

## 11. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

### 11.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) addresses the potential landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Development. The full description of the Proposed Development is provided in Chapter 4 of this EIAR. The emphasis in this chapter is on the likely significant direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Development. The chapter includes the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) methodology, a description of the Proposed Development and the existing baseline landscape, as well as landscape policy and relevant guidance. It includes a description of Meath and Kildare County Council's landscape policy and relevant policy contained in the Maynooth Local Area Plan pertaining to the landscape setting in which the Proposed Development is located.

The landscape of the site and wider area is described in terms of its existing character, which includes a description of landscape value, the susceptibility of the landscape to change and a determination of landscape sensitivity. The landscape and visual impact assessment of the Proposed Development uses representative viewpoints and photomontages. The potential impacts in both landscape and visual terms are then assessed, including cumulative impacts.

This chapter comprises the following sections:

- **Introduction** – Includes a description of the Proposed Development, its location and essential aspects requiring the most consideration from an LVIA perspective.
- **Methodology and Assessment Criteria** – An outline of the methodology and guidance used to conduct the LVIA.
- **Landscape Baseline** – A review of the landscape policy context and landscape designations pertinent to the site; a description of the baseline landscape conditions and character of the Proposed Development site and wider landscape setting; as well as identification of landscape value and landscape sensitivities.
- **Visual Baseline** – An appraisal of likely visibility of the Proposed Development from prominent visual receptors located within 3km of the Proposed Development site, including a description of visibility from designated scenic amenity designations. The visual baseline identifies key visual receptors and locations selected as photomontage viewpoints.
- **Cumulative Baseline** – Identification and description of other planned or permitted large scale developments in the surrounding area.
- **Landscape and Visual Effects** - A determination of the likely significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development, including an assessment of likely cumulative landscape and visual effects. Assessment of effects is informed by a site visit and production of photomontages. Cumulative and in-combination effects are also assessed, addressing the interactions of the various development elements under assessment in this EIAR as well as other permitted and planned developments in the wider landscape area.

#### 11.1.1 Statement of Authority

MKO has developed extensive expertise and experience over the last 15 years in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of a range of projects, including residential developments, quarries, road schemes, wind energy developments and a range of other projects.

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the LVIA chapter of EIA reports for large infrastructure developments. Jack holds an MSc. in Coastal and Marine Environments and a BSc. In Psychology, membership with the Landscape Research Group, as well as membership with the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management.

This chapter was reviewed by Michael Watson. Michael is Project Director and head of the Environmental Team at MKO, an Irish planning and environmental consultancy. Michael has extensive expertise conducting LVIA's and 20 years' professional consultancy experience as a project director, project manager and lead coordinator of environmental impact assessments for large-scale infrastructure projects.

### 11.1.2 'Do Nothing' Scenario

If the Proposed Development were not to proceed, no changes would be made to the current land-use practice. The site would continue to be managed under the existing farming and agricultural practices and the existing road networks would remain as they are. No landscape and visual impact would occur.

### 11.1.3 Proposed Development Description

A comprehensive description of the Proposed Development is included in Chapter 4 of this EIAR. The Proposed Development which is the subject of this LVIA consists of six planning applications encompassing the following development components:

- A Strategic Employment Zone (hereafter referred to as **Site A**) which consists of three office block buildings, public road widening, and road realignment works along the existing R157 Regional Road and L2214-3 Local Road, the delivery of approximately 365m of new public access road under the Maynooth Outer Orbital Road (MOOR) scheme, internal access road and associated car parking;
- Healthcare Facilities (hereafter referred to as **Site B**) which includes a nursing home and primary care centre as well public road widening and road realignment works along the existing R157 Regional Road, internal access road and associated car parking, and all associated infrastructure;
- The Strategic Housing Development (hereafter referred to as **Site C**) will consist of 360 no. residential homes, a creche facility, scout den, public park, internal access roads, approximately 500m of distributor road, approximately 670m of pedestrian and cycle improvements, two pedestrian and cycle bridges over the Blackhall Little and, shared communal and private open space and all associated site development works.
- The Maynooth Outer Orbital Road (hereafter referred to as **the MOOR**) which consists of approximately 1.7km of distributor road, a single span bridge over the River Rive Water and a single span bridge over the Blackhall Little Stream, pedestrian and cycle improvement measures, a pedestrian and cycle bridge adjacent to the Kildare bridge, upgrade works to an existing road and all associated utilities.
- The Kildare Bridge works (hereafter referred to as **Kildare Bridge**) planning application includes road upgrade works to the existing R157 Regional Road, a proposed pedestrian / cycle bridge adjacent to the existing Kildare Bridge, as well as a proposed wastewater connection to the Maynooth Municipal Wastewater Pumping Station to the southeast of the Proposed Development in County Kildare.
- The Moyglare Bridge (hereafter referred to as **Moyglare Bridge**) planning application includes for the provision of an integral single span bridge over the River Rye Water with associated flood plain works and embankments, as well as services and utilities connections.

For the purposes of this EIAR, where the 'Proposed Development' is referred to, this relates to all the project components described in detail in Chapter 4 of this EIAR (and listed above).

To provide a rigorous and robust assessment of the Proposed Development, each component of the six planning applications (listed above - Site A; Site B; Site C; MOOR; Kildare Bridge; Moyglare Bridge) are assessed independently. The landscape and visual assessments will then assess the cumulative impact of the Proposed Development in its entirety in consideration of the proximity, connectivity, shared utilities and infrastructure of the various development components.

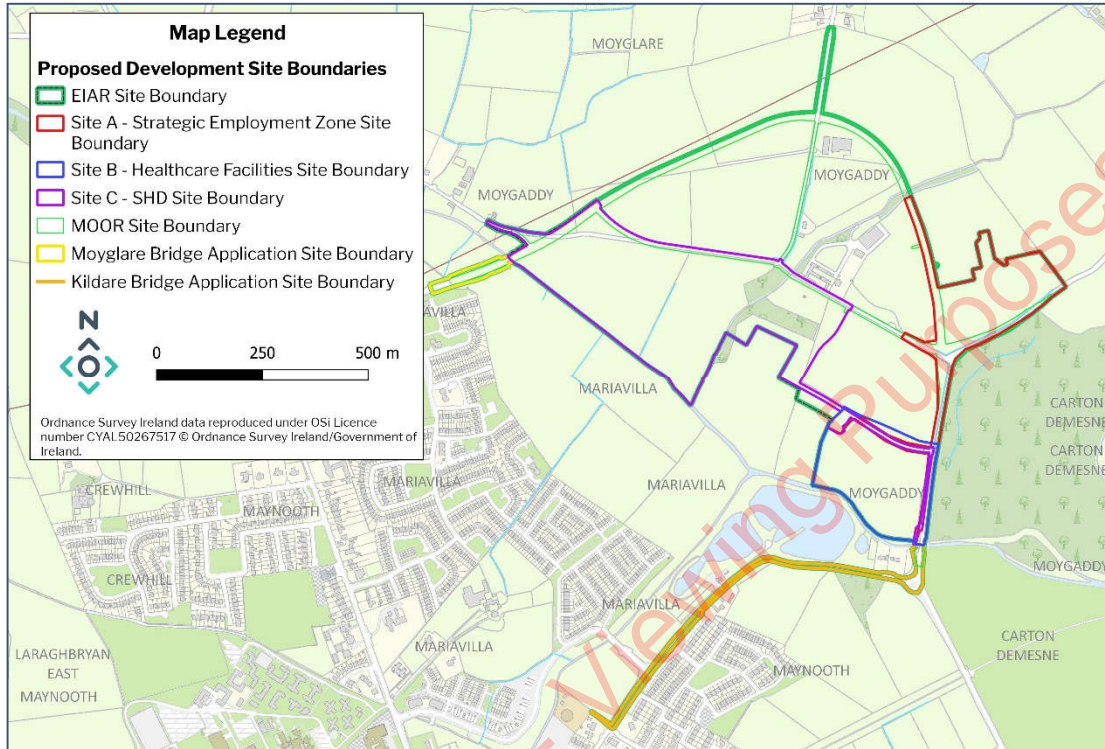


Figure 11-1 Site Boundaries of the Proposed Development

Where applicable and appropriate, this Chapter will also consider the landscape and visual impact of the Proposed Development in combination with other permitted or planned developments in the vicinity, including all those listed in Chapter 2 of this EIAR. Relevant permitted and planned developments assessed are identified in Section 11.5 – *Cumulative Baseline*.

During the conduct of an LVIA it is important to focus on “*the essential aspects of the scheme that will potentially give rise to its effects on the landscape and visual amenity*” (GLVIA3, 2013). The following Proposed Development descriptions (with the aid of visuals) for Site A, Site B, Site C, the MOOR, Kildare Bridge, and Moyglare Bridge focus on the essential elements from a landscape and visual perspective.

#### Site A: Proposed Development Description (Essential Elements from an LVIA Perspective)

The proposed Site A - Strategic Employment Zone includes the construction of:

- Three no. office buildings; Block A (5 storey), Block B (3 Storey) & Block C (3 Storey);
- Provision of internal access roads and associate car parking spaces, and delivery of a c.365m section of the proposed Maynooth Outer Orbital Route (MOOR) and associated road widening, and realignment works along the existing L22143 Local Road and R157 Regional Road.
- Provision of roof mounted solar PV panels on Office Blocks A, B & C.



Figure 11-2 Excerpt from the Landscape Plan of Site A (Source RMDA)

As illustrated by the images in Figure 11-3 and Figure 11-4 (below) the three blocks of office buildings are the largest and most visually prominent features of the Proposed Development at Site A. Features such as the MOOR, car parking facilities and other pathways will cover a relatively large spatial extent of Site A, however, by their nature as surface features, they are unlikely to be visually prominent features of the landscape.





Figure 11-3 A CGI render of the Proposed Development Site A – Strategic Employment Zone within an axonometric view from the south-west (David Smith Architecture)



Figure 11-4 A CGI render of the Proposed Development Site A – Strategic Employment Zone within an axonometric view from the west

### Site B: Proposed Development Description (Essential Elements from an LVIA Perspective)

The proposed Site B - Healthcare Facilities includes the construction of:

- > A two-storey Nursing Home containing 156 no. bedrooms;
- > A three-storey Primary Care Centre (PCC);
- > Provision of internal access roads, car parking amenities, and road widening works along the R157 Regional Road.
- > Provision of communal (semi-private) and public open space.



Figure 11-5 Excerpt from the Landscape Plan of Site B – (Source RMDA)

As indicated by Figure 11-6 and Figure 11-5, the two storey Nursing Home (west of Site B) and three storey Primary Care Centre (east of Site B) are the largest and most visually prominent features of the Proposed Development within Site B - Healthcare / Community Infrastructure.





Figure 11-6 An artistic impression of Site B – Healthcare Zone within an axonometric view from the south-west

### Site C: Proposed Development Description (Essential Elements from an LVIA Perspective)

The proposed Site C - Strategic Housing Development includes the construction of:

- 360 no. residential homes comprising: 196 no houses; 102 no. duplexes; 62 no. apartments
- A two-storey creche facility (514 sqm), outdoor play area and associated parking.
- A single storey Scout Den facility, including a hall, kitchen, meeting room and ancillary facilities (220sqm) and parking.
- 4 no. bridge structures, comprising:
  - A single span bridge at Moyglare Hall over the River Rye Water to connect with existing road infrastructure in County Kildare and associated floodplain works and embankments;
  - A new pedestrian and cyclist bridge at Kildare Bridge which will link the proposed site with the existing road network in County Kildare;
  - A new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Blackhall Little Stream on the L2214-3
  - A new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Blackhall Little Stream linking the proposed residential site with the proposed Childcare Facility, Scout Den and Moygaddy Castle Public Park.
- Provision of pedestrian and cycle improvement measures along local road networks (L6219, L2214-3 & R157);
- Shared communal open space including pedestrian and cyclist links along the River Rye, car and bicycle parking, site landscaping, playground, public lighting, bin stores, site services and all associated site development works.



Figure 11-7 Excerpt from the Landscape Plan of Site B – (Source RMDA)



Figure 11-8 A CGI render of the Proposed Development Site C - A Four Storey Apartment Block, road network and dedicated cycle lanes.





Figure 11-9 A CGI render of the Proposed Development Site C - A Four Storey Apartment Block, road network and cycle lane upgrades.

The above ground elements (360 Residential homes; creche facility; Scout Den facility) will be the most visually prominent features of Site C. Most of the Proposed Development footprint comprises two storey residential houses which will be of lesser prominence in the landscape than the proposed duplexes and apartment blocks.

Two No. four storey apartment blocks (pictured in Figure 11-8 above) are the tallest form of proposed building in Site C. One is located at the north-westerly corner of site C and the other at the north-easterly corner.

### Maynooth Outer Orbital Route – MOOR: Proposed Development Description (Essential Elements from an LVIA Perspective)

The proposed MOOR - Maynooth Outer Orbital Route includes the construction of:

- Construction of approximately 1.7km of new distributor road linking the existing R157 Regional Road, located to the east of Site B, to the proposed Moyglare bridge which will link into the Moyglare Hall road in Mariavilla, located southwest of Site C. The distributor road will comprise of 7.0m carriageway with turning lanes where required, footpaths, cycle tracks and grass verges.
- The MOOR also includes upgrade and re-alignment works to the existing road network, as well as new junctions and bridges.

The MOOR links all elements of the Proposed Development (Site A; Site B; Site C; Moyglare Bridge; Kildare Bridge) and several sections of the route are included as part of the development footprint of the other various sites. As shown in the imagery (extracted from planning drawings) presented in Figure 11-10 below, the MOOR comprises four main development features: Carriageway; Cycle Way; Footway; and, Verge.

From a visual perspective, most of the proposed MOOR comprises surface features and visual impacts are likely to be highly localised to locations in close proximity to the route. In terms of landscape effects, the route will need to be cleared and topographical level adjustments to enable construction of the route.

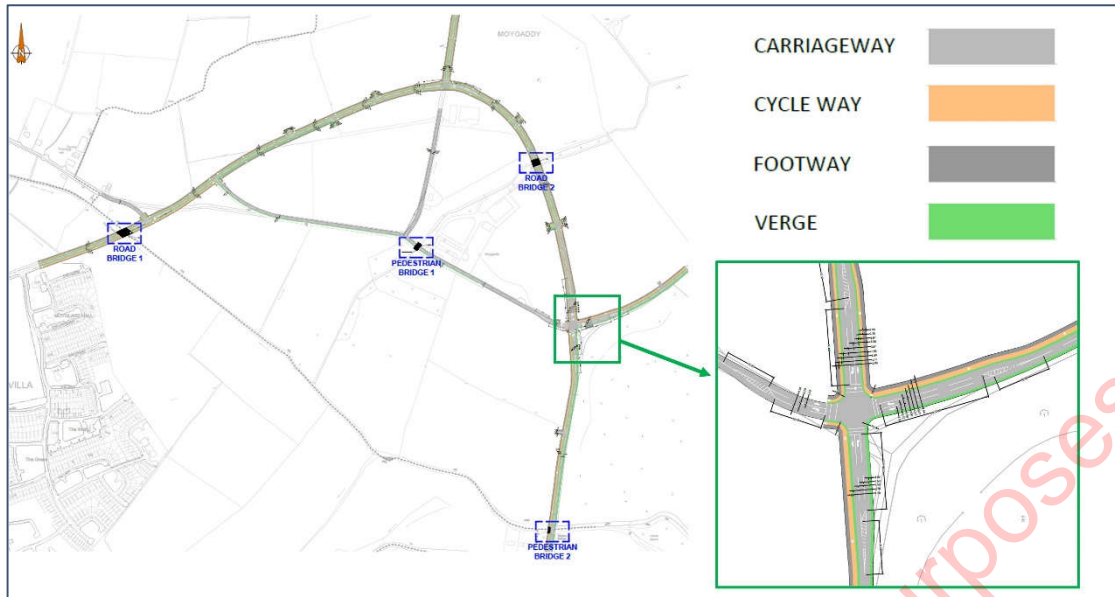


Figure 11-10 Route of the MOOR and an example of new proposed Junction/Crossroad adjacent to Site A – Imagery extracted from Planning Drawings (OCSC, 2022)

The MOOR traverses the Blackhall Little Stream (a small stream as described in Section 11.3 – *Landscape Baseline*) at two points. As illustrated in Figure 11-11 below, the Proposed Development includes the construction of a Pedestrian Bridge (Pedestrian Bridge 1 in Planning Pack) at the site of the existing bridge on the existing L2214-3 Local road (near Moygaddy Castle). It is proposed to construct a multipurpose bridge (Road Bridge 2 in Planning Pack - carriageway, cycle and foot access) along the north-eastern portion of the MOOR.

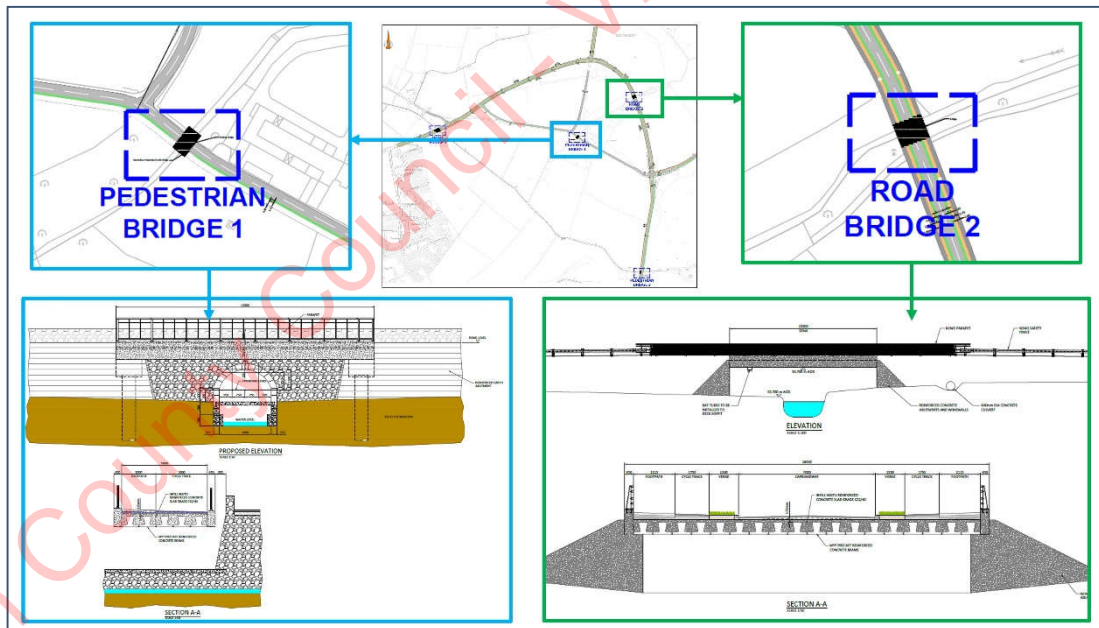


Figure 11-11 Proposed Bridges along the route of the MOOR – Imagery extracted from Planning Drawings (OCSC, 2022)

The MOOR includes upgrade works over Kildare Bridge which cross the Rye Water north of Dunboyne Roundabout. The MOOR includes the proposed construction of a new standalone pedestrian and cycle bridge (Pedestrian Bridge 2 in Planning Pack) to the western side of Kildare Bridge. The proposed Route of the MOOR also crosses the Rye Water to the south-east of Site C via the proposed Moyglare Bridge (Road Bridge 1 in Planning Pack), where it will connect with the existing Road Network at Moyglare Hall Road, adjacent to Maynooth Community College.

The southern portions of both Kildare Bridge and Moyglare Bridge are located in County Kildare and are the subject of separate, independent planning applications. A description of the two proposed bridges over the Rye Water are included in the following sections.

### Kildare Bridge: Proposed Development Description (Essential Elements from an LVIA Perspective)

The proposed Kildare Bridge (Pedestrian Bridge 2 in Planning Pack) includes the following:

- Construction of a new standalone bridge comprising a footpath and dual lane cycle track.
- Upgrade works to the R157 Regional Road
- Potable water and utility connections
- Wastewater connection to the Maynooth Municipal Wastewater Pumping Station which is located to the southeast of the Proposed Development

The proposed bridge is a new standalone structure to the western side of the existing Kildare Bridge which crosses the Rye Water on the R157 Regional Road north of the Dunboyne Roundabout. Figure 11-12 below shows the plans for the proposed bridge.

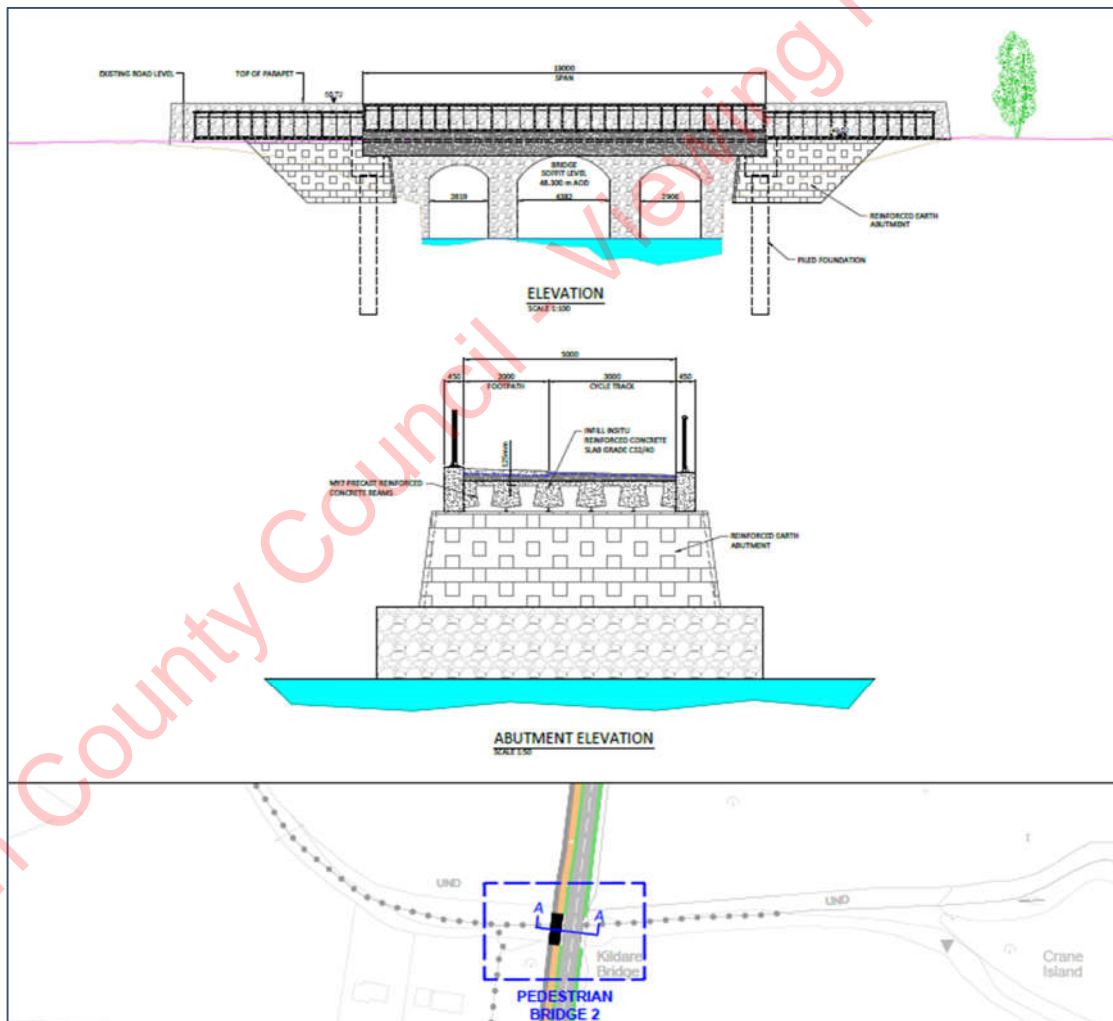


Figure 11-12 Proposed Kildare Bridge (Pedestrian Bridge 2) – Imagery extracted from Planning Drawings (OCSC, 2022)

### Moyglare Bridge: Proposed Development Description (Essential Elements from an LVIA Perspective)

The proposed Moyglare Bridge (Road Bridge 1 in Planning Pack) includes the construction of:

- A bridge comprising a road carriageway (The MOOR), 2No. grass Verges; 2No. footpaths 2 No. cycle tracks.
- Potable water and utility connections
- The proposed bridge development includes embankments, culverts and concrete abutments surrounding the Rye Water river.

The proposed bridge crosses the Rye Water to the south-west of Site C, linking the proposed MOOR with the existing Road Network at Moyglare Hall Road, adjacent to Maynooth Community College. Figure 11-13 below shows the plans for the proposed bridge.

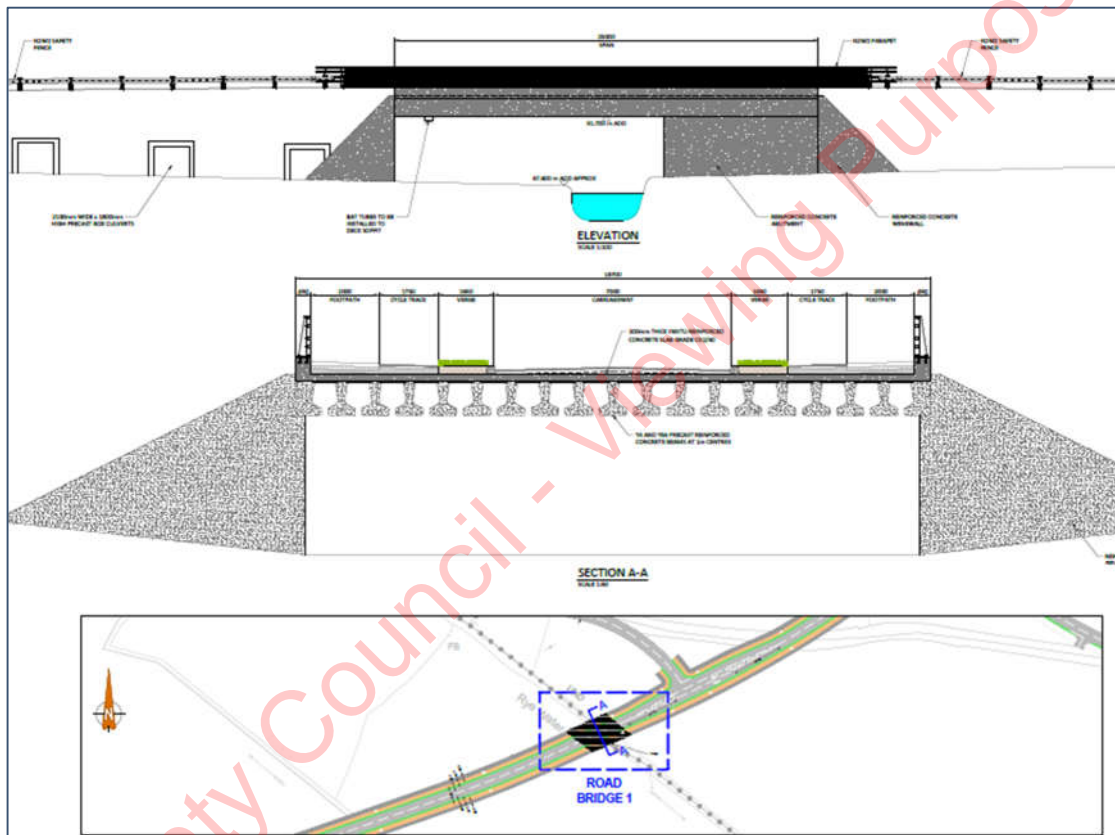


Figure 11-13 Proposed Moyglare Bridge (Road Bridge 1) – Imagery extracted from Planning Drawings (OCSC, 2022)

### The Moygaddy Master Plan Site & Proposed Landscape Plan

A Landscape Master Plan has been created for all lands within the Maynooth Environs which form the wider Moygaddy Master Plan Site. As shown in the project plans and landscape plans of the various Proposed Development elements (see Volumes 3a, 3b 3c in Appendix 4-2, Volumes 3d, 3e, 3f in Appendix 4-1 and Volumes 3a, 3b, 3c in Appendix 4-7, Volumes 3d in Appendix 4-5) there is an objective to retain (where possible) existing field boundaries and mature native woodland, as well as provide additional planting of native species within the individual site boundaries.

The landscape plan aims to increase the recreational capacity of the lands at Moygaddy through the provision of pedestrian/cycle access routes which will link various areas of the wider Master Plan Site, as well as along the MOOR. These safe access pathways will facilitate recreational amenity at various



features within the Master Plan site, such as local watercourses (Rye Water and Blackhall Little) and Moygaddy Castle ruins.

The baseline landscape and visual investigations in this chapter consider and describe the landscape of wider Proposed Development site as a whole, as well as the individual landscapes of Site A, Site B, Site C, the MOOR, Kildare Bridge, and Moyglare Bridge.

### 11.1.4 Proposed Development Location & Terminology

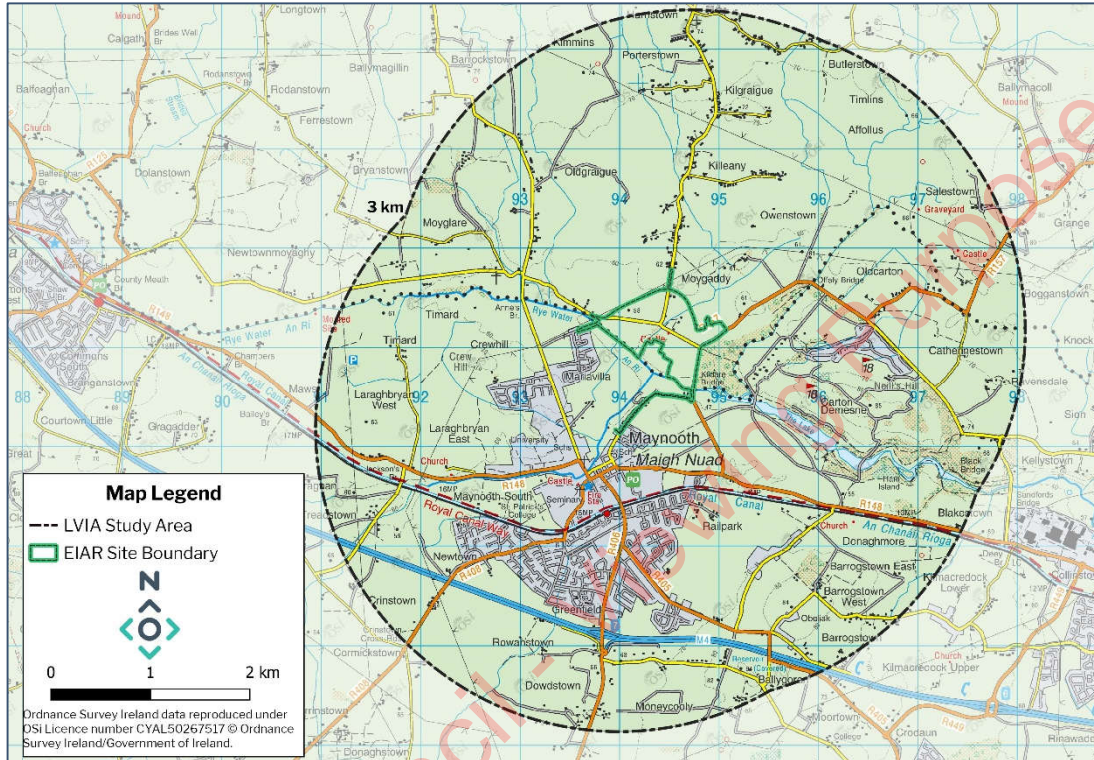


Figure 11-14 Location of the Proposed Development and LVIA Study Area.

The Proposed Development is located in an area defined as the Maynooth Environs which is within the townland of Moygaddy, north of Maynooth town. A majority of the Proposed Development is located in the functional area of County Meath and several components of the Proposed Development (Kildare Bridge; Moyglare Bridge and utility infrastructure) are located in County Kildare. Baseline investigations have included all lands (including both Counties Meath and Kildare) within 3 km of the proposed EIAR Site boundary – The LVIA Study Area (See Figure 11-14 above). Figure 11-1 (See previously) shows the Proposed Development and various elements referred to in this report, which are referred to with the following terminology:

- When stating the ‘Proposed Development’, this refers to all components (Site A, Site B; Site C; MOOR; Kildare Bridge; Moyglare Bridge) included in the EIAR Study Area.
- When stating the ‘Proposed Development Site’ or ‘the site’, this relates to the primary study area for the Proposed Development. This area is labelled as the ‘EIAR Site Boundary’ illustrated by a dark green line in mapping figures in this Chapter (e.g. Figure 11-14 above);
- When stating the ‘LVIA Study Area’, this relates to all lands within 3 km of the EIAR Site Boundary and comprises the wider landscape area investigated and assessed in this chapter (See Figure 11-14 above); – Rationale for determination of this study area are included in the following Section – *Methodology and Assessment Criteria*.

- > When stating 'Site A', this refers to the Strategic Employment Zone delineated by a red line in mapping figures in this Chapter (e.g. Figure 11-14Figure 11-1 previously);
- > When stating 'Site B', this refers to the Healthcare Facilities delineated by a blue line in mapping figures in this Chapter (e.g. Figure 11-14Figure 11-1 previously);
- > When stating 'Site C', this refers to the Strategic Housing Development delineated by a purple line in mapping figures in this Chapter (e.g. Figure 11-14Figure 11-1 previously);
- > When stating 'the MOOR', this refers to the route of the MOOR as delineated by a thin green line in mapping figures in this Chapter (e.g. Figure 11-14Figure 11-1 previously);
- > When stating 'Kildare Bridge', this refers to the proposed pedestrian/cycle bridge and utility connection works at Kildare Bridge as delineated by an orange line in mapping figures in this Chapter (e.g. Figure 11-14Figure 11-1 previously);
- > When stating 'Moyglare Bridge', this refers to the proposed Moyglare Bridge and utility connection works at the proposed Moyglare bridge as delineated by a yellow line in mapping figures in this Chapter (e.g. Figure 11-14Figure 11-1 previously).

Meath County Council - Viewing Purposes Only!

## 11.2 Methodology and Assessment Criteria

This section broadly outlines the methodology used to undertake the landscape and visual impact assessment of the Proposed Development, including a description of the following:

- Guidance and Reference material used to conduct the LVIA.
- Study Area chosen for the conduct of Baseline Landscape and Visual Investigations
- Methods for Assessing Landscape Effects
- Methods for Assessing Visual Effects

### 11.2.1 Guidance/Reference Documents

In 2000, the Department of the Environment and Local Government (DoEHLG) published 'Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities', which recommended that all local authorities adopt a standardised approach to landscape assessment for incorporation into development plans and consideration as part of the planning process. This document remains in Draft.

In 2002, Ireland signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention (ELC). This introduced a pan-European concept that centres on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published a National Landscape Strategy for Ireland in 2015. The strategy aims to ensure compliance with the ELC and contains six main objectives, including undertaking a National Landscape Character Assessment and developing landscape policies.

Although the DoEHLG 2000 guidance remains in draft form, this section of the LVIA has been informed by the landscape assessment guidelines presented in the DoEHLG document as well as a range of other guidelines, which include:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3) (The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, UK, 2013) - also referred to as GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013).
- 'Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Assessment'; Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/2011 (2011);
- County Development Plan of County Meath and County Kildare as well as Local Area Plans pertaining to Maynooth Town and surrounding lands.
- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA 2022).

### 11.2.2 Scope and Definition of the LVIA Study Area for Baseline Landscape and Visual Investigations

The GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013) guidance refers to the identification of the area of landscape that is to be covered while assessing landscape and visual effects. The guidelines state:

*"The study areas should include the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape around it which the proposed development may influence in a significant manner."*

For the purposes of this LVIA, where the 'Proposed Development Site' or 'the site' is referred to in this chapter, this relates to the primary study area for the Proposed Development, as delineated in Green as the 'EIAR Site Boundary' within mapping figures in this report and EIAR. This total area measures approximately 60.8 hectares. However, the landscape and visual baseline mapping and viewpoint selection are based on a wider study area. In this case, the wider study area constitutes all the area within 3 kilometres from the EIAR Site Boundary. This area is referred to as the Landscape and Visual

Impact Assessment (LVIA) Study Area or 'LVIA Study Area' (See Figure 11-14 previously).

Considering the scope and scale of the Proposed Development and its existing landscape setting, it is considered that landscape and visual effects will not be significant beyond the 3km LVIA Study Area, therefore assessment of landscape and visual effects from locations beyond 3km are scoped out of this assessment.

Initial baseline investigations of the LVIA Study Area were conducted through desk studies, constraints mapping and site visits. The Landscape Baseline exercise (Section 11.3) identifies landscape policy pertinent to the site and LVIA Study Area such as landscape designations contained in the Meath and Kildare County Development Plans and relevant local area plans. This includes policies on landscape and landscape character, designated landscapes, and protected views. The site is described in terms of landscape character types as identified in 'Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoEHLG, 2000) as well as the surrounding landscapes within the LVIA Study Area. The landscape baseline exercise identifies key landscape values and sensitivities within the site and wider landscape setting.

The Visual Baseline exercise (Section 11.4) includes an appraisal of the likely visibility of the Proposed Development from key visual receptors within the surrounding landscape and within the immediate setting of the site itself. This includes a description of views towards the Proposed Development from a variety of perspectives which informs the selection of photomontage viewpoints.

### 11.2.3 Assessing Landscape Effects

The methodology uses qualitative methods in order to arrive at an assessment, which is based on the Landscape and Landscape Assessment (DoEHLG, 2000) Guidelines as well as the GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013).

Landscape effects can be described as changes which affect the landscape as a resource. This includes how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects and its landscape character. Landscape effects also relate to changes in the structure of the landscape. Under the GLVIA3 (2013) guidance, the assessment of likely significant effects on landscape receptors includes a judgement on both the sensitivity of the receptor as well as magnitude of the change.

#### 11.2.3.1 Assessing Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity, which is described in the GLVIA3 (2013) as a combination of the landscape's susceptibility to change as well as the value attached to the landscape.

Susceptibility to change can be described as the ability of the landscape receptor (either the overall character, quality of the landscape or a particular landscape feature) to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline (existing) landscape and/or the aims of landscape planning policies and strategies.

Landscape value is the importance attributed to a specific landscape receptor or feature. Landscape value is determined through baseline assessments considering a combination of criteria such as designations and local characteristics.



For the purposes of this LVIA and the assessment of landscape sensitivity, the following landscape sensitivity ratings are assigned to receptors on site and in the LVIA study area based on designations in the Kildare and Meath County Development Plans and findings from on-site appraisals during site investigations:

- > Very High
- > High
- > Medium
- > Low

### 11.2.3.2 Assessing Magnitude of Change in the Landscape

The magnitude of change occurring within a landscape is a combination of the visual presence - size and scale - of the change, the extent of the area to be affected, and the duration and reversibility of the effect. The magnitude of change for differing landscape receptors was assessed using the definitions outlined in Table 11-1 below.

Table 11-1 Magnitude of Landscape Change Assessment Criteria

Magnitude of Change	Description
Substantial	Where a landscape will experience the loss of key landscape features or the introduction of uncharacteristic additions over a large area. The changes to the landscape are prominent and large in scale. The level of change has an effect on the overall landscape character. The effects are likely long term and may be irreversible.
Moderate	A more limited loss of or change to landscape features over a medium extent which will result in some change to landscape features and aesthetics. Could include the addition of some new uncharacteristic features or elements that would lead to the potential for change in landscape character in a localised area or part of a landscape character area. Would include moderate effects on the overall landscape character that do not affect key characteristics. The effects could be long to medium term and/or partially reversible.
Slight	The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium to short term and/or reversible.
Negligible	A change affecting smaller areas of landscape character including the loss of some landscape elements or the addition of features or elements which are either of low value or hardly noticeable. The effects could be short term and/or reversible.

### 11.2.3.3 Landscape Effects Assessment Matrix

The significance of landscape effect was arrived at by combining the magnitude and sensitivity classifications, using the assessment matrix in Table 11-2 below, where landscape sensitivity is shown in the left-hand first column and magnitude of change is shown in the first row at the top of the table.

Table 11-2 Landscape effects significance assessment matrix

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
Very High	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor
High	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor
Medium	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/Negligible
Low	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/Negligible	Negligible

The determination of significance uses a seven-point scale, ranging from Major to Negligible. This seven-point scale is translated to the EPA (2022) impact assessment classifications of significance, as outlined in Table 11-6 below in Section 11.2.4.5.

## 11.2.4 Assessing Visual Effects

Visual effects relate to changes in views and visual amenity of the surroundings of individuals or groups of people – termed ‘visual receptors’. These may result from changes in content and character of views as a result in changes to the landscape. The assessment of visual effects is based on views shown in photomontages as well as actual visibility on the ground.

It should be noted that in assessing visual effects, there are different types of visual effects:

- Visual obstruction: This occurs when there is an impact on a view which blocks the view
- Visual intrusion: This occurs when there is an impact on a view but which does not block the view.

The significance of the effect on visual amenity is a combination of the sensitivity of the receptor balanced with the magnitude of the change occurring within a view. The likely significant effects of the Proposed Development in terms of visual and landscape effects are informed by on site visibility appraisals and photomontages.

### 11.2.4.1 Photomontage Viewpoint Selection

A step-by-step process is followed when selecting appropriate photomontage locations. The first step is to select a number of representative locations following a detailed desk top study of mapping. These locations are based on the following criteria:

- Potential visibility of the development site;
- Critical landscape designations e.g. views and prospects, scenic routes, areas classed as sensitive;
- Proximity to receptors such as settlements, groups of residential dwellings or recreational routes or amenity areas;
- Within publicly accessible areas or on public roads, particularly more trafficked routes;
- Views that cover a wide area in terms of geographical location, elevation and varying distance from the site.

Finally, following a site visit, to assess visibility on the ground (see Section 11.4 – *Visual Baseline*), locations were identified as suitable viewpoints for photomontage production. The selected locations provide a representative range of local views towards the Proposed Development. A total of 17 No.

photomontages were produced from 15 No. Viewpoints (some Viewpoint locations show two differing fields of view e.g. VP 4A & 4B; VP 9A & 9B).

### 11.2.4.2 Photomontage Production

Photomontages are photorealistic visualisations that superimpose an image of the Proposed Development upon a photograph or series of photographs. They are intended as graphical representations of how a Proposed Development will appear in the existing landscape and are used as a tool to inform the LVIA process.

Verified photomontage imagery has been produced by integrating a 3D architectural model of the Proposed Development within a GPS validated model of the landscape from a high-resolution topographical survey. Images were captured from a height of approximately 1.7 metres and a rendering applied to the imagery that best represents the proposed materials from which the Proposed Development will comprise in the light conditions when the photomontage was captured. A more detailed description of the methodology used to capture and produce the photomontages is included at the start of the Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet titled '*Methodology for Verified Views*'.

Photomontage visualisations can never show exactly what the Proposed Development will look like in reality due to factors such as; atmospheric lighting and weather conditions which vary through time and season. Where possible, photomontage viewpoints are chosen to show open views of the Proposed Development, however, in reality they are representative of viewing conditions encountered; in many instances, some or all of the Proposed Development is screened from view by intervening vegetation, topography or built form existent within the baseline landscape.

Photomontages give a reasonable impression of the scale of the development and the distance to the development, however, there are likely to be minor inaccuracies. It is recommended that decision-makers and any interested parties or members of the public should ideally visit the viewpoints on site, where visualisations (photomontages) can be compared to the 'real life' view, and the full impact of the Proposed Development can be understood.

The following images are shown in the Photomontage Booklet for each viewpoint location:

- **Baseline:** Shows the baseline landscape/streetscape conditions as it currently exists in a do-nothing scenario.
- **Proposed;** Shows a scaled render of the Proposed Development within the current landscape/streetscape.
- **Proposed VVM & Cumulative Wirelines:** Shows the photomontage as presented in the 'Proposed VVM' view; as well as wirelines indicating the relative physical position and scale of the Proposed Development irrespective of screening. The wirelines of the various above ground development elements are colour coded with the following:
  - **Red Wireline = Site A** - Proposed Strategic Employment Zone
  - **Blue Wireline = Site B** - Proposed Healthcare Facilities
  - **Purple Wireline = Site C** - Proposed Strategic Housing Development

Less visually prominent elements of the Proposed Development such as the MOOR, Kildare Bridge and Moyglare Bridge are included in the photomontages. In order to ensure the photomontage booklet is clean and coherent, no wirelines have been added around these surface features within the 'Proposed VVM & Cumulative Wirelines', as this would have resulted a relatively confusing visual output. Where they will be seen, the MOOR, the Kildare Bridge works and the Moyglare Bridge are included in the photomontages and are assessed within the assessment narrative in the photomontage assessment tables included in Appendix 11-1.

Photomontages are displayed in the photomontage booklet which forms Volume 2 of this EIAR. A comprehensive assessment of the visual effects of the Proposed Development from each of the 17 No. photomontages is included in Appendix 11-1 and a summary of visual effects is included in Table 11-10 in Section 11.6.3.2.11

### 11.2.4.3 Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity balances the sensitivity and susceptibility of the receptor (people or groups of people) as well as the amenity value of the view on offer at a particular location. Visual receptor sensitivity depends on the occupation or activity of the people, as well the extent to which the attention is focused on views and visual amenity, according to the GLVIA Guidelines (2013). Visual receptor sensitivity is assessed as either being Very High, High, Medium or Low, based on the definition of descriptions and examples set out in Table 11-3 below.

Table 11-3 Visual Receptor Sensitivity Assessment Criteria

Sensitivity of Visual Receptor(s)	Description
Very High	Included in this category are viewers that are primarily focused on views from this particular location, such as visitors to popular destinations identified for their outstanding views. Residents in close proximity who have primary views of a scenic quality in the direction of the Proposed Development.
High	Includes viewers at designated views or landscapes. Viewers such as residents in close proximity to the viewpoint who have primary views that will be in the direction of the development that may not necessarily be of a particularly scenic quality; viewers at well-known heritage or popular tourist or recreational areas, viewers along scenic or tourist routes.
Medium	Includes viewers who may have some susceptibility to a change in view. Viewers such as residents in medium proximity but who do not have views focused in the direction of the Proposed Development or whose views are not of a particularly scenic quality; those from views which are not designated but may have local recreational uses or those travelling along routes or at view which are considered moderately scenic.
Low	Includes viewers engaged in activities where the focus is not on the landscape or view. These including those travelling along a busy route, viewers at work or engaged in sport not related to views or experience of the landscape.

Photomontage viewpoints are specific locations which are representative of key visual receptors. The viewpoint assessment tables in Appendix 11-1 consider all receptors represented in the determination of the visual receptor sensitivity rating for each viewpoint. This determination takes a balanced approach considering the types, sensitivities, and quantities of visual receptors represented. The sensitivity rating given to each photomontage viewpoint in Appendix 11-1 considers both the susceptibility of the visual receptors represented as well as the value attached to the available views at that particular location.

### 11.2.4.4 Magnitude of Visual Change

The magnitude of the visual change resulting at each viewpoint is a combination of scale of the change, the extent of the area to be affected and the duration and reversibility of the effect, determined by



reviewing the photomontage images for each viewpoint. The magnitude of change is determined in accordance with the definitions and descriptions included in Table 11-4 below.

Table 11-4 Magnitude of Visual Change Assessment Criteria

Magnitude of Change	Description
Substantial	Substantial change, where the proposals would result in large-scale, prominent or very prominent change, leading to substantial obstruction of existing view or complete change in character and composition of the baseline through removal of key elements or addition of uncharacteristic elements which may or may not be visually discordant. This includes viewpoints where the Proposed Development is fully or almost fully visible over a wide extent, at close proximity to the viewer. This change could be long term or of a long duration.
Moderate	The change in the view may involve partial obstruction of existing view or partial change in character and composition of the baseline through the introduction of new elements or removal of existing elements. Likely to occur at locations where the development is partially visible over a moderate or medium extent, and which are not in close proximity to the development. Change may be readily noticeable but not substantially different in scale and character from the surroundings and wider setting.
Slight	The proposals would be partially visible or visible at sufficient distance to be perceptible and result in a low level of change in the view and its composition and a low degree of contrast. The character of the view may be altered but will remain similar to the baseline existing situation. This change could be short term or of a short duration.
Negligible	Any change would only be barely distinguishable from the status quo “do-nothing scenario” in the surroundings. The composition and character of the view would be substantially unaltered, approximating to little or no change.

#### 11.2.4.5 Visual Effects Assessment Matrix

Table 11-5 below shows the significance of visual effects, arrived at by combining the visual receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change classifications. Visual receptor sensitivity is shown in the left-hand first column and magnitude of visual change is shown in the first row at the top of the table. This table is used as an indicative tool to assist in determining the significance of visual effects. In different circumstances differing levels of mitigating factors may ultimately result in a different determination of the level of significance (see below). The significance of a visual effect is based on a balance between the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of effect. The significance of visual effect is arrived at using a combination of the matrix shown in Table 11-5 as well as Figure 11-15 shown in section 11.2.5 - *Determination of Residual Landscape and Visual Effects*, seen below.

Table 11-5 Visual effects significance assessment matrix

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
Very High	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor
High	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor
Medium	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/Negligible
Low	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/Negligible	Negligible

The determination of significance uses a seven-point scale, ranging from Major to Negligible. This seven-point scale is translated to the EPA impact assessment classifications of significance, as outlined Table 11-6 below.

Table 11-6 EPA Impact Assessment Significance Classification for Landscape and Visual Effects

Matrix Classification Significance	EPA Significance Classification	EPA (2022) Definition of Significance
Major	Profound	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics
Major/Moderate	Very significant	An effect, which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment
Moderate	Significant	An effect, which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Moderate/Minor	Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends
Minor	Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities
Minor/Negligible	Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
Negligible	Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences

#### 11.2.4.6 Residual Visual Effect

After determining the significance of the visual effect using the above visual effects assessment matrix, mitigating factors are taken into consideration to arrive at the final residual effect.

#### 11.2.5 Determination of Residual Landscape and Visual Effects

The matrices and tables above are excellent tools to aid professional judgement in the determination of the significance of an effect. They are useful in that they provide a transparent, objective structure to the

process of balancing sensitivity and magnitude of change. In the context of the determination of visual effects, the formulaic process created by the use of the matrices above provides an indicative initial assessment, which is clearly demonstrated in the photomontage assessment tables in Appendix 11-1.

However, over-reliance on the formulaic process, which is heavily influenced by the definitions of sensitivity and magnitude of change (e.g. Table 11-4 and Table 11-5 above), can lead to a failure to properly account for the full range of circumstances and factors at play in the determination of the significance of a visual effect (see section 3.35, GLVIA3, 2013). A wide range of factors, mitigating or otherwise, can factor into such a determination, and it is not possible to capture the complexity involved in balancing all considerations within the necessarily limited definitions contained in these tables. This then naturally results in circumstances whereby the process of the determination of significance using the mechanistic method involved with the matrix shown in Table 11-5 can result in misrepresentations of the significance of visual effects. It is only with professional judgement, and narrative descriptions of effect, that such complexity can be integrated into the determination of significance. Therefore, the formulaic methods based upon the matrix presented above is combined with professional judgement in the determination of significance. This is illustrated in Figure 11-15 below where the professional judgment of the competent expert is used to properly determine the significance of an effect taking all considerations into account.

A focus is placed upon the narrative description of effects (see section 3.36, GLVIA3, 2013) given the naturally subjective nature of the significance determination process, particularly in relation to visual effects, ensuring that the rationale for the overall judgement is clear (see sections 3.28-3.29, GLVIA3, 2013). The comprehensive assessment of photomontages included in Appendix 11-1 aims to provide a transparent and robust determination of residual visual effects utilising the graph in Figure 11-15 below in combination with a clear and logical narrative.

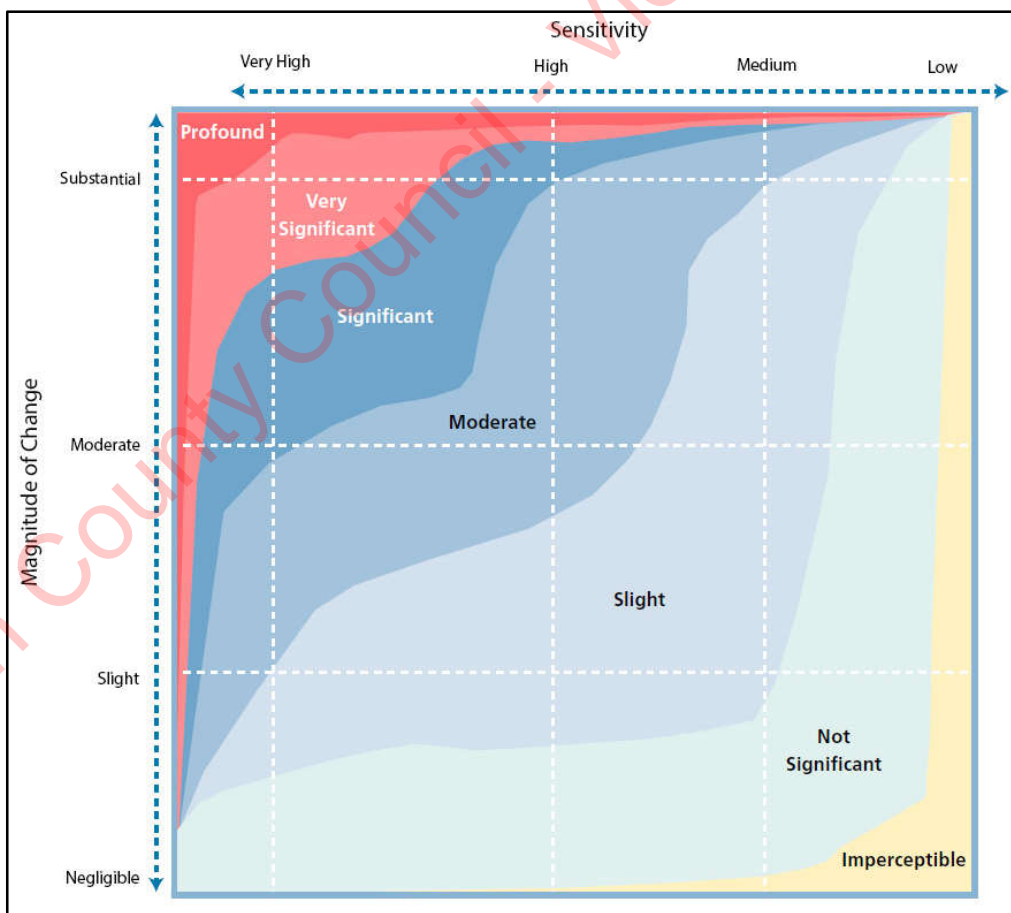


Figure 11-15 Visual Effect Significance Graph (adapted from EPA Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, 2022)

## 11.3 Landscape Baseline

This section of the report identifies and describes landscape policy designations and sensitive landscape receptors located in the LVIA Study Area (within 3 km from the Proposed Development site boundary). The receiving landscape of the development site and surrounding areas are also described in terms of their landscape character and landscape value.

### 11.3.1 Landscape Policy Context

A majority of the Proposed Development is situated in the townland of Moygaddy (Maigh Gadaí), County Meath. Therefore, the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 has been consulted to identify relevant landscape policy designations in the LVIA Study Area. The southern perimeter of the Proposed Development Site (South of Site B and Site C) tracks along the banks of the Rye Water River which demarks the boundary between County Meath to the north and County Kildare to the south. The proposed Kildare Bridge and Moyglare Bridge traverse the county boundary and therefore these elements of the Proposed Development are also sited in County Kildare, therefore, The Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 was also consulted.

The Proposed Development is located in a predominantly greenfield site to the north of Maynooth Town. Both the Meath and Kildare County Development Plans contain Local Area Plans (LAPs) specifically focussed upon the town of Maynooth and its surrounding environment. Therefore, landscape policy and designations in these LAPs are considered most pertinent with regards to the likely landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Development.

#### 11.3.1.1 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (MCDP)

The Meath County Development Plan (MCDP) 2021-2027 was brought into effect on the 3rd of November 2021.

##### 11.3.1.1.1 General Landscape Policy – County Meath

Chapter 8 of the MCDP contains a strategy for Culture and Natural Heritage, Section 8.17 of Chapter 8 comprises general policy and objectives pertaining to landscape. General landscape policies and objectives relevant to the Proposed Development site its surrounding landscape are reported below:

*“HER POL 52 - To protect and enhance the quality, character, and distinctiveness of the landscapes of the County in accordance with national policy and guidelines and the recommendations of the Meath Landscape Character Assessment (2007) in Appendix 5, to ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.”*

*“HER POL 53 To discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amount of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.”*

*“Objective HER 49 - To ensure that the management of development will have regard to the value of the landscape, its character, importance, sensitivity and capacity to absorb change as outlined in Appendix 5 Meath Landscape Character Assessment and its recommendations.”*

*“Objective HER 50 - To require landscape and visual impact assessments prepared by suitably qualified professionals be submitted with planning applications for development which may have significant impact on landscape character areas of medium or high sensitivity.”*



This LVIA addresses the likely impacts of the Proposed Development on landscape character in the context of the Meath Landscape Character Assessment (2007) that forms *Appendix 5* of the MCDP. A detailed landscape master plan is proposed for the Proposed Development. In mind of objective HER POL 53, where possible, the landscape plan includes the retention of treelines, hedgerows and historic walls that form boundaries within the Moygaddy Master Plan Site.

*Section 8.7.4* of the MCDP affords special protection to the high sensitivity landscapes of Tara/Skryne, as well as Loughcrew and Slieve Na Calliagh Hills under policy HER POL 54, designating them as Landscape Conservation Areas:

*“HER POL 54: To protect the archaeological heritage, rural character, setting and amenity of the Tara landscape and Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills”*

The Proposed Development is located a substantial distance from these landscapes (>51 km south-east of Slieve na Calliagh and >20 km south of the Hill of Tara) and will therefore have no material impact on any County Meath Landscape Conservation Areas.

### 11.3.1.1.2 Landscape Character Assessment – County Meath

A Landscape Character Assessment is contained in *Appendix 5* of the MCDP. This Landscape Character Assessment divides the county into 4 landscape character types (LCTs) and subdivides these into 20 landscape character areas (LCAs). *Section 8.17.5* of the MCDP defines the sensitivity of LCAs as:

*“its overall resilience to sustain its character in the face of change and its ability to recover from loss or damage to its components.”*

The MCDP and the Landscape Character Assessment contained in *Appendix 5* categorise the sensitivity of different LCAs as Low, Medium, or High. The MCDP states that:

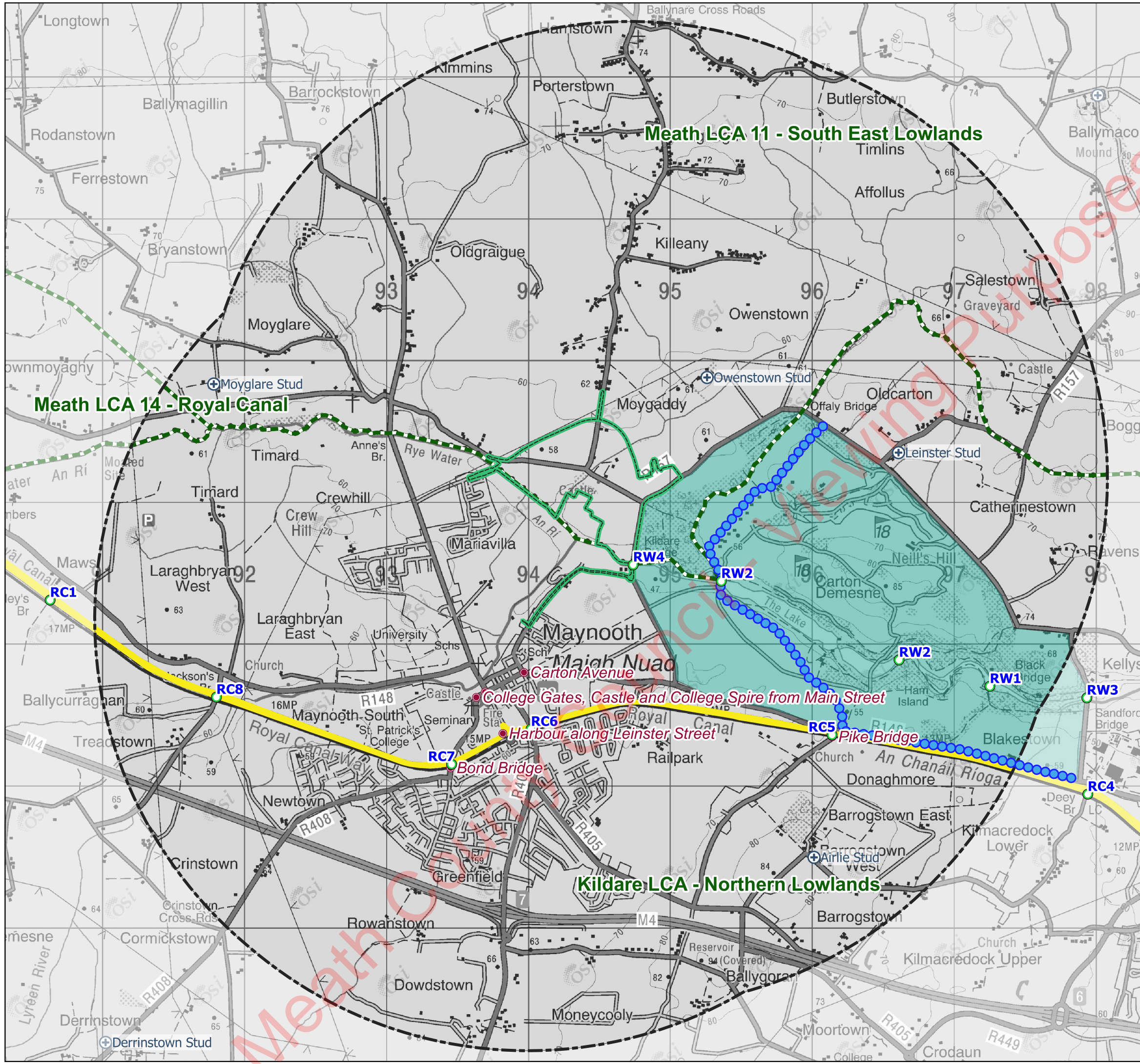
*“highly sensitive landscape is likely to be vulnerable, fragile and susceptible to change whereas a landscape with low sensitivity is likely to be more robust and/or tolerant of change.”*

*Section 8.17.6* of the MCDP defines landscape capacity of LCAs as:

*“The potential capacity of each LCA is based on indicative types of development that are likely to occur within the study area. Capacity is the ability that the landscape has to absorb specific types of development. It is only possible to define actual capacity on a case-by-case basis because it will vary according to the type and form of development, its location in relation to the landscape character area in question, and its visibility from it”*

Figure 11-16 below shows that the Proposed Development is entirely located within Meath *LCA 11 – South East Lowlands* which is designated as an LCA of ‘medium’ landscape sensitivity. Meath *LCA 14 – Royal Canal* is located within the LVIA Study Area (within 3 km). LCA 14 is located approximately 1.8 km west of the Master Plan Site Boundary at its closest point and it is designated as an LCA of ‘medium’ sensitivity. A description summary of these LCAs as reported in *Appendix 5* of the MCDP are outlined below:





### Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area - 3km Search Area
- EIA Site Boundary
- Landscape Policy Designations**
- Meath and Kildare Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)
- County Kildare Designated Scenic Route
- County Kildare Designated Scenic Views
- Protected Views and Prospects from the Maynooth Local Area Plan
- Other Landscape and Visual Receptors**
- Carton House Demesne
- ⊕ Stud Farms
- Royal Canal Way Marked Trail and Greenway

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Drawing No. Figure 11-16

Drawing Title  
**Landscape Policy Context**

Project Title  
**Moygaddy Mixed-Use Development**

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:26,000	210414	25.08.2022	JW	MW





### LCA 11 - South East Lowlands

This LCA encompasses the area between the Hill of Tara to the southern border and the Dunboyne environs. It is predominantly rolling lowland with large areas dominated by attractive estate landscapes with associated parkland. This parkland has a mix of smaller estates and stud farms that create a distinctive character. The land is extensively used for pasture in the north, with arable land more prominent further south. The landscape condition gradually deteriorates where development pressure from the Dublin metropolitan area becomes more evident. The landscape is relatively enclosed due to the topography and wooded hedgerows with longer views at the top of many drumlins. Many of the views in the lowlands are restricted to those along road corridors and the immediate hinterland.

County Meath LCA 11 is designated as having a 'Very High' landscape value, a 'Medium' landscape sensitivity and is a landscape of 'Regional' importance. The MCDP provides the following relevant recommendations in relation to this LCA:

*“Recognise the importance of stud farming to the upkeep of the landscape in the centre of the Dunboyne farmland and maintain the viability of this industry by sensitive siting of development that may adversely affect it.”*

Landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Development on stud farms in the wider landscape surrounding the site are considered in this LVIA. In terms of capacity for development in this LCA, the MCDP states that there is:

*“Low potential capacity to accommodate multi-house developments due to the significant growth of this type of development in recent years. Such development should be limited to the existing urban areas, which have been designated to accommodate such growth, and in these locations they should be very carefully planned in terms of location, scale and design to mitigate against potential adverse impacts, particularly cumulative impacts.”*

The Proposed Development is located within the Maynooth Town Environs and within a designated area where land is zoned to accommodate growth such as that of the Proposed Development (see Section 11.3.1.1.4).

### LCA 14 – Royal Canal

The Proposed Development is located approximately 1.8 kilometres east of the eastern boundary of this LCA. This LCA encompasses the rolling lowland adjacent to the Royal Canal, which is more open due to larger arable field patterns and in general this area is less densely vegetated. The landscape is attractive although adjacent to the canal much of the landscape is in poor condition with scrappy farmland and a clear loss of hedgerows. The Meath CDP states that:

*“The landscape adjacent to the Royal Canal is very flat, but overgrown scrappy hedgerows and farmland restrict views. Views along the Royal Canal are available at the various stone bridges crossing the canal into Kildare, these provide good vantage points and views across the lowland.”*

LCA 14 contains part of the Kilcock Environs, which is located approximately 4.5 kilometres west of the Proposed Development. Kilcock is a medium sized settlement area with a diverse mix of retail, commercial and residential development.

### 11.3.1.1.3 Views and Prospects - County Meath

County Meath affords protection to designated scenic views and prospects that are of amenity and tourism value. The following policy objective relates to the protection of designated views and prospects in County Meath.

*“Objective HER 56 - To preserve the views and prospects listed in Appendix 10, in Volume 2 and on Map 8.6 and to protect these views from inappropriate development which would interfere unduly with the character and visual amenity of the landscape.”*

Appendix 10 of the MCDP lists and describes 94 No. designated Views and Prospects, the locations of which are shown in Map 8.6. There are no County Meath designated views and prospects within the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development or within the LVIA Study Area (within 3km of the Proposed Development site). The closest County Meath protected view is Coole Hill (County Meath Designated View No. 84), which is located approximately 11 kilometres from the Proposed Development site. The direction of this view is to the west, away from the Proposed Development. It is anticipated that there will be no impact on any protected views or prospects designated within the MCDP, and they are not considered further in this LVIA.

### 11.3.1.1.4 Maynooth Environs Written Statement (2021-2027 MCDP)

Volume 2 of the MCDP contains a Written Statement for the Maynooth Environs comprising a development strategy for the northern environs of Maynooth Town within the administrative area of Meath County Council. Maynooth Environs in County Meath includes the following lands:

*“Maynooth Environs in County Meath is located on the northern periphery of the dynamic university town of Maynooth. The lands within Maynooth Environs are largely undeveloped at present and comprise approximately 139 hectares of land approximately 1.5km to the north east of the town centre. It is bisected by the R157 road which links Maynooth to Dunboyne. For the purposes of this plan the Moygaddy lands are taken to contain all lands within the boundary of the Environs Plan excluding the lands in Co. Meath which are part of the Carton Estate.”*

The written statement describes the Maynooth environs as two distinct elements, the Moygaddy Stud and The Carton Demense.

*“The lands are composed of two distinct elements; Moygaddy stud, on lands to the west of the R157, and the Carton Demesne lands located to the east of the R157. The lands to the west of the R157, of some 98 hectares, are currently in use as a stud farm. The existing buildings on these lands reflect this use and consist of a purpose built stud dating from the 1830’s...”*

The Proposed Development is located within the Moygaddy Stud area of the Maynooth Environs, west of the R157, which are lands zoned for strategic development. The strategic vision for the Moygaddy stud area of the Maynooth Environs as stated in Section 3 of the Written Statement is reported below:

*“Maynooth Environs shall develop in partnership with the existing town in County Kildare as a dynamic developing area, which will integrate with the town’s existing urban area. It is envisaged that the Environs will be a focal point for science and technology employment, with high quality knowledge based jobs utilising the synergy with NUI Maynooth as a centre of excellence for research and innovation. The intention is to create a unique employment hub centred on a high tech/bio tech campus within the lands, supported by a ‘live work’ community with a mixture of residential, employment, community and tourism zoning”*



To facilitate this vision, the Written Statement identifies a master plan for the Maynooth Environs which includes very specific land use zoning for the landscape of the Moygaddy area and site of the Proposed Development. The policy and direction of this master plan is comprehensively addressed in Chapter 2 of this EIAR. As detailed in Chapter 2, the Proposed Development is a plan lead design, adhering to the land use zoning and objectives included in the master plan and Maynooth Environs Written Statement.

Map 26(a) of the Written Statement shows the proposed land use zoning for the Maynooth Environs. Figure 11-17 below shows the location of the various proposals comprising the Proposed Development (Site A; Site B; Site C; the MOOR; Kildare Bridge; Moyglare Bridge) within the EIAR Site Boundary in the context of land zoning in Map 26(a).

The infrastructure footprint of the Site A proposed Strategic Employment Zone are located within Zoning 'E1 – Strategic Employment Zones'. The infrastructure footprint of the Site B proposed Healthcare Facilities is located within Zoning 'G1 – Community Infrastructure'. The infrastructure footprint of the Site C proposed Strategic Housing Development is located within Zoning 'A2 – New Residential'. The proposed MOOR follows the 'Transport - Indicative Road Route' within the zoning map. Considering the alignment and compliance of the Proposed Development with these land use zoning in local planning policy (Maynooth Environs Master Plan) the landscape of the subject lands are deemed to have a low susceptibility to change.

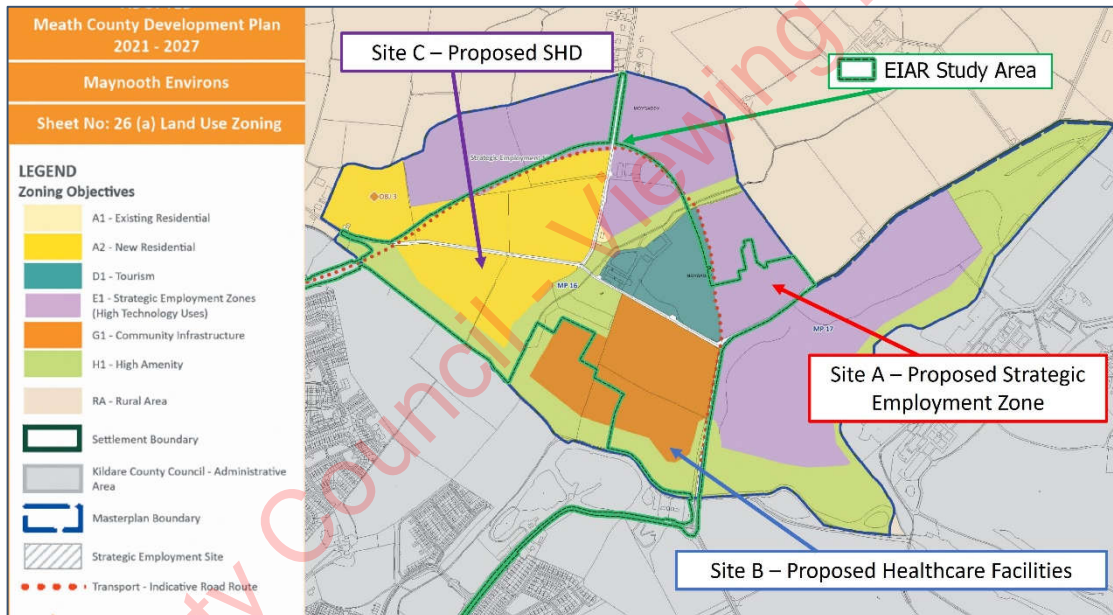


Figure 11-17 Land Zoning maps extracted from the MCDP 2021-2027 and the location of The Proposed Development and EIAR Site Boundary bounded by a green line.

As shown in Figure 11-17, the EIAR Study Area includes lands zoned as 'H1- High Amenity Area'. As shown in the zoning of the master plan (seen above in Figure 11-17), H1 High Amenity Area zoning primarily comprises buffer zones around watercourses such as the Rye Water and its tributary the Blackhall Little, as well as woodland and monuments surrounding Moygaddy Castle ruins. H1 areas within the EIAR Study Area includes land at the margins of the Rye Water, as well as two crossing points, Kildare Bridge and Moyglare Bridge. It is an objective of Meath County Council to protect and improve lands zoned as H1. Permitted uses/development in these lands zoned as high amenity include "Cycleways / Greenways / Trail Development, Land & Water Based Recreational Activities Open Space, Cultural Activities". In accordance with the H1 zoning of lands, the Landscape Master Plan for the Proposed Development includes cycleways, pedestrian walkways, recreational green space and various amenities to facilitate cultural and recreational activities (e.g. Scout Den)

It is noted that that the proposed infrastructure footprint of the Healthcare Facilities at Site A, Site B and SHD at Site C do not comprise the Area of H1 High Amenity zoning (green).

As shown above in Figure 11-17, multiple other land use zones exist within the wider master plan for the Maynooth Environs. The Written Statement contains the following general policies relating to the proposed master plan, its landscape and the visual aesthetic of development proposed for the area:

***"MAY POL2:*** *To ensure that the development of the Maynooth Environs is accommodated in an environmentally sensitive manner that will:*

- 1. Create a centre of excellence for innovation and employment;*
- 2. Protect the existing natural environment and built heritage and utilise it to frame new development, and*
- 3. Build a distinctive and attractive mixed-use place to work and live.*

***"MAY OBJ10:*** *To require that any development in the Maynooth Environs respects the built and natural heritage of the area, its landscape quality, protected structures, historic demesne, archaeological heritage, natural heritage and general landscape character."*

***"MAY OBJ11:*** *To ensure all development in the area has no negative impact on the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC site or on the environmental characteristics of the area including woodland, rivers and tributaries"*

***"MAY OBJ12:*** *To encourage the sympathetic re-use or rehabilitation of Moygaddy House and outbuildings and encourage their sensitive conversion to residential or tourist accommodation or other appropriate use in accordance with the land use objective applicable to the said lands."*

***"MAY OBJ13:*** *To facilitate the provision of community facilities including a hospital and/or associated educational/research and residential facilities.*

***"MAY OBJ14:*** *To promote a high standard of architectural design, and quality of materials utilised throughout the Development Framework area, that is appropriate in scale, and form to its location.*

This LVIA addresses the likely impact of the Proposed Development upon the landscape character of the site and its qualities in consideration of built heritage features and natural landscape receptors such as woodland, hedgerows and the Rye Water Valley that exist within the landscape of the site.

Under the objective *MAY OBJ 2 (Master Plan 17)*, the Written Statement emphasises the importance of Carton House and its Demesne landscape located to the east and south-east of the Proposed Development and provides many measures to preserve and protect its unique landscape setting. *Item 1 of MAY OBJ 2* refers to Proposed Developments within Carton Demesne:

*"An assessment prepared by a suitably qualified conservation architect which demonstrates and concludes that the Proposed Development is sited and scaled such that it ensures that the character and integrity of this sensitive designed landscape and setting of Carton House within this landscape is respected and not adversely impacted upon. The assessment shall include reference to the significance of the designed landscape within the Development Framework lands to the overall evolution of the demesne."*

The Proposed Development is not located within Carton Demesne. There are no protected views listed in the MCDP or the Maynooth Environs written statement. However, County Kildare is located immediately south and south-east of the Proposed Development site and the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 identifies protected views to and from Carton House and the lake and woodland areas comprising the Carton Demesne landscape. These scenic views are reported in the following section. Visibility of the Proposed Development from Carton Demesne is assessed in Section 11.4 - *Visual Baseline*.

### 11.3.1.2 Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 (KCDP)

The Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (KCDP) contains policies and objectives relating to landscape, recreation, and amenity which are referred to in the following sections.

#### 11.3.1.2.1 General Landscape Policy – County Kildare

The KCDP contains the following designations relating to areas and landscapes which are of value:

- Designated Views
- Scenic Routes
- Areas of High Amenity

General landscape policies and objectives contained in *Section 14.8.1* of the KCDP are reported below:

*“It is the policy of the Council to:*

**LA 1:** *Ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity is an important factor in determining development uses. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design, type and the choice of location of Proposed Development in the landscape will also be critical considerations.*

**LA 2:** *Protect and enhance the county’s landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the existing local landscape.*

**LA 3:** *To require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany significant proposals, that are likely to significantly affect:*

- *Landscape Sensitivity Factors*
- *A Class 4 or 5 Sensitivity Landscape (i.e. within 500m of the boundary)*
- *A route or view identified in maps 14.2 and 14.3 (i.e. within 500m of the boundary)*

**LA 4:** *Seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerows, shelter belts and stone walls are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development.”*

**LA 7:** *Be informed by consideration of the County Landscape Character Appraisal.”*

This LVIA addresses the impacts upon designated landscape receptors of high sensitivity within the LVIA Study Area (3km from the proposed Development) such as those noted in policies LA3 and LA4 above. The LVIA will be informed by the Landscape Character Appraisal referred to in policy LA7 (See following section 11.3.1.2.2 below).

*“It is an objective of the Council to:*

**LO 1:** *Have regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Factors in the vicinity of sites in the consideration of any significant development proposals.*

**LO 2:** *Ensure landscape assessment will be an important factor in all land-use proposals.*

**LO 4:** *Protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Kildare’s built and natural environment.*

**LO 5:** *Preserve the character of all important views and prospects, particularly upland, river, canal views, views across the Curragh, views of historical or cultural significance (including buildings and townscapes) and views of natural beauty.*

**LO 6:** *Preserve and protect the character of those views and prospects obtainable from scenic routes identified in this Plan, listed in Table 14.5 and identified on Map 14.3.”*

The LVIA conducted in this chapter assesses the impact of the Proposed Development on scenic amenity in the LVIA Study Area (3km) such as those noted in policy LO5 and the designated views and prospects listed in *Table 14.5* and on *Map 14.3* of the KCDP.

### 11.3.1.2.2 Landscape Character Assessment – County Kildare

The KCDP refers to Volume II of the Kildare County Development Plan 2005-2011 which comprises a Landscape Character Assessment carried out in 2004. This Assessment identifies 14 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and also categorises these into four types of landscape, based on similarities within these areas. As shown in Figure 11-16 (above), the Kildare LCA *Northern Lowlands* is located immediately south of the River Rye, comprising all areas of County Kildare located in the LVIA Study Area.

#### Northern Lowlands LCA

This LCA encompasses the lowland area to the north-east of Kildare. This area is characterised by generally flat terrain and open lands with regular (medium sized) field patterns. Hedgerows are generally well maintained and low, with scattered trees along the field boundaries that partially screen the lowest lying areas. Nevertheless, the generally low-lying vegetation of the area allows long-distance and extensive visibility. The predominant landuse in this area is pasture, with large areas of non-irrigated arable lands (mainly tillage). Coniferous plantations and deciduous woodlands can also be found, as well as large patches of bogland and peat extraction sites. This area has a high population density, with a number of large towns including Maynooth.

The Landscape Character Assessment states that the following Critical Landscape Factors for this LCA are:

**“Smooth Terrain** - *Smooth terrain and the generally flat topography and landform that characterise this landscape character unit, allow vistas over long distances without disruption. As a result development can have a disproportionate visual impact, due to an inherent inability to be visually absorbed.*

**Undulating topography** - *Gently undulating topography is presented at certain areas of this character unit, providing the potential for local visual enclosure thereby absorbing development where it does not break the skyline (i.e. it renders visually unobtrusive of the overall landscape scale). St. Patrick’s Hill, Ardrass, Celbridge represents an important topographical feature within the Northern Lowlands area.*

**Low Vegetation** - *The grassland, tillage fields and generally low hedgerows of this area provide similar characteristics to smooth terrain in landscape terms, and the two are often interrelated due to soil attributes. Grassland vegetation and agricultural crops are usually uniform in appearance, failing to break up vistas, and allowing long distance visibility. Existing low hedgerows partially screen the lowest land parcels, nevertheless the common low vegetation proves unable to visually absorb new development.*

**Shelter Vegetation** - *Shelter vegetation is represented at some stretches of this unit by coniferous plantations, deciduous woodlands and the presence of trees that grow on field hedgerows. In a similar manner to undulating topography, shelter vegetation has a shielding*



*and absorbing quality in landscape terms. It can provide a natural visual barrier and also adds to the complexity of a vista, breaking it up to provide scale and containment for built forms.*

**Localised River and Canal Views** - *River valleys and canal corridors are generally visually enclosed and highly localised areas of very distinctive character with a high degree of visual consistency. This character unit includes sections of the River Liffey and the Grand and Royal Canals. Due to the low lying nature of this area, many views of the river valley and the canal corridors are available from the local roads and from the viewing points located on bridges.”*

This LCA is designated as Class 1 – Low Sensitivity in the KCDP, as it is an area “with the capacity to generally accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area.”

### 11.3.1.2.3 Areas of High Amenity - County Kildare

In addition to the LCAs and the sensitivity rating of these areas, the KCDP recognises special landscape receptors within the county. These areas are designated as Areas of High Amenity “because of their outstanding natural beauty and/or unique interest value and are generally sensitive to the impacts of development.”

The KCDP lists 5 areas designated as Areas of High Amenity. The Grand and Royal Canal Corridor is a designated Area of High Amenity in the KCDP. The Royal Canal flows in an east to west direction along the northern boundary of the county through Maynooth and at its closest point it is located approximately 680 metres south of the EIAR Site Boundary (underground utilities that are part of the Proposed Development). The KCDP states the following in relation to the Canal Corridor High Amenity Area:

*“The canal corridors and their adjacent lands have been landscaped and enhanced along the sections where the canals flow through urban areas. Canal locks are distinctive features of these water corridors.*

*The smooth terrain, generally gentle landform and low canal bank grassland that characterise the canal corridors allow vistas over long distances without disruption, where the canal flows in a straight-line direction. Consequently, development can have a disproportionate visual impact along the water corridor and it can prove difficult for the existing topography to visually absorb development. The occurrence of natural vegetation, coniferous and mixed plantations adjacent to the water corridors can have shielding and absorbing qualities in landscape terms, by providing natural visual barriers.*

*Canal corridors are potentially vulnerable linear landscape features, as they are often highly distinctive in the context of the general landscape. In some cases landscape sensitivities may be localised or site-specific.”*

The Kildare CDP contains the following policies in relation to Water Corridors (Areas of High Amenity), including the Royal Canal Corridor:

*“It is the policy of the Council to:*

**WC 1** *Seek to locate new development in the water corridor landscape character areas towards existing structures and mature vegetation.*

**WC 2** *Facilitate appropriate development that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, whilst taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation.*

**WC 3** Control development that will adversely affect the visual integrity of distinctive linear sections of water corridors and river valleys and open floodplains.”

As shown in Figure 11-16 (previously), the route of the Royal Canal generally runs in a linear path, east to west across the LVIA Study Area. Above ground elements of the Proposed Development are located approximately 1 km north of the canal at its closest point (underground utility infrastructure is located in closer proximity, but will not be visible after the construction phase), therefore, long-ranging vistas along the canal corridor are oriented in a direction perpendicular to the Proposed Development. Consequently, landscape features lining the canal (vegetation and built form) are likely to screen the Proposed Development from view, protecting the visual integrity of linear views along the canal.

Table 14.10 of the KCDP designates 11 No. protected views to and from bridges which cross the Royal Canal. Four of these designated views (RC-5, RC-6; RC-7; RC-8) are located in the LVIA Study Area and are described in Table 11-7 of the following Section.

#### 11.3.1.2.4 Scenic Routes and Protected Views - Kildare

Section 14.6 of the KCDP identifies designated Scenic Routes and Protected Views within County Kildare. The KCDP describes them as “important and valued views and prospects within the county” and notes that protected views “are located particularly along water corridors and to and from the hills in the countryside.” The KCDP states:

*“The Council recognises the need to protect the character of the county by protecting views and scenic routes. However, it is acknowledged that in certain circumstances, some development may be necessary. In this regard, appropriate location, siting and design criteria should strictly apply. All proposals will be assessed taking into account the overall character of the scenic route and the character of the landscapes through which the route passes, in accordance with the criteria outlined in section 14.4.2.”*

The following policies from the KCDP apply to Scenic Routes and Watercourse and Canal Corridor Views:

*“It is the policy of the Council to:*

**SR 1** Protect views from designated scenic routes by avoiding any development that could disrupt the vistas or disproportionately impact on the landscape character of the area, thereby affecting the scenic and amenity value of the views.

**WV 1** Curtail any further development along the canal and river banks that could cumulatively affect the quality of a designated view.

**WV 2** Preserve and enhance the scenic amenity of the river valleys and canal corridors and the quality of the vistas available from designated views.

**WV 3** Prevent inappropriate development along canal and river banks and to preserve these areas in the interests of biodiversity, built and natural heritage and amenity by creating or maintaining buffer zones, where development should be avoided.”

Designated Scenic Routes and Protected Views identified within the LVIA study area (3km of the Proposed Development), are illustrated in Figure 11-16 and described in Table 11-7 below.

\*Please note the following prefixes in Table 11-7:

- > SR – Scenic Routes in County Kildare;
- > RW – Views of the Rye Water from Bridges;
- > RC – Views to and from all bridges on the Royal Canal.

Table 11-7 Scenic Routes and Views from the Kildare CDP

Scenic View	Description KCDP
SR - 30	Within Carton Demesne walls: Views to and from Carton House, the Lake and Woodland Areas
RW - 1	Black Bridge Kellystown / Blakestown
RW - 2	Carton Bridge Carton Demesne.
RW - 4	Kildare Bridge Carton Demesne
RC - 5	Pike Bridge Railpark/Donaghmore
RC - 6	Mullen Bridge Railpark/Maynooth
RC - 7	Bond Bridge Maynooth
RC - 8	Jackson's Bridge Laraghbryan East

The likely visibility of the Proposed Development was appraised from these designations during a site visit conducted in August 2021, visibility from these receptors is reported in Section 11.4 of this report - *Visual Baseline*.

#### 11.3.1.2.5 **Maynooth Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019**

The Maynooth Local Area Plan 2013-2019 (MLAP) forms part of the current KCDP and incorporates the lands of the Proposed Development at Kildare Bridge and Moyglare Bridge. A majority of the Proposed Development site is located in County Meath immediately adjacent to the northern border of the area covered by the MLAP and does not fall within the jurisdiction of the MLAP. Figure 11-18 (below) is extracted from *Map 5* of the MLAP, the red line indicates the 'Local Area Plan Boundary'.

The Maynooth streetscape, amenity areas to the north and green fringe areas are important landscape receptors contributing to the context, setting and character of the surrounding landscape of the Proposed Development site within the wider LVIA Study Area. As discussed in Section 11.3.1.1.4 the Proposed Development is located within the Maynooth Environs zoned lands as set out in the Maynooth Environs Local Area Plan (2013-2019).

#### Amenity Grasslands - MLAP

*Section 7.10.8* of the MLAP contains the following policies related to amenity grasslands:

*"It is the policy of the council:*

*GI 1: To require all proposals for major developments to submit, as part of the landscaping plan for the proposal, details of how any green infrastructure proposed as part of the development (e.g. green open spaces, hedgerows, tree lines, etc.) contribute positively to the development and protection of the overall green infrastructure assets of Maynooth as identified in Map 5 and how it protects and enhance linkages to the wider natural landscape features."*

The proposed Moyglare Bridge will cross a small portion of designated amenity grasslands which tracks the course of the Rye Water along the northern boundary of the Maynooth LAP.

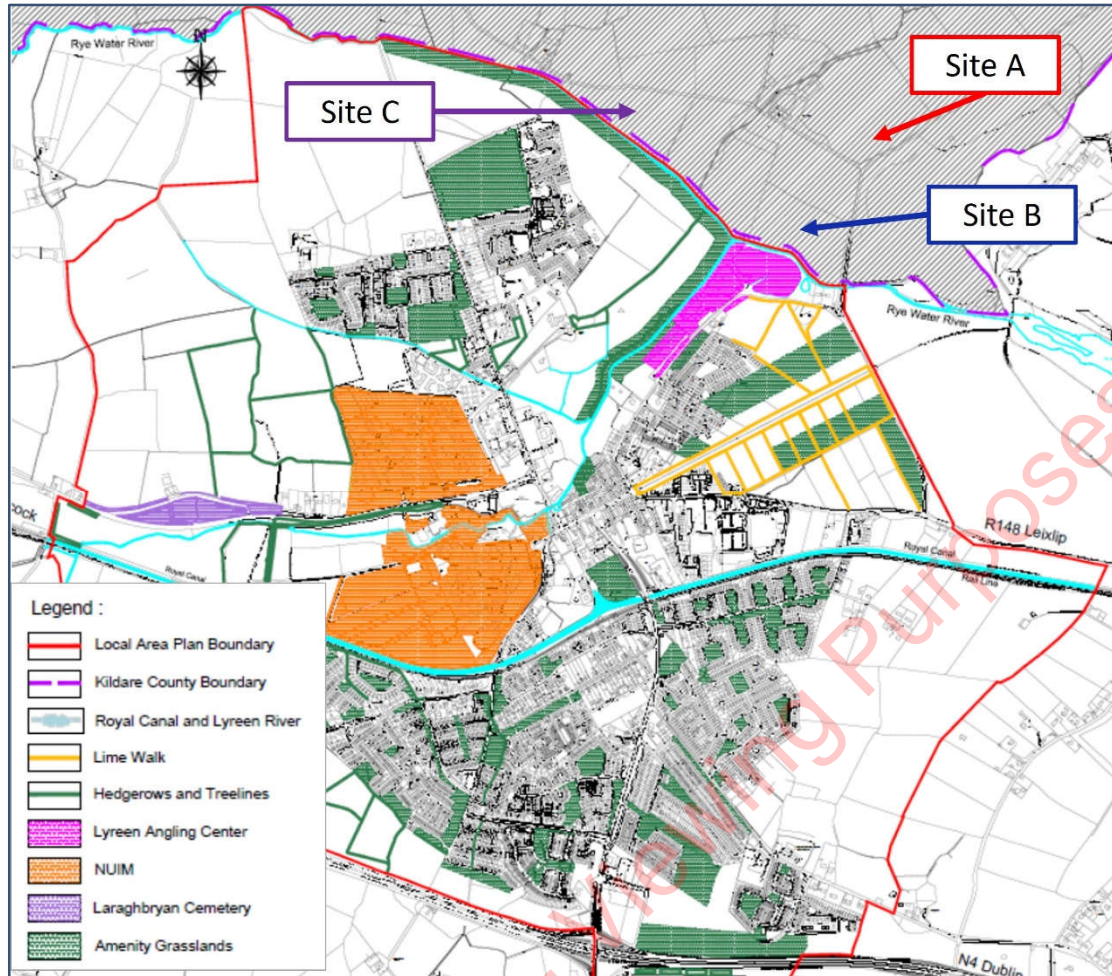


Figure 11-18 Extracted from Map 5 from Maynooth LAP showing the location of the Proposed Development Site A, Site B and Site C.

### Views and Prospects

Section 7.11 of the MLAP provides an overview of policies and objectives related to recreation, amenity and open spaces. The following policies relate to views and prospects in the MLAP:

*“It is the policy of the Council: AR 10: To protect the following views and prospects:*

- > *Of the College Gates and Castle;*
- > *Of The Royal Canal from all bridges;*
- > *Pike Bridge;*
- > *Bond Bridge;*
- > *Along the Carton Avenue / Main Street Axis;*
- > *Off the Harbour along Leinster Street;*
- > *The College Spire from MainStreet”*

These views and prospects are mapped on Map 4 and 4(a) of the MLAP as well as the Landscape Policy Context Map (Figure 11-16). These designated views are either focussed within the internal streetscape of Maynooth itself or are views along the Royal Canal from elevated bridges. The likely visibility of the Proposed Development was appraised from these designations during a site visit conducted in August 2021, visibility from these locations are reported in Section 11.4 of this report - *Visual Baseline*.



## 11.3.2 Landscape Character of the Proposed Development Site:

### Landcover and Land Use

The Proposed Development is located within a greenfield site which currently comprises a rural agricultural landscape as part of Moygaddy Stud Farm. Predominant landcover is improved grassland of open grazing pasture used for sheep (Plate 11-1) and cattle (Plate 11-7), as well as horses in the northern fields of Moygaddy farm (Plate 11-2). The entirety of the Moygaddy Master Plan Area (as defined in the Maynooth Environs Written Statement) comprises 13 No. fields. Field cells are bounded by stone walls, wooden fencing and well-established vegetation in the form of mature hedgerows, scrub, gorse and mixed woodland.

Mature broadleaf trees (e.g. Oak, Ash, Alder, Beech) are a common feature of the site, particularly along local watercourses, along field boundaries and at the centre of the site where Moygaddy house and the ruins of Moygaddy Castle are enclosed by mature woodland.

A comprehensive description of the trees existent within the EIAR Study Area and their ecological value are detailed in Chapter 6 of this EIAR, as well as a tree survey and protection plan in Appendix 6-3.



Plate 11-1 A typical view within the Proposed Development site: Open parklands of grazing pasture bounded by mature woodland.



Plate 11-2 View to the south-west towards Moygaddy house from the north-east of the site.

The remnants of Moygaddy castle are pictured below in Plate 11-3. The tower and other elements such as a well and old stone wall boundaries are sensitive cultural heritage features within the site. The area containing these features is parkland surrounded by mature woodland. These lands are designated as H1 High amenity Areas in the Maynooth Environs Written Statement (See Figure 11-17 previously). As shown in the landscape master plans (see Appendix 4-5, valuable landscape receptors such as the mature trees and heritage elements will be retained where possible. Proposals include the addition of recreational walking trails in this area, enabling safe public access to these features, improving their amenity value. The Landscape Plan includes for the surrounds of Moygaddy Castle to be landscaped as a public park with a playground.

For a more comprehensive description and appraisal of the impact of the Proposed Development on heritage features within the Proposed Development Site see Chapter 12 - *Cultural Heritage*.





Plate 11-3 View to the west of Moygaddy Castle Ruins, A mature oak tree and the L2214-3 Local road are visible in the image.

Plate 11-3 was captured from a small field to the south of the L2214-3 Local road, and east of the Blackhall Little watercourse. Moygaddy House, pictured below in Plate 11-4 is located adjacent to the castle ruins on the northern side of the road. Moygaddy House is also a heritage building and conservation of its landscape setting is also a key aim of the proposed Master Plan. A communication mast is evident in the background of Plate 11-4 as a tall thin lattice structure.



Plate 11-4 View north-east towards Moygaddy House from south of the L2214-3 Local road.

### Landform and Drainage

Although the wider landscape of Maynooth and its surrounding farmlands are generally very flat, the Proposed Development site comprises rolling pasture with localised topographical undulations. The River Rye Water flows easterly along the south-western perimeter of the Masterplan area. As shown in



Figure 11-19 below, a steep embankment exists along the southern margins of the site as the landform rises and extends away from the Rye Water to the north-east (See Plate 11-5 below).

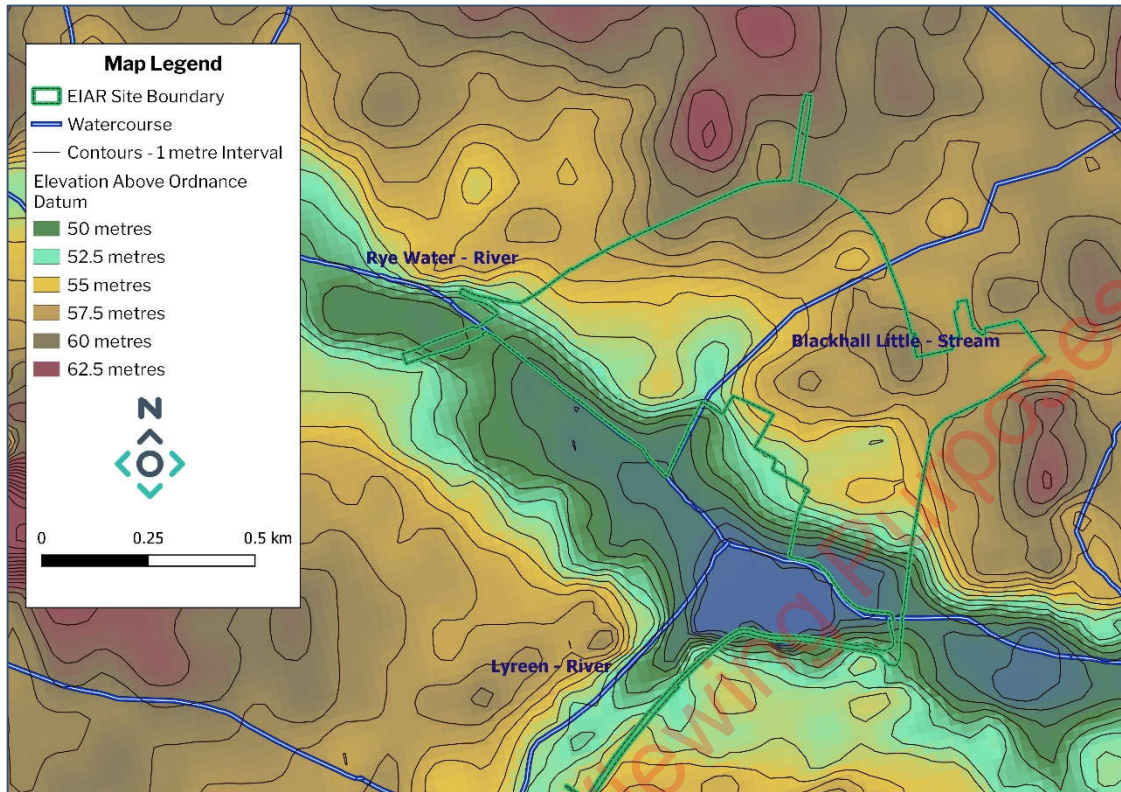


Figure 11-19 Topography and Drainage



Plate 11-5 Steep topography at the southern perimeter of the site (Site B looking south-east) where the landscape drains into the Rye Water.

As shown in Figure 11-19 above, the Proposed Development Site is bisected by a stream called the Blackhall Little (IE\_EA\_09R010400). The Blackhall Little enters the EIAR Study Area from the north-



eastern perimeter and flows in a south-westerly direction. The watercourse carves a narrow valley past Moygaddy House and Moygaddy Castle before discharging into the Rye Water at the south-western perimeter of the Proposed Development site. The entirety of the site is drained by the Rye Water, which is joined by its tributary the Lyreen River before heading east where it discharges into the Royal Canal and then the River Liffey in central Dublin.



Plate 11-6 View looking south from along the Blackhall Little from a field south-west of Moygaddy Castle

The open fields to the north of the Rye Water provide an elevated vantage point where there are relatively unobstructed, long-ranging views of Maynooth Town (see Plate 11-7 below).



Plate 11-7 An open view of Maynooth Town from within the site boundary.

## Human Influences

This is a modified and managed working landscape, influenced by the ongoing livestock grazing at the Moygaddy Stud Farm. Other human influences include grid infrastructure such as metal pylons and overhead lines (Plate 11-8 below) which cross the north-eastern extent of the Masterplan area, as well as a communication mast at Moygaddy House (seen previously in Plate 11-4). The Route of the proposed MOOR roughly traces the route of the overhead electricity line through the field shown in Plate 11-8 below.



*Plate 11-8 An electricity pylon at the north-east of the site where the MOOR will cross this field, parallel to the overhead line. Residential settlements are seen beyond the northern margin of the site boundary.*

The L6219 Local road enters the site boundary from the west and traverses to the east where it passes a junction with the L2214 and then the road becomes the L2214-3 as it passes Moygaddy House. The L2214-3 Local road links with the R157 Regional road which traces the eastern perimeter of the site. As shown in Plate 11-9 and Plate 11-10 below, the roadway is lined on both sides by dense vegetation. During summer months when trees and hedgerows are full of foliage, there is very little visibility into the adjacent fields.





Plate 11-9 View to the east along the L2214-3 Local Road from Moygaddy House.



Plate 11-10 View to the west along the L6219 local road at the junction with the L2214 & L214-3

A small bridge crosses the Blackhall Little watercourse in the centre of the Proposed Development Site (Plate 11-11) in close proximity to Site C, Moygaddy House and Moygaddy Castle. West of this bridge is a junction where the L2214 Local road extends north from the L2214-3 and L6219.





Plate 11-11 Bridge over the Blackhall Little on the L2214-3



Plate 11-12 Junction between the L6219, L2214-3 and L2214. At the centre of the Proposed Development site.

### 11.3.3 Landscape of Site A – Strategic Employment Zone

Site A is located immediately north of the L2214-3 and west of the R157 Regional Road. It is located in a field that connects with Moygaddy House to the west. As shown in Plate 11-13 below, the landscape of Site A is very flat. Like the rest of the Masterplan area, Site A is currently an open field of grazing pasture comprising improved grassland bordered by dense hedgerows and several mature trees adjacent to the roads and junction to the south and east.





Plate 11-13 Existing landscape of Site - A Strategic Employment Zone and the northerly, greenfield section of the proposed MOOR.

The majority of the proposed infrastructure (e.g., office blocks and car parking) of Site A is located within the existing field cell shown in the image above. However, the proposed crossroad, new sections of the MOOR network and road upgrades to the R157 and L2214-3 will be located at the south-western boundary of the field and upon the existing road network. As shown by the annotations on Plate 11-14 below, localised vegetation clearance will be required in order to facilitate the upgrade to this junction and development of the MOOR road network.



Plate 11-14 View west-north-west along the L2214-3 Local Road from the existing junction with the R157.





Plate 11-15 View north-north-west where the proposed north-westerly section of the MOOR is located

Plate 11-15 shows an indication of the proposed c.380m section of the MOOR as part of the Site A planning application. This is located within the same field cell as the other infrastructure forming Site A shown in Plate 11-13 previously. Plate 11-15 was captured from a grove of beech trees (amongst other species) that exists at the old driveway entrance to Moygaddy House (seen below in Plate 11-16). The existing driveway and woodland extends north-westerly adjacent to the local road until it reaches Moygaddy House, the woodland and driveway are located approximately 85 metres from the proposed MOOR route at its closest point.



Plate 11-16 Woodland at the driveway entrance to Moygaddy House adjacent to the L2214-3 Local Road.

### 11.3.4 Landscape of Site B – Healthcare Facilities

Site B is located within an agricultural grassland field immediately adjacent to the R157 as it exits Maynooth to the north from the Dunboyne Roundabout. The northern field boundary (Plate 11-17) comprises a wooden fence and a line of dense mature deciduous trees. As shown below, overhead lines and telegraph poles run across the site parallel with the northern field boundary.



Plate 11-17 View east along the northern field boundary of Site B.

The northern portion of Site B (shown Plate 11-17) is the flattest area of Site B and is consequently the proposed location of all proposed infrastructure including the proposed primary care centre, proposed nursing home, the proposed pumping station and proposed access roads and associated car parking amenities.

The western (left) and southern (right) boundaries of Site B are shown in the panorama image below (Plate 11-18). The elevation of the landscape tapers down to the south towards the Rye Water which is located beyond the treelines to the right of the image. As shown previously in Plate 11-5 there is a steep embankment at the southern perimeter of Site B, a natural flood plain of the Rye Water. Consequently, minimal infrastructure (only drainage infrastructure – See Chapter 4 of this EIAR) is proposed within the more steeply sloped areas of Site B. This area which tracks along the northern bank of the Rye water is also zoned as H1- High Amenity Area and therefore is not zoned for full development.





*Plate 11-18 Panorama view west(left) and south(right) of Site B.*

As shown in Plate 11-19 the suburban fringe (Lyreen/Mariavilla Housing Estate) of Maynooth town is visible beyond the low elevations around the Rye Water to the south-west of Site B. Excepting the proposed road entrance that links with the R157 at the east of the site, all of the proposed infrastructure of Site B is located within the enclosure of the existing field cell. The Proposed Development design includes the retention of the existing field boundaries which typically comprise dense hedges, scrub and deciduous trees (See Plate 11-20 below).



*Plate 11-19 View to the south-west towards Maynooth town from within Site B.*





Plate 11-20 Typical existing field boundary conditions of Site B.

### 11.3.5 Landscape of Site C – Strategic Housing Development

The landscape of Site C includes the lands discussed previously around Moygaddy Castle Ruins (Plate 11-3) and the Blackwater Little (Plate 11-6) which will be developed in line with land zoning as areas of recreational amenity. A majority of the development footprint of the proposed residential houses, apartments and duplexes will be located within the two fields located immediately west of the Blackhall Little and north of the Rye Water. Like the rest of the Proposed Development site, the landscape comprises agricultural grassland bound by dense vegetation.



Plate 11-21 View into an agricultural field at the north-eastern perimeter of Site C SHD.



The northern perimeter of Site C comprises the L6219 Local Road. As part of the Proposed Development the western portion of this road will be re-aligned in a north-westerly direction where it will link up with the proposed MOOR.



Plate 11-22 View West along the L6219 Local Road, along the northern perimeter of Site C

### 11.3.6 Landscape of The Proposed MOOR

The route of the proposed MOOR arcs north-east from Site A through fields of grassland and across the Blackhall Little stream (Plate 11-23). The MOOR then intersects with the existing Local Road L1224 north of Moygaddy House (Plate 11-24) before arcing to the south-west towards the north-western perimeter of Site C (Plate 11-25).



Plate 11-23 Route of the MOOR, across the Blackhall Little and through Fields of grassland.



Plate 11-24 Route of the MOOR at the north of the EIAR Study Area where the proposed route intersects with the L1224.

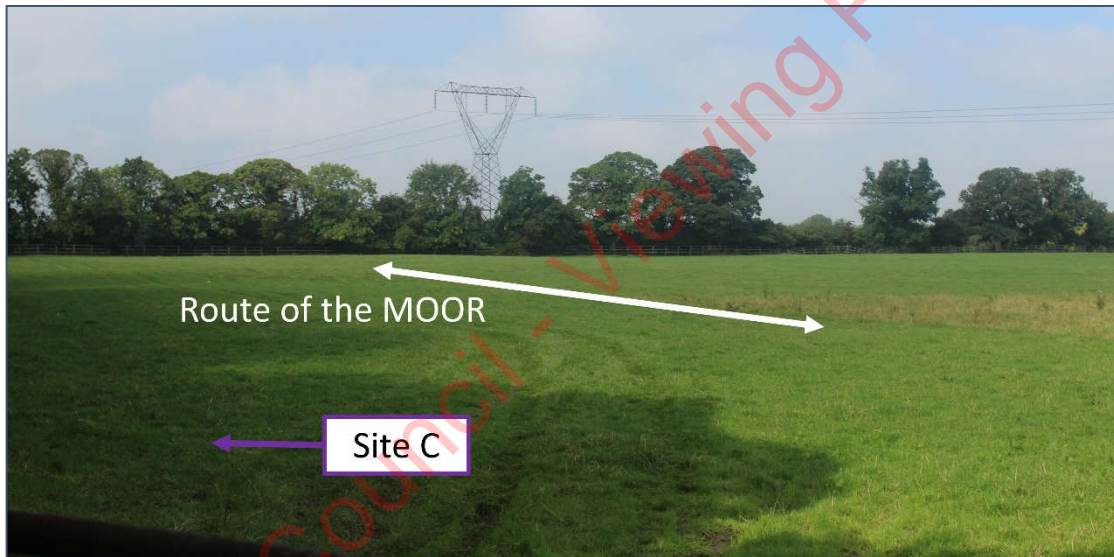


Plate 11-25 Route of the MOOR to the west of the L1224.

### 11.3.7 Landscape of Kildare Bridge

The proposed Kildare Bridge pedestrian and cycleway bridge known will be a standalone structure located adjacent to and west of the existing Kildare Bridge pictured below in Plate 11-26. The existing bridge carries the R157 Regional road over the Rye water, bridging County Meath and County Kildare. The landscape surrounding the Rye Water river comprises riparian vegetation and a landscape of some ecological value. There is currently no public right of way down to the Rye Water from the bridge and the landscape surrounding the river is relatively inaccessible. As detailed in the following Section (Section 11.4 – *Visual Baseline*), due to the high stone walls, there is limited visibility of the Rye Water from the existing pedestrian access across the existing Kildare Bridge. The proposed ‘Kildare Bridge’ pedestrian and cycleway will enable visual receptors such as pedestrians and cyclists an opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the environment of the river Rye Water.





Plate 11-26 Kildare Bridge viewed from the West.

### 11.3.8 Landscape of Moyglare Bridge

The proposed Moyglare Bridge crosses the Rye Water to the south-west of Site C. The lands of Moyglare Bridge are located within County Kildare and comprise a disused field of wild grassland seen in the foreground of Plate 11-27. These grasslands are designated in the MLAP as amenity grasslands.

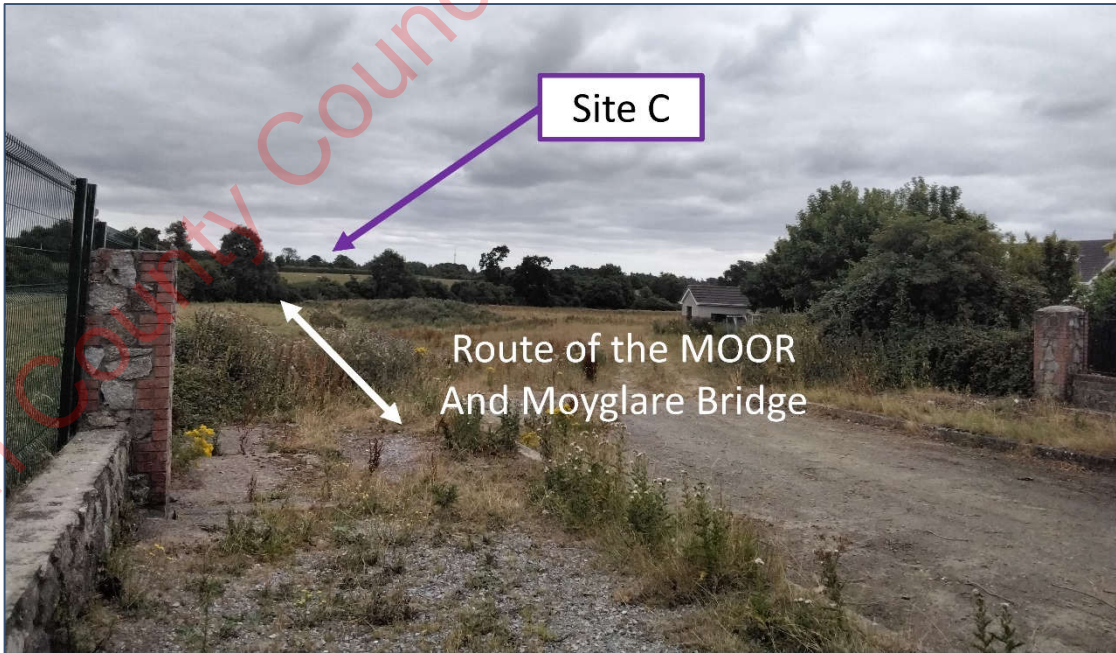


Plate 11-27 View north along the Route of the MOOR and Moyglare Bridge from the south of the Rye Water.





Plate 11-28 A roundabout on Moyglare Hall Road, where the proposed MOOR and Moyglare Bridge will link the Existing Road Network in County Kildare

The banks of the Rye Water are lined by deciduous woodland and scrub.



Plate 11-29 Landscape around the Rye Water River in proximity to the proposed site of Moyglare Bridge.

### 11.3.9 Wider Landscape Setting

The Proposed Development site is located approximately 1 km north of the centre of Maynooth Town. Maynooth is a small but vibrant university town with a well-developed streetscape, heritage features and its own protected views (see Section 11.3.1.2.5 previously).





Plate 11-30 The R148 and streetscape in the centre of Maynooth Town.

The Royal Canal (Plate 11-31 below) bisects Maynooth town and is a central feature of the town, providing visual and recreational amenity. The Lyreen is a small river that also traverses the town, flowing from the south-west to the north-east before discharging into the Rye Water. Several ponds south of the Rye Water and east of the Lyreen river provides amenity for the Lyreen angling centre immediately south of Site B and adjacent to Kildare Bridge.



Plate 11-31 View to the east along the Royal Canal corridor from Mullen Bridge in Maynooth Town





Plate 11-32 View to the north, towards the Proposed Development from a newly built bridge on Lyreen Avenue. The Lyreen watercourse is visible within the small valley.



Plate 11-33 View towards urban developments (Coláiste Pobail Mhá Nuad – Public College of Maynooth) at the northern margins of Maynooth from the local road west of the Proposed Development Site, north of the Rye Water.

The Rye Water River and the slight valley of its floodplain provides both a physical and visual buffer between the existing urban fringe to the north of Maynooth and the Proposed Development Site. The northern margins of Maynooth comprises high density residential developments as well as school and college buildings shown above in Plate 11-33.

A gently rolling agricultural landscape exists to the north of the site. This rural landscape is very similar to that of the Proposed Development site, comprising fields of pasture delineated by hedgerows and woodland. Sporadic private settlement exists in linear arrangements along the local road networks, as well as the small village of Kilcloon approximately 2.5 km north of the Proposed Development.

The wider areas to the north and north-west of the site is a modified working landscape influenced by working stud farms. Moyglare stud farm is located north of the Rye Water and 1.9 km west from the eastern extent of the EIAR Site Boundary. The townland of Moyglare also contains Moyglare Manor which is a historic, eighteenth-century house with 268 acres of parkland landscape. Owenstown Stud Farm neighbours the site and is located approximately 600 metres north-east of the EIAR Site Boundary at its closest point. Leinster Stud Farm is located approximately 1.5 km east beyond Carton House Demesne. The likely visibility of the Proposed Development from the aforementioned stud farms are reported in Section 11.4 - *Visual Baseline*.



Carton House Demesne is a managed and protected heritage landscape located to the east and south-east of the site. Walking routes, a golf course and Carton House Hotel gives this landscape a high recreational amenity value. Dense woodland along the north-western margins of the Carton House substantially buffers this landscape from the Proposed Development site and is likely to screen the Proposed Development from view (a detailed assessment of likely visibility from Carton Demesne is detailed in Section 11.4 – *Visual Baseline*).



Plate 11-34 Carton House and Demesne Landscape.

### 11.3.10 Landscape Value and Sensitivity

Landscape values were assessed in order to determine the landscape sensitivity of the Proposed Development site and its wider landscape setting. Determination of landscape value considers scenic amenity designations, sensitivity and value designations found in local landscape policy, as well as other indications of landscape value attached to undesignated landscapes. Table 11-8 (below) describes various features and attributes of the landscape that indicate landscape value. These then contribute to the assessment of landscape sensitivity.

Table 11-8 Indications of Landscape Value

Features & Attributes of Landscape Value	Description
Landscape Designations	The Proposed Development site is not a protected landscape within any local landscape policy. Kildare Bridge is the origin of a County Kildare protected view and there are protected views along the Rye Water. Carton Demesne is a protected landscape of high sensitivity to the south-east, contributing value to the wider setting of the landscape at Moygaddy. The lands at Moygaddy are located within County Meath Landscape Character Area 11 – ‘South East Lowlands’, which is designated as a landscape of Medium sensitivity in County Meath. Descriptions of LCA 11 recognise the value and sensitivity of stud farming in the rural landscape of the Dunboyne Farmlands.
Landscape Elements Quality/Condition	This refers to the physical state of the landscape and the condition of individual elements. The landscape of the Proposed Development site

Features & Attributes of Landscape Value	Description
	is well maintained agricultural land of relatively high quality and condition.
Aesthetic Qualities	The Proposed Development Site has some rural aesthetic qualities considering the neatly maintained fields, watercourses, woodland and the ruins of Moygaddy Castle. In general, it is a relatively enclosed landscape due to the flat topography and densely vegetated field boundaries. Longer ranging views towards the town of Maynooth exist from fields towards the southern perimeter of the lands at Moygaddy. From Site B and Site C there are relatively uninterrupted views across the Rye Water to the Maynooth townscape. Views within Site A are contained to the field cell in which it is located by densely vegetated field boundaries. The wooded river landscape and riparian zone around the Rye Water are of high aesthetic quality, particularly at the site of Kildare Bridge.
Wildness/naturalness	The landscape within the EIAR Study Area is currently a modified working landscape – fields used as grazing pasture. The rivers and woodland in the area give the landscape setting a natural and rural feel, however, the presence of Maynooth to the south and surrounding road network slightly diminishes any sense of remoteness or wildness.
Rarity/Conservation Interests	Conservation interests include the mature trees and woodland seen throughout the Proposed Development site and the densely vegetated field boundaries which are important biodiversity corridors. The Blackhall Little stream, the Rye Water River and riparian zone to the south of Site B and Site C holds some ecological value. A comprehensive assessment of the biodiversity within the EIAR study Area is contained in Chapter 6 – <i>Biodiversity</i>
Cultural Meaning/Associations	Moygaddy Castle, Moygaddy House and stone walls demarking field boundaries are valuable heritage features of the Site. A detailed assessment of cultural heritage features and monuments on the site are contained in Chapter 12 – <i>Cultural Heritage</i>
Recreation Value	The site itself is privately owned land and it is not currently used for public recreation. The small loughs across the Rye Water to the south of Site B are used by the Lyreen angling centre although there is limited public access to this area.

In consideration of the indicators detailed in Table 11-8 above, the landscape value of the site is deemed to be Medium to High. Local policy designations within the Maynooth Environs Written Statement pertaining to the lands of the Proposed Development Site align with the proposals which are the subject of this EIAR. The landscape of the site is zoned to accommodate growth such as that of the Proposed Development, therefore the susceptibility of this landscape to the proposed change is deemed to be Low. On balance, the sensitivity of the site is deemed to be **Medium**.

## 11.4 Visual Baseline

This section of the LVIA establishes the likely visibility of the Proposed Development from landscape and visual receptors located in the LVIA Study Area (area within 3 km of the Proposed Development - EIAR Site Boundary). This includes a description of views towards the Proposed Development from a variety of perspectives which has informed the selection of photomontage viewpoints. Certain areas were screened out from assessment where it is very unlikely that any visibility will occur due to factors such as screening from vegetation, localised topography and built form.

### 11.4.1 Visibility of the Proposed Development – Views Towards the site

A site visit was conducted during August 2021. The likely visibility of the Proposed Development and general visibility of the Moygaddy Masterplan area was appraised from sensitive receptors and landscape policy designations identified in the previous section of this chapter - *Landscape Baseline*. Photos are used to show views towards the site from prominent visual receptors in the LVIA Study Area, as well as local and regional roads within and surrounding the site. The location of photos used in the following section are illustrated below in Figure 11-20. Figure 11-20 also shows an ‘Indicative Area of Likely Visibility’ (IALV), this is a subjective determination of areas where any proposed development within the Moygaddy Masterplan area is likely to be visible from. The IALV was established from appraisals conducted during a site investigation.

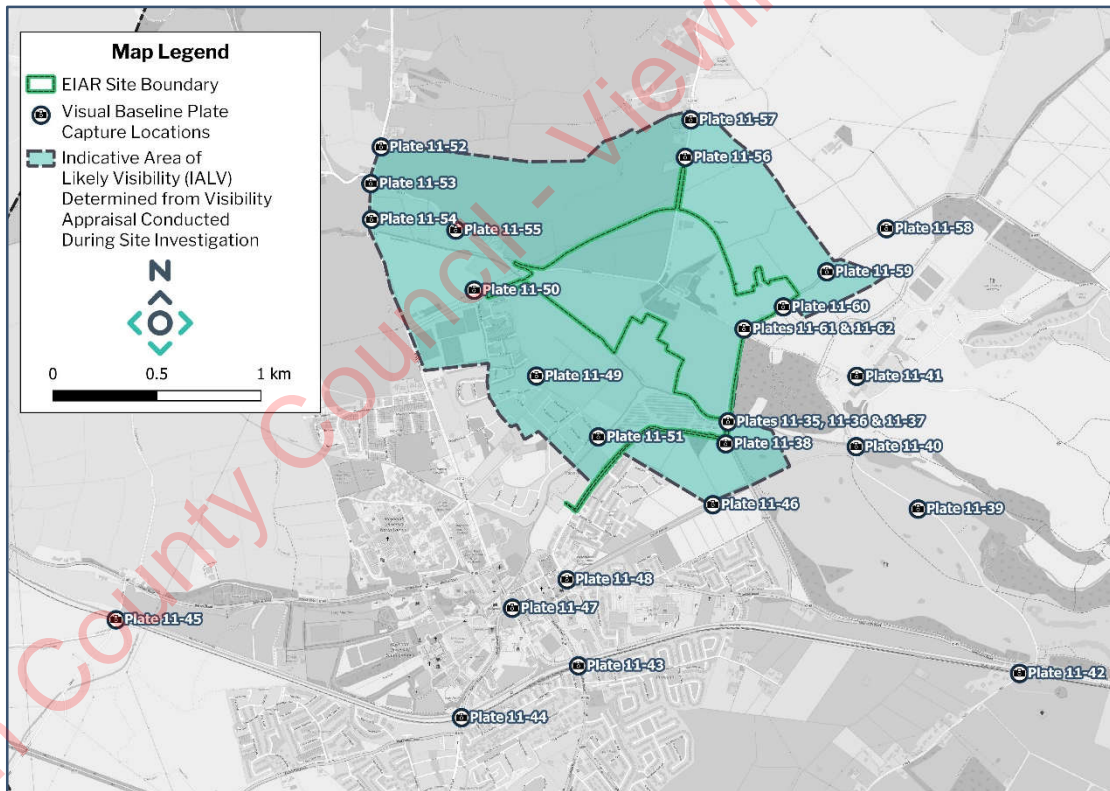


Figure 11-20 Plate Capture Locations and Zone of Visual Influence

#### 11.4.1.1 Visibility from Designated Scenic Views and Prospects

Baseline investigations of the LVIA Study Area identified 8 No. Designated scenic views/prospects from the KCDP and 7 No. protected views from the MLAP.



County Kildare Scenic View RW-4 is located within the EIAR Study Area on Kildare Bridge. Kildare Bridge and the R157 Regional road crosses the Rye Water to the north of the Dunboyne Roundabout. The protected views are directed east and west towards the Rye Water from Kildare Bridge, as shown in Plate 11-35 and Plate 11-36 below.



Plate 11-35 View of the Rye Water from Kildare Bridge (County Kildare View RW-4), this view is directed west towards the River Lyreen.



Plate 11-36 View of the Rye Water from Kildare Bridge (County Kildare View RW-4), this view is directed east towards Carton Demesne

The images above show the relatively scenic views of the Rye Water River, as well as the woodland and riparian vegetation surrounding the river. During a site investigation, it was noted that the stone walls enclosing either side of the existing Kildare Bridge are quite high, above the eyesight of the



average pedestrian who might be crossing the bridge. The images above were captured by extending the camera up above the parapet, it is therefore unlikely that many visual receptors such as pedestrians and cyclists can currently appreciate these designated scenic views. The proposed pedestrian and cycleway on the western side of Kildare Bridge included as part of the Proposed Development would enhance the accessibility of the designated scenic views (RW-4) available to the west (Plate 11-35). The Proposed Kildare Bridge (pedestrian and cycle access) will not be seen above the parapet of the existing stone walls of the bridge and it is unlikely to restrict views from the existing Kildare Bridge and R157 (which are currently difficult to access). The likely visual impact of the proposed Kildare Bridge is discussed in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*

The proposed infrastructure of Site B is likely to be visible to the north and north-west from Kildare Bridge, which is the origin of view RW-4 (see Plate 11-37 below). Although dense roadside screening is evident along the R157 Regional Road (right of image below), there will be some relatively open views into the field where the Healthcare Facilities of Site B are sited from immediately south of Kildare Bridge. Therefore, this location was chosen as a photomontage viewpoint (Viewpoint 07). Visual effects arising from this location (Viewpoint 07) are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*.



Plate 11-37 View north-east towards the Proposed Development from Kildare Bridge, on the R157 Regional Road.

The Dunboyne roundabout is located approximately 100 metres south of Kildare Bridge (Kildare View RW-4). As shown below in Plate 11-38, tall and dense roadside hedgerows will obscure visibility of the Proposed Development from the Dunboyne Roundabout. Due to other screening elements, very little visibility is anticipated from areas to the south, south-east and west of this capture location.



Plate 11-38 View towards the Proposed Development from the Dunboyne Roundabout.

### Carton Demesne

County Kildare Scenic View RW-2 is directed to the Rye Water from Carton Bridge within Carton Demesne Historic Landscape. County Kildare designated Scenic Route 30 is also located within Carton Demesne comprising protected scenic amenity “*Within Carton Demesne walls: Views to and from Carton House, the Lake and Woodland Areas*”. The images below show views towards the Proposed Development from Scenic Route 30 (Plate 11-39) and View RW-2 (Plate 11-40).



Plate 11-39 View towards the Proposed Development from County Kildare Scenic Route 30, within Carton Demesne.





Plate 11-40 View of the Rye Water from Carton Bridge within Carton Demesne (County Kildare View RW-2), this view is directed west towards the Proposed Development (Site B).

The dense woodland comprising the north-western margins of Carton Demesne is seen in the background of the images above. This woodland will screen the Proposed Development from designated scenic view RW-2 and the entirety of Scenic Route 30. No visibility is likely to occur from the other protected views (RW-1) on the Rye Water east of Carton Bridge. The Proposed Development is not likely to impact any protected scenic amenity within Carton Demesne.



Plate 11-41 View north-north-west in the approximate direction of Site A from the north-western side of Carton House Hotel.

Site A is located to the north-west of Carton House Hotel. As illustrated by Plate 11-41 above and Figure 11-21 below, the dense woodland located between the Proposed Development and Carton House Hotel is a physical landscape buffer separating both developments. Due to the dense screening

and distance it is highly unlikely that the Proposed Development will be visible from this part of Carton Demesne.

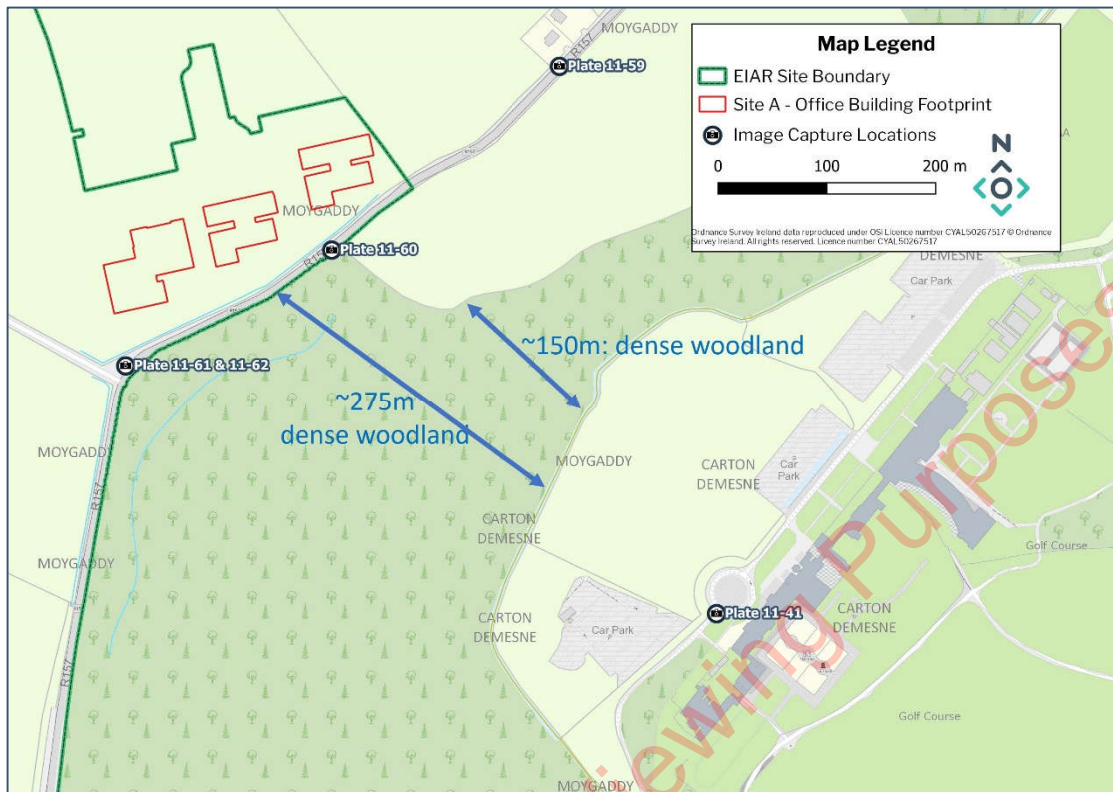


Figure 11-21 Woodland buffer between Site A and Carton House Hotel

Visibility of the Proposed Development (Site B only) may occur from several isolated areas within Carton Demesne during winter months when there is less foliage on intervening trees and hedges. Visibility may occur at the westerly extent of the golf course, south of the Rye water and also where the walking path from Carton Avenue (also known 'Lime Walk') extends north easterly across the golf course into Carton Demesne. Therefore, a location on this walking route within Carton Demesne was chosen as a photomontage viewpoint (Viewpoint 10) and it was captured during winter months to demonstrate the worst-case scenario. Visual effects arising from this location (Viewpoint 10) are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and are summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*. It is noted that visibility is only likely to occur momentarily from certain angles as receptors move on along the path or golf course. These are not designated scenic views and any slight visibility of the Proposed Development is not likely to alter the visual aesthetic or character of Carton Demesne or Carton House.

### The Royal Canal

During a site visit, likely visibility of the Proposed Development was assessed from the four County Kildare designated scenic views located on bridges over the Royal Canal (RC-5, RC-6, RC-7, RC-8) that were identified in the LVIA Study Area. All of the bridge views are from elevated vantage points, and valuable scenic amenity is directed along the canal corridor. Due to the distance from the Proposed Development (RC-6 in closest proximity at 0.7km to EIAR Site Boundary) and the extent of screening (vegetation and built form) existent in the relatively flat landscape, no visibility of the Proposed Development is likely to occur from any of the designated Royal Canal scenic views.





Plate 11-42 View to the north-west towards the Proposed Development from County Kildare protected View RC-5 (Pike Bridge Railpark/Donaghmore).



Plate 11-43 View to the north towards the Proposed Development from County Kildare protected View RC-6 (Mullen Bridge Railpark/Maynooth).





Plate 11-44 View to the north-east towards the Proposed Development from County Kildare protected View RC-7 (Bond Bridge Maynooth).



Plate 11-45 View south-east along the Royal Canal from County Kildare protected View RC-8 (Jackson's Bridge Laraghbryan East)

The Royal Canal Way is a popular way marked walking trail following the route of the Royal Canal. As shown in Plate 11-42 and Plate 11-45, the canal and the recreational walking route is located within a linear corridor contained by tall mature treelines and hedges. The Proposed Development will not be visible from the royal canal corridor and will not impact the landscape of the canal or any of its recreational value or scenic amenity.



## Maynooth Streetscape – Protected views in the MLAP

Likely visibility of the Proposed Development was assessed from protected views within Maynooth town (see list of views identified previously in Section 11.3.1.2.5). As shown previously there is not likely to be any visibility of the Proposed Development from any of the bridges over the Royal Canal. On-site appraisals determined that the Proposed Development would not comprise views “of the Harbour along Leinster Street” or views “of the College Gates and Castle”.

Plate 11-47 below, shows a view towards the Proposed Development from Main Street in Maynooth. The Proposed Development will not be visible within the protected view “of the College Spire from Main Street”. Also, as shown in Plate 11-48, the Proposed Development is unlikely to be visible in the protected view “along the Carton Avenue /Main Street Axis”.

Carton Avenue is a popular and direct walking route from Maynooth Town Centre to Carton Demesne. As shown in the image below, the route is lined on either side by mature treelines. It is unlikely that there will be any visibility of the Proposed Development from a majority of the route, there may be some minor glimpses of elevated rooftops from isolated areas towards the eastern end of Carton Avenue during winter months when vegetation has lost its foliage, although as demonstrated by Plate 11-46 (below) this is likely to be very limited.



Plate 11-46 View towards the Proposed Development from a location towards the eastern end of Carton Avenue during winter months.

Due to the enclosed nature of the streetscape and built form (as well as treelines), it is anticipated that there will be no visibility or very limited visibility of the Proposed Development from any of the protected views in the Maynooth Local Area Plan.





Plate 11-47 View towards the Proposed Development Site from Main Street – The Proposed Development is not likely to be visible from this location



Plate 11-48 View along the Carton Avenue / Main Street Axis – The Proposed Development is not likely to be visible from this location

### 11.4.1.2 Views from Residential Receptors South of the Rye Water

Several housing estates (Moynlare Hall, Mariavilla and Lyreen) and college buildings (Coláiste Pobail Mhá Nuad – Public College of Maynooth) comprise the northern fringe of urban development in Maynooth. These developments are built upon the elevated embankments south of the Rye Water. Open views towards the Proposed Development are found along these slightly elevated lands, where there are relatively unobstructed views to the north across the Rye Water floodplain.





Plate 11-49 View north towards the Site C from within the Moyglare Hall Residential Housing Estate.

Plate 11-49 (above) and Plate 11-50 (below) show views towards Site C which from receptors to the south-west of the Rye Water and the Proposed Development Site. Site C, the MOOR and Moyglare Bridge will be clearly visible from residential receptors located at these locations at the northern perimeter of Moyglare Hall housing development, as well as the Public College of Maynooth. Photomontages were captured from these two locations (Viewpoint 12 and Viewpoint 13). Visual effects arising from these viewpoints are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*.

The second storey of residences and college buildings are likely to have more visibility of the Proposed Development than is shown in Plate 11-49 and Plate 11-50 and potentially some visibility of the Site A and Site B to the east and north-east. These open views only occur at isolated and localised areas at the northerly and easterly perimeter of these housing developments and college grounds, as the housing and school buildings themselves screen views towards the Proposed Development from areas to the south and west.



Plate 11-50 View north-east towards the Proposed Development (Site C) from the Public College of Maynooth. The communications mast at Moygaddy house is visible in the background (centre-right) of the image.

Plate 11-51 below shows a view across the Lyreen River and then the Rye Water, towards the south-eastern portion of the Proposed Development (Site B). Plate 11-51 was captured from recreational

greenspace adjacent to Lyreen Close in the Mariavilla Housing development. Infrastructure of the Proposed Development will be visible from residential receptors in this area. Therefore, this location was chosen as a photomontage viewpoint (Viewpoint 08). Visual effects arising from this location (Viewpoint 08) are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*.

The permitted Dunboyne Road SHD (See Description in Chapter 2) is located to the right (east) of the view shown in Plate 11-51 below, beyond the angling centre building and woodland. The permitted Dunboyne Road SHD is likely to be partially visible in combination with the Proposed Development from this location. The proposed Moyglare Road Development (ABP 314337) is located to the south of Viewpoint 08 and will likely be visible in the other direction to the south. Assessment of photomontage Viewpoint 08 (Appendix 11-1) considers the potential for cumulative visual impact from this location.



Plate 11-51 view to the north-east towards the Proposed Development site from Lyreen Close in the Mariavilla Housing Development.

### 11.4.1.3 Views from the rural landscape and local roads surrounding the Proposed Development Site – north of the Rye Water.

In a general sense, the rural landscape surrounding the Proposed Development site to the west, north and east is quite flat. The agricultural field cells in the surrounding lands are bounded by mature woodland and hedgerows. Excepting elevated vantage points, the dense field boundaries obscure long-range views beyond the nearest field in the flat landscape. On-site surveys determined that in most instances, likely visibility of the Proposed Development will be restricted to locations in close proximity to the site (1-2 field cells, approximately 250 metres) and it is only likely that elevated elements of the Proposed Development (e.g., three storey office block buildings) will be visible above screening within the landscape.

#### Views from the West

Plate 11-52 was captured approximately 850 metres north-west of the Proposed Development on the L1202 Local Road. The communication mast at Moygaddy House is faintly visible in the centre background of the image. Plate 11-52 was found to be one of the only elevated vantage points with long ranging views looking down over the Moygaddy Masterplan Area from the surrounding agricultural landscape north of the Rye Water and was therefore selected as a photomontage viewpoint (Viewpoint 14). Visual effects arising from this location (Viewpoint 14) are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*.





Plate 11-52 View east towards the Moygaddy Masterplan area and Proposed Development from an elevated vantage point on the L-1012 road.

No visibility of the Proposed Development is anticipated from locations north or west of the capture location of Plate 11-52 (Photomontage Viewpoint 14). The roadside screening along the L-1012 road suggests that views such as those seen in the image above will only be seen momentarily from road users passing this location.

Plate 11-53 (seen below) was captured from the intersection between the L-1012 and the L6219, approximately 850 metres west of the Proposed Development. The image shows substantial screening of views towards the Proposed Development, however, there is likely to be better visibility in the winter months when vegetation has lost its foliage.



Plate 11-53 View east towards the Proposed Development from the intersection between the L-1012 and the L6219

Plate 11-54 shows a view towards the Proposed Development (Moyglare Bridge, The MOOR and Site C) from a location immediately north of Anne's Bridge on the L-1012 (Moyglare Road). The treeline seen in the middle-ground of the image will screen most visibility of the Proposed Development within

this view along the Rye Water. The Moyglare Bridge and MOOR may be just discernible in the very background right of the image.



Plate 11-54 View to the east towards the Proposed Development from the L-1012 (Moyglare) Road immediately north of Anne's Bridge over the Rye Water.

As the L6219 tracks directly east towards the Proposed Development from the junction shown in the image above (Plate 11-53), the road rises to an elevated vantage point approximately 350 metres west of the EIAR Study Boundary (Plate 11-55). From this location there are open views down upon the low-lying lands immediately north of the Rye Water.



Plate 11-55 view to the south-east towards the Proposed Development site from the L6219 Local Road.



Infrastructure of the Proposed Development such as buildings of Site C and Site B are not likely to be visible within Plate 11-55 as the line of sight is obscured by the trees and vegetation seen to the left of the image. A photomontage was captured from a viewpoint (Viewpoint 15) beyond the dense screening where the first open visibility of Site C will occur from the west on the L6219. Visual effects arising from this location (Viewpoint 15) are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*.

### Views from the North

Open views of the Proposed Development are very limited from areas to the north. It is unlikely that the Proposed Development will be seen beyond 250 metres from the site boundary where tall mature woodland along field boundaries causes a disproportionate screening effect in the flat landscape.



Plate 11-56 view south towards the Proposed Development site from the L2214 at the north of the site.

Plate 11-56 (above) was captured from a location approximately 250 metres north of the proposed crossroad between the existing road network and the MOOR, 5 approximately metres north of the EIAR Site Boundary. As seen in the image there is a row of residential properties in this area. Tall components of the most northerly proposed above ground infrastructure (Site A and Site C) will most likely be either partially or entirely screened from view from these residential receptors by intervening treelines and hedgerows.

Plate 11-57 (below) was also captured from a location on the L2214 road, approximately 230 metres north of the EIAR Study Boundary. The Proposed Development infrastructure elements of Site A are located beyond the treelines in the background of the image. As the capture location of Plate 11-57 is the most open view towards the Proposed Development (Site A) from receptors to the north, it was chosen as a photomontage viewpoint (Viewpoint 05). Visual effects arising from this location (Viewpoint 05) are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*.



Plate 11-57 View south-west towards the Proposed Development site from the L2214 at the north of the site.

### Views from the East

The R157 Regional Road approaches the Proposed Development (Site A) from the north-east. With Carton Demesne to the south and south-west, the road passes along the south-eastern boundary of Site A before heading south into Maynooth. The tall hedgerows and trees lining the R157 (Plate 11-58) will obscure most views towards the Proposed Development until the road runs adjacent to the site boundary itself.



Plate 11-58 Dense roadside screening on the R157 Regional road as it approaches Moygaddy from the north-east

An open view towards Site A was found from a residential dwelling approximately 173 metres east of the ELAR Study Boundary (Plate 11-59).





Plate 11-59 View west-south-west towards the Proposed Development from a residential dwelling on the R157, east of the site

The proposed three storey office block located at the north-eastern extent of the Site A will likely be visible above the treeline in the background of Plate 11-59. Therefore, the capture location of Plate 11-59 was chosen as a photomontage viewpoint (Viewpoint 01). Visual effects arising from this location (Viewpoint 01) are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*.

Plate 11-60 shows a gap in the roadside hedgerows from the R157, immediately east of the Proposed Development (Site A) where an old gate (Queen Victoria Gate) enters/exits from Carton Demesne. Other than the location shown above in Plate 11-59, this is one of the only locations where there will be open visibility of the Proposed Development Site from the north-eastern approach of the R157. Therefore, this location was chosen as a photomontage viewpoint (Viewpoint 03). Visual effects arising from this location (Viewpoint 03) are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*.



Plate 11-60 View west to the proposed office development from the R157.

The Proposed Development is likely to be visible to both the north (Site A) and the south (Site B) from the junction shown in Plate 11-61 below. Therefore, this location was chosen for the capture of



photomontages. Photomontage Viewpoint 04A shows a perspective to the north towards Site A, whereas Photomontage Viewpoint 4B shows a view to the south towards Site B.

Although to provide better context within the imagery, the photomontages were captured on opposing sides of the road (See photomontage 4A and 4B). Visual effects (including impact of cumulative intervisibility between Site A and Site B) arising from this location are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*.



Plate 11-61 Junction between the R157 and the L2214-3 Local Road at Moygaddy



Plate 11-62 View south along the R157 on the approach to Maynooth.



As shown in Plate 11-62, there is dense roadside screening along the R157 as it heads south towards Maynooth. A photomontage was captured at the crest of the hill midway between the junction shown previously (Plate 11-61) and the Dunboyne roundabout. This capture location (Viewpoint 06) is just visible in the background of the image Plate 11-62. Due to its close proximity, the Proposed Development (Site B) is likely to be clearly visible from this location. Visual effects arising from this location will be reported in the LVIA. Visual effects arising from this location are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 and summarised in Section 11.6.3.2 – *Likely Significant Visual Effects*.

### Visibility from Local Stud Farms

Stud farms are deemed to be valuable contributors to the character of the surrounding rural landscape. four stud farms (excluding Moygaddy Stud) were identified in the LVIA Study Area; Leinster Stud, Moyglare Stude, Airlie Stud, and Owenstown Stud. On-site appraisals determined that no visibility is anticipated from Leinster Stud. The Proposed Development is not likely to be visible from most areas comprising Moyglare Stud, however, there may be very slight visibility of the Site C from isolated areas in eastern fields of Moyglare Stud, although there will be substantial screening from intervening treelines and topography.

Due to its elevated location south-east of Maynooth, there may be some distant visibility of the Proposed Development (Site B) where open views occur from the grounds of Airlie Stud. However, with a substantial set back distance of 2.5 km and intervening screening elements, no significant visual effects are likely to occur. A Folly comprising a tall obelisk called ‘Conolly’s Folly’ is located adjacent to Airlie Stud. Due to its height (42 metres) and elevated location, the tall slender structure of the obelisk is a recognisable feature within the landscape and is discernible from Site B where there are some relatively open views south and south-east across the Rye Water River. The substantial set back distance (~2.5 km) and screening from woodland immediately north of the folly limit visibility of the Proposed Development and it will have little to no impact on the setting of the Folly.



Plate 11-63 Connolly's Folly

Owenstown Stud is located approximately 600m north-east of the EIAR Site Boundary (Site A). It is likely to have the most visibility of the Proposed Development (Site A) than from any other stud farm due to its close proximity. Two field boundaries of mature woodland are located between the proposed office blocks at the north-east of the site and the stables at Owenstown Stud. There is likely to be very limited visibility of the Proposed Development above the treelines from Owenstown Stud. Photomontage Viewpoint 01 is located in closer proximity to the Proposed Development than Owenstown Stud where visual effects are anticipated to be greater.

## 11.4.2 Summary of Visibility and Views

### Disproportionate Screening Effect

Any landscape feature that blocks a view and prevents a clear onward view has a visual screening effect, whether it is a one-metre-tall wall, a two-metre-high roadside hedgerow, a five-metre-high building, or a 10-metre-tall tree. As a full visual screen, such features only allow a person to see over them, thereby pushing the person's line of sight higher into the sky rather than along the level of the ground. The impact of screening elements such as vegetation (road-side hedgerows and trees) and buildings (particularly within towns and villages) on long range visibility are accentuated in flat lowland landscapes, this is called a disproportionate screening effect. It can be difficult to see beyond a few kilometres above screening within flat landscapes, excepting from elevated vantage points.

### Visibility and Views towards the Proposed Development

Visibility appraisals were informed by site investigations, photos captured in the field and the production of 17 No. verified photomontages presented in the Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet accompanying this EIAR.

In a general sense the landscape of the LVIA study area and beyond is representative of a flat lowland landscape. The landscape comprises many screening elements such as the townscape of Maynooth and the mature vegetation demarking field boundaries in the surrounding rural landscape to the north of the Rye Water. A disproportionate screening effect is likely to greatly restrict visibility of the Proposed Development from a vast majority of the LVIA study area (areas >750 metres from the EIAR Study Boundary). On-site appraisal and photomontages determined that actual visibility of the Proposed Development only occurs from locations in very close proximity to the Proposed Development site itself. The Proposed Development is only likely to be seen within medium range views from the south and south-west across the low elevated land of the Rye Water floodplain at the northern margins of Maynooth town.



### 11.4.3 Photomontage Viewpoint Locations

Photomontage viewpoints were selected upon the criteria outlined previously in Section 11.2.4.1 in consideration of the visibility assessments conducted during site visits. A total of 15 no. photomontage viewpoint locations were selected and 17 No. Photomontages were produced. The viewpoints are described in Table 11-9 below. A map showing the locations of the photomontage viewpoints is seen below in Figure 11-22, a viewpoint map is also contained within the Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet.

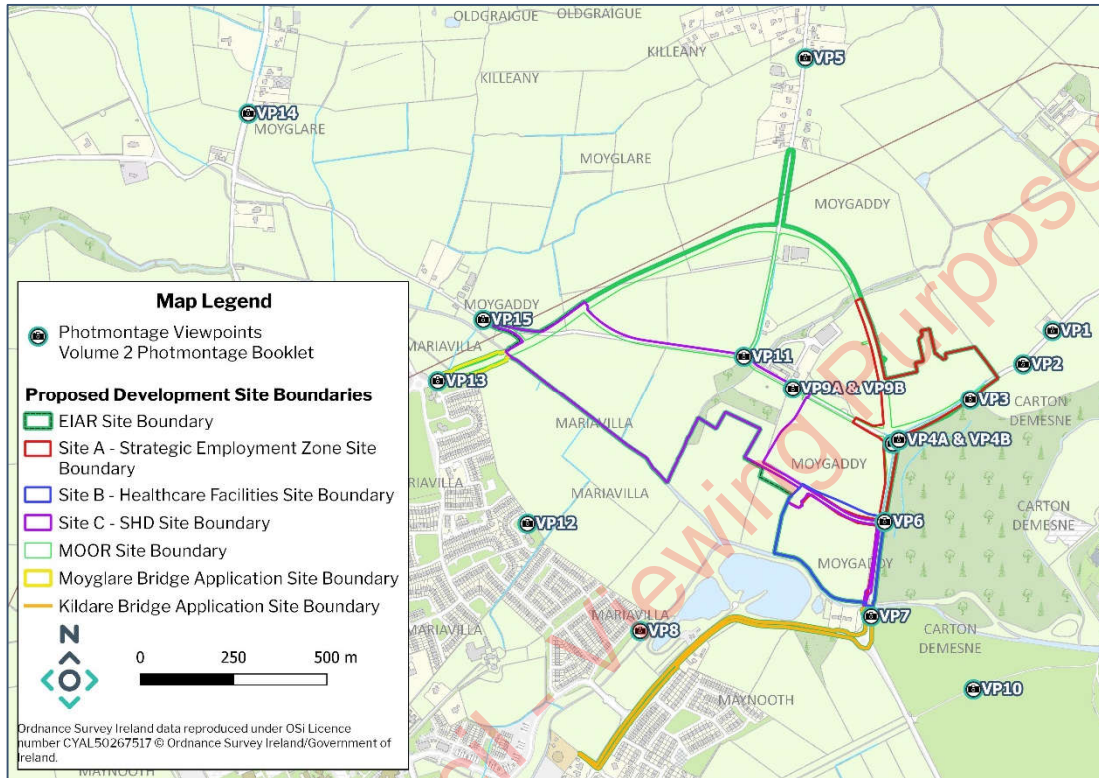


Figure 11-22 Photomontage Viewpoint Locations.

Table 11-9 Photomontage Viewpoint Locations

Viewpoint	Description	Grid Ref (ITM)
1	View west from a residential property on the R157 Regional Road as it approaches Site A and Maynooth from the north-east. This viewpoint is located on the verge of the R157 Regional Road approximately 205 metres east of the nearest proposed building (Office Block C) within Site A.	E: 695,157 N: 739,327
2	View west from the R157 Regional Road as it approaches Site A and Maynooth from the north-east. This viewpoint is located on the verge of the R157 Regional Road approximately 105 metres east of the nearest proposed building (Office Block C) within Site A.	E: 695,078 N: 739,238
3	View west from Queen Victoria Gate, an old disused access gate into the woodland east of the R157 Regional Road. This viewpoint is located within the EIAR Study Boundary and at the south-eastern extent of Site A on the verge of the R157 Regional Road where there is a gap in the roadside hedgerow.	E: 694,937 N: 739,141

Viewpoint	Description	Grid Ref (ITM)
4A	<p>View north towards Site A from the existing junction between the L2214-3 Local Road and R157 Regional Road. This viewpoint is located on the verge of the L2214-3 Local Road, approximately 62 metres south of the nearest proposed Office Block of the proposed Site A at its closest point.</p> <p><i>* Photomontage Viewpoint 4B was captured from the opposite side of the junction, the view presented in 4B is focussed in the opposite direction – to the south.</i></p>	E: 694,728 N: 739,023
4B	<p>View south-west towards Site B from the R157 Regional Road at the existing junction with the L2214-3 Local Road. This viewpoint is on the verge of the R157 Regional Road approximately 250 metres north of Site B at its closest point.</p>	E: 694,745 N: 739,033
5	<p>View south-south-east from the L2214 Local Road as it approaches the Proposed Development from the north. This viewpoint represents a small cluster of residential receptors on situated on this local road. The viewpoint is located approximately 250 metres north of the EIAR Study Boundary.</p>	E: 694,494 N: 740,058
6	<p>View south-west towards Site B from the R157 Regional Road. This viewpoint is located on the verge of a public road, within the EIAR Study Boundary, immediately adjacent to the proposed vehicular access road into Site B.</p>	E: 694,707 N: 738,814
7	<p>View north-west towards Site B from a location on the R157 Regional Road. This viewpoint is located on the public footpath approximately 10 metres south of existing Kildare Bridge structure and the location/origin of County Kildare Designated Scenic View RW-4. The photomontage imagery was captured immediately south of the designated scenic view in order to show a wider perspective and an open view towards the Proposed Development, slightly set back from existent roadside screening.</p>	E: 694,671 N: 738,561
8	<p>View north-east from the Lyreen Housing Development in the townland of Mariavilla. This viewpoint is located adjacent to an area of recreational green space at the eastern extent of the Lyreen Housing Development. The viewpoint is approximately 500 metres south-west of the proposed nursing home building in Site B.</p>	E: 694,051 N: 738,522
9A	<p>View focused south-south-east towards Site B from the L2214-3 Local Road in proximity to Moygaddy House and Moygaddy Castle Ruins. The viewpoint is located within the EIAR Study Boundary and approximately 295 metres north of the proposed nursing home building in Site B at its closest point.</p> <p><i>* Photomontage Viewpoint 9B was captured from the opposite side of the road from 9A, the view presented in 9B is focussed in the opposite direction – to the west.</i></p>	E: 694,461 N: 739,171



Viewpoint	Description	Grid Ref (ITM)
9B	View focused west towards Site C and Moygaddy Castle Ruins from the L2214-3 Local Road in proximity to Moygaddy House. The viewpoint is located within the EIAR Study Boundary.	E: 694,447 N: 739,187
10	View north-west towards Site B from Lime Walk within Carton Demesne. The viewpoint is located on a popular walking path (Extension of Carton Avenue) through the Carton House Golf Course.	E: 694,945 N: 738,366
11	View south-west towards Site C from the T junction between the L6219, L2214 and the L2214-3 Local roads. The viewpoint is located within the EIAR Study Boundary.	E: 694,339 N: 739,258
12	View north towards Site C from a residential housing estate (Mariavilla/Moyglare Hall) south of the Rye Water. The viewpoint is located approximately 340 metres south of the EIAR Site Boundary at its closest point.	E: 694,447 N: 739,187
13	View north-east towards Site C from Moyglare Hall Road, the viewpoint is located adjacent to Maynooth Community College Campus. The viewpoint is located just within the EIAR Site Boundary, on the southern perimeter of the Moyglare Bridge Application.	E: 693,551 N: 739,208
14	View south-west from an elevated vantage point on the L1012 Local Road in the townland of Moyglare. The viewpoint is located approximately 850 metres west of the EIAR Study Boundary at its closest point.	E: 693,003 N: 739,904
15	View east-south-east towards Site C along the L6219 Local Road. The viewpoint is approximately 10 metres from the EIAR Study Boundary.	E: 693,621 N: 739,358

The photomontages are comprehensively assessed in Appendix 11-1 – *Photomontage Assessment Tables*. It is recommended that Appendix 11-1 is read in conjunction with the Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet. Each viewpoint assessment table (within Appendix 11-1) describes the ‘Baseline VVM’, this is the existing view and baseline conditions at each viewpoint. Then the ‘Proposed VVM’ photomontage is described and the changed occurring within the photomontage is determined. The likely significance of visual effects at each viewpoint is then determined using the methodology outlined in Section 11.2.4 of this chapter. Mitigation measures are also noted and factored into the assessment process to give a residual visual effect classification following the EPA (2022) Definition of Significance.

## 11.5 Cumulative Baseline

Considering the linkages, shared utilities and proximity of the various elements of the Proposed Development (Site A; Site B; Site C; MOOR; Kildare Bridge; Moyglare Bridge), this LVIA considers the cumulative and in-combination landscape and visual effects of the various development components. Cumulative assessments also consider other planned or permitted large scale developments in the surrounding area. Figure 11-23 shows developments identified in a planning search that, details of which are reported in Chapter 2 of the EIAR.

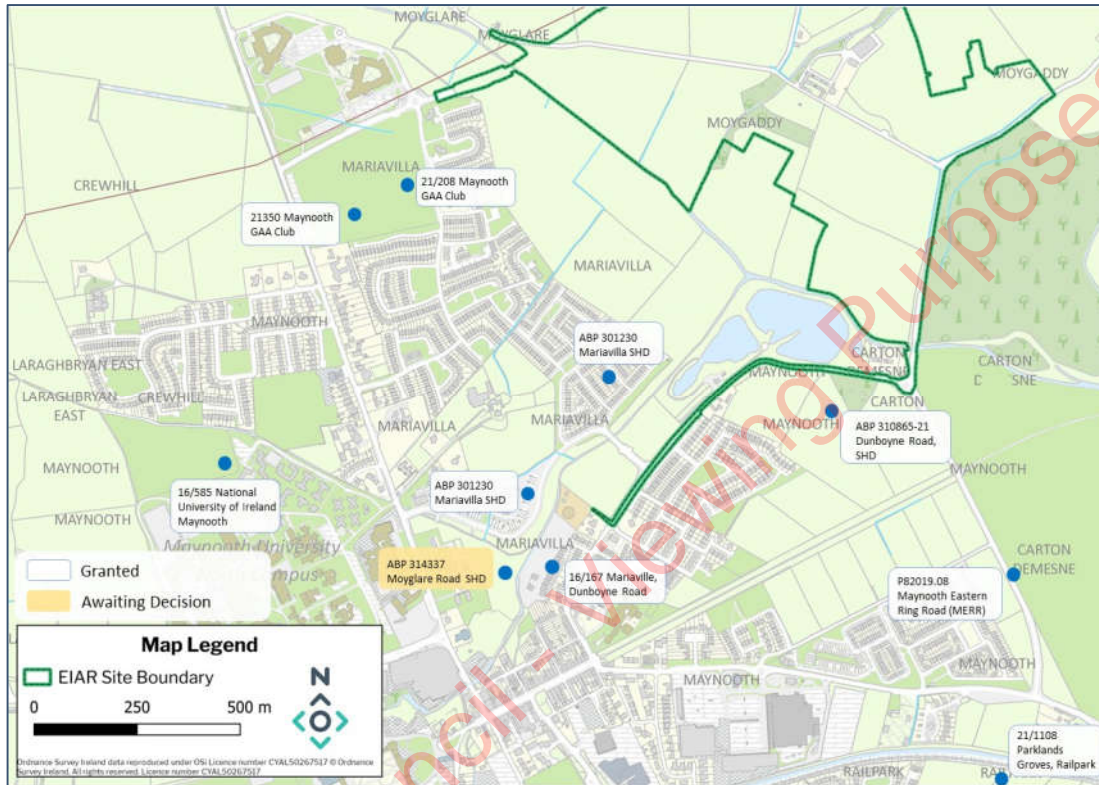


Figure 11-23 Cumulative Developments Identified in the Planning Search contained in Chapter 2

Some of the developments identified in the map above are already constructed and are existing elements within the landscape, these will therefore already be naturally assessed in this LVIA as they are real, visible features of the landscape. Following the Visual Baseline exercise, many of these other developments were screened out for cumulative assessment as they are either already constructed or there is not likely to be any visual or landscape connectivity with the Proposed Development.

Three planned and permitted developments screened in for cumulative landscape and visual assessment. These are:

- The permitted Dunboyne Road SHD (ABP 310856-21) is currently under construction and is located in the Indicative Area of Likely Visibility;
- The proposed Moyglare Road SHD (ABP 314337) is slightly set-back within the townscape of Maynooth however there may be some very minor visual connectivity with the Proposed Development;
- Maynooth Eastern Ring Road (MERR – P82019.08) Proposed Development and is therefore screened in for cumulative assessment. The associated works may have minor connectivity with the Proposed Development;

When applicable, the potential for cumulative landscape and visual impacts with these developments are considered and assessed in the photomontage Assessment Tables in Appendix 11-1.



## 11.6 Likely Significant Landscape and Visual Effects

The assessment of likely significant landscape and visual effects in this section follows the methodology detailed previously in Section 11.2.3 - *Assessing Landscape Effects* and Section 11.2.4 - *Assessing Visual Effects*.

### 11.6.1 'Do Nothing' Scenario

If the Proposed Development were not to proceed, no changes would be made to the current land-use practice. The site would continue to be managed under the existing farming and agricultural practices and no landscape and visual impact would occur.

### 11.6.2 Construction Phase Effects

During the construction phase, potential landscape and visual effects will result as the site changes from an area of agricultural land to a construction site of considerable size. This is expected to be carried out across a period of approximately 3.5 years. Potential landscape effects include vegetation removal, earthworks and a subsequent change in character. These effects will include permanent negative effects, where vegetation is removed, and the land is re-graded, and short-term effects such as the activities of machinery, resulting in noise and dust in the landscape. Construction phase visual effects include potential negative effects on the nearby visual receptors as a result of the vegetation removal, earthworks and operation of machinery. These visual effects will be most pronounced in the immediate vicinity of the site. Cranes may be required to facilitate construction of the taller buildings of the Proposed Development (e.g. Office Block A - 5 storeys); these are likely to be visible from greater distances than other components of the construction phase and are accounted for in the determination of visual effects. The construction phase effects will be short term in duration.

#### 11.6.2.1 Likely Landscape Effects – Construction Phase

The predicted direct impacts upon the landscape arising from the construction phase will include the transformation of the landscape from requisite earthworks and construction activities, as well as the noise and dust from construction operations, material transport, and increased site traffic.

The mitigation measures proposed include the implementation of appropriate site management procedures – such as the control of site lighting, storage of materials, placement of compounds, delivery of materials and appropriate car parking.

#### Significance of Landscape Effects – Construction Phase

Overall, the Proposed Development will have a localised **Moderate**, but **Short-Term Negative Effect** on the landscape during the construction phase. The effect on the landscape is localised and will have a minor impact upon the wider character of the landscape surrounding the site. The effects of the operational phase are outlined in the following sections.

#### 11.6.2.2 Likely Visual Effects – Construction Phase

In general, visibility of the Proposed Development site is largely restricted by screening from vegetation and topographical characteristics of the surrounding area. It can only be seen from a very limited area outside the site as demonstrated by the assessments conducted as part of the Visual Baseline in Section 11.4. As illustrated by the photomontages, visibility is confined to locations in close proximity (limited visibility beyond distances of approximately 500 metres) to the site. The Proposed Development site will only be partially visible due to the presence of mature trees and hedges immediately adjacent to roads in the intervening landscape which obscure views.

Visual impact during the construction phase will be mitigated somewhat through appropriate site management measures, work practices and a waste management plan to ensure the site is kept tidy, dust is kept to a minimum and that public areas are kept free from building material and site rubbish.

Site hoarding will be appropriately scaled, finished and maintained for the period of construction of each section of the works as appropriate. To reduce the potential negative impacts during the construction phase, good site management and housekeeping practices will be adhered to. The visual impact of the site compound and scaffolding visible during the construction phase are of a temporary to short term nature only and, therefore, it is expected that this will require no remedial action other than as stated above. As tall slender features, cranes will cause the greatest and far-reaching visual impact during the construction phase, however, visibility will be limited by the screening elements within the surrounding landscape.

### Significance of Visual Effects – Construction Phase

There are likely to be **Short-term Slight Negative** Visual impacts associated with the construction works. This will be due to the process of substantial site clearance, earthworks and building processes required to construct the Proposed Development. Effects on visual receptors are limited in that there are few sensitive receptors located in the immediate vicinity of the site, however, any impacts by their nature are predominantly negative. Visual effects of the construction phase are deemed to be **Short-term** in duration and of **Slight** significance.

## 11.6.3 Operational Phase Effects

The operational phase commences following completion of construction works. Mitigation, remedial and avoidance measures have been integral in the design of the Proposed Development. Strategic siting and design of infrastructure components reduce the potential landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development and are therefore factored into the following assessments of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development has been designed with the intention of becoming a lasting benefit to the local area, and in this regard, all operational effects will be long-term.

A dedicated landscape design is included as part of the Proposed Development and is included as Appendix 4-7. An overriding principle of the proposed scheme's landscape design philosophy is to retain, where possible, the existing trees, hedgerows and field boundaries present on the site, creating a high-quality external setting. Retention of these trees and hedgerows will allow continued function as wildlife corridors for the area. As well as conserving important biodiversity corridors and providing visual screening from visual receptors, retention of existing field boundary vegetation will enable the site to retain some of its existing rural landscape character. Provision of pedestrian pathways and cycleways are also an important element of the landscape design. The implementation of these safe public access routes enhance the recreational value of the landscape (e.g. access to the Rye Water and Moygaddy Castle Ruins) as well as providing a platform to connect with Maynooth Town.

The designated landscape plan also includes planting of trees, shrubs and other vegetation. The planting will naturally mitigate the effects of the Proposed Development through replacement of green spaces and biodiversity which will be lost during the construction phase, as well as providing some additional visual screening of the Proposed Development from visual receptors. It is noted that this mitigation will improve over time as vegetation establishes following the commencement of the operational phase.

### 11.6.3.1 Likely Significant Landscape Effects – Operational Phase

A desktop study of landscape policy did not identify any designated landscape receptors pertaining to the lands of the Proposed Development site itself. A designated scenic view (RW-4: Views of the Rye Water from Kildare Bridge) was identified within the EIAR Study Area. As this designation is of a visual nature, it is considered and assessed in the following section – *Likely Significant Visual Effects* –



*Operational Phase* (Also, see Photomontage Viewpoint 7). The desktop study and site investigations identified other sensitive landscape receptors in the immediate setting and wider area such as the Rye Water and Carton Demesne which contribute value to the landscape of the site and its overall character. Archaeological features of the Proposed Development site such as Moygaddy Castle Ruins, Moygaddy House and old stone walls contribute cultural heritage value to the local landscape. Field boundaries within the Proposed Development comprising mature woodland and hedgerows were identified as the most valuable and sensitive landscape receptors located within the site itself.

### Landscape Effects - Proposed Development Site (EIAR Study Area)

Indications of landscape value of the site and its setting are summarised in Table 11-8 previously. The existing landscape of the site and its setting was found to have some attributes and qualities of medium to high value. As the landscape of the Moygaddy Masterplan Area is zoned to accommodate growth such as that of the Proposed Development, the susceptibility of this landscape to the proposed change is deemed to be Low. On balance, the landscape sensitivity of the Proposed Development Site is deemed to be of **Medium** Sensitivity.

During the operational phase, the Proposed Development will result in a substantial change to the physical fabric of the landscape of the site, as well as its landscape character within its immediate vicinity. Although the development type is consistent with the zoning and planning of the lands at Moygaddy, the scale of the change will be substantial as the character, structure and composition of the site transitions from a rural environment to a well-developed landscape of a semi-urban nature. The magnitude of change within the site is deemed to be **Substantial**.

Some rural qualities of the site will be lost, however, retention of boundary vegetation and implementation of the designated landscape plan will mitigate the extent of the change and replace valuable landscape attributes lost during the construction phase and potentially enhance the recreational value of the landscape. On balance, considering the mitigating factors and the alignment of the Proposed Development with the zoning of the subject lands, direct effects on the landscape of the site are deemed to be long-term effects and of **Moderate Significance** – “An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends” (EPA, 2022).

### Landscape Effects – Wider Landscape Setting and Specific Landscape Receptors

As shown by the visual baseline exercise and the photomontages, the abundance of vegetation screening surrounding the Proposed Development and its siting in a relatively flat landscape result in relatively limited visibility from locations beyond its immediate vicinity. Therefore, effects of the Proposed Development on the aesthetic and perceptual elements of the wider landscape setting and landscape character are of **Slight Significance** – “An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities” (EPA, 2022).

Due to the very limited visibility of the Proposed Development from Carton Demesne (visibility only occurs from a small, localised area, view shown in Photomontage Viewpoint 10), it is deemed that landscape effects on the landscape of the Carton Demesne are **Not Significant**.

The Proposed Development is located within County Meath landscape Character Area (LCA) 11 – South-East Lowlands which is designated as having a medium sensitivity. Considering the very limited visibility of the Proposed Development from the north, west and east (where the rest of LCA 11 is located) effects on the character of the LCA are negligible. On balance, it is deemed that landscape effects on LCA 11 are **Not Significant**.

Other LCAs in the LVIA Study Area include Meath LCA 14 – *Royal Canal* and Kildare LCA – *Northern Lowlands*. Considering the set-back distances from these LCAs, and the extremely limited

visibility of the Proposed Development from within these landscapes, the Proposed Development will have a negligible magnitude of change on these LCAs and No Significant effects will occur.

### 11.6.3.2 Likely Significant Visual Effects

The desktop study, site visit and photomontages all inform the assessment of visual effects. In a general sense the landscape of the LVIA study area and beyond is representative of a flat lowland landscape. The landscape comprises many screening elements such as the townscape of Maynooth and the mature vegetation demarking field boundaries in the surrounding rural landscape to the north of the Rye Water. A disproportionate screening effect greatly restricts visibility of the Proposed Development from a vast majority of the LVIA study area. On-site appraisal determined that in most instances actual visibility of the site will only occur within relatively short-range views from locations in very close proximity to the site. However, the Proposed Development will be visible within medium range views from the south and south-west across the low-lying land of the Rye Water floodplain at the northern margin of Maynooth town.

The locations chosen for photomontages follow a detailed and extensive process including review of baseline policy information, site visits and high-quality photo taking at multiple locations within the LVIA study area. Many locations, which based on a desktop review had the potential for views of the site, had complete intervening screening or were screened to such an extent that the development of photomontages was not considered useful in terms of the assessment process i.e. little or no visibility towards the Proposed Development.

#### Visual Effects - Photomontage Assessment

A comprehensive and detailed assessment of each individual photomontage is presented in Appendix 11-1 – *Photomontage Assessment Tables*. The determination of likely significance of visual effects for each viewpoint is included in Appendix 11-1 as well as the significance of residual visual effects accounting for mitigating factors. Table 11-10 (below) summarises the residual visual effects presented in each of the 17 No. photomontages. Table 11-10 and the Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet should be viewed whilst reading Appendix 11-1. All visual effects are deemed to be long-term negative visual effects.

Table 11-10 Viewpoint Assessment Summary

VP No	Brief Descriptor	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Residual Significance of Visual Effect
01	Residential Receptor on the R157 north-east	Medium	Moderate	<b>Slight</b>
02	R157 Approach from the north-east	Low	Moderate	<b>Slight</b>
03	Queen Victoria Gate on the R157	Low	Substantial	<b>Moderate</b>
04 - A	View focussed on Site A from Existing Junction (R157 & L2214-3)	Low	Substantial	<b>Moderate</b>
04 - B	View focussed on Site B from Existing Junction (R157 & L2214-3)	Low	Moderate	<b>Slight</b>
05	Residential Receptors on the L2214 north-west	High	Negligible	<b>Not Significant</b>



VP No	Brief Descriptor	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Residual Significance of Visual Effect
06	Site B from the R157 Regional Road	Low	Substantial	<b>Moderate</b>
07	Kildare Bridge and County Kildare Designated Scenic View RW-4	Medium	Moderate	<b>Slight</b>
08	Lyreen Housing Estate	Medium	Moderate	<b>Moderate</b>
09A	View Focused on Site B from Mogaddy House & Moygaddy Castle Ruins	Medium	Slight	<b>Not Significant</b>
09B	View Focused on Site C from Mogaddy House & Moygaddy Castle Ruins	Medium	Moderate	<b>Moderate</b>
10	Carton Demesne	High	Slight	<b>Slight</b>
11	Moygaddy Local Road T-Junction	Low	Substantial	<b>Moderate</b>
12	Residential Development South of the Rye Water	Medium	Moderate	<b>Moderate</b>
13	Moyglare Hall Road	Medium	Substantial	<b>Moderate</b>
14	L1012 Local Road, Moyglare	Medium	Negligible	<b>Not Significant</b>
15	L6219 Local Road West	Medium	Moderate	<b>Slight</b>

The significance of the residual visual effect was not considered to be 'Profound', 'Very Significant' or 'Significant' at any of the 15 No. viewpoint locations. \* no. of the photomontages were deemed to have a residual visual effect of "Moderate" significance, six 'Slight' significance, and three were deemed to be 'Not Significant'.

As shown by the photomontage booklet and assessment tables in Appendix 11-1, the greatest visual effects will occur in very close proximity to the site. For instance, Viewpoints 03, 4A and 5 recorded visual effects of 'Moderate' significance. These viewpoints were all located within the EIAR Study Area in very close proximity (30-60 metres) to large buildings proposed as part of the Proposed Development where a substantial magnitude of change will occur. These viewpoints (03, 4A, 6) were not representative of sensitive visual receptors, therefore no significant visual effects are likely to occur. In a general sense, visual effects from the local roads surrounding the site were deemed to be 'Not Significant' when receptors (viewpoints) are greater than 200 metres from buildings of the Proposed Development.

As reported in the visual baseline, most open visibility of the Proposed Development will occur from the south, where the Rye Water valley affords more open views towards the Proposed Development than elsewhere in the surrounding landscape. Viewpoints 07, 08, 10, 12 and 13 are representative of key visual receptors with visibility of the Proposed Development from the south. Due to separation distances, intervening screening elements and various other factors (reported specifically for each photomontage in Appendix 11-1), the Proposed Development will not have a significant effect on visual amenity to the south.

Due to the characteristics of the local landscape and screening surrounding the site, the Proposed Development will have limited visibility within the wider LVIA study area and will not have any significant effects on designated scenic amenity. Considering the highly localised visibility of the Proposed Development, as well as measures such as vegetation boundary retention and a landscaping plan which will provides some additional screening, overall, visual effects are deemed to be **Long-Term** and of **'Slight'** significance.

## 11.6.4 Cumulative Effects

There are many potential scenarios and interactions where cumulative visual effects may occur. While cumulative landscape and visual effects can occur due to the interaction of the Proposed Development with any other permitted or planned developments, the focus in the LVIA are those scenarios that are likely to give rise to significant cumulative effects. These scenarios can include interactions between differing development elements the Proposed Development, as well as the three other developments of similar scope and scale within the surrounding landscape that were identified previously in Section 11.5 – *Cumulative Baseline* (Permitted Dunboyne SHD; Proposed Moyglare Road SHD; Proposed MERR).

### 11.6.4.1 Cumulative Landscape Effects

All components of the Proposed Development are linked by the MOOR, shared utility infrastructure, as well as the pathways and landscape designs included in the master plan. Therefore, direct landscape effects resulting from both the construction and operational phases are connected. Direct effects on the landscape of Site A, Site B, Site C, the MOOR, Kildare Bridge and Moyglare Bridge are additive, and this was factored into the assessment of direct landscape effects reported previously.

Due to the highly localised visibility of the proposed infrastructure at Site A it is rarely viewed in combination (Viewpoint 08 only) with Site B, and it will not be viewed in combination with Site C, Kildare Bridge or Moyglare Bridge. There is some intervisibility between the substantial features of Site A and Site B (See Viewpoint 4a and 4B), however, due to the spatial separation and intervening treelines cumulative visual effects are very minor. Both Site A and Site B are viewed in combination from Viewpoint 08. Site B, Site C, Moyglare Bridge and the south-western portion of the MOOR are located within a slightly more exposed landscape to the south of the EIAR study Area, near to the Rye Water. Consequently, there is some intervisibility and combined cumulative effects amongst these elements, which do have a minor cumulative effect on the aesthetic attributes of the wider landscape. The cumulative landscape effects are additive but are not deemed to be significant.

### 11.6.4.2 Cumulative Visual Effects

Several factors must be considered when determining cumulative visual effects; Combined visibility (simultaneously and successional) and sequential visibility.

#### Combined Visibility - Simultaneous

Combined visibility occurs where an observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint. Simultaneous combined visibility occurs when two developments are simultaneously seen within the same field of view from one viewpoint. As the MOOR is a common feature linking the entirety of the Proposed Development it will be viewed simultaneously with every other element and therefore cumulative visual effects will arise.

Simultaneous combined visibility of both Site A and Site B (and a very small portion of Site C) only occurs within medium ranging views from the south-west, as shown in Photomontage viewpoint 08, where visual effects were deemed to be of 'Moderate' Significance. Simultaneous combined visibility of Site A and Site C occurs when viewed from the south-east (Viewpoint 10). Site C, the MOOR and



Moyglare Bridge will have combined simultaneous visibility, this is particularly evident in viewpoint 13, which was deemed to have a visual impact of 'Moderate' significance.

It is likely that there will be some in-combination visibility of the Proposed Development with the permitted Dunboyne Road SHD from Viewpoint 10 which may be partially visible to the left of the view shown in the photomontage, beyond a distant treeline. In this photomontage, the Proposed Development and this proposed SHD would add minor visibility of built infrastructure to the landscape seen from within Carton Demesne, however, cumulative visual effects are not deemed to be significant.

### Combined Visibility - Successional

Successional visibility is when a receptor can view two developments from the same location but within differing arcs or fields of view. Combined successional visibility of Site A and Site B will occur from some locations between the various sites. As shown by the combination of Photomontages 4A and 4B where Site A and Site B have combined successional visibility. Also, Photomontage 9A and 9B show combined successional visibility of Site B and Site C. In both instances, landscape elements such as the mature vegetation along the field boundaries and large fields act as a buffer, visually separating the various proposed infrastructure, therefore mitigating the potential for significant cumulative visual effects as a result of intervisibility.

There will be combined successional visibility of the Proposed Development with several other SHD developments located to the south (Proposed Moyglare Road – ABP 314337) and east (Permitted Dunboyne Road ABP 310865-21) of photomontage Viewpoint 08 located adjacent to the Lyreen River. These developments may be partially visible in opposing fields of view to the Proposed Development. They will add to the existing residential and suburban character of the landscape immediately east and west of Viewpoint 08. These developments and the Proposed Development will have a cumulative effect aligning with the current trend of urbanisation in this area. Considering the separation distances and screening elements obscuring full intervisibility between the Proposed Development and these two developments, significant cumulative visual effects are not likely to occur.

Plans for the proposed Maynooth Eastern Ring Road (MERR – P82019.08) include a transport network linking with the Dunboyne roundabout. Associated works for this development may be visible to the south of Viewpoint 07, combined successional visibility may occur with the MOOR and Kildare Bridge works. It is anticipated however, that cumulative visual effects will not be significant.

### Sequential Visibility

Sequential impacts occur when an observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments. Sequential cumulative effects should be assessed for travel along regularly-used routes like major roads, railway lines, ferry routes, popular paths, etc. In a 'Journey Scenario' the magnitude of sequential effects will be affected by speed of travel and distance between viewpoints. Sequential cumulative visual impacts are likely to occur as receptors travel along the R157 Regional Road. Visual effects will be brief and momentary as road users pass various locations in close proximity to Both Site A and Site B where open visibility will occur. No significant cumulative visual effects are anticipated to occur along this route. As the proposed MOOR is a transport network designed to link all of the Proposed Development components sequential visibility will inevitably occur on this route.

In a general sense, cumulative visual effects of some form (combined or sequential) will occur, however, they are not deemed to be significant due to the landscape features which provide a visual and spatial buffer between the various proposals. It is also noteworthy in this regard that any cumulative visual effects experienced as a result of the visual interactions between the various components of the Proposed Development, are in line with what is clearly envisioned in planning and development policy. The Sites where the various elements of the Proposed Development are located, are aligned with the zoning of these lands in the Maynooth Environs Written Statement.

## 11.7

## Conclusion

Desk studies and site visits determined that there would be very limited visibility of the Proposed Development beyond distances of 600 metres (only from the south, reduced visibility from all other geographical perspectives) from the site and therefore there will be no effects on sensitive visual and landscape receptors or landscape designations in the LVIA Study Area beyond 600 metres. Photomontage assessments determined that most open visibility of the Proposed Development would occur from the local road network immediately surrounding the site as well as from the embankments to the south of the Rye Water.

Perceptual and aesthetic changes to the wider landscape character surrounding the site are likely to be insignificant as a result of the very limited and localised visibility. The greatest changes will occur on the footprint of the development site where the landscape will be materially altered from an unkept green field site of grassland to a landscape of a more suburban nature. Considering the proposed retention of existing woodland along existing field boundaries, a dedicated landscape plan and the zoning of these lands for development, landscape effects are not deemed to be significant.

Due to very effective screening of the Proposed Development by existing vegetation there will be in minimal visual changes in the landscape of the wider LVIA Study Area. Sensitive receptors with potential to be impacted by the Proposed Development were identified during a desk study and site visit. Visual effects were then assessed using photomontages. A walking path at the western extent of Carton Demesne was identified as one of the most sensitive receptors where some visibility of the Proposed Development may occur; residual visual effects were deemed to be of 'Slight' significance from this location. A cluster of residential receptors to the north-west of Site A were found to have open views of a scenic nature towards the site within their primary residential visual amenity, the photomontages showed very little visibility of the Proposed Development and residual visual effects were deemed to be 'Not Significant'.

Other sensitive receptors assessed using photomontages include a designated scenic view on Kildare Bridge, the Lyreen Housing estate to the south of the Rye Water, and a view in proximity to Moygaddy Castle ruins and Moygaddy House; visual effects were recorded as 'Slight', 'Moderate,' and 'Moderate' from these locations respectively. Visual effects of 'Moderate' significance was recorded from photomontage viewpoints located south of the Rye Water, adjacent to housing estates and Maynooth Community College; where Site C (SHD), the MOOR and Moyglare bridge will be seen within relatively open views across the small Rye Water Valley. A substantial magnitude of change will occur from the local road network in the immediate vicinity of the site. The road network represents motorised traffic which are not deemed to be sensitive visual receptors. Therefore, residual visual effects recorded for the viewpoints in very close proximity to the Proposed Development infrastructure were of 'Moderate' significance.

No significant cumulative landscape and visual effects are likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development. As noted in the previous section, any cumulative visual effects experienced (combined or sequentially) as a result of views of both Site A, Site B, Site C, the MOOR, Kildare Bridge and Moyglare Bridge, are in line with what is clearly envisioned in planning and development policy for the areas within which these developments are located, given that all developments are aligned with the zoning of these lands in the Maynooth Environs Written Statement.

To conclude, likely landscape and visual effects anticipated from the Proposed Development are not deemed to be significant. Considering the mitigation plans in place, and the zoning of these lands, residual effects upon the landscape and visual amenity are deemed to be acceptable and in line with the sustainable development of the area.