

Appendix 12A

Visual Impact Assessment at each of the 22 Viewpoints

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Visual Impact Assessment at Representative Viewpoint Locations

The assessment of visual effects at each of the selected viewpoints is aided by spatially accurate wireframe images and photomontages that have been produced in accordance with best practice guidance. The presented images for each viewpoint include;

1. Existing View (Contextual 90° included angle)
2. Wireframe view - proposed and cumulative turbines (Contextual 90° included angle)
3. Wireframe view (53.5° included angle)
4. Montage View (53.5° included angle)

Categories of receptor types

- Key Views (from features of national or international importance) (KV);
- Designated Scenic Routes and Views (SR);
- Local Community views (LCV);
- Centres of Population (CP);
- Major Routes (MR); and
- Amenity and heritage features (AH).

VP No.	Existing View	Receptor Type	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance/ Quality/ Duration of Impact
VP1	R513 at Hospital This is a relatively contained a view across a foreground field that is flanked to the right by tall conifer trees and backed in the middle distance by mature hedgerows that become stacked one behind the other. It is a view that is experienced by the residents of the small rural village of Hospital.	CP, MR	Medium-low	The partial blade sets of around four of the proposed turbines will be visible from here in a small gap in the hedgerow that contains the field. The turbines are seen at a considerable distance and may not be noticed by a casual observer. The blades are slightly cluttered presenting in silhouette against the sky, but this is a little consequence given the degree of screening in distance. Overall, it is considered that the magnitude of visual impact is Low-negligible in the quality of that effect, marginally negative.	Slight-imperceptible / Neutral -Negative / Long-term
VP2	R515 southwest of Elton This view is presented above a low roadside wall across a foreground field of pastoral grazing that is contained by stacked hedgerows within a relatively short distance. The view represents both road users and residents of the nearby small rural village of Elton. It is also from an overpass above the railway line, however, visibility would be much more restricted from the railway line.	MR	Medium-low	The blade tips of the majority of the proposed turbines will be partially visible from here rotating just above the vegetated skyline in the middle distance. The turbines are seen at a considerable distance and therefore at relatively small scale. There is a minor degree of visual ambiguity and clutter generated by the turbine blades overlapping with each other and rotating in silhouette against the skyline vegetation. However, they may not be noticed by passing motorists and even if they were, they have little consequence for visual amenity at this location. Overall, it is considered that the magnitude of visual impact is Low-negligible in the quality of that effect, marginally ..	Slight-imperceptible / Neutral -Negative / Long-term
VP3	L1511 at Kilfinane This is an elevated view in a relatively open visitor from the village of Kilfinane looking out across a broad tapestry of lowland farming to the northwest. The foreground comprises of a sweeping road that has scoil Fhionain facilities on both	CP	Medium-low	The majority of proposed turbines are visible from here at the right hand side of the framed vista. They are seen at a long distance and relatively small scale within a relatively condensed cluster. There is some degree of visual clutter both between the turbines themselves and the foreground	Slight / Negative / Long-term

VP No.	Existing View	Receptor Type	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance/ Quality/ Duration of Impact
	sides of the road. The foreground is framed by mature trees and utility poles.			utility poles. The turbines will add to the intensity in diversity of built development within the distant plains, however, they will not have a notable bearing on visual amenity at this location. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact at this location is considered to be Low and of a negative quality.	
VP4	R512 at Ardpatrik This is a slightly elevated view from the outskirts of the small village of Ardpatrik looking north. The foreground is contained by a palisade fence and commercial garage whilst just beyond begins lowland plains of fields and hedgerows. The nearest vegetation consists of mature tree lines in Woodlands that form a near skyline for much of the view.	CP, MR	Medium-low	Notwithstanding some screening by the foreground garage complex, the proposed turbines are seen at a long distance rising just above the vegetated skyline at a small scale. If noticed within the context of this view, it will be as a distant background feature that has little bearing on visual amenity in this complex visual sitting. For the reasons outlined above the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low-negligible and the quality of that affect, marginally negative.	Slight-imperceptible / Neutral -Negative / Long-term
VP5	N20 at Charleville This is a slightly elevated view from near the centre of the settlement of Charleville where the N20 road sweeps to the north from its north-westerly bearing. The view is contained throughout the fore-to-middle ground by dwellings and mature vegetation contained within the settlement. Above this can be seen brief glimpses of the distant rural plains to the north.	CP, MR	Medium-low	The clear view of one blade set and the partial view of around six others can be seen rising above and between intervening treetops within the distant plains. The turbines are seen at a small scale from this distance. They will add a minor degree of visual clutter due to the partial blades sets rotating against intervening treetops. They will also add to the diversity and intensity of built development within this view, but within the context of a complex vista. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low-negligible and the quality of that affect marginally negative.	Slight-imperceptible / Neutral-Negative / Long-term

VP No.	Existing View	Receptor Type	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance/ Quality/ Duration of Impact
VP6	N20 at Harding Grove This is a brief gateway view afforded to road users on the N20 looking eastward. It is a relatively simple and contained view across a foreground field which is backed by mature hedgerow. In the distance can be seen glimpses of the Galtee Mountains to the south-east.	MR	Medium-low	The blade tips of around six of the proposed turbines can be seen from here rotating just above the intervening vegetation. These turbines will be barely noticeable to passing traffic travelling in an oblique direction. If noticed, there may be a very minor degree of visual ambiguity relating to the nature and context of the moving structures. However, this will have little bearing on visual amenity and the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.	Imperceptible / Neutral / Long-term
VP7	R518 at Bruree This is a view from the rural edge of the small village of Bruree looking to the northeast across a foreground field that is backed by a combination of hedgerows mature trees and dwellings that form a near skyline. It is afforded to residents of the village and road users.	CP, MR, LC	Medium-low	The partial blades sets of around eight of the proposed turbines can be seen from here rotating above and between the intervening skyline elements. They are seen at a relatively small scale from this distance. There will be some degree of visual clutter generated between the turbines and the intervening trees and houses as well as some overlapping of turbine blades sets. However, the proposed turbines are not a distinct or prominent feature of the view that will only have a small bearing on visual amenity. On the balance of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low and the quality of effect, negative.	Slight / Negative / Long-term
VP8	R512 at Kilmallock This view is very similar in nature to the one from Charleville (VP5), except that it is from the R512 as it sweeps in a northerly direction near the middle of the settlement. Again, it takes in a fore-to-middle ground of mature trees, buildings and houses characteristic of a rural service centre. The view is contained by these elements which also form the near skyline.	CP, MR	Medium-low	A partial view of around six of the proposed turbines blade sets will be visible from here on alignment with the road. The blades will rotate against the intervening treetops in a slightly cluttered fashion, which is exacerbated by the frequent utility poles in the foreground. Whilst the turbines will be noticeable and their aesthetics are not ideal, this is diluted by the high degree of screening in what is already a complex view.	Slight / Negative / Long-term

VP No.	Existing View	Receptor Type	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance/ Quality/ Duration of Impact
				On balance of the reasons outlined above the magnitude of visual impact of this considered to be low and the quality of effect, negative.	
VP9	L1550 at Trinity Holywell This is a view from the entrance to a local heritage feature, the Trinity holywell that is experienced by members of the local community passing, road users and visitors to the Holywell site which is neatly maintained as a garden. As such, it is likely to be enjoyed for its tranquillity and as a place of reflection. The subject view to the north-east is slightly uphill across an open field of grazing partially contained by a sporadic hedgerow and farm buildings on the near horizon.	AH, LC	Medium	The blades of around six of the proposed turbines can be seen rotating above the near skyline ridge. At this distance the turbine components are seen at a prominent scale, albeit with a high degree of screening by the intervening landform and vegetation. There is a degree of visual clutter and ambiguity associated with the moving turbine blades amongst trees and utility poles where the landscape context of the windfarm is not revealed to the viewer. On balance of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Medium-low and the quality of that effect, Negative.	Moderate-slight / Negative / Long-term
VP10	Dromin Graveyard This viewpoint is slightly closer to the proposed site along the same road as VP9 and it is also from a locally important node, Dromin Cemetery and church ruins, where visitors can enjoy the tranquillity and an opportunity for reflection. The view to the north is an expansive one from this slightly elevated location across the rural plains of County Limerick taking in fields, hedgerows and scattered farmsteads throughout. The view is more contained at close quarters to the south by the low ridge that hosts the graveyard, however more expansive views to the south are afforded from the top of the graveyard.	AH, LC	Medium	This is a clear and unambiguous view of the proposed windfarm trailing across the plains at a prominent scale. The turbines have a broad lateral extent covering the northern quarters of the vista. The nearest and perceptibly largest of the turbines are contained within the more condensed cluster at the central and right hand side of the cluster (northeast) with perceived scale and spacing intensity dissipating to the left hand side (north). This generates a strong sense of perspective and depth for the array that emphasises the scale and distance of the view in general. There are some overlapping blade sets that will generate a minor degree of visual clutter but the scale differential between turbines counters that effect somewhat by highlighting the spacing between them. There will be a considerable increase in the scale and extent of built development within the view. However, it is a broad rural vista across a productive lowland landscape where the	Substantial-moderate / Negative / Long-term

VP No.	Existing View	Receptor Type	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance/ Quality/ Duration of Impact
				turbines appear as a compatible component without unduly impacting on the agricultural land use below. On balance of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be High-medium and the quality of effect Negative, but with some ameliorating attributes.	
VP11	Local Road at Dromin North This is a slightly elevated and expensive view to the north from a local road which serves a cluster of rural dwellings, which can be seen in the foreground. Beyond the tightly clipped hedge in the foreground can be seen a narrow band of agricultural plains stretching into the distance. This view is experienced by local residents and road users. Open views are also afforded to the south across flat farmland.	LC	Medium-low	The proposed turbines will be fully visible from here at a prominent scale stretching across the northern quarters of the view in close proximity. They will have a dominant visual presence and will be the most distinctive aspect of the northerly vista. They are seen in a clear and unambiguous manner from base to tip and there is a reasonable sense of visual permeability through the wind farm. There is a strong sense of perspective generated by the scale differential between the nearest and furthest turbines, which highlights the depth of the layout and the sense of space and distance across the plains. The windfarm brings a new form of development consisting of tall moving structures that will considerably increase the intensity of built development within the scene. Nonetheless, the turbines do not appear out of place in this productive rural vista where they add a supplementary layer of productivity without unduly interfering with the agricultural land use practices below. On the balance of the above factors, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be High and the quality of	Substantial-moderate / Negative / Long-term
VP12	Local Road at Rathcannon As with VP11, this is a slightly elevated viewpoint that affords a broad vista across the lowland plains of County Limerick. It is framed in the foreground by mature vegetation and there is a cluster of agricultural buildings in the lower foreground as well as a small pond. Beyond can be seen agricultural fields stretching into the distance. This is a view that is afforded to local residents as well as local road users.	LC	Medium-low	effect will be negative. The proposed turbines can be seen at a prominent, but not overbearing scale from here stretching across the easterly view in two distinct clusters. The cluster to the east is condensed and seen in a clear and unambiguous manner with relatively even spacing and a good sense of perspective between the nearest and furthest turbines. By contrast, to the northeast is a pair of turbines and a single turbine that are broadly spread and almost appear as a separate	Moderate / Negative / Long-term

VP No.	Existing View	Receptor Type	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance/ Quality/ Duration of Impact
				development to the condensed cluster. Whilst this relationship does generate some sense of visual tension and ambiguity, it also provides visual relief between the clusters of turbines and a sense of a loose and organic layout. There will be a notable increase in the scale, intensity and diversity of built development within this view, but the windfarm does not appear out of place in this productive rural scene. On balance of these factors, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be High-medium and the quality of the	
VP13	L1414 at Rathcannon This is the view from the local road that runs between the clusters of the proposed windfarm. The view to the northeast is an open one across farmed fields lined by sporadic hedgerows. On the opposite side of the road, to the southeast, the view is enclosed by a low rise in the terrain and mature tree lines forming a vegetated horizon in the near middle ground. It is a view that is afforded to local residents and road users.	LC	Medium-low	effect, negative. In the view to the northeast of the road there is a clear and comprehensible view of two clusters of proposed turbines, one consisting of three turbines and the other of two. They are seen from base to tip at a prominent scale from this near distance, but in a broad rural context where they do not appear over-scaled or out of place. There is a notable gap between the two clusters which may generate some sense of visual tension, however, it also provides for a strong sense of permeability between the clusters. The view to the southeast is quite different, being of around seven partial blades sets rotating above and between the skyline vegetation at a slightly greater distance and with a much higher degree of screening. It is possible that these turbines will appear as a separate development due to the disparate nature of visibility. However, the three clusters may also be perceived as a single dispersed development without undue impact on visual amenity resulting from the clustered arrangement as the intensity is dispersed. There will be considerable increase in the scale, intensity and diversity of built development within this scene. However, the proposed turbines are not an ambiguous feature in this productive lowland setting.	Moderate / Negative / Long-term

VP No.	Existing View	Receptor Type	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance/ Quality/ Duration of Impact
				On balance of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be High-medium and the quality effect, Negative.	
VP14	L1414 at Camas South Like VP13, this viewpoint is also from the local road that dissects the site of the proposed development. However, unlike VP13, the view is more enclosed throughout the northern quarters and more open to the south. The gateway view to the southwest takes in a foreground field and rural dwelling and is surrounded by a field boundary hedgerow with taller trees rising above. To the northwest, the view is enclosed by mature roadside vegetation. This view is afforded to local residents and road users.	LC	Medium-low	Rising to the southwest above the intervening vegetation are the blades sets of around eight of the proposed turbines with the partial blades sets of three more rising above and beyond the foreground dwelling and vegetation. None of the proposed turbines to the northwest are visible from here due to screening by roadside vegetation. The visible turbines to the southwest are seen in a reasonably comprehensive manner albeit with some blades rotating amongst intervening tree tops. They are seen at a reasonable but not dominating scale from this distance and will introduce a higher intensity of built development. Nonetheless, the turbines represent a compatible feature within this productive rural setting. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Medium and the quality of the effect is considered to be negative.	Moderate / Negative / Long-term
VP15	R512 at Tynacocca This is a gateway view from the regional road that runs a short distance to the east of the site. It takes in a foreground setting of manicured lawns and domestic fields surrounding two large dwellings. Beyond can be seen a more typical farming context of fields and hedgerows that become stacked with perspective to form a vegetated skyline in the near middle distance. This view is afforded to local residents and road users.	LC	Medium-low	Despite relatively close proximity to the southern cluster of turbines, only a small proportion of the proposed turbines will be visible from this location. Three turbines are openly visible directly to the west rising above the intervening vegetation, whilst the partial blade sets of two more can be seen beyond the dwelling to the southwest. The remainder are fully or substantially screened by intervening vegetation. The visible turbines are seen at a prominent but not overbearing scale from here with a relatively contained lateral extent. There is some visual ambiguity associated with the view of partial turbines emerging to varying degrees throughout the westerly view, however, they do not appear out of place in this rural setting and do not appear over-	Moderate / Negative / Long-term

VP No.	Existing View	Receptor Type	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance/ Quality/ Duration of Impact
				scaled relative to the foreground buildings. They will, however, increase the scale, intensity and diversity of built development within the scene. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be High-medium in the quality of the effect is deemed to be Negative.	
VP16	R512 at Bruff This is a view from the bridge the passes over the Morningstar River that runs through the middle of the settlement of Bruff, which is the closest settlement to the site. The road bridge sweeps around a bend to the southwest and is relatively enclosed by mature vegetation within this urban setting. Indeed, the mature trees also substantially screen the surrounding buildings within the settlement. This view is afforded to local residents of Bruff as well as road users on the R512 heading south.	CP, MR, LC	Medium-low	Only the partial view of one blade set is visible from here on the road alignment rising just above and beyond intervening treetops. The turbine components are seen at a noticeable scale despite the high degree of screening and it may appear slightly ambiguous rotating within this urban context without a clear understanding of the rural context within which it sits and its scale relative to distance. Nonetheless, this is diluted by the high degree of screening of the proposed development in general. On balance of these reasons the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Medium-low and of a Negative quality.	Moderate-slight/ Negative / Long-term
VP17	Grange Stone Circle This is a view from within the Grange Stone Circle, the perimeter of which can be seen crossing the foreground. It is contained within a grassy field which is backed by mature vegetation and two residential dwellings in the subject view to the southwest. The Grange Stone Circle is part of the Lough Gur archaeological complex which is an important heritage area that is regularly visited and therefore has tourism and recreation value as well as heritage value. Present day visual amenity mainly relates to the stone circle and it's immediate context rather than the wider landscape beyond. The adjacent road is part of a scenic route network that surrounds the Lough Gur complex, but it is considered that visual amenity from the route relates mainly to features within the complex.	AH, SV, LC	High-medium	The proposed turbines will not be visible from here due to screening by intervening terrain and vegetation. Therefore, the magnitude of visual impact is negligible by default.	Imperceptible / Neutral / Long-term

VP No.	Existing View	Receptor Type	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance/ Quality/ Duration of Impact
VP18	Lough Gur Wedge Tomb This is a view from within the Lough Gur Wedge Tomb, which is surrounded by grassy fields and mature trees in close proximity. These add to the sense of enclosure as well as the sense of place. The Lough Gur Wedge Tomb is part of the Lough Gur archaeological complex, which is an important heritage area that is regularly visited and therefore has tourism and recreation value as well as heritage value. Present day visual amenity and interest relates to the wedge tomb and it's immediate context rather than the wider landscape beyond. The adjacent road is part of a scenic route network that surrounds the Lough Gur complex, but it is considered that visual amenity from the route relates mainly to features within the complex.	AH, SV, LC	High-medium	The proposed turbines will not be visible from here due to screening by intervening terrain and vegetation. Therefore, the magnitude of visual impact is negligible by default.	Imperceptible / Neutral / Long-term
VP19	Lough Gur This is a view from the northern end of Lough Gur, which affords a channelled vista south-westward along the lough in the direction of the site. It is a designated scenic route and is enjoyed by visitors to the Lough Gur complex as well as those that live in the area. The foreground consists of marshy ground and scrub which forms riparian woodland on the slopes to either side of the Lough. The lock is only partially visible from here and a U-shaped skyline is generated by the combination of middle distance terrain and foreground vegetation.	AH, SV	High-medium	The partial blade sets of around three of the proposed turbines will be seen rising just above the terrain and vegetation that forms the skyline at the head of the lough. The blades will rotate amongst intervening vegetation and are not particularly conspicuous at this scale and distance except that they are on alignment with the main aspect of the vista. There will be some degree of visual ambiguity relating to scale and distance as well as the actual landscape context of the turbines relative to that of the foreground enclosed Lough. The development also represents a new form of built development within a scene that does not currently contain a high degree of human intervention. The Lough Gur complex is also associated with archaeological heritage features and the turbines will be a modern element within the view. Nonetheless, the turbines are a considerable distance away and read as a background feature that is discrete from the foreground setting. On balance of the reasons outlined above the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low and the quality of the effect is considered to be Negative.	Moderate-slight/ Negative / Long-term

VP No.	Existing View	Receptor Type	VP Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance/ Quality/ Duration of Impact
VP20	L1412 at Cahirgillmore This is a relatively enclosed view across a foreground field of rough grazing that is contained at a short distance by a dense hedgerow on the opposite boundary. It is a view that represents the nature of visibility from a cluster of residential dwellings along this section of the road.	LC	Medium-low	The proposed turbines will not be visible from here due to screening by intervening terrain and vegetation. Therefore, the magnitude of visual impact is negligible by default.	Imperceptible / Neutral / Long-term
VP21	L1410 west of Monaster This view is from a designated scenic route that surrounds the subtle rise of Tory Hill and the presumption is that the visual amenity associated with designation is views afforded towards Tory Hill, which is in the opposite direction to the site in this instance (northwest). The view in question to the southeast is afforded through a gap in roadside vegetation and includes a foreground field backed by a mature treeline.	SV	Medium	The proposed turbines will not be visible from here due to screening by intervening terrain and vegetation. Therefore, the magnitude of visual impact is negligible by default.	Imperceptible / Neutral / Long-term
VP22	Residential Road at Adare This is a view from the southern residential edge of the heritage village and popular tourist node of Adare. It is also home to the world renowned Adare Manor Golf Course. It is a low-lying settlement where the land slopes down to the River Maigue in a north-easterly direction. The view in question is contained at a short distance by the hedge and tree planting that contains this peripheral housing estate. It is an illustrative view indicating the generally contained nature of visibility within the settlement.	AH, CP	Medium	The proposed turbines will not be visible from here due to screening by intervening terrain and vegetation. Therefore, the magnitude of visual impact is negligible by default.	Imperceptible / Neutral / Long-term

LVIA viewpoint locations selected for the Ballinlee Wind Farm project

