



Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)

Volume 6 of 6: Appendices

(Appendix A16.1) Operational Phase Visual Im- pact Appraisal at Representative View Points

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Appendix A16.1 Operational Phase Visual Impact Appraisal at Representative View Points

- To assess the susceptibility of viewers and the amenity value of views, the assessor uses a range of criteria and provides a four-point weighting scale to indicate how strongly the viewer/view is associated with each of the criterion identified in Chapter 16 (Section 16.2.6.2).

Strong value	Moderate value	Mild value	Negligible value

Values associated with the view	VP0.1	VP0.2	VP0.3	VP1	VP1a	VP2	VP3	VP4	VP5	VP6	VP7	VP8	VP9	VP9a	VP10	VP11	VP12	VP13	VP14	VP15	VP16	VP17	VP18	VP19	VP20	VP21	VP22	VP23	VP24
Viewer Susceptibility																													
Recognised scenic value of the view																													
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas																													
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)																													
Provision of vast, elevated panoramic views																													
Sense of remoteness / tranquillity																													
Degree of perceived naturalness																													
Presence of striking or noteworthy features																													
Sense of Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance																													
Rarity or uniqueness of the view																													
Integrity of the landscape character within the view																													
Sense of place at the viewing location																													
Sense of awe																													
Visual Receptor Sensitivity	H	H	L	ML	M	HM	M	HM	HM	HM	H	ML	ML	ML	ML	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	ML	M

VH = Very High, H = High, HM = High-medium, M = Medium, ML = Medium-low, L = Low, VL = Very-low

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP0.1	National Looped Walk, Ardataggle	W
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key view • Amenity feature • Local community View 	
Receptor Sensitivity	High	
Existing View	<p>This is a locally elevated, panoramic view from a local road that runs along the engineered embankment of the headrace canal. The National Looped Walk (O'Briensbridge - Errinagh Bridge) passes along this section of local road. A concrete post-and-wire mesh fence separates the road from the grassed ridge of the headrace embankment. To the north of this VP, the canal flows from north-east to south-west in the middle ground. Riparian vegetation lines the opposite bank. Immediately behind this, as the terrain begins to rise, there is a band of conifers that run parallel to the canal (and the R463, which occurs on the far side of the plantation). Twin wooden poles sit within a clearing in the conifer plantation. This elevated band of forestry foreshortens the view to the north-west, although long distance views along the canal are afforded to the north-east and west. Though not depicted in photomontage, views are also afforded to the south-east of the River Shannon and a rolling landscape, set against a backcloth of the Slieve Felim Mountains in the background.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>The twin wooden pole structure in the middle ground will be replaced by a 1m taller twin wooden pole structure. The OHLs will be replaced and consequently the tension of the new OHL may be slightly different. There will also be small bird deterrents spaced evenly along the section of line that crosses the river to minimise the potential for bird strikes. The views from this viewpoint area are already characterised by OHL infrastructure and the upgrade of this twin wooden pole structure will not alter this, nor will it notably increase the intensity of infrastructure in the view. This is because the new twin wooden pole structure will be in the same location and will be of a similar height with the same number of OHLs. Indeed, the changes are not likely to not be perceptible by casual observers. The views afforded from this viewpoint are broad and include long distance prospects in other directions draw the eye away from the twin wooden pole structure. These works occupy only a fraction of the available view and will not affect the visual amenity on offer at this location. For these reasons, the magnitude of Operational Phase visual impact is deemed to be negligible.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	No specific mitigation measures proposed.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	<p>The broadleaved vegetation immediately to the fore of the new tower will drop its leaves in winter to reveal slightly more of the lower portions of the new tower. However, this seasonal change will not alter the magnitude of Operational Phase visual impact.</p>	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	High	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	High	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP0.2	National Waymarked Way, O'Briensbridge	SW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key view • Amenity feature • Heritage feature • Major route • A centre of population 	
Receptor Sensitivity	High	
Existing View	<p>This is a low lying but open from a picnic area on the banks of the River Shannon, adjacent to the settlement of O'Briensbridge. This is an important hub on the Lough Derg Way (National Waymarked Way) and other walking routes (National Looped Walk [O'Briensbridge - Errinagh Bridge], O'Brien's Bridge Blue Looped Trail and the Sean Sli na mBairse [Old Barge Way]). It also facilitates recreational access to the river and offers an attractive stopping point for boaters. The waters of the River Shannon flow through the foreground. On the opposite bank the low lying flood plain is utilised for pasture and a mature belt of trees runs along the river edge. From this precise location, 3 of the existing pole-sets are visible on the far side of the River Shannon, while other pole-sets are present, too, but are screened by intervening vegetation. To the west, an historic stone bridge spans the river, over which a long distance view is afforded to the Silvermines Mountains. Aside from this, the views are largely enclosed.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>The changes involved to the OHL infrastructure in this view relate to upgrading the apparatus on the existing pole-sets. Due to the small scale of the upgraded apparatus and the significant intervening distance, they will not be noticeable. Thus, the magnitude of Operational Phase visual impact is negligible.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	<p>No specific mitigation measures proposed.</p>	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	<p>When the intervening vegetation drops it's leaves, additional pole-sets that are screened in the warmer months may become identifiable. However, the alterations to the apparatus on the pole-sets will still not be noticeable.</p>	
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.</p>	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	High	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	High	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP0.3	Regional road, Gortybrigane	NW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Route • Local community View 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Low	
Existing View	<p>From the centre of the Birdhill Roundabout the view is a one with a high degree of complexity. In the foreground the roundabout is visible with associated signage and lighting columns. Vehicular movement through the view is common and reduces the tranquillity. The roundabout is slightly elevated and the landform falls away in the middle ground helping to partially screen the Birdhill substation. A plethora of electrical infrastructure is visible within the substation and linking into the substation from the adjacent areas. These contribute to reasonably cluttered scene with a high proportion of vertical elements, most notably the communication mast, having both the largest girth and height. These elements are set against a backcloth of a mature hedgerow immediately behind and the more distant farmed and forested ridge in the background.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>The new conductors will enter the existing substation from the west via the existing pole-sets and will connect into the same existing tower within the substation. The position of a small number of poles will be adjusted within the substation but neither of these changes will not be noticeable. The 38 kV modular GIS building however will be noticeable to a casual observer, but it will not be taller than the existing envelope of the substation. The visual intrusion is minimal and the small stature and proportions of the 38 kV modular GIS building means it is considered to have a sub-dominant to minimal visual presence. The view is already characterised by infrastructural elements, electrical, communications and transport so the Proposed 38 kV Uprate Works will be readily visually absorbed and will not alter the existing character or have a noticeable reduction to the visual amenity. For these reasons, the magnitude of Operational Phase visual impact is deemed to be negligible.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	No specific mitigation measures proposed.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	No seasonal variation predicted, by default, the magnitude of Operational Phase visual impact will not alter.	
Night time Visual Impact from lighting	<p>The foreground of this view containing the roundabout is heavily lit by bright lights mounted on tall lighting poles. By contrast the rural hinterland beyond, including the nearby Birdhill substation is cloaked in relative darkness. The lighting associated with the proposed 38kV uprate works is modest in height (4m lamp standards) and intensity and will assimilate closely with the brightly lit foreground roundabout without unduly impacting on the darker rural landscape beyond. The lighting will only be activated by movement from site visitors and will therefore be infrequent and illumination will only be for a short period. The lighting from the RWI and WTP are not visible from here due to intervening terrain and vegetation. Consequently, the night time visual effect will be Negligible.</p>	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Low	Low	Slight-Imperceptible and Negative-Neutral
Residual	Low	Low	Slight-Imperceptible and Negative-Neutral
Night time	Low	Low	Slight-Imperceptible and Negative-Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP1	Birdhill	N
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A centre of population • A major route 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	This is a pleasant framed view across a foreground of rolling agricultural grassland, mature treelines and forestry that forms the northern hinterland of Birdhill. The railway line can be seen in the lower foreground and a sliver of the Parteen Basin can be seen in the distant middle ground at the left-hand side of the view. Beyond the Parteen Basin, farmed fields, forestry and a dense scattering of dwellings can be seen on the lower slopes of the Slieve Bearnagh range, whereas forestry prevails on higher slopes. Further to the right, a blanket of mature woodland and treelines in the lower ground gives way the farmed and forested slopes of the Arra mountains which lie to the east of the Lough Derg complex.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	Neither the proposed RWI&PS nor the WTP will be visible from here due to intervening vegetation screening and thus, the magnitude of visual impact is negligible by default.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Mitigation will not be visible from here.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	Due to the density and frequency of broadleaf screening coupled with coniferous vegetation, there will not be a noticeable difference in effect between seasons.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP1a	R494 at Kilmaglasderry	W
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Major Route • Local community View 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	This is a relatively open view to the west looking across an agricultural field from the recently upgraded R494 regional road. A new cycle lane is visible in the foreground backed by an immature hedgerow that will soon foreshorten much of the view. Across the field is a dense band of mixed broadleaf and coniferous vegetation consisting of several layers. The view is afforded to road users and a series of rural residential dwellings.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	All that will be visible from this location in relation to both the RWI and the WTP is the new entrance and access way to the RWI which runs away from the viewer across the foreground field and passes into the vegetation on the opposite side of the field. The entrance consists of an ornate stone and steel railing gateway with permanent RWI&PS signage embedded. The tarmac at the entrance and along the access track that runs away from the viewer is lined by a wooden post and rail fence. While these features add to the intensity of development and transport related infrastructure within the scene, they are not ambiguous in this setting and have a high quality finish and sense of permanence. Prior to mitigation, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Proposed mitigation includes native meadow grass and evenly spaced native trees to line the access track. There is also a pocket of woodland planting provided in an otherwise awkward corner between the access road and the field boundary. Once established, these vegetation features will help to soften and assimilate the entrance and access track anchoring it into the landscape. The magnitude of visual impact is deemed to reduce to Low-negligible following mitigation.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	There is not considered to be a notable variation in visual impact across seasons.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Low	Slight and Neutral
Residual	Medium low	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP2	R504 south of Birdhill	N
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A major route Local community views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium	
Existing View	This is a vast panoramic vista from an elevated section of the R504 looking across a fore-to-middle ground of flat forestry and farmland towards the Slieve Bearnagh range. At the transition between the lowland and upland context is the broad and narrow horizontal expanse of the Parteen Basin, which is backed by lower slopes of farmland and forestry with a notable scattering of rural / residential dwellings. Higher slopes consist of a combination of moorland and forestry. In the lower foreground, the twin transport corridors of the R446 regional road and the adjacent railway line are partially and intermittently visible between mature treelines.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	The proposed RWI&PS structures will not be visible from here due to intervening screening from a combination of off-site forest plantations and broadleaf treelines and due to immediate foreground screening there is no potential to view the proposed WTP. The only discernible aspect of the RWI&PS may be a brief break in the canopy of this middle distance vegetation required as part of site clearance. This will have no material affect on the view or visual amenity and thus, the magnitude of visual impact is negligible.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Mitigation measures are not likely to be discernible from here and will only serve to ensure that the proposed RWI&PS remains screened from view.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	Due to the viewing distance and contribution of coniferous planting to screening it is not considered that there will be any seasonal variation in visual impacts.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	High medium	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	High medium	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP3	R446 southwest of Birdhill	NE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A major route Local community views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium	
Existing View	This is a similar, but less elevated view to that represented by VP2, as it occurs from the R446, which lies downhill to the west of the R504. It takes in a foreground of farmed fields that descend gently towards a lowland context of mature broadleaf treelines and coniferous forest plantations, which largely mask any intervening fields. Beyond is the narrow horizontal sliver of the Parteen Basin, above which rises the Arra Mountains to the right and the Slieve Bearnagh range to the left.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	As with the view from VP2, the most likely visual expression of the proposed RWI&PS that may be discernible from here is a brief break in the otherwise consolidated canopy of trees immediately to the fore of the Parteen Basin. This will not have a material impact on the visual amenity of this scene and thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be negligible. The proposed WTP will not be visible from here.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Mitigation measures are not likely to be discernible from here and will only serve to ensure that the proposed RWI&PS remains screened from view.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	Due to the viewing distance and contribution of coniferous planting to screening it is not considered that there will be any seasonal variation in visual impacts.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP4	Elevated local road west of the Parteen Basin	E
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lough Derg Way Local Community Views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium	
Existing View	<p>This is a vast panoramic view afforded to the east from an elevated local road that also hosts a section of the Lough Derg Way. A number of rural dwellings also line this road and take advantage of the broad views on offer. The lower fore-to-middle ground consists of lakeside farmland defined by mature tree-lined hedgerows. The Parteen Basin crosses the view in the middle distance and is partially obscured by intervening vegetation. Beyond the water body is a shoreline of riparian woodland, coniferous forest and also the bare embankment constructed to contain the eastern side of the Parteen Basin. Forest and farmland continue to rise up the foothills of the Silvermines Mountains and Keeper Hill is the most prominent feature on the distant skyline.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>The proposed RWI&PS will be visible from here as one of the few built features of any notable scale within the easterly vista. It will rise on the opposite shore of the Parteen basin near where the riparian woodland meets the horizontal berm of the constructed shoreline. Aside from the tight cluster of buildings themselves there will be a break in vegetation backed shortly thereafter by a conifer plantation. Nearly double the distance further to the east, portions of the rolling roofline of the proposed WTP is partially visible between treelines. This is not likely to be noticed by a casual observer and will have little material impact on visual amenity.</p> <p>Aesthetically, the RWI&PS is clearly an industrial / utility feature and its shoreline location suggests it has an operational need to be there. It has an unapologetic and considered design, the most notable feature being the rolling barrel – vaulted roofline. Even at this distance and presenting at a modest scale, the RWI&PS increases the intensity of built development within this scene compared to baseline levels. However, it does not obstruct views of the Parteen Basin and is only a minor intrusion on the overall scene. It also serves as a demarcation between the constructed shoreline of the Parteen Basin and the more naturalistic wooded shoreline to the north. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	<p>Following the establishment of mitigation planting within and around the RWI&PS the break in vegetation will be less distinct and there will be an improved sense of the buildings being bedded within their surrounding woodland / forest context. However, this will not serve to reduce the visual impact by a full assessment category.</p>	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	<p>In this instance, the main aspect of variation between seasons is not related to screening, but the changing colour tones of winter and summer vegetation. In this regard, the muted tones selected for the RWI&PS provide a balance between seasons such that the development will not have a noticeably stronger tonal contrast against surrounding vegetation in any particular season.</p>	
Night time Visual Impact from lighting	<p>The night time view reveals that the main source of artificial lighting is concentrated around the settlement of Birdhill on the opposing slopes above the Parteen Basin in the distance. This consists of both streetlighting poles and residential dwellings. There is also a scattering of domestic intensity lighting in the surrounding countryside. There is very little lighting around the Parteen Basin and within the farmed and forested landscape beyond in the direction of Keeper Hill. The proposed lighting associated with the water side RWI is modest in intensity and internalised within the site such that it appears as a single domestic light. However, it does appear in a part of the vista that is not subject of notable lighting in the baseline context. There may be a minor reduction in the sense of naturalness around the wooded edge of the waterbody . However, this will not have a notable bearing on visual amenity in the early hours of darkness and this is not an area that is recognised in terms of policy for dark skies. The lighting will only be activated by movement from site visitors and will therefore be infrequent and illumination will only be for a short period. For these reasons, the night time visual effect is deemed to be Low-negligible.</p>	
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.</p>	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	High medium	Low	Slight and Negative
Residual	High medium	Low	Slight and Negative
Night time	High medium	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible and Negative

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP5	R463 west of the Parteen Basin	E
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A designated scenic route • A major route • Local community views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium	
Existing View	<p>This is a very similar viewing angle to VP4 but from the R463, which runs along the lower slopes above the western shores of the Parteen Basin. Despite the scenic designation for this road, there is surprisingly few opportunities to view the water body itself, which is presumably the reason for the designation. Indeed VP5 represents one of the only potential views across the water towards the proposed RWI&PS site. This view comprises of a grassed embankment at the roadside followed by pastoral farmland that descends gently towards the Parteen basin, which is only partially visible due to a combination of terrain and vegetation screening. The far shore is defined by a mixture of riparian woodland and coniferous forest as well as the low horizontal profile of the constructed embankment that formed the water body. Beyond a distant farmed ridge, the Silvermines Mountains and Keeper Hill form a distinctive backdrop to the scene.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>Although oblique to the direction of travel, the proposed RWI&PS will be a noticeable feature of the eastward view, more so because it is a distinctive industrial / utility feature within a section of view not currently encumbered by built development rather than its scale. Indeed, the scale and extent of the facility is modest in the context of this scene and a casual observer travelling along this section of the road may not notice it. In terms of visual presence it is considered to be sub-dominant.</p> <p>The three dimensional design of the main intake building is clearly apparent from this distance and angle and has some aesthetic merit due to the modular curved sections of its roofline and the lakeside gantries which appear almost like a pergola. In this respect it presents itself to the water in a confident manner. The facility represents a modest and slightly negative intrusion on a broad and varied vista rather than an obstruction of an important aspect of that vista.</p> <p>For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium low.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	<p>Mitigation planting will serve to soften and restrict the view of the side facades of the buildings and visually narrow the extent of the scheme presented to the water. The established planting will also help to give the buildings a more established appearance within this visual setting. Though mitigation will soften the view of the proposed RWI&PS, this will not be to the degree that the visual impact reduces by a category.</p>	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	<p>Seasonal variation in the visual context will not result in the scheme being screened to a noticeably greater or lesser extent, but instead, relates to tonal contrast. The colour scheme for the buildings has been selected to provide tonal balance between seasons, such that it will not noticeably contrast more in one season or another.</p>	
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.</p>	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	High medium	Medium low	Moderate Slight and Negative
Residual	High medium	Medium low	Moderate Slight and Negative

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP6	Clarisford Park	S
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A recreational amenity area 	
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium	
Existing View	<p>This is a window of visibility across the Parteen Basin from a small picnic area associated with Clarisford Park, which is a multifunctional recreational area that also hosts the Ballina / Killaloe Rugby Club. The view in question, or its likes, are not afforded from other locations within the otherwise enclosed setting of Clarisford Park, which is a former demesne landscape associated with Clarisford Palace. This southerly view is framed by mature foreground trees and dominated by the surface of the Parteen Basin which stretches from the foreground in to the distance. On the opposing shores is a mature riparian woodland that gives way to a grassed, low horizontal embankment backed by commercial conifer forest in the middle distance. A low-farmed ridge can be seen further distant to the south.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>The Raw Water Pumping Station building and associated gantries from proposed RWI&PS will be clearly visible in the central middle ground, nestled on the opposing shore at the juncture of the riparian woodland, engineered embankment and conifer forest. It is a modest scale, yet distinctive feature of a view that otherwise comprises of few and simple elements. The two Microfiltration buildings are both substantially screened by existing woodland vegetation, when viewed from here – as is the more distant WTP. It is likely that the proposed development will draw the attention of a casual observer and its visual presence is considered to be co-dominant to sub-dominant in this lake view.</p> <p>In relation to visual amenity, it is considered that the RWI&PS will legibly present as an industrial / utility feature as opposed to a recreational or commercial entity. As one of the only noticeable structures in view, it will increase the intensity of built development in this otherwise fairly naturalistic setting. Nonetheless, it has an obvious locational connection and need to be placed at the shore of the water body and this ensures that it will not look awkward or out of place in this scene. The distinctive barrel-vaulted roofline indicates considered architectural design intended to favourably present rather than hide the structures and this also softens the profile of the buildings against the near backdrop of vegetation below which it is contained. The proposed development will serve as a subordinate focus within the lake view and it will not obstruct or unduly intrude on any sensitive aspects of the view. Indeed, located as it is, between naturalistic and anthropogenic sections of the far shoreline it acts as a transition piece between them and a reminder of the original utilitarian function of the Parteen Basin.</p> <p>On balance of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be medium-low prior to the establishment of mitigation planting.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	<p>In combination with the recessive and punctuated colour scheme, proposed mitigation planting to replace some of what will be lost to the construction of the RWI&PS will help to screen and soften the view of the Raw Water Pumping Station building. This will make it a less noticeable feature of the view and help to assimilate it with the enclosing backdrop of woodland and forest. Following the establishment of mitigation planting, the magnitude of impact is deemed to reduce to low.</p>	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	<p>There may be a very marginal increase in the visibility of the Microfiltration buildings during winter months when broadleaf vegetation is bare, but the main variation relates to the more muted tone of this deciduous vegetation in winter. By contrast the backdrop of conifer forest will remain unaltered. It is considered that the selected colour scheme bridges seasonal tones and the development will not contrast more starkly in any particular season and not to the degree that the visual impact judgement would be different.</p>	
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.</p>	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	High medium	Medium low	Slight and Negative
Residual	High medium	Low	Moderate Slight and Negative

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP7	Tountinna Mountain	S
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A popular lookout point over the Lough Derg / Arra Mountains setting 	
Receptor Sensitivity	High	
Existing View	<p>This is a vast and elevated panoramic view that extends to almost all quarters but with a particular focus on the westerly quarters. This includes Lough Derg and the Slieve Bearnagh range to the west and northwest, the twin settlements of Ballina and Killaloe on either side of the Shannon to the southwest and the Parteen basin just beyond to the south. Keeper Hill and the Silvermines range are visible in the distance to the southeast. The foreground of the view in question (to the south) slopes away quickly with a land cover that transitions equally quickly from moorland to forestry and then a patchwork of farmed fields and hedgerows. The lowland landscape to the east and northeast of the Parteen basin is generously cloaked in mature treelines, patches of broadleaf woodland and conifer forests, which merge together to form a dense vegetation pattern interspersed by agricultural fields. A large quarry is a prominent feature on a low ridge to the south.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>Both the proposed RWI&PS and the WTP are visible from this elevated vantage point, albeit at distances of beyond 7km and within a vast and richly diverse context of both natural and cultural landscape features.</p> <p>The RWI&PS is a modest scale feature that is only likely to be noticed due to its lakeside location on the Parteen Basin within a densely wooded section of the view where there is little other built development evident. Even so, there is some sense of connection to the built form within and around the nearby settlement of Ballina / Killaloe. By comparison the proposed WTP is a much more noticeable feature of the southerly vista due to its scale and extent within a sparsely developed farm / forestry portion of the vista. There is little sense of visual or obvious thematic connection between the two aspects of the development. Nor is there a noticeable sense of cumulative visual presence as the WTP is considerably more conspicuous. They both contribute to a marginal increase in the degree of built development within the vast views on offer, but the bulk of this contribution comes from the WTP. The overall visual presence is deemed to be in the order of sub-dominant to minimal in this context.</p> <p>In terms of aesthetics, the contrast of built form against predominantly farmed and forested portions of the view for both the RWI&PS and WTP represents a slightly negative contribution to the vista and increases the intensity of built development within the southerly view.</p> <p>The RWI&PS has a distinguishable connection to the water body on which it sits and this ensures that it does not appear ambiguous or out of context, attributes that are aided by its modest scale and the rolling form of its barrel vaulted roof. By comparison the scale and intensity of the proposed WTP is slightly at odds with its apron of field and hedgerows in terms of both form and function. Its scale and function is however, more akin to the broad conifer plantation than backs it and the large quarry on the hill beyond. In the case of both the RWI&PS and the WTP, the selected colour scheme helps to visually assimilate them within their respective settings</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the combined magnitude of visual impact from the RWI&PS and the WTP is deemed to be Low.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	<p>The establishment of mitigation planting predominantly around the periphery of the two sites will aid the visual assimilation of particularly the RWI&PS as it will reaffirm some of the enclosure afforded by the surrounding riparian woodland and forest plantation by screening and softening the northern facades of the structures. The screening and softening effect will be less for the WTP as it is the expansive roof area that is most noticeable from this elevated vantage point. Nonetheless, the proposed planting will help to bed the buildings further into their landscape context and works with the colour scheme to break up the bulk and massing of structures. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact post-mitigation establishment is deemed to be Low-negligible.</p>	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	<p>Due to the backcloth of evergreen conifer plantations for both the RWI&PS and the WTP as well as building colour schemes that are deliberately not season specific there will be little variation in the visual presence of the proposed development throughout the seasons. It should also be noted that deciduous vegetation presents with less transparency at longer distances than it does in close proximity – much like looking through a net curtain.</p>	
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.</p>	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	High	Low	Moderate Slight and Negative
Residual	High	Low-negligible	Slight and Negative

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP8	Birdhill on the R445	N
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A centre of Population • A major route • A popular tourist draw 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	This setting is relatively enclosed in the foreground and to the rear of the viewer, but affords slightly elevated and relatively open views to the north towards the Arra Mountains in the distance. Beyond the large residential property in the lower foreground are agricultural fields backed by a dense and mature series of broadleaf treelines and eventually a conifer plantation that blanket the lowland context and give little sense of the intervening fields. A glimpse of a roofline from the Shannonside Business Park can be seen between treetops in the middle distance.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	Due to terrain screening the proposed RWI&PS will not be visible from here and due to dense layers of both broadleaf treelines and conifer plantation, nor will the proposed WTP. The magnitude of visual impact is, therefore, negligible by default.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Mitigation will not be visible.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	None.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP9	Local road at Greenhills	W
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	This is a relatively unremarkable gateway view across a gently rolling landscape of fields, dense tree lined hedgerows and forestry throughout the fore-to-middle ground. A mature treeline that runs away from the viewer frames / divides the view in the immediate foreground. A wooded hilltop above a quarry face can be seen in close proximity to the southwest, whilst low hills are also evident on the western horizon.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>All but small upper sections of several of the central buildings can be seen from here between intervening tree tops in the lower middle ground. All other section of the development will be substantially screened by layers of broadleaf hedgerow to the fore of the site. The visual presence of the development is deemed to be sub-dominant to minimal on the basis the built form may draw some attention within a scene that is almost devoid of other visible man-made structures.</p> <p>The fact that the proposed development is the only notable built form in view to the west, means that despite the low degree of visual exposure, it will contribute to the intensity of anthropogenic development within this tranquil rural scene. However, it is still a productive rural setting of farm and forestry rather than being strongly naturalistic, and the development will not appear out of context. Indeed, the modest visible portion of the WTP may be read as typical farmyard storage sheds.</p> <p>Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Following the establishment of mitigation planting, principally around the perimeter of the site, it is likely that the profile of the slightly more elevated tanks will remain visible and any softening and further obscuring of structure will be modest. However, the same planting may be more effective in winter months when it forms an extra veil of screening between the viewer and the proposed structures.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	During winter months when the foreground trees are bare, noticeably more of the development will be visible, albeit veiled by stacked layers of winter branches. The backcloth of conifer plantation will remain consistent and help to absorb the selected colour scheme in the manner intended. Overall, it not considered that the degree of increase in visual impact warrants higher classification during winter.	
Night time visual Impact from lighting	There are some minor distant sources of light above the vegetated horizon in this rural view but few light sources in the immediate surrounds except for roadside dwellings in the vicinity (not depicted). There is a red navigation light on the distant ridgeline, but generally the view to the west is characterised by low artificial lighting levels. The lighting from the proposed WTP will present as two closely associated and modest (domestic intensity) sources of light exuding from the dark lower ground of forestry and farmland in the middle distance. This may appear slightly ambiguous given the rural context, but is a very subtle source of light that will not unduly influence visual amenity within the hours of darkness. Much of the building mounted lighting will only be activated by movement from site visitors and will therefore be infrequent and full illumination will only be for a short period. Overall, it is considered that the magnitude of night time visual impact is Low.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Low	Slight and Negative
Residual	Medium low	Low	Slight and Negative
Night time	Medium low	Low	Slight and Negative

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP9a	R445 at Kilmustulla	N
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Major Route • Local community View 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	This is a relatively enclosed road corridor view where the Kilmustulla River runs under the R445 Regional road. There is a farm shed and a dilapidated dwelling and shed just to the east on the same side of the road as the viewpoint, but otherwise the road is strongly contained by roadside hedgerow and riparian vegetation at this point, which is where the WTP site entrance is proposed.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>The vehicle entranceway will open in a broad bell mouth immediately to the east and will result in the loss of roadside vegetation and structures. It will locally and fleetingly reduce the sense of enclosure along this section of road and increase the intensity of road infrastructure. A stone wall / steel railing gateway boundary treatment of a similar design to the RWI&PS entranceway will surround the entrance. However, this is a familiar form of entrance development in any landscape context and does not have a marked bearing on visual amenity in this typical rural road corridor setting. Indeed, it generates an ornate sense of permanence and presence that is consistent across the project. The view will open up to reveal an agricultural field and associated boundary hedgerows, but the scene will still be relatively enclosed with little potential to see the WTP c.600m to the north beyond an intervening forest and hedgerows.</p> <p>On the basis of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium-low, but of a Neutral or even Positive quality.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Once mitigation screen planting around the site entrance has become established the entrance will appear consolidated within the surrounding rural context to a greater degree than when it was first constructed. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is not deemed to reduce but remains of a Neutral/Positive quality.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	There is not considered to be a notable variation in visual impact across seasons.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Medium-low	Moderate-slight and Neutral-Positive
Residual	Medium low	Medium-low	Moderate-slight and Neutral-Positive.

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP10	Local road at Kilmastulla	W
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Community Views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	This is a similar view to that from VP9 and it is from the same minor local road. The foreground consists of a series of farmed fields viewed intermittently between treelined hedgerows that become stacked to form a dense band across the lower middle ground within a relatively short distance. Further to the southwest, more elevated ground reveals a pattern of fields hedgerows and forestry as well as the face of a quarry just below the low ridge that contains the view.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	A small glimpse of the roofline from the proposed WTP will be afforded above intervening vegetation to the southwest, whilst the remainder of the development is fully screened by the same layered band of vegetation. Although it may be a noticeable addition to the view, it will not have any greater implication for visual amenity than the partial view of a farm shed roof. For this reason, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Because it is only an elevated section of roofline that is visible from here proposed mitigation planting may not screen it, but given the Negligible pre-mitigation impact, this is of little consequence. Mitigation planting may assist in the winter screening of the proposed WTP structures by adding another layer of vegetation.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	It is unlikely that the proposed WTP will be substantially more visible from here during winter months due to the dense layers of intervening hedgerows. There may be slightly more open visibility of the roof line as the intervening treetops will be less densely branched. The recessive colour scheme of the buildings will help with its visual integration and it is not considered that the level of impact will be any greater during winter months.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP11	Intersection of R496 and local road north of WTP site	S
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views A major route 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	This is a slightly elevated view across a farmed field that descends gently towards mature tree lined hedgerows to both the south and west. These tree lines allow only filtered glimpses of the agriculture and forestry context beyond. One such gap occurs to the south where a low farmed hill can be seen above and dark green plinth of forestry in the lower middle ground.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>The proposed WTP will be partially visible through the gap in foreground vegetation to the south. This reveals the rooflines and upper north/east facades of some of the buildings, which span a reasonable site area, such that they will not pass unnoticed as a cluster of typical agricultural buildings. Indeed the proposed development is likely to draw the viewers attention as a contextually large built development within a rural area characterised by low levels of such development. Also, because it is one of few open glimpses towards the proposed development afforded from this portion of the study area.</p> <p>Aesthetically, the scale and nature of the WTP is slightly at odds with the typical rural setting and it will noticeably increase the intensity of built development within this scene. However, in terms of its low rise design, incorporation of barrel vaulted rooflines and sympathetic colour scheme it is visually well assimilated with surrounding landform and vegetation patterns. Furthermore, it will not obstruct views of any sensitive landscape features beyond or interrupt the skyline.</p> <p>Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Following the establishment of mitigation planting within and around the site, the facades of the proposed buildings will be substantially screened from view leaving only several sections of roofline visible in a more dispersed/less intensive arrangement. The WTP will be less noticeable and will have a reduced sense of scale more akin to its rural context. Consequently, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to reduce to Low-negligible.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	During winter months the proposed WTP will be revealed to a slightly greater extent, albeit with any additional visibility through a veil of winter branches. This veil will be heavier with the gradual establishment of mitigation screen planting and the building colour scheme is designed to blend with surrounding vegetation across seasons. Thus, there will not be a marked difference in visual impact across seasons.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Low	Slight and Negative
Residual	Medium low	Low negligible	Slight Imperceptible and Negative-Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP12	R496 at Dunally Bridge	S
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views A major route 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	This lowland farming scene consists of an open foreground of pasture backed by a series of mature tree lined hedgerows. Between gaps in this vegetation can be seen a low ridge of farmed and forested slopes in the distance. A farmstead consisting of a large dwelling and multiple sheds and ancillary buildings can be seen in the near middle ground.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	Partial glimpses of the roof profile of a couple of structures from the proposed WTP are afforded through gaps in the foreground treeline and above sections of more distant hedgerows. Although these structures are discernible, they do not hint at the scale of the surrounding development, which remains hidden and they are likely to be dismissed by the viewer as typical rural shed profiles – not dissimilar to that in the foreground. Therefore it is not considered that there will be a material effect on visual amenity and the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Following the establishment of mitigation screen planting, the visible extent of the scheme is likely to be marginally reduced, but not completely screened. Mitigation planting will also add weight to the density of screening during winter months. The visual impact remains Negligible.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	The proposed WTP structures are likely to be slightly more exposed during winter months when much of the intervening vegetation is bare of leaves. However, the scheme will remain heavily cloaked with a recessive colour scheme, such that it is not likely to draw the eye or impact on visual amenity to a noticeably greater degree.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP13	R496 at Roolagh	SE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views A major route 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	This is a slightly elevated view from a localised rise in the R496 where it also encounters a brief window of open visibility in the roadside vegetation at the gateway to a derelict cottage. This gap affords views across a low-lying fore-to-middle ground that consists of a fairly uniform mix of fields, hedgerows and forestry blocks. Similar land cover continues on the slopes of a low rising ridge in the distance that is also punctuated by a sizeable quarry.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>The proposed WTP is visible as a narrow horizontal band of built form consisting of roof profiles and the upper section of facades that appear intermittently, yet consistently, across nearly the full lateral extent of the site. The WTP is likely to draw the eye of passers-by albeit fleetingly on account of its apparent scale and context within a section of the view with little else in the way of built development.</p> <p>Aside from the increase in the scale and intensity of built development within this view, the form and colour scheme of the development help to blend it with surrounding vegetation structures so that it does not appear visually incongruous. Indeed, it is a working rural landscape of agriculture, forestry and quarrying and although industrial development is not otherwise present in this view (There is some just to the west), the proposed development does not appear out of place in a thematic sense.</p> <p>For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Once mitigation screen planting to the north of the site becomes established, the extent of scheme visibility will be noticeably reduced such that only roof profiles will be revealed and more intermittently than in the pre-mitigation scenario. The sense of scale of the development will be reduced and it is considered that the impact magnitude will reduce to Low negligible.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	There will be clearer and less interrupted views of the proposed development during winter months through the bands of intervening hedgerow vegetation. Whilst the visual presence of the WTP may be marginally higher, the muted colour scheme will help to assimilate it and the effect on visual amenity is not considered to be greater. Mitigation planting will also add another layer of density to existing vegetation structures to reinforce the 'Low' magnitude of visual impact across seasons.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Low	Slight and Negative
Residual	Medium low	Low negligible	Slight Imperceptible and Negative-Neutral

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP14	Knockanacree Woodland / Knockanacree Hill	NW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A recreational amenity feature and highlighted scenic view (Coillte walking map) 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium	
Existing View	<p>This is an elevated location, which is identified on the Coillte walking route maps as a scenic vantage point. However, it currently does not afford vast panoramic views due to localised terrain (the plateau brow of Knockanacree Hill to the north and mature woodland/ forest vegetation in all other directions. Furthermore, to obtain this vista the viewer is required to depart from the otherwise enclosed woodland path and it is not signposted. Indeed, it is possible that it may have been first highlighted as a scenic view when the forest was immature.</p> <p>This contained hilltop view takes in a foreground of pastoral farmland flanked by mature woodland. A prominent telecommunications mast and associated equipment cabins sits atop a small rise a short distance to the north.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>There will be some minor re-grading of the existing profile of the hilltop to generate a flat platform for the break pressure tank. In the foreground is a wooden post and rail fence, a 'grasscrete' access track and a paladin fenceline. Just beyond and nestled into this subtle cleft can be seen a series of solar panels and the administration building at the southern end of the site. The view of these structures represents a marked visual change for this scene, which aside from the telecommunications tower is otherwise defined by field and woodland. This change is the considerable increase in built development of an industrial form within an otherwise rural context. However, even though the nature of the scene is altered, the Proposed Development will not noticeably enclose visually obstruct more distant views of sensitive elements, as the north-westerly view is already foreshortened by the brow of the hill.</p> <p>For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be medium prior to the establishment of mitigation.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	<p>Following the establishment of mitigation planting around the southern and eastern extents of the site the structures will be substantially screened from view. This will generate a slightly greater degree of visual containment, but without foreshortening views of anything except the BPT structures and will be consistent in appearance with surrounding woodland vegetation in other aspects of the view. Thus, the magnitude of impact is deemed to reduce to low-negligible following mitigation.</p>	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	<p>The main seasonal variation will be the potential to see the BPT structures through mitigation screen planting during winter months as this will consist primarily of deciduous broadleaf species to match native species common in woodlands / hedgerows in the vicinity. Nonetheless, the planting will generate a heavy veil of winter branches and coupled with the light tone of the administration building against a backdrop of sky the magnitude of visual impact is not likely to exceed low during winter months.</p>	
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.</p>	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium	Medium	Slight and Negative
Residual	Medium	Low-negligible (summer) Low (winter)	Slight / Slight imperceptible and Negative

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP15	Local road at Loughaun northeast of BPT site	SW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreational amenity (Ormond Way - National Waymarked Trail) and local community views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium	
Existing View	This is a pleasant pastoral setting obtained through a farm gate adjacent to rural dwellings. It consists of a large flat field in the foreground that gives way to gentle slopes of fields and tree-lined hedgerows in the direction of Knockanacree hill. Atop the hill is a wooded skyline that also contains a telecommunications structure.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	The proposed BPT will not be visible from here due to intervening screening by terrain and thus, the magnitude of visual impact is negligible by default.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Mitigation planting is unlikely to be visible from here and would have no visual impact consequence in any event.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	As the screening is afforded by terrain, there will be no seasonal difference in effects.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP16	Local road at the base of Knockanacree Hill	SE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	This is a brief gateway view uphill towards the modest summit of Knockanacree Hill. The scene is framed by foreground hedgerow vegetation and takes in a large grassed field on the ascending slope. At the top of the field is a patch of ridge top woodland just beyond which rises the telecommunications structure on the top of Knockanacree Hill.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	The proposed BPT will not be visible from here due to intervening screening by terrain, however this is the location of the site access, which will result in clearance of the scrubby roadside hedgerow across this field to provide for sight lines on either side of the newly located entrance a short distance to the northeast. Although there is already a farm track in place, this will be reinstated and replaced by an all weather access road with low mounding to the side. The entrance will be delineated by a new wooden post and rail fence along the roadside and to the north of the access track as it ascends the hill. Two pole mounted CCTV cameras will also be visible adjacent to the access road, but these are subtle features. The effect is an opening up of the view and an increase in the intensity and scale of road access development, which will not appear at all ambiguous in this setting or materially draw from visual amenity. For these reasons, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low and of a Neutral Quality.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Mitigation hedgerow and woodland planting along the access road and around the entrance way will help to reinstate some enclosure and consolidate the new road infrastructure into the surrounding rural setting reducing the visual impact to Low-negligible.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	As the screening is afforded by terrain, there will be no seasonal difference in effects.	
Night time visual Impact from lighting	On the basis that the BPT facility is screened from here by terrain and the proposed lighting is the minimum required for safe circulation of the internal site, it is very unlikely that there will be any noticeable effects during the hours of darkness. Furthermore, this is not an area designated for dark skies and the lighting effect is likely to be akin to a farmstead if seen from surrounding areas. Even if discernible, the lighting will only be activated by movement from site visitors and will therefore be infrequent and illumination will only be for a short period. For these reasons the magnitude of night time visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Low	Slight and Neutral
Residual	Medium low	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible and Neutral
Night time	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP17	Local road at Peamount	NE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	<p>This is a broadly horizontal and open view across a large tillage field towards Peamount Hospital, which is enclosed behind a mature band of trees along its southern boundary and vegetated berm that rises at the south-western corner of the hospital site. A scattering of mature broadleaf trees can be seen in silhouette above the horizon line to the right of the hospital, whilst a line of utility poles are the only vertical counterpoint to a low-clipped hedgerow to the left. A very gentle rise in terrain in the direction of the view precludes further visibility beyond the middle distance. The Dublin Mountains provide modest containment to the south-easterly aspect of the view.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>The most noticeable aspect of the proposed TPR is a horizontal grassed berm that extends northwards (left) from the band of trees that defines the hospital grounds. Although horizontal in its general form, it has a vertical height of 7m above prevailing ground level and thus, it has considerable bulk that is only partially mitigated by the sloping form of the berm. This feature will add to the intensity of development within view and although close to Peamount Hospital and the existing water reservoirs, the proposed TPR is more visually exposed. The elongated mound is slightly obscure within this flat landscape, but its grassed finish is in keeping with the agricultural surrounds. Furthermore, the TPR is only a modest scale feature at this distance and in the context of this broad vista. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact prior to mitigation establishment is deemed to be Medium-low.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	<p>Once mitigation screen planting around the southern boundaries of the TPR site has become established, it will substantially screen the structures and berm from view. This planting will visually merge with the existing tree band screening the Hospital and will therefore not appear ambiguous in its own right. Following mitigation, the magnitude of visual impact is judged to reduce to low.</p>	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	<p>During winter months when the deciduous component of the screen planting is bare of leaves there is likely to be a marginally more exposed view of the TPR features, but only the built structures are likely to be noticed (not the grassed berm). Nonetheless, the structures have a light 'sky-tone' finish and there is a reasonable coniferous component to the proposed planting to aid screening and assimilation with the substantially coniferous treeline to the south of the hospital. For these reasons, the seasonal variation in visual exposure is not deemed great enough to warrant an increase in the attributed visual impact.</p>	
Night time visual Impact from lighting	<p>The main artificial sources of light in the existing view are street light poles at the entrance to Peamount Hospital to the east. There are also glimpses of lighting within the hospital facility through the dense layer of conifer trees that lines its boundary. There is also a subtle hint of the lighting from Dublin City represented by a glow on the horizon to the northeast. There is only a small degree and low intensity of lighting proposed for the TPR and it is on the far side of the facility. Even if discernible, the lighting will only be activated by movement from site visitors and will therefore be infrequent and illumination will only be for a short period. Consequently, it has no material consequence to the baseline lighting scenario and the night time visual effect is considered to be Negligible.</p>	
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.</p>	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Medium-low	Moderate Slight and Negative
Residual	Medium low	Low	Slight Imperceptible and Negative-Neutral
Night time	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP18	Local road a Loughtown Lower	E
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low	
Existing View	<p>This is a broad horizontal vista afforded through a gateway at the northern end of a linear cluster of dwellings that line this laneway from its intersection with the busier local road that links between the R120 and R405 regional roads. It takes in a large and relatively undefined arable field in the fore-to-middle ground, which is then only subtly contained by an intermittent low-clipped hedgerow that runs across the middle distance skyline. Further beyond can be seen Peamount Hospital within a layered band of trees that reveals only occasional roof tops and a prominent water tower. At the northern (left) end of the Hospital setting is less discernible grassed berm and concrete structure that defines the existing water distribution facility at Peamount.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>From this angle the full lateral extent of the TPR is revealed, principally as a broad horizontal grassed berm, but with several tanks at the southern end. The berm is of a height that it will obscure much of the treeline and buildings of the hospital beyond and provide a marginal increase in the containment of this substantially uncontained view. The zigzag profile of solar panels can be seen on the skyline above the berm and the flat elongated berm has a distinctly 'engineered' appearance. Together, these aspects will draw slightly from the rural nature of this vista, but with limited consequence for overall visual amenity.</p> <p>Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be medium low prior to the establishment of mitigation planting.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	<p>Following the establishment of mitigation planting along the western boundary of the site, the berm will be softened in scale and appearance and the proposed vegetation will blend readily with the hospital vegetation beyond such that the TPR will be a subtle feature of the eastward view. For this reason, the magnitude of impact is deemed to reduce to Low.</p>	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	<p>At this distance the dense branches of the deciduous component of the proposed screen planting will form an almost impenetrable veil of the TRP features and it is not considered the predicted level of residual impact will increase.</p>	
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.</p>	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Medium low	Moderate Slight and Negative
Residual	Medium low	Low	Slight Imperceptible and Negative-Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP19	Grand Canal at Mullauns	S
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Grand Canal - A heritage and recreational amenity 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium	
Existing View	This is strongly enclosed section of the Grand Canal with the enclosure provided by a combination of canal-side berms hosting mature broadleaf trees. Consequently, there is some sense of tranquillity along this section of the towpath, with little of the landscape beyond the canal corridor except for a glimpse of the Dublin Mountains ridge through a gap in the foreground trees.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	The proposed TPR will not be visible from here due to dense foreground screening and thus, the magnitude of visual impact is negligible by default.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Proposed mitigation will not be visible from here.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	The VP19 photomontage depicts an early Spring vegetation context with only limited leaf cover and it is clear that there will not be any seasonal variance in the visual impact.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape),, the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP20	Grand Canal at Balscott	SE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Grand Canal - A heritage and recreational amenity 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium	
Existing View	In comparison to VP19, which is also from the Grand Canal a little further to the east, this view is more open – at least across the Canal to the southeast. Reeds and rushes line the foreground canal, which is then flanked by sporadic riparian vegetation along its low opposing bank. The farmed landscape beyond is at a marginally lower level and stretches towards the Dublin Mountains, which are partially visible in the distance.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	Despite the view being more open than VP19, layers of intervening hedgerows preclude visibility of the proposed TPR and the visual impact will be negligible by default.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Mitigation will not be visible from here.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	The VP20 photomontage depicts an early Spring vegetation context with only limited leaf cover and it is clear that there will not be any seasonal variance in the visual impact.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP21	L3003 local road, Pass	NW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium - low	
Existing View	The road on which this viewpoint is located is generally heavily enclosed by roadside hedgerows apart from at this field gate. The fore to middle ground is comprised of large arable fields bounded by hedgerows. Landform rises gradually until it forms a low tree lined ridge in the background that foreshortens the view.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	The BPS building with roof would be situated in the arable field in the middle ground with the surge vessel immediately to the north. The facility would be enclosed by security fences and the northern end will be 'in cut'. The BPS would appear as a long horizontal building which only marginally protrudes above the skyline therefore the visual presence is deemed to be in sub-dominant. The green security fence filters portions of the grey cladding of the BPS. The BPS represents a visual change, however, the barrel-vaulted design of the BPS makes it adhere to the typology of a common barn, thus the effect of the visual amenity of the view is limited. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium-low prior to the establishment of mitigation planting.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	The proposed planting along the eastern side of the BPS site will heavily screen the BPS although the upper portions of the barrel-vaulted roof may still be visible. This will help the BPS to 'bed in' and will mirror the existing long, straight hedgerows. Thus, the magnitude of impact is deemed to reduce to low-negligible following mitigation.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	This view towards the BPS in clear, and the intervening hedgerow is low so there is little seasonal variation to note that would have any relevance to the assessment.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Medium low	Moderate Slight and Negative
Residual	Medium low	Low negligible	Slight and Negative

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP22	L303 local road, Streamstown	N
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community view 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium low	
Existing View	The road on which this viewpoint is located is generally heavily enclosed by roadside hedgerows apart from at this field gate. A channelled view over and through a field gate of an arable field is afforded from this location. The terrain gradually rises in the middle ground and vegetation in the background foreshortens the already narrow view.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	The field gate will be removed and replaced with a 2.4m security fence and existing vegetation on both sides of the entrance will be removed to facilitate sight lines. This will open up views generally and will allow clear views of the BPS facility, which has an industrial character, but one that is similar in scale and nature buildings associated with rural farmsteads in the area. The aesthetic of the security fencing would not be a common feature in this local area and would detract from the character within the view. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be medium prior to the establishment of mitigation planting.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Planting is proposed to restore the sections of removed treeline / hedgerow but set back beyond the sight lines required for the vehicle entrance. This will reinstate the sense of enclosure of the baseline view and will greatly limit the potential for views into the BPS facility. On balance, the magnitude of impact is deemed to reduce to low-negligible following mitigation establishment.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	The proposed roadside hedgerow will be more visually porous in the winter time but the dense layering of branches still heavily veil the view of the BPS.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Medium	Moderate and Negative
Residual	Medium low	Low negligible	Slight Imperceptible and Negative-Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP23	L3003 local road, Coagh Upper	SE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community view 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium low	
Existing View	This is channelled view from a field gate that is a little bit set back from the road. The foreground is composed of a slightly elevated pasture. The terrain gradually falls away from this viewpoint to the southeast to reveal treelines and hedgerows in a shallow valley. Slieve Bloom Mountains form a distant backcloth.	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	The BPS would be located in the base of the low valley in the middle ground, surrounded by trees and hedgerows. The proposed BPS will not be visible from here due to dense screening and thus, the magnitude of visual impact is negligible by default.	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	Proposed mitigation will not be visible from here.	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	There will be no seasonal difference in effects.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral
Residual	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible and Neutral

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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View
VP24	L2008 local road, Commons Upper	SE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community view 	
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium low	
Existing View	<p>This is a gateway view from an otherwise strongly enclosed section of local road lined by mature roadside trees and hedgerows. Whilst there is a series of rural residences on the western side of the road further south towards a railway cutting, this is not a view that can be seen from those properties. The view comprises of a large flat field that stretches towards a vegetated skyline in the middle distance, which flanks the railway line at a distance of c. 280m. There is another line of rural dwellings that front a local road that runs perpendicular to the L2008 a similar distance to the northeast of this viewpoint and the rear facades of several of these dwellings can be seen across the foreground field.</p>	
Visual Impact prior to the establishment of mitigation.	<p>The FCV, which comprises of a raised mound hosting the access cover as well as a control centre (shed), solar panels, a telemetry pole, CCTV cameras and perimeter security fence, will be accessed directly through this gateway. However, to achieve adequate egress sightlines the mature trees on either side of the site entrance (c. 200m in each direction) may need to be removed and it is this worst-case scenario that is assessed. It is the loss of these roadside trees and the provision of a green palisade security fence more than the internal features of the FCV that is most distinctive visual change from here and also from the dwellings to the northeast. The view across the field will be truncated by the foreground FCV facility. However, the loss of a section of roadside trees and the provision of a modest utility site are not ambiguous or uncharacteristic activities in a productive rural setting such as this. The dwellings to the northeast will have a relatively clear but distant view across the field towards the FCV, but again it will be the security fence and loss of tree cover they notice most.</p> <p>Overall, the magnitude of visual impact from this gateway is deemed to be Medium prior to the establishment of mitigation. It will be Medium-low from the more distant houses to the northeast.</p>	
Visual Impact following mitigation establishment (approx. 7yrs)	<p>Proposed mitigation will not prevent visibility of all of the FCV site through the gateway, but it will soften and frame the site, whilst reducing the degree of internal visibility of the site considerably. It will also go some way towards replacing the mature trees that may need to be removed. The magnitude of visual impact is deemed to reduce to medium-low.</p> <p>The mitigation screen planting will be more effective in relation to the dwellings to the northeast that will no longer have a view of the FCV plant, but instead the hedgerow that surrounds it, which is a commonplace feature in this rural area. They will still register the loss of the mature roadside trees. The residual magnitude will be medium-low.</p>	
Seasonal variation in visual impacts.	There will be no material difference in seasonal effects due to the dense branch structure of the proposed screen planting.	
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 16.2.5.2 of Chapter 16 (The Landscape), the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.	

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact and Quality
Pre-mitigation	Medium low	Medium	Moderate and Negative
Residual	Medium low	Medium low	Moderate-slight and Negative