

## ANNEX 4

Scottish Government: Energy & Climate Change Directorate  
Habitats Regulations appraisal of the Implications of the proposed Stornoway Wind Farm  
**Lewis Peatlands Special Protection Area (SPA)**

**14 December 2021**

The following appraisal has been prepared by the Scottish Ministers as the Competent Authority for the Stornoway Wind Farm.

	<b>Description</b>	
1	Brief description of the project	<p>The Development Site is located to the west of the town of Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis. There is consent for a 36 turbine Stornoway Wind Farm on the Development Site. The Proposed Development comprises 33 wind turbines together with associated infrastructure on the site of the consented Stornoway Wind Farm (the Development Site).</p> <p><b>The components of the generating station and ancillary development comprise:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 33 wind turbines (24 turbines with blade to tip height of up to 180m and 9 turbines with a blade to tip height of 156m) associated foundations;</li><li>• Battery Storage Facility;</li><li>• Crane hard standings;</li><li>• Construction of site entrance;</li><li>• Upgrade and construction of internal tracks and passing bays;</li><li>• Establishment and working of up to five borrow pits;</li><li>• Construction of a temporary site compound(s);</li><li>• Construction of a new on-site control building and substation.</li></ul>
2	Brief description of the designated Natura site	The EU Exit does not alter the standard of protection for Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and are designated under the Habitats Regulations.

	<p>The Lewis Peatlands SPA is designated under the EC Directive (79/409/EEC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive) as amended by EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the Habitats Directive) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black-throated Diver <i>Gavia arctica</i>, 11 pairs representing at least 6.9% of the breeding population in Great Britain (1994 National survey)</li> <li>• Red-throated Diver <i>Gavia stellata</i>, 60 pairs representing at least 6.4% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Count, as at mid-1990s)</li> <li>• Golden Eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>, 6 pairs representing at least 1.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (1992 National survey)</li> <li>• Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>, 20 pairs representing at least 1.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Count, as at mid-1990s)</li> <li>• Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina schinzii</i>, 3,650 pairs (33.2% of the Baltic/UK/Ireland breeding pop.)</li> <li>• Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>, 1,978 pairs representing at least 8.8% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Count, as at mid-1990s)</li> <li>• Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>, 152 pairs (0.3% of Europe/Western Africa breeding population).</li> </ul> <p>The Lewis Peatlands SPA area is also designated as a Ramsar site, designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar, 1971) to which the UK is a signatory. The Ramsar interests are fully covered by the appropriate assessment process for the Lewis Peatlands SPA.</p> <p>The Lewis Peatlands comprise an extensive area of deep blanket bog, interspersed with bog pool complexes and freshwater lochs, covering the main part of Lewis. Grazed, poor-quality grassland also occurs with heather (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>) dominant on the coast.</p> <p>In the south, the continuous blanket bog becomes increasingly fragmented by rocky outcrops and larger lochs. Overall, the continuous and largely unfragmented extent of the peatland is a striking feature of the area. The peatlands are of importance for a range of characteristic peatland breeding birds, especially waders, divers, and raptors.</p>
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		Unlike most SPAs the Lewis Peatlands SPA is not underpinned by a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation, pursuant to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981/Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.
3	Conservation objectives for Lewis Peatlands SPA	<p>To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and to ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of the species as a viable component of the site</li> <li>• Distribution of the species within site</li> <li>• Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species</li> <li>• Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of the species</li> </ul> <p>Black-throated diver (<i>Gavia arctica</i>)  Red-throated diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>)  Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>)  Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)  Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina schinzii</i>)  Golden plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)  Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>)</p>
	<b>Screening</b>	
4	Is the proposal directly connected with, or necessary to, conservation management of the Natura site?	The proposal <b>is not</b> directly connected with, or necessary to, conservation management of the Lewis Peatlands SPA.
5	Is the operation likely to have a significant effect on the qualifying interest? Consider	Yes. This proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the golden eagle and red-throated diver qualifying interest of the SPA. For golden eagle, there is potential displacement from their range within the SPA. For Red-throated diver, this proposal is

	each qualifying interest in relation to conservation objectives.	likely to have a significant effect because there is potential for collisions with turbine blades while in flight. Depending on the degree of the predicted risk, resulting mortality could then have an adverse effect on site integrity. There are not likely to be significant effects on the other qualifying species of the SPA.
	<b>Appraisal</b>	
6	Identify the relevant conservation objectives to consider for the Lewis Peatlands SPA	To avoid deterioration of the habitats of qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained.  To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of the species as a viable component of the site</li> <li>• Distribution of the species within the site</li> <li>• No significant disturbance of the qualifying species</li> </ul> The qualifying species in respect of the Stornoway Wind Farm are: Red-throated diver and Golden Eagle.
7	Can it be ascertained that the proposal/plan will not adversely affect the integrity of the Lewis Peatlands SPA	It can be ascertained with sufficient confidence that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the integrity of the SPA in respect of Golden eagle, Red-throated diver or the other qualifying interests.  <u>Red-throated Diver</u>  On the basis of the information provided for red-throated diver, the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the site.  The current proposal predicts a collision mortality of 0.43 per annum compared to the existing consented scheme which has a predicted annual mortality of 0.37. This is not significantly different, so Scottish Ministers maintain that there will not be an adverse effect on site integrity.  <u>Golden eagle</u>

		<p>On the basis of the original application and the Additional Information (AI) and Additional Information 2 (AI2), the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the site. It is possible that a breeding pair of golden eagles near the site would have been displaced, potentially leading to range abandonment. The amended layout at AI2, specifically the removal of turbine positions T24 and T34, brings the range loss figure below what is predicted for the previously consented developments.</p> <p>The current proposal has a predicted collision mortality for golden eagle of 0.114 per annum in the breeding season and 0.046 based on the non-breeding season, given an estimated 0.16 per annum in total. The figure for the consented Stornoway proposal is 0.299. the current proposal therefore presents less of a collision risk than the consented scheme so there will still be no adverse impact on the integrity of the SPA.</p>
8	Consider whether mitigation measures or conditions can be adopted to avoid impacts on site integrity	The proposal as per AI2 is predicted not to impact on site integrity, so no further mitigation is required.
	<b>Conclusion</b>	
9	Can adverse impacts on site integrity be avoided ?	Two turbines (T24 and T34) have been removed from the proposed Development. Therefore the proposed Development alone and in combination with other projects or proposals that could have impacts on the SPA, will not have an adverse effect on SPA's integrity.