Planning and Environmental Consultants

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Long Point Loughrea Amenity Area FI

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 LVIA in Response to Further Information Request

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been conducted in response to a request for further information in relation to the Proposed Development known as Long Point Lough Rea Amenity Area at Long Point, Loughrea, Co. Galway. In a letter from An Coimisiún Pleanála (case no.ABP-320946-24), it was requested to provide the following further information under Point 2. Nature and Extent of Proposed Development:

> *"(v) A summary Landscape impact assessment of the development from vantage points including from Corry's field protected view (CDP ref 40). The summary assessment will include consideration and recommendations as appropriate relating to lighting and car parking."*

To address Point 2(v), this LVIA assesses the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development from the specifically requested viewpoint, Corry's Field Walk protected view (CDP ref.40) as well as two additional viewpoints, using methodology following best-practice guidance for LVIA. The LVIA is informed by desk study, site visits and verified photomontage visualisations. The photomontages are included in the Verified Views Photomontage Booklet accompanying this LVIA.

The LVIA comprises the following sections:

- **Introduction** – Includes a description of the Proposed Development, its location and essential aspects of the development that will potentially give rise to effects on the landscape and visual amenity.
- **Methodology and Assessment Criteria** – An outline of the methodology and guidance used to conduct the LVIA.
- **Landscape Baseline** – A review of the landscape policy context and landscape designations pertinent to the Site; a description of the baseline landscape conditions and the character of the Proposed Development site and wider landscape setting as well as the identification of landscape value and landscape sensitivities. The landscape baseline identifies key Landscape Receptors to be considered in the assessment.
- **Visual Baseline** – Identification of the relevant Visual Receptors; an appraisal of likely visibility of the Proposed Development within the surrounding landscape, including visibility from designated scenic amenity designations. The visual baseline identifies key Visual Receptors and locations selected as photomontage viewpoints.
- **Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment** – Comprehensive visual impact assessment of selected viewpoints (VP1 to VP3) and outcome of visual impact ratings.
- **Landscape and Visual Effects** – A determination of predicted landscape and visual effects using best practise guidance outlined in the methodology. The assessment of effects is informed by desk-study, onsite visibility appraisal and production of photomontages.

1.2 Statement of Authority

MKO have extensive expertise and experience over the last 15 years in the LVIA of large-scale infrastructure developments. The MKO Landscape and Visual team have produced LVIA across a diverse range of project types, including renewable energy and grid infrastructure, residential

developments, transport infrastructure, extraction infrastructure, and a range of other projects requiring EIAR. This LVIA was written by Jack Workman and Rachel Smith and reviewed by Michael Watson.

Jack Workman MSc., TMLI. is the Landscape & Visual Project Director at MKO and is chartered as a Technician Member of the British Landscape Institute. Jack is an environmental scientist and an LVIA specialist with an academic background in the field of Environmental Science and Geography. Jack's primary role at MKO is scoping and writing LVIA for EIARs with over 5 years' experience managing all aspects of LVIA for a broad range of commercial infrastructure developments. Jack holds a BSc. in Psychology, and an MSc. in Coastal and Marine Environments (Physical Processes, Policy & Practice). Jack is an active participant in the National Landscape Forum, presenting in 2023 and 2024 on the topic of LVIA, he also regularly delivers guest lectures for students on the topic of LVIA at top third level institutions in Ireland including University of Galway, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and University College Cork. Jack holds a membership with the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management and is also a member of the Landscape Research Group.

Rachel Smith, MSc., is a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Professional who has been working with MKO since October 2023. Rachel is an Earth & Environmental Science consultant with more than 10 years of professional experience in producing and editing technical scientific reports, and collecting, analysing and reporting environmental data for regulatory compliance in both the US and Ireland, including the utilisation of QGIS mapping, organisation of field work, management of environmental databases and training of environmental science staff. Rachel's primary role at MKO is producing and reviewing the LVIA chapter of EIA reports accompanying Planning Applications for multi-scale onshore renewable energy and non-wind developments. Rachel holds an MSc. in Coastal and Marine Environments (Physical Processes, Policies & Practice) and a BSc. in Geology.

Michael Watson is the Environment Division Director at MKO, overseeing a team of highly skilled environmental professionals working on EIAR for a wide range and scale of projects, in particular large-scale infrastructure, housing, commercial and renewable energy development. Michael has over 25 years' experience in the environmental sector. Following the completion of his master's degree in environmental resource management, Geography, from National University of Ireland, Maynooth he worked for the Geological Survey of Ireland and then a prominent private environmental consultancy prior to joining MKO in 2014. Michael's professional experience includes managing Environmental Impact Assessments and Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments on behalf of clients in the wind farm, waste management, commercial and industrial sectors nationally. Michael worked on the capture and development of photomontages as well as compiling the Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments for some of the first wind turbines being proposed in Ireland in the early 2000's and has been compiling and reviewing LVIA chapters for multiple wind farm projects each year since 2014. Michael is a key member of the MKO senior management team and as head of the Environment Division has responsibilities to mentor various grades of team members, foster a positive and promote continuous professional development for employees. Michael also has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Geography and Economics from NUI Maynooth, is a Member of IEMA, a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv).

1.3 Key Response Topics

As requested in the RFI, the key focus topics of the LVIA and photomontage visualisations are:

- Landscape and visual impact on Corry's Field Walk protected view (CDP ref.40).
- Consideration and recommendations of lighting and carparking.

The LVIA has assessed the impact on the protected view as well as additional viewpoints which demonstrate the effects of lighting and carpark from the visual receptors nearby the Proposed Development. The assessment outcomes are supported by discussions and visualisations of supplementary photo viewpoints from the surrounding landscape.

1.4 Project Description

The project aims to improve the visitor experience of Long Point amenity area at the southeast end of Lough Rea by implementing landscaped areas and carpark areas, as well as associated buildings, facilities and accommodation; the full project description has been previously provided in the original planning application – see 2024 Planning Report and Section 2 of the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

The figures below are extracts of the proposed layout and enlargement of the carpark and lighting area at the east end, which are the primary focus of this LVIA. These are followed by an extract of the 3D rendered model of the Proposed Development originally submitted with the planning application.

The proposed landscape softworks plan has been previously provided in the planning application and includes wildflower zones, pollinator friendly grass planting, stone planter beds, native tree clusters, avenue tree planting, swale planting and amenity grass – see 2024 Landscape Softworks Report with species examples and imagery. Landscape softworks will be carried out within the carpark and lighting area and are considered in the visualisations of this LVIA.

Figure 1-1 Proposed site layout (extracted from Planning Report, 2024)

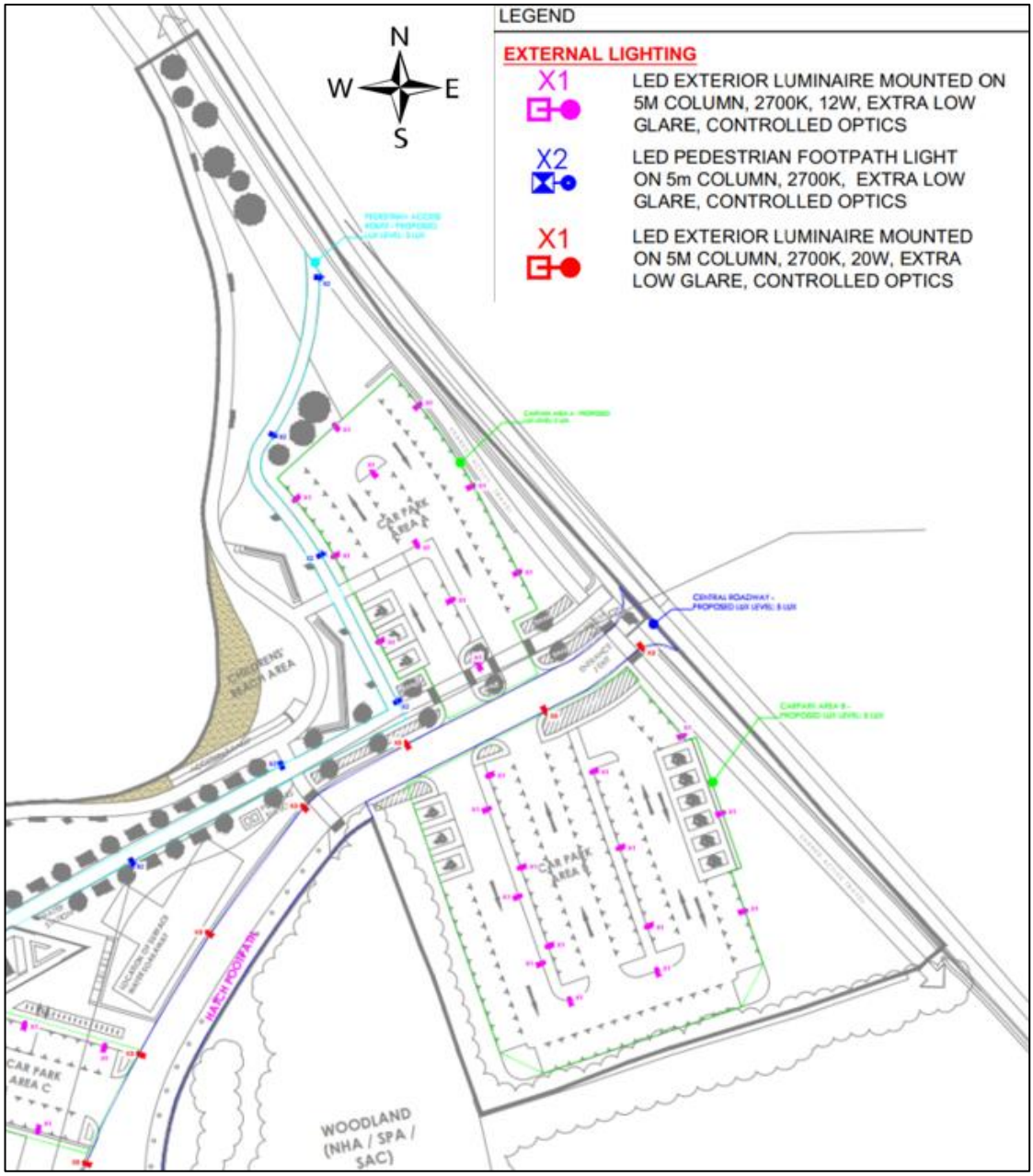

Figure 1-2 Carpark and lighting elements of the Proposed Development (extracted from Planning Drawings, 2024)

Figure 1-3 3D rendered model submitted with original planning application (model imagery provided by Client, 2025)

1.5 Site Description and LVIA Study Area

The site of the Proposed Development at Long Point is currently developed, featuring a carpark, lakeside footpath, recreational areas and small buildings as shown in the images below, followed by a map of the LVIA Study Area and Proposed Development site boundary (see Section 2.2 in methodology below). The imagery indicates several key features of the LVIA Study Area including:

- R351 Regional Road (known as Lake Rd),
- Lough Rea Footpath,
- R351 Lake Rd public parking overlook,
- St. Brendan's Community Nursing Unit,
- Corry's Field Walk area at the north end of the lake.

Figure 1-4 Current development and features at Long Point (drone imagery provided by Client, 2025)

Figure 1-5 Current development looking from the east over the carpark and lighting area (drone imagery provided by Client, 2025)

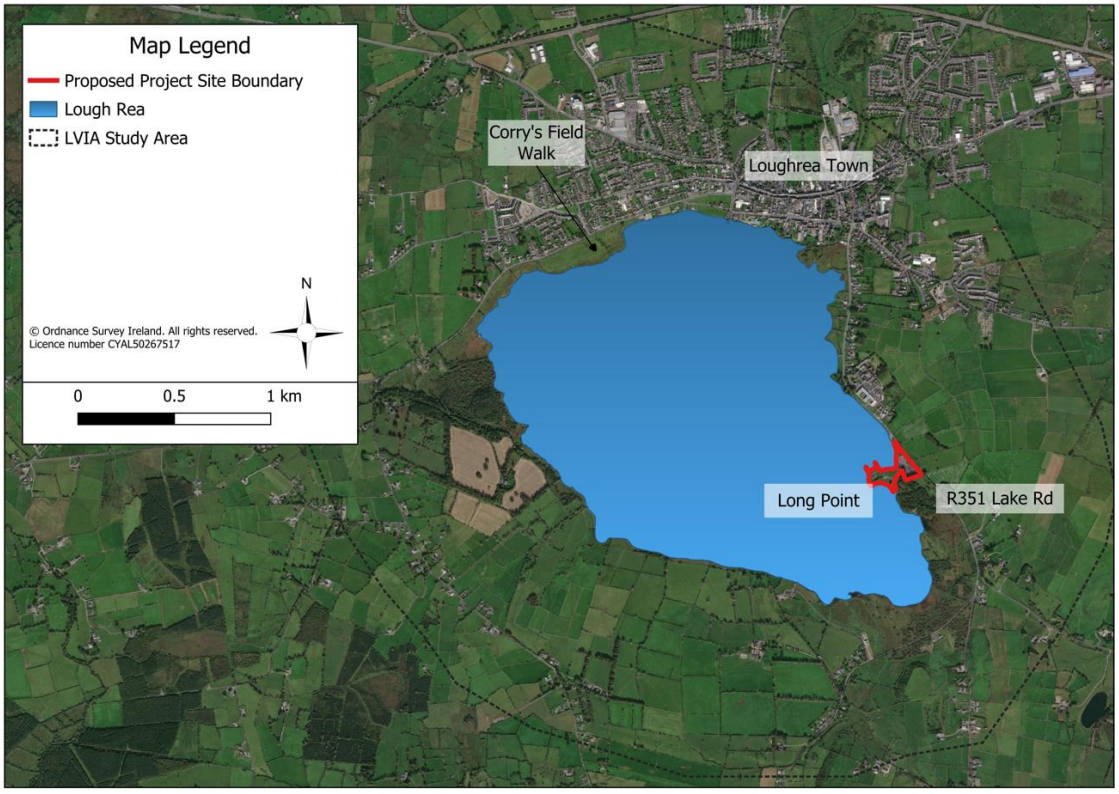

Figure 1-6 LVIA Study Area and Proposed Development site boundary

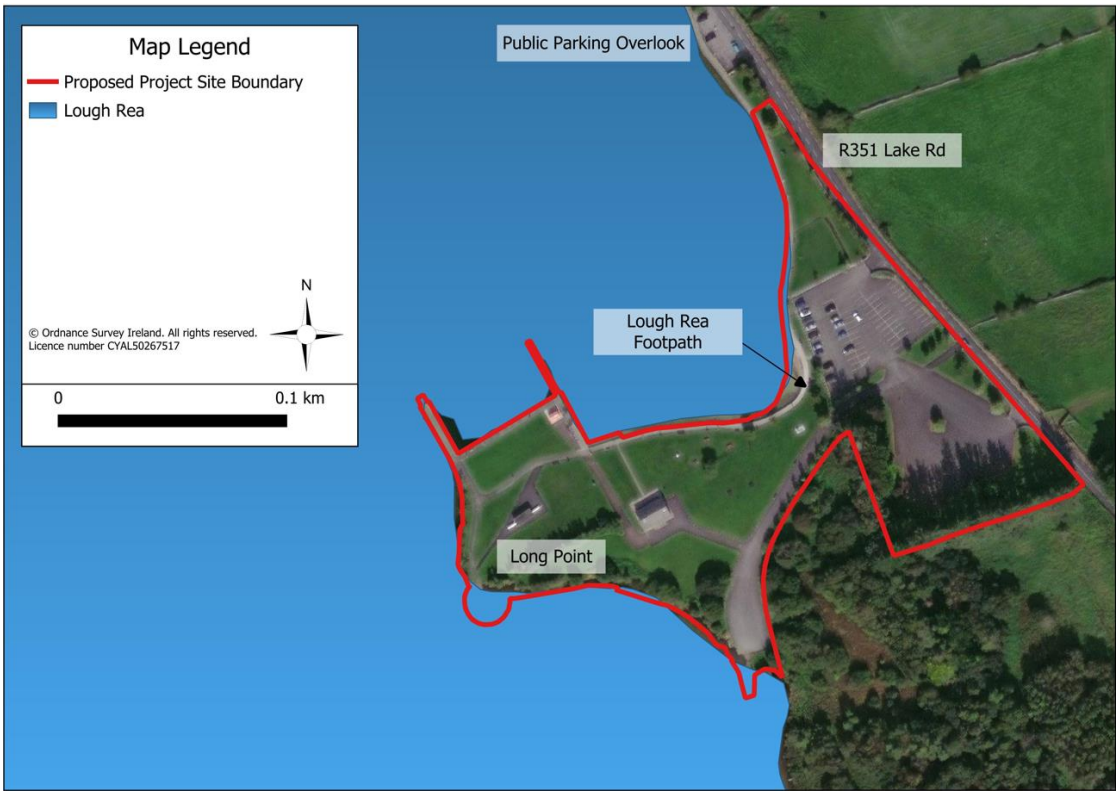

Figure 1-7 Enlargement of Proposed Development site boundary

2. METHODOLOGY AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

2.1 Guidance Documents

In 2000, the Department of the Environment and Local Government (DoEHLG) published '*Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities*', recommending that all local authorities adopt a standardised approach to a landscape assessment for incorporation into development plans and consideration as part of the planning process. The DoEHLG 2000 guidance remains in draft form.

In 2002, Ireland signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention (ELC). This introduced a pan-European concept that centres on the quality of landscape protection, management, and planning. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published a National Landscape Strategy for Ireland in 2015. The strategy aims to ensure compliance with the ELC and contains six main objectives, including undertaking a national Landscape Character Assessment and developing landscape policies.

Although the DoEHLG 2000 guidance remains in draft form, the LVIA is informed by the landscape assessment guidelines presented in that document as well as a range of other guidance documents including:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Ed.* (Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, UK 2013) (hereafter, GLVIA3).
- *Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA3: Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2024-01* (Landscape Institute 2024).
- *Visual Representation of Development Proposals: Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19* (LI TGN 06-19) (Landscape Institute 2019).

2.2 Scope of the LVIA and Study Area

The GLVIA3 describes the identification of the area of landscape that is to be covered while assessing landscape and visual effects–the study area. The guidelines state:

> *'The study area should include the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape around it which the Proposed Development may influence in a significant manner.'*

For this LVIA, the landscape and visual baseline mapping and viewpoint selection are based on a wider study area surrounding the Proposed Development site, in this case ranging from <1km to approx. 3km from the development site boundary (see FIGURE previously). The study area is defined primarily following the topographical enclosure of hills and elevated areas surrounding Lough Rea, which limit visibility both towards and from Long Point to within the lake basin. Considering the scale and nature of the Proposed Development, it is not likely to be identifiable from locations outside the LVIA Study Area boundary and therefore it is anticipated that no visual or landscape effects will occur beyond this boundary.

2.3 Residual Landscape and Visual Effects

Following the below methods and evaluation criteria, the overall Landscape Effects and Visual Effects are to be determined considering the sensitivity and magnitude of change for landscape and visual receptors, which includes consideration of the value and susceptibility to change for each receptor. The overall landscape and visual effects are reported in this LVIA as High, Medium or Low.

2.4 Assessing Landscape Effects

Qualitative methods will be used to assess the effects on landscape receptors identified during baseline investigations, some of which have been conducted for this LVIA Report. The methodology follows the guidance in the GLVIA3 as well as the DoEHLG 2000 guidance.

Landscape Effects can be described as changes which affect the landscape as a resource. This includes how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects, and its landscape character. Landscape effects also relate to changes in the physical structure (i.e. material nature) of the landscape. Under the GLVIA3, the assessment of effects on landscape receptors includes a judgement on both the sensitivity of the receptor as well as the magnitude of change owing to the Proposed Development itself, explained as follows.

Landscape Sensitivity is described in the GLVIA3 as a combination of the landscape's susceptibility to change as well as the value attached to the landscape. Landscape 'susceptibility to change' can be described as the ability of the landscape receptor (either the overall character or quality of the landscape, or a particular landscape feature) to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline (existing) landscape situation, and/or the achievements of landscape planning policies and strategies. Landscape 'value' is the importance attributed to a specific landscape receptor or feature. Landscape value is determined through baseline assessments considering a combination of criteria such as designations and local characteristics. Appraisal of the landscape value of the Proposed Development site and its surrounding landscape will be reported in the *Landscape Baseline* section of the LVIA.

The table below presents the descriptions and example criteria of landscape susceptibility to change and landscape value, each considered as 'High', 'Medium' or 'Low', which are combined to arrive at a determination of overall landscape sensitivity.

Table 2-1 Assessing Landscape Sensitivity

Susceptibility of Landscape to Change	Description and Example Criteria
High	Landscapes where the overall landscape character or condition is highly susceptible to change and where the landscape receptor has a low ability to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the landscape character and in compliance with planning policies/strategies.
Medium	Landscapes where the overall landscape character has a moderate ability to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the landscape character and in compliance with planning policies/strategies.
Low	Landscapes where the overall landscape character has a strong ability to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue consequences to the maintenance of the landscape character and in compliance with planning policies/strategies.

Value attached to Landscape Elements	Description and Example Criteria
High	Landscapes deemed as high value or forming part of designations (e.g. areas of amenity, scenic routes/views) in the development plan, at a national or international level.
Medium	Landscapes where value is not formally designated but are of value as good examples of high quality, intact landscapes and are areas deemed to be of relatively high scenic quality. Landscapes that contain some rare elements, include areas which are wild or have a sense of naturalness, strong cultural associations or which have recreational value.
Low	Landscapes that are not formally designated and considered as modified. Areas which do not have particularly scenic qualities, do not include rare elements or landscape features, and do not have strongly evident cultural or heritage associations.

Landscape Magnitude of Change, as outlined in the table below, is determined by evaluating a combination of the size and scale of the change due to the Proposed Development, the extent of the area affected (e.g. how much of a feature is lost or the extent of the feature to be added) and the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects may be altered. It is considered as 'High', 'Medium' or 'Low'.

Finally, to determine the overall residual Landscape Effect, the magnitude of change to the landscape is combined with the landscape sensitivity.

Table 2-2 Assessing Magnitude of Landscape Change

Magnitude of Change	Description and Example Criteria
High	Major loss or alteration of key landscape elements with an effect on the overall landscape character, resulting in a high degree of change to the aesthetics of the landscape. Changes will be evident over a wide geographical area.
Medium	Some loss or alteration of landscape elements resulting in some change to landscape character and aesthetics. This includes landscapes where there is a moderate effect on the overall landscape character but does not affect key characteristics.
Low	Minor loss of or change to landscape elements. These changes do not affect the overall landscape character or key elements. Changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes are low and limited in their geographical extent.

2.5 Assessing Visual Effects

Visual Effects relate to changes in views and visual amenity of the surroundings of individuals or groups of people – termed 'Visual Receptors'. These may result from changes in content and character of views as a result in changes to the landscape. The assessment of visual effects is based on views shown in photomontages as well as actual visibility determined on the ground during site visits. The assessment of visual effects will be supported by verified photomontage visualisations.

2.6 Photomontage Viewpoint Selection

A step-by-step process is followed in selecting appropriate photomontage viewpoint locations. For this LVIA in response to the Further Information Request, it was specifically requested that the designated scenic viewpoint of Corry's Field Walk (GCDP 2022-2028) be represented in the selected viewpoints; this was used as VP1.

Following the below methodology comprising a preliminary visibility appraisal and baseline study, an additional 2 no. VP locations (VP2, VP3) were selected as suitable viewpoints to round out the suitable representation of local views of the Proposed Development. All VPs are described and identified below in Section 0 Viewpoint Locations Selected for Assessment.

The first step of the photomontage viewpoint selection process is to select representative locations following a detailed desktop study of mapping. The locations are based on the following criteria:

- Potential visibility of the Proposed Development site.
- Critical landscape designations, e.g. views and prospects, scenic routes and areas classed as sensitive.
- Proximity to receptors such as settlements, groups of residential dwellings or recreational routes and amenity areas.
- Areas which are publicly accessible or located on public roads, particularly higher-trafficked routes such as regional or national roads or locally important local roads.
- Views that cover a relatively wide area in terms of geographical distribution, elevation, and varying distance from the Site, within the LVIA Study Area.

2.7 Photomontage Production

Photomontages are photorealistic visualisations that superimpose an image of the Proposed Development upon a photograph or series of photographs. Photomontages are intended as graphical representations of how the Proposed Development will appear in the existing landscape and are used as a tool to inform the LVIA process.

The Photomontage Booklet accompanying this LVIA Report comprises verified photomontages captured and produced by MKO. The verified photomontages are classified as Type 4 Visualisations and will be modelled and produced to the verification standards in the LI TGN 06-19 and following best practice guidance in the GLVIA3. The methodology included as part of the *Photomontage Booklet* details the tools and processes used to produce Type 4 photomontages.

The following images are presented in the *Photomontage Booklet* for each viewpoint location (VP1 through VP3):

- Existing View at 39.6°, showing the existing landscape / streetscape conditions as it currently exists.
- Proposed View at 39.6°, showing a scaled verified render of the Proposed Development within the current landscape.

The 'Existing View' and 'Proposed View' will use photographic imagery captured using a 50mm full frame sensor. These views are presented on A3 paper within a 39.6° field of view (equivalent of a full frame) as per the LI TGN 06-19. When printed at A3 and held out at typical arm's length, the photomontages are representative of the view and Proposed Development as it would be seen in the landscape from a given viewpoint.

2.8 Visual Receptor Sensitivity and Magnitude of Change

Visual Receptor Sensitivity, as described in the table below, depends on the occupation or activity of the people as well as the extent to which the attention is focused on views and visual amenity, according to the GLVIA3. Receptor and viewpoint sensitivity also considers the value attached to certain views and to what extent it has scenic or aesthetic quality.

The table below presents the descriptions and example criteria of visual receptor susceptibility to change and the value attached to the view, each considered as 'High', 'Medium' or 'Low', which are combined to arrive at a determination of overall visual sensitivity.

Table 2-3 Assessing Visual Sensitivity

Susceptibility of Visual Receptor	Description and Example Criteria
High	These include viewers at designated views or landscapes; viewers such as residents which are focussed to a large extent on the development due to location in close proximity, viewers at well-known heritage or popular tourist or recreational areas and viewers along scenic or tourist routes.
Medium	Visual receptors who may have some susceptibility to changes in view, such as those from views which are not designated, but may have local significance or those travelling along routes or at views which are considered moderately scenic.
Low	Viewers engaged in activities where the focus is not on the landscape or view, such as those travelling along busy routes, viewers at work or viewers engaged in sport not related to views or experience of the landscape.
Value attached to the View	**Description and Example Criteria**
High	Protected views or views from designated landscapes of national or international importance, views indicated on tourist/cultural publications or considered of high scenic quality, naturalness, tranquillity, or views with rare elements.
Medium	Non-designated views, but including panoramic views or views judged to be of some scenic quality, demonstrating some sense of naturalness, tranquillity or have some rare element in the view.
Low	Views which are not designated and are not judged to be panoramic views or of particular scenic quality as described above. These are views which have no distinctive features.

Magnitude of Visual Change, as described in the table below, is evaluated based on the size and scale of change from a specific viewpoint as a direct result of the Proposed Development, the extent of the area affected and the duration or reversibility of the effect. The magnitude of visual change is considered as 'High', 'Medium' or 'Low'. Finally, to determine the overall residual Visual Effect, the magnitude of visual change is combined with the visual receptor sensitivity.

Table 2-4 Assessing Magnitude of Visual Change

Magnitude of Change	Description and Example Criteria
High	Viewpoints where the Proposed Development results in a substantial change of the view and its composition and creates a high degree of contrast to the existing. This includes viewpoints where the Proposed Development is fully or almost fully visible over a wide area at close proximity to the viewer. The effects are long term or permanent and have a low level of reversibility.
Medium	Viewpoints where the Proposed Development results in moderate changes to the view and a moderate degree of contrast with the existing view. This includes viewpoints where the development is visible over a substantial proportion of the view and viewpoints, which are not in close proximity to the development.
Low	Viewpoints where the Proposed Development results in a low level of change in the view and its composition with a low degree of contrast. Viewpoints where the development is partially or barely visible in a small proportion of the view and includes viewpoints at a distance from the Proposed Development.

3. LANDSCAPE BASELINE

3.1 Landscape Receptors

The following landscape receptors have been identified in the LVIA Study Area and are scoped in for the assessment of landscape effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development. The next sections describe the relevant landscape policy context for these receptors.

Table 3-1 Landscape Receptors identified in the LVIA Study Area

Receptor ID	Name and Description
G-V40	**Corry's Field Walk.** "This view is from the east end of Corry's Field Walk that sticks out into Lough Rea. The focus of this view is Loughrea Town." (GCDP 2022-28)
G-V41	**Loughrea Swimming Area.** "This view is from the swimming area carpark and shore footpaths. The focus of this view is the expanse of Lough Rea as well as the backdrop of Loughrea Town and the wooded hills." (GCDP 2022-28)
Loughrea	**Loughrea** settlement, categorised as Self-Sustaining Town in GCDP; at its closest point, the urban area is located approximately 1.5km from the Proposed Development site.

One Landscape Receptor Scoped Out. The Landscape Baseline exercise identified the following receptor and scoped it out of the assessment with rationale as follows: ACA-U, Loughrea Architectural Conservation Area at 1.5km northeast of the site, scoped out as ACA key sensitivities are not affected.

Typical Receptors Not Present. The Landscape Baseline exercise determined that the LVIA Study Area contains none of the following typical landscape receptor types: no national waymarked walking trails, no Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi) running trails or OSi Viewing Areas, no tourist/recreational destinations of regional, national or international renown.

3.2 Landscape Policy Context

3.2.1 Galway County Development Plan (GCDP) 2022-2028

The entirety of the Proposed Development site is located within Co. Galway; thereby this LVIA reports the context of relevant landscape policies in the Galway County Development Plan (GCDP) 2022-2028 and its associated appendices pertaining to landscape policy objectives.

Vol.1 Ch.1 Introduction, Mandatory Objectives (p.4):

> *"Preservation of the character of the landscape, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest."*

Vol.1 Ch.2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy, Section 2.4.3 Settlement Hierarchy (p.32) identifies the settlement of Loughrea as a "Self-Sustaining Town" defined as having "high levels of population growth and a limited employment base which are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services and which require targeted "catchup" investment to become more sustaining."

Vol.1 Ch.2 Policy Objectives Settlement Hierarchy (p.45):

> *"Objective SS4 Self-Sustaining Towns (Level 4). Support the development of Gort and Loughrea as Self-Sustaining Towns as outlined in the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy in order to improve local employment, services and sustainable transport options in order to become more self-sustaining settlements."*

Vol.1 Ch.8 Tourism and Landscape, Section 8.13.2 Landscape Sensitivity (p.24):

> *"**Objective LCM 1 Preservation of Landscape Character**. Preserve and enhance the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation and enhancement, where possible of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest."*

> *"**Objective LCM 2 Landscape Sensitivity Classification**. The Planning Authority shall have regard to the landscape sensitivity classification of sites in the consideration of any significant development proposals and, where necessary, require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany such proposals. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key strategic infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan."*

> *"**Objective LCM 3 Landscape Sensitivity Ratings**. Consideration of landscape sensitivity ratings shall be an important factor in determining development uses in areas of the County. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations."*

3.2.2 Landscape Designations: Scenic Routes and Protected Views

No designated scenic routes are existent within the LVIA Study Area; however, two designated protected views are identified and relevant to this LVIA (see below). The GCDP 2022-2028 reports landscape policy and objectives for scenic routes and views combined, as follows.

Galway County Council Scenic Routes and Views (schedule included at the end of App.4 Landscape Character Assessment)

As shown in the below figure, two designated scenic views are within the LVIA Study Area, in this LVIA called G-V40 and G-V41; they are named and described below. Both are categorised with "County" significance, the second lowest of four levels (Local, County, Regional, National), defined as follows in the GCDP.

> *"County (Significance): A view – often a panorama – that encompasses a wider expanse of territory, or a large or prominent natural features – a hill, bay, ridge, headland or lake shore which gives a sense of a large unit of countryside that is felt to be typical of that part of the county."*

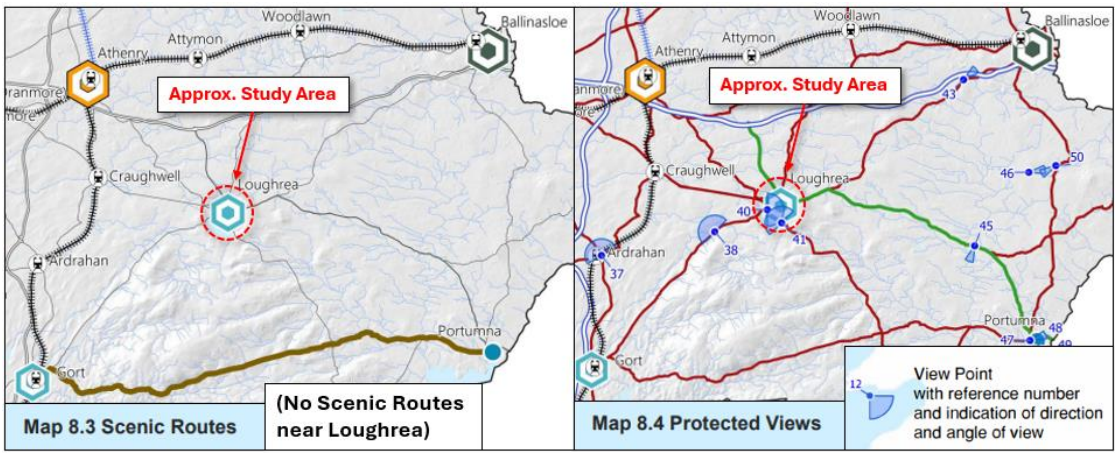

Figure 3-1 Extracted Maps 8.3 and 8.4 from Ch.8 GCDP 2022-2028, modified with location of study area

G-V40 Viewpoint 40 Corry's Field Walk (p.42):

- *"Significance: County.*
- *Location of View: This view is from the east end of Corry's Field Walk that sticks out into Lough Rea.*
- *Description of View: The focus of this view is Loughrea Town."*

G-V41 Viewpoint 41 Loughrea Swimming Area (The Long Point) (p.43):

- *"Significance: County.*
- *Location of View: This view is from the swimming area carpark and shore footpaths.*
- *Description of View: The focus of this view is the expanse of Lough Rea as well as the backdrop of Loughrea Town and the wooded hills."*

App.4 Section 6 Protected Views, Section 6.1 Introduction (p.26):

> *"Scenery and appreciation of views has two separate but closely related aspects, namely;*
>
> - *Visual impacts - focusing on the extent to which new developments can be seen.*
> - *Impacts on the character of the landscape, examining responses which are felt towards the combined effects of the new development."*

App.4 Section 6.2 Attributes of Protected Views (p.26):

> *"Sites of protected views were identified by using, three principle sources of evidence– use, development and national recognition. Examples of evidence of use includes observable patterns of consistent behaviour–such as trails on vegetation, roadside parking or repeated presence of visitors at specific places. Examples of development evidence for the presence of a valued landscape experience include: Public parking places and layby designated by maps and signs as 'Scenic Views' (etc.)."*

Vol.1 Ch.8 Section 8.13.3 Protected Views and Scenic Routes (p.26):

> *"...protected views and scenic routes have a very important amenity, tourism, economic and cultural value for the county and its people. It is therefore important to protect and conserve these views and development where permitted should not hinder or obstruct these views but should be located and designed in a manner so as not to negatively impact on these protected views and scenic routes."*

Vol.1 Ch.8 Section 8.13.3 Policy Objective Landscape Conservation and Management (p.30):

> *"Objective PVSR 1 Protected Views and Scenic Routes. Preserve the protected views and scenic routes as detailed in Maps 8.3 and 8.4 from development that in the view of the Planning Authority would negatively impact on said protected views and scenic routes. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan."*

3.2.3 Landscape Designations: Sensitivity

According to the GCDP 2022-2028 Landscape Character Assessment, the Proposed Development is located within an area classed as 1 – Low Sensitivity (out of five classes). This sensitivity classification is defined below and the relevant factors and policies relating to landscape sensitivity follow.

App.4 Section 4.3 Landscape Sensitivity Definitions (p.22):

> *"Low (Sensitivity): Unlikely to be adversely affected by change."*

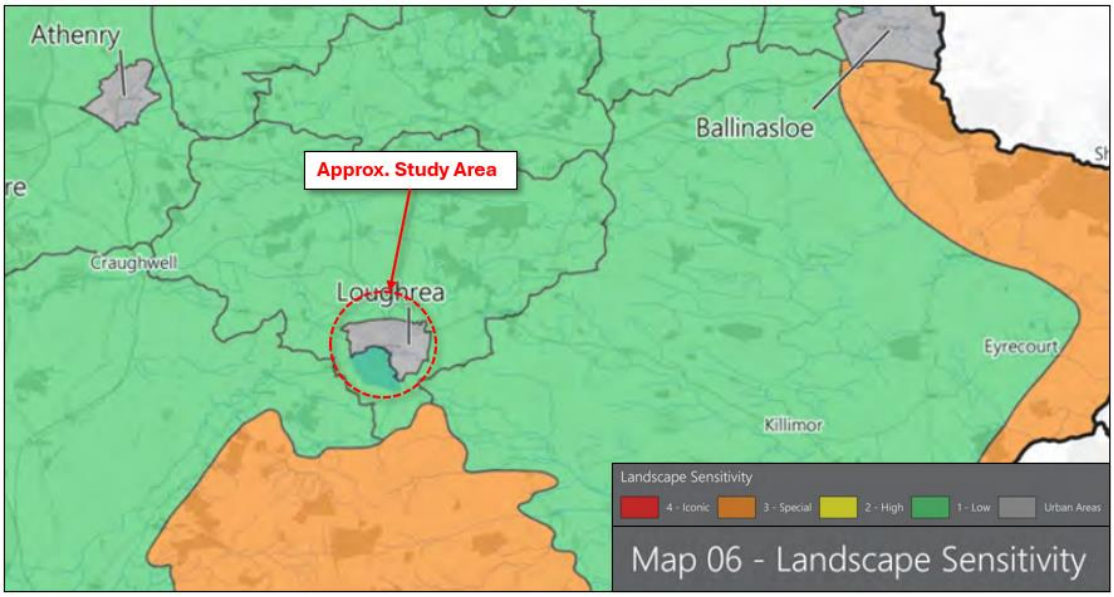

Figure 3-2 Extracted Map 06 from App.4 GCDP 2022-2028, modified with location of study area

App.4 Section 4 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, Section 4.2 Landscape Sensitivity (p.22):

> *"A landscape's capacity to absorb new development, without exhibiting a significant alteration of character or change of appearance is referred to as it's 'sensitivity'. This depends on factors such as elevation, slope, as well as the types of land-cover and soil. Landscape sensitivity increases when one or more of these factors occur in the same place."*

App.4 Section 4.4. Landscape Sensitivity Factors (p.22):

> *"Sensitivities arise due to characteristics that affect a wide area. These include proximity to features such as...Shores of lakes (etc.)"*

> *"Sensitivities also arise from the prevailing landcover and topography. Those that give rise to large areas that lack significant visual screening include...Large water bodies (etc.)*

App.4 Section 4.5 Other Sensitivity Factors (p.22):

> *"The following factors are readily available in maps and have been combined to produce indications of the ability of a landscape to accommodate change…Water bodies, Lacustrine soils (etc.)"*

3.3 Landscape Character Areas

According to the GCDP 2022-2028 Landscape Character Assessment, the Proposed Development is located within the Eastern Plains landscape region, Central Galway Complex Landscape Type, South Loughrea Landscape Character Area (LCA), here labelled as G-LCA6e.

App.4 Section 2.3.6 Central Galway Complex Landscape Type (p.12):

The Proposed Development is located within the landscape character type of Central Galway Complex Landscape Type, with "South Loughrea" listed as a "Component Unit" and the key characteristics relevant to the Lough Rea area as follows.

> *"Description. An extensive plain of grasslands comprising of medium-to-large fields with low enclosures and many areas of low stone walls used for field boundaries. It also includes distinctive features, including locally elevated features, such as Knockma, south-west of Tuam as well as areas that overlook Lough Corrib in the west and the complex of lakes and foothills between Gort and Loughrea in the south."*

> *"Significance. Many areas have local sensitivities – often on account of local amenities or historic sites."*

> *"Sensitivities. Open countryside offers frequent extensive panoramic views from local highpoints."*

App.4 Section 3 Landscape Units, Map 05 Central Galway Complex, Karst & Slieve Aughty Landscape Units (p.21):

> *G-LCA6e South Loughrea. "Long-occupied working landscape with elevated concentrations of settlements and infrastructure. Larger areas of bog and forestry."*

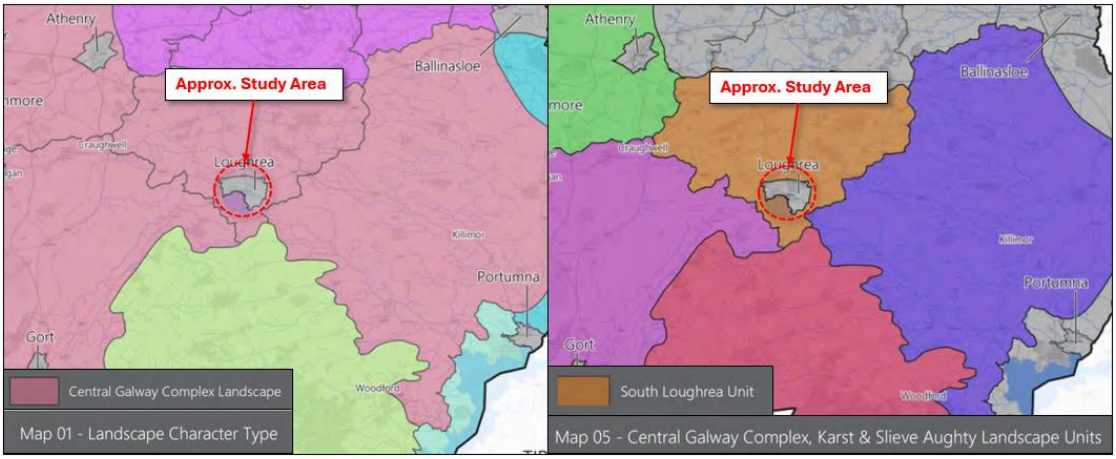

Figure 3-3 Extracted Maps 01 and 05 from App.4 GCDP 2022-2028, modified with location of study area

3.4 Landscape Character of the Site and Wider Setting

The entire LVIA Study Area, including the site and its wider setting, comprises landscape of the Landscape Character Unit (LCU) called G-LCA6e South Loughrea Unit, a smaller unit within the Central Galway Complex LCT as described above, with "Low" sensitivity designated in the GCDP 2022-2028. Imagery of views within the existing site and views from the wider landscape setting are provided in Section 4 Visual Baseline.

The Proposed Development site itself is a relatively flat, moderately vegetated shoreline immediately adjacent to the south edge of Lough Rea featuring a shallow-water environment for swimming and recreation (Loughrea Swimming Area). The site has been developed previously for recreational purposes (depicted above in Section 1.4 Project Description and LVIA Study Area), the features of which are still existing and actively used; these include namely the shoreline modified into a paved walkway and the flat area modified into a basic carpark and series of landscaped lawn areas, see baseline imagery below.

The protected scenic view G-V41 Loughrea Swimming Area (The Long Point) from GCDP 2022-2028 is located within the site boundary and is characterised by views looking out over the water, which will not be compromised by the Proposed Development.

The wider landscape of the LVIA Study Area includes the settlement of Loughrea Town at the north end of the lake, situated in a low-lying area between elevated hills. The lake sits within a basin surrounded by hills which are sparsely populated, and feature patchwork woodlands, some commercial forestry stands and low-intensity agricultural fields. The figure below shows a topographical map of the LVIA Study Area. The point of highest elevation is 145m at the southeast end of the study area and no visual receptors could be identified in this area.

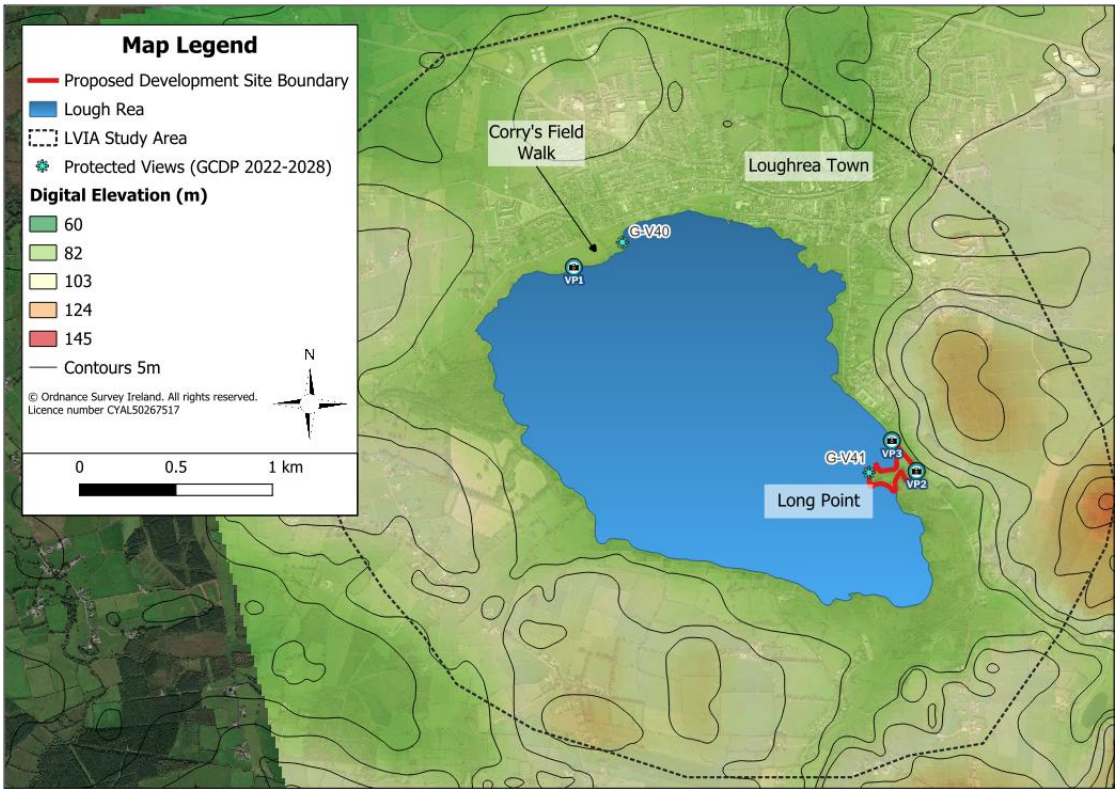

Figure 3-4 Topography of LVIA Study Area

3.5 Landscape Sensitivity: Value and Susceptibility to Change

Following the above methodology in Section 2.4 Assessing Landscape Effects, the table below considers the collective appraisal of seven indicators of landscape value from the GLVIA3, which is then combined with a determination of landscape susceptibility to change with respect to the Proposed Development. The value and susceptibility to change are combined to assign an overall Sensitivity rating of the site, reported as High, Medium or Low.

Table 3-2 Indicators of Landscape Value and Susceptibility to Change used to determine Landscape Sensitivity

Indicator	Appraisal
Landscape Designations	The designated LCA containing the Proposed Development site, G-LCA6e South Loughrea is described in the GCDP 2022-2028 has having low sensitivity.
Landscape Elements Quality/Condition	Definition: Refers to the physical state of the landscape of the site and the condition of each of its individual elements. The site is currently manicured as an active recreational use area with lawn areas, trees and other planted vegetation amongst paved carpark and walkways.
Scenic/Aesthetic Qualities	Qualities include: The site has some aesthetic value and qualities with its park-like setting and views of the lake and surrounding hills.
Rarity or Conservation Interests	No interests of rarity or conservation were identified within the site.
Wildness/Naturalness	The present degree of wildness and naturalness of the site has been diminished by the human-modified elements described above; however, the lake, woodland to the south and rural setting do incite a sense of naturalness.
Recreational Value	The recreational value of the site is high as it is currently a locally known recreational destination with basic amenities and is used by the community during all seasons, especially summer.
Cultural Meaning/ Associations	No elements of cultural associations are present within the site.

On balance, the overall sensitivity of the site is deemed to be **Medium**. Whilst the site is relatively highly valued for recreational use and aesthetic landscape value, the material landscape of the site is already currently developed for recreational purposes, thus it is considered highly modified and has no unique or sensitive landscape features.

4. VISUAL BASELINE

4.1 Visual Receptors

The following visual receptors and locally sensitive receptors, as well as relevant areas of residential visual amenity, have been identified within the LVIA Study Area and are scoped in for the assessment of visual impacts arising as a result of the Proposed Development.

Table 4-1 Visual Receptors in the LVIA Study Area

Receptor ID	Name and Description
Protected Views	GCDP Protected Views G-V40 and G-V41 as identified above in Section 3.
R351	**R351 Regional Road.** Traverses the eastern edge of Lough Rea in N-S orientation directly adjacent to the northeastern edge of the Proposed Development site, with primarily intermittent views towards the Proposed Development.
Lough Rea Footpath	**Lough Rea Footpath.** Paved footpath along the eastern edge of the lake featuring benches, lawn areas, picnic tables, and open views of the water including views towards the Proposed Development at Long Point.
St. Brendan's	**St. Brendan's Community Nursing Unit** complex located along R351 overlooking the lake; at its closest point, the St. Brendan's complex is approximately 225m to the Proposed Development site at the edge.
Residential NW	**Residential Receptors Northwest – Tullahill.** Residence dwellings located on the elevated landform around Tullahill with views southeast over Lough Rea, located approx. 2.8km from the Site.

Visual Receptors Scoped Out. *Residential Receptors* – Baseline desk study investigation found that three additional areas of residential receptors on elevated landforms around the perimeter of Lough Rea have no potential for visibility of the Proposed Development: Curheen (west), Grange (southwest) and Earlspark (southeast); these areas are scoped out of the LVIA.

4.2 Viewpoint Locations Selected for Assessment

This LVIA in response to the further information request assesses the visual impact for 3 no. viewpoints VP1 to VP3, mapped below and described in the following table.

Table 4-2 Viewpoints VP1 to VP3 selected for this LVIA

Viewpoint	Name and Description
VP1	**Corry's Field Walk – Bench Viewpoint.** Bench at Corry's Field Walk mid-point with scenic view overlooking the entire lake. Represents unobstructed, open views towards the Proposed Development from the area near GCDP Protected View GV40.
VP2	**Carpark Internal SE Corner.** View looking northwest over new and existing carpark from inside the Site boundary at the SE corner.
VP3	**R351 Lake Rd Public Parking Overlook.** View from small public carpark pullout along the waterside overlooking Long Point.

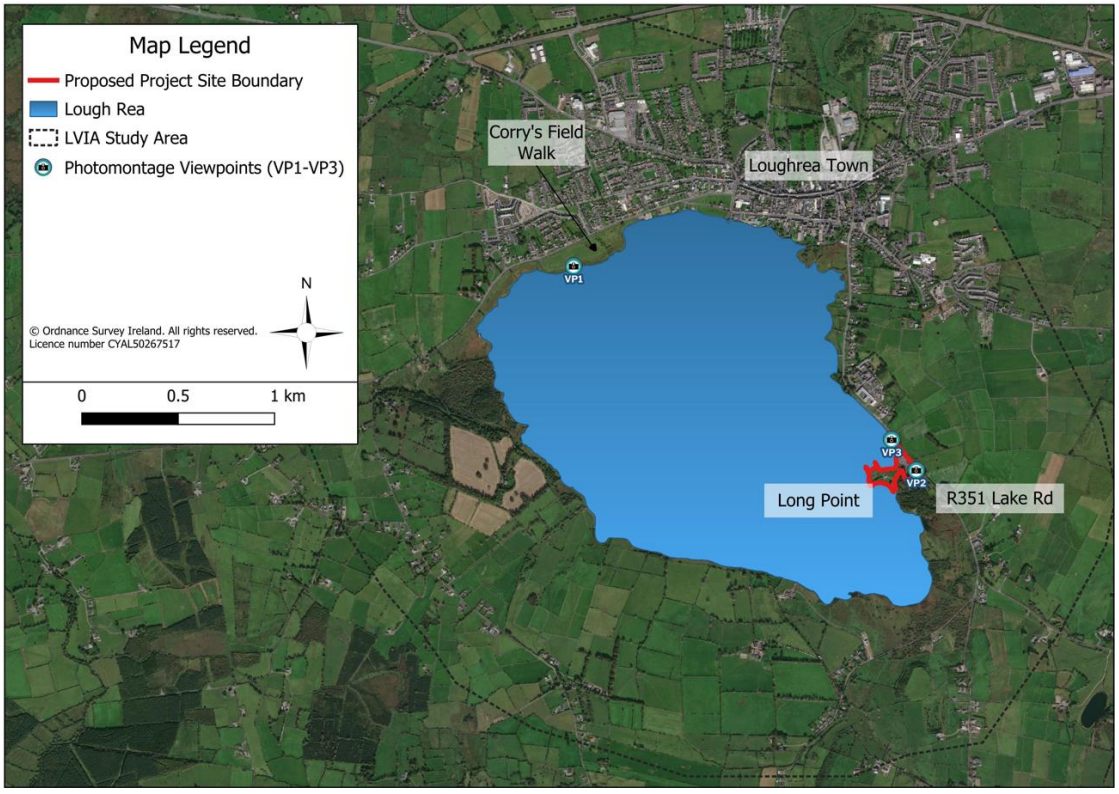

Figure 4-1 Locations of photomontage viewpoints VP1 to VP3

Rationale for VP Selections. Following the visibility appraisal described in the next section, which included desk-study and mapping, on-site investigation, and imagery collection of views within the site and from the surrounding area, VP1 to VP3 were selected as the best representations of receptors as identified in the previous section. The first viewpoint VP1 was specifically requested by the RFI to assess impacts on the GCDP Protected View G-V40 Corry's Field Walk. As shown in the enlarged VP maps below, the actual viewpoint location of VP1 is 283m southwest of the protected view site, and the rationale for selecting this position is given as follows. Site investigations showed that actual views from the site of G-V40 at the northeastern edge of Corry's Field looking southeast towards the Proposed Development at Long Point 1.8km in the distance, are primarily visually screened by intermittent vegetation in the foreground, as shown in Supplementary Viewpoint (SVP1). Moreover, the direction of

view of G-V40 as designated/defined in the GCDP is directed away from the Proposed Development, looking towards Lough Rea Town to the east (shown in the image).

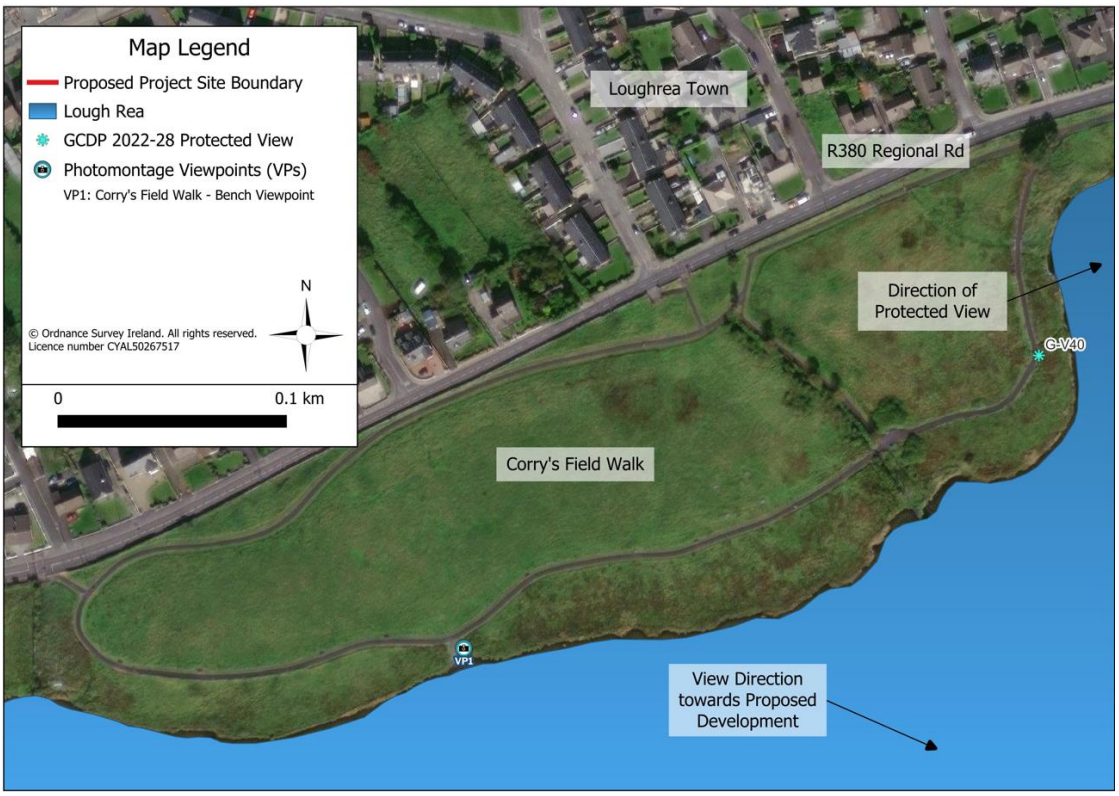

Figure 4-2 Enlargement of VP map showing position of VP1 to Protected View G-V40

Figure 4-3 SVP1 Protected View GVP40: Corry's Field Walk

Description from GCDP 2022-28: "*This view is from the east end of Corry's Field Walk that sticks out into Lough Rea. The focus of this view is Loughrea Town.*"

Thus for the avoidance of doubt on how the Proposed Development would actually be viewed from the majority of the trails in this area, it was decided to position the specifically requested VP1 at the site of the bench viewpoint at Corry's Field, slightly to the southwest of the protected view location, as the bench viewpoint location has unobstructed, open views looking in the direction of Long Point. The selected location is best representative of actual views of the Proposed Development for most receptors using the Corry's Field Walk area.

Viewpoints VP2 and VP3 were selected by this LVIA to aid in illustrating the potential visual impact of the carpark and lighting aspects of the Proposed Development from close-in vantage points, which are the second subjects of the RFI in terms of addressing landscape and visual impact. The enlarged VP map below indicates their positioning within and adjacent to the site.

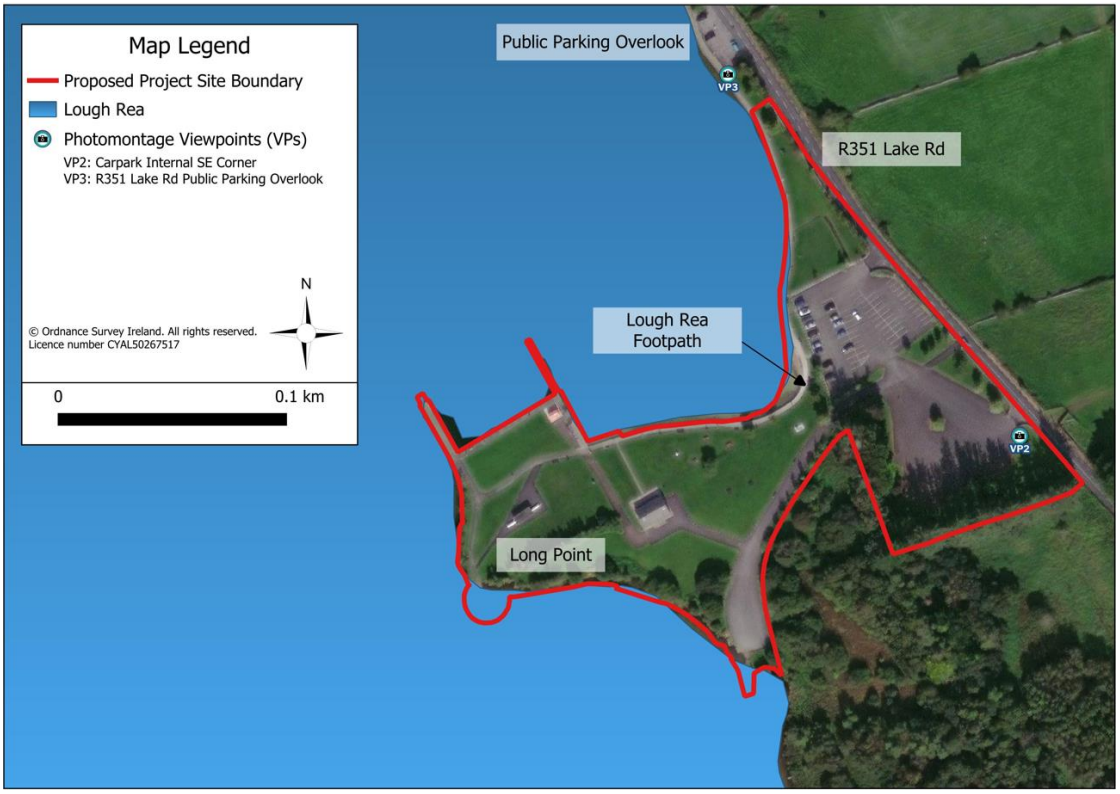

Figure 4-4 Enlargement of VP map showing positions of VPs at the site

4.3 Visibility Appraisal

4.3.1 Site Investigation

The Visual Baseline exercise found that visibility of the Proposed Development is limited primarily to the Lough Rea Footpath which traverses the lakeside along R351 Lake Rd immediately to the north of the Site, as well as from R351 Lake Rd itself as it passes by the eastern edge of the Site. In addition, Corry's Field Walk area at the north end of the lake has open views looking towards Long Point and the Proposed Development site.

An additional 9 no. supplementary viewpoints (SVP1-SVP9, including SVP1 previously shown above) are presented to depict views from within the Proposed Development site as well as the surrounding area and wider landscape.

4.3.2 Views within the Existing Site

The following Supplementary Viewpoints (SPV2-SVP4) show the existing baseline condition of the Proposed Development site at Long Point from within the site boundary and from along the adjacent R351 Lake Rd. Views mainly consist of those looking over the lawn and carpark of the recreational area, and towards the Lough Rea Footpath and surrounding hills of the lake, as well as looking out over the water from GCDP protected View G-V41 Loughrea Swimming Area.

Figure 4-5 SVP2 R351 at Treeline

Description: Looking NW over existing carpark from far side of R351.

Figure 4-6 SVP3 Carpark Internal Point at South Edge

Description: View from the south edge of the existing carpark.

Figure 4-7 SVP4 Eastern Aspect of Protected View GVP41: Loughrea Swimming Area

Description: Looking eastward into the site from the protected view vantage point; the protected view is looking away from the site, described in the GCDP 2022-28 as: "*This view is from the swimming area carpark and shore footpaths. The focus of this view is the expanse of Lough Rea as well as the backdrop of Loughrea Town and the wooded hills.*"

4.3.3 Views of the Surrounding and Wider Areas

The following Supplementary Viewpoints (SPV5-SVP8) show views looking away from or towards the Proposed Development site at Long Point from the surrounding area and wider landscape, followed by discussion. Views along the lake mainly consist of water views with distant low-lying hills and the paved path with associated amenities such as benches and trees, along with the building complex of St. Brendan's Community Nursing Unit on the east shore. The surrounding hills are relatively low elevation and feature patchwork fields, pockets of broadleaf woodland and mature vegetation.

Figure 4-8 SVP5 Lough Rea Footpath looking North

Description: View looking north along the Lough Rea Footpath towards St. Brendan's Community Nursing Unit.

Figure 4-9 SVP6 Aerial view looking Northeast from Site (drone imagery provided by Client, 2025)

Description: View from behind Long Point looking northeast over the site towards the eastern hills of Lough Rea basin.

Figure 4-10 SVP7 Aerial view looking South over Long Point and Southern Hills (drone imagery provided by Client, 2025)

Description: View from in front of Long Point looking south over the site towards the pockets of woodland and southern hills of Lough Rea basin.

Figure 4-11 SVP8 Aerial view looking West over Long Point and Western Hills (drone imagery provided by Client, 2025)

Description: View from the western aspect of the site looking over Lough Rea and the surrounding hills in the west and northwest.

Figure 4-12 SVP9 Galway Rd at Tullahill

Description: View looking across Lough Rea towards Proposed Development from elevated vantage point above NW end of lake in Tullahill townland.

Viewpoint SVP9 above is representative of the typical view of residential receptors at the northwest side of the lake, to the west of Loughrea Town, looking towards the Proposed Development at Long Point, approx. 2.7km distant. The vantage point where the photo was captured is the only location along Galway Rd where a view of the Proposed Development is likely to occur between intermittent roadside screening by vegetation and built structures.

5. PHOTOMONTAGE VIEWPOINT ASSESSMENT

5.1 VP1: Corry's Field Walk – Bench Viewpoint

Table 5-1 Viewpoint 1 Visual Impact Assessment

VP1: Corry's Field Walk - Bench Viewpoint	
Location Description E 560798 N 716247	Bench at Corry's Field Walk mid-point with scenic view overlooking the entire lake. Represents unobstructed, open views towards the Proposed Development from the area near GCDP Protected View GV40.
Overview of Existing View	Long-ranging view of the eastern and southern hills surrounding Lough Rea to the south and east of Long Point, which is 1.8km distant, situated in the mid-centre of the shoreline at the base of the forestry stand.
Viewpoint and Receptor Sensitivity	**High:** This view is captured at the point of a bench installed for recreational use and enjoyment of the scenic views. Though it is not a designated scenic view, it represents high-sensitivity receptors using the trail network at Corry's Field Walk where the protected view is located at the northernmost end of the field area (directed away from the site). The view from this bench and similar views from Corry's Field Walk are nearly panoramic and are valued for the scenic amenity of the lake and surrounding hills of the basin.
Magnitude of Change as shown by Photomontage	**Low:** Considering the distance of this viewpoint from the site (1.8km) and the view is over the flat surface of the water, as well as the size and scale of the Proposed Development featuring relatively short building structures, the change in view is virtually undetectable with the human eye.
Factors Mitigating Visual Effects	› This viewpoint represents the highest degree of visibility of the Proposed Development as is possible without magnification, which is virtually undetectable. › The Proposed Development is hardly visible owing to the distance of the viewpoint from the site (1.8km) and low height of the proposed buildings. › The Proposed Development does not obstruct scenic views from this location, which focus on the lake and surrounding hills in the distance.
Residual Visual Effect	On balance, the visual effect is considered **Low.**

5.2 VP2: Carpark Internal SE Corner

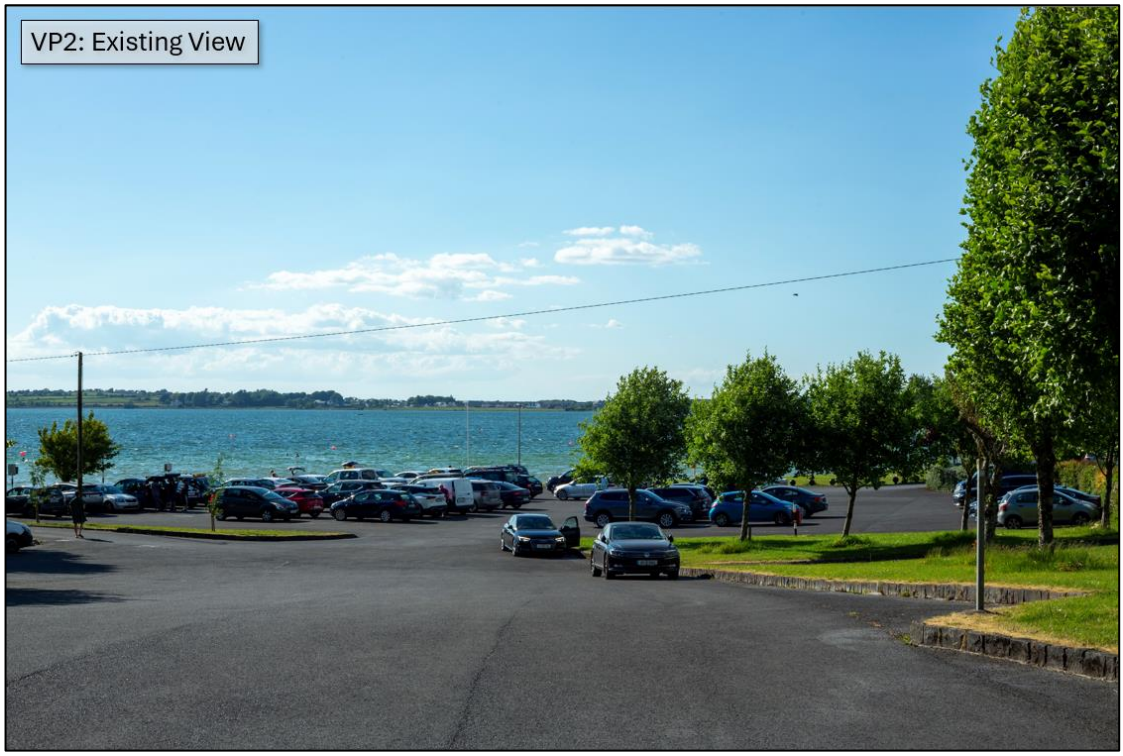

Table 5-2 Viewpoint 2 Visual Impact Assessment

VP2: Carpark Internal SE Corner	
Location Description E 562575 N 715188	View looking northwest over new and existing carpark from inside the Site boundary at the SE corner.
Overview of Existing View	Shows the internal extent of the existing carpark as a paved surface surrounded by small lawn areas and some landscaped trees with a partial view of the lake and distant hills to the northwest; the lawn areas are not currently set up for recreational use. A few of the current lighting elements are visible as taller, thin poles closer to the water, and powerline is visible stretching across the field of view. The view is immediately adjacent to R351 Lake Rd and is visible from the road as receptors drive by or enter the carpark.
Viewpoint and Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium:** This view is not a destination or stopping point for users of the recreational area to view the lake; however, it is one of the first views that receptors have when driving into the carpark and is visible from the road when driving north on R351 Lake Rd. It is the closest point of the Proposed Development to the road and will be visible from the moderately trafficked regional road as well as to all users of the recreational area who enter the carpark from this point.
Magnitude of Change as shown by Photomontage	**Medium:** The changes to carpark and lighting elements from this viewpoint are noticeable across the entire field of view and include views of enhanced landscaping elements such as planted beds with flowers and mature trees. The powerline is absent and new lighting elements are dispersed throughout the carpark, moved farther inland from the water's edge; the number of lighting elements has increased from that seen in the existing view. The new extension of the footpath between the carpark and R351 Lake Rd is visible, as well as the designated carpark spaces for electric vehicles which are equipped with small charging stations. The partial view of the lake are likely to be somewhat obstructed by mature vegetation and lighting elements. The change in character of the landscape seen in the view is low and similar to that of the existing view.
Factors Mitigating Visual Effects	› The view is not a destination or stopping point for viewing the lake, rather it is a view of the carpark entrance which is designed for practical use by drivers. › The carpark element of the proposed design features enhancements to the aesthetics of the current view, including more green space, more vegetation, more features of recreational use (e.g. footpath) and removal of the powerline. › The lighting elements of the proposed design add a measure of increased safety for visibility in darkening hours.
Residual Visual Effect	On balance, the residual visual effect is considered **Medium.**

5.3 VP3: R351 Lake Rd Public Parking Overlook

Table 5-3 Viewpoint 3 Visual Impact Assessment

VP3: R351 Lake Rd Public Parking Overlook	
Location Description E 562448 N 715347	View from small public carpark pullout along the waterside overlooking Long Point.
Overview of Existing View	Short-range view looking onto the carpark and lighting elements of the existing site from the Lough Rea Footpath which follows the edge of the lake from the north of the site and traverses through the site itself until reaching the swimming area at the far end. Lawn areas in the mid-ground ait in front of the carpark, and mature tree stands sit behind the carpark. The lighting elements are few in number and sit relatively close to the water's edge.
Viewpoint and Receptor Sensitivity	**High:** This view is at the public carpark overlook with access to the Lough Rea Footpath in both directions, which people come to enjoy the views of the lake and Long Point. Primary views from this location would be directed towards the lake and the distant hills to the west, off the right edge of the image.
Magnitude of Change as shown by Photomontage	**Low:** The carpark element of the Proposed Development is not visibly altered from this vantagepoint as it occupies the same footprint as that in the existing view. the number of lighting elements has increased from that seen in the existing view; however, they are situated farther inland from the water's edge than those in the existing view and thus do not occupy as much of a vertical extent. Added recreational features such as benches are visible along the edge of the path. The change in character of the landscape seen in the view is Low and similar to the existing view.
Factors Mitigating Visual Effects	› Changes to the carpark element of the Proposed Development are not noticeable. › Changes to the lighting elements of the Proposed Development improve the aesthetic and scenic qualities of the view, as the light stands have been moved farther away from the water's edge and are now absorbed amongst the landscaping proposals. › The landscaping element of the Proposed Development visible from this vantage point enhances the scenic quality of the setting by adding more green space and vegetation.
Residual Visual Effect	On balance, the residual visual effect is considered **Medium.**

6. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

6.1 Visual Effects Summary Table

Table 6-1 Visual Effects Summary Table

Viewpoint	Name	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Residual Visual Effect
VP1	Corry's Field Walk – Bench Viewpoint	High.	Low.	**Low.**
VP2	Carpark Internal SE Corner	Medium.	Medium.	**Medium.**
VP3	R351 Lake Rd Public Parking Overlook	High.	Low.	**Medium.**

6.2 Visual Effects Discussion: Corry's Field Walk

This LVIA in response to the RFI considers the impact of the Proposed Development on the protected view G-V40 Corry's Field Walk as designated in the GCDP 2022-2028. As reported above in Section 4 Visual Baseline, the visibility of the Proposed Development is obstructed by vegetation from the origin of protected view G-V40 as it is mapped in the GCDP; moreover, the description of the protected view (described as the view of Loughrea Town to the east) is directed away from the site (which is located to the south at Long Point), thus the protected view as it is described in the GCDP is not affected by the Proposed Development. However, given that Corry's Field Walk area extends southwest from the location of G-V40 and features a trail system with many points of open views towards Long Point, VP1 was selected at the Corry's Field Walk – Bench Viewpoint to represent the common view of users of the area and was assessed for the avoidance of doubt.

Considering the distance of Corry's Field Walk from the site (1.8km) and considering the relatively small size and scale of the Proposed Development buildings (i.e. changing room and storage shed), the magnitude of change to the view is virtually undetectable with the human eye. From this distance, the Proposed Development is likely to be visible only as a very thin, light-coloured structure at the base of a distant stand of woodlands (see enlarged image below) and will not impact or obstruct scenic views from this location, which focus on the lake and surrounding hills.

Figure 6-1 Extract of VP1 Proposed View image at 400% Enlargement

Although not the focus of the photomontages of the RFI, the proposed building (changing room) will be the most visually prominent part of the Proposed Development. As shown in the image enlargement, the building will be visible on the lakeside at the north end of Long Point. An existing building will be removed as part of the Proposed Development, and therefore the magnitude of change

in the view will be low compared with the current baseline view. The proposed building and landscaping will cause a low visual effect, and the Proposed Development will be an improvement to the area and will support recreation of the lakeside amenities.

Overall, whilst the sensitivity of receptors using the Corry's Field Walk area is high given the designated protected view and similar views for users of the trail system, the magnitude of change is negligible thus the overall visual effect is **Low**.

6.3 Visual Effects Discussion: Carpark and Lighting

This LVIA considers the impact of the carpark and lighting elements of the Proposed Development as they will be visible from receptors on the Lough Rea Footpath and users of the R351 Lake Rd immediately east of and adjacent to the site. Given that the carpark is not a destination or stopping point for recreational users to view the lake, the visual changes are considered in the context of practicality and aesthetic quality. The greatest visual changes in this area of the Proposed Development include the landscaping of the carpark area with increased planted beds and increased number of trees, as well as the addition of more lighting elements which have been moved farther inland, away from the lake's edge. Further changes include the addition of a paved walkway between the carpark and R351 Lake Rd where currently there is no pedestrian access, and benches installed along the Lough Rea Footpath to facilitate enjoying outward views of the lake. These changes will be visible for users of the footpath and road and are considered to increase the practicality and safety of the carpark space, in that more lighting elements within the carpark will increase visibility in the darkening hours and pedestrians will have safer accessibility along the roadway. In addition, the added landscaping softworks are considered to visually enhance the overall aesthetics of the area, which currently features a wide, paved surface with no designated parking spaces and very little landscaping for aesthetics purposes or recreational use. Therefore, whilst the visual changes will be noticeable to receptors, the nature of the changes support enhanced practicality, safety and aesthetic value of the site and the overall visual effect is **Low**.

6.4 Landscape Effects

It is reported above in Section 3 Landscape Baseline that the Proposed Development site is within a landscape of 'Low' sensitivity designated in the GCDP 2022-2028 and is found to have Medium overall sensitivity owing to its high degree of modification and having no unique or sensitive landscape features. It is considered that the direct changes to the landscape of the Proposed Development site will be contained within the current footprint of the already developed facility at Long Point. Changes in landscape character will be low and will only be experienced from locations in very close proximity to the site. Further, the proposed softworks landscape plan is a positive intervention for the Proposed Development and is expected to improve not only the recreational and biodiversity value of the landscape, but also the practical elements for safety (increasing carpark lighting, extension of footpath) and recreational amenity (benches, lawn areas). The current landscape character of the site, which is already modified and currently used as a recreational facility, will be improved for that function, thus the landscape effects are considered to be **Low**.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This LVIA, conducted in response to a recent request for further information regarding Long Point Lough Rea Amenity Area by An Coimisiún Pleanála, addresses the queries of Point 2(v) regarding the potential landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development on the protected view at Corry's Field Walk and elements of the design relating to carpark and lighting.

The protected view G-V40 at Corry's Field Walk as designated in the GCDP 2022-2028 is situated in a location without direct visibility of the Proposed Development; moreover, the direction of the protected view as defined in the local policy (looking east towards Loughrea Town) is not affected by the Proposed Development since it looks away from the site (at the south of the lake). The LVIA therefore assessed one viewpoint (VP1) in close proximity to the protected view location, which has unobstructed, open views looking towards the site. The visual effects on the area of Corry's Field Walk are **Low** with a negligible visual change primarily owing to the distance of Corry's Field from the Proposed Development site (1.8km) and the nature of the Proposed Development comprising structures of low height, which are visible only to a small degree at the given distance.

The LVIA assessed two additional viewpoints (VP2, VP3) taken to show the changes to carpark and lighting elements of the design from the most sensitive visual receptors, that is users of the R351 Lake Rd and Lough Rea Footpath. The residual visual effects of the carpark and lighting elements of the Proposed Development are **Low** with noticeable changes that serve to improve the area in terms of aesthetic quality as well as practicality and safety.

The landscape effects are found to be **Low** on account of the overall landscape character of the site will be improved in terms of its function as a recreational amenity area, which includes improved landscape and visual features. There are no recommendations to modify the current design of the Proposed Development from a landscape and visual perspective.