Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development, Co. Clare

Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)

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13. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

13.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The LVIA assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Project on the landscape and visual amenity. The LVIA reported in this chapter was informed by desktop studies and receptor mapping, site visits, verified photomontages, and an impact assessment methodology which follows best practice guidance for LVIA. The LVIA also includes assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects. This chapter is supported by one volume and four appendices:

- **EIAR Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet** (Hereafter 'Photomontage Booklet'): A1 Banner Photomontage Booklet presenting verified photomontage visualisations from representative viewpoints;
- **Appendix 13-1, LVIA Methodology:** An appendix detailing the methodology and guidance used for the assessments reported in this chapter;
- **Appendix 13-2, LCA Assessment Tables:** An assessment of effects on designated Landscape Character Areas (LCAs);
- **Appendix 13-3, Photomontage Assessment Tables:** A visual impact assessment of the representative viewpoints included in the Photomontage Booklet;
- **Appendix 13-4, A0 LVIA Baseline Map:** A large scale (A0) map showing all baseline landscape and visual receptors and LVIA tools (e.g. Viewpoints and Visibility mapping).

13.1.1 Statement of Authority

MKO has developed extensive expertise and experience over the last 20 years in the LVIA of large-scale infrastructure developments for Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR). The MKO Landscape and Visual team have produced LVIA across a diverse range of project types, including: renewable energy and grid infrastructure; residential developments; transport infrastructure; extraction infrastructure; and a range of other projects requiring EIAR.

This LVIA was written by Jack Workman with oversight by Michael Watson. Daniel Mulpeter provided technical support for the production of the LVIA including fieldwork and GIS with oversight from Jack and Michael.

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

Michael Watson is the Environment Division Director in MKO who has over 25 years' experience in the environmental sector. Following the completion of his master's degree in environmental resource management, Geography, from National University of Ireland, Maynooth he worked for the Geological Survey of Ireland and then a prominent private environmental consultancy prior to joining MKO in 2014. Michael's professional experience includes managing Environmental Impact Assessments and Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments on behalf of clients in the wind farm, waste management,

commercial and industrial sectors nationally. Michael worked on the capture and development of photomontages as well as compiling the Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments for some of the first wind turbines being proposed in Ireland in the early 2000's and has been compiling and reviewing LVIA chapters for multiple wind farm projects each year since 2014. Michael is a key member of the MKO senior management team and as head of the Environment Division has responsibilities to mentor various grades of team members, foster a positive and promote continuous professional development for employees. Michael also has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Geography and Economics from NUI Maynooth, is a Member of IEMA, a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv).

Daniel Mulpeter is an Affiliate Member of the Landscape Institute and an LVIA Specialist with MKO with experience engaging in LVIA assessments for wind energy and public infrastructure. Daniel holds an MSc in Environmental Science from Trinity College Dublin, where he completed his thesis on "Estimating Peat Depth using Gamma-ray Spectrometry and Photogrammetry". Furthermore, he received a BSc (Hons) in General Science, finishing with Applied Maths and Biology. Daniel's key strengths include proficiency in GIS tools such as QGIS and ArcGIS, conducting landscape and visual impact assessments, and capturing data through drone surveys and photomontages.

13.1.2 Proposed Project Description

A full and detailed description of the Proposed Project can be found in Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Project of this EIAR. Section 4.1 of that chapter describes the Proposed Project and its component parts, including the works subject of a proposed application for planning permission to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

This planning application seeks a ten-year planning permission and 35-year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire wind farm.

13.1.2.1 In-Text Reference to the Proposed Project

The following references are used throughout this chapter as per the definitions set out in Chapter 1 of this EIAR:

- Where the 'Proposed Project' is referred to, this encompasses the entirety of the project for the purposes of this EIA in accordance with the EIA Directive. The Proposed Project is described in detail in Chapter 4 of this EIAR.
- Where the 'Site' is referred to, this encompasses lands where the Proposed Project is located as delineated by the EIAR Site Boundary in green as shown on Figure 1-1 of the EIAR and encompasses an area of approximately 1,260 hectares.
- Where the 'Proposed Grid Connection Site' is referred to, this refers to the part of the Site containing the extension to the existing 110kV substation at Slievecallan and the proposed 33kV underground cabling route from the Proposed Turbines to the substation at Slievecallan.
- Where the 'Proposed Wind Farm Site' is referred to, this refers to the portion of the Site containing the Proposed Turbines and ancillary infrastructure, excluding the Proposed Grid Connection Site.
- The 'Proposed Turbines' refers to the 9 no. turbines of the Proposed Project located within the Proposed Wind Farm Site as outlined above.
- Where the 'Proposed Enhancement Site' is referred to, this refers to the portion of the Site containing the proposed biodiversity and ornithology enhancement and management areas, excluding the Proposed Wind Farm Site and Proposed Grid Connection Site.

13.1.2.2 Essential Aspects of the Proposed Project and Primary Focus of the LVIA

This LVIA follows 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition' (hereafter, GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute (LI) & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013) as well as 'Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA3: Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2024-01' (hereafter, LI TGN 24-01) published by the Landscape Institute (LI) (2024). This guidance states that:

> *"It is important to make sure that the Project description provides all the information needed to identify its effect on particular aspects of the environment. For LVIA it is important to understand, from the Project description, the essential aspects of the scheme that will potentially give rise to its effects on the landscape and visual amenity".*

The tall, vertical nature of the Proposed Turbines make them the most prominent elements of the Proposed Project from a landscape and visual perspective and have the most potential to give rise to significant landscape and visual effects. In this regard, the Proposed Turbines are deemed to be the 'essential aspect' of the Proposed Project which will give rise to effects on the landscape and visual amenity and are the primary focus of the LVIA reported in this chapter.

The proposed 30m meteorological mast is also a tall vertical structure; therefore, it is included in the Photomontage Booklet and is fully considered throughout this chapter. However, it will be substantially less visible than the Proposed Turbines given its shorter and slender lattice form.

Other components of the Proposed Project are not deemed to be as visually prominent as the Proposed Turbines; however, they have the potential to give rise to localised landscape and visual effects. Although not the primary focus of this LVIA, these elements are given full consideration throughout this Chapter.

13.1.3 Mitigation by Design

The Proposed Wind Farm Site was strategically selected as a landscape highly suitable for the development of wind energy. Through the iterative project design process, various best practice tools for assessing the landscape and visual impact of a proposed wind farm development were utilised to bring forward the optimum design for the Proposed Project with respect to landscape and visual factors. These tools include landscape modelling, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping and the preparation of photomontage visualisations.

The iterative design process was informed by the siting and design guidance for wind farms in specific landscape types as set out in the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government [DoEHLG], 2006), hereafter the 'Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006)', and regard to the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government [DoHPLG], 2019), hereafter the 'Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019)'.

The final design of the Proposed Project included careful micro-siting of infrastructure with the aim of preventing the potential for significant landscape and visual effects. Details of the various turbine layout iterations included as part of this design process are included in Chapter 3: Site Selection and Reasonable Alternatives of this EIAR. Landscape and visual 'mitigating' factors which were key to the site selection and design of the Proposed Project are established below, these factors are of key relevance to this LVIA in this chapter.

- All 9 no. Proposed Turbines of the Proposed Project are sited in a "Strategic Area" for wind energy development in the Clare Wind Energy Strategy.

- The Proposed Turbines are sited within the Sliabh Callan Uplands Landscape Character Area (LCA), an LCA of the lowest landscape sensitivity rating for wind energy development in County Clare, as set out in local planning policy. The landscape characteristics of this LCA make it highly suitable and capable of absorbing multiple large scale wind energy developments.
- The Proposed Project is not located within any high sensitivity landscape designations of County Clare ('Heritage' Landscapes').
- The Proposed Wind Farm Site is primarily comprised of a marginal upland landscape strongly influenced by land uses such as commercial forestry and historical peat extraction. As such, it is a modified working landscape with low sensitivity, deemed capable of absorbing the Proposed Turbines.
- The Proposed Turbines are sited in an upland landscape of large scale, capable of effectively accommodating multiple wind energy developments.
- The Proposed Turbines are sited in a sparsely populated area with appropriate setback distances from local population centres.
- The topographical characteristics of the marginal upland landscape and its surrounding area naturally limit the visual exposure of the Proposed Turbines. Distinctive ridgelines and landforms of the upland landscape to the east and north effectively obscure visibility of the turbines from much of the broader landscape, thereby limiting the extent of landscape and visual impact upon large numbers of receptors as shown by the ZTV map.
- The turbine layout has been designed to create a coherent arrangement of turbines, contiguous and connected to each other visually and with consistent spacing in line with the guidance for design and siting of wind farms in 'Mountain Moorland' Landscape Types in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), and regard to the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).
- Siting of Proposed Turbines adheres to the minimum 500m set back distance in the current Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and also the recommended larger 4 times tip height set back distance to third-party properties, explicitly set out for residential visual amenity, prescribed by the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019)
- The proposed 33kV underground cabling follows the local road network and existing forestry tracks. The proposed extension to the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation is sited at a location surrounded by coniferous plantations, thereby limiting potential landscape and visual effects during the operational phase;
- The Proposed Wind Farm Site is located nearby (approx. 3.6km) to the existing Slievecallan substation and grid infrastructure where the grid connection occurs, this proximity significantly reduces the extent of grid infrastructure required to facilitate renewable energy generation and therefore minimises landscape and visual impacts that could potentially arise from this component of the Proposed Project.
- The internal site road layout makes use of the existing forestry tracks wherever possible (to be upgraded for construction and delivery of wind turbine components), to minimise the requirement for new tracks within the Site;

13.2 Brief Methodology And Assessment Criteria

This section broadly outlines the guidance and methodology used to undertake the LVIA of the Proposed Project; a more detailed description of the methodology is provided in Appendix 13-1: *LVIA Methodology*. There are five main sections to the LVIA reported in this Chapter:

- Visibility of the Proposed Project:
  - ZTV mapping;
  - Overview of actual visibility from site visits;
  - Route Screening Analysis;
- Landscape Baseline:
  - Policy Context – Relevant landscape and visual policies and designations in local planning policy documents;

- Landscape Character and Sensitivity of the Proposed Wind Farm Site - informed by site visits, and an overview of relevant best practice siting and design guidance for wind farms appropriate to the landscape of the Site;
- Landscape Character and Sensitivities of the wider landscape setting – Identify designated LCAs and high sensitivity landscape receptors scoped in for impact assessment.

- Visual Baseline:
  - Identify visual receptors scoped in for impact assessment;
  - Selection of photomontage viewpoints.
- Cumulative Context: Identification of other wind energy developments included for cumulative LVIA.
- Likely Significant Landscape and Visual Effects:
  - Impact assessment supported by Appendix 13-2 – *LCA Assessment Tables*, and Appendix 13-3 - *Photomontage Assessment Tables*;
  - Landscape and Visual effects reported through the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Project;
  - Assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects.

13.2.1 Guidelines

Regarding legislation and general guidance on overall Environmental Impact Assessment, please refer to Chapter 1 Introduction of this EIAR.

The methods and processes used for the LVIA reported in this chapter was guided and informed by benchmark best practice guidance specifically pertaining to LVIA and the LVIA of wind energy development. Details of the guidance used to conduct this LVIA are outlined in Appendix 13-1: *LVIA Methodology* (Section 1.3 Guidelines).

13.2.2 Scope of the LVIA and Study Areas

The landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Turbines on the Site are assessed in this LVIA. However, the landscape baseline mapping, visual receptor mapping and viewpoint selection are based on wider study areas. Following best practice guidance, the experience and professional judgement of the assessment team, two study areas were defined for this LVIA:

- **'LVIA Study Area':** All of the landscape within **25km** from the Proposed Turbines for assessment of effects on landscape and visual receptors and is the search area for other wind energy developments included for cumulative assessment;
- **'LCA Study Area':** All of the landscape within **15km** from the Proposed Turbines for assessment of effects on designated Landscape Character Areas (LCAs).

The distance at which the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is set from the Proposed Turbines defines the parameters of the LVIA Study Area. The LVIA Study Area was chosen to be 25km from the Proposed Turbines for landscape and visual effects, due to the proximity of 'the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark'. This landscape is of international renown, therefore the 25km LVIA Study Area was chosen as per the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019):

> *"In areas where landscapes of national or international renown are located within 25km of a proposed wind energy development, the Zone of Theoretical Visibility should be extended as far (and in the direction of) that landscape. This reflects the fact that highly sensitive landscapes deserve extra special treatment by developers and planners"*

After defining the parameters for this LVIA, and on the basis of desk studies, survey work undertaken, professional judgement and experience of the assessment team, the following are scoped out of assessment in this LVIA:

- Effects on landscape and visual receptors with minimal or no theoretical visibility (as predicted by the ZTV mapping), and/or very distant visibility, and are therefore unlikely to be subject to significant effects;
- Effects on designated landscape receptors beyond 25km from the Proposed Turbines where it is judged that significant effects on key characteristics and/or special qualities are unlikely to occur;
- Effects on designated LCAs beyond 15km from the Proposed Turbines, where it is judged that significant effects on landscape character are unlikely to occur;
- Effects on visual receptors beyond 25km from the Proposed Turbines where it is judged that significant effects are unlikely occur;
- Cumulative landscape and visual effects beyond 25km from the Proposed Turbines where it is judged that significant effects are unlikely to occur.
- Cumulative effects in combination with single turbines with a tip height lower than 50 metres beyond 3km from the Proposed Turbines, where it is judged that significant effects are unlikely to occur in these potential cumulative scenarios.

13.2.3 Assessment of Potential Impacts

The landscape and visual assessment methodology used in this chapter (Detailed in Appendix 13-1) includes clearly documented methods based on the GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013). This includes consideration of landscape and visual sensitivity balanced with the magnitude of change to determine the likely significance of effects. Potential for cumulative effects are also considered and accounted for in these determinations and judgements. Mitigating factors are then taken into consideration to arrive at residual landscape and visual effects. Residual landscape and visual effects are graded upon an 'impact assessment classification of significance' scale, as defined by the 'Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' (EPA, 2022). The assessments have been informed by many site visits and are supported by a range of best practice tools for LVIA including ZTV mapping and photomontages. Further details of the methods used to produce ZTV maps and photomontages, as well as the LVIA process, including assessment of cumulative effects are presented in Appendix 13-1.

13.2.4 LVIA Wind Energy Context

Given Irelands renewable energy targets which have been set by the State for on-shore renewable wind energy development, wind turbines will form a new component in the working landscape for the coming decades. The focus for visual impact assessment of wind energy developments is therefore distance, arrangement, location and potential disruption to key scenic sensitivities rather than a commonly misconceived focus on whether turbines are visible or not from a particular vantage point. The outcome of the visual impact assessment, with regards to the EPA (2022) definition of significance, is calibrated in the overall context of LVIA of wind energy developments in Ireland and what is acceptable in the context of emerging baseline trends and the acceptability of wind turbines within views as a result of national policy.

Over time, wind turbines have, and will become, a more familiar and accepted component of the Irish landscape, particularly in working rural contexts. Accordingly, their presence may not carry the same level of perceived visual intrusion as less common or incongruous forms of development. In this context, the calibration of visual impact significance reflects both the policy-driven imperative for renewable energy development and the evolving visual baseline in parts of the Irish landscape. While the visibility of turbines remains an important consideration, it does not in itself equate to significant visual impact.

Key factors of focus in the overall impact assessment on visual receptors in relation to photomontages are:

- The scale of the Proposed Turbines relative to the landscape as a result of setback distance;
- The number of Proposed Turbines visible;
- Full or partial visibility of partial turbines e.g. are they partially screened by features;
- The horizontal extent of the Proposed Turbines in the field of view;
- Overall visual coherency with regards to form and arrangement and how the Proposed Turbines correspond to the landscape from a particular vantage point as per best practice siting and design guidance.

13.3 Visibility of the Proposed Project

Determining the visibility of the Proposed Project is a fundamental component of the assessment of landscape and visual effects. Visibility has been evaluated using a combination of complementary best practice methods. While the assessment focuses primarily on the Proposed Turbines, all associated infrastructure has been considered. Visibility analysis is informed by GIS-based spatial analysis, including ZTV mapping. The nature and extent of actual visibility were verified through systematic field surveys undertaken across the LVIA Study Area during 2024 and 2025. The degree of visibility and the resulting magnitude of visual effects were further tested through the preparation of photomontages from a range of representative viewpoints, selected to reflect different geographic locations and visual receptor types.

13.3.1 ZTV: Theoretical Visibility of the Proposed Turbines

ZTV mapping is an important step in the LVIA process, in that it clearly shows which areas of the LVIA Study Area will have theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines and which areas will have no theoretical visibility. The ZTV mapping methodology is outlined in Appendix 13-1. This method was used to examine the theoretical visibility of the 9 No. Proposed Turbines from all landscape and visual receptors within the LVIA Study Area, using the half blade height of the wind turbines as points of reference. The Guidelines (p.94) (DoEHLG, 2006) state:

> *"It is recommended that the Zone of Theoretical Visibility should assess the degree of visibility based on the numbers of turbines visible to half the blade length in addition to hub-height".*

A Half-Blade ZTV is considered more appropriate and useful than a Full-Blade ZTV for analysing visibility of the Proposed Turbines and scoping receptors in and out for assessment, particularly when using an elevation model representing a bare earth scenario. As well as the guidance cited above, the decision to use a Half-Blade ZTV is based upon professional judgement and guided by the extensive experience the assessment team have ground truthing ZTVs against the reality of turbine visibility within landscapes where turbines already exist. As noted in Appendix 13-1, actual visibility on the ground is significantly less than predicted by the ZTV mapping due to intervening factors such as: on site screening from natural and man-made features, atmospheric weather and/or localised topography.

Generation of the ZTV utilises large scale topographical data (interpolation across 10 m OSi contour data) and does not account for topographical variation of smaller scale (e.g. < 10 metre). Therefore, in reality, small, localised undulations in topography are likely to further inhibit visibility of the Proposed Turbines that may not be represented in the ZTV map. Other features of the landscape such as vegetation and man-made elements are also likely to obscure the Proposed Turbines from view from many areas where the Half-Blade ZTV indicates there is full theoretical visibility. In this regard, the ZTV Map is a useful tool to indicate where there is definitely no visibility of the Proposed Turbines, thus receptors located in these areas can be scoped out from further assessment.

The Half Blade ZTV map of the Proposed Turbines and LVIA Study Area is shown in Figure 13-1 below. Separate colour bands are used on each ZTV map to indicate the number of Proposed Turbines of which the half blade will potentially be visible due to visual screening from landform. The legend on each map shows the number of theoretically visible turbines for each corresponding colour, which are as follows:

- Teal: 1-3 Proposed Turbines theoretically visible.
- Yellow: 4-6 Proposed Turbines theoretically visible.
- Grey: 7-9 Proposed Turbines theoretically visible.

Figure 13-2 (below) shows the landform features and elevation gradients existent within the landscape of the LVIA study area, the geography of these topographical characteristics define the distribution of theoretical visibility illustrated in Figure 13-1.

N

ATLANTIC OCEAN
An tAigéan Atlantach

5km
10km
15km
20km
25km

0 5 10 km

Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbines

Half-Blade Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 1-3 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 4-6 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 7-9 Turbines Theoretically Visible

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-1

Drawing Title

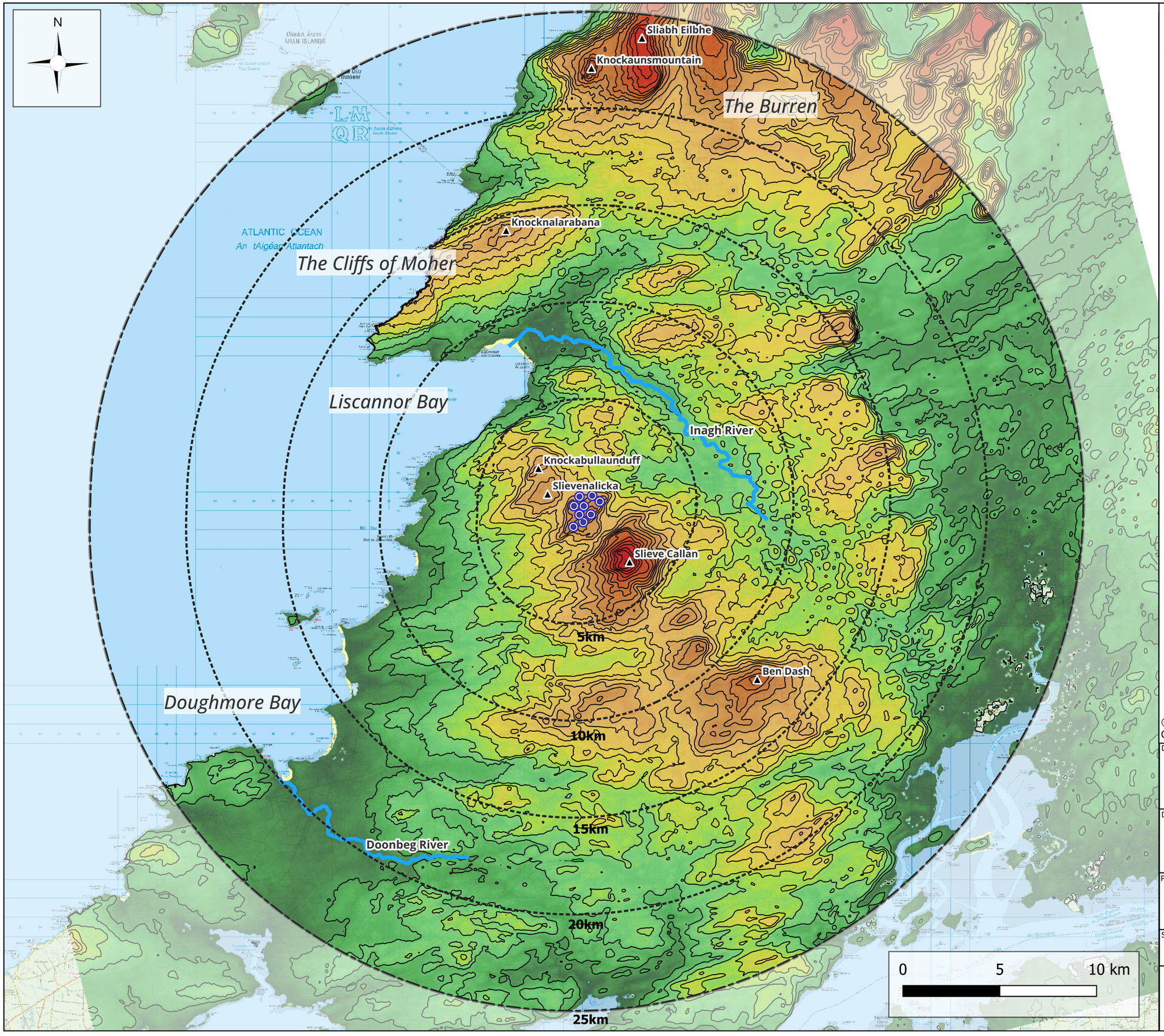
Half-Blade Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:186,900	240718	30.04.2026	DM	JW

MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants



Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbines
- Local Peaks of High Elevation
- Prominent Rivers

Elevation (Above Ordnance Datum)

- 1m
- 25m
- 50m
- 75m
- 100m
- 150m
- 200m
- 250m
- 300m
- 350m

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-2

Drawing Title

Physical Landscape Features Map

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:186,200	240718	30.04.2026	DM	JW

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Figure 13-2 (above) shows the topographical features and elevation gradients existent within the receiving landscape of the LVIA Study Area; the geography of these topographical features defines the distribution of theoretical visibility illustrated in Figure 13-1.

The Proposed Wind Farm Site is located in an upland area in West Clare, known as the Sliabh Callan Uplands

Distribution of Theoretical Visibility within 5km

The ZTV map shows full or partial theoretical visibility from majority of areas within 5km of the Proposed Turbines. Figure 13-2 shows that the Proposed Turbines are located on a plateau of elevated ground surrounded by steep ridges, consequently areas immediately south, east and north-east of this plateau demonstrate only partial theoretical visibility as the steep terrain ascending to the site will screen visibility of the Proposed Turbines.

To the north-east and south-west there is predominantly full theoretical visibility to 5 km from the Proposed Wind Farm Site as the landscape slopes down to lower elevations in both directions. To the north-west, theoretical visibility to 5 km of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is significantly reduced by screening from the elevations of Knockabullaunduff and Slievenalicka which are of relatively similar elevation to the Proposed Wind Farm Site. As indicated by Figure 13-1, this topographical screening extends to the southern coastline of Liscannor Bay (south of Lahinch) where ZTV mapping recorded no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines.

Slieve Callan is the highest elevation in West Clare, it's peak (391 metres above ordnance datum) is located 3km south-east of the nearest Proposed Turbines. Therefore, all areas greater than 3 km southeast of the Proposed Turbines are afforded significant screening by the landform of Slieve Callan, resulting in primarily no theoretical visibility being recorded in any location in the south-east portion of the LVIA study area.

Distribution of Theoretical Visibility to the South-East

As stated above, Slieve Callan and the uplands southeast of the Proposed Wind Farm Site result in a large area of no theoretical visibility in the southeast of the LVIA Study Area.

Distribution of Theoretical Visibility to the South

South of the Proposed Wind Farm Site, there is mixed theoretical visibility between 5 to 10 km, areas of full theoretical visibility is limited to lands of high elevation south of Doo Lough. As demonstrated in Figure 13-1, areas greater than 10 km south of the site show primarily no theoretical visibility or just small patches of partial theoretical visibility.

Distribution of Theoretical Visibility to the South-West

As shown in Figure 13-2, areas to the south-west of the Proposed Wind Farm Site comprise of low lying land, gently sloping from the upland areas in the east down towards the coastline in the west and the flat coastal plain surrounding Doughmore Bay in the south-west. The Proposed Turbines are located on relatively high ground in comparison to these lower elevations with no intervening landform of significance to provide screening. Therefore, these topographical characteristics are likely to enable open views of the Proposed Turbines from areas to the south-west of the Proposed Wind Farm Site as indicated by the widespread full theoretical visibility shown on the ZTV map in Figure 13-1.

Distribution of Theoretical Visibility to the East of the Site

There is widespread full theoretical visibility across the Cullenagh/Inagh River Valley to the north-east of the Proposed Wind Farm Site with pockets of no theoretical visibility increasing in size and frequency as distance from the Proposed Turbines increases. There is limited theoretical visibility recorded in the lower elevated areas of the Cullenagh/Inagh River valley surrounding Ennistimon. The landscape east of the Cullenagh/Inagh valley comprises of hilly drumlin farmland which causes intermittent patches of theoretical visibility.

There is predominantly no theoretical visibility in areas greater than 15km east of the Proposed Turbines, including Ennis and surrounding areas. A small area of theoretical visibility is evident around elevated vantage points at the Barefield Junction on the M18 Motorway north of Ennis. The ZTV extends to 25km due to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark being attributed a landscape receptor of international renown (Page 9, Appendix 3 of the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006); the Barefield junction is located at a distance greater than 23km from the Proposed Turbines, which is generally out-with the parameters for assessment of visual receptors prescribed by best-practice guidance for LVIA, where a typical study area is extended to 20km. Any actual visibility of the Proposed Turbines occurring from this location is likely to be negligible and significantly mitigated by distance. Visual receptors would need to be actively searching the landscape in order to have visibility of the Proposed Turbines from this location on the M18 Motorway.

Distribution of Theoretical Visibility to the North of the Site

Approximately 15km north of the Proposed Wind Farm Site the land rises to the highly elevated, Karst limestone landscape of the Burren, as demonstrated in Figure 13-2. There is a large area of full theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines from these highly elevated lands of the Burren around the town of Lisdoonvarna and the southern aspect of the Burren National Park to the north-east. Approximately 14km north to north-west of the Proposed Turbines, a hill at Knooknalarabana (200m AOD) extends south-westerly to the Cliffs of Moher. There is widespread full theoretical visibility on this ridge of elevated land and the intervening landscape that slopes gently south to the north coast of Liscannor Bay. Theoretical visibility of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is very limited surrounding the town of Lahinch and the flat coastal estuary of the Inagh River.

Additional ZTV mapping exercises were conducted to assess the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines cumulatively with all other existing, permitted and proposed wind farm developments located within the 25km LVIA study area. These ZTV maps are presented and discussed in Section 13.6 Cumulative Baseline.

13.3.2 ZTV versus Actual Visibility

The ZTV map is a useful tool to indicate areas where there will be no visibility of the Proposed Turbines. Further, in practice, vast areas of the LVIA Study Area which have an indication of full theoretical visibility by the ZTV map (Figure 13-1) are likely to have no visibility of the Proposed Turbines due to other visual screening factors existent within the landscape.

Multiple field surveys were conducted during 2024 and 2025 to determine the actual likely visibility from locations where the ZTV has indicated full theoretical visibility. These surveys determined that visual screening from localised undulations in topography, vegetation and man-made elements substantially reduce the likelihood of viewing the Proposed Turbines in vast areas of the LVIA Study Area.

13.3.2.1 Route Screening Analysis (RSA)

In this LVIA, Route Screening Analysis (RSA) was carried out within a 3km radius of the Proposed Turbines and on all major roads extending to 5km. The RSA determined the actual likely visibility of

the Proposed Turbines in comparison with theoretical visibility on all local and regional roads within 3km of the Proposed Turbines and other prominent roads within 5km of the site e.g. R474 (CCDP Scenic Route 15). The full methodology is outlined in Appendix 13-1: *LVIA Methodology* (Section 1.4.3: On-Site Visibility Appraisal: RSA).

The RSA visual screening categories are:

- **'Little/No'** visual screening: areas of the road that are mainly open with open views in the direction of the Proposed Turbines (see example below in Plate 13-1);
- **'Intermittent/Partial'** visual screening: areas of the road where there are intermittent or partial views in the direction of the Proposed Turbines (see Plate 13-2);
- '**Dense/Full'** visual screening: areas of the road with dense visual screening, sufficient to block views in the direction of the Proposed Turbines (see Plate 13-3).



Plate 13-1 Example of 'Little/No Screening' on the L-5159 Local Road north of the Proposed Turbines



Plate 13-2 Example of 'Intermittent/Partial Screening' on the L-5159 Local Road north of the Proposed Turbines



Plate 13-3 Example of 'Full Screening' on the L-1074 Local Road north of the Proposed Turbines

Below, Figure 13-3 maps the quantified results of the RSA, showing the extent to which each visual screening classification is present on all public roads within 3km of the Proposed Turbines, and on major roads extending to 5km, using the following colour scheme: Little/None (teal); Intermittent/Partial (blue); Dense/Full (orange).

Table 13-1 Distribution of Visual Screening Recorded during RSA

Visual Screening Class	Length of Road Mapped in Fig.	Percentage Distribution of Screening on the Surveyed Roads
Little/No Screening	14.45km	32.86%
Intermittent/Partial Screening	13.67km	31.08%
Dense/Full Screening	15.85	36.06%

'Dense/Full' visual screening was the most common class recorded, with long stretches of 'Dense/Full Screening' seen on roads to the north and south of the Proposed Turbines, as seen below in Figure 13-3. As shown in Figure 13-3, the stretches of 'No/Little' visual screening are interspersed with short stretches of 'Intermittent/Partial' or 'Dense/Full Screening', becoming more prevalent at a further distance from the Proposed Turbines.

Mature vegetation, such as coniferous plantations and hedgerows, provide visual screening towards the Proposed Turbines from many areas of the local road network, which is reflected by the stretches of 'Intermittent/Partial' and 'Dense/Full' visual screening. This occurs to the north of the Proposed Turbines along the L-5162, L-1074 and L-1076 local roads. There were stretches of road with steep sides and roadside vegetation that also limit visibility in the direction of the Proposed Turbines. These were recorded as having 'Intermittent/Partial' or 'Dense/Full' visual screening, and found along the R460 regional road to the south of the Proposed Turbines. To the east of the Proposed Wind Farm Site the RSA indicates longer stretches of 'Intermittent/Partial' visual screening along the R460 regional road and the L-1074 local road. to the west and southwest of the Proposed Turbines, there are more stretches of road where 'Little/No Screening' was recorded, as shown in Figure 13-3. Along these stretches of road there is much less roadside vegetation allowing more visibility in the direction of the Proposed Turbines.

N

Map Legend

- Proposed Turbines

Route Screening Analysis

- No / Very Little Screening
- Partial / Intermittent Screening
- Dense / Full Screening

3km

5km

0 1 2 km

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-3

Drawing Title

Route Screening Analysis

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:41,300	240718	30.04.2026	DM	JW

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13.3.2.2 Overview of RSA and Visibility Appraisals

The ZTV indicates that within 5km of the Proposed Turbines there is visibility in the direction of the Proposed Turbines along both local and regional roads. However, the visibility appraisals conducted as part of the RSA have found that the ZTV Map (Figure 13-1) is not fully representative of the actual visibility along some of these roads, where views in the direction of the Proposed Turbines are limited by vegetative and topographical screening. Site visits determined that this is also the case for the wider landscape of the LVIA Study Area, where above-ground screening from localised topography, mature vegetation and the built environment substantially reduce the visual exposure of the Proposed Turbines compared with what is indicated by the ZTV. Visibility within the LVIA Study Area will be discussed further throughout this chapter

13.4 Landscape Baseline

The Landscape Baseline section details relevant policies pertinent to this LVIA, as well a description of the receiving landscape where the Proposed Project is located, and the wider landscape setting.

13.4.1 Landscape Designation and Policy Context

This section provides an overview of local planning policy and identifies landscape and visual protections, designations and spatial zoning for wind energy development relevant to the LVIA of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project is located in Co. Clare, therefore the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (hereafter 'CCDP') was the primary document used to inform this exercise.

13.4.1.1 Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (CCDP)

Chapter 14 of the CCDP outlines the policies relating to the landscape and visual amenities within County Clare. Section 14.1 of the CCDP outlines five strategic aims with regard to landscape planning (CCDP, p.343) and are stated below.

- *"To ensure the implementation of the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 in County Clare.*
- *To implement the 'Clare's Living Landscapes' approach to landscape management and enhancement throughout the County.*
- *To encourage the utilisation of the Clare County Landscape Character Assessment in both the preparation and assessment of planning applications.*
- *To utilise the 'Clare Living Landscapes' approach to ensure that development in the County takes place in the location / landscape deemed most appropriate; and*
- *To sustain the natural and cultural heritage of the County."*

13.4.1.1.1 *Co. Clare Renewable Energy Strategy*

Section 11.8.5 of the CCDP sets out several 'Development Plan Objectives' in relation to renewable energy resources in Co. Clare. Of these, objective CDP11.47 (CCDP, p.291) contains 'Item C' which relates specifically to the development of wind energy, stating:

"CDP11.47 It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- *(a) To encourage and to favourably consider proposals for renewable energy developments, including community owned developments, and ancillary facilities in order to meet National, Regional and County renewable energy targets, and to facilitate a reduction in CO2 emissions and the promotion of a low carbon economy;*

- *(b) To assess future renewable energy-related development proposals having regard to the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023–2030 in Volume 5 of this plan and associated SEA [Strategic Environmental Assessment] and AA [Appropriate Assessment];*
- *(c) To support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on-shore and offshore) at appropriate locations and of its related grid infrastructure in County Clare, in accordance with all relevant policies, guidance and guidelines pertaining to the protection of the environment and protected habitats and species, and to assess proposals having regard to the Clare Wind Energy Strategy in Volume 6 of this plan and the associated SEA and AA, or any subsequent updated adopted Strategy and to national Wind Energy Guidelines;*
- *(d) To prepare a new and updated Wind Energy Strategy for County Clare during the lifetime of this plan, subject to the publication of the update to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006;*
- *(e) To strike an appropriate balance between facilitating renewable and wind energy related development and protecting the residential amenities of neighbouring properties; and*
- *(f) To support and facilitate the development of new options and technological advances in relation to renewable energy production and storage, that may emerge over the lifetime of this Plan"*

Item C states that the assessment of wind energy proposals should have regard to Volume 6 of the CCDP, the Clare Wind Energy Strategy.

13.4.1.1.2 Clare Wind Energy Strategy 2023-2026 (CWES)

The Clare Wind Energy Strategy 2023 - 2026 (Hereafter - CWES) forms Volume 6 of the CCDP. The CCDP describes the CWES as follows:

> *"This volume comprises a detailed countywide Wind Energy Strategy, supplemented by maps which set out Clare County Council's strategy for informing wind energy development, having regard to economic, environmental and visual issues".*

Chapter 4 of the CWES is called 'Advice on Landscape Capacity for Wind Energy Developments based on Landscape Character Areas'. In this section, the CWES identifies and designates different areas of the landscape of Co. Clare into 4 No. classifications relating to their suitability for wind energy development. The 'Wind Energy Designations' map from Chapter 4 of the CWES is reproduced below in Figure 13-4, with the location of the Proposed Wind Farm Site highlighted by a red annotation, and the four wind energy designations as follows:

- 'Strategic Areas' (purple on the map below);
- 'Acceptable in Principle' (dark green);
- 'Open to Consideration' (light green);
- 'Not Normally Permissible' (orange).

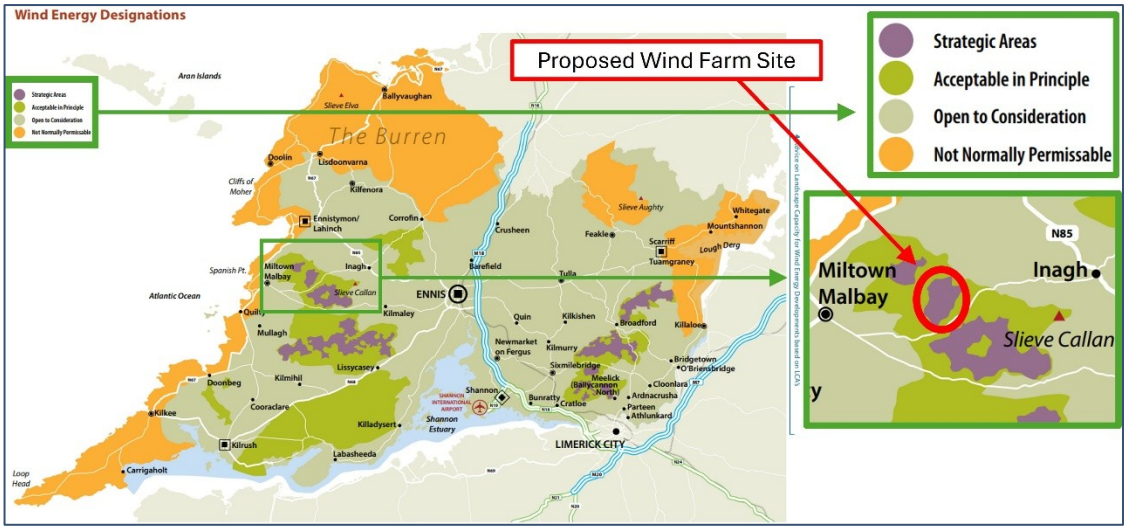


Figure 13-4 Wind Energy Designation Map from Section 4 of the CWES; Location of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is identified by red annotation

Landscape and Visual Considerations in the CWES

Section 2.5.3 of the CWES reports that potential for Landscape and Visual Impacts have been a key strategic consideration informing the development of the wind energy strategy and spatial designations in the CWES. For example, the areas of Co. Clare designated as 'Not Normally Permissible' are essentially considered 'no go' areas for wind energy development, and the spatial extent of these designations generally overlaps and mirrors areas of Co. Clare 'Heritage Landscape'. Co. Clare Heritage Landscapes are the most vulnerable, sensitive and protected landscape designations in the county, including unique protected landscapes such as The Burren, the Cliffs of Moher, the Atlantic coastal corridor and the eastern banks of Lough Derg (Co. Clare Heritage Landscapes are discussed in more detail in Section 13.4.1.1.5 below).

Section 2.5.3 of the CWES reports that the wind energy designations were informed by analysis of other designations (as well as 'Heritage' landscapes) such as designated Scenic Routes and designated LCAs, stating:

> *"In addition, the Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare was used as a baseline to assess capacity for areas to accommodate wind farm developments".*

The Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare (LCACC) was published in 2004 and is addressed and considered in this LVIA (see below Section 13.4.1.1.4); however, it is noted that the CWES includes a more recent appraisal of LCAs than the LCACC and addresses the sensitivity and capacity of designated LCAs with specific consideration of wind energy development. LCAs are of primary consideration in Chapter 4 of the CWES, in that the chapter provides zoning maps for wind energy designations and Table 4a which addresses each LCA in Co. Clare and provides 'Strategic Guidance on Landscape Capacity for Wind Energy Developments'. The LCAs of the county and the guidance in Table 4a of CWES are reported below.

Potential for effects on landscape and visual amenity have been a key strategic consideration in the spatial zoning of wind energy designations in Co. Clare. It is therefore reasoned that the CWES as a local planning policy document envisions turbines to be seen within the 'Strategic Area' landscapes where wind energy development has been specifically directed and promoted.

The wind energy designation map above (Figure 13-4) includes the entire landscape of Co. Clare. A relatively small portion of the landscape comprises 'Strategic Areas', only approximately 2.9% of the entire county, indicating that these areas are generally the most suitable area of the landscape capable of accommodating and absorbing wind energy development. The CWES does not rule out

development of wind energy in other designated areas such as 'Acceptable in Principle' and 'Open to Consideration'.

As seen in Figure 13-5 below, all 9 No. Proposed Turbines are sited within the area designated as 'Strategic Areas'.

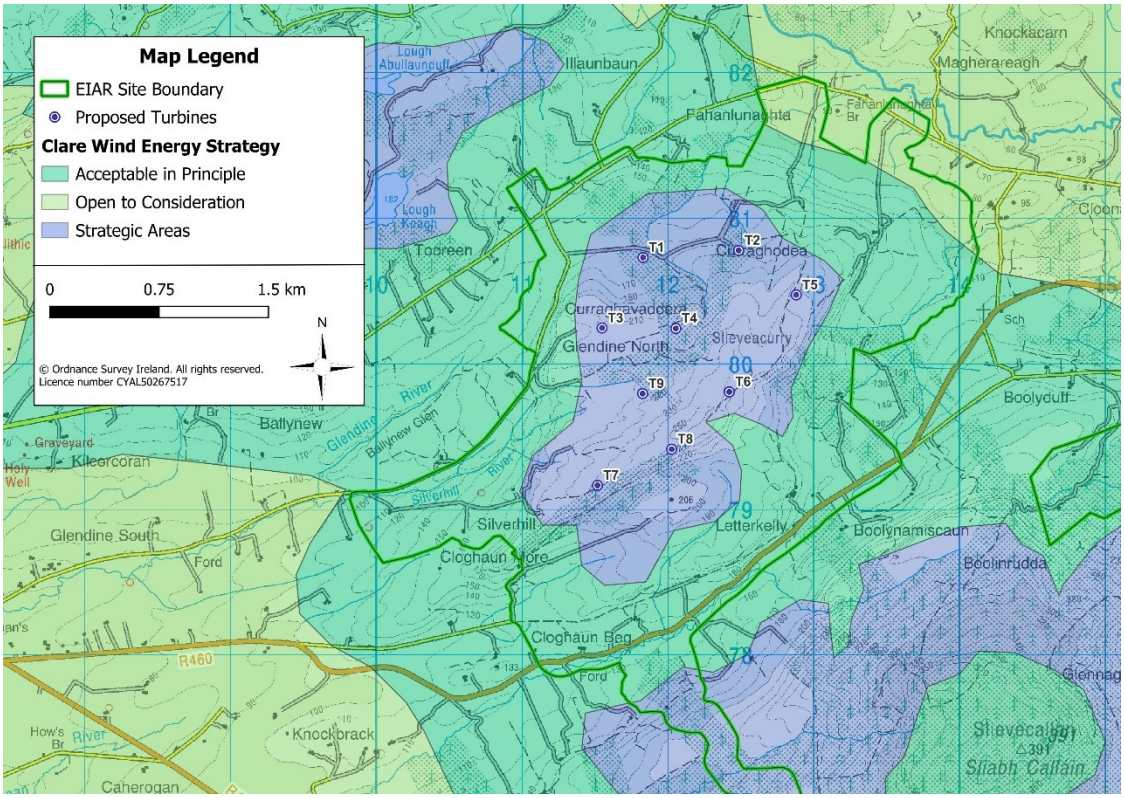


Figure 13-5 Proposed Turbines and EIAR Study Boundary relative to Wind Energy Strategy Designations

13.4.1.1.3 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) from the CWES

Table 4a in Section 4 of the CWES reports the general landscape capacity for wind energy developments across the county's different Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The LCAs in the LVIA Study Area are described further below in Section 13.4.1.1.4. All Proposed Turbines are located in LCA 17 – Sliabh Callan Upland. Table 4a is reproduced below in Figure 13-6.

Table 4a:
Strategic Guidance on Landscape Capacity for Wind Energy Developments

LCA's within areas designated as Strategic Areas					
LCA	**Overall Sensitivity to Wind Farm Developments**	**Appropriate size of wind farms (turbine numbers)**	**Capacity**	**LCTs in Co. Clare. LCA and Corresponding LCTs in 2006 Planning Guidelines**	**Cumulative Advice from 2006 Planning Guidelines**
Sliabh Callan This LCA encompasses upland hills and slopes of Sliabh Callan and Ben Dash	Medium to Low	Large	The rolling hills, low settlement, extensive plantations reduce the overall sensitivity of this LCA to wind farm development. The area could accommodate a number of large or medium wind farms subject to careful siting to avoid significant impacts on skylines. Potential Renewable Energy Generation for this area is 250 MW (Limerick Clare Energy Agency).	Upland Hills Moorland Hills Planning Guidelines: Moorland Mountain	Acceptable, depending on topography as well as siting and design of wind energy developments involved.

Figure 13-6 Reproduction of Table 4a from Section 4 of the CWES: 'Landscape Capacity of the Slieve Callan Upland LCA to Wind Energy Development'

The 'Overall sensitivity to Wind Farm Development' of LCA 17 – Sliabh Callan Upland is given a rating of 'Medium to Low', which is the lowest sensitivity designation/category by the CWES

attributable to LCAs in Co. Clare. Considering the local planning policy designations, this LCA is deemed to be of 'Low' sensitivity and capable of absorbing wind energy such as the Proposed Project.

Table 4a of the CWES also determines that the 'appropriate size of wind farms (turbine numbers)' in this LCA is rated as 'Large'. Section 1.4 of the CWES defines 'Large' as wind farms numbering 11 to 25 turbines and 'Medium' as wind farms numbering 6 to 10 turbines. In this regard, it is considered that the 9 No. Proposed Turbines are of a medium size, thus it is a development with the potential to be effectively absorbed by this LCA.

13.4.1.1.4 County Clare Landscape Character Assessment

The Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare discussed in Section 14.2.1 of Volume 1 of the CCDP, and the Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare 2004 identifies 26 Landscape Character Types (LCTs), which the CCDP describes as *"distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character"*. These are further subdivided into Landscape Character Areas (LCAs).

The CCDP sets out the following objectives in relation to LCAs:

> *"a) To encourage the utilisation of the Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare, the forthcoming Regional Landscape Strategy and other relevant landscape policy and guidelines and to have regard to them in the facilitation, protection and management of appropriate landscape change in County Clare"*

The LCACC designates areas of Co. Clare with two landscape classification scales:

- Landscape Character Types – *"Distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the County. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use"*.
- Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) – *"Units of the landscape that are geographically specific and have their own character and sense of place. Each LCA has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, land use, cultural, historical and ecological features"*.

The LCACC identifies 21 distinct LCAs. The Proposed Wind Farm Site is predominantly sited in LCA 17 – Sliabh Callan Uplands, while a small portion of the EIAR Site Boundary falls within LCA 16 – Cullenagh River Farmlands. LCA 17 has been given the following 'key characteristics':

- *"Land rises to moorland hills of Sliabh Callan and Ben Dash.*
- *Mix of pasture, silage and coniferous habitats.*
- *Very little settlement, concentrated along communication routes and in outer parts of the area.*
- *Areas become increasingly rural as one travels eastwards, away from the coast.*
- *Communications is aligned along valleys.*
- *Uplands very exposed, valleys contained but unenclosed. Long views south from Ben Dash towards Shannon Estuary".*

The section on landscape condition and sensitivity in the LCACC reports the landscape sensitivity of LCA 17 – Sliabh Callan Uplands. The LCACC was published in 2004 and describes landscape sensitivity for LCA 17, but does not have a specific sensitivity rating with respect to wind energy development. Whereas the CWES which was published more recently in 2013 and includes landscape sensitivity assessments specifically for wind energy development. Therefore, the CWES designation of this LCA as a 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development takes precedence over any 2004 sensitivity classifications in the LCACC in the context of this LVIA. As detailed above in Figure 13-6, the CWES designates this LCA as having a 'Medium to Low' sensitivity to wind farm development, the lowest sensitivity designation in Co. Clare, with 'Large' wind farms (11– 25 turbines) being of appropriate size. Overall this LCA 17 is given a 'Low' sensitivity rating in the impact assessments in this LVIA.

8 no. other Co. Clare LCAs are identified within the 15km LCA Study Area for assessment of effects on designated LCAs:

- LCA-1 Burren Uplands
- LCA-2 Low Burren
- LCA-3- Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch
- LCA-4 Fergus Loughlands
- LCA-15 Kilnamona High Drumlin Farmland
- LCA-16 Cullenagh River Farmlands
- LCA-19 Kilrush Farmland
- LCA-20 Malbay Coastal Farmland

These LCAs are mapped and further addressed below in Section 13.4.3. In that section, all designated LCAs are analysed using ZTV mapping (see Figure 13-12) to scope them in or out of assessment. All LCAs scoped in during the preliminary analysis are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 13-2: *LCA Assessment Table*.

13.4.1.1.5 Co. Clare Living Landscape Designations

In Chapter 14 of the CCDP, it is listed that one strategic aim is to:

> *"...implement the 'Clare's Living Landscapes' approach to landscape management and enhancement throughout the County".*

The CCDP identifies three types of 'Living Landscape', as follows:

- *"Settled Landscapes – areas where people live and work;*
- *Working Landscapes – intensively settled and developed areas within Settled Landscapes or areas with a unique natural resource;*
- *Heritage Landscapes – areas where natural and cultural heritage are given priority and where development is not precluded but happens more slowly and carefully"*

Co. Clare applies different objectives and protections to each Living Landscape designation. 'Heritage' landscape areas are considered the most sensitive landscapes, while 'Settled' and 'Working' landscapes are of lower sensitivity.

The Proposed Wind Farm Site is located in 'Settled Landscape'. Development in these Settled areas is guided by the development plan Objective CPD14.2, which is a general policy relating to sustainable development.

"CDP14. 2 It is an objective of Clare County Council:

To permit development in areas designated as 'settled landscapes' to sustain and enhance quality of life and residential amenity and promote economic activity subject to:

- *I. Conformity with all other relevant provisions of the Plan and the availability and protection of resources;*
- *II. Selection of appropriate sites in the first instance within this landscape, together with consideration of the details of siting and design which are directed towards minimising visual impacts;*
- *III. Regard being had to the need to avoid intrusion on scenic routes and on ridges or shorelines.*

Developments in these areas will be required to demonstrate:

- *a) That the site has been selected to avoid visual prominence*

- *b) That the site layouts avail of existing topography and vegetation to reduce visibility from scenic routes, walking trails, water bodies, public amenities and roads.*
- *c) That design of buildings and structures reduces visual impact through careful choice of forms, finishes and colours, and that any site works seek to reduce visual impact."*

Selection of the Proposed Wind Farm Site was led by the strategic zoning in the CCDP and the CWES, as well as the suitability of the large scale marginal upland landscape to accommodate the Proposed Turbines with appropriate setback distance from sensitive visual receptors. By nature wind energy developments are visually prominent, however, the Proposed Project has been designed in alignment with best practice siting and design guidance for mountain moorland landscape type, with the aim of minimising visual impacts on the surrounding settled landscape (see Section 13.4.2.5).

The three living landscape designations cover the entirety of Co. Clare, comprising a total area of approximately 3,450 km². 'Settled Landscape' comprises approximately 51.6% (1782 km2) of the entirety of Co. Clare, therefore this policy pertains to a large area and is very general in nature. Item C in Objective CDP11.47 of the CCDP cites that it is an objective of the plan to assess wind energy proposals with regard to the CWES. The CWES designates only 2.9% of Co. Clare as 'Strategic Areas' for wind energy development. Considering the trade-off in a spatial context between the clear and specific designations of the CWES (and Objective CDP11.47) and the very general policy objective of CDP14.2, the limited amount (2.9% of Co. Clare) of viable areas reserved as 'Strategic' must take precedence over policy designations and objectives for 'Settled Landscape' which comprises a vast area (51.6% of Co. Clare).

Co. Clare 'Heritage Landscape' is the most sensitive of the Living Landscape designations, comprising sensitive landscape areas such as The Burren and Lough Derg, as well as coastal areas such as the Atlantic coastal corridor and the Shannon Estuary. Development proposals within and in close proximity to these landscapes must be highly cognisant of potential landscape and visual impacts under policies in the CCDP.

In relation to wind energy development, the Co. Clare 'Heritage' landscapes generally mirror the 'Not Normally Permissible' areas designated in the CWES. Areas of Co. Clare 'Heritage' Landscapes in the LVIA Study Area are mapped in Figure 13-7 and include areas along the west coast corridor and around the Shannon Estuary. The impact of the Proposed Turbines upon these receptors are assessed later in this chapter. All policies relating to Living Landscapes place some form of protection with regards to intrusion upon designated Scenic Routes.

13.4.1.1.6 Protected Views and Prospects

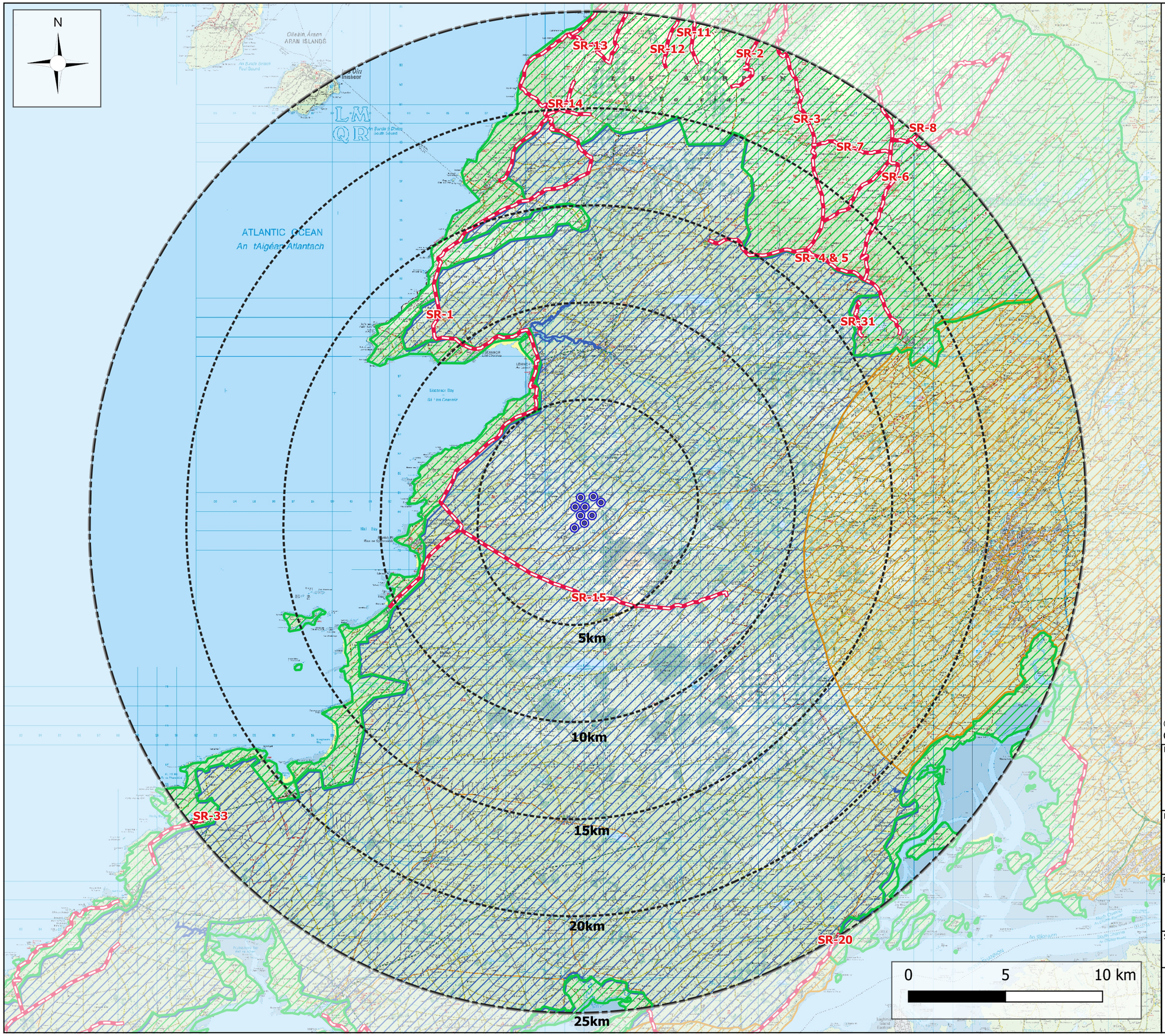
Section 14.5 of the CCDP outlines the county's objectives on views and prospects. The CCDP recognises the *"need to protect and conserve views adjoining public roads where these views are of high amenity value."* It does so through the designation of scenic routes, as outlined in maps in Volume 2 (Map C) and Appendix 5 of the CCDP.

The CCDP includes Objective CDP14.7 as the development plan objective relating to scenic routes, in which it is stated it is an objective of Clare County Council:

- *"To protect sensitive areas from inappropriate development while providing for development and change that will benefit the rural community;*
- *b) To ensure that proposed developments take into consideration their effects on views from the public road towards scenic features or areas and are designed and located to minimise their impact; and*
- *c) To ensure that appropriate standards of location, siting, design, finishing and landscaping are achieved."*

Designated CCDP Scenic Routes are listed in Appendix 5 of the CCDP, and those that are within the LVIA Study Area have been reproduced below in Figure 13-7.

There are 35 no. CCDP Scenic Routes across the county and 15 no. are located within the LVIA Study Area. The closest CCDP Scenic Route (No.15) is located 3km south from the nearest Proposed Turbine (T7). As these 15 no. scenic amenity designations are of a visual nature, they are comprehensively addressed in Section 13.5 of this Chapter – Visual Baseline, where ZTV mapping and on-site appraisals determine the likely visibility of the Proposed Turbines from each route.



Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbines
- CCDP Scenic Routes

'Living Landscapes' (CCDP 2023-2029)

- Heritage Landscapes
- Settled Landscapes
- Working Landscapes

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-7

Drawing Title

Policy Context Map

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:186,900	240718	14.04.2026	DM	JW

MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants

N

ATLANTIC OCEAN
An tAigéan Atlantach

SR-13
SR-11
SR-12
SR-2
SR-14
SR-3
SR-8
SR-7
SR-6
SR-4 & 5
SR-1
SR-31
SR-15
SR-33
SR-20

5km
10km
15km
20km
25km

0 5 10 km

Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbines
- CCDP Scenic Routes

'Living Landscapes' (CCDP 2023-2029)

- Heritage Landscapes
- Settled Landscapes
- Working Landscapes

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 1-3 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 4-6 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 7-9 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-8

Drawing Title

Policy Context Map with ZTV

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:185,600	240718	14.04.2026	DM	JW

MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants

13.4.2 Landscape Character of the Site

Landscape character refers to the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how people perceive this. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement, and creates the particular sense of place found in different areas.

13.4.2.1 Landscape Character of the Proposed Wind Farm Site

The Proposed Wind Farm Site was visited multiple times during 2024 and 2025, where an assessment of topography, drainage, landcover and land use was conducted in conjunction with other LVIA surveys. Information gathered during these visits have informed the following descriptions of the Proposed Wind Farm Site. The landscape character of the Proposed Grid Connection Site is discussed in Section 13.4.2.3 below.

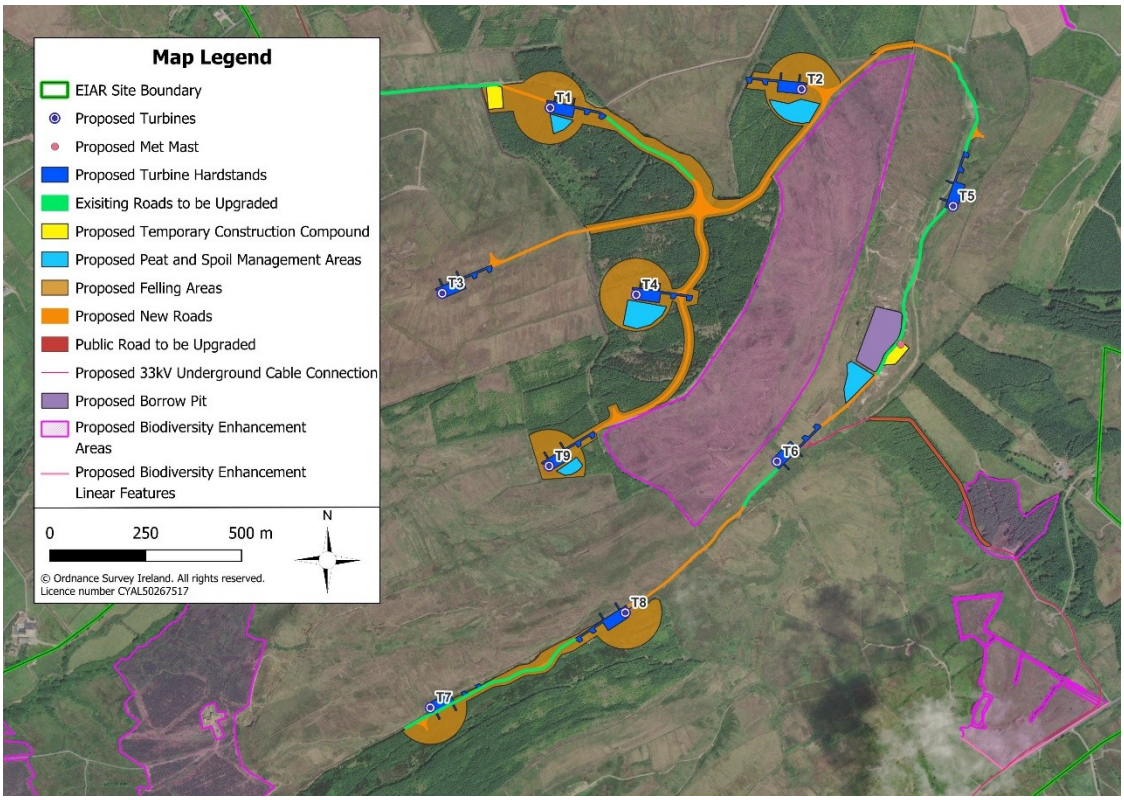


Figure 13-9 Aerial View of the Proposed Wind Farm Site

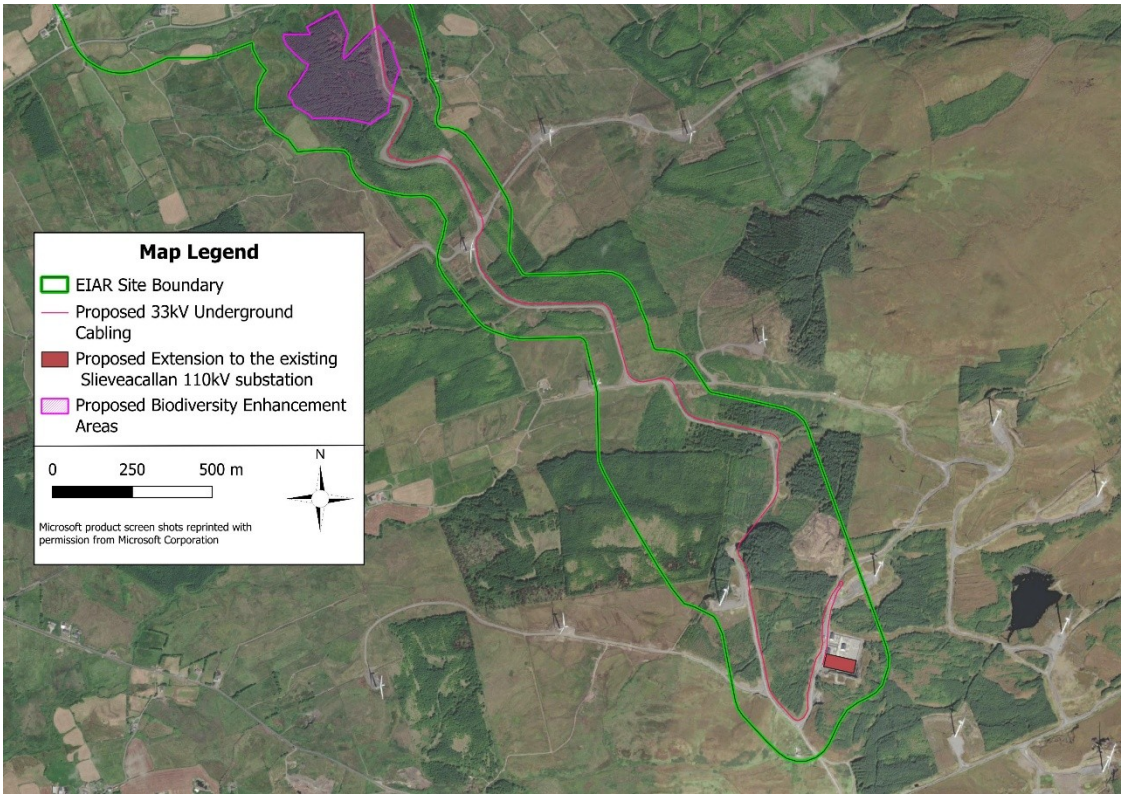


Figure 13-10 Aerial View of the Proposed Grid Connection Site

Landform and Drainage

The Proposed Wind Farm Site is located in an upland area of western County Clare (see Figure 13-9 above). The topography of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is hilly, with elevations ranging from 67 metres A.O.D at the EIAR Site Boundary to a central plateau of 260 metres A.O.D. As shown in Figure 13-11 below, a ridge of elevated land extends from the south-west of the Site to the north-east from Proposed Turbine T7 to T5. Proposed Turbines located to the north of the Proposed Wind Farm Site are located upon the central ridgeline (T3, T4, T5, T9). Proposed Turbines T1 and T2 are sited at a slightly lower elevation further north as the ridgeline slopes down to the north.

The northern and eastern sections of the Proposed Wind Farm Site are located within the Inagh drainage catchment, which drains to the Inagh River. This Inagh river flows north westerly towards the estuary at Liscannor Bay, north of Lahinch. The southern and western sections of the site are located within the Annagh drainage catchment. The western area of the site is drained by the Silverhill River, a tributary of the Glendine River, which then flows to the Annagh River. The watercourses in the southern section of the site drain to the Kildeema River, which also flows into the Annagh River. The Annagh river flows east to west, towards the coast.

Further detail on drainage of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is included in Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology.

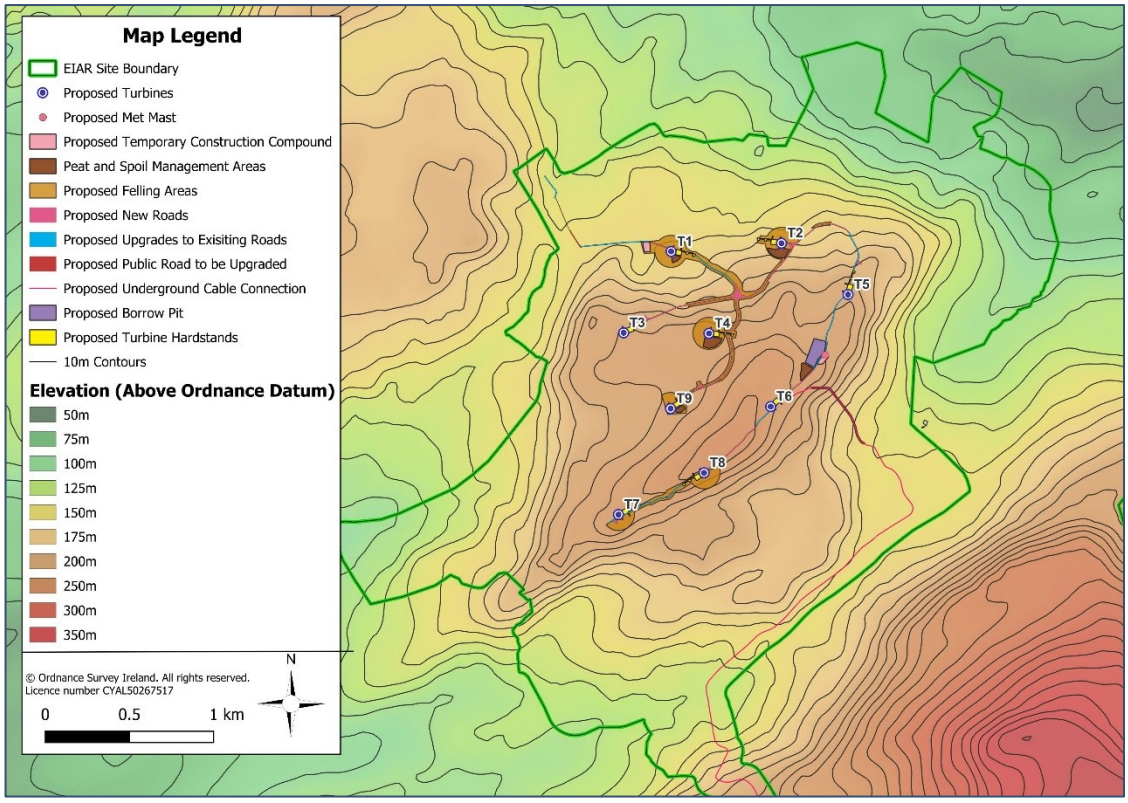


Figure 13-11 Topography of the Proposed Wind Farm Site

Landcover

Landcover is the term used to describe the combinations of vegetation and land-use that cover the land surface. It comprises the more detailed constituent parts of the landscape and encompasses both natural and man-made features.

Landcover on the Proposed Wind Farm Site and within the surrounding area comprises a mix of pasture, coniferous forest, peat bogs and transitional woodland scrub. As shown in both the aerial and topography maps above, the infrastructure of the Proposed Wind Farm is located on the most elevated lands within the EIAR Site Boundary characterised by moorland and conifer plantations. Excepting the Proposed Grid Connection Site, no infrastructure is proposed in the lower lying lands of more agricultural character. The majority of peatlands within the Proposed Wind Farm Site have been cut over at some time in the past and are now classified as cutover bog (see Plate 13-5).

Coniferous forestry is located primarily on the southern slopes, central plateau and northern section of the Proposed Wind Farm Site. Coniferous forestry is also a common landcover element in the wider area surrounding the Proposed Wind Farm Site, as shown in Plate 13-4. Plate 13-6 and Plate 13-7 which show views from the Proposed Wind farm Site towards the south-east and north-east.



Plate 13-4 Typical landcover on the Proposed Wind Farm Site; includes coniferous forestry and wet grassland



Plate 13-5 Cutover bog on the Proposed Wind Farm Site



Plate 13-6 View to the northeast from the Proposed Wind Farm Site, encompassing the north-eastern slopes of Slieve Callan



Plate 13-7 View to the northeast from the Proposed Wind Farm Site, showing coniferous forestry as a common landcover element within Proposed Wind Farm Site

Land Use

The Proposed Wind Farm Site is part of a rural working landscape, with forestry being the primary land-use in the uplands where the Proposed Wind Farm infrastructure is sited, with lower lying lands in the surrounding area comprising agricultural land uses. Man-made features within the wider landscape include roads, residential houses and farm buildings.

Man-made features on the Proposed Wind Farm Site include forestry access roads. The Proposed Project plans to upgrade the existing forestry roads or access tracks on the Proposed Wind Farm Site. Plate 13-8 and Plate 13-9, show forestry access roads, located in the north-western section of the Proposed Wind Farm Site.



Plate 13-8 Forestry access road in northwest section of the Proposed Wind Farm Site



Plate 13-9 Existing track in west section of the Proposed Wind Farm Site

Whilst there is a degree of visual enclosure provided by the conifer plantations on the Proposed Wind Farm Site, the Site as a whole is a relatively open and exposed landscape with large areas of open cutover peatland. It is a large scale, unpopulated upland landscape. From the elevated vantage point of the Proposed Wind Farm Site itself, there are expansive panoramic views out across the coastal plain to the south (such as seen in Plate 13-10 below), then across the undulating drumlins of the Inagh valley to the north, with views across to Slieve Callan and the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm to the east, as seen in Plate 13-6 previously.



Plate 13-10 Drone view facing southwest over the southwest section of the Slieveacurry ridgeline



Plate 13-11 View to the north from the Proposed Wind Farm Site, showing the views available across the undulating drumlins of the Inagh valley in the far distance



Plate 13-12 Drone view facing north over west slopes of the Slieveacurry ridgeline



Plate 13-13 View to the northwest from the Proposed Wind Farm Site, showing the landcover of Proposed Wind Farm Site and the far ranging views available from within the Proposed Wind Farm Site

The images above show the isolated and sparsely populated nature of the Proposed Wind Farm Site and also its large scale and mountain moorland character.

13.4.2.2 Landscape Value and Sensitivity of the Proposed Wind Farm Site Itself

The landscape sensitivity of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is determined by combining assessments of landscape value and susceptibility to change. Landscape value considers designations, landscape quality, scenic qualities, and other indicators of how the landscape is valued by society. Susceptibility considers the ability of the landscape to accommodate the proposed type of development without undue consequences for its character. Table 13-2 below assesses indicators of landscape value for the Proposed Wind Farm Site. The Proposed Wind Farm Site's susceptibility to change and overall sensitivity rating are then determined based on this assessment of value, the existing landscape character, and the nature of the Proposed Project.

Table 13-2 Indicators of Landscape Value on the Proposed Wind Farm Site

Features & Attributes of Landscape Value	Description
Landscape Designations	The Proposed Turbines are located in a 'Strategic Area' for Wind Energy Development in the Clare Wind Energy Strategy. The Proposed Wind Farm Site is located primarily within LCA 17 – Sliabh Callan Uplands. This LCA has the lowest sensitivity rating to windfarm development in local planning policy (CWES), and has the capacity to absorb large wind farms, such as the Proposed Project. The Proposed Turbines are located with a landscape designated as a 'Settled Landscape', a landscape comprising a network of farmlands and settlements. It is not located in Co. Clare Heritage Landscape.
Landscape Elements Quality / Condition	The condition of the landscape is Medium/Low, it has been impacted and strongly influenced by the presence of coniferous forestry plantations, turf cutting and working farmland. Areas of bog and moorland within the Proposed Wind Farm Site have been degraded by historical peat cutting operations.

Scenic / Aesthetic Qualities	The Proposed Wind Farm Site itself has some rural aesthetic qualities due to its remote siting within an upland landscape and open coastal views to the southwest of the Site. However, the human influence arising from a commercial forestry and historic cut-over peatland detracts somewhat from the aesthetic quality of the Proposed Wind Farm Site.
Perceptual Qualities (Tranquillity / Wilderness / Naturalness)	This refers to the present degree of human interference on the landscape of the Proposed Wind Farm Site. There is a sense of wildness associated with the relatively remote and unpopulated nature of this upland landscape. However, the Proposed Wind Farm Site is comprised of a highly managed area of coniferous forestry plantations, agricultural fields and boglands. Therefore, while there is a degree of wildness and naturalness, despite its natural elements, the Proposed Wind Farm Site is considered to be a landscape influenced by high levels of human modification and interference.
Rarity / Conservation Interests	As discussed in Chapter 7 of this EIAR, the Hen Harrier is an Annex I species of the EU Birds Directive, which have been observed foraging and roosting within the Proposed Wind Farm Site and in the wider area as a whole. Within the Proposed Wind Farm site there are Blanket Bogs and Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica teralix*, which were assessed as Annex I habitats of the EU Habitats Directive, and watercourses were assessed a Local Importance (higher value) to County Importance, as they support protected flora and fauna. Where possible, impacts on these conservation interests have been avoided and mitigated through the iterative design process, this is discussed further in Chapter 06 – *Biodiversity*.
Cultural Meaning / Associations	There are no cultural meanings or associations of significance associated with the landscape of the Proposed Wind Farm Site itself. There is one recorded monument (Stone Circle RMP CL031-052) located within the Proposed Wind Farm Site. The effect on this monument is discussed further in Chapter 14 – *Cultural Heritage*.
Recreational Values	The Proposed Wind Farm Site comprises privately owned land and is not used for any public recreational activities.

In consideration of the factors detailed in Table 13-2 above, the landscape value of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is deemed to be Low. While there are some scenic views from within the Proposed Wind Farm Site itself, it is predominantly located within a marginal, working upland landscape comprising privately owned lands. There is little to no recreational value to the Proposed Wind Farm Site itself, and it is a landscape which has undergone a degree of human modification due to current and historic land uses such as commercial forestry and historic peat extraction. It is a large scale and sparsely settled landscape of marginal upland in a 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development in local planning policy. In consideration of these factors, the susceptibility of the Proposed Wind Farm Site to the proposed change is considered 'Low.' On balance, the landscape sensitivity of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is deemed 'Low'. Considering the factors outlined above, the sensitivity of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is determined to be Low.

Landscape value and sensitivity of other areas of the Proposed Project such as the Proposed Grid Connection Site are deemed to be Low sensitivity.

13.4.2.3 Landscape Character and Sensitivity of the Proposed Grid Connection Site

As discussed in detail in Chapter 4, there is a proposed 33kV underground cable connecting the Proposed Wind Farm Site to a proposed extension of the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation in the townland of Knockalassa, located approximately 3.6km southeast from nearest Proposed Turbine. The proposed 33kV underground cabling travels approx. 7.1km, and follows local access roads, the R460 regional road, and passes through a tract of existing coniferous plantation, where a strip of felling is proposed to accommodate the development of the proposed 33kV underground cabling. This route traverses through a rural landscape, characterised by agricultural fields and residential areas.

The design of the proposed extension to the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation makes use of existing infrastructure within a tract of forestry, see Figure 13-10 previously. This location is enclosed and visually contained by landforms and existing forestry ensuring that the proposed substation extension will not be visible from nearby receptors such as the R474 regional road (CCDP Scenic Route 15).

13.4.2.4 Landscape Character and Sensitivity of the Proposed Enhancement Site

The Proposed Enhancement Site (approximately 172.7 hectares) includes 13 no. areas in which biodiversity management and enhancement measures are proposed, inclusive of hen harrier habitat enhancement. 1 no. area is located within the Proposed Wind Farm Site, and there are 4 no. separate areas of land proposed. These Proposed Enhancement Sites are comprised of agricultural lands and tracts of commercial forestry and are located on the southern and northern slopes of Slieve Callan. The character of the Proposed Enhancement Areas has been highly influenced and modified by the previous and existing land uses of commercial forestry and agricultural uses.

Measures for the agricultural fields include implementation of a rotational grazing scheme, planting of wildlife seed crop, hedgerow enhancement, scrub planting, cessation of fertiliser application and predator fencing. It is also proposed to permanently remove commercial forestry. This will create more biodiverse upland habitat for foraging hen harrier. Areas of patchy scrub will be planted in order to create a diversity of vegetation structures to provide cover and resources for hen harrier prey species. A detailed description of the proposed enhancement measures are included in Appendix 6-4 of this EIAR.

The Proposed Enhancement Areas are located within an area surrounded by existing farmland, commercial forestry and bogland, as discussed in Section 13.4.3 below. Sensitivity of these Proposed Enhancement Areas are deemed to be Low due to the landscape being modified for commercial forestry and agriculture.

13.4.2.5 Guidance for the Design of Wind Farms in Specific Landscape Types as per the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006)

This section considers the design of the Proposed Wind Farm Site relative to the siting and design guidance in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) with respect to specific landscape character types defined by the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006).

Section 6.9 (*6.10*) of the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) is called *'Landscape Character Types as a Basis for Guidelines'* and offers guidance for the siting and design specifically of wind energy developments in multiple landscape contexts, defining six landscape character types representing most situations where wind turbines may be proposed. These are:

- **'Mountain Moorland' – category selected by this assessment**

- 'Hilly and Flat Farmland'
- 'Flat Peatland'
- 'Transitional Marginal Landscape'
- 'Urban/Industrial'
- 'Coastal'

The guidance is intended to be indicative and general and notes that it represents the 'best fit' solutions to likely situations. The guidance notes that, in the case where a wind energy development is located in one landscape character type but is visible from another, it will be necessary to decide which of the landscape types more strongly influences the approach adopted for the LVIA. Based on information gathered during site visits (see previous section) and visualisations presented in the Photomontage Booklet, as well as from other mapping and imagery present in this Chapter, the Proposed Wind Farm Site was considered to be a cross between either 'Mountain Moorland' Landscape Character Type and/or 'Transitional Marginal' Landscape Character Type.

Site visits determined that the Proposed Wind Farm Site exhibits characteristics of both Mountain Moorland and Transitional Marginal landscapes, the entire visual unit(s) in which the Proposed Turbines are viewed in should be taken into consideration (the Guidelines DoEHLG, 2006, page 46). The wider landscape context of the upland areas where the infrastructure is sited and the extensive, unenclosed character of the Mountain Moorland of the Proposed Wind Farm Site more strongly influences the approach to siting and design. Therefore, the siting and design guidance for Mountain Moorland landscape type has been applied, as it best reflects the landscape of the Proposed Wind Farm Site and the visual unit(s) in which it is viewed in.

13.4.2.5.1 Mountain Moorland Landscape

The key characteristic of the 'Mountain Mooreland' landscape character type as stated in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) are:

- *'Peaked, ridged or rolling mountains and upland with steep sides or gently formed valleys;*
- *Generally unenclosed;*
- *Landcover comprising blanket bog, a mottling of heather, wild grasses and some rush in wet flushes; and*
- *A landscape type of relative remoteness and often comprising pristine, unspoilt and remote landscapes'.*

Siting and design guidance for the following six considerations of this landscape type according to the Guidelines and with respect to the Proposed Wind Farm Site are outlined below: location, spatial extent, spacing, layout, height and cumulative effect. All relevant 'guidance' quotations shown below are taken from the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).

Location

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) :

> *"It may be acceptable to locate wind energy developments on ridges and peaks. They may also be appropriate, in certain instances, in a saddle between two peaks where they will be partially contained or "framed". A third acceptable location is lower down on sweeping mountainsides."*

In terms of location, in accordance with the guidance quoted above, all Proposed Turbines are strategically sited on ridges and peaks of mountain moorland and are clearly separated visually from the complexity of lower ground. Siting for the infrastructure (including turbines) of the Proposed Wind Farm Site at its current location has resulted in sufficient distance from the greatest number of receptors

within the nearby area. In terms of separation distance, the Proposed Turbines are also set-back a reasonable distance from third-party properties, adhering to the recommended 4-times-tip-height set-back distance from the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).

Spatial Extent

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006):

> *"Given the typical extensive areas of continuous unenclosed ground, larger wind energy developments can generally be accommodated because they correspond in terms of scale. However the spatial extent of a wind energy development would need to be reduced where a suggestion of smaller scale is provided by nearby landscape features."*

The receiving landscape is of a large scale, comprising areas of continuous unenclosed upland where larger wind farms can be accommodated. The Proposed Project includes 9 No. Proposed Turbines which is deemed appropriate given the corresponding scale of the upland area.

Spacing

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006):

> *"All spacing options are usually acceptable. Where a wind energy development is clearly visible on a crest or ridge there is considerable scope to vary the rhythm, though on simple ridges, regular spacing may be more appropriate. On sweeping and continuously even areas of mountain moorland or upland plateaux regular spacing may be most desirable."*

In terms of spacing, the visual unit in which the Proposed Turbines will be visible within are on a relatively exposed ridge, therefore, the relatively regular spacing but slightly varied rhythm of the Proposed Turbines is suitable and appropriate for a mountain moorland site such as this.

Layout

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006):

> *"All layout options are usually acceptable. However, the best solutions would either be a random layout, and clustered where located on hills and ridges (fig 1(a)), or a grid layout on sweeping and continuously even areas of moorland or plateaux (fig 1(b)). Where a wind energy development is close to a linear element, such as a river, road or long escarpment, a corresponding linear layout or staggered line might be most desirable."*

In terms of layout, the Proposed Turbines, are arranged in a clustered layout around the peaked ridgelines of the Proposed Wind Farm Site, in accordance with the guidance quoted above.

Height

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006):

> *"There would generally be no height restrictions on mountain moorlands as the scale of landscape is so great. However, shorter turbines may be more appropriate where they are located on small peaks and outcrops in order to maintain an appropriate scale. Profile, whether even or uneven, is dependent on topography: the more rugged and undulating (e.g., knolls and crags) the more uneven it will be. The profile of the wind energy development should not necessarily run in parallel to that of the topography."*

In terms of height, the Proposed Turbines are sited across relatively open and extensive upper ground, where they are appropriately scaled relative to the receiving landscape and its topographical features located within it, in accordance with the guidance quoted above.

Cumulative Effect

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) :

> *"The open expanse of such landscapes can absorb a number of wind energy developments, depending on their proximity. The cumulative impact will also depend on the actual visual complexity of landform, whether steeply rolling, undulating or gently sweeping. The more varied and undulating an area is topographically, the greater its ability to absorb and screen wind energy developments. The aesthetic effect of wind energy developments in these landscapes is acceptable where each one is discrete, standing in relative isolation."*

The Proposed Wind Farm Site and wider landscape setting is considered to be of large scale, with landscape characteristics capable of absorbing the Proposed Project and other cumulative developments. This LVIA includes a comprehensive assessment of potential cumulative landscape and visual effects arising from the two turbine clusters, and also in combination with all other relevant existing, permitted and proposed wind energy developments in the LVIA Study Area.

13.4.3 The Wider Landscape Setting: Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Designated LCAs

The wider landscape setting from 5-25km surrounding the Proposed Turbines comprises a variety of landscape types and characteristics. A large proportion of the wider landscape is predominantly a settled rural landscape strongly influenced by agricultural land uses, with the western areas of the LVIA Study Area strongly influenced by the dramatic Atlantic coastline. The Proposed Turbines are sited in a strip of upland landscape which extends to the coastline to the north-west of the Proposed Wind Farm Site and then to the southeast towards and beyond Slieve Callan, and Ben Dash where it forms part of the larger Sliabh Callan Uplands LCA. This is an elevated region featuring hills and well-defined ridgelines, along with expansive plateaus in certain areas. This area of the landscape to the south and south-east is largely covered by extensive coniferous plantations, interspersed with blanket bog and marshy regions, it is an area strongly influenced by existing wind energy development. In the lower lying areas to the north and south of the LVIA Study Area, it is a rolling agricultural landscape of rural settlements with a scattered rural population. To the west of the Proposed Turbines, the landscape is rolling farmland of lower elevation, that extends towards the coastal 'Heritage Landscape' of County Clare. The Cliffs of Moher, part of the UNESCO Global Geopark, is located in the north of the LVIA Study Area, as well as the unique karst landscape of the Burren.

13.4.3.1 LCA Preliminary Analysis

This section provides initial analysis of designated LCAs from the county-level policy Landscape Character Assessments. As discussed in Section 13.4.1.1.4 previously, 9 no. Landscape Character Areas have been identified within the LCA Study Area (15km Study Area for assessment of designated LCAs). Following preliminary assessment, 5 no. LCAs in the 15km LCA Study Area were scoped in for assessment in this LVIA. The comprehensive assessment is detailed in Appendix 13-2: LCA Impact Assessment:

- LCA 3: Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch
- LCA 15: Kilnamona High Drumlin Farmland
- LCA 16: Cullenagh River Farmlands
- LCA 17: Sliabh Callan Uplands
- LCA 20: Malbay Coastal Farmland

In addition, 4 no. LCAs have been scoped out of further assessment where it is considered there will be no potential significant impacts to occur on their key characteristics and landscape sensitivities, due to limited visibility of the Proposed Turbines, set back distance, or a combination of these factors:

- LCA 1: Burren Uplands
- LCA 2: Low Burren
- LCA 4: Fergus Loughlands
- LCA 19: Kilrush Farmland

All LCAs identified within the 15km LCA Study Area are mapped below in Figure 13-12 to indicate theoretical visibility from within the landscape areas. Table 13-3 lists the preliminary analysis and scoping of each LCA and rationale for scoping out individual LCAs from further assessment.

Table 13-3 Preliminary Assessment of LCAs in the LCA Study

Map Ref.	LCA	Theoretical Visibility from ZTV Mapping	Actual Visibility	Scoped In
LCA-1	Burren Uplands	Yes	The Proposed Turbines are visible as very small elements within the background of the views from this LCA.	No - There is a very small part of this LCA that falls within the LCA Study Area, there will be no significant impact on its key characteristics.
LCA-2	Low Burren	Primarily no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines. There will be a full theoretical visibility (TV) from a small area in the southwest corner of this LCA, located approximately 10.6km north of the Proposed Turbines.	Where the few patches TV is indicated in these, there is visibility towards the Proposed Turbines available.	No
LCA-3	Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch	Primarily full TV beyond 10km from the Proposed Turbines. There is a slither of no TV around 5km from the Proposed Turbines LCA	There are few tall screening factors, which allows wide ranging visibility over the landscape, including towards the Proposed Turbines.	Yes.
LCA-4	Fergus Loughlands	Primarily no TV, only a very small portion of this LCA that falls within the LCA Study Area has full TV.	Visibility is far less than indicated by the ZTV Map, owing to distance from the Proposed Turbines and visual screening	No

			by the undulating landscape.	
LCA-15	Kilnamona High Drumlin Farmland	There is large patches of full theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines indicated within this LCA, with areas of no theoretical visibility indicated further east and south in this LCA.	Actual visibility only found in open and elevated locations.	Yes
LCA-16	Cullenagh River Farmlands	Area of full theoretical visibility within 5km of the Proposed Turbines; Partial or no theoretical visibility to the east and south	Actual visibility only found in open and elevated locations. Limited visibility found in the Cullenagh River Valley	Yes
LCA-17	Sliabh Callan Uplands	Contains all Proposed Turbines. Primarily full theoretical visibility within 5km from the Proposed Turbines with small pockets of no visibility. Theoretical visibility reduces beyond 5km.	Visibility will be greatest within 5km of the Proposed Turbines. Beyond 5km there is intermittent to limited visibility on relatively flat landscapes with the majority of the actual visibility coming from elevated vantage points.	Yes
LCA 19	Kilrush Farmlands	Mainly no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines from this LCA. There is small patches of full theoretical visibility and minor areas of partial theoretical visibility at the fringes of the LCA Study Area.	Mature vegetation along roadsides and within adjoining fields provide screening from some areas where TV is indicated. Where there is no screening the Proposed Turbines appear as miniature elements in the background.	No There is only a small portion of this LCA with theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines, and TV is indicated at the fringes of the LCA Study Area. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the Proposed Turbines will effect this LCA
LCA 20	Malbay Coastal Farmland	Primarily full theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines throughout this LCA. There is an area in the	This is a relatively flat landscape where absence of roadside vegetations allows longer ranging views	Yes

		north of this LCA that has no TV and some minor areas of partial TV just within 5km of the Proposed Turbines indicated immediately west of the Proposed Turbines. Small patches of no TV are indicated within LCA-20 beyond 5km south from the Proposed Turbines.	across it, including in the direction of the Proposed Turbines.	

A detailed description of the LCAs scoped in for further assessment (Table 13-3) and the likely effects on landscape character as a result of the Proposed Turbines are presented in the Landscape Character Assessment Tables that form Appendix 13-2. A summary of landscape effects on these LCAs are reported in Section 13.7.3 of this chapter - Operational Phase Effects.

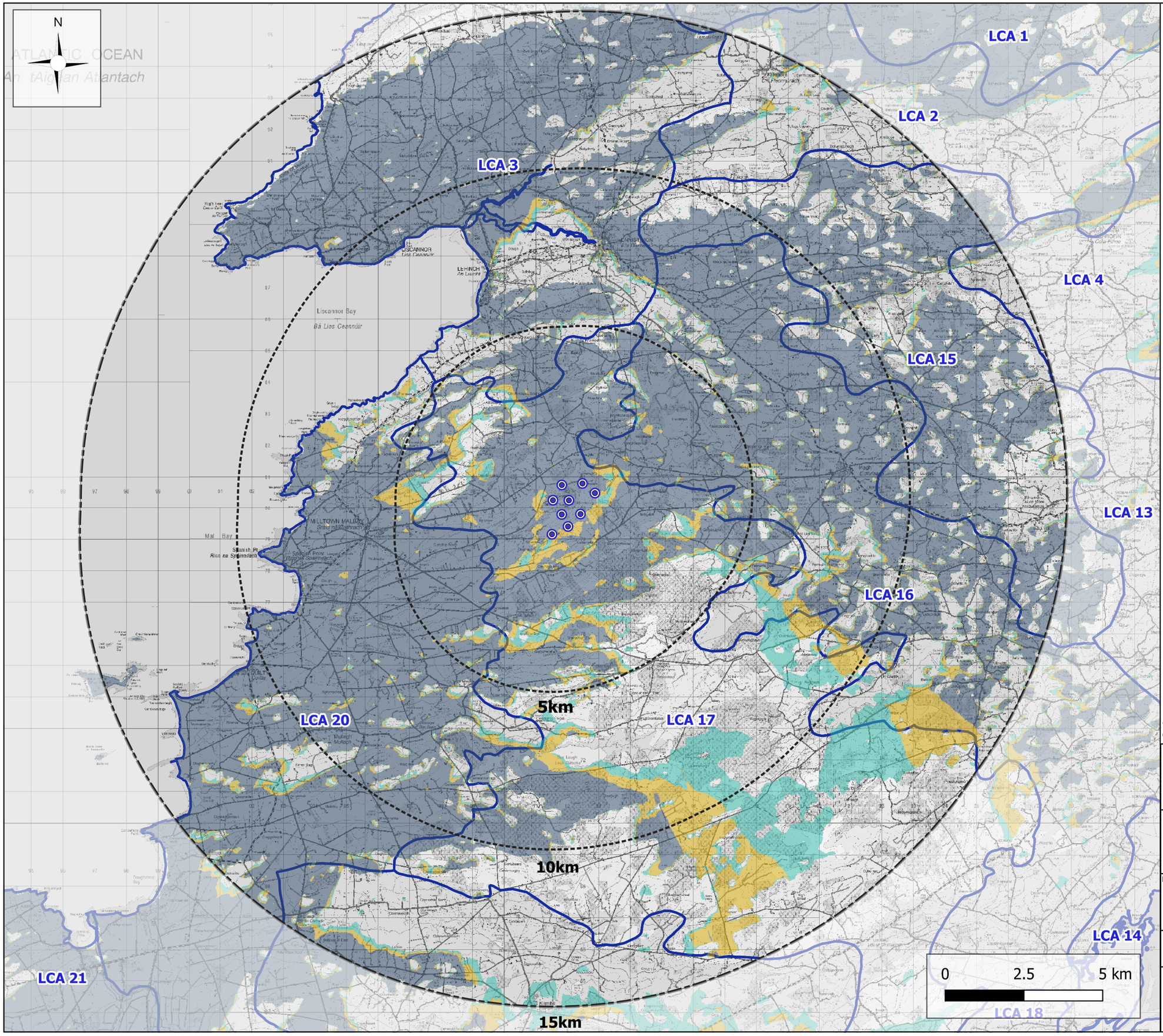
13.4.3.2 Preliminary Assessment – Other Landscape Receptors

Apart from the LCAs identified above, a number of additional landscape receptors have been identified in the preceding sections. These are mapped Figure 13-7 and listed in Table 13-4 below, along with a description of theoretical visibility from each receptor, as indicated by the ZTV in Figure 13-8. Potential visibility of the Proposed Turbines was appraised during site surveys (conducted in the years 2024 and 2025) from all receptors with very limited or partial theoretical visibility. The ZTV and on-site visibility appraisals determine which landscape receptors are scoped-in for full assessment later in this chapter, the results are noted in Section 13.7.

Table 13-4 Landscape Receptors within 25km of the Proposed Turbines

Name	Theoretical Visibility (TV) as indicated by the ZTV	Actual Visibility	Scoped In
The Coast - CCDP Heritage Landscape	There is primarily full theoretical visibility within this Heritage Landscape. No theoretical visibility is indicated in areas immediately to the northwest within 10km, and further north beyond 15km.	Visibility is likely to occur from elevated and exposed portions of this landscape receptor.	Yes
Fergus Estuary and River Shannon - CCDP Heritage Landscape	To the south along the River Shannon there are patches of full TV indicated within this landscape receptor. To the east along the Fergus Estuary there is no TV indicated within this landscape receptor.	At this distance, the Proposed Turbines, if visible, will appear as small elements in the distant background. Significant effects on landscape character of this Heritage Landscape and visual	No

		effects not likely to occur.	
Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark	Primarily full TV indicated where this landscape receptor falls within the LVIA Study Area. TV is limited further north along the coast.	Visibility is likely to occur from elevated and exposed portions of this landscape receptor	Yes



Map Legend

- LCA Study Area
- Proposed Turbines
- Co. Clare LCAs
  - LCA 1: Burren Uplands
  - LCA 2: Low Burren
  - LCA 3: Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch
  - LCA 4: Fergus Loughlands
  - LCA 15: Kilnamona High Drumlin Farmland
  - LCA 16: Cullenagh River Farmlands
  - LCA 17:Slieve Callan Uplands
  - LCA 19: Kilrush Farmlandss
  - LCA 20: Malbay Coastal Farmland

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 1-3 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 4-6 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 7-9 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-12

Drawing Title

Landscape Character Areas with ZTV

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:114,500	240718	03.03.2026	DM	JW

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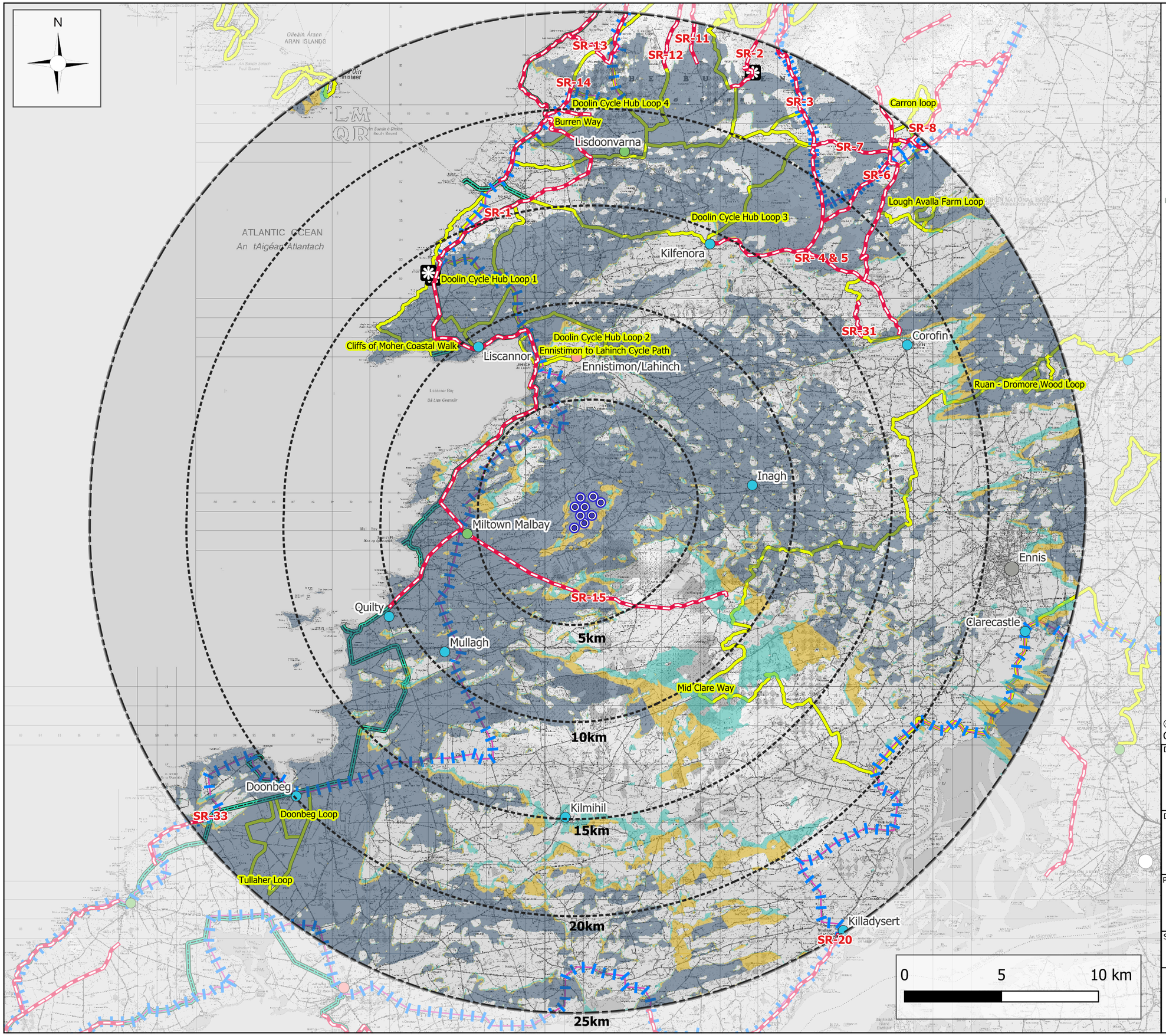
13.5 Visual Baseline

The 'Visual Baseline' exercise identifies the key visual receptors to be considered for assessment within the 25km LVIA Study Area, having utilised ZTV mapping, on-site visibility appraisals and desk study to scope receptors in/out of further assessment. The Visual Baseline map is shown below in Figure 13-13.

The key visual receptors identified for assessment in the visual baseline exercise are represented by 'Viewpoints'. Viewpoints are locations from which visual effects are assessed using photomontages (see Appendix 13-1: *LVIA Methodology*, Section 1.6: Photomontage Visualisations). To this end, the following visual receptors have been identified within the LVIA Study Area and are presented in this section:

- Designated Scenic Routes;
- Tailte Éireann Viewing Areas;
- Settlements;
- Recreational Routes and Trails, including:
    - Waymarked Walking Routes;
    - Cycle Routes;
    - Scenic Drives and Tourist Routes;
- Recreational, Cultural Heritage & Tourist Destinations;
- Residential Receptors:
    - See below Section 13.5.3: Visual Amenity from Residential Receptors.
- Transport Routes;

Below, Figure 13-13 presents the visual baseline map overlain with the ZTV. All receptors are listed in the tables in the following sections along with theoretical visibility at those locations indicated by the ZTV. During site visits conducted in 2024 and 2025, the likely visibility of the Proposed Turbines was appraised from receptors where the ZTV indicated theoretical visibility. In the case of there being either no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines, or where on-site appraisal determined visibility of the Proposed Turbines to be very unlikely or very limited, visual receptors were scoped out from further assessment. Where appropriate, the specific reasons for scoping out a receptor are included in the tables below. In some cases, specific receptors are scoped out where there is no potential for significant visual effects to occur on account of combination of factors such as distance, visual screening and the nature and sensitivity of the receptors at a particular location. Where appropriate, the specific reasons for scoping out a receptor are included in the tables below.



Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbines
- Clare Scenic Routes
- OSi Viewing Points

Recreational Routes

- EuroLevo Route
- Waymarked Trails
- The Wild Atlantic Way

Co. Clare Settlement Hierarchy

- Ennis
- Service Town
- Small Town
- Large Village

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 1-3 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 4-6 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 7-9 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-13

Drawing Title

Visual Baseline & ZTV Map

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:186,400	240718	30.04.2026	DM	JW

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13.5.1 Visual Receptors

The following subsections present the scoping tables for visual receptors, including designated Scenic Routes and Views; Tailte Éireann Viewing Areas; Settlements; Recreational Routes; Cultural Heritage, Recreational & Tourist Destinations; prominent Transport Routes.

13.5.1.1 Designated Scenic Routes

A total of 15 no. CCDP Scenic Routes are existent within the LVIA Study Area. Below, Table 13-5 displays the scoping of all identified receptors (scoped in or out for assessment), along with a description of each item, the direction of view indicated by the policy documents and whether it is directed towards the Proposed Turbines, the nature of theoretical visibility, and whether the receptor was scoped in for assessment.

Table 13-5 Designated Scenic Routes

Scenic Route	Description (CCDP 2023-2029)	Location in relation to the Proposed Turbines	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In for Assessment
Up to 5km				
SR15	R474 from Connolly to Miltown Malbay	Approx. 5km south of the nearest Proposed Turbine.	Primarily full theoretical visibility within 10km of the Proposed Turbines, with an extent of no theoretical visibility to the southeast.	Yes
5 to 10km				
SR1	Coast Road from County boundary (along the Kinvarra Road) to Quilty including the R479 spur to Doolin	Approx. 5km northwest of the nearest Proposed Turbine.	Stretch of full theoretical visibility within 15km of the Proposed Turbines. There is a large extent of no theoretical visibility 15km to 25km	Yes
10 to 15km				
SR 4 & 5	R476 from Leamaneh Castle to Corofin *(*Same description for both Scenic Routes in the CCDP)*	Approx. 14.7km northeast of the nearest Proposed Turbine.	Full theoretical visibility indicated along short section of this Scenic Route	No Given that there is primarily no Theoretical Visibility indicated along this Scenic Route

15 to 20km				
SR3	R480 from Ballyvaughan to Leamaneh Castle	Approx. 16.8km northeast of the nearest Proposed Turbine.	Primarily full theoretical visibility indicated along the southern portion of this Scenic Route	Yes
SR6	Series of roads from junction of R476 through Parkabinnia to Castletown and south west to Seshymore, northwards from Carran through Rannagh townland	Approx. 17.8km northeast of the nearest Proposed Turbine.	Primarily full theoretical visibility indicated along this Scenic Route	Yes
SR14	Series of roads from junction at Ballynalacken Castle through townlands of Ballynalacken, Carrownacleary, Ballynahown, Poulnagun and Cloughan	Approx. 19.7km north of the nearest Proposed Turbine	Theoretical Visibility along a short part of this Scenic Route	No Given the set-back distance from the Proposed Turbines, and the key scenic amenity is in the opposite direction overlooking the Atlantic Coast
SR31	Wood Road, Corofin	Approx. 15.9km northeast of the nearest Proposed Turbine	No Theoretical Visibility	No
20 to 25km				
SR-2	N67 from Ballyvaughan to Corkscrew Hill	Approx. 22.3km north of the nearest Proposed Turbine	Primarily no Theoretical Visibility	No Given the set-back distance from the Proposed Turbines, and the key scenic amenity is in the opposite direction
SR-7	Road from Caherconnell to Carran	Approx. 21.4km northeast of the nearest Proposed Turbine	Full Theoretical Visibility along a short part of this Scenic Route	No Given the set-back distance from the Proposed Turbines

SR-8	Series of roads from Carran through Fahee South, north to Glencolmcille south, northwards to Keelhilla (cross), westwards through Pullagh, Coolnatullagh and Coskeam to Fahee South	Approx. 24km northeast of the nearest Proposed Turbine	Primarily no Theoretical Visibility	No Given the set-back distance from the Proposed Turbines, and very limited Theoretical Visibility
SR-11	From junction at Fanore and R477 south eastwards to Lislareenbeg	Approx. 23km southwest of the nearest Proposed Turbine	Full Theoretical Visibility along a short part of this Scenic Route that falls within the LVIA Study Area	No Given the set-back distance from the Proposed Turbines, and the small stretch of this Scenic Route that falls within the LVIA Study Area
SR-12	From road junction Formoyle east, southwards to Lismorahaun	Approx. 22.5km north of the nearest Proposed Turbine	No Theoretical Visibility	No
SR-20	R473 from outside Labasheeda to T-junction before Kiladysert	Approx. 24.9km southwest of the nearest Proposed Turbine	No Theoretical Visibility	No
SR-33	Road running west from Bealaha Bridge as far as its junction with the N67	Approx. 24.5km southwest of the nearest Proposed Turbine	Partial Theoretical Visibility	No Given the set-back distance from the Proposed Turbines, and the small stretch of this Scenic Route that falls within the LVIA Study Area

13.5.1.2 Tailte Éireann Viewing Areas

According to the Tailte Éireann maps, 3 no. Tailte Éireann Viewing Areas were identified within the LVIA Study Area; these are described in the table below.

Below, Table 13-6 displays the scoping of all identified views, along with a description of the view, the direction of view indicated by the Tailte Éireann data and whether it is directed towards the Proposed Turbines, the nature of theoretical visibility, and whether the receptor was scoped in for assessment.

Table 13-6 Tailte Éireann Viewing Areas

Map Ref.	Description	Direction and Range of View	Directed to Turbines?	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
10 to 15km					
#90	Tailte Éireann Viewing Area located along the Burren Way at the Cliffs of Mohr.	West to Southwest	No	None	No
#175	Tailte Éireann Viewing Area located near O'Brien's Tower at the Cliffs of Moher.	View is focused to the west south over the Cliff of Moher.	No	None	No
20 to 25km					
#16	Tailte Éireann Viewing Area located at Corkscrew Hill	View is focused to the north over Corkscrew Hill	No	None	No

13.5.1.3 Settlements

In order to identify which settlements within the LVIA Study Area should be considered for viewpoint selection, the settlement hierarchy set out in the CCDP was consulted. The settlement hierarchy ranks settlements from the County Town/Hub of Ennis, down to service towns, small towns and large villages as listed in Table 3.1, Chapter 3 of the CCDP. Small Villages and Clusters were precluded from the visual baseline due to both their abundance and their insignificance in comparison to other prominent visual receptors. The settlements that are located within the LVIA Study Area are outlined in Table 13-7.

Table 13-7 Co Clare Settlement Hierarchy within the LVIA Study Area

Settlement	County Settlement Hierarchy	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
Up to 10km			
Ennistimon	Service Town	Theoretical Visibility primarily indicated, with an area of No Theoretical Visibility to the west of the town	Yes

Lahinch	Service Town	Theoretical Visibility is limited to the central and southern portion of the town	Yes
Miltown Malbay	Small Town	Full Theoretical Visibility	Yes
Mullagh	Large Village	Full Theoretical Visibility	Yes
Liscannor	Large Village	Full Theoretical Visibility	Yes
Inagh	Large Village	Full Theoretical Visibility	Yes
10 to 15km			
Quilty	Large Village	Full Theoretical Visibility	Yes
Kilmihil	Large Village	Primarily No Theoretical Visibility	No
Kilfenora	Large Village	Primarily No Theoretical Visibility	No
15 to 20km			
Lisdoonvarna	Small Town	Full Theoretical Visibility	Yes
Corofin	Large Village	Primarily No Theoretical Visibility	No
Doonbeg	Large Village	Full Theoretical Visibility	Yes
20 to 25km			
Ennis	County Town/Hub	Primarily No Theoretical Visibility	No
Clarecastle	Large Village	No Theoretical Visibility	No
Killadysert	Large Village	No Theoretical Visibility	No

13.5.1.4 Recreational Routes

Recreational routes are sensitive receptors as people are likely to be using them in a recreational capacity where there is high value on views as well as the scenic amenities of the landscape. The term recreational routes encompass the following:

- Waymarked walking routes (Source – Sport Ireland Designated Trails)
- Cycle routes (Source – Sport Ireland Designated Cycle Routes)
- Scenic drives and tourist routes (e.g., the Wild Atlantic Way)

Routes were identified and located within the LVIA Study Area by examination of Tailte Éireann maps and online sources such as: Sportireland.ie/outdoors/Irelands-trails. Many routes existing of differing scale and prominence are located within the LVIA Study Area, only recreational routes of county or national importance were included in this LVIA. The routes are shown on Figure 13-13 and are listed in Table 13-8 below, along with theoretical visibility distributed upon each route by ZTV mapping.

Table 13-8 Recreational Routes within the LVIA Study Area

Route Name	Description	Theoretical Visibility	Actual Visibility	Scoped In
Up to 5km				
Eurovelo	Designated Cycling Route	Primarily full Theoretical Visibility indicated within 5km and beyond in the south of the LVIA Study Area. To the north (beyond 10km) there is primarily no TV indicated.	Visibility of the Proposed Turbines likely to occur	Yes
5 to 10km				
The Wild Atlantic Way	Tourist Route	Primarily full Theoretical Visibility indicated within 5km and beyond in the south of the LVIA Study Area. To the north (beyond 10km) there is primarily no TV indicated.	There is visibility of the Proposed Turbines from elevated vantage points on the Wild Atlantic Way	Yes
Mid Clare Way	Waymarked Walking Route	Pockets of full TV indicated along a short sections of the route. Primarily intermittent and no TV indicated.	Intermittent visibility of the Proposed Turbines.	No
Burren Way	Waymarked Walking Route that comprises of many walking routes over a great distance around Clare	Full TV indicated within 15km of the Proposed Turbines.	Mix of partial, full and no actual visibility	Yes
Doolin Cycle Hub Loop 2	Waymarked Cycle Route	Full TV indicated within 15km of the Proposed Turbines, with stretches of no theoretical visibility	Mix of full and no actual visibility	Yes
Ennistimon to Lehinch Cycle Path	Waymarked Cycle Route	No TV along nearly full length of this route. TV indicated within the service town of Ennistimon.	The built up environment of Ennistimon screens views towards the Proposed Turbines where TV is indicated.	No

10 to 15km				
Doolin Cycle Hub Loop 1	Waymarked Cycle Route	Full TV indicated along the southern portion of this route, with no theoretical visibility on northern sections	Mix of full and no actual visibility	Yes
Doolin Cycle Hub Loop 3	Waymarked Cycle Route	Mix of both Full TV and no theoretical visibility indicated	Mix of full and no actual visibility	Yes
Doolin Cycle Hub Loop 4	Waymarked Cycle Route	Mix of both Full TV and no theoretical visibility indicated	Mix of full and no actual visibility	Yes
15 to 20km				
Tullaher Loop	Waymarked Walking Route	Full TV indicated	The flat landscape allows for wide-ranging views across the landscape in all directions, where there is limited roadside vegetation.	No. Given the setback distance of this route
Doonbeg Loop	Waymarked Walking Route	Full TV indicated	The flat landscape allows for wide-ranging views across the landscape in all directions, where there is limited roadside vegetation.	No. Given the setback distance of this route
20 to 25km				
Lough Avalla Farm Loop	Waymarked Walking Route	Primarily Full TV indicated	The elevated karst landscape this trail is located allows for relatively open views over the landscape. Some parts of this walk is screened by hedges, reducing visibility over the landscape.	No. Given the setback distance of this route

Ruan – Dunmore Wood Loop	Waymarked Walking Route	Primarily Full TV indicated	This walking loop is sited within Dunmore Woods where screening from vegetation will prevent visibility towards the Proposed Turbines.	No
Carron Loop	Waymarked Walking Route	Primarily No TV indicated	No visibility	No

13.5.1.5 Recreational, Cultural Heritage and Tourism Destinations

Popular recreational, cultural heritage and tourist destinations were identified in the LVIA Study Area through a desktop exploration of localised tourism plans as well as considering the most popular tourism destinations in County Clare listed on Tripadvisor.ie (and other similar websites).

The impact assessment in this chapter considers the effects of the Proposed Project on cultural heritage receptors from the perspective of a visitor to a site, monument, or heritage landscape. In this regard, only prominent and popular cultural heritage receptors are identified in the visual baseline exercise. A comprehensive description and assessment of all cultural heritage receptors are assessed in Chapter 14 of this EIAR– Cultural Heritage.

Prominent outdoor tourism, recreational destinations and cultural heritage destinations identified within the LVIA study area are listed below in Table 13-9.

Table 13-9 Recreational, Cultural Heritage and Tourist Destinations

Tourist Destination	Description	Theoretical Visibility	Actual Visibility	Scoped In
Up to 10km				
Lahinch Beach	An Taisce (2019) designated Blue Flag Beach with bathing waters of Good Quality Status. Frequent recreational surfing amenity occurs at this beach	Yes	At the southern end of the of the beach the built-up environment of Lahinch screens views towards the Proposed Turbines. At the northern end of the beach there are more open views southwards towards the Proposed Turbines.	Yes
Spanish Point Beach	An Taisce (2019) designated Blue Flag Beach with bathing waters of Good Quality Status.	Very limited partial TV on the edges of the beach.	The higher elevated ground behind the beach as well as some residential dwellings reduce actual visibility	No

			towards the Proposed Turbines.	
White Strand Beach (near Miltown Malbay)	An Taisce (2019) designated Blue Flag Beach with bathing waters of Good Quality Status.	Partial TV indicated at the northern extent of the beach, no TV towards the southern end.	Small residential units at this beach reduce any visibility from this beach.	No
10 to 15km				
Clahane Viewing Point	Viewing Point over Liscannor Bay along the Wild Atlantic Way	Yes	Mostly open views across the bay and landscape.	Yes
Cliffs of Moher	UNESCO Global Geopark. Tourism amenities at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.	Yes	Trails along the Cliffs of Moher will have visibility towards the Proposed Turbines.	Yes
Hags Head	Natural landmark and unique rock formation. A popular destination at the southern extent of the Cliffs of Moher.	Yes	Locations at the elevated points at this head will have panoramic views, including in the direction of the Proposed Turbines.	No Views are focused north along the coastline towards the Cliffs of Moher and out towards the Aran Islands, in the opposite direction of the Proposed Turbines
15 to 20km				
Dysert O'Dea Castle and Archaeology Centre	A restored 15th Century Castle surrounded by heritage walking trails at many archaeological sites.	No	None	No
White Strand Beach (near Doonbeg)	An Taisce (2019) designated Blue Flag Beach with bathing waters of Good Quality Status.	Yes	Viewed as minor elements in background.	No.

20 to 25km				
Burren National Park	A designated area of natural beauty located at the southeastern part of the Burren, with way-marked trails.	Mainly full TV with patches of no TV indicated	Visibility is available where indicated, although vegetation along sections of some trails and roads provide visual screening in the direction of the Proposed Turbines.	Yes

13.5.1.6 Transport Routes

Motorways, national primary roads and national secondary roads within the LVIA Study Area were investigated via desktop analysis. Transport routes are not typically considered to represent receptors of high sensitivity. Therefore, the potential for 'Significant' visual effects is only likely to occur for transport routes in close proximity to the Site where the magnitude change is likely to be greater. Consideration is also given to the number of receptors travelling these routes (as per GLVIA3 guidance). In mind of this, only prominent high-trafficked transport routes such as national roads and motorways are considered to 25km and only regional roads within 10km (excepting outer regional roads overlapping with a designated scenic route) are considered in the visual baseline exercise. The visual baseline exercise determined that most visibility of the Proposed Turbines will occur within 5km of them. Therefore, regional roads within 5km were included in this preliminary analysis scoping exercise of transport routes.

Table 13-10 below lists all identified transport routes, describes the geographical extent of theoretical visibility upon each route as illustrated by ZTV mapping, and indicates whether the receptor was scoped in for assessment. The road types are prefixed as follows: regional (R), national (N), motorway (M).

Table 13-10 Major Transport Routes within the LVIA Study Area

Transport Route	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
Up to 5km		
R460	Mostly full theoretical visibility up to 14km from the Proposed Turbines. Beyond 14km there is mainly no TV.	Yes
R474	The stretch of this road immediately south and southwest of the Proposed Turbines experiences mainly full TV. Beyond 5km from the Proposed Turbines there is predominantly no TV.	Yes
5 to 10km		
N67	Full TV from most sections of this route southwest of the site, and patches north of the site where there are greater stretches of no TV.	Yes
N85	Mostly full theoretical visibility up to 13km from the Proposed Turbines. Beyond 13km east there is mainly no TV.	Yes
R478	Full TV is indicated from Lahinch up until the Cliffs of Moher, and no TV indicated from here up to the outskirts of Lisdoonvarna	Yes

R481	Mostly no TV and a relatively short stretch full TV around 10km from the Proposed Turbines.	No
R482	Mostly full TV.	Yes
10 to 15km		
R476	Within 10km there is mainly no TV with a shorth stretch of partial TV northeast of Kilfenora. Between Lisdoonvarna and Kilfenora there is mainly full TV with an area of no TV indicated north of Kilfenora. Between Kilfenora and Corrofin this regional road passes through a greater area of no TV with some stretches of full TV. To the west of the site, between Corrofin and the junction with the N85 National Road, there is no TV along this regional road	No
R483	Within 10km there is predominantly full TV indicated along this regional road. Beyond 15km this regional road passes through areas of predominantly full TV and also areas of no TV.	No
R484	To the western extent of this relatively short stretch of regional road there is mostly full TV indicated. As this road extends in an easterly direction it passes through greater areas indicated as having partial and no TV.	No
15 to 20km		
N68	There is predominantly no TV along this route, with only some full TV indicated beyond 20km south of the site.	No
20 to 25km		
M18	This national road passes through areas indicated as having full TV and through patches of no TV.	No

13.5.2 Visual Receptors Preliminary Assessment

After identifying all visual receptors in the LVIA Study Area, the preliminary analysis was carried out to determine the likely visibility of the Proposed Turbines using ZTV mapping and on-site visibility appraisals, as reported in the tables of the previous sections. Following this, the final list of visual receptors was selected for further assessment as part of this LVIA using viewpoint selection and photomontage visualisation analysis. Viewpoints are explained below in Section 13.5.4 - Photomontage Viewpoint Selection.

Below, Table 13-11 presents the final list of visual receptors selected for assessment in this LVIA and identifies the viewpoint number(s) (indicated by 'VP') representative of that receptor.

*Table 13-11 Visual Receptors Scoped **In** for Assessment*

Visual Receptor	Description	Viewpoint (VP) No.
CCDP Scenic Routes	SR1	VP07; VP08; VP12; VP14;
	SR3	VP01

	SR6	VP01
	SR15	VP04; VP09.
Settlements	Ennistimon	VP11
	Doonbeg	VP06
	Inagh	VP02
	Lahinch	VP12
	Lisdoonvarna	VP15
	Miltown Malbay	VP09
	Mullagh	VP05
	Quilty	VP07
Recreational Routes	EuroVelo	VP05, VP09, VP12
	The Wild Atlantic Way	VP06, 07, 08, 12, 13, 14
	Burren Way	VP 12, 13, 14, 01
	Doolin Cycle Hub Routes	VP11, 12, 13, 14, 15
Recreational, Tourism and Cultural Heritage Destinations	Lahinch Beach	VP12
	Cliffs of Moher	VP14
	Burren National Park	VP01
	Clahane Viewing Area	VP13
Transport Routes	N67	VP07, VP08, VP11, VP15
	N85	VP02
	R460	VP02, VP03, VP07, VP08, VP16, VP17
	R474	VP04, VP09
	R478	VP12, VP14
	R482	VP08

Visual Receptors Scoped Out

ZTV mapping and visibility appraisals conducted on-site during 2024 and 2025 were used to inform the analysis and scope out visual receptors from further assessment. Some of the visual receptors identified

in the Visual Baseline were excluded due to the very limited visibility of the Proposed Turbines, as determined by ZTV mapping as well as onsite appraisals of each visual receptor location. In some cases, the factor of distance to the Proposed Wind Farm Site as well as the directional focus of views was included in the preliminary analysis and was a contributing factor in excluding these locations from being selected as viewpoints. Visual receptors that are not mentioned above in Table 13-11 have been excluded from further assessment.

13.5.3 Visual Amenity from Residential Receptors

During multiple surveys conducted during 2024 and 2025, visibility appraisals determined that most visibility of the Proposed Turbines will occur within 5km of the Proposed Turbines. It is a settled landscape and residential housing is organised along the local road network. Some residential receptors located in close proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm Site will likely have views of the Proposed Turbines and are likely to have the greatest visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Project.

In light of this, several photomontage viewpoint locations representing residential properties located in close proximity to the Proposed Turbines were selected for inclusion in the Photomontage Booklet and are assessed in Appendix 13-3: *Photomontage Assessment Tables*, as well as discussed later in this Chapter.

The following representative viewpoints (VPs) and are located in proximity to residential receptors and small settlement centres within 5km from the Proposed Turbines.

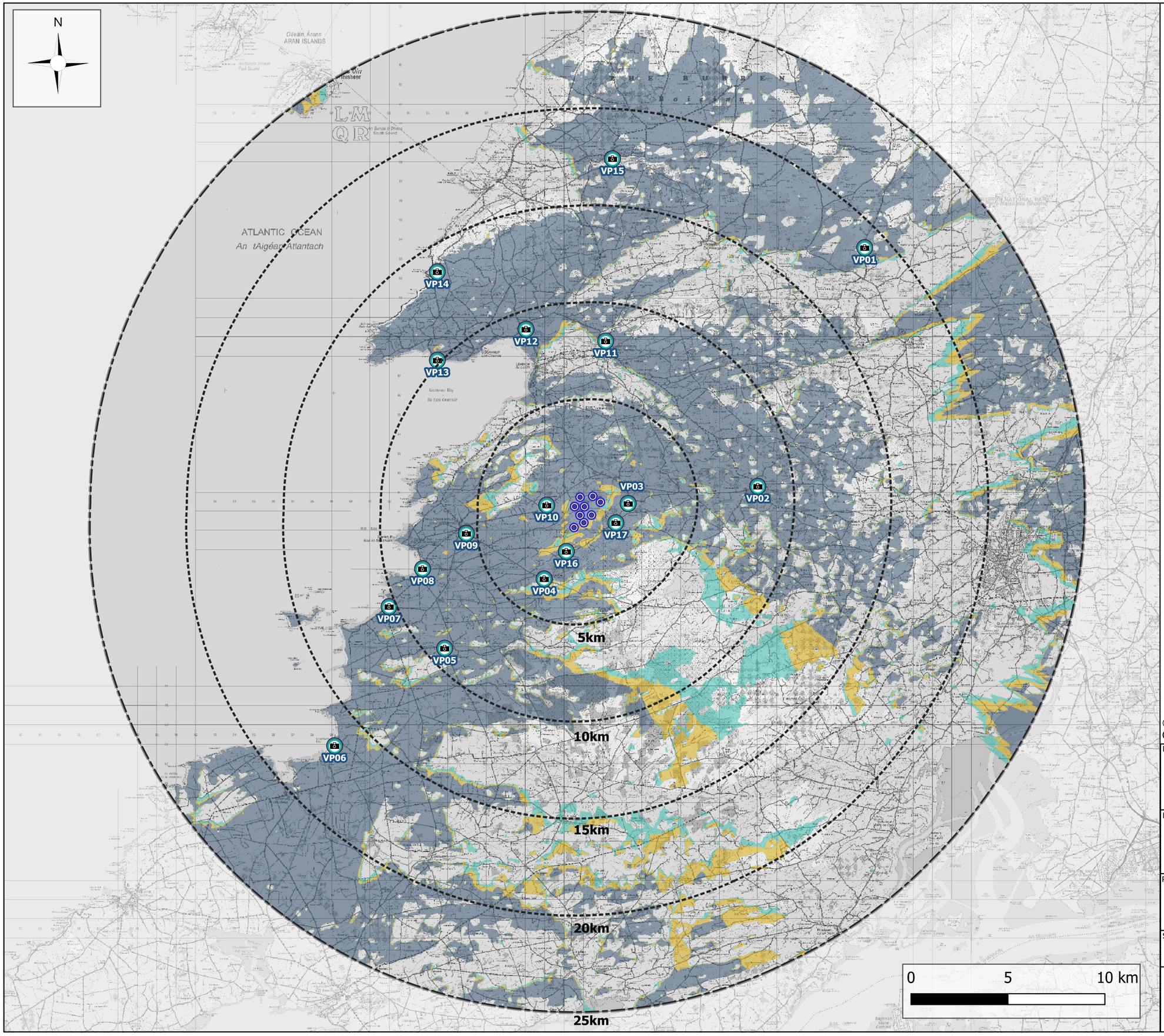
- VP03 - Cloonanaha townland
- VP04 – Doonsallagh East townland
- VP10 – Tooreen townland
- VP16 - Doonsallagh East townland (bordering the townland of Cloghaun Beg)
- VP17 - Boolynamiscaun townland

13.5.4 Photomontage Viewpoint Selection

Photomontage imagery was captured from multiple viewpoint locations in the LVIA Study Area; from these, a total of 17 no. photomontage viewpoints were selected for full assessment (named VP01–VP17). These are mapped below in Figure 13-14 (marked as white/green icons) and presented in the Photomontage Booklet accompanying this report. All VPs are comprehensively assessed in Section 13.7.3.4.2: Photomontage Assessment Outcomes.

Imagery captured from each viewpoint was used to assess the significance of visual effects arising from the Proposed Turbines from each viewpoint location. The viewpoint locations are representative of all visual receptors; in some instances, imagery was not captured directly at a visual receptor but from another location in close proximity to the receptor, from which there was a superior line of sight towards the Proposed Turbines (e.g. a point of higher elevation or a position with less visual screening).

The likely 'Significant' visual effects of the Proposed Turbines arising from each viewpoint location are reported below in Section 13.7.3.1.1. The comprehensive and detailed assessment is presented within the viewpoint (photomontage) impact assessment tables in Appendix 13-3: *Photomontage Assessment Tables.*



Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbines
- Proposed Viewpoints

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 1-3 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 4-6 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 7-9 No. Turbines Theoretically Visible

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-14

Drawing Title

ZTV with Photomontage Viewpoints

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:186,000	240718	14.04.2026	DM	JW

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13.6 Cumulative Context

All wind farm developments in the LVIA Study Area are identified in this section and each is categorised as one of the following:

- **Existing** – Wind energy developments that are currently operational in the baseline landscape at the time of conducting this LVIA;
- **Permitted** – Wind energy developments that are permitted (consented) at the time of conducting this LVIA. These developments have a high probability of being operational in a future receiving environment;
- **Proposed** – All well-developed wind farm proposals with project specifications in the public domain at the time of conducting this LVIA. Cumulative effects between the Proposed Turbines and other proposed developments within this category are inherently uncertain and are reliant on the outcome of the planning and consenting system (amongst other factors).

A description of the various cumulative categories are presented in the Photomontage Booklet and comprehensively reported on in Appendix 13-1: *LVIA Methodology* (Section 1.6: Photomontage Visualisations). The above categories are a useful guide to enable understanding and structure when viewing the Photomontage Booklet and identification of the developments listed in this section. However, irrespective of how a development is categorised, the assessments of cumulative landscape and visual effects include all other wind farm developments.

The effects reported both in this Chapter and within the assessment appendices (Appendix 13-2: *LCA Assessment Table*s and Appendix 13-3: *Photomontage Assessment Tables*) uses appropriate and logical narrative to discuss cumulative interactions between the Proposed Wind Farm Site and all other wind energy developments irrespective of which category they occur. Whilst the categories provide clarity in the presentation of visuals with respect to the scope of potential development in this landscape, discussion of cumulative interactions on specific landscape and visual receptors is relative to the effects on each receptor and is proportionate to the likelihood of significant landscape and visual effects occurring on that receptor.

In terms of cumulative landscape and visual effects, only other wind energy projects have been considered, as only these development types can be described as having very tall, vertical elements in the landscape (i.e. turbines) and therefore have the most potential to give rise to 'Significant' cumulative landscape and visual effects. These other wind energy developments within 25km of the Proposed Turbines were identified by searching past planning applications lodged through the online planning portals of relevant planning authorities (i.e. An Coimisiún Pleanála, Clare County Council).

The information identified in the initial planning search was then used to verify, by means of a desk-based study and ground-truthing, whether the permitted wind energy developments had been constructed. The list of existing, permitted, and proposed wind turbines present within the LVIA Study Area are listed below in Table 13-12.

Table 13-12 Cumulative Wind Farms identified in the LVIA Study Area

Other Wind Farms	Status	No. of Turbines	Distance from Nearest Proposed Turbine
Up to 5km			
Slievecallan	Existing	29	1.8km southeast from Proposed Turbine T8

Other Wind Farms	Status	No. of Turbines	Distance from Nearest Proposed Turbine
Illaunbaun	Proposed	6	1.5km northwest from Proposed Turbine T3
5 to 10km			
Booltiagh I	Existing	12	9.2km southeast from Proposed Turbine T8
Booltiagh Extension	Existing	6	8.6km southeast from Proposed Turbine T8
Cahermurphy (T1, T2, T4)	Existing	3	9.8km south from Proposed Turbine T7
Cahermurphy (T3)	Existing	1	9.5km south from Proposed Turbine T7
Cahermurphy II	Proposed	10	9.75km south from Proposed Turbine T7
Cahermurphy West	Proposed	8	9.95km south from Proposed Turbine T7
10 to 15km			
Letteragh	Existing	6	10.9km southeast from Proposed Turbine T7
Glenmore	Existing	12	11.1km south from Proposed Turbine T7
Kiltumper	Existing	2	11.6km south from Proposed Turbine T7
Boolynagleragh	Existing	9	13.1km southeast from Proposed Turbine T6
Boolynagleragh Extension	Existing	7	13.9km southeast from Proposed Turbine T6
15 to 20km			
Crossmore	Existing	7	18.1km south from Proposed Turbine T7
20 to 25km			
Tullabrack	Existing	6	22.1km southwest from Proposed Turbine T7
Cloonkett	Proposed	14	20.1km southeast from Proposed Turbine T7
Moanmore	Existing	7	23.1km southwest from Proposed Turbine T7.
Ballykett	Permitted	4	23km southwest from Proposed Turbine T7

Within the LVIA Study Area (25km radius), 12 no. existing, 1 no. permitted and 4 no. proposed wind farms have been identified. The locations of the 17 no.* wind farms can be identified in Figure 13-15: Cumulative Context Map (below). In cases where turbines of these wind farms are theoretically visible from the selected 17 no. photomontage viewpoints selected for this LVIA, the turbines are modelled and rendered within the 'Proposed View' photomontage imagery in the Photomontage Booklet.

**It is noted that the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm comprises 2 no. separate applications comprising a 5 no. turbine wind farm and a singular turbine. However, for the purposes of this EIAR these will be assessed as one 6 no. turbine wind farm.*

**The proposed Cahermurphy II Wind Farm and proposed Cahermurphy West Wind Farm have been proposed within the same site under two separate planning applications. Only one of these developments could form part of the cumulative landscape context in a potential future receiving environment. For the purposes of the cumulative assessment, proposed Cahermurphy II Wind Farm has been adopted as the assessed scenario, as it comprises a greater number of turbines (10 no.), and therefore represents a reasonable worst-case in terms of potential cumulative effects. As such, the proposed Cahermurphy II Wind Farm forms the basis of the cumulative assessment.*

13.6.1 Cumulative Context and Theoretical Visibility

Below, Figure 13-16 compares the cumulative theoretical visibility of all existing, permitted, and proposed wind farms, as well as theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines, and the subsequent Figure 13-16 shows the same map overlain with a newly calculated ZTV for cumulative effects.

The legend of Figure 13-16 shows the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines and cumulative turbines for each corresponding colour, as follows:

- Teal: Only the Proposed Turbines are theoretically visible;
- Yellow: Only turbines from existing, permitted and other proposed wind farms are theoretically visible;
- Grey: All cumulative turbines are theoretically visible, including the Proposed Turbines and all other existing, permitted and other proposed wind farms.

On Figure 13-16, the small pockets of teal colour on the ZTV map illustrate that the Proposed Project, on its own, adds very little additional theoretical visibility of turbines across the landscape within the LVIA Study Area. The theoretical visibility of cumulative turbines alone covers the majority of the LVIA Study Area, with interspersed patches where both the Proposed Turbines and cumulative wind farms are theoretically visible together.

As noted previously, the ZTV does not account for localised undulations in topography or other screening factors; as such, the actual visibility from areas of lowland vegetated landscape is likely to be far less than is indicated by the ZTV. Whilst the cumulative ZTV is a useful tool to aid assessment of cumulative effects and identify areas of non-visibility where certain cumulative impacts will not occur, its utility is limited.

It should be emphasised that, in general, photomontages are a more informative tool than the Cumulative ZTV for assessing the potential cumulative landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Turbines (refer to GLVIA3, LI & IEMA, 2013, p.129, para.7.30); the likely cumulative visual effects as shown in photomontages are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 13-3: *Photomontage Assessment Tables*.

Detailed discussions of cumulative landscape and visual effects are included below in Section 13.7.3.8: Discussion of Cumulative Visual Effects. The likely cumulative landscape effects are assessed in the landscape character assessment tables in Appendix 13-2: *LCA Assessment Tables*, and the likely cumulative visual effects are assessed in the photomontage assessment tables in Appendix 13-3: *Photomontage Assessment Tables*.

The assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects must be proportional, meaning that the focus of the assessment is on the extent to which the Proposed Project (individual clusters and turbines as a whole) contributes toward cumulative effects on the particular receptors under assessment; these contributions are clearly explained in the narrative on cumulative impact assessment included in this Chapter (Section 13.7.3.6) as well as in the impact assessment Appendices (Appendix 13-2 and Appendix 13-3).

N

ATLANTIC OCEAN
An tAigéan Atlantach

5km
10km
15km
20km
25km

0 5 10 km

Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbines

Cumulative Wind Farms

- Ballykett Wind Farm — Permitted
- Booltiagh Wind Farm — Existing
- Boolynagleragh Wind Farm — Existing
- Cahermurphy II Wind Farm — Proposed
- Cahermurphy Wind Farm — Existing
- Cloonkett Wind Farm — Proposed
- Crossmore Wind Farm — Existing
- Glenmore Wind Farm — Existing
- Illaunbaun Wind Farm — Proposed
- Kiltumper Wind Farm — Existing
- Letteragh Wind Farm — Existing
- Moanmore Wind Farm — Existing
- Slievecallan Wind Farm — Existing
- Tullabrack Wind Farm — Existing

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-15

Drawing Title

Cumulative Context Map

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:186,200	240718	12.03.2026	DM	JW

MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants

N

ATLANTIC OCEAN
An tAigéan Atlantach

5km
10km
15km
20km
25km

0 5 10 km

Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbines

Cumulative Wind Farms

- Ballykett Wind Farm — Permitted
- Booltiagh Wind Farm — Existing
- Boolynagleragh Wind Farm — Existing
- Cahermurphy II Wind Farm — Proposed
- Cahermurphy Wind Farm — Existing
- Cloonkett Wind Farm — Proposed
- Crossmore Wind Farm — Existing
- Glenmore Wind Farm — Existing
- Illaunbaun Wind Farm — Proposed
- Kiltumper Wind Farm — Existing
- Letteragh Wind Farm — Existing
- Moanmore Wind Farm — Existing
- Slievecallan Wind Farm — Existing
- Tullabrack Wind Farm — Existing

Comparative Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- Only Proposed Turbines Theoretical Visible
- Only Cumulative Turbines Theoretically Visible
- All Turbines Theoretically Visible

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-16

Drawing Title

Cumulative Comparative ZTV Map

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:186,200	240718	12.03.2026	DM	JW

MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants

13.7 Likely Significant Landscape and Visual Effects

Based on the analysis of landscape and visual baseline information reported above in this Chapter, combined with considerations of the cumulative effects with other wind farms, this section reports the landscape and visual effects likely to occur during all three phases of the Proposed Project:

- Construction phase;
- Operational phase;
- Decommissioning phase.

In addition, this section summarises the outcomes of LCA and photomontage impact assessments (refer to Appendix 13-2 and Appendix 13-3, respectively). A comprehensive description of the guidance and methodology used for the assessment of landscape and visual effects are included in Appendix 13-1: *LVIA Methodology*, along with information about the photomontages as a tool used to inform the impact assessment, including their limitations (Appendix 13-1, Section 1.6.5: Limitations of Photomontage Visualisation).

13.7.1 'Do-Nothing' Scenario

If the Proposed Project was not to proceed, no changes would be made to the current land-use practice of commercial forestry. The future receiving landscape is likely to continue evolving gradually in line with existing land use and management practices. Small-scale agriculture and commercial forestry practices in the area would continue to be managed under their existing farming practices and commercial forestry arrangements. The public road network would remain unaltered. Should this occur, the landscape and visual impact would be neutral in the context of this EIAR.

In implementing the 'Do-Nothing' alternative, the opportunity to capture a significant amount of County Clare's renewable energy resource would be lost, as would the opportunity to contributing to meeting Government's as well as the European Union's (EU) targets for the production and consumption of electricity from renewable resources and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, as this application includes a Biodiversity Management Enhancement Plan (BMEP) to be implemented during the development's operation, the opportunity to enhance the Site for biodiversity, via a structured implementation and monitoring plan, at a local scale, would also be lost.

13.7.2 Construction Phase Effects

It is estimated that the construction phase of the Proposed Project will last between 18-24 months – Short-Term (EPA, 2022). The construction of the Proposed Project will involve the construction of 9 No. Proposed Turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 175m and all associated works, and the Proposed Grid Connection Site.

Construction phase effects will also include the associated effects resulting from the movement of construction and turbine transport vehicles into and out of the Proposed Wind Farm Site, to allow the construction of the turbines, roads, and associated elements.

All landscape and visual effects during the construction phase are deemed to be 'Short-Term' and 'Negative'.

13.7.2.1 Landscape Effects (Construction Phase)

Associated earthworks such as the cut and fill required to facilitate the construction of the Proposed Project will have a direct effect on the landscape and have the greatest potential for landscape effects. Where excavation is required, the existing landcover, vegetation and spoil will be removed during the construction phase. In most instances, groundworks and excavation trenches will be re-installed upon the completion of construction.

The construction activities may potentially cause temporary impacts on the landscape such as the creation of temporary structures, dust, soil erosion and alterations to drainage. It is considered that the construction phase will have a 'Moderate', 'Short-term', 'Negative' effect in terms of direct landscape effects.

The construction works will be Short Term and completed as soon as practically possible. All construction activities will follow best practise methods to reduce impacts upon the environment and landscape of the Proposed Wind Farm Site. Further details are set forth in the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) contained in Appendix 4-5 of this EIAR.

Proposed Grid Connection Site

The proposed 33kV cabling will be underground; therefore, the greatest landscape effects attributed to this element of the Proposed Project will occur during the construction phase only, as the landscape is materially altered to allow the underground installation. The majority of cable route works are to be carried out along the existing R460 regional road, as well as local access roads. The construction phase of the proposed 33kV underground cable connection will be temporary, localised, and transient in nature, as the works proceed along the cable route. The works will include roadside vegetation removal, soil stripping, excavation, and other associated construction activities. These activities will cause Temporary change to the physical landscape of the Proposed Grid Connection Site; however, these changes will be localised to the immediate environment surrounding the route and will not affect the character of the landscape setting or visual amenity of the wider area. The construction works will be short-term in nature and completed as soon as practically possible. The construction phase of the proposed extension to the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation will be 'Short Term' and localised to the immediate area where commercial forestry contain the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation. The Proposed Grid Connection Site construction works are likely to result in 'Slight', 'Short-term', 'Negative' landscape effects.

13.7.2.1.2 *Mitigation Measures for Landscape Effects during Construction*

All construction activities will follow best practice methods to reduce impacts upon the environment and landscape of the Proposed Project. Further details are presented in the CEMP contained in Appendix 4-3 of this EIAR. The following measures should be implemented to mitigate landscape effects during the construction phase of the Proposed Project:

- In all circumstances, excavation depths and volumes will be minimised, and excavated material will be re-used where possible.

Following the implementation measures, residual direct landscape effects as a result of the Proposed Project will be 'Slight' and 'Short-term'. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

13.7.2.2 Visual Effects (Construction Phase)

13.7.2.2.1 *Proposed Wind Farm Site*

The most substantial visual effects will arise from requisite construction activities at the Proposed Wind Farm Site, such as assembling tower sections and erecting the Proposed Turbines and proposed met

mast. There will be temporary scenarios during the construction phase in which the Proposed Turbines will be partially constructed and may be seen as either stand-alone tower sections, or incomplete turbines where only one or two blades are visible. The equipment and vehicles required to transport and erect the wind farm components include large cranes and large haulage vehicles. The visual effects arising from the construction of the Proposed Turbines and the ancillary infrastructure such as roads and hardstands to service and build the Proposed Turbines will be experienced by a range of visual receptors in the landscape surrounding the Proposed Wind Farm Site, with most visibility occurring within 5km of the Proposed Turbines. These construction activities will cause 'Slight', 'Short-term', 'Negative' visual effects. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

General housekeeping measures, necessary for Health and Safety requirements, will ensure that the active construction areas will be kept tidy, mitigating localised visual impacts during the construction phase. A detailed description of the Proposed Project is included in Chapter 4 of this EIAR. The following sections assess the visual effects associated with the construction phase of the other (non-turbine) components of the Proposed Project.

Turbine Delivery Route (TDR) Accommodation Works

As detailed in Section 4.6 of Chapter 4, works are required along Proposed Turbine transport routes to accommodate the large vehicles used to transport turbine components to the Proposed Wind Farm Site. In some instances, temporary local road widening and temporary relocation of some signs and street furniture will be required. Full details of the assessment are included as part of the traffic impact assessment set out in Chapter 15: 'Material Assets' of this EIAR.

The landscape value and sensitivity of the TDR accommodation works are deemed to be Low and the change to occur will be highly localised. These works are likely to cause 'Not Significant', 'Temporary', 'Negative' landscape and visual effects. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

Proposed Borrow Pits, Spoil and Peat Management Areas

It is proposed to construct 1 no. borrow pit within the Proposed Wind Farm Site. The extraction of material from the borrow pit is a construction phase activity only, done through means of rock breaking and blasting (as appropriate). The direct effects of the borrow pit on the physical fabric of the landscape itself will be localised within the upland marginal peatland in which they are located in.

While on an elevated landform, the proposed borrow pit will be partially enclosed by commercial forestry that lies immediately to its south and east, and as such will be largely screened by dense vegetation. However, as the borrow pit is located on a slope of an elevated ridge, instances may occur where the borrow pit may be visible from elevated vantage points within the wider landscape, and will therefore have an effect on landscape character in combination with construction of the Proposed Turbines and other infrastructure. The proposed borrow pit is located within an area already influenced by high levels of human modification due to existing forestry operations, and is deemed to be of Low sensitivity. The landscape and visual effects will be very localised, temporary, 'Short-Term,' and 'Not Significant'.

To manage any excess overburden generated through construction activities, 5 no. peat and spoil management areas have been selected within the Site. The peat placed within these will be at a maximum height of 1m, where effects of spoil management areas will be very localised within the Proposed Wind Farm Site itself. Therefore, the creation of spoil management areas will have a 'Temporary', 'Slight' and localised effect on the landscape during the construction phase. Following regrading and re-establishment of vegetation of these areas following completion of the construction phase, effects will be 'Not Significant' during the operational phase. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

Meteorological (Met) Mast

One no. met mast is proposed as part of the Proposed Project. The met mast will be equipped with wind monitoring equipment at various heights. The proposed met mast will be located 385m south of Proposed Turbine T5. The met mast will be a free-standing slender lattice structure 30 metres in height. It will be constructed on a hard-standing area sufficiently large to accommodate the equipment that will be used to erect the mast. Within the Proposed Wind Farm Site and its immediate landscape setting, the landscape and visual effects arising from the construction of the met mast within an agricultural field is considered to be of highly localised 'Negative,' 'Short-Term', 'Slight' effects. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

13.7.2.2.2 *Proposed Grid Connection Site*

The proposed 33kV underground cabling works will consist of the installation of ducts in an excavated trench to accommodate electrical and fibre communications cables to facilitate a connection between the Proposed Turbines and the proposed extension to the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation. The proposed cable connection will be located underground, therefore the greatest visual effects attributed to this element of the Proposed Project will occur during the construction phase. The proposed 33kV underground cabling (approximately 7.1km) will be laid beneath the surface of the public road corridor, local access roads, the private access roads to the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm, and an area of commercial forestry where strip is proposed to be felled to accommodate the works.

The construction phase of the proposed 33kV underground cabling will be 'Temporary'. The works will include roadside vegetation removal, soil/road surface stripping, excavation, tree felling, and other associated construction activities. In all circumstances, excavation depths and volumes will be minimised, and excavated material will be re-used where possible. The construction of the proposed extension to the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation will be 'Short-Term'. Should any medium planting be removed, it will be replaced with the same or similar species whenever it is not possible to salvage and reinstate. Any areas of bare soil remaining after the landscaping phase will be seeded as soon as possible with a grass seed mix. Regarding the proposed 33kV underground cabling, changes will be localised to the immediate environment surrounding the cabling route and will not permanently affect the character of the landscape setting or visual amenity of the wider area.

The Proposed Grid Connection Site works are likely to cause 'Slight' 'Short-Term', 'Negative' landscape and visual effects. The proposed 33kV underground cabling will only cause perceptible effects on the landscape and visual amenity during the construction phase. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

13.7.3 Operational Phase Effects

Planning permission is being sought for a thirty-five-year operational life of the Proposed Project from the date of full commissioning of the Proposed Wind Farm Site and subsequent decommissioning which will involve the removal of the Proposed Turbines from the Site. Potential impacts of the Proposed Project during the operational phase are defined as 'Long-Term' as per the definition for duration in the EPA Guidance (2022). The Proposed Turbines would be removed from the Site at the end of the operational phase. Therefore, potential landscape and visual impacts effects on receptors caused by the Proposed Turbines are not permanent and are reversible.

This section reports the landscape and visual effects anticipated during the operational lifetime of the Proposed Project. This section is organised as follows:

- **Landscape Effects (Operational Phase):** Reporting landscape effects for the Proposed Wind Farm Site and Proposed Grid Connection Site;

- **LCA Assessment Outcomes**: A summary of the landscape impact assessment outcomes for each LCA in the (15km) LCA Study Area as is comprehensively reported in Appendix 13-2: *LCA Assessment Tables*;
- **Discussion of Cumulative Landscape Effects**: Discussion of landscape effects expected to occur in combination with the Proposed Project and all identified existing, permitted and proposed wind farms identified in the LVIA Study Area
- **Photomontage Assessment Outcomes**: A summary of the visual impact assessment outcomes in the (25km) LVIA Study Area for each photomontage as is comprehensively reported in Appendix 13-3: *Photomontage Assessment Tables*;
- **Discussion of Visibility and Visual Effects:** Discussion of visual effects on the specific visual receptors selected for assessment within the visual baseline exercise (recall Section 13.5.2: Preliminary Analysis: Visual Receptors) with reference to photomontages;
- **Discussion of Cumulative Visual Effects:** Discussion of visual effects expected to occur in combination with the Proposed Turbines and all identified existing, permitted and proposed wind farms identified in the LVIA Study Area.

13.7.3.1 Landscape Effects (Operational Phase)

13.7.3.1.1 *Proposed Wind Farm Site – Landscape Effects*

The landscape character of the Proposed Wind Farm Site will undergo major changes by the introduction of vertical man-made structures and ancillary infrastructure. There will be a 'Substantial' magnitude of change to the landscape in the localised areas within the Site where the landscape is materially altered (infrastructure footprint).

In a local context, the Proposed Wind Farm Site is located in a remote upland, marginal landscape, comprised of cutover peatland and commercial forestry. As outlined in Section 13.4.3 above, the landscape value and sensitivity of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is deemed to be 'Low.' Low sensitivity balanced with a Substantial magnitude of change amounts to long-term landscape effects of 'Moderate' significance upon the physical fabric of the landscape of the Site (See LVIA Methodology, Appendix 13-1). These direct landscape effects will be highly localised to the footprint of the Proposed Wind Farm Site. Effects on the perceptual and aesthetic character of the Proposed Wind Farm Site are also deemed to be of 'Moderate' significance.

Mitigation of Landscape Effects within the Landscape of the Site

The following measures have been included in the Proposed Project design and will be implemented in order to avoid, reduce, mitigate or offset effects on landscape receptors of the Site:

- The spatial configuration of the proposed infrastructure footprint has been carefully designed to minimise the loss of valuable landscape receptors on the Site, such as peatland of high biodiversity value.
- The proposed internal site road layout maximises the use of the existing forestry tracks wherever possible, to minimise the requirement for new tracks within the Site.
- In all circumstances, excavation depths and volumes will be minimised, and excavated material will be re-used where possible.
- To minimise cut and fill activities required to construct the Proposed Project, the proposed access roads, and other infrastructure such as hardstands have been designed to align with the existing terrain within the landscape of the Site.
- During initial vegetation stripping, all useful topsoil material will be temporarily stored on the Proposed Wind Farm Site and used for 'landscaping' the edges of the development infrastructure during reinstatement/regrading, including that of the peat and spoil management areas and proposed borrow pit. This will be particularly important in areas of cut and fill. The stripped topsoil will contain a natural seed source of local provenance and result in the re-establishment of baseline vegetation.

- A Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan (BMEP) has been prepared as part of this EIAR and is included as Appendix 6-4 to this EIAR. Enhancement measures included in the BMEP will provide ecological enhancement to the area, thereby providing a mitigating effect on landscape. The following measures proposed in the BMEP that will also have a mitigating effect on landscape areas are as follows:
    - The bolstering of and planting of new hedgerow and riparian corridors, as well as managing existing hedgerows and areas of native scrub;
    - The establishment of more biodiverse upland habitat, and the management of agricultural grassland into species rich wet grassland.

Residual Landscape Effects

Once the Proposed Wind Farm Site is operational and construction is complete, the landscape will naturally re-vegetate around the Proposed Wind Farm Site footprint with the aid of mitigation measures. Considering the mitigation measures above, residual effects upon the landscape of the Proposed Wind Farm Site are 'Negative,' 'Long-Term' and 'Moderate'. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

13.7.3.1.2 *Proposed Grid Connection Site*

As the proposed 33kV cabling is located underground, landscape and visual effects during the operational phase will be 'Imperceptible' once vegetation has been re-established along the roadway following earthworks during the construction phase. The magnitude of change is deemed to 'Negligible' and highly localised. Landscape effects will be 'Negative', 'Long-Term' and 'Imperceptible'. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

The proposed extension to the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation in a location surrounded by existing coniferous trees and landform which reduce visual exposure in the wider landscape. As the substation in sited in an area which makes use of the existing grid infrastructure, there is a 'Slight' degree of change to a very localised area of the landscape considered to be of 'Low' sensitivity. Overall, residual effects on this area of the landscape are 'Negative', 'Permanent' and 'Not Significant'. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

13.7.3.2 LCA Assessment Outcomes

An assessment of the effects on landscape character was undertaken for the 5 no. designated LCAs within the 15km LCA Study Area selected for assessment in Section 13.4.3.1 previously. The individual assessments for each LCA are summarised below in Table 13-13 and are detailed in Appendix 13-2: *LCA Impact Assessment*. The assessment criteria and grading scales which aided the assessment of landscape effects are detailed in Section 1.7 'Assessing Landscape Effects' of Appendix 13-1: *LVIA Methodology*.

Table 13-13 LCA Assessment Summary

Designated Landscape Character Area	LCA Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	Magnitude of Change	Residual Significance of Effect
LCA 17 – Sliabh Callan Uplands	Low	Moderate	Slight
LCA 3 – Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch	High	Slight	Slight

LCA 15 – Kilnamona High Drumlin Farmland	Low	Negligible	Imperceptible
LCA 16 – Cullenagh River Farmlands	Medium	Slight	Slight
LCA 20 – Malbay Coastal Farmlands	High	Slight	Moderate

The largest magnitude of change (Moderate) will occur in the LCA 17 - Sliabh Callan Uplands, as the Proposed Turbines will alter the landscape of this LCA. The Proposed Turbines are likely to be mostly visible within 5km of the Proposed Turbines as well as from elevated vantage points within this LCA. On-site appraisals determined that there would be more limited visibility of the Proposed Turbines to the southeast of the LCA due to the visual screening from intervening vegetation and topography in the landscape.

A review of the landscape policy reported above (Section 13.4.1) concludes that the Proposed Turbines are sited within a designated 'Settled Landscape', which has the capacity to accommodate wind energy development. Furthermore, it is noted that all of the Proposed Turbines are located within an area classified as 'Strategic Area' in the CCDP.

As per best practice guidance (GLVIA3, LI & IEMA), the methodology used for this LVIA calibrates landscape sensitivity with magnitude of change. LCA 3 – Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch and LCA 20 – Malbay Coastal Farmlands have been deemed to have 'High' sensitivity, which resulted in LCA 20 having the highest residual significance of effect, 'Moderate'. This is on account of the designated 'Heritage Landscape' within this LCA. There is a narrow portion of 'Heritage Landscape' that follows the coastline just beyond 5km northwest of the Proposed Turbines, this is located in both LCA 3 and LCA 20 and is where it comes in closest proximity to the Proposed Turbines. The ZTV shows little to no theoretical visibility in this proximate portion of 'Heritage Landscape' within these LCAs. Site visits found visibility in the direction of the Proposed Turbines would be limited by the undulating landform along this narrow coastal strip. This LVIA determined that the Proposed Turbines are sufficiently set back from the most sensitive 'Heritage Landscape' areas within these LCAs. Therefore, the Proposed Turbines will not significantly impact the key landscape characteristics and sensitivities of these LCAs. Effects on the Co. Clare Heritage Landscapes are discussed further below in the following section.

The Proposed Turbines will not materially alter any of the other LCAs in the LCA Study Area and therefore the Proposed Turbines will give rise to a 'Long-Term' 'Negative' residual landscape effects ranging from 'Not Significant' to 'Slight'. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

13.7.3.2.1 *Effects on Designated Landscape Receptors of High Sensitivity*

Several designated 'Heritage Landscapes' were identified in the landscape baseline as having Very High sensitivity and some theoretical visibility indicated by ZTV; the likely landscape effects on these receptors are discussed below. As noted previously, the CCDP states the following in relation to Heritage Landscapes:

> *"'Heritage Landscapes' are those areas within the County where sensitive environmental resources – scenic, ecological and historic - are located. These landscapes are envisioned as the most valued parts of the County, that are important to the people of County Clare as well as to wider national and international communities. The principal role of these landscapes is to sustain natural and cultural heritage"*

The Proposed Turbines will not directly alter the physical fabric of these landscape receptors and therefore, any landscape effects that may occur are likely to impact only their character or setting. In all

instances, there will be no 'Significant' impact on the key sensitivities of these receptors due to the large set-back distances of the Proposed Turbines from them.

The Coast (Heritage Landscape)

The area to the west of the LVIA Study Area comprises of the Atlantic coastal corridor, which is a 'Heritage Landscape' known as the 'The Coast'. At its closest point, this Heritage Landscape is located approximately 5km west of the nearest Proposed Turbine, T3. Overall, while there will be some effects on the character and setting of this 'Heritage Landscape' as the Proposed Turbines will introduce new elements into some distant views, they are viewed within the marginal uplands, inland, within a separate landscape type to the coastal plain and coastal corridor, whereas the key sensitivities are the coastline and adjacent rolling farmland. Also, the Proposed Turbines would not cause significant landscape or visual effects on the designated scenic routes, walking trails within this 'Heritage Landscape' as discussed in Section 1713981402.0.902744520.1713981418.902744520 below. The LVIA determined that existing wind energy development is currently visible from these coastal 'Heritage Landscapes' but are adequately absorbed and accommodated within the inland landscape views. Discussion on cumulative landscape and visual effects are discussed further in Section 13.7.3.3 and Section 13.7.3.6. Given the setback distance, positioning inland and narrow horizontal extent of the landscape where the Proposed Turbines are seen, the Proposed Project is not considered to significantly affect the character and key sensitivities of this Heritage Landscape. As such, the overall residual landscape effect is 'Negative', 'Long-Term' and 'Slight'. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Landscape

Viewpoint 01 and Viewpoint 14 are representative of views from The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, which is located in the northern extent of the LVIA Study Area, within the 'Heritage Landscape', and is deemed to have 'Very High' sensitivity. The Burren is a large, expansive landscape and its very high sensitivity is derived from its unique geological, ecological, visual and cultural heritage characteristics, with the Cliffs of Moher being a unique coastal attraction where the Burren meets the Atlantic Ocean. The Burren encompasses a large area, including the coastline from Doolin around Black Head and Galway Bay to Kinvarra, a large proportion of the Burren is located far north of the LVIA Study Area and has no ZTV and will not be impacted by the Proposed Project in any way. The ZTV shows theoretical visibility of the Proposed Turbines at the southern aspect of hills at the southern extent of the Burren, as well as inland areas comprising LCA 3: Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch. The Proposed Turbines will not directly impact these landscapes. When experienced from the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, the Proposed Turbines are viewed at distance within the Sliabh Callan Uplands, with other undulating farmland forming the component of the intervening landscape providing substantial separation.

When visible, the Proposed Turbines are seen within a small portion of the expansive views. A full assessment of visual effects from visual receptors in these landscapes are included below in Section 13.7.3.5. From locations within the Burren, such as from Viewpoint 01, the Proposed Turbines are seen in a distinctly separate visual unit and separate landscape, with several other landscape areas such as the drumlin farmland and Inagh valley acting as physical and visual buffer. The LVIA also determined that existing wind energy development is currently visible from the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Landscape but are adequately absorbed and accommodated within the inland landscape views. Discussion on cumulative landscape and visual effects are discussed further in Section 13.7.3.3 and Section 13.7.3.6. The Proposed Project is not considered to significantly affect the character and key sensitivities of this UNESCO landscape, and hence the overall residual landscape effect is 'Slight'.

13.7.3.3 Discussion of Cumulative Landscape Effects

The Proposed Project will contribute to cumulative effects on the landscape of West Clare where there are a number of other existing, permitted and proposed wind energy developments.

It is highlighted that although the LVIA Study Area includes many cumulative wind farms, many of which are existing or permitted, the likelihood of proposed or pre-application wind farms (Illaunbaun, Cahermurphy II) cumulatively impact landscape character depends on a range of factors, most notably the outcome of the planning process.

LCA-17 – Sliabh Callan Uplands

The Proposed Turbines will cause cumulative landscape effects with other wind energy developments within the Sliabh Callan Uplands LCA-17. The existing Slievecallan wind turbines are located approximately 1.6km on the opposing ridgeline to the south of the Proposed Turbines. Also, extending further south and southeast from the Proposed Turbines are the existing Cahermurphy, Glenmore, Booltiagh, Booltiagh Extension, Letteragh, Boolynagleragh, the Boolynagleragh Extension and existing Kiltumper Wind Farms. In a potential future receiving environment, to the northwest of the Proposed Turbines are the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm, and the proposed Cahermurphy II Wind Farm to the south of the Proposed Turbines. All these wind energy developments have the potential to contribute to cumulative landscape effects on the LCA-17 in combination with the Proposed Project, both in terms of impacting the physical fabric of this LCA and its landscape character.

Undulating landforms and well-defined ridgelines are prominent characteristics of LCA-17. These characteristics provide physical and visual separation between the various wind energy developments mentioned above and contribute to the landscapes capacity to absorb many wind farms. The greatest cumulative effects on landscape character are experienced from occasional elevated vantage points where the wind farm landscape of the Sliabh Callan Uplands is seen in its entirety where and where many developments are experienced. Cumulative effects on the character of LCA 17 will also be experienced in a journey scenario where a visual receptor moves throughout this landscape intermittently experiencing the various existing, permitted and proposed wind energy developments. A description of the cumulative visual interactions between the Proposed Turbines and other cumulative projects in the LVIA Study Area is included in the Photomontage Assessment Tables contained in Appendix 13-3. A comprehensive assessment of likely visual effects arising from the intervisibility of the Proposed Turbines and other wind farms is included in Section 13.7.3.6 – Discussion of Cumulative Visual Effects.

The Sliabh Callan Uplands is an LCA of the lowest landscape sensitivity rating for wind energy development in County Clare, as set out in CCDP (CWES). The cumulative effects on the Landscape of LCA-17 are to be anticipated considering the zoning and direction for the development of wind energy in this LCA within local planning policy. LCA-17 is characterised as being of a large scale, sparsely populated landscape of marginal upland with the capacity to absorb a number of wind energy developments. The addition of the Proposed Turbines would see the extension of wind energy in a landscape where wind energy has been established and not introducing novel elements to this landscape. The assessments in this chapter have determined that the scale and character of the receiving upland landscape is such that it can absorb a wind energy development of this scale in combination with the other developments in the vicinity.

Cumulative Effects on LCA 3 and Co. Clare Heritage Landscape

Widespread visibility towards the Sliabh Callan Uplands occurs from areas north-west of Lahinch and Liscannor within this LCA, visibility ceases in all areas north of the highest elevation at the Cliffs of Moher. When the Proposed Turbines are seen from this landscape, they are viewed in combination with the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm, and the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm in an uncertain future receiving environment, as shown in Viewpoints 12 north of Lahinch and at Viewpoint 13 at the Clahane viewpoint. The Proposed Turbines and the 2 no. cumulative wind farms are visibly setback within the Sliabh Callan Uplands, setback from the ‘Heritage Landscape’. Other cumulative wind farms are visible in the distant background from more elevated regions of this LCA, such as from Viewpoint 14, and do not have as much influence on cumulative effects but could be discernible on a very clear day. Whilst the Proposed Turbines and other cumulative turbines are visible and indirectly influence

the character of this 'Heritage Landscape', they are well set back and do not impact the key sensitivities and key landscape qualities associated with the coastline, the Heritage Landscape and LCA 3.

Cumulative Effects on LCA 20 and Co. Clare Heritage Landscape

From occasional elevated vantage points within the undulating coastal plain in LCA-20 - Malbay Coastal Farmland, there are open views towards the Sliabh Callan Uplands both to the north, east and south-east. In such instances the Proposed Project and many other cumulative wind farms are experienced (See Viewpoints 06 captured near Doughmore Beach). These cumulative effects are demonstrated in Viewpoints 07, 08 and 09, captured at Quilty, Spanish Point and Miltown Malbay, respectively, which mainly show the in-combination views with the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm and the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm. Other cumulative turbines are also experienced when viewing the Sliabh Callan Uplands inland, directly east. This includes the existing Cahermurphy turbines and the proposed Cahermurphy II Wind Farm in a potential future receiving environment, which has a small number of proposed turbines are located at the very eastern boundary of LCA 20.

The Proposed Turbines and other developments cumulatively influence the character of LCA 20 as they are a noticeable component of the landscape when looking inland.

The western portion of LCA 20 includes an area of High sensitivity 'Heritage Landscape' which comprises lands within the coastal corridor. The Proposed Wind Farm is well set-back from the coastline and this 'Heritage Landscape' designation, it is experienced only within inland views towards the upland landscape of Slieveacurry and Slieve Callan. Whilst the Proposed Project and other cumulative turbines are visible and indirectly influence the character of this 'Heritage Landscape', they are well set back and do not impact the key sensitivities and key landscape qualities associated with the coastline, the Heritage Landscape and LCA 20.

Cumulative Effects on Other LCAs

Beyond 15km to the south of the Proposed Turbines is the existing Crossmore Wind Farm sited within LCA 19 - Kilmihil Farmlands. Beyond 20km are the proposed Cloonkett Wind Farm is sited within LCA 18 – Shannon Estuary Farmland to the south-east. Beyond 22km to the southwest are the existing Tullabrack, and Moanmore Wind Farms, and the proposed Ballykett Wind Farms. Given the setback distances, as well as the physical and visual separation from the Proposed Turbines, these other wind energy developments have limited interaction and potential to cause cumulative landscape effects with these developments.

13.7.3.4 Visual Effects (Operational Phase)

The assessment of visual effects is informed by many site visits during 2024 and 2025 as well as many best practice tools for the LVIA of wind energy developments including the ZTV mapping reported previously in Section 13.3.1, the Route Screening Analysis reported previously in Section 13.3.2.1, and verified photomontage visualisations discussed in the following section.

13.7.3.4.1 *Selection of Representative Photomontage Viewpoints*

Photomontages were used to assess the visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Turbines from 17 No. viewpoint locations, which are presented in the Photomontage Booklet. These 17 No. viewpoint locations are depicted in the A0 Map in Appendix 13-4: *LVIA Baseline Map* and previously in Figure 13-14. The locations chosen for photomontages follow a detailed and extensive process including review of baseline information, site visits and high-quality photography taken at multiple locations within the LVIA Study Area. Many locations, which, according to the desktop review, were deemed to have potential views of the site, in reality, had complete intervening screening or views were visually screened to such an extent that the development of photomontages was not considered useful in terms of the assessment process, i.e. the viewpoints had little or no visibility towards the Proposed Turbines.

Multiple on-site surveys and visibility appraisals conducted throughout 2024 and 2025. It is important to note that the visual impact of the Proposed Turbines shown in the photomontages selected for the Photomontage Booklet is not entirely representative of visual effects in the wider landscape of the 25km LVIA Study Area, where in reality, little visibility occurs.

13.7.3.4.2 Photomontage Assessment Outcomes

Visual Effects were assessed using the assessment methodology described in Appendix 13-1. Each Viewpoint location is shown in Figure 13-14 above. The individual, comprehensive and detailed assessment from the 17 no. viewpoints are presented in Appendix 13-3 of this EIAR – *Photomontage Assessment Tables* and summarised in Table 13-14 below. Appendix 13-3 should be read in conjunction with the Photomontage Booklet forming Volume 2 of the EIAR.

The visual effects of the Proposed Turbines were assessed from each viewpoint in terms of the sensitivity of the visual receptors and quality of views, balanced with the magnitude of change, as recommended in GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013). This, in conjunction with a detailed review of the photomontages themselves as well as the likely visibility of the Proposed Turbines within the LVIA Study Area informed the assessment of visual effects.

Visualisations such as photomontages are tools that can represent the likely effect of a development and are used to inform the reader's prediction of how that development will appear in the landscape. In terms of the predicted visual quality of the Proposed Turbines, however, whether a visual effect is deemed to be positive, negative, or neutral, this involves a degree of subjectivity. What appears to be a positive effect to one viewer could be deemed to be a negative effect by another viewer. Taking a precautionary approach, all predicted visual effects of the viewpoints below are Long-Term and 'Negative' effects.

Table 13-14 Summary of Viewpoint Impact Assessment Results

VP No.	Description	Grid Ref.	Sensitivity of Receptor(s) (at Viewpoint)	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Residual Visual Effect
01	View from the Burren on the L5096 Local Road in the townland of Leana. Located approximately 18.9km northeast from the nearest proposed turbine (T5).	E 526,480 N 693,629	Very High	Negligible	Not Significant
02	View from the N85 National Road in the settlement of Inagh. Located approximately 8.1km east of the nearest proposed turbine (T5).	E 520,969 N 681,332	Medium	Slight	Slight
03	View from the R460 Regional Road in the townland of Cloonanaha. Located approximately 1.4km east of the nearest proposed turbine (T5).	E 509,950 N 676,560	High	Moderate	Moderate
04	View from the CCDP SR-15 on the R474 Regional Road in the townland of Doonsallagh East. Located approximately 3.05km southwest of the nearest proposed turbine (T7).	E 504,818 N 672,986	High	Moderate	Moderate
05	View from the L2094 Local Road in the settlement of Mullagh. Located approximately 9.1km southwest of the nearest proposed turbine (T7).	E 499,142 N 667,960	Medium	Slight	Slight
06	View from the Doonbeg Golf Course, near Doughmore Beach, in the townland of Carrowmore. Located approximately 16.7km southwest of the nearest proposed turbine (T7).	E 499,142 N 667,960	High	Slight	Slight
07	View from the CCDP SR-1 on the N67 National Road in the settlement of Quilty. Located approximately 10.4km southwest of the nearest proposed turbine (T7).	E 501,952 N 675,131	High	Slight	*Slight*

08	View from the CCDP SR-15 on the N67 National Road in the townland of Annagh, at Spanish Point. Located approximately 8.1km southwest of the nearest proposed turbine (T7).	E 503,677 N 677,080	High	Slight	Slight
09	View from the R474 Regional Road in the settlement of Mullagh. Located approximately 5.56km southwest of the nearest proposed turbine (T7).	E 505,935 N 678,905	High	Slight	Slight
10	View from the L2118 Local Road in the townland of Tooreen. Located approximately 1.44km west of the nearest proposed turbine (T3).	E 510,084 N 680,361	High	Moderate	Moderate
11	View from the Doolin Cycle Hub Loop 2 on the N67 National Road in the settlement of Ennistimon. Located approximately 8km north of the nearest proposed turbine (T2).	E 513,122 N 688,819	Medium	Slight	Slight
12	View from the CCDP SR-1 on the R478 Regional Road in the townland of Ballyellery on the southbound approach to Lahinch. Located approximately 9.1km north of the nearest proposed turbine (T1).	E 509,013 N 689,426	High	Slight	Moderate
13	View from Clahane Viewpoint on the L5136 Local Road in the townland of Cloghaudine. Located approximately 10.2km north of the nearest proposed turbine (T1).	E 504,441 N 687,831	Very High	Slight	Moderate
14	View from the CCDP SR-1 on the R478 Regional Road in the townland of Lislorkan North, near the Cliffs of Moher. Located approximately 13.8km north of the nearest proposed turbine (T1).	E 504,437 N 692,384	Very High	Slight	Moderate
15	View from the R476 Regional Road in the settlement of Lisdoonvarna. Located approximately 17.4km north of the nearest proposed turbine (T2).	E 513,474 N 698,212	High	Slight	Not Significant
16	View from the R460 Regional Road in the townland of Doonsallagh East, bordering the townland of Cloghaun Beg. Located approximately 1.29km south of the nearest proposed turbine (T7).	E 511,092 N 677,977	High	Moderate	Moderate

17	View from the R460 Regional Road in the townland of Boolynamiscaun. Located approximately 1.3km southeast of the nearest proposed turbine (T6).	E 513,648 N 679,453	High	Moderate	Moderate

The significance of the residual visual effect was not considered to be 'Profound' or 'Very Significant' or 'Significant' at any of the 17 No. viewpoint locations. The residual effects were found to be a range of 'Moderate' (8), 'Slight' (7), and 'Not Significant' (2).

The viewpoint assessment results (see Appendix 13-3) will be summarised and discussed in more detail in the following sections.

13.7.3.5 Discussion of Visibility and Visual Effects on Specific Receptors in the LVIA Study Area

The assessment of visual effects uses photomontages shown in the Photomontage Booklet. ZTV mapping is also a useful tool for scoping receptors in and out (based on bare-ground topography) and selection of photomontage viewpoints. The ZTV indicates vast areas of the LVIA Study Area where the Proposed Turbines will not be visible, as comprehensively discussed in Section 13.3. The following section discusses the visual effects arising at key sensitive visual receptors within the zone of theoretical visibility and scoped in for assessment previously in Section 13.5 – Visual Baseline.

Designated Scenic Routes

As reported above in Section 13.5, 9 No. CCDP Scenic Routes and 3 No. Tailte Éireann Viewing Areas were scoped out from further assessment as the ZTV indicated that there is no theoretical visibility and visibility during the site visit was difficult to establish due to visual screening by topography and vegetation. The remaining 4 No. CCDP Scenic Route have been scoped in for further assessment. The visual effects arising from these Scenic Routes are discussed below, as they arise from different representative viewpoints in the LVIA Study Area, where appropriate effects on other receptors at those viewpoints are also discussed.

Scenic Route 1 - Viewpoint 07 (Quilty) and Viewpoint 08 (Spanish Point): Both viewpoints represent the southerly extent of CCDP Scenic Route 1. Viewpoint 07 is located by the village of Quilty and is in close proximity to the Lahinch-Kilrush Dismantled Railway walking trail. Viewpoint 08 is representative of the coastal amenities at Spanish Point. There are unobstructed, open views of the Proposed Turbines from both viewpoints and the perspective and scale of the Proposed Turbines are very similar. The valuable scenic amenity in both areas are principally focussed in an offshore direction towards the coast and the Atlantic Ocean, not inland towards the Proposed Turbines. The Proposed Turbines are seen as small background elements in a landscape designated for wind energy development. From both viewpoints, the Proposed Turbines will not obstruct or intrude upon any coastal views and will not materially impact any scenic amenity attributed to the coast or CCDP Scenic Route 1. Therefore, residual visual effects were deemed to be 'Slight' for both viewpoints.

Scenic Route 1 - Viewpoint 12 (O'Briens Bridge Lahinch): The viewpoint is of 'High' sensitivity as it is representative of CCDP Scenic Route 1 and the CCDP Heritage Landscape. The photomontage is looking south over O'Briens Bridge towards Lahinch. From this viewpoint the Proposed Turbines are seen as background features of the landscape that do not obstruct or intrude upon views of the coastal landscape. Intervening landforms significantly screen visibility of the Proposed Turbines from most locations in and around Lahinch town, south of this viewpoint, where the scenic qualities are directed along the coast. Therefore, residual visual effects were deemed to be 'Moderate'.

Scenic Route 1 - Viewpoint 14 (Cliffs of Moher): This viewpoint is located on CCDP Scenic Route 1, near the Cliffs of Moher, and is therefore considered a viewpoint of 'Very High' sensitivity. The magnitude of change is considered 'Slight' from this viewpoint. As discussed in Appendix 13-3, the visibility of the Proposed Turbines will be significantly mitigated by distance as they will be seen as relatively small features in the background of the landscape from this location. The high sensitivity of visual receptors represented by this viewpoint is mainly attributed to its location at the Cliffs of Moher tourist destination. The valuable views and landscape receptors are located several hundred metres

west of this viewpoint where views are directed in an offshore direction or upon the cliffs themselves, not towards the Proposed Turbines. No visibility of the Proposed Turbines is expected from most of the key viewing areas actually surrounding the cliffs, with only distant visibility likely to occur from occasional elevated vantage points along the cliff walkway, such as O'Brien's Tower. Therefore, likely residual visual effects were recorded as 'Moderate' from this viewpoint.

The viewpoints discussed above show the most open views of the Proposed Turbines from some of the most sensitive locations on Scenic Route 1. There are many locations on Scenic Route 1 where there is no visibility of the Proposed Turbines and visual effects are 'Imperceptible'. Overall, visual effects on Scenic Route 1 are 'Long-Term', Negative' and range from 'Imperceptible' to 'Moderate'. On balance, these visual effects are not significant.

Scenic Route 6 - Viewpoint 01 (The Burren): This viewpoint is located on an exposed and elevated stretch of the CCDP Scenic Route 6 that directly faces the Proposed Turbines where the Parknabinnia heritage landmark is located. Scenic Route 6 is located on a road at the northern reaches of the LVIA Study Area. As well as being part of the Burren Way walking trail, this scenic route is a sensitive visual receptor and its elevated location in the Burren Uplands enables long unobstructed views across the landscape to the south. This is a relatively remote and isolated viewpoint location and there will not be a massive volume of visual receptors passing this point; however, it is representative of views from The Burren National Park which is a landscape receptor of international renown. Due to the distance from the Proposed Turbines site, a viewer would have to be actively searching the landscape to clearly locate and identify the Proposed Turbines, therefore residual visual effects are deemed to be 'Not Significant'.

Scenic Route 3 – Viewpoint 01 (The Burren): Due to the similarity in type of view, distance and geography in relation to the Proposed Turbines and the panoramic landscape views available from CCDP Scenic Route 6, Viewpoint 01 is representative of views on CCDP Scenic Route 3. Visual effects subjected by the Proposed Turbines will be less for CCDP Scenic Route 3 than CCDP Scenic Route 6 due to multiple mitigating factors, including: reduced visibility by intermittent screening provided by topography and vegetation, and that the road does not look directly towards the Proposed Turbines. Therefore, residual visual effects for this receptor are deemed to be 'Not Significant'.

Scenic Route 15 - Viewpoint 04: This viewpoint is located in the townland of Doonsallagh East and represents views of the Proposed Turbines from the south and westbound receptors on CCDP Scenic Route 15. CCDP Scenic Route 15 runs north-west to south-east on the R474 regional road. The route crosses a valley just south of the Proposed Turbines. Residual visual effects are deemed to be 'Moderate' from this perspective as the viewpoint is located in close proximity to the Proposed Turbines (3.1 km) and they will be visible as relatively large and prominent features of the landscape. Some of the Proposed Turbines are partially screened from view by the intervening topography of Slieveacurry, all turbine components are seen above the horizon, therefore the Proposed Turbines will not obstruct any views of the wider landscape or intrude upon any coastal views to the west from CCDP Scenic Route 15.

Scenic Route 15 - Viewpoint 09: This viewpoint is representative of views further west along the CCDP Scenic Route 15 as would be experienced by eastbound receptors, on the outskirts of Miltown Malbay. The Proposed Turbines are visible from this location as a linear array across the Slieveacurry ridge in a location designated for wind energy development. The Proposed Turbines are visible in the background of generally open panoramic views of the countryside, where they appear appropriately scaled and sited on the Slieveacurry ridge. Residual visual effects for this receptor are deemed to be 'Slight'.

The CCDP emphasises that the conservation of views should not prohibit development along designated routes, but rather, development, where permitted, should not seriously hinder or obstruct these views and should be designed and located to minimise their impact. Viewpoints 04 and 09 discussed above show the most open views of the Proposed Turbines from Scenic Route 15. There are many locations on Scenic Route 15 to the east of Viewpoint 04 and Slieve Callan where there is no visibility of the Proposed Turbines and visual effects are 'Imperceptible'. Where the Proposed Turbines

are seen from Scenic Route 15, they read coherently relative to the landscape in the background of the views and do not impact key scenic sensitivities experienced on the route such as the open and long ranging landscape views to the south and west towards the coast for westbound receptors. Overall, visual effects on Scenic Route 15 are 'Long-Term', Negative' and range from 'Imperceptible' to 'Moderate'. On balance, these visual effects are not significant.

Settlements

Of the 15 settlements identified in the LVIA Study Area, 7 were scoped out in the 'Visual Receptor Preliminary Assessment'. Viewpoints were selected for the remaining 8 settlements: Doonbeg, Ennistimon; Inagh; Lahinch; Lisdoonvarna; Miltown Malbay; Mullagh; Quilty and Spanish Point.

Miltown Malbay - Viewpoint 09: Miltown Malbay is located approximately 5.2km west of the nearest Proposed Turbine. There will be no visibility of the Proposed Turbines from within the townscape of Miltown Malbay due to screening from the built form of the townscape. Views towards the Proposed Turbines will occur on the east and northeast edges of the town, such as shown by Viewpoint 09. As stated previously, for this viewpoint, the Proposed Turbines are seen to be sited in a neat linear array within a landscape designated for wind energy development. As such, an overall residual visual effect of 'Slight' are deemed to arise for this viewpoint. Accordingly, an overall 'Slight' visual effect are deemed to arise for the settlement of Miltown Malbay.

Ennistimon - Viewpoint 11: Only in the northern part of Ennistimon at the highest elevation in the town could visibility of the Proposed Turbines be established. Viewpoint 11 is located on the N67 national road in the north of the town, the view is directed down the main street of Ennistimon. 'Slight' residual visual effects were recorded as the Proposed Turbines will be seen as small and suitably scaled elements in the background of the view and visual effects are significantly mitigated by distance. Also, the built form of the Ennistimon townscape significantly screens visibility of the Proposed Turbines in almost all other areas of the town. An overall 'Slight' visual effect are deemed to arise for the settlement of Ennistimon.

Lahinch – Viewpoint 12: As indicated previously for Scenic Route 1, the landform of and built environment screen visibility of the Proposed Turbines from most locations in and around Lahinch town. Views of the Proposed Turbines occur on the outskirts of the town, to the south, and to the north where Viewpoint 12 was captured. The Proposed Turbines will be intermittently visible in the uplands to the south-east for southbound receptors leaving Lahinch on the N67 by Cregg Beach where occasional 'Moderate' residual visual effects will occur, this includes receptors in and around the small settlement cluster of Moybeg where the Proposed Turbines will be visible from occasional elevated vantage points. While Viewpoint 12 was deemed to have an overall residual visual effect of 'Moderate', residual visual effects for receptors within the town of Lahinch itself are deemed to be 'Not Significant', given the limited visibility of the Proposed Turbines from within the town.

Inagh - Viewpoint 02: This viewpoint is located on the N85 national road as it enters the village of Inagh from the south. The built form of the Inagh streetscape significantly screens visibility of the Proposed Turbines in almost all other areas of the village. The N85 is primarily oriented in a direction perpendicular to the Proposed Turbines, therefore, road users are likely to be concentrating on the road ahead instead of actively searching the landscape for turbines in the periphery of their vision. Residual visual effects were recorded as 'Slight' from this viewpoint as the Proposed Turbines will be seen as small and suitably scaled features in the background of the view and any likely visual effects are significantly mitigated by distance.

Lisdoonvarna - Viewpoint 15: This viewpoint is representative of the town of Lisdoonvarna which is a popular tourist destination sited within the Burren landscape making it a receptor of high sensitivity. The viewpoint was captured at an elevated point where far-ranging views south towards the Proposed Turbines are available. At this distance (>17 km) the Proposed Turbines are seen as small and minor features of the landscape. This viewpoint location was selected for its optimal view of the Proposed Turbines, however the Proposed Turbines are not likely to be visible in most areas of Lisdoonvarna, as

they will be screened from view by the townscape of Lisdoonvarna, mature vegetation and intervening landform. Residual visual effects were deemed to be 'Not Significant' from this viewpoint.

Mullagh - Viewpoint 05: Viewpoint 05 is representative of views from Mullagh. Mullagh is located to the south-west of the Proposed Turbines where there are generally open and unobstructed views across the agricultural landscape towards the higher elevations of Slieve Callan and Slieveacurry. The Proposed Turbines are viewed as a neat and coherent array of turbines sited appropriately on the Slieveacurry ridgeline. The Proposed Turbines is seen as a visual counterbalance to the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm in a 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development. Residual visual effects were deemed to be 'Slight' from this viewpoint.

Doonbeg - Viewpoint 06: Located approximately 19.8km southwest from the nearest Proposed Turbine, Doonbeg is sited along the Atlantic coast. This receptor is represented by Viewpoint 06 located 3km to the north. Viewpoint 06 has been designated a 'High' sensitivity on account of the 'Heritage Landscape', resulting in 'Slight' residual visual effects. This viewpoint was also captured at an elevated position with an unobstructed view inland over the landscape. Given the setback distance of the Proposed Turbines from the Doonbeg, and the focus of the views are of the scenic coastal corridor, residual visual effects for this receptor are deemed to be 'Not Significant'.

Quilty - Viewpoint 07: Viewpoint 07 was captured along the N67 national road in the north of Quilty. Views available from the fringes of Quilty are generally open and unobstructed. Viewpoint 07 shows views across the agricultural landscape towards the higher elevations of Slieve Callan and Slieveacurry. The Proposed Turbines is seen as a visual counterbalance to the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm in a 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development. Residual visual effects were deemed to be 'Slight' from this viewpoint, where the more scenic qualities are seen in the opposing direction along the coastal corridor.

Spanish Point – Viewpoint 08: Viewpoint 08 was captured along the N67 national road at Spanish Point. Similarly to Viewpoint 07, this viewpoint shows views over agricultural landscape towards the higher elevations of Slieve Callan and Slieveacurry. The Proposed Turbines are seen in the opposing direction of the scenic amenities of the coast and seen set back from this 'Heritage Landscape'. As a result, residual visual effects were deemed to be 'Slight' from this viewpoint.

Recreational, Tourism and Cultural Heritage Destinations

4 no. recreational and tourism receptors have been scoped in for assessment in the Visual Baseline. The visual effects arising at the Cliffs of Moher (Viewpoint 14), The Burren (Viewpoint 01), and Lahinch Beach (Viewpoint 12) have been discussed in detail in the previous section (see Appendix 13-3 for a more detailed assessment). The impact that the Proposed Turbines is likely to have on these locations as destinations for tourism and recreation is addressed below.

The Burren - Viewpoint 01: This viewpoint was captured in the Burren, which is located on Scenic Route 6 and The Burren Way recreational route. The Burren is a large landscape that extends north beyond the LVIA Study Area, with a unique landscape that has been deemed a UNESCO Global Geopark. Given the Proposed Turbine's setback distance from receptors here, a residual visual effect of 'Not Significant' is deemed to occur from Viewpoint 01.

Lahinch Beach - Viewpoint 12: This viewpoint was captured at O'Brien's Bridge, 2km north of Lahinch and is a receptor incorporating many recreational and tourism routes, including: The Burren Way, The Doolin Cycling Hub Routes, CCDP Scenic Route 1 and the Wild Atlantic Way. The viewpoint overlooks Lahinch and the beach of Lahinch. 'Moderate' residual visual effects were deemed to occur from this viewpoint, where the Proposed Turbines will not materially impact the recreational or tourism amenities in the area.

Cliffs of Moher - Viewpoint 14: The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre at the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark is the largest tourist destination in County Clare, the high footfall of tourists

crossing the road and traffic driving on the road at this location makes this viewpoint a visual receptor of 'Very High' sensitivity. Residual visual effects were recorded as 'Moderate' from this viewpoint and the Proposed Turbines will not materially impact the value of the Cliffs of Moher as a tourism destination.

Clahane Viewpoint - Viewpoint 13: Viewpoint 13, captured at Clahane Viewpoint, is deemed to be a visual receptor of 'High' sensitivity on account of its location in a 'Heritage Landscape' and the scenic amenity overlooking Liscannor Bay. The Proposed Turbines are seen across the bay, as relatively small elements setback within the Sliabh Callan Uplands, and do not obstruct any landscape views. The Proposed Turbines will not materially or significantly impact the integrity of scenic amenity attributed to the coast or the value of this location as a destination for recreation and tourism. The residual visual effects were determined to be 'Moderate' from this viewpoint.

Recreational Routes

There were 4 no. recreational routes scoped in for further assessment. The visual effects arising at viewpoints along all these routes have been discussed in detail in the previous sections above. The impact that the Proposed Turbines is likely to have on these locations as recreational routes is addressed below

The Wild Atlantic Way: This recreational route stretches the west coast of Ireland, where only a small portion falls within the LVIA Study Area. There is full theoretical visibility along many stretches of the WAW within the LVIA Study Area, with small pockets of no visibility. Viewpoints 06, 07, 08, 12, 13 and 14 are representative of views from this recreational route. All have been designated as 'High' or 'Very High' sensitivity on account of the 'Heritage Landscape' or the Cliffs of Moher. The focus of views of this recreational route is along the coast, and not towards the Proposed Turbines. Given the overall scale of the Wild Atlantic Way (approximately 2,600km in length), and the limited extent within the LVIA Study Area that exhibits potential visibility, the Proposed Turbines are not considered to have a significant impact on the route as a whole. Overall, the residual visual effects on the WAW are 'Long-Term', Negative' and range from 'Imperceptible' to 'Moderate'. On balance, these visual effects are not significant.

EuroVelo: The Eurovelo cycling route is an international network of long-distance cycling routes across different European countries. There is primarily full theoretical visibility along the stretch of this recreational route, with small pockets of no visibility. Within the LVIA Study Area, the Eurovelo generally follows the coastline, where visibility will be limited due to distance and intervening vegetative screening. Viewpoints 05, 09 and 12 are sited along this recreational route. Viewpoints 05 and 09 were deemed to have 'Slight' residual visual effects, and Viewpoint 12 was deemed to have a 'Moderate' residual visual effect. Given the overall scale of the Eurovelo (approximately 2,350km in length), and the limited extent within the LVIA Study Area that exhibits potential visibility, the Proposed Turbines are not considered to have a significant impact on the route as a whole. Overall, the residual visual effects on the EuroVelo are 'Long-Term', Negative' and range from 'Imperceptible' to 'Moderate'. On balance, these visual effects are not significant.

The Burren Way: The Burren Way is a recreational walking route with total a length of 118.8km and has predominantly full theoretical visibility. Viewpoints 01, 12, 13, and 14 are representative of locations along this recreational route. The sensitivity of these viewpoints were determined to be 'High' or 'Very High' for their location within the 'Heritage Landscape' and within the to the Cliffs of Moher with a 'Slight' magnitude of change Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark. Viewpoints 12, 13 and 14 were deemed to have a residual visual effect of 'Moderate' on account of the high sensitivity receptors. This recreational route stretches over a large area of the Burren landscape where there are areas of no theoretical visibility indicated, and views tend to be focused on the more scenic amenities of this landscape. Overall, the residual visual effects on The Burren Way are 'Long-Term', Negative' and range from 'Imperceptible' to 'Moderate'. On balance, these visual effects are not significant.

Doolin Cycle Hub Loops: These recreational routes are long range cycle loops traversing the landscape in the north portion of the LVIA Study Area. These are represented by Viewpoints 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. Similar to previous discussion, these viewpoints were determined to be of 'High' or 'Very High' sensitivity given the high value landscape receptors represented. Overall, the residual visual effects on the Doolin Cycle Hub Loops are 'Long-Term', Negative' and range from 'Imperceptible' to 'Moderate'. On balance, these visual effects are not significant.

Transport Routes

Visual effects arising on the N67 national road have been discussed in detail in the previous sections (VP 07, 08, 11).

The N85 National Road (Ennis to Ennistimon) was assessed via Viewpoint 02 in the village of Inagh which recorded 'Slight' residual visual effects. No open views of the Proposed Turbines were established of the from the N85 between Inagh and Ennis, although there are open views of existing Slievecallan Wind Farm.

Local topography and vegetation screening on the N85 between Inagh and Ennistimon significantly limited views of the Proposed Turbines from this stretch of the N85. During site visits, one open view of the Proposed Turbines was found in the townland of Ballyea between Inagh and Ennistimon; the visual effects arising from this location are very similar to that of Viewpoint 02. Residual visual effects are deemed to be 'Slight'. It is worth noting that this was one of the only open views of the site found along the N85 between Inagh and Ennistimon and it is not truly representative of the visibility existent upon the rest of this stretch of road. Road users are likely to be concentrating on the road which runs perpendicular to this view and this view would only be visible momentarily if travelling at any speed, therefore, visual receptors would have to be scanning the landscape in order to experience this view.

Visual effects arising from the R474 and R460 Regional roads located in close proximity to the site have been discussed previously via analysis of Viewpoints 03 (Moderate), 04 (Moderate) and 09 (Slight).

As the R460 exits the village of Inagh to the west, there are open views along the regional road towards the Proposed Turbines. Views from this section of the R460 are represented by photomontage Viewpoint 02 (located within Inagh Village) which as discussed previously and was found to have residual visual effects of 'Slight' significance.

13.7.3.5.2 *Residential Receptors*

During the iterative design process, early stage LVIA studies identified local residential receptors as the most locally sensitive receptors with the greatest potential to be impacted by the Proposed Turbines with regard to visual impacts. Consequently, residential visual amenity was of key consideration throughout the iterative design process for the Proposed Project. This section of the LVIA firstly states how design measures have been used to mitigate the potential for significant visual effects on residential receptors, then gives an overview of the residential context in terms of population density in the surrounding area and the geographic arrangement of residential receptors in close proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm Site. Finally, a visual impact assessment of each cluster of residences is reported, these assessments use analysis of aerial maps, photomontages with the intention of identifying the worst-case scenario for potential visual effects on these residential receptors in close proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm Site.

The design of the Proposed Wind Farm Site has been informed by industry best practice set-back distances, with regard to the siting of the Proposed Turbines relative to residential receptors, including the following measures:

- All Proposed Turbines exceed the mandatory 500m set-back distance from residential receptors set out in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006).

- All Proposed Turbines adhere to the recommended 4-times-tip-height set-back distance (700m) from third-party properties for residential visual amenity as prescribed by the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).

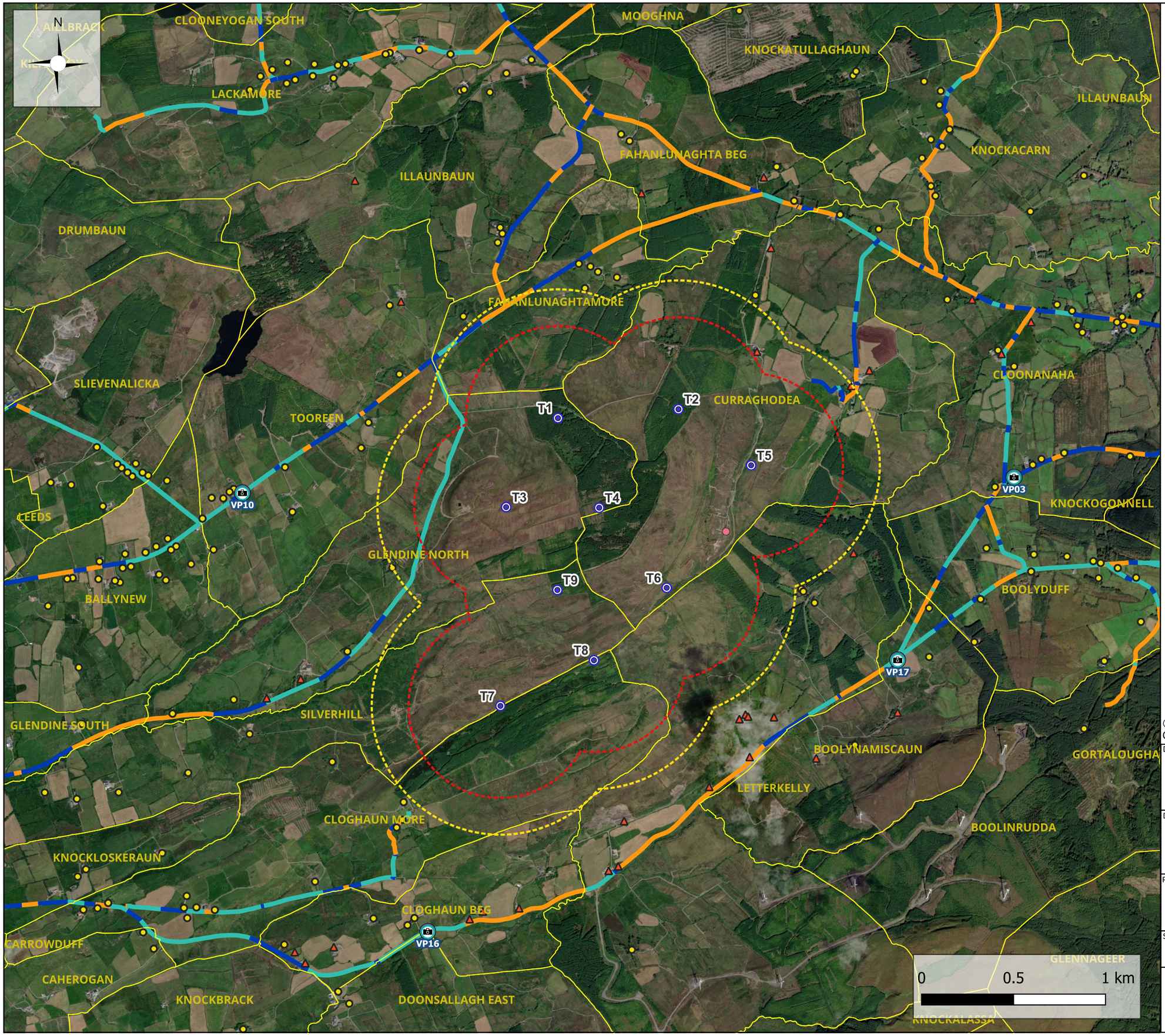
Residential Context – Population Density and Arrangement of Dwellings

As reported in the landscape baseline (see Section 13.4.2: Landscape Character of the Site), the Proposed Wind Farm Site itself is located within a large area characterised primarily by commercial forestry, cutover peatlands with agricultural fields in the lower-lying lands surrounding Slieveacurry ridge. Figure 13-17 below illustrates how the Proposed Turbines are set-back from residential receptors in the surrounding landscape and that the distances are compliant with the guidance in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019). There are 24 no. residential receptors located within 1km of the Proposed Turbines locations. The closest third-party residential receptor is located 700m from the nearest Proposed Turbine i.e., at 4-times-tip-height set-back distance (4 × Tip Height at 175m = 700m). Aerial imagery as shown below in Figure 13-17, shows that the Proposed Wind Farm Site itself, and the immediate surrounding landscape is sparsely populated.

Assessment of Residential Amenity – Photomontages

A key focus in this LVIA is identifying the scenarios where the greatest likelihood of visual effects occur. The highest residual visual impact recorded was 'Moderate', which have been determined from 4 no. photomontage viewpoints representing residential receptors in closest proximity to the Proposed Turbines (see Appendix 13-3). All 4 no. viewpoints were captured within 3km from the Proposed Turbines.

Photomontages are one of the many tools employed during LVIA in order to inform the assessment of landscape and visual effects. It would be a disproportionate measure to include an individual photomontage from all individual residential receptors; further, this is not required to conduct a thorough and robust assessment of landscape and visual effects. In line with the guidance laid out in the GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013), the viewpoints selected for this LVIA were informed by a range of factors including the *"ZTV analysis, by fieldwork, and by desk research"* (para 6.18 in 'Assessment of Visual Effects', GLVIA3, p.109). Furthermore, the GLVIA3 states that representative viewpoints are to be *"selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where larger numbers of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ"* (para 6.19, GLVIA3). The large number of viewpoints used to conduct the LVIA particularly in very close proximity to the Proposed Turbines is sufficient to represent all residential receptors within the LVIA Study Area, including the "distribution of population" (para 6.18, GLVIA3).



Map Legend

- Proposed Turbines
- Proposed Met Mast
- Set Back Compliance - 700m (4x Tip-Height) (DoHPLG, 2019)
- Set Back Compliance - 500m (DoEHLG, 2006)
- Photomontage Viewpoints
- Residential Dwellings (Involved)
- Residential Dwellings
- Townlands

Route Screening Analysis

- No / Very Little Screening
- Partial / Intermittent Screening
- Dense / Full Screening

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-17

Drawing Title

Residential Receptors

Project Title

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:19,600	240718	30.04.2026	DM	JW

MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants

Residential Receptors to the East of the Proposed Turbines

To the east, residential receptors are primarily located along the R460 regional road and the L-1080 local road. As shown by the RSA in Section 13.3.2.1 previously and the map above, the R460 regional road experience stretches of mainly 'Partial/Intermittent Screening', and local roads in the area, such as the L-1080 local road, experience mainly 'Little/No Screening'.

Residential receptors to the east of the Proposed Turbines, such as those in the townlands Boolyduff and Cloonanaha, are located on land which slopes northwards from the elevated landform of Slieve Callan. For residential dwellings located at these elevated locations, and where there is limited visual screening from vegetation, there are open views over the rural landscape to the north and west, as seen in Viewpoint 03 and Plate 13-14 below. This includes views towards the Proposed Turbines to the west which are seen setback along the Slieveacurry plateau, and where views of the intervening lands provide a sense of separation between these receptors and the Proposed Turbines.

There are residential receptors east of the Proposed Turbines that delineate the L-1074 local road, immediately north of Viewpoint 03 in the townland of Cloonanaha. These residences are sited at a slightly lower elevation, where onsite investigations found views of the surrounding landscape are quite limited by field boundary vegetation. The Route Screening Analysis indicates mainly 'Partial/Intermittent Screening' along this network of local roads, with stretches of 'No/Very Little Screening' and 'Dense/Full Screening'. Where open views to the west and south occur from receptors in this area, the intervening lands that rise towards Slieveacurry provides a sense separation where the Proposed Turbines would be viewed on the Slieveacurry ridgeline.

For all third-party and involved properties within areas east of the Proposed Wind Farm Site, the Proposed Turbines adhere to the siting of turbines in proximity to residential dwellings, the Proposed Turbines exceeds the minimum 500m set back distance in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006). The Proposed Turbines also adhere to the 4 times tip height set-back distance prescribed by the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) for all third-party properties, with only 2 no. involved properties located within this 4 times tip-height to the northeast in the townland of Curraghodea. A 'Moderate' magnitude of change was deemed to occur for Viewpoint 03, with an overall residual visual effect of 'Moderate'.

Residential receptors to the east of the Proposed Turbines also have views of the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm to the south. These cumulative views are discussed further below, relative to residential receptors to the south and south-east of the Proposed Wind Farm.



Plate 13-14 View north from the R460 regional road in the townland of Boolyduff

Residential Receptors to the Southeast of the Proposed Turbines

As shown in the topography map in Figure 13-11 there is a distinct valley that transects the elevated landforms of Slieveacurry and Slieve Callan in a south-westerly to north-easterly orientation. Residential dwellings to the south of the Proposed Wind Farm Site, such as those in the townlands of Boolynamiscaun and Letterkelly, are primarily located in the lower elevations of this valley where the relatively steep nature of the ridgeline will screen many of the Proposed Turbines from view as indicated by the ZTV Map, see Figure 13-1. Where residential receptors are present, they are typically located along the local road network. The Route Screening Analysis (see Section 13.3.2.1 previously) notes that the road network to the southeast of the Proposed Turbines is primarily classified as 'Little/No Screening' with stretches of 'Partial/Intermittent Screening' Visual Screening and 'Dense/Full Screening'.

Viewpoint 17 is located 1.3km southeast of the nearest Proposed Turbine T7, within the townland of Boolynamiscaun. This image was captured along the R460 regional road adjacent from the Proposed Wind Farm Site and illustrates a relatively open view towards the Proposed Turbines. Despite the proximity (1.3km), the Proposed Turbines occupy a relatively moderate horizontal extent within the view. As discussed in Appendix 13-3, from this area the Proposed Turbines are viewed as a coherent and well-designed array, viewed above the horizon within the sparsely settled landscape in an area designated as strategic for the development of renewable wind energy by the CWES.

As shown in Plate 13-15, the existing Slievecallan turbines are located in close proximity to Viewpoint 17. The Slievecallan turbines are visible in a field of view focussed to south from this location. Seven existing turbines are visible; however, visual effects are mitigated by screening from intervening topography. As illustrated by Viewpoint 17, the Proposed Turbines are not visible in the same primary viewshed as the existing Slievecallan turbines, where these two developments are viewed in opposite directions on elevated topography. This allows both developments to be viewed as set-back from receptors along this road, where it is unlikely a visual receptor will observe both developments at the same time.



Plate 13-15 View of existing Slievecallan Wind Farm to the south from the location of Viewpoint 17

Plate 13-16 below shows the nature of visual screening both from the steep sided landform and hedgerows that exists in the narrow valley located between Slieveacurry and Slieve Callan.



Plate 13-16 View to the north east from along the R460 regional road in the townland of Letterkelly

Residential Receptors to the South of the Proposed Turbines

To the south, residential receptors are primarily located along the R460 regional road and the L-62301 local road. These residential receptors to the south of the Proposed Wind Farm Site, such as from within the townlands of Cloghaun Beg, Cloghaun More and Doonsallagh East, are sited south of the Slieveacurry ridgeline, where from this location the intervening topography primarily visually screens views of the Proposed Turbines to the north, as indicated by Viewpoint 16. The siting of the Proposed Turbines beyond the landform gives a sense of set-back from residential receptors to the south. For all third-party and involved dwellings within this area, the Proposed Turbines adhere to the siting of turbines in proximity to residential dwellings, the Proposed Turbines exceeds the minimum 500m set back distance in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), and also the 4 times tip height set-back distance prescribed by the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019). A 'Moderate' magnitude of change was deemed to occur for this viewpoint, with an overall residual visual effect of 'Moderate'.

Residential receptors to the south also have open views south-east across the valley towards the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm. Some of these residential dwellings sited at a higher elevated position also have views across the coastal plain to the south to west, and in a potential future receiving environment the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm will be visible to the north. The Proposed Turbines do not obstruct or intrude upon scenic amenity to the south from this location.



Plate 13-17 View of the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm to the east-south-east from Viewpoint 16

Residential Receptors to the West of the Proposed Turbines

To the west of the Proposed Turbines, residential receptors are primarily situated in a linear arrangement along the local road network (including the L-2118, and the L-6242 local roads), as seen in the townlands of Tooreen, Ballynew and Slievenalicka. The Route Screening Analysis in Section 13.3.2.1 indicates that the majority of these routes experience 'Little/No Screening'.

Viewpoint 10 is located 1.44km west of the nearest Proposed Turbine T3, within the townland of Tooreen. Viewpoint 10 and residential receptors to west of the Proposed Wind Farm Site are located on a locally elevated landform adjacent the Slieveacurry landform and illustrates a relatively open view towards the Proposed Turbines. Despite the proximity (1.44km), the Proposed Turbines occupy a relatively moderate horizontal extent within the view. The intervening lands at a lower elevation between Viewpoint 10 and the Proposed Turbines provides visual separation between receptors represented by this viewpoint and the Proposed Turbines. Furthermore, at these elevated locations to the west of the Proposed Turbines, the more scenic views are oriented south to west towards long-ranging, open views over the Malbay Coastal Farmland, in the opposing direction to the Proposed Project. This view is shown in Plate 13-18 below, where the Proposed Turbines would be located to the left of the open view in a short-range view across the upland valley, as shown in Viewpoint 10. As such, the Proposed Turbines are not obstructing or intruding upon the long-ranging views of higher scenic quality to the south. For third-party and involved dwellings in this area, the Proposed Turbines exceeds the recommended 500m set-back distance in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) also the 4-times-tip-height set-back distance set out for residential visual amenity prescribed by the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019). As discussed in Appendix 13-3, a 'Moderate' magnitude of change was deemed to arise at Viewpoint 10 with an overall 'Moderate' residual effect.

Residential receptors here will also experience views of the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm to the southeast of the Proposed Turbines, and in a potential future receiving environment the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm will be sited north of these receptors.



Plate 13-18 View south from the location of Viewpoint 10 in the townland of Tooreen

Residential Receptors to the North of the Proposed Turbines

To the north of the Proposed Turbines, the rural character of the landscape is primarily defined by agricultural fields and commercial forestry. It is a sparsely settled landscape. Where residential receptors are present, they are typically located along the local road network. The Route Screening Analysis (see Section 13.3.2.1 previously) notes that the road network to the north of the Proposed Turbines is primarily classified as 'Dense/Full Screening' and 'Partial/Intermittent Screening' with stretches of 'Little/No Screening'.

Plate 13-19 below was captured in the townland of Fahanlunaghta Beg, from the L-1074 local road adjacent the Proposed Wind Farm Site and shows an existing open view towards Slieveacurry and indicates the extent of the Proposed Turbines. This view is representative of one of the few locations in this area where such open views in the direction of the Proposed Turbines occur. Viewpoint 03 is representative of similar views open views towards the Proposed Turbines. This viewpoint was considered to be a 'High' sensitivity viewpoint, on account of the residential receptors represented that are located in close proximity to the Proposed Turbines. The magnitude of change for this viewpoint was deemed to be 'Moderate', owing to the moderate scale the Proposed Turbines would be perceived and comprise a large horizontal extent of views. A residual visual effect of 'Moderate' was deemed to arise in relation to the receptors located adjacent to Viewpoint 03, considering the Proposed Turbines do not obstruct any landscape views, and they are visually coherent, seen as a neat cluster within a landscape designated as strategic for wind energy development.

Furthermore, for all third-party and involved dwellings in this area the Proposed Turbines exceeds the recommended 500m set-back distance in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) also the 4-times-tip-height set-back distance set out for residential visual amenity prescribed by the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).



Plate 13-19 View south from the L-1074 local road in the townland of Fahanlunaghta Beg

Summary of Visual Effects on Residential Receptors

There are many residential receptors located in the LVIA Study Area experiencing varying degrees of visual impact from the Proposed Turbines with a large proportion having no visual impact. The previous discussions illustrate the wort-case scenarios where the greatest visual impacts occur for the small number of residential receptors in closest proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm Site. Overall, residual visual effects on residential receptors are 'Long-Term', 'Negative' and range from 'Imperceptible' to 'Moderate'. On balance, these visual effects are not significant.

13.7.3.5.3 *Visual Effects Arising within the Proposed Grid Connection Site*

Residential dwellings delineate the R460 regional road and local roads where the proposed underground cable connection is located. The proposed 33kV underground cabling is located underground; therefore, no visual effects are deemed to arise from it during the operational phase.

The grid connection cable route will connect to the permanent extension to the existing 110kV substation at Knockalassa, at the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm. The existing 110kV substation is sited approximately 450m north of the R474 regional road (CCDP Scenic Route 15) on the southern slopes of Slieve Callan. The existing 110kV substation and proposed extension are sited within an area visually screened by coniferous forestry and topography, where visibility is substantially limited from receptors such as the CCDP Scenic Route 15 and the R474 Regional Road. An overall 'Negligible' magnitude of change is deemed to arise for these receptors, given the very limited visibility. There are no views available of the proposed extension from receptors to the north and northwest, such as those from the elevated vantage area in the townland of Tooreen, nor from the locations along the R460 regional road. The overall residual visual effects arising from the Proposed Grid Connection Site are deemed to be Negative, Permanent and 'Not Significant'. On balance, these effects are not considered significant.

13.7.3.5.4 *Proposed Enhancement Sites – Landscape and Visual Effects*

Section 13.4.2.4 describes the character of the Proposed Enhancement Sites. As reported in Section 13.4.2, these lands are highly influenced and modified by past and existing forestry land use, and therefore the landscape sensitivity of the Proposed Enhancement Sites is 'Low'. The character of the Proposed Enhancement Sites will be altered by the removal of commercial forestry and the establishment of a mosaic of open heathland and patchy scrub vegetation. The magnitude of change is deemed to 'Slight' and highly localised. Once the Proposed Enhancement Sites have been implemented, landscape effects on the Proposed Enhancement Sites themselves will be Positive, Long-Term and 'Not Significant'. On balance, these effects are not significant.

The local road network, and a cluster of residential dwellings are located adjacent to the Proposed Enhancement Sites. These residential receptors are of 'High' sensitivity. The visual changes to the landscape include changes to landcover arising from deforestation of forestry, enhancement of hedgerows and planting and changes to the composition of grassland. An overall 'Negligible' magnitude of change is deemed to arise for these receptors. The overall residual visual effects arising from the proposed measures within the Proposed Enhancement Sites are deemed to be 'Positive', 'Permanent' and 'Not Significant'. On balance, these effects are not significant.

13.7.3.6 Discussion of Cumulative Visual Effects

There are many potential scenarios and interactions where cumulative visual effects may occur. These scenarios include interactions between the Proposed Turbines, other wind energy developments (wind farms or grid infrastructure), as well as other man-made landscape features (quarries, transport networks and overhead telecommunication lines) and land uses. Guidance for the assessment of cumulative effects of onshore wind farms (SNH, 2012; NatureScot, 2021) clearly states the following:

> *'At every stage in the process the focus should be on the key cumulative effects which are likely to influence decision making, rather than an assessment of every potential cumulative effect';*
>
> *'The level of information generated can distract attention from the most significant cumulative effects which are likely to influence the consenting decision. Assessments should therefore focus on the most significant cumulative effects and conclude with a clear assessment of those which are likely to influence decision making'.*

Following this guidance, a primary focus is given to the cumulative effects likely to occur as a result of other wind turbines identified in the LVIA Study Area as these are likely to cause the greatest potential for significant cumulative effects. Cumulative visual effects were assessed as part of the viewpoint assessments in Appendix 13-3: *Photomontage Assessment Tables*.

The discussion of cumulative visual effects in this section uses the term 'in combination' where the Proposed Turbines will be seen with other turbines from a particular vantage point representing visual receptors. In combination 'simultaneous' visual effects occur where the Proposed Turbines are seen with other cumulative turbines within the same or similar field of view. In combination 'successional' visual effects occur where the Proposed Turbines are seen with other turbines from the same viewpoint but in an alternative field of view where the receptor will need to turn to face a different direction to experience cumulative effects.

In relation to windfarms, as discussed previously, within the LVIA Study Area (25km radius) there are 12 no. existing wind farms, 4 no. proposed wind farms and 1 no. permitted wind farms, which are listed in Table 13-12 previously. The Cumulative Comparative ZTV of all cumulative turbines with the Proposed Turbines can be seen in Figure 13-16 previously. As shown in Section 13.6 of this Chapter, the cumulative turbines are theoretically visible throughout majority of the LVIA Study Area, where a smaller portion of this area is where both the Proposed Turbines and cumulative turbines will be theoretically visible. As such, there are very few locations where the Proposed Project would introduce turbines as entirely new or novel elements within the landscape. While Figure 13-16 indicates the geographic extent of cumulative theoretical visibility, actual visibility and actual nature of cumulative visual effects are best understood through analysis and assessment of photomontages in the Photomontage Booklet and assessments from site visits, which have been conveyed in the detailed discussion for each viewpoint in Appendix 13-3.

Areas of theoretical visibility of both the Proposed Turbines and cumulative turbines are primarily confined to the west, south and north of the LVIA Study Area with patches seen to within 15km to the east. As a result, combined visibility of both the proposed and cumulative turbines becomes increasingly limited with distance further north and east within the LVIA Study Area

Cumulative Visual Effects with the Existing Slievecallan and Proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm

Depending on the perspective of view and location of receptor, the Proposed Turbines may be viewed as either a contiguous array of turbines with the Slievecallan Wind Farm or as a separate and independent development. The existing Slievecallan Wind Farm is located approx. 1.8km southeast of the Proposed Turbines. In a potential future receiving environment, the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm would be located 1.5km northwest of the Proposed Turbines.

Receptors to the South

As demonstrated by photomontages from the south-west (Viewpoints 05; 06; 07; 08; 09), the Proposed Turbines are viewed in combination with two cumulative wind developments. The Proposed Turbines, existing Slievecallan Wind Farm and the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm are seen as slightly separate developments where they are viewed on adjacent elevated landforms. From receptors to the south, the three groups of turbines have the same height profile within the landscape from this perspective, as seen in Figure 13-18 below. Collectively, they correspond sympathetically to the landforms and are effectively accommodated with appropriate separation across the three upland areas, separated by small valleys and gulleys. The Proposed Turbines are seen as a neat cluster of turbines on the elevated ridge adjacent to the Slievecallan Wind Farm and proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm with a saddle of lower ground separating the three developments. The Proposed Turbines and the cumulative turbines are seen in areas designated as 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development in local planning policy. From these perspectives the Proposed Turbines can be viewed as a visual counterbalance between the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm and the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm.



Figure 13-18 Extract from Viewpoint 07 illustrating the Proposed Turbines, existing Slievecallan Wind Farm and proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm sited on separate landforms

Figure 13-18 (above) shows the side profile of the linear range of upland where the Proposed Turbines and Slievecallan and Illaunbaun are located as experienced from the south and south-west. The profile of these landforms are experienced very differently when viewing from north and north-westerly perspectives. In such instances, receptors to the north-west are looking from one end of the linear upland landscape with the terrain gradually increasing in height with distance. This factor changes the nature of cumulative effects occurring from these directions, as discussed below.

Receptors to the North and North-West

From receptors to the north to northwest, where visibility occurs, in combination simultaneous effects occur, as shown in Viewpoints 12, 13, and 14. The existing Slievecallan Wind Farm are viewed as smaller elements behind the Proposed Turbines. In a potential future receiving environment the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm would be viewed in front of the Proposed Turbines. Receptors looking south from the designated Scenic Route 1 and from parts of the Cliffs of Moher will experience in combination simultaneous views, where these 3 no. developments will be viewed as a collective array of turbines within the same visual unit of upland. Viewpoints 13 and 14 were deemed to be 'Very High' sensitivity on account of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, where the magnitude of change was deemed to be 'Slight'. Viewpoints 13 and 14 show that the Proposed Turbines do not increase the horizontal extent of turbines seen within the landscape but does increase the density of turbines seen within this relatively narrow field of view. Whilst the Proposed Turbines contribute to the cumulative effects occurring from receptors and vantage points to the north and north-

west, they are always seen in the background of views and do not significantly impact the integrity and key sensitivities of the views of the 'Heritage Landscape' including the coastal corridor. All cumulative turbines are visible in 'Strategic Areas' for wind energy in local planning policy.

Receptors to the East

From receptors to the east, actual visibility of both the Proposed Turbines and these cumulative wind farms are limited to receptors in close proximity, where local topography and intervening vegetation visually screens views. Viewpoint 02 captured at Inagh, approximately 8.1km east of the Proposed Turbines and shows the Proposed Turbines are viewed in combination with the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm, where they are seen to extend the horizontal extent of turbines visible in the view. Viewpoint 03 was captured in closer proximity, approx. 1.4km east of the Proposed Turbines, representing local residential receptors, the R460, as well as the church and local school at Cloonanaha. From this viewpoint, the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm would be predominantly visually screened by the intervening topography. Receptors at the location can see the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm to the southwest. Receptors would view the Proposed Turbines in succession with the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm, where the two developments would be viewed set back within the upland landscape.

Receptors located between the Proposed Turbines and the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm and the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm

Receptors located immediately south to southeast of the Proposed Turbines will experience in-combination successional views of the Proposed Turbines and the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm, where they would be viewed in two opposing directions. This includes a very small number of residential receptors and R460 which is a relatively low trafficked road. Viewpoints 16 and 17 were captured along the R460 reginal road that passes between the two developments. Both viewpoints were deemed 'High' sensitivity on account of the residential receptors represented, where the magnitude of change was deemed 'Moderate'. The Proposed Turbines and existing Slievecallan Wind Farm are seen set-back effectively accommodated within upland areas, either side of the valley and exceed the 4x tip height set back distance set out for third-party properties receptors in the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019). The intervening landform predominantly screens visibility of the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm from receptors to the southeast of the Proposed Turbines. Receptors located further south or at more elevated lands, such as at Viewpoint 04, would have more visibility of the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm in an uncertain future receiving environment to the north.

A number of residential receptors and small portion of the local road located immediately north of the Proposed Wind Farm Site will potentially experience in-combination successional visual effects of the Proposed Turbines and the proposed Illaunbaun Wind Farm in a potential future receiving environment. In such scenarios, the two developments would be viewed in two opposing directions. Viewpoint 10 is located on the L-2118 local road in the townland of Tooreen, illustrates views east towards the Proposed Turbines and also the existing Slievecallan turbines visible beyond in the very background of the views. Site visits determined that open visibility in both directions is mostly mitigated by the local landform characteristics enclosing most dwellings in the area Significant residual visual impacts may potentially arise in a future receiving environment with the proposed Illaunbaun turbines for the small number of residential receptors in the townland of Tooreen (< 10 No.). However, this is an uncertain scenario which will occur for a very small number of receptors, and both developments adhere to the 4 times tip height set back distance from both third-party and involved dwellings, as set out for residential visual amenity in the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG 2019). Should the proposed Illaunbaun turbines not be part of the future receiving environment, residual visual effects on these residential receptors will be 'Moderate'.

Cumulative Visual Effects with Other Windfarms to the South

Beyond the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm to the south include existing Kiltumper, Booltiagh, Booltiagh Extension, Glenmore, Boolynagleragh, Boolynagleragh Extension, Cahermurphy, Letteragh, and Crossmore Wind Farms. From some locations to the north of the Proposed Turbines, these

cumulative turbines are seen in the as smaller elements in the background of the view within the upland landscape. For example, such as VP04 and VP05, there is very limited visibility of the cumulative turbines east due to intervening landform.

From locations to the south west of the Proposed Turbines, the Proposed Turbines will be viewed in combination, in succession and sequentially with these cumulative turbines to the north. Elevated positions with open views, such as that of VP05 and VP06, are examples of in combination and successional views, respectively. From locations like these, these cumulative turbines are seen at similar scale in the background of the view. Both the Proposed Turbines and cumulative turbines are viewed within the Sliabh Callan Uplands, both seen inland, set-back from the more scenic views along County Clare's coastline. VP06 was deemed as a 'High' sensitivity viewpoint given that it is representative of the CCDP Heritage Landscape, and the magnitude of change was deemed 'Slight'. A residual visual effect of 'Slight' was deemed to arise in relation to the receptors located adjacent to the viewpoint. This effect incorporates cumulative visual effects that arise at this viewpoint (see Appendix 13-3).

Within 10km of the Proposed Turbines to the south, there will be more locations where the Proposed Turbines would be viewed in succession and sequentially with cumulative turbines. Receptors from the south, such as from along the CCDP Scenic Route 15, will have views north towards the Proposed Turbines and other existing wind farms, such as the existing Cahermurphy Wind Farm turbines, and views east to northeast towards the existing Slievecallan turbines. In an uncertain future receiving environment, the proposed Cahermurphy II and Illaunbaun Wind Farms will also be viewed in succession and sequentially, as illustrated by photomontage viewpoints VP04. This viewpoint is representative of the CCDP Scenic Route 15 and as such have been deemed to be of 'High' sensitivity, with a 'Moderate' magnitude of change. A residual visual effect of 'Moderate' was deemed to arise in relation to the receptors located adjacent to the viewpoint. This effect incorporates cumulative visual effects that arise at this viewpoint (see Appendix 13-3).

Cumulative Visual Effects with Other Wind Farms to the Southwest

To the southwest of the Proposed Turbines are the existing Tullabrack and Moanmore Wind Farms, and the proposed Ballykett Wind Farm. From locations within 20km of the Proposed Turbines, there will be in succession and sequential views of the Proposed Turbines and cumulative wind farms to the southwest. Similarly, in succession views are most likely to occur from open and or elevated locations due to the rolling farmland landscape and boundary vegetation. Viewpoint 06 was captured from an elevated location along the coastline, illustrating these open views, where the cumulative turbines to the southwest would be visible in the opposing direction. While the Proposed Turbines and cumulative turbines would be visible from these locations, they would be seen set-back inland from the more scenic coastal corridor and hence seen as background features with limited visual influence. No Significant cumulative visual effects were deemed to arise at this viewpoint as a result of the Proposed Turbines.

From locations within closer proximity to the Proposed Turbines, such as from VP04, the cumulative turbines to the southeast are seen as very small elements in the distant background, with very limited cumulative visual effects.

13.7.4 Decommissioning Phase Effects

The landscape and visual effects during decommissioning are anticipated to be of a similar nature as those occurring during the construction phase.

The important element of decommissioning from an LVIA perspective is the dismantling and removal of the Proposed Turbines. This will occur for a limited period of time and will predominately involve cranes adjacent to the turbines during the dismantling process. Upon decommissioning of the Proposed Wind Farm Site, the wind turbines will be disassembled in reverse order to how they were erected. The turbines will be disassembled with a similar model of crane that was used for their erection. The turbine

will likely be removed from the Proposed Wind Farm Site using the same transport methodology adopted for delivery to the Site initially.

Removal of the turbines and ancillary infrastructure from the Proposed Wind Farm Site during the decommissioning phase will result in a 'Short-Term', 'Slight', 'Negative' visual effect from local receptors, such as residences in the area and the local road network. A Decommissioning Plan has been prepared (Appendix 4-7) the detail of which will be agreed with the local authority prior to any decommissioning. The Decommissioning Plan will be updated prior to the end of the operational period in line with decommissioning methodologies that exist at the time and will be agreed with the competent authority at that time

13.8 Conclusion

This chapter of the EIAR is a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Project. The assessments in this chapter focussed on the impact of the Proposed Turbines as the essential aspect of the Proposed Project likely to give rise to significant landscape and visual effects. A study area was set to 25km from the Proposed Turbines termed as the 'LVIA Study Area'. The LVIA was conducted in accordance with national and international best practice LVIA guidance for assessing wind energy developments. The assessment was informed by desktop GIS analysis, on-site appraisals, topographical and ZTV modelling and production of verified photomontages. This chapter includes a description of the landscape and visual baseline conditions of the Site and LVIA Study Area. The baseline exercises outline the local policy context with respect to landscape and visual designations, models the ZTV to help identify the landscape and visual receptors requiring assessment and evaluates the cumulative context of landscape and visual effects in combination with other existing, proposed and permitted wind farm developments in the LVIA Study Area.

The design of the Proposed Project was informed by a detailed iterative process, resulting in a suitably scaled and appropriate design for this location in line with siting and design guidance for mountain moorland landscape types in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).

The Proposed Turbines are located in the Sliabh Callan Uplands LCA of Co. Clare. The Proposed Turbines are sited in mountain moorland landscape type characterised by commercial forestry and cutover peatland. The landscape in this LCA has the lowest landscape sensitivity rating to wind energy in the CCDP 2023-29. The landscape within the Proposed Wind Farm Site is strongly influenced by current and historic land use, it has been modified for commercial forestry and historic peat harvesting. All Proposed Turbines are located within an area designated as 'Strategic' for wind energy by the Clare Wind Energy Strategy. Overall, this LVIA determined the Proposed Wind Farm Site to be of 'Low' landscape sensitivity, an acceptable receiving environment for the Proposed Project. The siting of the Proposed Turbines within the 'Mountain Moorland' are found to comply with the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) in terms of its siting and design and 4-times-tip-height set-back distance from all third-party dwellings and most involved dwellings as set out in the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019), within a sparsely populated upland of the Sliabh Callan Uplands.

Imagery was captured from a total of 17 No. viewpoints in the LVIA Study Area for the production of photomontages. These visualisations were used to assess the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Turbines on all of the receptors scoped in for assessment during preliminary analysis using ZTV mapping. The visual receptors include: 4 No. CCDP Scenic Routes, 8 No. settlements, 4 No. recreational routes, 4 No. Recreational, Cultural Heritage and Tourist Destinations and 6 No. regional- and national-level transport routes. Many receptors are represented within the 17 No. selected photomontage viewpoints (Photomontage Booklet).

Visibility of the Proposed Wind Farm Site is predominantly limited to areas upon the flat coastal plain to the south-west of the Proposed Turbines, upon the southern slopes of the Burren to the north and the coastal farmland to the north-west. Due to screening from the high elevation of Slieve Callan, no visibility is evident from a vast area to the south-east of the LVIA study area and visibility from Ennis

and drumlin farmland to the north-east of the site is also screened by intervening topography. Visual and landscape effects in close proximity are mitigated by topographical and vegetation screening factors present in the hilly and flat farmland landscape surrounding the site and within the wider LVIA Study Area.

In terms of landscape character, only LCA 17 - The Sliabh Callan Upland, in which the Proposed Turbines are located will experience direct effects on landscape character as a result of the Proposed Project. 2 No. LCAs were found to be of 'High' sensitivity: LCA 3 – Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch and LCA 20 – Malbay Coastal Farmlands due to their proximity to the Atlantic Coast, the 'Heritage Landscapes' and the significance of The Burren and The Cliffs of Moher as landscape receptors of National and International renown. As such, the likely significant effects of the Proposed Project upon these landscapes were assessed in detail in this LVIA (See Appendix 13-2). The Proposed Turbines are visible from within these landscapes but located outside them, therefore effects on landscape character are indirect and the Proposed Project will not materially alter these landscape receptors and landscape effects were not deemed to be significant.

The visual assessment concluded that residual visual effects of "Moderate" significance was deemed to arise at eight of the 17 viewpoint locations. All other viewpoints were assessed as resulting in Slight significance (7) and Not Significant (2) residual visual effects. Importantly, the LVIA found no significant visual impact on views from designated scenic routes or any impact on the key scenic sensitivities and views of the County Clare high sensitivity 'Heritage Landscape'.

The likely significant visual effects arising from local residential amenity was assessed from four viewpoints in very close proximity to the Proposed Turbines (VP03, VP10, VP16 and VP17). Residual visual effects were found to be 'Moderate', which is appropriate and acceptable for a wind energy development of this scale and type, with the Proposed Turbines adhering to the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) with respect to best practice set back distances from residential visual amenity.

Cumulative effects on landscape character are included in the impact assessment outlined in Appendix 13-2. Overall, the LCA-17 – Sliabh Callan Uplands are found to be capable of accommodating the Proposed Turbines and cumulative turbines where its undulating characteristics provide physical and visual separation. Although the Proposed Turbines will slightly increase the extent of turbines visible within the landscape, from most perspectives surrounding the Proposed Wind Farm Site it will be viewed in conjunction with the existing Slievecallan Wind Farm. The Proposed Turbines when viewed cumulatively with existing and proposed wind energy developments in the vicinity and wider area consolidates the provision of wind energy infrastructure at this location which has been designated as a Strategic Area in the Wind Energy Strategy for the County. Landscape and visual effects were among the primary considerations of the Planning Authority in designating this location as a Strategic Area. This location has been identified by the Planning Authority as one of the most suitable and environmentally robust locations for the provision of wind energy in County Clare, consequently cumulative landscape and visual effects will occur and the Proposed Project will contribute to these cumulative effects. All of the various potential scenarios of cumulative landscape and visual effects likely to arise from different receptors and geographic perspectives have been comprehensively discussed in this LVIA with the aid of cumulative ZTV mapping and photomontage visualisations.

In conclusion, the Proposed Project is an appropriately designed development and suitably aligned with the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019), sited in a landscape envisioned for wind energy development. The Proposed Turbines are located within a zoning designated as a 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development in Volume 6: Clare Wind Energy Strategy (CWES) of the CCDP with no potential significant effects on protected landscape and visual sensitivities in the LVIA Study Area.