10.1 The following planning policies set out in the Flintshire LDP (Flintshire County Council, 2023) are of relevance to the SLVIA:

EN4 – Landscape Character

- 1.3.10.2 *‘New development, either individually or cumulatively, must not have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. Landscaping and other mitigation measures should seek to reduce landscape impact and where possible bring about enhancement’.*

EN13 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

- 1.3.10.3 *‘All renewable or low carbon energy proposals will be permitted provided that:*
- *The siting, design, layout, type of installation and materials used do not have a significant adverse effect on the character and features of the proposed location*
 - *There would not be an unacceptable loss of public amenity or accessibility to the area*
 - *The impact of the development upon agriculture, forestry, recreation and other land use is minimised to permit existing uses to continue*
 - *There would be no individual or cumulative significant adverse effect on the landscape, particularly the AONB and its setting’.*
- 1.3.10.4 *‘In the case of wind energy proposals:*
- *The turbines are appropriately designed as to avoid, or mitigate against unacceptable environmental impacts, including noise, light reflection and shadow flicker*
 - *Sufficient steps are taken to avoid or where possible to mitigate electro-magnetic interference to any existing transmitting or receiving systems’.*

1.3.11 Isle of Anglesey/Sir Ynys Mon and Gwynedd

Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2025 (adopted 2017)

1.3.11.1 The following planning policies set out in the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan (Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd Council, 2017) are of relevance to the SLVIA:

Strategic Policy PS 19: Conserving and where appropriate enhancing the natural environment

1.3.11.2 The Councils will manage development so as to conserve and where appropriate, enhance the Plan area's distinctive natural environment, countryside and coastline, and proposals that have a significant adverse effect on them will be refused unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweighs the value of the site or area and national policy protection for that site and area in question. *'When determining a planning application, consideration will need to be given to the following:*

- *Safeguard the Plan area's habitats and species, geology, history, the coastline and landscapes*
- *Protect, or where appropriate, enhance sites of international, national, regional and local importance and, where appropriate, their settings in line the national policy*
- *Have appropriate regard to the relative significance of international, national or local designations in considering the weight to be attached to acknowledged interests, ensuring that any international or national responsibilities and obligations are fully met in accordance with National Policy*
- *Protect, retain or enhance the local character and distinctiveness of the individual landscape character areas' (in line with policy AMG 2) 'and Seascape Character Areas' (in line with Policy AMG 4).*

AMG1: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans

1.3.11.3 Proposals within or affecting the setting and/or significant views into and out of the AONBs must, where appropriate, have regard to the relevant AONB Management Plan.

AMG 3: Protecting and enhancing features and qualities that are distinctive to the local landscape character

1.3.11.4 *'Particular emphasis will be given to the landscapes identified by the Landscape Character Areas as being of high and outstanding quality because of a certain landscape quality or a combination of qualities. Additional consideration will also be given to development that directly affect the landscape character and setting of the AONBs or the National Park'.*

1.3.12 Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park Authority

Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park Local Plan 2016-2031

1.3.12.1 The following planning policies set out in the Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park Local Plan 2016-2031 (Snowdonia National Park, 2017) are of relevance to the SLVIA.

1.3.12.2 *'The future of the National Park should be founded on its national significance, on what makes the National Park special and unique – its local distinctiveness, its 'Special Qualities'. The following list of 'Special Qualities' outlined in the Eryri National Park Management Plan were drawn up following extensive engagement and consultation:*

- *The diversity of high-quality landscapes and coastal areas within a small geographic area – ranging from coast to rolling uplands to the rugged mountains for which Eryri (Snowdonia) is famed*
- *The robust sense of community cohesion, belonging and vibrancy which combine to give a strong 'sense of place'*
- *Continuing vibrancy of the Welsh language as the primary language in social and professional environments. This aspect is evident in local place names that reflect the area's cultural heritage*
- *An area which has inspired some of the nation's most notable culture, folklore, art, literature and music, which continues to inspire to the present day*
- *The opportunity for people to understand and enjoy the National Park actively, whilst maintaining areas of tranquillity and solitude, thus promoting aspects of health and wellbeing*
- *Landscapes and townscapes which chart human impact over centuries, from Neolithic times to the present day. This is evident in archaeological remains, place and field names, oral and written history and present day land management practices. Its architectural heritage is reflected in the density of Listed Buildings and the wider historic environment*
- *Complex, varied and renowned geology, vital in influencing the disciplines of geology and geography internationally*
- *Varied biodiversity reflecting Eryri's (Snowdonia's) landscapes, geology, land management practices and climate. Some notable species and habitats are of national and international significance, for example species which are remnants of the last ice age, providing a glimpse of semi-Arctic habitats. Eryri (Snowdonia) is the most southerly point in the UK for many such species*
- *Extensive opportunities for recreation, leisure and learning for people of all ages and ability combined with areas of tranquillity'.*

1.3.13 Blackpool City Council

Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027 (Adopted January 2016)

1.3.13.1 The following planning policies set out in the Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027 (Blackpool City Council, 2016) are of relevance to the SLVIA:

Policy DM19: Strategic Views

1.3.13.2 *'Development should protect and enhance views of the following buildings and features of strategic importance:*

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- *Blackpool Tower – views from the seafront, from the piers and along main transport corridors leading into the Town Centre*
- *along the seafront and coastline*
- *into and within conservation areas*
- *views of listed and locally listed buildings*
- *views of buildings which provide a landmark and assist with wayfinding.*

Development that has a detrimental impact on these strategic views will not be permitted’.

1.3.14 Wirral Borough Council

Wirral Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000)

1.3.14.1 The following planning policies set out in the Wirral Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (Wirral Borough Council, 2000) are of relevance to the SLVIA. It should be noted that new Wirral Council Local Plan 2021-2037 is undergoing preparation. The Submission Draft was submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for independent examination on 26 October 2022.

Policy LA1 – Protection for Areas of Special Landscape Value

1.3.14.2 *‘The Local Planning Authority will protect the character and appearance of areas designated as Areas of Special Landscape Value from the adverse effects of development and will not permit proposals which would:*

- *Introduce new intrusive development within an otherwise open setting, especially along a prominent skyline or along the undeveloped coast*
- *Result in the loss or erosion of distinctive landscape features, such as woodlands, hedges or trees, without appropriate replacement provision*
- *Other proposals which, in terms of their siting, scale, form and external appearance, would detract from the appearance of the Area or intrude within important views into or out of the Area’.*

Policy LA2 – Areas of Special Landscape Value

1.3.14.3 *‘The following areas are identified as Areas of Special Landscape Value. Their boundaries are shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals within these areas will be regulated in accordance with Policy LA1:*

- *Bidston Hill*
- *Dee Coast, including Heswall Dales, Thurstaston Common and Royden Park*
- *Caldy Hill, including Stapledon Wood*
- *Thornton Hough’.*

Policy REN1 - Principles for Renewable Energy

- 1.3.14.4 *'Renewable energy proposals will be assessed with regard to their siting and design, environmental impact, and impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses, subject to the other policies of the plan'.*

1.3.15 Sefton Council

Sefton Council Local Plan (Adopted April 2017)

- 1.3.15.1 The following policies set out in Sefton Council Local Plan (Sefton Council, 2017) are of relevance to the SLVIA:

'Policy NH1 – Natural Assets

1. Sefton's natural assets together with its landscape character should continue to contribute to the Borough's sense of place, local distinctiveness and quality of life. Development proposals and other initiatives should contribute positively towards achieving this.

2. A hierarchical approach will be taken to the protection and enhancement of Sefton's natural assets, according to their designation and significance.

3. Development should seek to protect and manage Sefton's natural assets (including natural habitats, sites, the Ecological Network and green infrastructure). Where possible, development should:

- a. Maintain, restore, enhance or extend these natural assets; and*
- b. Create new habitats and green infrastructure; and*
- c. Secure the long-term management of these natural assets.*

4. Where it has been demonstrated that appropriate protection or retention of natural assets cannot be achieved, and there are no alternatives, mitigation and/or as a last resort compensatory provision will be required.

5. The main priorities are improving access, quality, linkages and habitat within the city region ecological network (including the Nature Improvement Area), improving access to and the quality of public open space and other outdoor facilities available to the public and urban trees'.

1.3.16 Fylde Council

Fylde Local Plan (Adopted December 2021)

- 1.3.16.1 The following policies outlined in the Fylde Local Plan (Fylde Council 2021) are of relevance to the SLVIA:

Strategic Policy GD7 – Achieving Good Design in Development

- 1.3.16.2 *'Development will be expected to be sympathetic to surrounding land uses and occupiers, avoiding demonstrable harm to visual amenities of the local area and protecting existing landscape features and natural assets as an integral part of the development'.*

Strategic Policy ENV1 – Landscape

- 1.3.16.3 *'Development will have regard to its visual impact within its landscape context and the landscape type in which it is situated. Development will be assessed to consider whether it is appropriate to the landscape character, amenity and tranquillity within which it is situated, as identified in the Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment, December 2000 or any subsequent update'.*

1.3.17 Isle of Man Government

The Isle of Man Strategic Plan (Adopted February 2016)

- 1.3.17.1 The following policies set out in the Isle of Man Strategic Plan (Isle of Man Government, 2016) are of relevance to the SLVIA:

Strategic Policy 4

- 1.3.17.2 *'Proposals for development must protect or enhance the landscape quality and nature conservation value of urban as well as rural areas but especially in respect to development adjacent to Areas of Special Scientific Interest and other designations'.*

Environment Policy 2

- 1.3.17.3 *'The present system of landscape classification of Areas of High Landscape or Coastal Value and Scenic Significance (AHLV's) as shown on the 1982 Development Plan and subsequent Local and Area Plans will be used as a basis for development control until such time as it is superseded by a landscape classification which will introduce different categories of landscape and policies and guidance for control therein. Within these areas the protection of the character of the landscape will be the most important consideration unless it can be shown that:*
- (a) the development would not harm the character and quality of the landscape; or*
 - (b) the location for the development is essential'.*

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Appendix A: SLVIA offshore study area

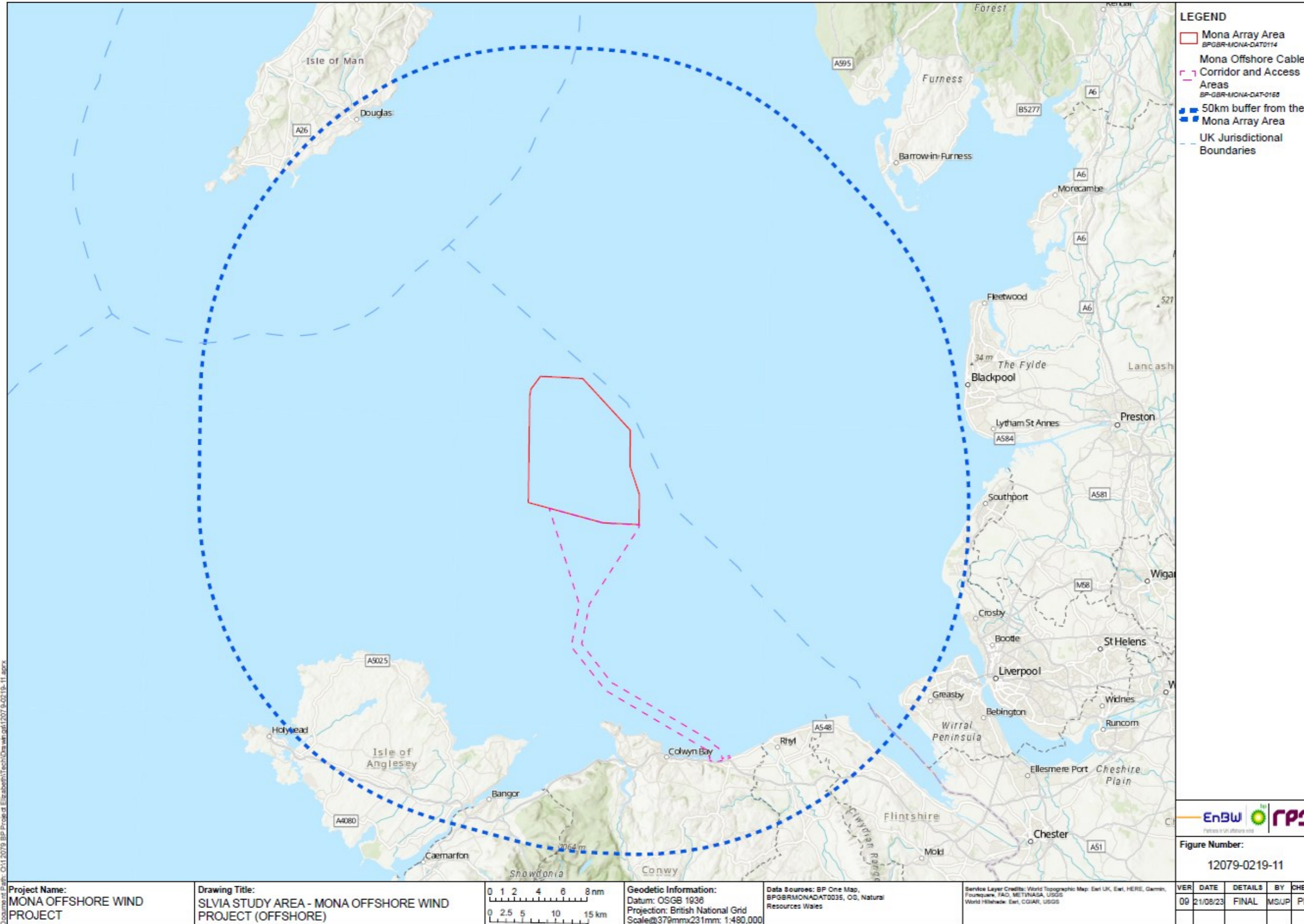


Figure A. 1: SLVIA offshore study area.