

“Highly scenic views or vistas indicate areas along public roads from which views and prospects of areas of high natural beauty and interest can be enjoyed. Sightseeing visitors are more likely to be concentrated along these areas.

Development located between the public road and the seashore, lakeshore or riverside should be subject to strict visual criteria. New development should only be considered where it can be demonstrated that it does not obstruct or designated highly scenic vistas nor alters or degrades the character of the surrounding landscape.”

The two classes of scenic routes are shown on Map 4 of the LACM, reproduced here as Plate 13-7. As ‘Scenic Routes’ and ‘Scenic Routes with Views’ identified in the LVIA Study Area, seen in Figure 13-13, are of a visual nature, and 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 the different routes.

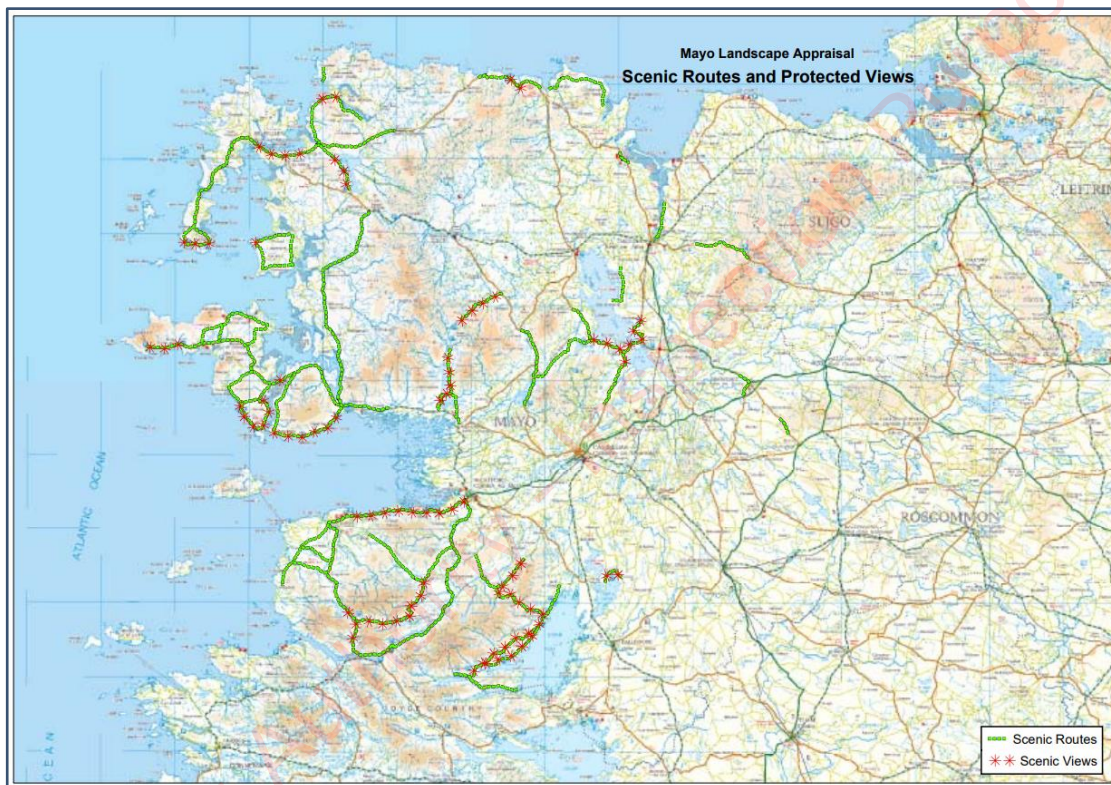


Plate 13-7 Scenic Routes and Protected Views from Map 4 of the LACM.

13.4.2 Landscape Character of the Site

The Proposed Wind Farm is located in a rural and undulating lowland landscape, characterised by areas of open peatland and agricultural fields within the Plains of Mayo. The landscape character is defined by a gently rolling lowland landform interspersed with low-lying elongated drumlin hills. The character of the wider landscape surrounding the Proposed Wind Farm is defined by a patchwork of rural agricultural land, peatlands, tracts of forestry and scattered rural settlements, as depicted in Plate 13-8 below.



Plate 13-8 Drone Photo: Views south overlooking the Proposed Wind Farm and wider landscape, from the townland of Knockaunakill

The landcover of the Site comprises a modified rural landscape, characterised by a mix of agricultural fields, cutover peatlands with shrubs, and wetlands areas, creating a patchwork of land uses, as shown in Plate 13-9 below.

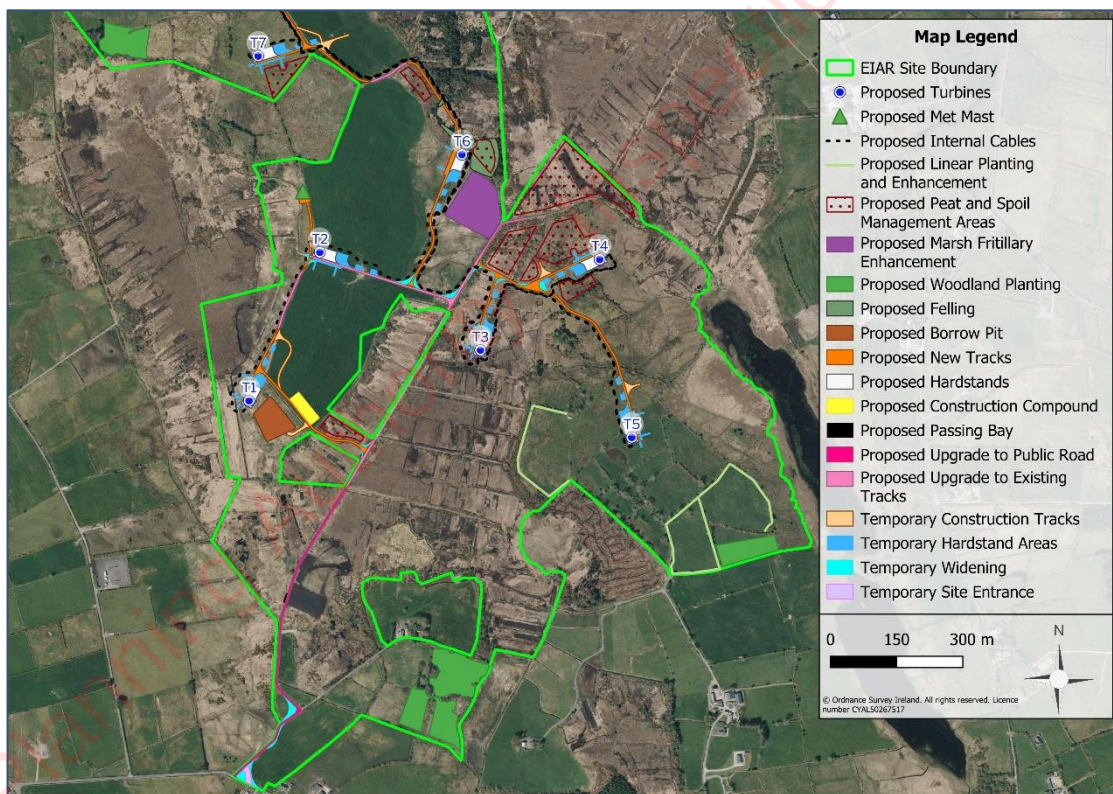


Figure 13-9 Aerial View of the Proposed Wind Farm

A narrow bog road (L15053) bisects the Site, running in a south-north direction. A section of this road is proposed for upgrade, as indicated by Figure 13-9. The low-lying terrain and presence of drainage channels indicate historical peat extraction, which has strongly influenced the landscape's character.



Plate 13-9 Drone Photo: Views north overlooking the Site and wider landscape, from the townland of Knockroe



Plate 13-10 Views north overlooking the local bog road (L15053) bisecting the Site

The agricultural fields (as can be seen in Plate 13-11), that cover the majority of the Site are primarily delineated by mature hedgerows and treelines. Some areas consist of a more degraded landscape (see Plate 13-12 below), featuring rough grassland and dense shrubland. Peatlands are also prominent feature within the landscape, as seen in Plate 13-13, exhibiting a highly degraded condition with extensive areas of exposed peat.



Plate 13-11 Views towards the agricultural field where proposed turbine T3 is located



Plate 13-12 Views north-west towards the Site from the local road (L15053), approx. 380m south of turbine T4



Plate 13-13 Views west towards the peatlands, approximately 65m east from proposed turbine T4

The presence of existing infrastructure across the Site, including overhead power lines as seen in the images above, further emphasises the extent of human influence within the landscape. However, despite these localised modifications, the landscape remains predominantly rural and largely undeveloped.

At the scale of the Site, the landscape is relatively flat. Within the Site, elevation varies only by 10 metres, ranging from approx. 60m AOD to 70m AOD. These minor changes in elevation within the Site are indicative of features within the wider landscape. The wider landscape is characterised by low-

relief, elongated ridges as part of the gently rolling, undulating drumlin landscape as can be seen below in Figure 13-10. Drumady Lough is located to the east of the proposed turbines.

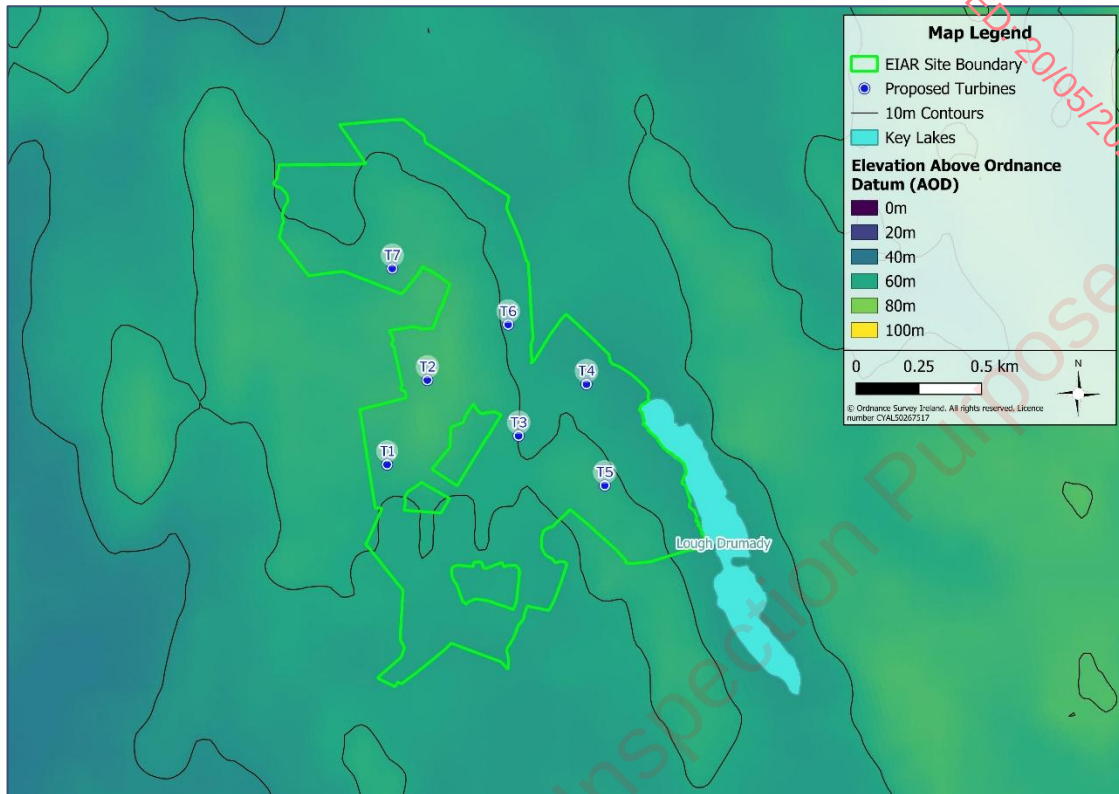


Figure 13-10 DEM of the surrounding area, indicating the low-relief elongated ridges of the drumlin landscape.

Due to the low-relief undulating nature of the Site, long-range views are limited, with visibility largely contained within the Site itself (see Plate 13-14). However, there are some distant views of sensitive receptors seen on the gently undulating landform in the distance, as can be seen in Plate 13-15 below.



Plate 13-14 Views north-west from within the Site, approx. 120m east of turbine T7



Plate 13-15 Views east towards the existing Mace Upper and Magheramore wind farms, approx. 20m from turbine T3

While views from within the Site are primarily of surrounding agricultural fields, some distant undulating mountainous landforms of the Patry Mountains and Croagh Patrick (situated approximately 37.8 km west of proposed turbine, T7) which can be seen as a faint outline on a clear day (see Plate 13-16 below).



Plate 13-16 Zoomed in picture westward towards Croagh Patrick, approx. 37.8km west of nearest turbine (T7).

Landscape of the Proposed Grid Connection

As outlined in Chapter 4, it is intended to connect the Proposed Wind Farm to the national grid via a new onsite 'loop-in' 110kV substation connected to the nearby Cloon to Castlebar 110kV overhead transmission line via approximately 982 metres (m) of underground cabling route which will run in a north-eastward direction from the proposed onsite 110kV substation through agricultural land to the existing overhead line. The existing overhead line will be broken by 2 no. end masts (lattice type towers) to facilitate the connection to the Proposed Wind Farm. (Figure 13-11). The 2 no. new end masts will be located along the same linear path as the existing Castlebar-Cloon OHL.

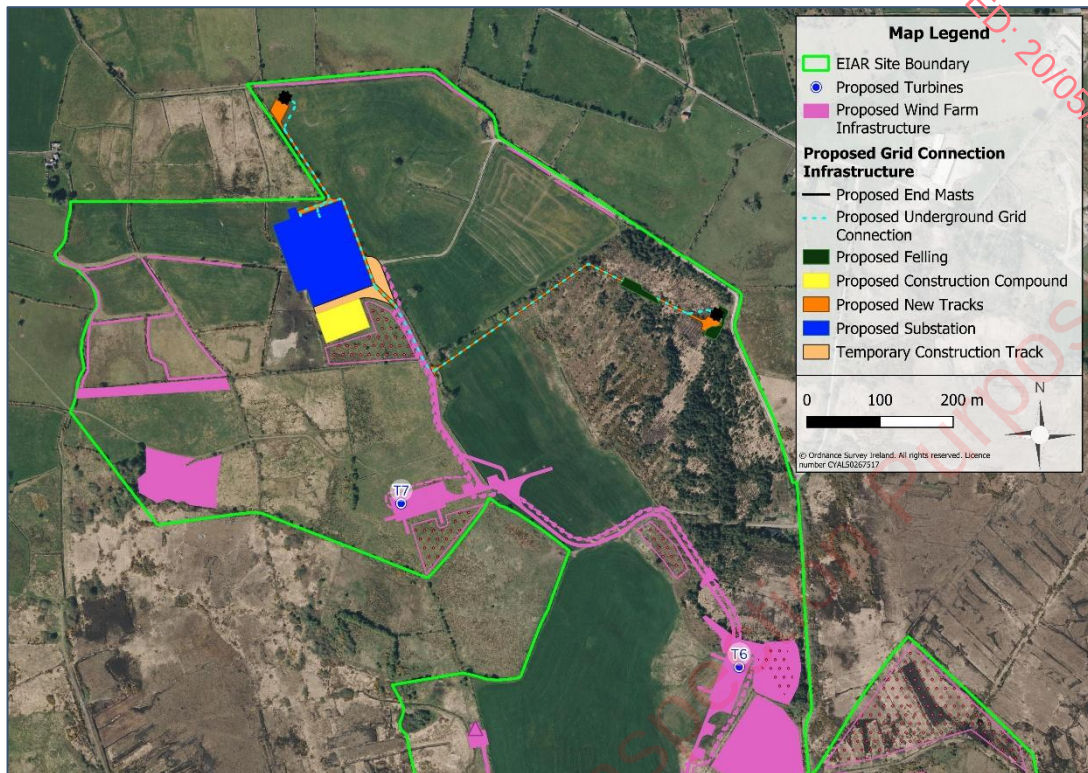


Figure 13-11 Aerial view of the Proposed Grid Connection.

The proposed onsite 110kV substation is located on a relative flat area of land within the undulating drumlin landscape approximately 295m north from the nearest proposed turbine, T7. The land cover of the field in which the proposed 110kV substation is proposed is a degraded agricultural field comprising dense shrub and tree vegetation (Plate 13-17). Sensitive receptors are seen in the distant background on elevated terrain. Woodland and treeline/ hedgerow planting and bolstering are proposed along the western and north-eastern boundary of the proposed onsite 110kV substation as part of the Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan (BMEP) (Appendix 6-4), which will provide some visual screening. Visual effects arising as a result of this element of the Proposed Project are discussed in full in Section 13.7.5.4 below.



Plate 13-17 Views west towards the proposed 110kV substation location



Figure 13-12 Approximate locations of the proposed 110kV substation and 2 no. new end-masts.

2 no. new end-masts will be constructed to facilitate the connection of the proposed onsite 110kV substation via underground cabling to the existing Castlebar-Cloon OHL (approx. locations in Figure 13-12). 3 no. wooden poles that are located underneath the existing Castlebar-Cloon OHL will be removed following construction (see Appendix 4-2: *Grid Connection Infrastructure* for further detail). The western-most proposed end-mast will be located to the north of the proposed onsite 110kV substation within an agricultural field (see Plate 13-18). The eastern-most end mast will be located to the northeast of the proposed onsite 110kV substation adjacent to existing confiner trees (see Plate 13-19).



Plate 13-18 Location of the western-most end mast at the north-west of the Site in an agricultural field lined with vegetation.



Plate 13-19 View of the shrubby vegetation at the location of the second eastern- most end-mast.

13.4.3

Sensitivity of the Site: Landscape Value & Susceptibility to Change

Landscape ‘Value’ was assessed in order to determine the landscape ‘Sensitivity’ of the Proposed Project to establish the capacity of the immediate landscape in which the Proposed Project will be built, as is prescribed by best practice guidance (GLVIA3, p.80):

‘...as part of the baseline description the value of the potentially affected landscape should be established’.

The landscape sensitivity of the 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 Site. The 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.

The ratings of Value and Susceptibility range from High, Medium, or Low, while the overall Sensitivity is assigned as **Very High**, **High**, **Medium** or **Low**, following criteria outlined in the full detailed methodology, presented in *Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology* (Section 1.7: Assessing Landscape Effects).

Table 13-2 Indicators of Landscape Value and Susceptibility to Change

Indicator	Description
Landscape Designations	The Site is located within Policy Area 4 – Drumlins and Inland Lowlands, which has the lowest sensitivity (medium) to wind farm development compared to the other Policy Areas in County Mayo. No designated ‘Vulnerable Features’, designated ‘Scenic Routes’, or ‘Designated Scenic Routes with Views’ fall within the Site itself. The Site is located within an area classified as ‘Tier 1- Preferred (cluster of turbines)’ as set out in the RES for County Mayo.
Landscape Elements Quality / Condition	This refers to the physical state of the landscape and the condition of individual elements. The Site is a modified rural landscape, characterised by a mix of agricultural pastures, peatlands with shrubs, and wetlands creating a patchwork of land uses. The condition of the landscape is degraded in several locations within the Site due to high levels of human modification and alteration.
Scenic / Aesthetic Qualities	While the Site retains some rural aesthetic quality due to its remote location, the human influence arising from agricultural land-use and historical peat activities detracts from the rural aesthetic qualities of the Site itself.
Rarity or Conservation Interests	There are no designated areas of conservation within the Site itself. The vast majority of the Site comprises of cutover or open cutaway peat, improved agricultural grassland and forestry. Small tracts of forestry and other boundary vegetation around the site are valuable biodiversity corridors. A comprehensive description and assessment of the biodiversity within the Site is contained in Chapter 6 – <i>Biodiversity</i> .

Perceptual Qualities (Tranquillity / Wilderness / Naturalness)	The extensive modifications resulting from human activities has led the landscape being primarily characterised as a degraded agricultural landscape. Such views of agricultural and peatland activity as seen within the Site are common throughout the local area, proving it to be a common land-use activity within the landscape. As a result, the landscape exhibits limited naturalness and a diminished sense of wilderness, despite its rural setting.
Recreational Value	The Knockaunakill Loop follows a local road along the northern extent of the Site. This section of the route extends for approximately 2km of the overall 8km loop.
Cultural Meaning / Associations	There are no recorded archaeological sites, or groups of sites, within the Proposed Wind Farm as detailed in Chater 14 – <i>Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage</i> .

In consideration of the factors detailed in the table above, and the designations outlined in the MCDP, the landscape value of the Site is deemed to be **'Low'**. Excepting for a small section of the Knockaunakill Loop which passes through to the north of the Site, there is little to no recreational value to the Site itself, and it is a landscape which has undergone a degree of human modification due to current and historic land uses such as peatland activity and agricultural fields. All of the proposed turbines are located within an area designated as "Tier 1- Preferred (Cluster of Turbines)" for wind energy development, and are located within Policy Area 4, which has the lowest designated sensitivity (medium) to wind farm development compared to the other Policy Areas in County Mayo. In consideration of these factors the susceptibility of the Site to the proposed change is considered **'Medium'**. On balance, the landscape sensitivity of the Proposed Project is deemed **'Low'**.

13.4.3.1 Landscape Characterisation in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019)

This section considers the context of the Proposed Project based on siting and design guidance in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) with respect to landscape and visual effects. Here, we identify the appropriate landscape character type defined by the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and describe the landscape type of the Site in that context.

Section 6.9 of the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Section 6.10 of the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) are titled *'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'
- **'Hilly and Flat Farmland' – category selected by this assessment**
- '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 Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) note 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 *EIAR Volume 2: Photomontage Booklet*, as well as

from other mapping and imagery present in this Chapter, the Proposed Wind Farm was considered to be a cross between either 'Hilly and Flat Farmland' Landscape Character Type and/or 'Flat Peatland' Landscape Character Type.

Site visits determined that while individual turbines may be located within areas exhibiting characteristics of both 'Flat Peatland' and 'Hilly and Flat Farmland' landscapes, the entire visual unit(s) in which the proposed turbines are viewed in should be taken into consideration (the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), page 47; the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019), page 100). The wider landscape context of the undulating agricultural farmland landscape strongly influences the approach to siting and design of the proposed turbines. Therefore, the siting and design guidance for the '**Hilly and Flat Farmland**' Landscape Character Type has been applied, which best reflects the landscape of the Proposed Wind Farm and the visual unit(s) in which the proposed turbines are viewed in.

'Hilly and Flat Farmland'

The key characteristics of Hilly and Flat Farmland as stated in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) (p.52) and the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) (p.104) are:

- *'Intensively managed farmland, whether flat, undulating or hilly;*
- *A patchwork of fields delineated by hedgerows varying in size;*
- *Farmsteads and houses are scattered throughout, as well as occasional villages and*
- *towns;*
- *Roads, and telegraph and power lines and poles are significant components; and*
- *A working and inhabited landscape type'.*

This LVIA considers the importance of the following design consideration for Hilly and Flat Farmland according to the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) (p.104):

'The essential key here is one of rational order and simplicity, as well as respect for scale and human activities. The predominance of field pattern introduces an organised patchwork landcover structure that not only prompts a similar response in the siting and design of wind energy developments, but also provides a spatial structure and rhythm. Although hilly and flat farmland type is usually not highly sensitive in terms of scenery, due regard must be given to houses, farmsteads and centres of population'.

All relevant siting and design guidance (including **Location, Spatial Extent, Spacing, Layout, Height and Cumulative Effect**) given for 'Hilly and Flat Farmland' in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) are set out below:

Location

"Location on ridges and plateaux is preferred, not only to maximise exposure, but also to ensure a reasonable distance from dwellings. Sufficient distance should be maintained from farmsteads, houses, and centres of population in order to ensure that wind energy developments do not visually dominate them. Elevated locations are also more likely to achieve optimum aesthetic effect. Turbines perceived as being in close proximity to, or overlapping other landscape elements, such as buildings, roads and power or telegraph poles and lines may result in visual clutter and confusion. While in practice this can be tolerated, in highly sensitive landscapes every attempt should be made to avoid it."

In terms of **location**, the proposed turbines are sited in cutover bogs, forestry and agricultural fields. As such, the Proposed Wind Farm site and immediate surrounds are not highly sensitive landscapes.

One rationale for the recommendation (cited above) to site turbines on elevated ridgelines within this landscape type, is to ensure a reasonable distance from dwellings and population centres, whilst avoiding visual dominance. In this regard, the proposed turbines are set back a reasonable distance from dwellings, exceeding the 500m set-back distance as outlined in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), and also adhere to the recommended 4 x tip height set-back distance in accordance with the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).

Spatial Extent

“This can be expected to be quite limited in response to the scale of fields and such topographic features as hills and knolls. Sufficient distance from buildings, most likely to be critical at lower elevations, must be established in order to avoid dominance by the wind energy development.”

In terms of **spatial extent**, as noted above, the sufficient distance from buildings, critical at lower elevations is achieved through the spatial extent of the Proposed Wind Farm site, with the proposed turbines adhering to the 500m set-back distance as outlined in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) as well as the recommended 4 x tip height set-back distance (for third party Sensitive Properties) in accordance with the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) .

Spacing

“The optimum spacing pattern is likely to be regular, responding to the underlying pattern field pattern. The fields comprising the site might provide the structure for spacing of turbines. However, this may not always be the case and a balance will have to be struck between adequate spacing to achieve operability and a correspondence to field pattern.”

In terms of spacing, the proposed turbines generally follow a regular spacing pattern that broadly corresponds with the underlying field pattern. As the Wind Farm site comprises multiple landscape types (i.e. cutover bog, forestry and agricultural land), strict regular spacing is not entirely allowed for. Accordingly, the proposed turbines have adopted a balanced approach, whereby turbine spacing responds where possible to the varied land cover while striking a balance across the different landscape types.

Layout

“The optimum layout is linear, and staggered linear on ridges (which are elongated) and hilltops (which are peaked), but a clustered layout would also be appropriate on a hilltop. Where a wind energy development is functionally possible on a flat landscape a grid layout would be aesthetically acceptable.”

In terms of **layout**, the proposed turbines generally follow rough grid layout with a relatively flat landscape. The turbines are evenly spaced in lines that give a sense of order to the layout when viewed from multiple orientations in the immediate surrounds.

Height

“Turbines should relate in terms of scale to landscape elements and will therefore tend not to be tall. However, an exception to this would be where they are on a high ridge or hilltop of relatively large scale. The more undulating the topography the greater the acceptability of an uneven profile, provided it does not result in significant visual confusion and conflict.”

In terms of **height**, the proposed turbines will be tall features within the landscape. Overall, the proposed turbines retain a relatively even profile; when viewing the turbines, the nacelles are positioned

at relatively even heights, improving visual coherence when viewed from areas within the wider landscape.

Cumulative Effect

"It is important that wind energy development is never perceived to visually dominate. However, given that these landscapes comprise hedgerows and often hills, and that views across the landscape will likely be intermittent and partially obscured, visibility of two or more wind energy developments is usually acceptable."

In terms of **cumulative effect**, there are no existing wind farms within 5km of the Proposed Wind Farm. Cumulative landscape and visual effects are discussed in Section 13.7.5.5.

13.4.4 Landscape Character of the Wider Landscape Setting

The landscape surrounding the Proposed Wind Farm is of a rural agricultural landscape. It is a working, settled landscape with clusters and linear arrays of residential receptors scattered along the surrounding agricultural field system. These agricultural fields dominate visually, providing a sense of order to the landscape. These fields are defined by visible boundaries comprised of hedgerows and treelines (as seen in Plate 13-20 below). Whilst at a macro-scale, the wider landscape is a relatively flat agricultural landscape, it is interspersed by localised undulations formed from the drumlin landscape, restricting visibility in these directions.



Plate 13-20 Drone Image: Views south-west from the townland of Knockaunakill

Agricultural land, bogs and peatlands constitute a large portion of the landcover in the wider area. These areas have a cultural history of turf-cutting activities. Due to the historic peatland activity in the LVIA Study Area, large tracts of shrub vegetation and forestry are also prominent throughout the landscape, forming a notable element of the character of the landscape.



Plate 13-21 Drone Image: Views northwest of the landscape, in the townland of Knockroe

Overall, the drumlin landscape within the LVIA Study Area is predominantly flat with localised hills, gradually ascending in a north-easterly direction. The terrain rises sharply to the north towards Cuillalea Hill. To the west, the landscape is primarily flat and low-lying where Lough Carra and Lough Mask are located in and contain the only scenic routes in the entire LVIA Study Area.

The linear arrays of residential receptors are aligned along the local road network that surround the agricultural fields. These roads connect with the major transport routes within the LVIA Study Area such as the N60 National Road, which links the primary settlements within the LVIA Study Area, such as Claremorris, located approximately 5.4km east from the nearest proposed turbine, and Castlebar, located approximately 17.8km away from the nearest proposed turbine. The closest settlement is the historic town of Mayo Abbey, located approx. 2.5km from the nearest proposed turbine. The Irish Rail network, which connects major towns such as Castlebar, Claremorris, and Ballyhaunis passes within the LVIA Study Area, coming within 1.5km of the nearest proposed turbine, T4.

The impact assessments detailed later in this chapter (Section 13.7) provide a comprehensive evaluation of the likely significant landscape and visual effects from key receptors where theoretical visibility on the ZTV is present.

13.5 Visual Baseline

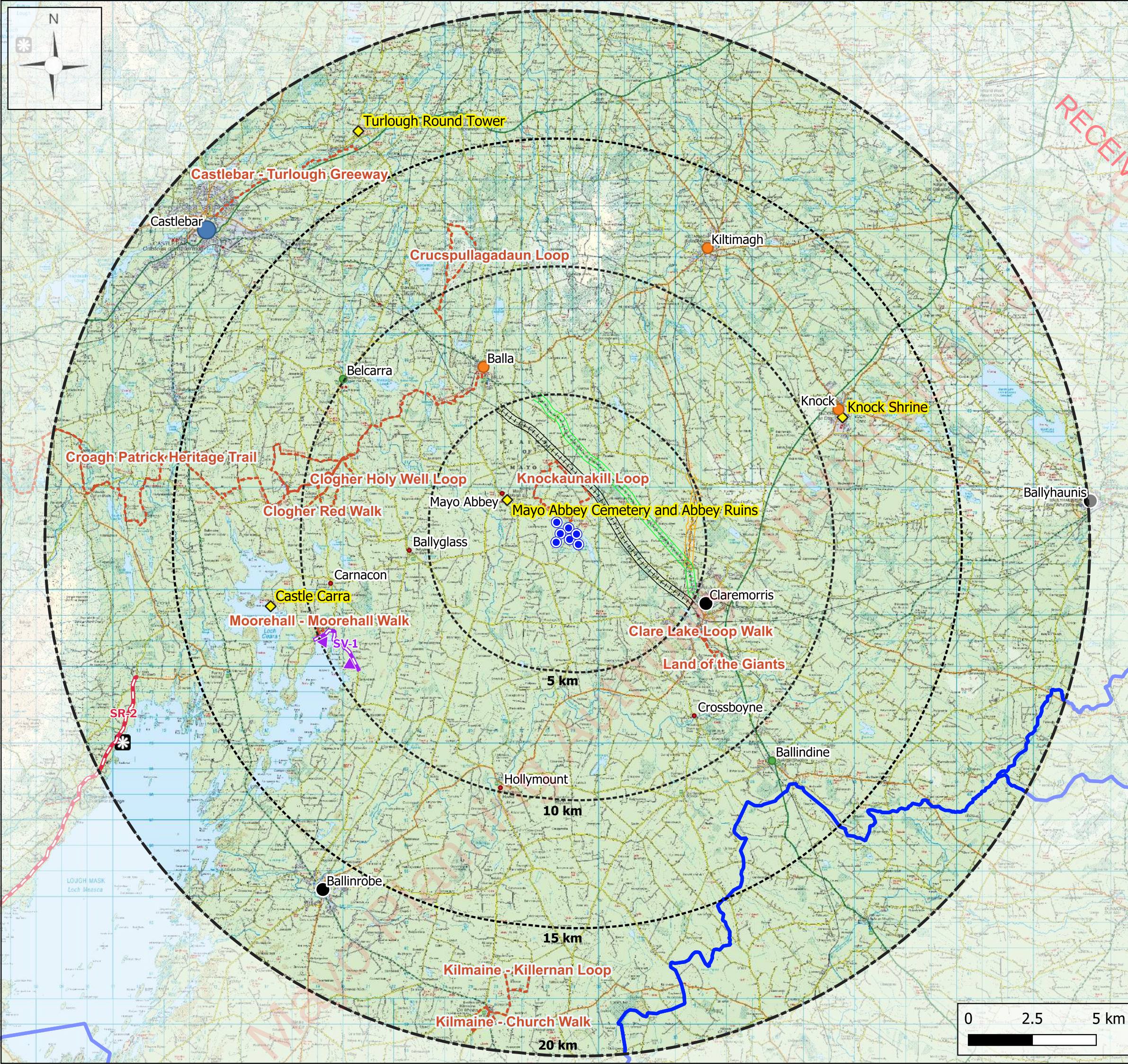
13.5.1 Visual Receptors

The main purpose of establishing the visual baseline is to identify the key visual receptors that should be considered for viewpoint selection. Viewpoints are locations from which visual effects are assessed using photomontages (See *Appendix 13-1 – LVIA Methodology*). To this end the following have been identified:

- > Designated Scenic Routes and Scenic Views
- > Settlements
- > Recreational Routes and Tourist Designations
 - Waymarked Walking Routes
 - Cycle Routes
 - Scenic Drives
 - Tourist Routes (e.g. Wild Atlantic Way)
- > Viewing Points (e.g. marked on OS Maps)
- > Transport Routes

All visual receptors identified in the visual baseline are shown on Figure 13-13 below. These visual receptors are listed in tables in the following sections along with theoretical visibility at those locations indicated by the Visual Baseline and Half-Blade ZTV map – Figure 13-14 below.

During site visits conducted during 2023, 2024, and 2025 the likely visibility of the Proposed Project was appraised from receptors where the ZTV has indicated theoretical visibility. Visual receptors are scoped out from further assessment when there is 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.



Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- County Borders
- Proposed Turbines
- Co. Mayo Settlements**
 - Strategic Growth Towns
 - Self Sustaining Growth Towns
 - Self Sustaining Towns
 - Rural Settlements
 - Rural Villages
- Visual Receptors**
 - Tailte Eireann Viewing Points
 - Co. Mayo Tourism Designations
 - Co. Mayo Recreational Routes
- Co. Mayo Scenic Designations**
 - Scenic Routes
 - Scenic Routes with Views
- Key Transport Routes within 5km**
 - Regional roads
 - National roads
 - Railways

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-13

Drawing Title

Visual Baseline

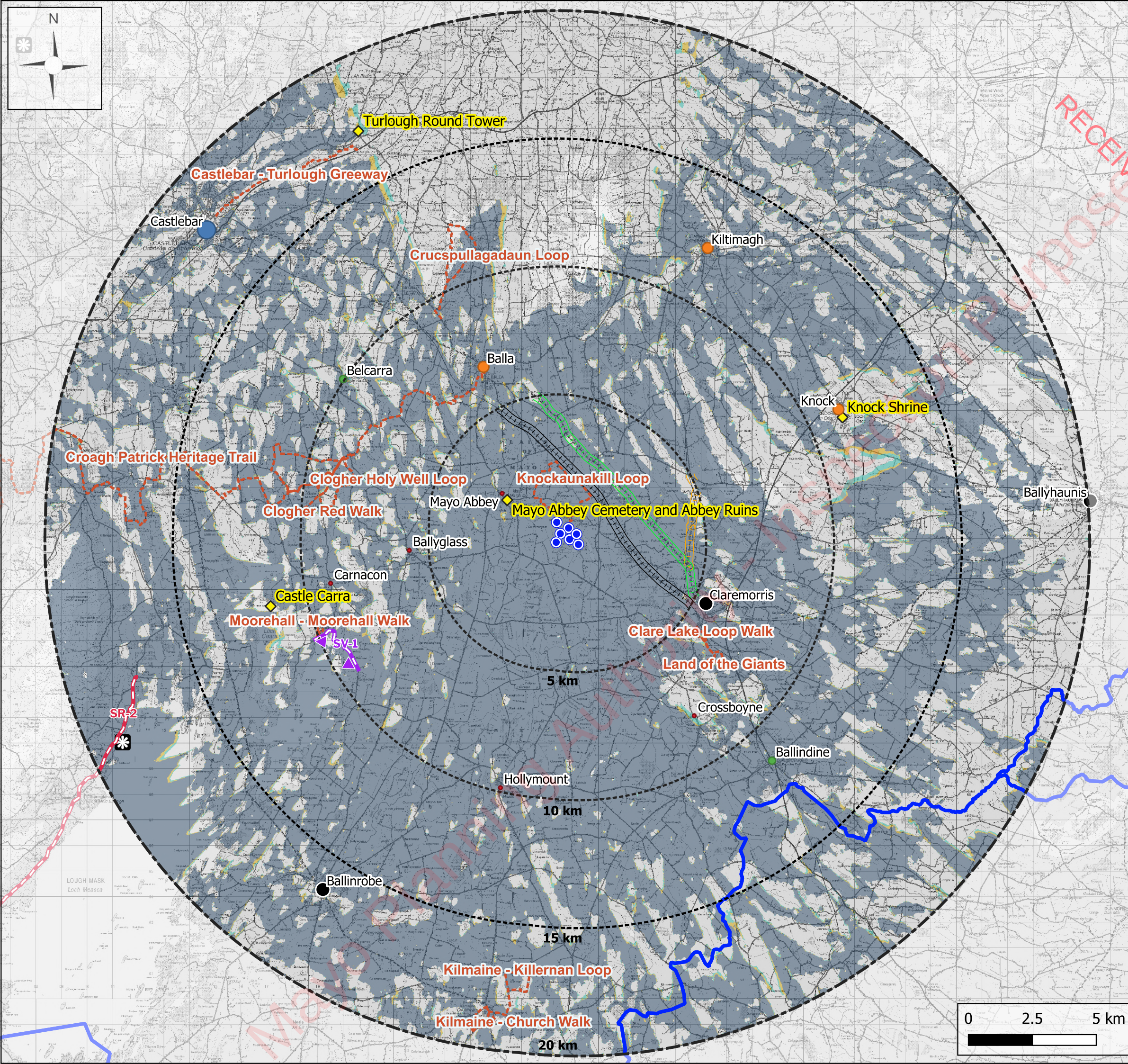
Project Title

Cunlaghfadda Green Energy Project

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:140,000	220825	15.04.2026	GL	DM



Planning and Environmental Consultants



Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- County Borders
- Proposed Turbines
- Co. Mayo Settlements**
 - Strategic Growth Towns
 - Self Sustaining Growth Towns
 - Self Sustaining Towns
 - Rural Settlements
 - Rural Villages
- Visual Receptors**
 - Tailte Eireann Viewing Points
 - Co. Mayo Tourism Designations
 - Co. Mayo Recreational Routes
- Co. Mayo Scenic Designations**
 - Scenic Routes
 - Scenic Routes with Views
- Key Transport Routes within 5km**
 - Regional roads
 - National roads
 - Railways
- Half-Blade Zone of Theoretical Visibility**
 - 1-2 Turbines Theoretically Visible
 - 3-4 Turbines Theoretically Visible
 - 5-7 Turbines Theoretically Visible

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-14

Visual Baseline with Zone of
Theoretical Visibility

Cunlaghfadda Green Energy Project

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:140,000	220825	16.03.2026	GL	DM

13.5.1.1 Designated Scenic Routes and Views

As reported previously in Section 13.4.1.1.6, and shown in Figure 13-13, there are 2 No. designated scenic routes and scenic routes with views within the LVIA Study Area. Of these, 1 no. (SV-1) is located within 10km of the proposed turbines and 1 no. (SR-2) is located within 20km of the proposed turbines. See the scoping of all the following receptors in Section 13.5.2.

13.5.1.2 Tailte Éireann Viewpoints

There is 1 no. Tailte Éireann Viewing Area located within the LVIA Study Area, located within 20km of the proposed turbines, as seen in Figure 13-13 and Figure 13-14.

13.5.1.3 Settlements

The settlement hierarchy reported in the MCDP was consulted to identify the settlements within the LVIA Study Area. This LVIA focuses on key settlements and population centres within the LVIA Study Area such as large towns and villages within 20km and smaller rural settlements of local importance within 10km.

13.5.1.4 Recreational Routes

Recreational routes are sensitive receptors as people are likely to be using them in a recreational capacity where value is likely to be placed upon views and the scenic amenities of the landscape. The term 'recreational routes' encompasses the following:

- Waymarked walking routes;
- Cycle routes;
- Scenic drives and tourist routes (e.g., the Wild Atlantic Way).

According to sources including such as Tailte Éireann maps and Sport Ireland Designated Cycle Routes and Trails, 16 no. designated routes were identified in County Mayo within the LVIA Study Area. In general, many such routes exist of differing scale and prominence, thus only the recreational routes of county- or national-level importance which are featured on the available websites or are designated in county-level policies were included in this LVIA.

13.5.1.5 Recreational, Cultural Heritage and Tourist Destinations

Popular recreational, cultural heritage and tourist destinations in the LVIA Study Area were investigated through a desktop exploration of localised tourism plans as well as considering the most popular tourism destinations in County Mayo posted on [Tripadvisor.ie](https://www.tripadvisor.ie). Note that 'cultural heritage' destinations in this section refers to those of popular renown in the sense of general tourism; a detailed assessment of archaeological cultural heritage sites in relation to the Proposed Project is provided in this EIAR, Chapter 13: Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage. A full scoping exercise on these receptors is provided in Section 13.5.2.

13.5.1.6 Transport Routes

Onsite visibility appraisal determined that most visibility of the proposed turbines will occur within 3-5km of the Proposed Wind Farm from the local road network surrounding the proposed turbines, and there is also potential for visibility to occur for users of N60 National, R320, Regional Road and the Railway where they pass within 5km of the Site. These are considered in the preliminary analysis.

13.5.2 Preliminary Analysis: Visual Receptors

13.5.2.1 Visual Receptors Scoped In for Further Assessment

The receptors in Table 13-3 identified in the LVIA Study Area were scoped in for assessment in the LVIA and are mapped above in Figure 13-13 and Figure 13-14; see the full detailed methodology in *Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology* for the analysis of scoping receptors in and out of assessment.

Table 13-3 Visual Receptors Scoped in for Further Assessment

Receptor	Description	Direction of View	Directed to Turbines	Theoretical Visibility	Photomontage Viewpoint No.
Up to 5km					
Settlements	Mayo Abbey (Tier 5 – Rural Village)	N/A	N/A	Full Theoretical Visibility	VP08, VP09
Recreational, Cultural Heritage and Tourist Destinations	Mayo Abbey Cemetery and Abbey Ruins	N/A	N/A	Full Theoretical Visibility	VP08, VP09
Recreational Routes	Knockaunakill Loop: an 8km loop walk	N/A	N/A	Full Theoretical Visibility	VP02
Road Network	N60 National Road Railway R320 Regional Road	N/A	N/A	Primarily full Theoretical Visibility	VP01, VP13, VP15
5-10km					
Scenic Route and Views	SV-1¹: “Local road north-east of Lough Carra, from Carrownacon to north of Ballygarries (looking towards Lough Carra)”	South/south-west	No	Primarily full Theoretical Visibility	VP05
Settlements	Claremorris (Tier 2 – Self-Sustaining Growth Town)	N/A	N/A	Full Theoretical Visibility	VP13, VP17

¹ As the Mayo County Development Plan (MCDP) 2022–2028 does not assign reference numbers to designated scenic routes, this report applies a numbering system to facilitate clarity in mapping, labelling, and cross-referencing.

	Balla (Tier 3 – Self-Sustaining Town)				
Recreational Routes	Croagh Patrick Heritage Trail: <i>“The Croagh Patrick Heritage Trail, a National Waymarked Way, extends from the town of Knock, 20km south of Knock International Airport, in east Mayo, to the village of Murrisk at the base of Mayo’s holy mountain, Croagh Patrick. The trail is 85km in length and mainly at low level, but the walker should note that the trail does reach a high point of 315 metres around the foothills of Croagh Patrick. There is an alternative coastal road route from Prospect to Murrisk.”</i> (MayoCountyCouncil.ie) (also includes Clogher Bog Loop, Clogher Holy Well Loop, and Clogher Red Walk with disconnect from the main trail and loop back rejoin it)	N/A	N/A	Mix of Full Theoretical Visibility and no Theoretical Visibility along the extent of the trail. On-site appraisals determined that visibility may occur from elevated vantage points along the trail.	VP19
10-15km					
Recreational Routes	Crucspullagadaun Loop: <i>“This pleasant walk brings the walker on very quiet minor road by a mixture of agricultural land and stretches of forestry with a section through one of these on forest track and a path through the trees, while being treated to fine views of the surrounding countryside and beyond a great vista of Lough Conn, Croagh Patrick, Clare Island, Achill Island the Nephin Mountains.”</i>	N/A	N/A	Sections of Full Theoretical Visibility. On-site appraisals determined that visibility likely to occur along elevated vantage points along the loop	VP11

	(Mayo.ie)				
Settlements	Kiltimagh (Tier 3 – Self-Sustaining Town) Ballindine (Tier 4 – Rural Settlement)	N/A	N/A	Full theoretical visibility	Photowire Images in Section 13.7.5.2.4
15-20km					
Scenic Route	SR-2: “Local road from Maumtrasna to Srah (west of Lough Mask)”	Primarily south-east, wide view	Yes	Full theoretical visibility	VP12
Taillte Ireland	Lough Mask Viewing Point	South-east	Partially	Yes	VP12
Recreational Route	Killmaine - Loop / Nature Walk Kilmaine - Church Walk	N/A	Partially	Mix of Full Theoretical Visibility and no Theoretical Visibility along the extent of the trail. On-site appraisals determined that some distant views may occur from elevated vantage points.	VP10

13.5.2.2 Visual Receptors Scoped Out for Further Assessment

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, direction of views and the nature and sensitivity of the receptors at a particular location (see Section 1.4.3 of *Appendix 13-1 Methodology* for further information). Please see Table 13-4 for list of receptors which have been scoped out for further assessment.

Table 13-4 Visual Receptors Scoped out From Further Assessment

Receptor	Description	Rationale for Scoping Out
Up to 10km		
Settlements	Crossboyne (Tier 5 – Rural Village) Hollymount (Tier 5 - Rural Village) Carnacon (Tier 5 - Rural Village) Ballyglass (Tier 5 - Rural Village) Belcarra (Tier 4 – Rural Settlement)	No theoretical visibility (e.g. large portions of Crossboyne) and/or further visual screening will occur from the built environment of the settlement and vegetation on intervening elevated ridges. Significant visual effects are not likely to occur.
Recreational Routes	Clare Lake Loop Walk Land of the Giants Trail Moorehall Walk	Visibility is likely to be very limited, as the routes are either located within settlements (where the built environment provides substantial visual screening), within areas of dense forest cover, or views are oriented in opposing directions to the proposed turbines (e.g. towards Lough Carra). Significant visual effects are not likely to occur.
10-15km		
Settlements	Knock (Tier 3 – Self-Sustaining Town)	No Theoretical Visibility
Recreational, Cultural Heritage and Tourist Destinations	Knock Shrine Castle Carra	No Theoretical Visibility
15-20km		
Settlements	Castlebar (Tier 1 – Strategic Growth Town) Ballinrobe (Tier 2 – Self-Sustaining Growth Town) Ballyhaunis (Tier 2 – Self-Sustaining Growth Town)	At these distances beyond 15km, within these low-lying settlements, visibility is likely to be very limited (e.g. Ballinrobe), have very little theoretical visibility (e.g. Castlebar) or have no theoretical visibility (e.g. Ballyhaunis), with further visual screening provided by the built environment and vegetation

Receptor	Description	Rationale for Scoping Out
		on intervening ridgelines. Where visibility does occur, the proposed turbines will be seen as small-scale elements relative to the landscape in the distant background. Significant visual effects are not likely to occur.
Recreational Routes	Castlebar - Turlough Greenway	Primarily no theoretical visibility occurs along the Castlebar-Turlough Greenway. At these distances beyond 15km, the two very small areas where visibility could occur is likely to be very limited due to distance and intervening above-ground features (built environment and vegetation). Where visibility does occur, the proposed turbines will be seen as small-scale elements relative to the landscape in the distant background. Significant visual effects are not likely to occur.
Recreational, Cultural Heritage and Tourist Destinations	Turlough Round Tower	Some partial theoretical visibility may occur, although at this distance beyond 15km, visibility is likely to be very limited due to distance and intervening above-ground features (built environment and vegetation). Where visibility does occur, the proposed turbines will be seen as small-scale elements relative to the landscape in the distant background. Significant visual effects are not likely to occur.

13.5.3 Residential Receptors

During site visits conducted in 2023, 2024 and 2025, visibility appraisals determined that most visibility of the proposed turbines will occur within 5km. It is a settled landscape, with residential housing being organised along the local road network as well as in small settlement clusters around local crossroads and junctions. Some residential receptors located in close proximity to the 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 Wind Farm were selected for inclusion in the *Photomontage Booklet* and are assessed in *Appendix 13-3: Photomontage Visual Impact Assessment Tables*, as well as discussed later in this Chapter.

The following representative viewpoints (VPs) are located in proximity to residential receptors and settlement centres within 5km from the Site:

- VP01: Townland of Brees, approx. 2.9km north of proposed turbines;
- VP02: Knockaunakill, approx. 690m north of proposed turbines;
- VP03: Townland of Ahena, approx. 3.2km south of proposed turbines;

- > VP04: Townland of Knockrickard, approx. 1km south of proposed turbines;
- > VP06: Townland of Oory, 4km south-west of proposed turbines;
- > VP07: Townland of Knockroe, 700m west of proposed turbines;
- > VP08: Townland of Lehanagh, 2km north-west from proposed turbines;
- > VP13: Townland of Claremount, 4.7km east from proposed turbines;
- > VP14: Townland of Clogher Beg, 1.4km south-east of proposed turbines;
- > VP15: Townland of Birchfield, 2.5km north-east of proposed turbines;
- > VP18: Townland of Drumady, 660m east of proposed turbines;

The impact of the proposed turbines on residential receptors is discussed in detail in Section 13.7.5.3.

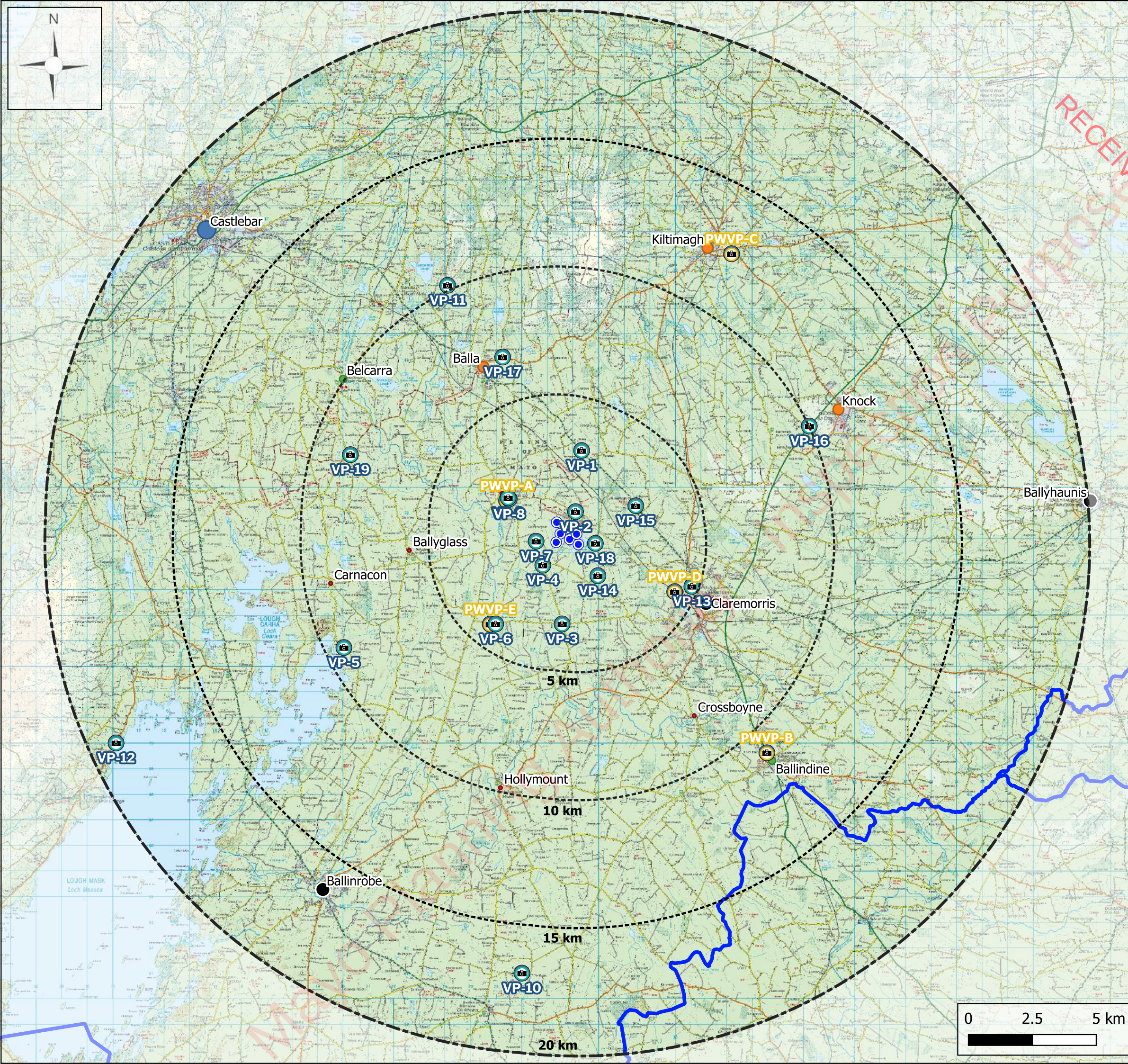
13.5.4 Viewpoint Selection: Photomontage and Photowire Locations

Selection of Main Photomontage Viewpoints

Photomontage imagery was captured from multiple viewpoint locations in the LVIA Study Area; from these, a total of 19 no. photomontage viewpoints were selected for full assessment (named VP01–VP19). These are mapped below in Figure 13-15 (marked as white/blue icons) and presented in the *ELAR Volume 2: Photomontage Booklet* accompanying this report. All VPs are comprehensively assessed in Section 13.7.5.1.2.

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 visual effects of the proposed turbines arising from each viewpoint location are reported below in Section 13.7.5.1. The comprehensive and detailed assessment is presented within the viewpoint (photomontage) impact assessment tables in *Appendix 13-3: Photomontage Visual Impact Assessment Tables*.



Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- County Borders
- Proposed Turbines
- Photomontage Viewpoint Locations
- Photowire Viewpoint Locations
- Co. Mayo Settlements**
 - Strategic Growth Towns
 - Self Sustaining Growth Towns
 - Self Sustaining Towns
 - Rural Settlements
 - Rural Villages

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Drawing No.

Figure 13-15

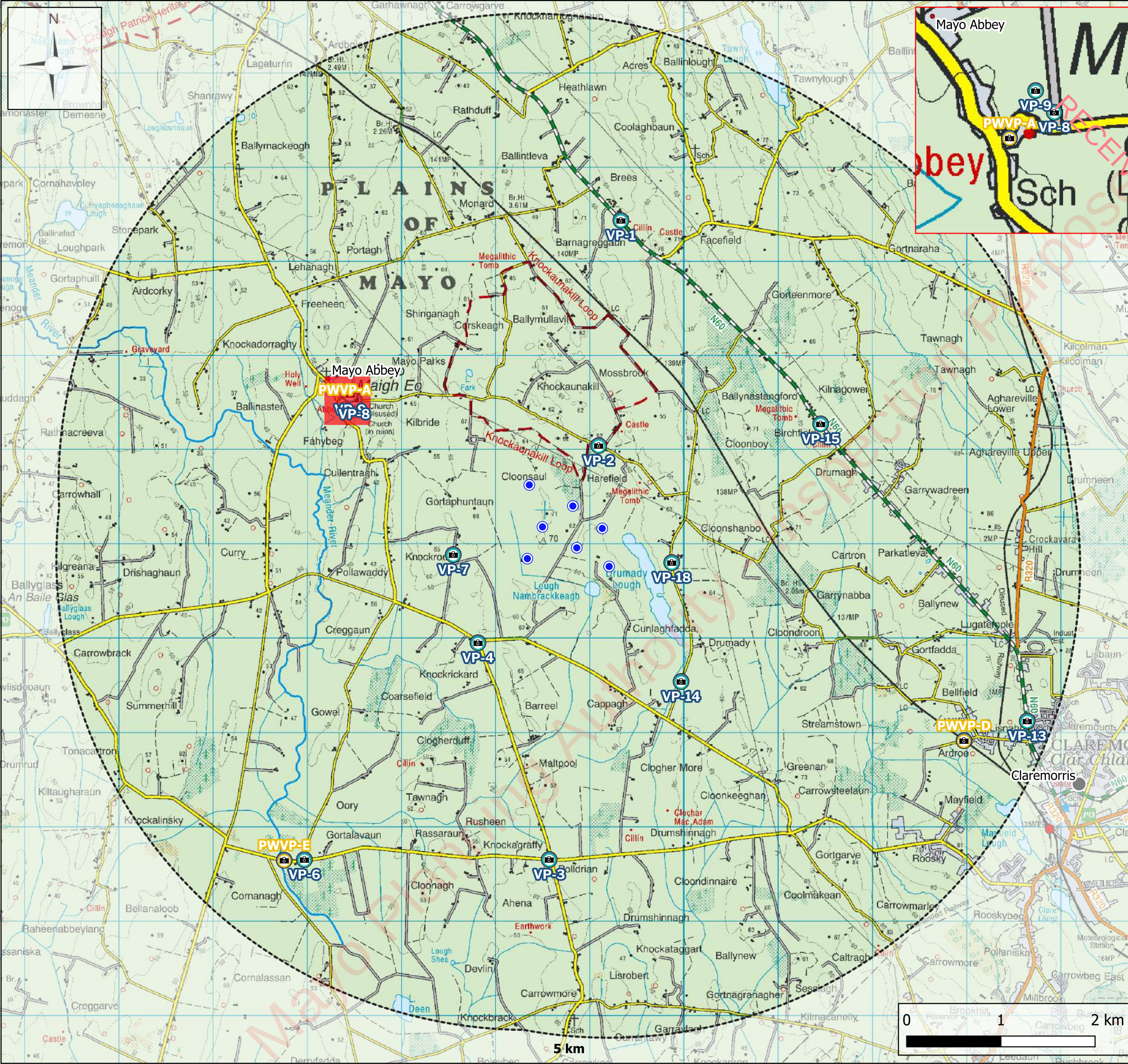
Drawing Title

Photomontage Viewpoint Locations

Project Title

Cunlaghfadda Green Energy Project

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:140,000	220825	08.05.2026	GL	DM



Map Legend

- 5km buffer
- Proposed Turbines
- Photomontage Viewpoint Locations
- Photowire Viewpoint Locations

Co. Mayo Settlements

- Rural Villages

Figure 13-16

Zoom on Photomontage Viewpoint Locations

Cunlaghfadda Green Energy Project

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:38,000	220825	08.05.2026	GL	DM



Planning and Environmental Consultants