



**PORT OF
CROMARTY
FIRTH**

Appendix P: Landscape and Visual





Appendix P.1: Viewpoint Baseline and Assessment



Appendix P.1: Viewpoint Baseline and Assessment

Viewpoint: 1	
Baseline conditions	
Viewpoint location: B817, Invergordon	
Grid reference: NH 6969 6888	Drawing Numbers: 30.16.11
Distance to Proposed Development: 0.5 km	View direction: 163°
Landscape character type: Enclosed Firth	Landscape designation: none
<p>Context:</p> <p>This viewpoint lies to the north-west of the Proposed Development, within a parking area with picnic facilities beside the B817. The car park forms part of the Linear Park, along the western approach to Invergordon.</p> <p>It provides open 180 degree views along and across the Firth of Cromarty, representative of the direct views experienced by road users heading east along this open stretch of the B817. Similar, intermittent views would be possible from the rail line at this point.</p>	
<p>Current view:</p> <p>Beyond the grass verge that borders the car park, the view south-east is across the open water of the firth. A patchwork of fields and woodland clothes the rising slopes of the Black Isle, which forms the skyline on the opposite bank of the firth. Housing at Newhall Point is visible to the left of centre, with the ridge of Cullicudden beyond to the west, forming an intermediate horizon. The existing revetments and lighting standards of Phase 3 and the fishmeal shed (Drawing 30.2.3) can be seen in the foreground to the left, with an oil rig in the Queens Dock. Although not shown in the photograph, cruise ships would be periodically visible alongside Berths 2-4 during summer months.</p> <p>The view south-east forms part of a wide panorama, with the longest views towards Ben Wyvis in the west and hills further south, which form the main focus. Views to the north are curtailed by scrubby gorse and trees along the rail line.</p>	
<p>Landscape sensitivity</p> <p>Susceptibility to change:</p> <p>The open coastal landscape is moderately varied. Frequent settlement and infrastructure reduce susceptibility, although the area forms a backdrop in views, especially from bridges. Overall it is assessed as medium.</p> <p>Landscape value:</p> <p>Wide views along the firth and varied land use contribute to landscape quality, although port facilities, oil rigs, industrial buildings and the busy road detract. The landscape is not designated, but the Linear Park is valued by local residents and others who use it. Taking these points into account, the landscape value is assessed as medium.</p>	
<p>Visual receptors, receptor susceptibility to change and value of view recreational users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some users come to enjoy the view – med-high susceptibility • not a well-promoted viewpoint and a medium number of receptors – medium value 	

road users:

- most road users likely to be travelling for other purposes than the view - medium susceptibility
- view not widely promoted, large number of receptors – med-high value

Assessment of predicted effects**Description of changes:**

The rock armour and additional lighting columns would be the most obvious new permanent elements of Phase 4, appearing to form a continuous extension of those of Phase 3, to the left, extending infrastructure 14 degrees to the west.

Cruise ship scenario.

The entire cruise ship would be visible from this viewpoint, with some minor screening of the base of the hull by the Phase 3 and 4 rock armour. It would occupy approximately 22 degrees of the view and would be predominantly back-lit by the sun.

Oil rig scenario.

In this scenario, the entire oil rig would be visible, occupying approximately 5 degrees of the view and predominantly back-lit by the sun. Components on the laydown area would be visible in front of the rig, extending across 15 degrees of the view.

Offshore renewables scenario.

The pre-assembled turbine towers would be the most noticeable element, occupying some 8 degrees of the view and predominantly back-lit by the sun. The remainder of the laydown area within Phase 3 and 4 would be full of components and crawler cranes would be seen operating behind - and partly screened by - the components. The vessel on Berth 5 would be largely screened from this viewpoint, but the crane of the crane vessel on Berth 6 would be visible behind the turbine towers,

Landscape effects:*Permanent elements.*

The permanent elements would increase the extent of large-scale industrial built elements, but within a landscape already influenced by the port facilities, lighting, oil rigs, industrial buildings and traffic noise. The changes would be evident, but affecting few landscape characteristics.

The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Cruise ship scenario.

Cruise ships are periodically visible alongside Berths 2-4 at present, but the Phase 4 facilities would allow slightly larger ships to berth, further to the west. There would be a slight change to the baseline conditions and the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs are periodically visible alongside Phase 3 at present. Phase 4 would allow rigs to be accommodated further to the west and there would be a slight effect due to the apparent extension of infrastructure westwards. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Offshore renewables scenario.

Onshore turbine components are periodically stored on the other Phases, but Phase 4 would allow the offshore wind sector to be supported including part assembly activities. There would be a noticeable increase in the amount of components and the pre-assembled turbine

towers would extend the effects further westwards. The changes would be obvious, affecting some of the landscape characteristics. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be med-large.

Construction effects:

Construction activity and movement would be evident from this viewpoint. The changes would be obvious, affecting some of the landscape characteristics and the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be med-large.

Visual effects:

The permanent elements would introduce a minor change to the view, appearing similar in colour and form to Phase 3, although a moderate proportion of this wide view, closer to the main focus would be affected. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small-med.

Cruise ship scenario.

Cruise ships would occupy a substantial part of this wide view, drawing the eye from the longer views south and west. There would be a very noticeable change to the baseline conditions from this viewpoint, as ships currently berth alongside Berths 2-4, where they are partly concealed by buildings and infrastructure within the port. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be medium-large.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs would form a strong focus, but would fit the existing pattern of infrastructure and affect a small part of this wide view. There would be a slight change in the baseline conditions and the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small.

Offshore renewables scenario.

Turbine components would occupy a substantial part of this wide view. The vertical elements would contrast in terms of colour and form, forming a competing focus. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be large.

Construction effects:

Ground-based construction activity would be very obvious from this viewpoint, extending across Phase 3 which would be used as a laydown area, occupying a substantial part of this wide view. The magnitude of visual effect during construction is predicted to be large.

Significance of visual effects

Construction effects:	recreational users: mod-major (significant)
	road users: mod-major (significant)
Operational effects:	
Permanent elements:	recreational users: moderate (not significant)
	road users: moderate (not significant)
Temporary activities:	
Cruise ship scenario:	recreational users: mod-major (significant)
	road users: mod-major (significant)
Oil rig scenario:	recreational users: mod-minor (not significant)
	road users: mod-minor (not significant)

Offshore renewables scenario:	recreational users: mod-major (significant)
	road users: mod-major (significant)

Viewpoint: 2	
Baseline conditions	
Viewpoint location: King George Street, Invergordon	
Grid reference: NH 7001 6882	Drawing Numbers: 30.16.12
Distance to Proposed Development: 0.4 km	View direction: 187°
Landscape character type: Enclosed Farmed Landscapes	Landscape designation: none
<p>Context:</p> <p>This viewpoint lies on the southern boundary of Cromlet housing development, to the west of the town centre. It provides slightly elevated views of the Proposed Development, representative of direct views experienced by residents of nearby dwellings and oblique views for road users. Similar views would be experienced elsewhere along this road.</p>	
<p>Current view:</p> <p>Beyond the distributor road the wooded slopes fall to the B817 and the open water of the firth beyond. To the left of the view, a patchwork of fields and woodland clothes the rising slopes of the Black Isle, forming the skyline on the opposite bank of the firth further west. The partly wooded fields of Cullicudden form an intermediate horizon. The existing revetments, laydown area and lighting standards of Phase 3 and the Fishmeal Shed can be seen in the foreground to the left. Although not shown in the photograph an oil rig is present to the left of the view and cruise ships would be periodically visible alongside Berths 2 to 4 during summer months.</p> <p>The view south-east forms part of a 180 degree panorama, with the longest views towards Ben Wyvis in the west, and the hills to the south. Views to the north are curtailed by houses.</p>	
<p>Landscape sensitivity</p> <p>Susceptibility to change:</p> <p>The open, undulating landscape is moderately varied. Frequent settlement and infrastructure and traffic noise reduce susceptibility, although the wider area forms a backdrop in views and has a regular field pattern, which compensates. Overall it is assessed as medium.</p> <p>Landscape value:</p> <p>Wide views along the firth, varied land use, trees and woodland contribute to the landscape quality, although the nearby port facilities, oil rigs, industrial buildings and traffic noise detract. The landscape value is assessed as medium.</p>	
<p>Visual receptors, receptor susceptibility to change and value of view</p> <p>residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • views from dwellings - high susceptibility • view not promoted, small number of receptors – medium value <p>road users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most road users are likely to be travelling for other purposes than the view - medium susceptibility 	

- view not promoted, medium number of receptors – medium value

Assessment of predicted effects

Description of changes:

The rock armour and additional lighting columns would be the most obvious new permanent elements of Phase 4, appearing to form a continuation of those of Phase 3, to the left.

Cruise ship scenario.

The entire cruise ship would be visible from this viewpoint, with some minor screening of the base of the hull by the Phase 3 and 4 rock armour. It would occupy approximately 27 degrees of the view and would be predominantly back-lit by the sun.

Oil rig scenario.

In this scenario, the entire oil rig would be visible, occupying approximately 5 degrees of the view and predominantly back-lit by the sun. Containers and portacabins on the laydown area would appear in front of the rig, extending across 19 degrees of the view.

Offshore renewables scenario.

In this scenario, the pre-assembled turbine towers would be the most noticeable element, occupying some 12 degrees of the view and predominantly back-lit by the sun. The remainder of the laydown area within Phase 3 and 4 would be full of components and crawler cranes would be seen operating. The vessels on Berths 5 and 6 would be partially screened from this viewpoint, the crane of the crane vessel appearing behind the turbine towers.

Landscape effects:

Permanent elements.

The permanent elements would extend the effect of large-scale industrial built elements within a landscape already influenced by the port facilities, lighting, oil rigs, industrial buildings and traffic noise. The changes would be evident, but affecting few landscape characteristics.

The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small-med.

Cruise ship scenario.

Cruise ships are periodically visible alongside Berths 2-4 at present, but the Phase 4 facilities would allow larger ships to berth, effectively extending infrastructure further west. Taking the baseline conditions into account the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs are periodically visible alongside Phase 3 at present. Phase 4 would allow rigs to be accommodated further to the west. There would be a slight effect due to the apparent extension of infrastructure westwards, but taking into account the baseline conditions, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Offshore renewables scenario.

Onshore turbine components are periodically stored on the other Phases, but Phase 4 would allow the offshore wind sector to be supported including part assembly activities. There would be a substantial increase in the amount of infrastructure and the pre-assembled turbine towers would noticeably extend the effects further westwards. The changes would be obvious, affecting some of the landscape characteristics. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be med-large.

Construction effects:

All construction activity and movement would be evident from this viewpoint. The changes would be obvious, affecting some of the landscape characteristics and the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be med-large.

Visual effects:

The permanent elements would introduce a minor change to the view, appearing similar in colour and form to Phase 3. A moderate proportion of this wide view would be affected, the changes closer to the centre of view for residents. Residents would experience direct views and the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small-med. Road users would have oblique views and a small magnitude of effect is predicted.

Cruise ship scenario.

Cruise ships would occupy a substantial part of this wide view, drawing the eye and forming a new focus. There would be a very noticeable change to the baseline conditions from this viewpoint, as ships currently berth alongside Berths 2-4, where they are partly concealed by buildings and infrastructure within the port. Residents would experience direct views and the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be med-large. Road users would have oblique views and a medium magnitude of effect is predicted.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs would form an obvious new focus, tending to draw the eye. They would fit the existing pattern of infrastructure and affect a small part of this wide view, however. This would represent a minor change to the baseline. Residents would experience direct views and the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small. Road users would have oblique views and a small-neg magnitude of effect is predicted.

Offshore renewables scenario.

Turbine components would occupy a substantial part of this wide view. The vertical elements would draw the eye and form a new focus, contrasting in terms of form and colour, and towards the centre of view for residents. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be large for residents and med-large for road users.

Construction effects:

Ground-based construction activity would be very obvious from this viewpoint, extending across Phase 3 which would be used as a laydown area, occupying a substantial part of this wide view. The magnitude of visual effect during construction is predicted to be large for residents and med-large for road users.

Significance of visual effects

Construction effects:	residents: mod-major (significant)
	road users: moderate (not significant)
Operational effects:	
Permanent elements:	residents: moderate (not significant)
	road users: mod-minor (not significant)
Temporary activities:	
Cruise ship scenario:	residents: mod-major (significant)
	road users: moderate (not significant)

Oil rig scenario:	residents: mod-minor (not significant)
	road users: minor (not significant)
Offshore renewables scenario:	residents: mod-major (significant)
	road users: mod-major (significant)

Viewpoint: 3	
Baseline conditions	
Viewpoint location: Invergordon High Street	
Grid reference: NH 7053 6856	Drawing Numbers: 30.16.13
Distance to Proposed Development: 0.6 km	View direction: 238°
Landscape character type: Enclosed Farmed Landscapes	Landscape designation: none
Context: This viewpoint lies at the western end of the High Street, allowing partly screened views towards the Proposed Development, representative of the oblique views experienced by residents of nearby dwellings and more direct views for road users.	
Current view: The High Street is bordered by a mix of one and a half and two storey buildings which contain the view west at this point. An oil rig and workshops on Phase 1/2 can be seen above and between the buildings. There are slightly longer views east along the High Street and a long glimpse west towards Ben Wyvis. Other views are short, enclosed by nearby buildings.	
Landscape sensitivity Susceptibility to change: Industrial buildings and infrastructure and traffic reduce susceptibility, although the small scale of the settlement and varied land use compensate to a degree. Overall it is assessed as low-med. Landscape value: The strong form of the settlement and variety of characteristic stone buildings add to the landscape value, though nearby port facilities, oil rigs, industrial buildings and traffic movement detract. The landscape value is assessed as medium.	
Visual receptors, receptor susceptibility to change and value of view residents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> views from dwellings - high susceptibility not widely promoted view, small number of receptors – medium value road users: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> most road users likely to be travelling for other purposes than the view - medium susceptibility view not widely promoted, medium number of receptors – medium value 	
Assessment of predicted effects	
Description of changes:	

No permanent elements of Phase 4 would be visible from this viewpoint.

Cruise ship scenario.

The cruise ship would not be visible from this viewpoint, screened from view by nearby buildings.

Oil rig scenario.

In this scenario, the upper part of the oil rig would be visible, occupying approximately 4.5 degrees of the view and predominantly back-lit by the sun. No containers and portacabins on the laydown area would be visible.

Offshore renewables scenario.

The pre-assembled turbine towers and turbine bases would be the most noticeable elements, contrasting in terms of colour and form, occupying some 13 degrees of the view and predominantly back-lit by the sun. Cranes may also be visible, but other components and the vessels on Berths 5 and 6 would be screened from view.

Landscape effects:

Permanent elements.

No landscape effect is predicted.

Cruise ship scenario.

No landscape effect is predicted.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs are periodically visible alongside Phase 3 at present. Phase 4 would allow rigs to be accommodated further to the west, slightly further from this viewpoint. No landscape effect is predicted.

Offshore renewables scenario.

There would be a noticeable increase in the amount of infrastructure evident, but few of the landscape characteristics would be affected. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small-med.

Construction effects:

There would be a slight increase in the amount of activity evident, but few of the landscape characteristics would be affected. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Visual effects:

No visual effect is predicted.

Cruise ship scenario.

No visual effect is predicted.

Oil rig scenario.

Although oil rigs would form an obvious focus, they would be slightly more distant and less evident than at present. No visual effect is predicted.

Offshore renewables scenario.

Turbine components and cranes would occupy a substantial part of this restricted view. The more massive, vertical elements would draw the eye and form a new focus, further to the west and closer to the longest part of the view. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be med-large for road users and medium for residents.

Construction effects:	
Ground-based construction activity would not be visible from this viewpoint, but taller structures, such as cranes may just be visible. The magnitude of visual effect during construction is predicted to be small-medium for road users and small for residents.	
Significance of visual effects	
Construction effects:	residents: mod-minor (not significant)
	road users: mod-minor (not significant)
Operational effects:	
Permanent elements:	residents: none
	road users: none
Temporary activities:	
Cruise ship scenario:	residents: none
	road users: none
Oil rig scenario:	residents: none
	road users: none
Offshore renewables scenario:	residents: mod-major (significant)
	road users: moderate

Viewpoint: 4	
Baseline conditions	
Viewpoint location: Near Balblair	
Grid reference: NH 7055 6705	Drawing Numbers: 30.16.14
Distance to Proposed Development: 1.2 km	View direction: 331°
Landscape character type: Open Farmed Slopes	Landscape designation: none
Context:	
This viewpoint lies at the eastern end of Cullicudden, at a passing place below Balblair Croft, directly opposite Invergordon. It is slightly elevated and gives direct open views of the Proposed Development, representative of those experienced by residents of a nearby dwelling and users of the minor road to Newhall Point.	
Current view:	
The view north is towards Invergordon, with port facilities and shipping in the foreground and housing and the town centre beyond. A strong pattern of fields on sloping ground forms a backdrop to the settlement, with rounded moorland hills above, forming the skyline. Novar wind farm is visible towards the centre of the view.	
To the east, several rigs are visible in Cromarty Bay and part of the Black Isle can be seen further south. Rising ground and nearby vegetation screens views to the south. To the west there are long views to Ben Wyvis and Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm.	
Landscape sensitivity	
Susceptibility to change:	

This open, undulating landscape has a diverse land cover and strong field pattern. Views of Invergordon and infrastructure reduce susceptibility, which is assessed as medium.

Landscape value:

Panoramic views along the firth, varied land use, trees and woodland contribute to the landscape quality, although the nearby port facilities, lighting, oil rigs and industrial buildings detract. The landscape value is assessed as medium.

Visual receptors, receptor susceptibility to change and value of view

residents:

- views from dwellings - high susceptibility
- not widely promoted view, small number of receptors – medium value

road users:

- some road users may be travelling for the view - medium susceptibility
- view not widely promoted, small number of receptors – medium value

Assessment of predicted effects

Description of changes:

Berth 6 and additional lighting columns would be the most obvious new permanent elements of Phase 4, appearing to form a continuation of those of Phase 3, to the left and extending the infrastructure by 7 degrees.

Cruise ship scenario.

The entire cruise ship would be visible from this viewpoint, occupying approximately 15 degrees of the view and would be predominantly front-lit by the sun.

Oil rig scenario.

In this scenario, the entire oil rig would be visible in front of Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm, occupying approximately 2.5 degrees of the view and predominantly front-lit by the sun. Containers and portacabins on the laydown area would appear to the right of the rig, extending across 6 degrees of the view.

Offshore renewables scenario.

In this scenario, the pre-assembled turbine towers would be the most noticeable element, occupying some 6 degrees of the view, effectively screening Beinn Tharsuinn windfarm and predominantly front-lit by the sun. The remainder of the laydown area within Phase 3 and 4 would be full of components and crawler cranes would be seen operating. The vessels on Berths 5 and 6 would be visible alongside the berths, the vessel crane would be seen operating in front of the turbine towers.

Landscape effects:

Permanent elements.

The permanent elements would increase the extent of large-scale industrial built elements slightly within a landscape already influenced by the port facilities, lighting, oil rigs and industrial buildings. The changes would be evident, but affecting few landscape characteristics.

The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Cruise ship scenario.

Cruise ships are periodically visible alongside Berths 2-4 at present, but the Phase 4 facilities would allow larger ships to berth, upstream to the west. Taking baseline conditions into account the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs are periodically visible alongside Phase 3 at present. Phase 4 would allow rigs to be accommodated further to the west. There would be a slight effect due to the apparent extension of infrastructure westwards, but taking into account the baseline conditions, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Offshore renewables scenario.

Onshore turbine components are periodically stored on the other Phases, but Phase 4 would allow the offshore wind sector to be supported including part assembly activities. There would be an increase in the amount of infrastructure and the pre-assembled turbine towers would extend effects further westwards. The changes would be obvious, affecting some of the landscape characteristics. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be medium.

Construction effects:

There would be a moderate increase in the amount of activity evident, affecting some of the landscape characteristics would be affected. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small-med.

Visual effects:

The permanent elements would introduce a minor change to the view, appearing similar in colour and form to Phase 3. There would be little change to the focus and a small proportion of this wide view would be affected. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small.

Cruise ship scenario.

Cruise ships would occupy a substantial part of this wide view, drawing the eye and forming a new focus. This would represent a minor change to the baseline, as cruise ships are currently fully visible from this viewpoint. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs would form an obvious new focus in front of Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm, tending to draw the eye. They would fit the existing pattern of infrastructure and affect a small part of this wide view, however. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small.

Offshore renewables scenario.

Turbine components would occupy a moderate part of this wide view. The vertical elements would contrast in terms of form and colour, drawing the eye and forming a competing focus to Beinn Tharsuinn. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be med-large.

Construction effects:

Ground-based construction activity would be very obvious from this viewpoint, extending across the west of Phase 3 which would be used as a laydown area, occupying a moderate part of this wide view. The magnitude of visual effect during construction is predicted to be med-large.

Significance of visual effects

Construction effects:

residents: mod-major (significant)

road users: moderate (not significant)

Operational Effects:	
Permanent elements:	residents: mod-minor (not significant)
	road users: mod-minor (not significant)
Temporary activities:	
Cruise ship scenario:	residents: mod-minor (not significant)
	road users: mod-minor (not significant)
Oil rig scenario:	residents: mod-minor (not significant)
	road users: mod-minor (not significant)
Offshore renewables scenario:	residents: mod-major (significant)
	road users: mod-major (significant)

Viewpoint: 5	
Baseline conditions	
Viewpoint location: A9-Skiach	
Grid reference: NH 6306 6762	Drawing Numbers: 30.16.15
Distance to Proposed Development: 6.8 km	View direction: 85°
Landscape character type: Enclosed Firth	Landscape designation: none
Context: This viewpoint lies to the west of Alness beside the junction of the A9 with the B9176 and Skiach services. It provides open views of the Proposed Development, representative of the direct views experienced by road users heading east.	
Current view: The view east forms part of a wide panorama southwards across the firth to the patchwork of fields and small woods on the Black Isle. Alness Point extends across the view in the middle distance and beyond this, several oil rigs are visible in Cromarty Bay and near Invergordon. Views to the north are curtailed by scrub and trees on the adjacent road embankments.	
Landscape sensitivity	
Susceptibility to change: The open coastal landscape is moderately varied. Frequent settlement and infrastructure reduce susceptibility, although the area forms a backdrop in views, especially from bridges, which compensates. Overall it is assessed as medium.	
Landscape value: Panoramic views along the firth, varied land use, natural shorelines contribute to the landscape quality, although the oil rigs, port facilities and industrial buildings detract. The landscape value is assessed as medium.	
Visual receptors, receptor susceptibility to change and value of view	
road users:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some road users likely to be travelling for the view – med-high susceptibility • view not widely promoted and large number of receptors – med-high value 	

Assessment of predicted effects

Description of changes:

The permanent elements of Phase 4 would not be discernible from this viewpoint.

Cruise ship scenario.

The cruise ship would be visible amongst oil rigs, occupying less than 0.5 degrees, back-clothed by hills and front-lit slightly more often.

Oil rig scenario.

In this scenario, the oil rig would be visible, appearing amongst other oil rigs in the firth. Containers and portcabins on the laydown area would be screened by the landform of Alness Point.

Offshore renewables scenario.

The pre-assembled turbine towers would be the most noticeable elements, occupying some 1.5 degrees of the view and front-lit slightly more often. Turbine bases would appear amongst workshops to the left and crawler cranes and the crane vessel to the right of the turbine towers.

Landscape effects:

Permanent elements.

No landscape effect is predicted.

Cruise ship scenario.

The larger size and closer proximity of the cruise ship is unlikely to result in any perceptible change and no landscape effect is predicted.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs are periodically visible alongside Phase 3 at present. Phase 4 would allow rigs to be accommodated very slightly closer to this viewpoint, but no landscape effect is predicted.

Offshore renewables scenario.

There would be a noticeable increase in the amount of infrastructure evident within Invergordon, but few of the landscape characteristics would be affected. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Construction effects:

There would be a slight increase in the amount of activity evident, but overall the magnitude of effect during construction is predicted to be small-neg.

Visual effects:

No visual effect is predicted.

Cruise ship scenario.

The larger size and closer proximity of the cruise ship is unlikely to result in any perceptible change and no visual effect is predicted.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs would be slightly closer than at present, but this is unlikely to be perceptible from this viewpoint. No visual effect is predicted.

Offshore renewables scenario.

Turbine components and cranes would occupy a small part of this wide view, although the more massive, vertical elements would contrast in terms of colour and form, drawing the eye

and forming a more obvious focus. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small-med.	
Construction effects: Ground-based construction activity may just be visible from this viewpoint, but taller structures, such as cranes would be more obvious. The magnitude of visual effect during construction is predicted to be small.	
Significance of visual effects	
Construction effects:	road users: mod-minor (not significant)
Operational Effects:	
Permanent elements:	road users: none
Temporary activities:	
Cruise ship scenario:	road users: none
Oil rig scenario:	road users: none
Offshore renewables scenario:	road users: moderate (not significant)

Viewpoint: 6	
Baseline conditions	
Viewpoint location: Fyrish Hill	
Grid reference: NH 6077 6974	Drawing Numbers: 30.16.16
Distance to Proposed Development: 9.1 km	View direction: 99°
Landscape character type: Rounded Hills	Landscape designation: none
Context: This viewpoint lies beside the Cnoc Fyrish monument, a simulated ruin erected by General Sir Hector Munro of Novar around 1783 as relief work in a time of famine. It is popular with walkers, reached by waymarked trails from a small car park on the minor road to Boath. It provides extensive views over the Cromarty Firth and to Ben Wyvis in the West.	
Current view: The view south-east forms part of a wide panorama, extending from Balintore on the coast round to Ben Wyvis, and across the firth to the Black Isle and the Cairngorm Hills beyond. Several oil rigs are visible in Cromarty Bay, Evanton airfield and industrial estate lie below and Alness, Invergordon and Nigg are visible further to the east. Communications masts, pylons and wind turbines are also evident on the hills to the south and west. Views to the north are curtailed by the rising moorland.	
Landscape sensitivity	
Susceptibility to change: This large scale, open, exposed landscape has a uniform vegetation cover and rolling landform. Views of settlement and infrastructure reduce susceptibility, although Cnoc Fyrish forms an important backdrop. Overall it is assessed as medium susceptibility.	
Landscape value: Panoramic views, rugged landform and semi-natural vegetation contribute to the landscape quality, although views of oil rigs, masts, port facilities, industrial buildings and the sound and	

movement of traffic on the A9 below detract. The landscape is valued as a recreational resource, however and is assessed as med-high.

Visual receptors, receptor susceptibility to change and value of view

walkers:

- most visitors come to enjoy the view – high susceptibility
- view widely promoted with moderate number of receptors – med-high value

Assessment of predicted effects

Description of changes:

The permanent elements of Phase 4 would just be discernible from this viewpoint, extending the Phase 3 laydown area towards the viewer.

Cruise ship scenario.

The cruise ship would be visible against the water of the firth, occupying 0.6 degrees and back-lit slightly more often.

Oil rig scenario.

In this scenario, the oil rig would appear between other oil rigs in the firth. Containers and portacabins on the laydown area would also be discernible.

Offshore renewables scenario.

The pre-assembled turbine towers would be the most noticeable elements, occupying some 1.2 degrees of the view and back-lit slightly more often. Cranes and vessels on Berths 5 and 6 would be seen to the right of the turbine towers and turbine bases may be discernible amongst workshops to the left. Other components would cover the laydown areas.

Landscape effects:

Permanent elements.

The landscape effect is predicted to be negligible.

Cruise ship scenario.

The slightly larger size of the cruise ship is unlikely to result in any perceptible change and no landscape effect is predicted.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs are periodically visible alongside Phase 3 at present. Phase 4 would allow rigs to be accommodated very slightly closer to this viewpoint, but no landscape effect is predicted.

Offshore renewables scenario.

There would be a noticeable increase in the amount of infrastructure evident within Invergordon, but few of the landscape characteristics would be affected, given the extent of industrial structures currently present. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Construction effects:

There would be a slight increase in the amount of activity evident, but overall the magnitude of landscape effect during construction is predicted to be small-neg.

Visual effects:

The visual effect is predicted to be negligible.

Cruise ship scenario.

The larger size of the cruise ship is unlikely to result in any perceptible change and the visual effect is predicted to be negligible.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs would be slightly closer than at present, but this is unlikely to be perceptible from this viewpoint. Portacabins and containers would highlight the extent of the laydown area, however. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be negligible.

Offshore renewables scenario.

Turbine components and cranes would occupy a small part of this wide view, similar in extent to the oil rigs in Cromarty Bay. The more massive, vertical elements would draw the eye slightly and the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small-med.

Construction effects:

Ground-based construction activity may just be visible from this viewpoint, but taller structures, such as the piling crane would be more obvious. The magnitude of visual effect during construction is predicted to be small-med.

Significance of visual effects

Construction effects:	walkers: moderate (not significant)
Operational Effects:	
Permanent elements:	walkers: mod-minor (not significant)
Temporary activities:	
Cruise ship scenario:	walkers: mod-minor (not significant)
Oil rig scenario:	walkers: mod-minor (not significant)
Offshore renewables scenario:	walkers: moderate (not significant)

Viewpoint: 7

Baseline conditions

Viewpoint location: Cromarty Beach

Grid reference: NH 7859 6769

Drawing Numbers: 30.16.17

Distance to Proposed Development: 8.4 km

View direction: 274°

Landscape character type: Open Farmed Slopes

Landscape designation: none*

Context:

This viewpoint lies adjacent to Marine Terrace, which forms part of NCN Route 1, on the western edge of Cromarty. It provides direct views of the Proposed Development, representative of those experienced by residents and road users.

*The Cromarty Sutons, Rosemarkie and Fort George SLA lies just to the east of the viewpoint.

Current view:

The view west forms part of a 180 degree panorama across the firth towards Ben Wyvis. Dwellings at Newhall Point can be seen in the middle distance, with the remainder of the Black Isle to the left of the view. Invergordon appears to the right, the foreground is dominated by several nearby oil rigs which would periodically obscure views of the Proposed Development.

Landscape sensitivity

Susceptibility to change:

The open, undulating landscape is moderately varied. Frequent settlement and infrastructure reduce susceptibility, although the area forms a backdrop in views and has a regular field pattern, which compensates. Overall it is assessed as medium.

Landscape value:

Panoramic views along the firth, varied land use, trees and woodland contribute to the landscape quality, although the oil rigs, port facilities and industrial buildings detract. The landscape value is assessed as medium.

Visual receptors, receptor susceptibility to change and value of view

residents:

- views from dwellings - high susceptibility
- moderately promoted view, small number of receptors– medium value

road users:

- some road users travelling for the view – med-high susceptibility
- view moderately promoted, but small number of receptors – medium value

Assessment of predicted effects

Description of changes:

The permanent elements of Phase 4 would not be easily discernible from this viewpoint.

Cruise ship scenario.

The cruise ship would be visible behind a foreground of oil rigs, occupying less than 0.5 degrees, back-clothed by hills and front-lit slightly more often.

Oil rig scenario.

In this scenario, the oil rig would be visible, appearing behind much closer rigs. Containers and portacabins on the laydown area are unlikely to be visible.

Offshore renewables scenario.

The pre-assembled turbine towers would be the most noticeable elements, occupying some 1.2 degrees of the view and front-lit slightly more often. Crawler cranes and vessels on Berths 5 and 6 would be visible to the left of the turbine towers and the turbine bases would appear to the right.

Landscape effects:

Permanent elements.

No landscape effect is predicted.

Cruise ship scenario.

The larger size of the cruise ship is unlikely to result in any perceptible change and no landscape effect is predicted.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs are periodically visible alongside Phase 3 at present and no landscape effect is predicted.

Offshore renewables scenario.

There would be a noticeable increase in the amount of infrastructure evident within Invergordon, but few of the landscape characteristics would be affected. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small.

Construction effects:	
There would be a slight increase in the amount of activity evident, but overall the magnitude of landscape effect during construction is predicted to be small-neg.	
Visual effects:	
No visual effect is predicted.	
<i>Cruise ship scenario.</i>	
The larger size of the cruise ship is unlikely to result in any perceptible change and no visual effect is predicted.	
<i>Oil rig scenario.</i>	
No visual effect is predicted.	
<i>Offshore renewables scenario.</i>	
Turbine components and cranes would occupy a small part of this panoramic view, although the more massive, vertical elements would contrast in terms of form and colour, drawing the eye and forming a competing focus to Ben Wyvis. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small-med.	
Construction effects:	
Ground-based construction activity is unlikely to be visible from this viewpoint, but taller structures, such as the piling crane would be more evident. The magnitude of visual effect during construction is predicted to be small.	
Significance of visual effects	
Construction effects:	residents: mod-minor (not significant)
	road users: mod-minor (not significant)
Operational Effects:	
Permanent elements:	residents: none
	road users: none
Temporary activities:	
Cruise ship scenario:	residents: none
	road users: none
Oil rig scenario:	residents: none
	road users: none
Offshore renewables scenario:	residents: moderate (not significant)
	road users: mod-minor (not significant)

Viewpoint: 8	
Baseline conditions	
Viewpoint location: A9-A862	
Grid reference: NH 5878 6211	Drawing Numbers: 30.16.18
Distance to Proposed Development: 12.6 km	View direction: 61°

Landscape character type: Enclosed Firth	Landscape designation: none*
<p>Context:</p> <p>This viewpoint lies within a layby on the northern approach to the bridge over the Cromarty Firth. It provides open views towards the Proposed Development, representative of those experienced by road users.</p>	
<p>Current view:</p> <p>The view north-east forms part of a wider panorama. There are long views north-east along the firth and medium range views south-east to the patchwork of hills and woods on the Black Isle. Views to the north are curtailed by woodland on rising ground, where a nearby wind turbine is visible. The western outskirts of Invergordon and several oil rigs are visible in the distance, but the port and town centre are partly obscured by the ridge of Cullicudden on the Black Isle.</p> <p>The longest views are south-west along the firth to distant hills. Transmission pylons and wind turbines are evident on the hills.</p>	
<p>Landscape sensitivity</p> <p>Susceptibility to change:</p> <p>The open coastal landscape is moderately varied. Frequent settlement and infrastructure reduce susceptibility, although the area forms a backdrop in views, especially from bridges, which compensates. Overall it is assessed as medium.</p> <p>Landscape value:</p> <p>Panoramic views along the firth, varied land use, natural shorelines contribute to the landscape quality, although the oil rigs, turbines, pylons, port facilities, industrial buildings and traffic noise and movement detract. The landscape value is assessed as medium.</p>	
<p>Visual receptors, receptor susceptibility to change and value of view road users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some road users likely to be travelling for the view – med-high susceptibility • view not widely promoted and large number of receptors – med-high value 	
<p>Assessment of predicted effects</p>	
<p>Description of changes:</p> <p>The permanent elements of Phase 4 would not be readily discernible from this viewpoint.</p> <p><i>Cruise ship scenario.</i></p> <p>Much of the cruise ship would be concealed by the rising landform of Cullicudden. The upper part of the ship would be visible, occupying less than 0.5 degrees, against a background of oil rigs.</p> <p><i>Oil rig scenario.</i></p> <p>In this scenario, the upper parts of the oil rig would be visible, appearing against other rigs. Portacabins and containers on the laydown area may be discernible.</p> <p><i>Offshore renewables scenario.</i></p> <p>The pre-assembled turbine towers would be the most noticeable elements, occupying some 0.8 degrees of the view and front-lit slightly more often. Turbine bases would appear behind and partly screened by the turbine towers and cranes would also be visible. Vessels on Berths 5 and 6 and other components are likely to be screened by the rising landform of Cullicudden.</p>	

Landscape effects:

Permanent elements.

No landscape effect is predicted.

Cruise ship scenario.

The larger size of the cruise ship is unlikely to result in any perceptible change and no landscape effect is predicted.

Oil rig scenario.

Oil rigs are periodically visible alongside Phase 3 at present and no landscape effect is predicted.

Offshore renewables scenario.

There would be a slight increase in the amount of infrastructure evident within Invergordon, but no landscape characteristics would be affected. The magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be small-neg.

Construction effects:

There would be a marginal increase in the amount of activity evident, overall the magnitude of landscape effect during construction is predicted to be negligible.

Visual effects:

No visual effect is predicted.

Cruise ship scenario.

No visual effect is predicted.

Oil rig scenario.

No visual effect is predicted.

Offshore renewables scenario.

Turbine components and cranes would occupy a minor part of this panoramic view but the more massive, vertical elements would contrast in terms of colour and form, drawing the eye slightly. The magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be small-neg.

Construction effects:

Ground-based construction activity may just be visible from this viewpoint, but taller structures, such as cranes would be more obvious. The magnitude of visual effect during construction is predicted to be small-neg.

Significance of visual effects**Construction effects:**

road users: mod-minor (not significant)

Operational Effects:**Permanent elements:**

road users: none

Temporary activities:**Cruise ship scenario:**

road users: none

Oil rig scenario:

road users: none

Offshore renewables scenario:

road users: mod-minor (not significant)