

**LANDSCAPE/SEASCAPE ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRTH OF CLYDE
SECTION 16 – APPENDIX 1: EXTRACT FROM THE PROJECT BRIEF**

16 APPENDIX 1: EXTRACT FROM THE PROJECT BRIEF

This appendix contains an extract from the project brief

16.1 Extract from project brief

A copy of the brief in full can be obtained from the Firth of Clyde Forum. This extract outlines the objective of the project as commissioned.

Landscape / Seascape Assessment for the Firth of Clyde

A) Background

This work is being commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) on behalf of the Firth of Clyde Forum. The contract for the study will be held between the appointed consultant and SNH.

Approval of the Marine (Scotland) Act in 2010 introduced a new era for the management of Scotland's seas. One of the key elements of the Act is the marine planning provisions, which will allow better management of the competing demands on marine resources. Marine Planning will be introduced at a national level and also at a regional level through the establishment of Scottish Marine Regions. It is expected that the Firth of Clyde will become one of the Scottish Marine Regions.

In 2008 the Firth of Clyde SSMEI (Scottish Sustainable Marine Environment Initiative) contracted a strategic level landscape/seascape assessment of the Firth of Clyde¹ to provide an outline description of the landscape character and visual resource to inform the Firth of Clyde Marine Spatial Plan. In addition to identifying character zones, recommendations were provided in relation to further landscape/seascape assessment work required to inform marine spatial planning. The Firth of Clyde Marine Spatial Plan identified that there is limited guidance available to local authorities and developers about the impacts of new development on the coastal and seascape character of the Firth. Action Plan ENV10 proposed that a seascape/landscape analysis of the Firth of Clyde be carried out.

B) Context and Purpose of Study

'Seascapes' refers to *'an area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land with sea, by natural and/or human factors.'* The term is increasing in usage and is included within the definition of landscape contained within the European Landscape Convention².

¹ Grant, A Landscape/Seascape Assessment: Firth of Clyde SSMEI (May 2008) – available at http://www.clydeforum.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=57&Itemid=62

² See *European Landscape Convention, Florence, 20.X.2000* [The European Landscape Convention](#)

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP 2010) outlines why the coast is important³. This is because:

- many areas of our coasts are of national, and in some parts international, significance where they contain areas of special landscape and ecological significance;
- a large proportion of Scotland's population live on or near the coast;
- the coast is a major focus for economic activity, recreation and tourism, and
- the sustainable development of coastal areas is an important contributor to sustainable economic growth.

The coast and its immediate hinterland is a significant part of the seascape, their landscape characteristics affect seascape character and dominate most peoples' experience of the sea. Defining coastal character, and its relationship with both its hinterland and the sea, is an important aspect of assessing marine developments (renewable energy, aquaculture, recreational facilities, housing etc.) and aids coastal and marine spatial planning.

SNH Strategic (National) Coastal Character

In Scotland, a Scottish Natural Heritage commissioned report⁴ identified 13 general seascape character types – that is **strategic coastal character types** (see Figure 2 in Annex A). This establishes coastal character at the national scale, valid only at the broad, strategic level. These 'national level' seascape character types form a framework within which the ten regional coastal character types identified at a strategic level for the Firth of Clyde in Grant (2008) will 'nest'.

SNH Landscape Character Assessment

The landscape character of the Firth of Clyde area is classified at the regional level; assessment and descriptions of which are found in the following SNH Commissioned Reports⁵:

- Landscape Character Assessment of Argyll and the Firth of Clyde (1996)
- Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment (1998)
- Glasgow and Clyde Valley Landscape Character Assessment (1999)
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Landscape Character Assessment (1999)

Firth of Clyde Landscape/seascape Assessment (Regional Coastal Character)

Undertaken in 2008⁶ this outline study comprised two main areas of work to assess:

³ A statement of the Scottish Government's policy on nationally important land use planning matters, February 04, 2010. See para. 98-103.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/02/03132605/0>

⁴ An Assessment of the Sensitivity and Capacity of the Scottish Seascape in Relation to Windfarms, (2005), SNH Commissioned Report 103 – available at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=419>

⁵ Available at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications>

- existing landscape designations, with an overview of the key qualities of 3 nationally designated landscapes
- ten strategic landscape/seascape character zones within the Firth of Clyde SSMEI zone

and it identified

- the work and necessary resources required to adequately consider landscape/seascape issues at both the strategic level and more detailed character level.

C) Purpose of Study - Main Aims and Outputs

Building on this outline strategic landscape/seascape assessment the purpose of this project is to assist Local Authorities with coastlines in the Firth of Clyde Forum area (see Figure 1 in Annex A) in the development plan process, to inform SNH staff, and others, in developing policy and responding to casework, and to inform future marine planning. It should also inform Marine Scotland in the marine licensing process for marine developments outwith planning, eg marine renewables, seaweed farming. It needs to be clearly and concisely written for a wide but informed audience. It needs to present a logical and clear framework.

Four main aims have been identified for this project and it is suggested that these are underpinned by seven work stages:

Aim 1 – to establish a baseline of the key characteristics/attributes of coastal character at the strategic (regional) and local level;

1. develop a series of seascape attributes to assess in the field based on an understanding of existing landscape character and reflecting likely pressures and issues in this area. This should include initial identification of any positive/negative attributes (opportunities and constraints) landmark features, and areas with qualities of wildness; a visual assessment should include consideration of important visual horizons, areas with high coastal visibility; important viewpoints;
2. review the 2008 Grant strategic (regional) coastal character types against the established attributes and develop the existing guidance where appropriate;
3. undertake assessment and classification of local coastal character areas at the 1:50,000 scale using the established attributes devised above. This should include assessment from the sea. Provide a detailed description and analysis of the various seascapes at national/regional/local level including historic and cultural aspects and function/amenity and use of the coast. Photographs and maps should

⁶ Grant, A Landscape/Seascape Assessment: Firth of Clyde SSMEI (May 2008) – available at http://www.clydeforum.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=57&Itemid=62

be used to illustrate key findings. Detailed guidance for each coastal character area is to be provided.

Aim 2 - assess the sensitivity of the coastal character to different development and/or activities (both on and offshore)

4. develop criteria to assess the sensitivity of local coastal character (informed by above attributes) including visual coastal character and undertake a sensitivity assessment. Include perspectives from the shore, from land and from the sea. Consider also changes in climatic conditions. Consider the likely pressures for change including erosion or climatic factors along with developmental pressures. Developments can include housing, industry and infrastructure on land including ports and piers, as well as marine-based developments such as renewable energy structures and aquaculture. The project group can provide input to sensitivity analysis during interim meetings. Consider the issue of the accumulative effect of multiple developments or activities. Develop guidance on how this change can be accommodated. A review of how this detailed local assessment translates up to the sensitivity of the strategic coastal character types and any implications for policy should also be undertaken;
5. undertake a public preference study or similar to validate the sensitivity assessment criteria identified above;

Aim 3 - identification of coastal areas with isolated/remote qualities;

6. coastal areas with overriding qualities/characteristics of wildness should be extrapolated to identify isolated/remote coastline (see Scottish Planning Policy paras 100-103);

Aim 4 - identification of coastal areas with visual sensitivities:

7. coastal areas with a recognisable and definable visual sensitivity should be identified. Develop guidelines on how differing landscapes can be conserved, enhanced or improved.

D) Draft Methodology

The methodology should be in accordance with the most recent guidance for landscape character assessment (and specifically coastal character assessment) such as *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland* (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002)⁷ and *Guidance on Landscape / Seascape Carrying Capacity for Aquaculture* (SNH 2008)⁸. Any departure from this would require justification and explanation, as they are the basis

⁷ See

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/assessment/default.aspx>

⁸ See <http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=976>

of a widely accepted approach to landscape casework and research. LCA Topic Paper 6⁹ on capacity and sensitivity may also be relevant. See also *The siting and design of aquaculture in the landscape: visual and landscape considerations* (SNH 2011)¹⁰ for coastal landscape character types.

In terms of the relationship of the hinterland, coastal landscapes and seascape the following are the guiding principals:

Landscape Character is defined as 'a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape (GLVIA)

A *Landscape Character Type* A landscape type will have broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern discernible in maps and field survey.

Landscape Character Types and Areas are defined in the SNH National programme of Landscape Character Assessment which identifies areas of consistent and recognizable character as a result of a distinct composition of landscape characteristics.

Seascape is the visual and physical conjunction of land and sea which combines maritime, coast and hinterland character. (Grant op cit)

Coastal Character Areas are recognisable geographical areas which have a consistent overall character at a strategic level

Local Coastal Character Areas Areas of consistent seascape character with a strong integrity, such as a specific bay, or section of coast, or loch with a similar character. Elements that define character are presented in Grant 3.2.2; Tables 2A and 2B.

Scales of mapping Coastal Character

The regional coastal character types will be refined at a more detailed level. This will involve identifying local coastal character areas at a scale comparable to the existing Landscape Character Assessments, and will be informed by them. Local coastal character areas are, in themselves, areas of consistent character **with strong integrity**, like a specific bay or stretch of coast. Seascape character needs to be included.

These Local Coastal Character Areas will be best informed by 1:50,000 data. See Annex A for guidance on methodology and outputs.

GIS Outputs

⁹ Swanick, Carys (2004) *Techniques and Criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity LCA Topic Paper 6* Countryside Character Network, Countryside Agency & SNH

¹⁰ <http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/?q=siting+and+design+of+aquaculture&cat=>

The main spatial findings of the study should be mapped spatially in a Geographical Information System (see Annex B for GIS requirements). The specific GIS dataset outputs are to be agreed with the project group. The consultant should outline anticipated GIS outputs in their submission and isolate costs for this element of the project within the bid.

GIS data

A GIS dataset of the LCA information is also available to download from Scottish Natural Heritage's Natural Spaces website, which can be accessed by the following link: https://gateway.snh.gov.uk/pls/apex_ddtdb2/f?p=101:1:2814686604005056::NO

Public Preference Study

The proposal and costs for this element of the project should be isolated within the bid.