

A3. SITE SELECTION

A3.1 INTRODUCTION

The 2009 Viking Wind Farm ES identified the process leading to the selection of the Viking Wind Farm site. The wind farm design has been refined following comments on the 2009 ES; and an important SNH guidance document, on which the selection process was based, has since been updated and pertinent changes are presented here for reference. This Addendum chapter should be read in conjunction with the 2009 ES. Details of the overall design process and the recent revisions process are presented in Chapter A4 and Appendix A4.7

It is very important to read Chapter A1, the Introduction to this ES Addendum, before reading this Chapter A3. Chapter A1 describes the background to the changes, the philosophy and approach which guided them, and the extensive (and continuing) consultations with stakeholders which inform the changes.

A3.2 UPDATES TO ES SECTION 3.2

A3.2.1 Selection criteria

Section 3.2.1 of the 2009 ES detailed criteria and guidance that influenced the siting of the Viking Wind Farm. It was stated that this process was based on British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) guidelines and was in accordance with factors included by SNH in its Strategic Locational Guidance for Onshore Wind Farms 2002 (as updated in 2005). In particular, the site contains no areas safeguarded by national or international nature conservation designations, and in 2003 Shetland Islands Council identified the central mainland of Shetland as a preferred area for wind farm development¹

SNH published an updated version of the 2002 Strategic Locational Guidance in 2009 that takes into consideration RSPB bird sensitivity data. Integration of this guidance has resulted in adjustment of natural heritage sensitivity zones within Shetland, upgrading much of the wind farm site from Zone 1 (Low Sensitivity) and Zone 1/2 (Low to Medium Sensitivity) as recorded in the original text, to Zone 2 (Medium Sensitivity). More details of the ornithological issues and proposed mitigation relevant to the site are presented in Chapter A11 of this Addendum.

The prerequisite of a Shetland location is still necessary to support the business ownership structure discussed in Chapter A17.

A3.2.2 Stage 3 - Design and environmental assessment

Section 3.2.4 of the 2009 ES summarised the evolution of the wind farm design and the role of EIA within that process. Following comments received on the ES further changes

¹ Planning for wind energy in Shetland. 26/08/2003

have been made to layout and design and additional environmental assessment undertaken as necessary. Physical changes to the proposed Viking Wind Farm, the reasons for those changes and the process of review which led to their adoption, are described in Chapter A4 of this ES Addendum.