

Shetland Islands Regional Marine Plan - Supporting Guidance on Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

Introduction

This guidance has been produced by the Shetland Islands Marine Planning Partnership (SIMPP), a partnership of Shetland Islands Council and UHI Shetland. The SIMPP was directed by Scottish Ministers to prepare the Shetland Islands Regional Marine Plan (SIRMP) that was adopted in 2025.

It is intended that the guidance is used by consenting authorities, regulators and developers to help ensure that the requirements of these particular SIRMP policies (MP CLIM1: Climate Change Mitigation and MP CLIM2: Climate Change Adaptation) are applied and met in a proportionate manner.

Shetland Islands Council shall apply this policy to aquaculture developments which require planning permission under the Town and County Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), and also developments which require a Works Licence from the Council under the Zetland Country Council Act 1974.

The Marine Directorate of the Scottish Government should apply this policy for developments which don't require planning permission or a works licence from Shetland Islands Council but require a marine licence under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010.

All decision makers should have regard to this policy when they are determining a licence or consent, where relevant, and where proposals fall within devolved competencies.

Background

The SIRMP contains the following policies on Climate Change:

Policy MP CLIM1: Climate Change Mitigation

Proposals for marine development and use should consider climate change mitigation.

Applicants may be required to provide supporting information on how the following has been assessed and minimised:

- a) resource use;
- b) energy use; and
- c) greenhouse gas emissions

Applicants should refer to the associated SIRMP guidance on Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.

Applicants should consider adverse impacts on habitats which act as a carbon sink, or which protect against coastal erosion, and how these may be mitigated.

Policy MP CLIM2: Climate Change Adaptation

Proposals for marine development and use should consider the current and future risks of climate change on siting, design, and operation over the lifetime of the development and how these can be minimised.

Applicants may be required to provide supporting information demonstrating that risks have been considered and minimised and should refer to the associated SIRMP guidance on Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.

To address these two policies, supporting information on climate change mitigation and adaptation will be required in the following instances:

Aquaculture

- All new aquaculture developments (finfish & shellfish farms).
- Any development that seeks to increase biomass at an existing aquaculture site.
- All finfish developments, which require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), should aim to provide information on approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation within the accompanying EIA report or within additional information submitted alongside the planning application. Where EIA is required, Shetland Islands Council will aim to ensure that the requirements of this policy are covered within their response to the EIA scoping/EIA scoping report.
- Variations to aquaculture existing sites, such as changes to equipment on site, will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but are unlikely to require the provision of detailed information.

Works Licences

Due to the wide scope of developments that are covered by works licences issued by Shetland Islands Council, the requirement for the provision of information on climate change mitigation and adaptation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Examples of developments, which are likely to require more detailed information, include developments for renewables, cables, pipelines seaweed farming, and large-scale infrastructure work, such as piers, coastal protection/defences and land reclamation.

Works for developments that require EIA under other regulations*, such as marine works or electricity works, should aim to address the requirements of this policy in the EIA report or through the additional information prepared in support of marine licence and/or section 36 applications. Where a works licence is also required from Shetland Islands Council, the EIA or supporting information on climate change mitigation and adaptation should also be submitted alongside the works licence application.

* More information can be found here: [Marine licensing and consenting - Environmental Impact Assessment: overview - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/marine-licensing-and-consenting-environmental-impact-assessment/overview/pages/1)



Shetland Islands Council shall be proportionate in their approach and will collaborate with industry to establish the type and format of information required on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

It is noted that industry may already have established approaches and best practice that is followed with regards to climate change mitigation and adaptation. It is therefore envisaged that a standardised template/document could be used and adapted to suit common types of planning or works licence applications to meet the requirements of these policies.

It is also recommended that standardised approaches are firstly agreed between the Shetland Islands Council and industry or industry representative bodies as this will reduce the burden on individual applicants providing information.

Proposed Example Document

We have provided a basic guidance template that could be adapted and submitted alongside a development proposal to help meet the requirements of these policies:

Type of Resource/Energy/Emission Use Description (Both Construction and Operational Phase)	Possible Impacts and Risks	Methods & Procedures Considered to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change
<p><u>Resource Use</u></p> <p>Please explain the resources that will be used to construct the development and used during its ongoing operation.</p> <p>For example, this could include matters such plastics, cages, nets, droppers, rope, etc. for aquaculture developments.</p>	<p><u>Resource Use</u></p> <p>The possible risks and impacts of each resource should be highlighted and explained here.</p>	<p><u>Resource Use</u></p> <p>Explain what mitigation measures will be applied to reduce the resource use and also adapt to climate change over the lifetime of the development</p> <p>For example, recycling, re-use, implementing technologies and approaches.</p>
<p><u>Energy Use</u></p> <p>Explain the energy use that will be required during the constructing of the development and during its operation.</p> <p>For example, fuel and energy for construction, boat movements, operation of barges etc.</p>	<p><u>Energy Use</u></p> <p>The possible risks and impacts of energy use should be highlighted and explained here.</p>	<p><u>Energy Use</u></p> <p>What mitigation measures will be applied to reduce energy use and also adapt to climate change over the lifetime of the development? (Note – it is recognised that the information provided here may be similar or duplicate that in the box below: ‘emissions’).</p> <p>For example, this may include minimising boat movements, measures to conserve energy, adapting to renewable/sustainable</p>

		energy sources to power the development, measures to increase efficiency etc.
<u>Emissions</u> Explain the emissions that will arise from the construction and operation of the development. For example, greenhouse gases produced from energy and fuel use.	<u>Emissions</u> The possible risks and impacts of each type of emission should be highlighted and explained.	<u>Emissions</u> What mitigation measures will be applied to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change over the lifetime of the development? For example, minimising boat movements, adapting to renewable energy sources to power the development, measures undertaken to minimise waste and emissions, adapting to new technologies and approaches etc.
<u>Other Factors</u> Please set out any other site issues which may impact on climate change or factors such as best practice or standards that your industry or industry representative body may follow.	<u>Other Factors</u> Explain the possible impacts of any other site issues.	<u>Other Factors</u> Explain how mitigation measures will be applied and how climate change adaptation has been taken into account.

Pre-Application Advice

Shetland Islands Council strongly recommend that all proposals for development that require planning permission or a works licence are first subject to our pre-application advice service. This will help ensure that the information requested from developers on climate change mitigation and adaptation is proportionate and relevant. More information on pre-application advice can be found on the Council's website at:

www.shetland.gov.uk/coastal-marine-planning/make-marine-planning-application

Contact Us

If you have any queries about this guidance in relation to planning applications or works licence applications, please contact the Shetland Islands Council Marine Planning Team by email: marine.planning@shetland.gov.uk

If your query relates to a marine licence application, please, in the first instance, contact the Scottish Government's Marine Directorate – Licensing Operations Team (MD-LOT) by email: md.marinelicensing@gov.scot