1.   VIEWPOINT SELECTION CRITERIA

1.1   BACKGROUND

In 2006 ASH design + assessment (ASH) undertook preliminary reconnaissance of the study area in order to build up a picture of the existing landscape character, topographical features and historical associations. The site familiarisation exercise also identified, in broad terms, potential visual receptors. Initial consultation with SNH was undertaken and they provided details of eight initial viewpoints. Following continued consultation a further list of potential viewpoints was put forward by ASH and SNH and this final list was agreed with both SNH and Shetland Islands Council in Autumn 2007.

1.2   METHODOLOGY

The visual impact assessment of the development was carried out broadly based on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (2nd edition, 2002) and guidelines on current best practice, including: 'Guidelines on the Environmental Impacts of Windfarms & Small Scale Hydroelectric Schemes' (SNH February 2001); 'Visual Representation of Windfarms, Good Practice Guidance' SNH 2006; Landscape Character Assessment (The Countryside Agency and SNH 2002); and Visual Assessment of Windfarms: Best Practice (conducted by University of Newcastle for SNH, 2002).

A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) programme was run for the area in order to ascertain the visual envelope, to guide the field assessment of the impact of the proposals on properties, outdoor spaces and routeways within the envelope. A wide-ranging comprehensive visual assessment was then carried out of all receptors with the potential to receive an impact within the study area, supplemented by visualisations from a subset of points (those considered key viewpoints) as part of this wider assessment.

Field assessment was carried out for impacts during construction and for impacts during the operational years after completion. The LVIA survey area for the proposed wind farm extended to 35km from the development periphery, in accordance with current best practice. A further site visit by ASH took place once the final layout was agreed, at which time the impacts identified previously were modified as necessary.

1.3   VIEWPOINTS

A viewpoint is defined in 'Visual Representation of Windfarms, Good Practice Guidance' (The Guidance) as "...a place from where a view is gained and represents specific conditions or viewers (visual receptors)." The Guidance further suggests that "...over-provision of viewpoints can be as unhelpful as under-provision…"

All viewpoints should, therefore:

- Fall within the ZTV;

- have main/ most important views looking towards development;

- " ..likely to be significantly affected by the development" (PAN 58, para. 65);and

- be a key viewpoint, e.g. visitor attraction, settlement, tourist route, recreation site, popular vantage point, or an Historic /Designed Landscape.

In addition, viewpoints selected should ideally;

- represent a variety of distances, aspects and elevations;

- demonstrate a variety of visible extent, e.g. full, hub, tips only;

- be representative of a range of views and viewer types that will experience the development; and

- be representative of a range of landscape character types.

The finalised and agreed list of viewpoints and their reasons for inclusion are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Finalised List of Viewpoints

Viewpoint Number	Location	Grid Reference	Description/ Reasons for Selection
1	The Burn of Lunklet	HU 367 576	Outdoor Recreation Area (footpath) and Tourist Destination
2	Aith Pier	HU 347 560	Settlement
3	Kergord Valley (Weisdale Mill)	HU 395 531	Outdoor Site/ Tourist Destination
4	Noup of Noss	HU 552 399	Outdoor Site, National Nature Reserve, SPA, SSSI
5	Ronas Hill	HU 306 834	Peak/Outdoor Recreation Area/Viewpoint (highest point in Shetland)
6	Lunna House	HU 487 692	Designed Landscape/Historic site/ Tourist Destination
7	Loch of Tingwall	HU 417 434	Historic Site/ Tourist Destination
8	Knab/ Knab Road, Lerwick	HU 478 407	Settlement
9	North Ness, Lerwick	HU 475 420	Settlement
10	Scord of Scalloway	HU 411 397	Vantage Point, identified on OS maps
11	North Nesting (Laxfirth)	HU 474 597	Settlement
12	South Nesting (Benston)	HU 470 542	Settlement
13	Viewpoint from A971 between Bixter and Walls	HU 287 529	Main road between two settlements
14	Voe (Car Park at Laxo road junction)	HU 413 624	Viewpoint
15	Vidlin	HU 487 661	Settlement
16	Papa Stour	HU 181 609	Settlement
17	Whalsay (Clate)	HU 543 615	Settlement
18	Firth/Mossbank	HU 448 749	Settlement
19	Burravoe (Yell)	HU 519 793	Settlement
20	Uyeasound (Unst)	HP 592 010	Settlement
21	Hamnavoe (Burra)	HU 369 362	Settlement
22	Brae	HU 355 681	Settlement
23	Hillswick	HU 282 770	Settlement
24	West Sandwick (Yell)	HU 450 874	Settlement
25	Ollaberry	HU 369 806	Settlement

Viewpoint Number	Location	Grid Reference	Description/ Reasons for Selection
26	Out Skerries	HU 681 718	Settlement
27	A970 south of Cunningsburgh,	HU 430 263	Road Route; first view from southern mainland heading north
28	A970 Kames	HU 415 600	Road Route
29	B9076 near Scatsta (Airport Viewpoint)	HU 398 729	Viewpoint, identified on OS maps
30	Northlink Ferry (off Mousa)	HU 490 230	Ferry Route; one of main means of access to Shetland
31	Bressay Light House	HU 490 376	Historic Building; visitor viewpoint
32	Mousa	HU 457 236	Outdoor Location, Tourist Destination, Designated Area – SPA & SSSI
33	Wormadale Hill (A971)	HU 403 463	Viewpoint, identified on OS maps
34	Mavis Grind	HU 340 684	Outdoor Location/ Tourist stop
35	Fethaland track	HU 376 926	Outdoor Recreation Location, Designated Area - NSA
36	Esha Ness	HU 221 783	Designated Area - NSA / Tourist stop
37	Brough Lodge (Fetlar)	HU 580 927	Historic Building/ Designed Landscape
38	Belmont House (Unst)	HP 565 010	Historic Building/ Designed Landscape
39	Busta Junction, Brae	HU 348 675	Settlement/ Important elevated pausing point on way to popular hotel
40	Mulla, Voe	HU 404 641	Settlement with elevated south-facing views
41	Laxo	HU 444 636	Settlement
42	Gardie House,Bressay	HU 487 422	Historic Building/ Designed Landscape
43	Heglister (A971)	HU 385 512	Road Route

APPENDIX 9.2 - 3