



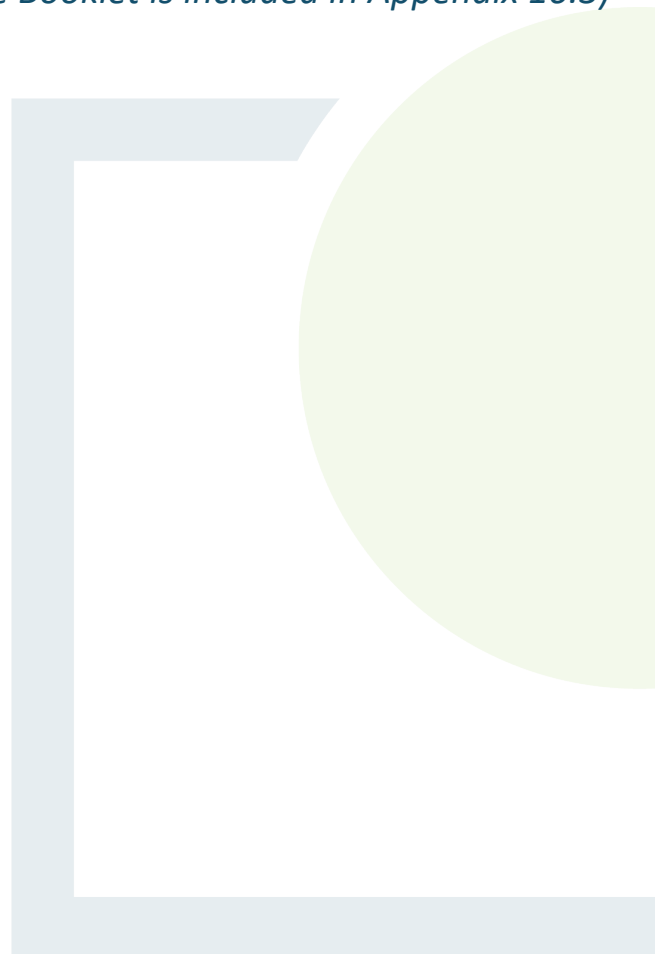
DESIGNING AND DELIVERING  
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## Appendix 16.1

**Appraisal of Visual Receptor Sensitivity**

**Assessment of Visual Impacts at Viewshed Reference Points**

*(The Photomontage Booklet is included in Appendix 16.3)*



## Appraisal of Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Based on the site-specific factors outlined in Chapter 16 and per the general visual receptor sensitivity considerations contained in the methodology Section 16.2.5, visual receptor sensitivity judgement is provided for each representative viewpoint in the table below.

The wider study area encompasses some highly sensitive visual receptors, typically associated with the highly scenic areas of Lough Corrib and Lough Mask. Nonetheless, it is also characterised by existing wind energy development. It contains settlements, major routes, and other anthropogenic built features that reduce viewers' susceptibility to the type of visual change proposed.

The sensitivity of visual receptors within the study area ranges between 'High-medium' at Knockma Woods (VP19) and 'Low' at the N17 national primary road at the outskirts of Tuam (VP15), with those of a higher classification representing designated scenic routes or areas of outdoor pursuits with a strong degree of scenic amenity/naturalness. Those of a 'medium' and 'medium-low' sensitivity are typically influenced by more typical rural and upland vistas and surrounding anthropogenic built features such as other wind farms, roads, settlements, electrical infrastructure development, etc.

Key differentials in visual receptor sensitivity relate to the occupation of the visual receptor and whether views of the surrounding landscape are an inherent part of the experience. Static residential receptors are considered generally more susceptible to changes in views over those where views are experienced transiently by those travelling through the landscape, particularly on major transport routes, where road infrastructure and traffic volume draw from visual amenity. Likewise, receptors located in closer proximity to the site are considered more susceptible to changes in views over those where views are experienced at a distance.

VP No.	Existing View	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance / Quality / Duration of Impact
VP1	<p><b><u>Local road, Claremorris</u></b></p> <p>Representative of the population centre of Claremorris. The nearby Land of the Giants walking trail is located in the low-lying portion of the middle ground of the view. Still, this viewpoint is not representative of the trail as it is at a lower elevation and is enclosed by vegetation, unlike the view afforded by this viewpoint.</p>	Medium-low	The proposed turbines will be heavily screened from here by the intervening terrain, structures and vegetation in the direction of the Site. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Negligible.	<b>Imperceptible/Neutral/Long Term</b>
VP2	<p><b><u>Killosheheen, Ballinrobe</u></b></p> <p>This is a representative of the population centre of Ballinrobe. The viewpoint was selected in the playing fields located in the southern extents of the town. The view is enclosed due to the vegetation and buildings in the middle ground.</p>	Low	The proposed turbines will be heavily screened from here by the intervening terrain, structures and vegetation in the direction of the Site. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Negligible.	<b>Imperceptible/Neutral/Long Term</b>
VP3	<p><b><u>N17 national primary road, Milltown</u></b></p> <p>This viewpoint is representative of Milltown, a small population centre located on the N17 major route. To the southwest, there are views over a broad rural context of fields and hedgerows.</p>	Medium-low	A bungalow and vegetation in the foreground will screen five turbines from view. The turbine blade sets of the other five turbines will be partially and intermittently visible along the vegetated skyline at a distance of over c. 9.7 km. Whilst the turbines are unlikely to draw the eye from this distance, they will marginally increase the intensity of built development. They will generate a slight sense of visual ambiguity as to the actual location of the proposed wind farm development. Nonetheless, they will have very little notable influence on the visual	<b>Slight /Negative-Neutral/Long Term</b>

			amenity of this scene. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Low.	
VP4	<p><b><u>R328 regional road, Dunmore</u></b></p> <p>This view represents the population centre of Dunmore and the major route of the R328 regional road. It is an enclosed view, with undulating terrain in the foreground, shortening the view to the southwest.</p>	Medium-low	The proposed turbines will be heavily screened from here by the intervening terrain, structures and vegetation in the direction of the Site. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Negligible.	<b>Imperceptible/Neutral/Long Term</b>
VP5	<p><b><u>Kilmainepark, Kilmaine</u></b></p> <p>This view is representative of the Kilmaine Nature Walk, which is located south of the population centre of Kilmaine. The view is directed to the southeast over gently rolling farmland enclosed within drystone walls. Terrain and established vegetation contain most of the view.</p>	Medium-low	The proposed development will be entirely screened from here by the intervening terrain, built development and surrounding stacked vegetation. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Negligible.	<b>Imperceptible/Neutral/Long Term</b>
VP6	<p><b><u>R332 regional road, Oultaun</u></b></p> <p>This view is representative of the local community receptors and a major route. This is a wide-open view oriented toward the south. The depicted view is directed towards large open fields with low boundary vegetation and intermittent hedgerow trees. Views across these to a distant hill at Knockma Woods are in the background.</p>	Medium-low	All eleven turbines have the potential to be visible, but the four closest turbines will be located behind mature trees in the middle distance. Thus, they may not be noticeable to a casual observer. The remaining turbines will be sporadically visible between and above the scattering of trees in the background, and none will appear higher than the existing trees, thus presenting with sub-dominance in this scene. The turbines intensify land use and anthropogenic influence, and two turbines will be to the fore of the distant hill at Knockma Woods. Still, it is a case of visual intrusion rather than obstruction in relation to	<b>Slight/Negative/Long Term</b>

			a feature that is not key to visual amenity at this location. The magnitude of impact is deemed Low.	
VP7	<p><b><u>Local road, Kilshanv</u></b></p> <p>This is a relatively enclosed view from a local road to the north of the Site, representing local community views. The south-facing view is contained in the distance by a low, broad, elongated ridgeline and pastoral fields which foreshorten the view.</p>	Medium-low	All eleven proposed turbines are viewed at distances greater than c. 2.3 km to the south. They are seen at a noticeable, but not prominent scale in the middle distance and their visual presence is deemed to be in the order of co-dominant to sub-dominant. In terms of aesthetics, the proposed turbines present in a clear and legible manner above the low ridge in the middle distance. While there are some instances of turbine overlap, they do not cause excessive visual confusion due to the sense of scale perspective between the turbines in question. However, they will contribute to a noticeable increase in the intensity and diversity of built development within the view. Overall, the magnitude of impact is considered Medium-low.	<b>Moderate-slight/Negative/Long Term</b>
VP8	<p><b><u>Local road, Carrowmore</u></b></p> <p>This is a similar view to VP7 but without the low ridge in the middle ground, meaning longer-distance views are afforded to the west across a peatland context, but framed by foreground vegetation in a farmland setting. It is representative of local community views.</p>	Medium-low	The four northernmost turbines will be heavily screened by intervening foreground vegetation. The southernmost turbine and met mast will also be obscured by foreground vegetation, but the blade tips will be visible. The remaining six turbines are viewed at a distance greater than c. 2.4 km to the west. Regarding aesthetics, the proposed turbines will be presented here relatively clearly and legibly above the vegetation that forms the middle distance skyline. While there are some instances of turbine overlap, they do not cause excessive visual confusion, but the turbines will contribute to a noticeable increase in the intensity and diversity of built development across the south-eastern viewshed. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Medium-low.	<b>Moderate-slight/Negative/Long Term</b>

VP9	<p><b><u>Local road, Cloonshee</u></b></p> <p>This view is from adjacent to a property on a local road just to the north of the Site. It is representative of the local population and local community views. The view is slightly elevated, and an open view is afforded to the west. However, it is otherwise visually enclosed due to a nearby house, with specimen trees and a hedge in the garden. There are also agricultural hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. The wider setting includes a mix of pasture and agricultural buildings.</p>	Medium-low	<p>The proposal is visible at this relatively short distance. The nearest turbine is 0.8 km to the east, thus fully screened from view by the adjacent residential dwelling. Six turbines are located to the rear of this property, east of the local road, but will only be partially visible. Two will be fully screened, and the blade tips of four turbines will be visible.</p> <p>To the west of the local road, one turbine and the met mast will be screened by mature hedgerow trees, whilst three turbines will be visible and well-spaced, rising from the agricultural fields in the middle ground. These three turbines are legible and evenly spaced rising from a broad and productive land use context where they are well assimilated in terms of scale and function. There is more ambiguity associated with the partial view of several blade sets rotating between sections of foreground on the eastern side of the road. However, the screening is substantial and the viewing direction is divergent from the more clearly visible turbines to the west of the road, such that there is not a sense of being surrounded by turbines. The proposed development introduces a greater intensity and diversity of built development into this visual setting. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium.</p>	<b>Moderate/Negative/Long Term</b>
VP10	<p><b><u>Local road, Cloonbar</u></b></p> <p>This view is from a property on a local road close to the Site. It is representative of the local population and community views and is the closest viewpoint to the proposed turbine array. The view is slightly elevated, and an open view is afforded to the southwest, but it is otherwise visually enclosed due to agricultural buildings</p>	Medium-low	<p>The proposed turbines will be visible at close quarters throughout the northern, eastern and south-western quarters leaving on the north-western quarter free of development. Due to the scale and extent of visible turbines almost surrounding this locality, their visual presence is deemed to be dominant. The nearest turbines are those to the north and east, which are seen beyond a foreground dwelling, shed and mature vegetation in a manner that is slightly ambiguous as a result. There are only three turbines visible straddling</p>	<b>Substantial-moderate/Negative/Long Term</b>

	and mature hedgerow trees. The wider setting includes a mix of pasture and agricultural buildings.		the road to the south at a modest distance. The four turbines and met mast to the west are the most openly visible, but at a slightly greater distance and with a clear and legible layout rising out of scrubby peatland. Although none of the turbines is spatially overbearing in its own right it is the fact that they loosely surround the viewer that gives a sense of being contained within the turbine array with little respite from the view of turbines. They will also introduce a considerably increased intensity and scale of built development within this local landscape context. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be High.	
VP11	<p><b><u>Local road, Cloonnaglash</u></b></p> <p>This is a broad view located east of the Site. The viewpoint is representative of the local population and surrounding local community views. It takes in a scene of flat farmland and forestry interspersed with rural dwellings.</p>	Medium-low	The proposed turbines are viewed beyond c. 1.2km to the west in a prominent manner with a relatively condensed lateral extent. Regarding aesthetics, the proposed turbines will be presented in a clear and legible manner. However, some turbines are slightly stunted as the vegetation partially screens their towers. While there are some instances of turbine overlap, they do not cause excessive visual confusion as there is a strong sense of perspective between the nearest and furthest turbines that highlights the reality of their spacing. While the turbines will contribute to a marked increase in the intensity of built development across the viewer context, they are clearly legible and contextually assimilated into this broad and productive setting. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Medium.	<b>Moderate-slight/Negative/Long Term</b>
VP12	<p><b><u>N84 national secondary road, Shrule</u></b></p> <p>This is a typical view of agricultural lands enclosed in drystone walls, characteristic of this part of Ireland.</p>	Medium-low	The blade tips of all of the proposed turbines and the met mast are viewed at a distance greater than c. 3.9 km to the east with the nacelles of eight rising above the existing vegetation and buildings. In terms of aesthetics, three visible turbines tightly overlap,	<b>Moderate-slight/Negative/Long Term</b>

	<p>This viewpoint represents the major transport route, a population centre (Shrule), and the associated amenities and services in the immediate surroundings. The depicted view is oriented to the east. It affords a view across low, gently undulating farmland in the foreground with dwellings in the middle ground, leaving only snippets of rolling hills visible in the distance.</p>		<p>resulting in a degree of visual clutter. The turbines will be in the background and present at a similar or lower height to the existing vegetation that forms the skyline in much of the view. The turbines will contribute to an increase in the intensity of built development across the viewing context. Still, the scale of the turbines as a result of the intervening distance means that they are deemed to have a sub-dominant presence. Thus, the magnitude of impact is considered Medium.</p>	
VP13	<p><b><u>Local road, Derrymore</u></b></p> <p>This viewpoint is located west of the proposed turbines and northeast of the proposed substation. The viewpoint is representative of the local population and surrounding local community views. To the north east is a scene of locally elevated pasture enclosed by mature hedgerows and a drystone wall in the foreground. However, the eye is drawn more to the south west where a slightly elevated view over low lying farmland is afforded.</p>	Medium-low	<p>To the south west is the proposed substation. It sits in the lowland in the middle distance. It will be viewed against a backcloth formed by a low farmed and settled hill in the background, which will help to visually absorb the proposed substation. The buildings in the substation will look similar to the existing dwellings perched on the low ridge in the background. In the opposite direction, the proposed turbines are viewed beyond c. 1.1km to the east in a obstructed manner with a relatively condensed lateral extent. Regarding aesthetics, the proposed turbines will be presented in an obscure manner with turbines stunted as the landform and vegetation partially screens their towers. There is a degree of visual confusion as there is a limited sense of perspective between the visible turbines. While the turbines will contribute to a marked increase in the intensity of built development across the viewer context. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Medium.</p>	<b>Moderate-slight/Negative/Long Term</b>
VP14	<p><b><u>Local road, Beagh More</u></b></p> <p>This viewpoint represents the residents immediately to the south of the Site.</p>	Medium-low	<p>All eleven turbines will be partially visible. The towers of approximately half and the met mast will be screened by the scattering of trees in the background, which will reduce the prominence of the proposed</p>	<b>Moderate-slight/Negative/Long Term</b>



	<p>There is an expansive rural scene. The combination of open pastures, traditional stone walls, and scattered trees in the background creates a visually pleasing and harmonious view. The distant buildings add a human element without detracting from the area's visual amenity.</p>		<p>development, thus presenting with co- to sub-dominance. The proposed turbines will have a broad lateral extent, but they are well-spaced as a result. They are slightly ambiguous and cluttered due to the blade sets rotating between and above sections of foreground vegetation in perspective. The turbines also intensify the land use and anthropogenic influence. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Medium-low.</p>	
VP15	<p><b><u>Pedestrian bridge, N17 national primary road, Tuam</u></b></p> <p>This viewpoint represents the settlement of Tuam and road users on the N17 major route. However, it is located on a footbridge, so it is notably more elevated than the ground level, thus representing the worst-case scenario. Warehouses and electrical infrastructure are in the foreground of the view, and the background is composed of buildings and vegetation.</p>	Low	<p>Eight of the proposed turbine blade tips have the potential to be viewed from this footbridge over the N17 national primary road on the western outskirts of Tuam. The turbine blade sets will be partially and intermittently visible with scrutiny along the vegetated skyline at a distance of over c. 7.7 km. However, they are unlikely to be noticed by a casual observer, particularly in the context of the intensively developed foreground. The visual complexity of the vegetated skyline will help absorb the visible blade tips, and thus, they will have no material influence on the visual amenity of this scene. Therefore, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Negligible.</p>	<b>Imperceptible/Negative-Neutral/Long Term</b>
VP16	<p><b><u>Church, Carheenard</u></b></p> <p>This is an enclosed view in a church carpark adjacent to local residences that are surrounded by farmland. This viewpoint represents the heritage and amenity receptor of the Church and the surrounding local community at Carheenard.</p>	Medium-low	<p>Five of the proposed turbines and the met mast will be fully screened by intervening foreground vegetation and buildings. The blade tips of the other six turbines will be visible, rotating behind intervening vegetation in the middle ground of the view. There will be a minor sense of ambiguity as the scale / distance of the turbines from the viewpoint and the contextual relationship between the Site and the viewpoint. There is a notable degree of visual complexity in the fore to the middle ground of the view due to the structures associated with the church carpark and dwellings beyond, which will help the</p>	<b>Slight/Negative/Long Term</b>

			proposed turbines to be visually absorbed. Overall, the turbines will not notably reduce the visual amenity at this location. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Low.	
VP17	<p><b><u>R333 regional road, Thomastown</u></b></p> <p>This view is representative of the R333 major route. From this locally elevated section of the road, glimpses of a distant horizon are afforded above and between foreground roadside vegetation.</p>	Medium-low	Due to the vegetated flat landscape between the viewer and the proposed turbines, there is a high level of screening of the lower sections of most of the proposed turbines, and two turbines will be fully screened. Six nacelles are likely to be visible with a high level of overlap of three turbines and, therefore, clutter due to the number of blades rotating within a small visual extent. There is a high degree of visual complexity in the foreground context of the road corridor, and as the turbines will be more than 5.5 km away, their scale will be modest. Therefore, the turbines are deemed to have a visual presence that is sub-dominant to minimal in terms of visual presence which contributes to a Low magnitude of visual impact.	<b>Slight/Negative/Long Term</b>
VP18	<p><b><u>Local road, Ardfintan</u></b></p> <p>This viewpoint represents the designated scenic view towards the ruins of the Friary of Ross in the northwest. The view is orientated along the road corridor upon approach to this heritage feature. Oblique to the direction of travel towards this heritage feature, there is a view of a gently rolling rural landscape over a low-trimmed hedgerow to the northeast.</p>	Medium	The turbine blade tips of all eleven turbines will be partially and intermittently visible along the vegetated skyline at a distance of over c. 8.9 km to the northeast. This is outside the direction of the designated scenic view towards the Friary of Ross to the northwest. The turbines are unlikely to draw the eye from this distance because they are oblique to the direction of travel towards the Friar of Ross or within the extent of the viewshed of the designated scenic view. The skyline to the northeast is smooth due to its distance from this viewpoint with a low degree of visual complexity. There is a minor degree of contextual ambiguity due to partial views of turbine blades rotating on the skyline, however, this is ameliorated by the viewing distance and small scale	<b>Slight/Negative/Long Term</b>

			of the blade sets. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.	
VP19	<p><b><u>Woodland, Tobermina</u></b></p> <p>This view is representative of a worst-case scenario in terms of visual exposure from Knockma Woods because it is located on the woodland edge, while all of the walking trails are enclosed within the woods. It is an elevated and broad view over a rural landscape, with Castle Hacket house and associated historic demesne in the middle ground.</p>	High-medium	<p>The proposed turbines are viewed at distances of greater than c. 6.1 km to the northwest. The four turbines in the western portion of the Site are positioned at a remove from the other seven turbines and will be largely screened by woodland vegetation in the foreground. The other seven turbines will be a distinct cluster rising from the low-lying agricultural plane. They present here in a relatively clear and legible manner, albeit two turbines overlap, generating a very minor degree of visual clutter. The turbines will contribute to a minor increase in the intensity and diversity of built development in the distant lowland context.. There is also a contextual separation with respect to the Castle Hacket demesne. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Medium.</p>	<b>Moderate/Negative/Long Term</b>
VP20	<p><b><u>Local road, Annagh East</u></b></p> <p>This view is representative of the view from the banks of Lough Corrib, residents in the townland of Annagh East, and a general view from lands in the southern portion of the Study Area. A low-lying lakeland landscape is visible in the foreground, and views are foreshortened by vegetation, but elevated terrain near Knockma Woods is identifiable in the background.</p>	Medium	<p>Up to eight of the proposed turbine blade tips have the potential to be viewed from this landscape context along the eastern banks of Lough Corrib. The turbine blade sets will be partially and intermittently visible along the vegetated skyline at a distance of over c. 13.4 km with a low degree of contrast against the sky. The turbines are unlikely to draw the eye from this distance and they will only marginally increase the intensity of built development. They will generate a slight sense of visual ambiguity as to the actual location of the proposed wind farm development. Nonetheless, they will have very little notable influence on the visual amenity of this scene due to the distance and degree of screening. Thus,</p>	<b>Slight-imperceptible/Negative-Neutral/Long Term</b>

			the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Low-negligible.	
VP21	<p><b><u>N63 national secondary road, Abbeyknockmoy</u></b></p> <p>This view represents the population centre of Abbeyknockmoy and the major route of the N63 national secondary road. This slightly elevated view is enclosed by undulating terrain in the foreground, which foreshortens the view to the northwest.</p>	Medium-low	The proposed turbines will be almost completely screened from here by intervening terrain in the direction of the Site. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed Negligible by default.	<b>Imperceptible/Neutral/Long Term</b>