

SSE Tarbert Next Generation Power Station

Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)
Volume I
Chapter 10 Landscape and Visual

SSE Generation Ireland Limited

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Figure 10.1: Landscape Designations Map

Figure 10.2: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

10. Landscape and Visual

10.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) describes the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.

This chapter has been prepared in accordance with the 2022 Environment Protection Agency (EPA) Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports as well as the 2013 Landscape Institute guidelines on preparing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments as referenced in Section 10.10.

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is accompanied by the following technical appendices:

EIAR Volume II, Appendix 10A: Booklet of Verified Views / Photomontages:

- A3 Photomontages of Tarbert (OCGT) generator and associated plant and equipment (prepared by 3D Design Bureau)

EIAR Volume III, Figures:

- Figure 10.1: Landscape Designations Map
- Figure 10.2: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

The Site boundary ('red line boundary') for the Proposed Development encloses an area of approximately 15.18 hectares (ha) and encompasses land within SSE Tarbert, which is an area of 42ha under the management of the Applicant.

Full details on the background and Site history are provided in EIAR Volume I Chapter 4 (Existing Site and Conditions), and details of the Proposed Development is provided in EIAR Volume I Chapter 5 (Description of the Proposed Development), and the Planning Statement submitted with this planning application.

Landscape and visual effects are interrelated with other environmental effects but are assessed separately. Whilst elements of the built heritage such as Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are important elements of the landscape and contribute to its character and influence its quality and value, effects on the significance of these designated features and their setting do not form part of this assessment. Those are the subject of assessment in Chapter 08: Cultural Heritage.

10.2 Policy

10.2.1 European

The Council of Europe Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176) as amended according to the provisions of the Protocol of amendment to the Convention (CETS No. 219) as from its entry into force on 1 July 2021, provides guidelines for managing landscapes. The Convention is not an EU Directive. Countries that sign and ratify the Convention make a commitment to upholding the principles it contains within the context of their own domestic legal and policy frameworks. The convention was ratified by Ireland on

22 March 2002 and entered into force in Ireland on 01 March 2004. The European Landscape Convention requires *“integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.”*

10.2.2 National

10.2.2.1 National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025

The *‘National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025’* (NLS) was launched in May 2015 and promotes the sustainable protection, management and planning for the landscape. The NLS states that:

“The National Landscape Strategy will be used to ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing the landscape while positively managing its change. It will provide a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions”. It also states that *“The Strategy sets out Ireland’s high-level objectives and actions with regard to landscape. It also positions landscape in the context of existing Irish and European strategies, policies and objectives, and outlines methods of ensuring co-operation at a sectoral and at a European level by the State”.*

10.2.2.2 Regional Seascape Character Assessment for Ireland

The *‘Regional Seascape Character Assessment for Ireland’*, prepared for the Marine Institute and published in December 2020, presents the Regional Seascape Character Areas (SCAs) along the entire Republic of Ireland coast. The report describes ‘seascape’ as *“an area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land with sea, by natural and/or human factors”*, and, similarly to Landscape Character Assessments, identifies, classifies, and describes seascape character at a regional scale by Seascape Character Types (SCTs) and SCAs. However, the Seascape Character Assessment takes into consideration specific characteristics associated with the coast such as:

- Maritime influence.
- Character of the coastal edge.
- Character of the immediate hinterland; and
- Human activity (presence or absence).

10.2.2.3 National Marine Planning Framework

The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) (2021) is a national plan on how to use Ireland’s seas over a 20-year horizon to 2040. The NMPF sits at the top of the hierarchy of plans and sectoral policies for the marine area. The NMPF has been informed by existing sectoral plans and will, in turn, be used to inform future cycles of those plans in an ongoing feedback loop. It provides a coherent framework in which those sectoral policies and objectives can be realised. It is the key decision-making tool for regulatory authorities and policy makers in a number of ways, including decisions on individual authorisation applications, which will have to secure the objectives of the plan, similar to the way that terrestrial plans form part of the decision-making toolkit in the on-land planning process.

10.2.2.4 Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary

The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary was launched on 22nd November 2013 and developed by an interjurisdictional steering group to produce a land and marine based framework to guide the future development and management of the Shannon Estuary.

The SIFP identifies SSE Tarbert as a strategic zone for development to be prioritised for marine-related industry. The framework plan provides a range of guiding principles, objectives, and mitigation measures for development in this zone and the overall Shannon Estuary; the following is relevant to this chapter:

- **PHH MM 1:** *“Councils will provide for the long-term protection and improvement of the quality of the natural environment within the plan area and provide ecological and recreational linkages in order to enhance biodiversity, the conservation status of special habitats; air, water and soil quality as well as the amenity value of these areas”.*

10.2.3 Regional

The Proposed Development is solely located within the administrative area of Kerry County Council (KCC); however, given its prominent location along the River Shannon Estuary, this assessment has taken into consideration the potential landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development from viewpoints located in Co. Clare and Co. Limerick. For this reason, the Clare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (Clare CDP) (2023) and the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (Limerick CDP) (2022) have been reviewed and are discussed below. Relevant landscape designations are illustrated in Figure 10.1 (refer to EIAR Volume III).

10.2.3.1 Kerry County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The Kerry County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (Kerry CDP) is the main strategic planning policy document which guides the future renewal and development of Co. Kerry and came into effect on 15th August 2022. The Kerry CDP locates the Site within the Tarbert-Ballylongford Landbank which is zoned for ‘industry’.

The Kerry CDP considers the outstanding landscapes of the County as *“one of its most important economic assets”* which are *“important not only for their intrinsic value as places of natural beauty but also because they provide a real asset for residents and visitors alike in terms of recreation, tourism and other uses”*. As such, the Kerry CDP identifies and describes a number of landscapes, views, and prospects in Appendix 7 (Landscape Review), and sets out specific objectives aimed at protecting them. Relevant landscape policy objectives include:

- **KCDP 11-77:** *“Protect the landscapes of the County as a major economic asset and an invaluable amenity which contributes to the quality of people’s lives”.*
- **KCDP 11-78:** *“Protect the landscapes of the County by ensuring that any new developments do not detrimentally impact on the character, integrity, distinctiveness or scenic value of their area. Any development which could unduly impact upon such landscapes will not be permitted”.*
- **KCDP 11-79:** *“Preserve the views and prospects as defined on Maps contained in Volume 4”.*

- **KCDP 11-80:** *“Facilitate the sustainable development of existing and the identification of new Viewing Points along the route of the Wild Atlantic Way in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, while ensuring the protection of environmental attributes in the area through the implementation of environmental protection objectives, standards and guidelines of this Plan”*; and
- **KCDP 11-81:** *“Prohibit developments that have a material effect on views designated in this plan from the public road or greenways towards scenic features and/or public areas”*.

Regardless of landscape designations, the Kerry CDP states that *“it is important that development in all areas be integrated into its surroundings in order to minimise the effect on the landscape and to maximise the potential for development”* and *“development in areas outside of designated areas, should, in their designs take account of the topography, vegetation, existing boundaries and features of the area”*. The Kerry CDP remarks that development which *“cannot be integrated into its surroundings”* will not be granted permission.

10.2.3.2 Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

The Clare CDP is the main strategic planning policy document which guides the future renewal and development of Co. Clare to 2029 and beyond. The Landscape and Seascape Characters of Co. Clare are described within the Landscape Character Assessment of Co. Clare published in March 2004 and is referenced in the Clare CDP. Similar to the Kerry CDP, the Clare CDP sets out a number of policies aimed at protecting landscape, seascape, and visual designations. Although these are only applicable to proposed developments located within the boundaries of Co. Clare, given the location of the Proposed Development and the proximity to Co. Clare, this assessment has taken into consideration landscape designations and sensitivities as per those contained within the Clare CDP.

10.2.3.3 Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028

The Limerick CDP is the main strategic planning policy document which guides the future renewal and development of Co. Limerick to 2028 and beyond and outlines the landscape designations and sensitivities within the county, incorporating scenic views and prospects of the previous Limerick CDP 2010-2016 (as extended) to ensure continuity between and further development of landscape policies for rural Limerick.

Similar to the previous section, given the proximity of the Site to Co. Limerick, designations outlined by the Limerick CDP have also been taken into consideration for the purpose of this assessment.

10.3 Methodology

10.3.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Criteria

This chapter has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance documents:

- European Commission (EC) (2017). *Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report*.
- EPA (2022). *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*.

- Government of Ireland (2018). *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment*.
- Landscape Institute (2019). *Visual Representation of Development Proposals – Technical Guidance Note 06/19*; and
- Landscape Institute (UK) & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013). *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*.

Good practice guidance, such as the '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013)*'¹, herein referred to as 'GLVIA3', provide specific guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessments. Therefore, a combination of the EPA guidelines, the Landscape Institute guidelines and professional experience has informed the methodology for the assessment herein.

The Landscape Institute guidelines require the assessment to identify, predict, and evaluate the significance of potential effects to landscape characteristics and established views. The assessment is based on an evaluation of the sensitivity to change and the magnitude of change for each landscape or visual receptor. For clarity, and in accordance with best practice, the assessment of potential effects on landscape character and visual amenity, although closely related, are undertaken separately.

The assessment acknowledges that landscape and visual effects change over time as the existing landscape external to the proposed development evolves and proposed planting establishes and matures.

The significance of an effect is determined by two distinct considerations:

- 1. The nature of the RECEPTOR likely to be affected, namely:
 - The susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the Proposed Development; and
 - The sensitivity to change is related to the value attached to the receptor.
- 2. The nature or magnitude of the EFFECT likely to occur, namely:
 - The size and scale of the landscape and visual effect (for example, whether there is a complete or minor loss of a particular landscape element).
 - The geographical extent of the areas that will be affected.
 - The duration of the effect and its reversibility; and
 - The quality of the effect, whether it is neutral, beneficial, or adverse.

10.3.2 Assessment Process

The assessment is undertaken based on the following key tasks and structure:

- Establishment of the Baseline or receiving environment.
- Appreciation of the Proposed Development; and

¹ Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013). *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA)*, 3rd Edition.

- Assessment of effects.

10.3.3 Establishment of the Receiving Environment

A baseline study has been undertaken through a combination of desk-based research and site appraisal in June 2023 by Landscape Architects in order to establish the existing conditions of the landscape and visual resources of the study area. Desk based research has involved a review of mapping provided in county development plans, aerial photography by Google Earth, relevant planning and policy documents of local authorities namely Kerry, Clare and Limerick County Councils including associated Landscape Character Assessments (where available), and national policies and designations as referenced in Section 10.10.

Relevant landscape and visual designations are illustrated in Figure 10.1 (refer to EIAR Volume III).

10.3.4 Appreciation of the Proposed Development

In order to be able to accurately assess the full extent of likely effects on landscape character and visual amenity, it is essential to develop a thorough and detailed knowledge of the Proposed Development. This includes a comprehensive understanding of its location, nature, and scale, and is achieved through a review of detailed descriptions of the Proposed Development, drawings, and an on-site appraisal.

The landscape and visual impact assessment has considered all elements of the Proposed Development as detailed in Chapter 5: Description of the Proposed Development.

10.3.5 Assessment of Effects

The landscape and visual impact assessment seeks to identify, predict, and evaluate the significance of potential effects to landscape characteristics and visual amenity. The assessments are based on an evaluation of the sensitivity to change and the magnitude of change for each landscape or visual receptor.

The assessment acknowledges that landscape and visual effects change over time as the existing landscape internal and external to the Proposed Development evolves. The assessment therefore reports on potential effects during both construction (29 months) and operation (25 years); after this period, the Proposed Development may be either decommissioned or upgraded subject to electricity system and planning permission requirements, and potential modifications and amendments that would allow the asset to continue its operation. The prominence of the Proposed Development in the landscape or view will vary according to the existing screening effects of local topography, intervening existing vegetation, and building structures.

10.3.6 Scope

10.3.6.1 Study Area

A study area radius of 10km has been set from the boundary of the Site. The extent of the study area has been informed by desktop study and was verified on site during fieldwork surveys. This included desk-based reviews of published landscape and seascape character assessments and the wider landscape setting to determine the area which might be influenced by the Proposed Development. Considering the large scale of the Shannon Estuary and the existing Tarbert Power Station and

Moneypoint Power Station as reference points. a computer-generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) modelling was conducted and is included in Volume III, Figure 10.2: Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). An outline methodology of the ZTV mapping is included in Section 10.3.12 herein. The ZTV mapping was a helpful tool to identify viewpoint locations, which were later verified on site, and to understand where the Proposed Development will be visible and were not.

It is acknowledged that the Proposed Development may be visible from locations beyond the 10km study area, and as such it is important to note that the study area defines the area within which potential effects could be significant, rather than defining the extent of visibility. The study area captures long distance views of the Site to illustrate potential landscape and visual effects in often wide panoramic views. Beyond 10km, it is not considered that likely effects on views will be significant due to the effects of distance and the increasing dependency on clear weather conditions. The undulating topography of the wider landscape and the vegetative screening diminish and lessen the availability of views in the surrounding and wider landscape.

10.3.6.2 Effects Scoped Out

Effects arising from the decommissioning phase (after 25 years) of the Proposed Development are considered to be of a similar nature and duration to those arising from the construction process and have therefore not been considered separately in this report. Where this assessment refers to potential construction effects, these are also representative of predicted decommissioning effects.

10.3.7 Landscape Effects

Landscape effects describe the impact on the fabric or structure of a landscape or landscape character.

The assessment of landscape effects firstly requires the identification of the components of the landscape. The landscape components are also described as landscape receptors and comprise the following:

- Individual landscape elements or features.
- Specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects; and
- Landscape character, or the distinct, recognisable, and consistent pattern of elements (natural and man-made) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another.

The assessment will identify the interaction between these components and the Proposed Development during construction and operational phases. The condition of the landscape and any evidence of current pressures causing change in the landscape will also be documented and described.

Landscape sensitivity

Paragraph 5.39 of GLVIA3 states that “*landscape receptors need to be assessed firstly in terms of their sensitivity, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape*”.

Landscape Value

Landscape value is frequently addressed by reference to international, national, regional, and local designations, determined by statutory and planning agencies. However, the absence of such a designation does not necessarily imply a lack of quality or value. Factors such as accessibility and local


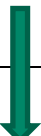
scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality, highly valuable as a local resource. The quality and condition are also considered in the determination of the value of a landscape.

With reference to GLVIA3, landscape value refers to the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. The definition and application of landscape value has also been informed by the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations.

The assessment of the value of each landscape receptor has been informed by the information set out in the baseline, including any relevant landscape designations, geographic criteria and valued attributes as set out in GLVIA3 Box 5.1, e.g., aesthetic, perceptual or experiential value.

Landscape value is assessed on a three-point scale, applying professional judgement and with reference to the criteria in Table 10.1 below.

Table 10.1: Landscape Value

Classification	Criteria
Very High 	The landscape is likely to be valued for one or more of its attributes at a national or regional level, and may be protected by a statutory landscape designation, e.g., National Park. The landscape may contain elements/features which are rare or perceived as very representative of the national or regional attributes and cultural associations. The landscape may provide a high scenic and landscape quality as well as many recreational opportunities.
	The landscape is likely to be valued for one or more of its attributes at a community or local level and may be designated by a landscape policy designation. The landscape may contain elements/features which are representative of the community or local level attributes and cultural associations. The landscape may provide some scenic and landscape quality and some recreational opportunities.
Medium 	The landscape is likely to be valued at a limited level only and not covered by any landscape designations. The landscape may contain features which are common and therefore do not specifically contribute to the wider landscape or cultural association. The landscape may provide a limited scenic and landscape quality and few recreational opportunities.
Very Low	

Landscape Susceptibility

GLVIA3 paragraph 5.40 defines landscape susceptibility as:

“the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be overall character or condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or features, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies”.

The following aspects of the landscape are considered to be particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- Overall agricultural character of the landscape.
- Sense of remoteness from development.

- Openness of landscape.
- Landscapes with sloping or elevated topography.
- Intricate, historic landscapes.
- Vegetation patterns formed by the network of hedgerows and blocks of woodland; and
- Sense of separation between existing settlements.

Landscape susceptibility is assessed on a three-point scale applying professional judgement and with reference to the criteria set out in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2: Landscape Susceptibility Criteria

Susceptibility Classification	Criteria
Very High	The receptor has a low capacity to accommodate the proposed development without effects upon its overall integrity. The landscape is likely to have a strong pattern/texture or is a simple but distinctive landscape and essentially intact. Undue consequences are likely to arise from the Scheme.
Medium	The receptor has some capacity to accommodate the proposed development without effects upon its overall integrity. The pattern of the landscape is mostly intact and/or with a degree of complexity and with features mostly in reasonable condition. Undue consequences may arise from the Scheme.
Very Low	The receptor is robust; it can accommodate the proposed development without effects upon its overall integrity. The landscape is likely to be simple, monotonous and/or partially degraded with common/indistinct features and minimal variation in landscape pattern. Undue consequences are unlikely to arise from the Scheme.

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape value and landscape susceptibility is assessed separately and then combined to define the sensitivity of the landscape receptor, with reference to the criteria set out in Table 10.3.

Table 10.3: Landscape Sensitivity to Change Criteria

Landscape Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Landscapes of international or national value with distinctive and rare elements with a very high susceptibility to the Scheme.
High	<p>Landscape of national or regional value with distinctive elements and characteristics, with a high susceptibility to the Scheme. Typically, these would be landscape receptors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With distinctive elements and features making a positive contribution to character and sense of place. • Likely to be designated or are adjacent to the designated area but exhibit elements which underpin the designation, especially at the local scale. • Areas of special recognised landscape value through use (e.g., visitors), perception or historic and cultural associations. <p>Likely to contain features and elements that are rare and could not be replaced.</p>
Medium	<p>Landscape of local or community value, with mostly common elements and characteristics, which by nature of their character would be able to accommodate some change. Typically, these would be landscape receptors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprised of mostly common elements and features, creating a generally unremarkable character but with some sense of place.

Landscape Sensitivity	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally designated, or value may be expressed through non-statutory local publications. • Containing some features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations. <p>Likely to contain some features and elements that could not be replaced.</p>
Low	<p>Landscape of community or limited value and relatively inconsequential elements and characteristics, the nature of which is potentially tolerant of substantial change of the type proposed. Typically, these would be;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprised of some features and elements that are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place. • Not designated. • Containing few, if any, features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations. <p>Likely to contain few, if any, features and elements that could not be replaced.</p>
Very Low	<p>Landscape of very low or limited value, which is damaged, degraded or a substantially modified landscape pattern with few or no natural or original features remaining, such that it is tolerant of change.</p>

Magnitude of Landscape Change

Magnitude of change is an expression of the size or scale of change in the landscape, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and reversibility of the resultant effect. The variables involved are described below:

- The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape.
- The extent to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones.
- Whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are integral to its distinctive character.
- The geographic area over which the landscape effects will be felt (within the Site itself; the immediate setting of the Site; at the scale of the landscape type or character area; on a larger scale influencing several landscape types or character areas); and
- The duration of the effects (short term, medium term or long term) and the reversibility of the effect (whether it is permanent, temporary or partially reversible).

Changes to landscape characteristics can be both direct and indirect. Direct change occurs where the Proposed Development will result in a physical change to the landscape within or adjacent to the Site. Indirect changes are a consequence of the direct changes resulting from the Proposed Development. They can often occur away from the Site (for example, off-site construction staff parking) and may be a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway (for example, a new road or footpath construction may increase public access and associated problems such as littering). They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects.

The indicative criteria applied to determine the magnitude of landscape effects are set out in Table 10.4. These are indicative and provide an example of considerations, supported and modified by explanative text in the LVIA.

Table 10.4: Indicative Criteria for Magnitude of Landscape Effects

Magnitude	Typical Criteria Descriptions
High	Large alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact an extensive area or unique characteristics at a local level. May be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Medium	Partial alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a wide area or characteristics at a local level. May be medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Low	Slight alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a restricted area and few key characteristics. May be short to medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Very Low	Very slight alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a limited area or no key characteristics. May be short term impacts, permanent or reversible.
None	No change to the landscape receptor.

10.3.8 Visual Effects

Visual effects are determined by the extent of visibility and the nature of the visibility (i.e., how a development is seen within the landscape); for example, whether it appears integrated and balanced within the visual composition of a view or whether it creates a focal point.

Negative visual effects may occur through the intrusion of new elements into established views, which are out of keeping with the existing structure, scale and composition of the view. Visual effects may also be beneficial, where an attractive focus is created in a previously unremarkable view, or the influence of previously detracting features is reduced. The significance of effects will vary, depending on the nature and degree of change experienced and the perceived value and composition of the existing view.

Receptors

For there to be a visual impact, there is the need for a viewer. Views experienced from locations such as settlements, recognised routes and popular vantage points used by the public have been included in the assessment. Receptors are the viewers at these locations. The degree to which receptors, i.e., people, will be affected by changes as a result of the Proposed Development depends on several factors, including:

- Receptor activities, such as taking part in leisure, recreational and sporting activities, travelling or working.
- Whether receptors are likely to be stationary or moving and how long they will be exposed to the change at any one time.
- The importance of the location, as reflected by designations, inclusion in guidebooks or other travel literature, or the facilities provided for visitors.
- The extent of the route or area over which the changes will be visible.
- Whether receptors will be exposed to the change daily, frequently, occasionally or rarely.
- The orientation of receptors in relation to the Proposed Development and whether views are open or intermittent.

- Proportion of the Proposed Development that will be visible (full, sections or none).
- Viewing direction, distance (*i.e.*, short-, medium- and long-distance views) and elevation.
- Nature of the viewing experience (for example, static views, views from settlements and views from sequential points along routes).
- Accessibility of viewpoint (public or private, ease of access).
- Nature of changes (for example, changes in the existing skyline profile, creation of a new visual focus in the view, introduction of new man-made objects, changes in visual simplicity or complexity, alteration of visual scale, landform and change to the degree of visual enclosure).
- Nature of visual receptors (type, potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected).

Value attached to views

GLVIA3 stresses the importance of considering the value attached to views, for example in relation to heritage assets within the view, or through planning designations. It provides a list of indicators of the value of views in paragraph 6.37, including:

- Appearance in guidebooks or tourist maps.
- Provision of facilities, such as parking places, sign boards and interpretive materials; and
- References in literature or art.

The assessment of the value attached to views is also informed by the location of the viewing place and the quality or designation of the existing elements in the view, with reference to the criteria set out in Table 10.5.

Table 10.5: Value of the View

Classification	Criteria
Very High	Recognised or iconic views within nationally/internationally designated landscapes, such as National Parks, and/or national/international landmarks with views recognised in planning policy and/or management plans.
High	Views or viewing places identified in regional strategies.
Medium	Views across high quality landscape which might include features of interest, such as landmarks, which may be identified in a Local Area Plan.
Low	Views of relatively common landscape elements, likely to be valued by the communities which experience the view.
Very Low	Views across poor quality landscape with a high degree of detracting or common elements.

Visual Susceptibility

GLVIA3 identifies that the susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is a function of:

- the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at a particular location; and
- the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

For example, residents in their home, walkers whose interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or a particular view, or visitors at an attraction where views are an important part of the experience often indicate a higher level of susceptibility. Whereas receptors occupied in outdoor sport, where views are not important, or at their place of work, are often considered less susceptible to change. Visual susceptibility criteria is outlined in Table 10.6.

Table 10.6: Visual Susceptibility

Classification Criteria

Very High	People visiting areas where the view is a very important part of the experience and specific to the reason for visiting the location.
High	People visiting areas where the view is an important part of the experience and/or residents with an expectation of enjoyment of the view.
Medium	People passing through the area where views are relevant to the experience of the journey but are not specific to the reasons for visiting.
Low	People passing through the area on secondary roads, where the view is not relevant to the activity. People working outdoors where the view is not relevant to the activity but may enhance it.
Very Low	People working in buildings where the view is not relevant to the activity or passing through the area of main road and rail networks, such that views are variable and expectation of enjoyment of them is secondary.

Visual Sensitivity

Sensitivity to change considers the nature of the receptor; for example, a person occupying a residential dwelling is generally more sensitive to change than someone working in a factory unit. The importance of the view experienced by the receptor also contributes to an understanding of the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change as well as the value attached to the view.

The following criteria, as set out in Table 10.7, have been referred to in determining the sensitivity of visual receptors from the combination of value and susceptibility. The criteria are included as an indicative example rather than definitive categories.

Table 10.7: Indicative Classification of Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Classification Criteria

Very High	Viewers specifically visiting a designated view or highly promoted view of a designated landscape or international or national feature, in order to enjoy it.
High	Viewers with or undertaking activity with a particular interest or appreciation of the view (e.g., residents with principal private views, or people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention is focused on the landscape and where people might visit purely to experience the view, such as promoted viewpoints) and/or a view of national value (e.g., within/towards a designated landscape).
Medium	Viewers with or undertaking activity with general interest or appreciation of the view (e.g., residents or people engaged in outdoor recreation that does not focus on an appreciation of the landscape, outdoor workers, people in schools or other institutional buildings and hotels and people passing through the landscape on defined scenic routes) and/or a view of local or community value (e.g., suburban residential areas, or agricultural land or urban areas).
Low	Activity where interest or appreciation of the view is secondary to the activity or the period of exposure to the view is limited (e.g., people at work, motorists travelling through the area or people engaged in outdoor recreation that does not focus on an appreciation of the landscape) and/or a view of limited value (e.g., featureless agricultural landscape, poor quality urban fringe).
Very Low	Activity where interest or appreciation of the view is inconsequential (e.g., people at work, or drivers of vehicles on main roads) and/or very low value of existing view (e.g., industrial areas or derelict land).

Magnitude of Visual Effects

Visual effects are direct effects as the magnitude of change within an existing view will be determined by the extent of visibility of the Proposed Development. The magnitude of the visual effect resulting from the Proposed Development at any particular viewpoint or receptor is based on the size or scale of change in the view, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The variables involved are described below:

- The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the Proposed Development.
- The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape form, scale, mass, line, height, sky lining, back-grounding, visual clues, focal points, colour and texture.
- The nature of the view of the Proposed Development, in relation to the amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses.
- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor, distance of the viewpoint from the Proposed Development and the extent of the area over which the changes will be visible; and
- The duration of the effects (short term, medium term or long-term) and the reversibility of the effect (whether it is permanent, temporary or partially reversible).

The magnitudes of visual effects are classified in Table 10.8. These are indicative and provide an example of considerations, supported and modified by explanative text in the LVIA.

Table 10.8: Indicative Criteria Descriptions for Visual Magnitude

Magnitude	Classification criteria
High	The Proposed Development will cause a pronounced change to the composition of the view or may be viewed in the foreground or directly. May be longer term effects, permanent or reversible and could include glint and glare effects.
Medium	The Proposed Development will cause a noticeable change to the composition of the view or may be viewed in the middle ground or indirectly. May be medium term effects, permanent or reversible and could include glint and glare effects.
Low	The Proposed Development will cause an unobtrusive change in the composition of the view or may be viewed in the background or obliquely. May be short to medium term effects, permanent or reversible and is not likely to include glint and glare effects.
Very Low	The Proposed Development will cause a barely perceptible change in the composition of the view or may be viewed in the background and very obliquely. May be short term effects, permanent or reversible and would not include glint and glare effects.
None	No change to the view.

The duration and quality of effects are classified in Table 10.9.

Table 10.9: Definition of Duration of Effects

Duration	Description
Temporary	Effects lasting one year or less.
Short Term	Effects lasting one to seven years.
Medium Term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years.
Long Term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years.
Permanent	Effects lasting over sixty years.

The quality of both, landscape, and visual effects, can be Beneficial (Positive), Adverse (Negative) or Neutral according to the definitions set out in Table 10.10.

Table 10.10: Definition of Quality of Effects

Effect	Effect Description
Neutral	This will neither enhance nor detract from the landscape character or view.
Beneficial (Positive)	This will improve or enhance the landscape character or view.
Adverse (Negative)	This will reduce the quality of the existing landscape character or view.

10.3.9 Significance Criteria

The objective of the assessment process is to identify and evaluate the potentially significant effects arising from the proposed development. The assessment will identify the residual effects likely to arise from the finalised design taking into account mitigation measures and change over time. The significance of effects will be assessed by considering the sensitivity of the receptor and the predicted magnitude of effect in relation to the baseline conditions to the definitions set out in Table 10.11.

Table 10.11: Categories of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

Significance Category	Description of Effect
Profound	An effect that obliterates sensitive characteristics within the landscape and / or visual environment.
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the landscape and / or visual environment.
Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the landscape and / or visual environment.
Moderate	An effect that alters the landscape in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the landscape and / or visual environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the landscape and/or visual environment but without significant landscape and / or visual consequences.
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant landscape and / or visual consequences.

The significance of the effect is determined by considering the magnitude of the effect and the quality of the baseline environment affected by the Proposed Development. The basis for consideration of the significance of effects is shown on **Plate 10.1**.

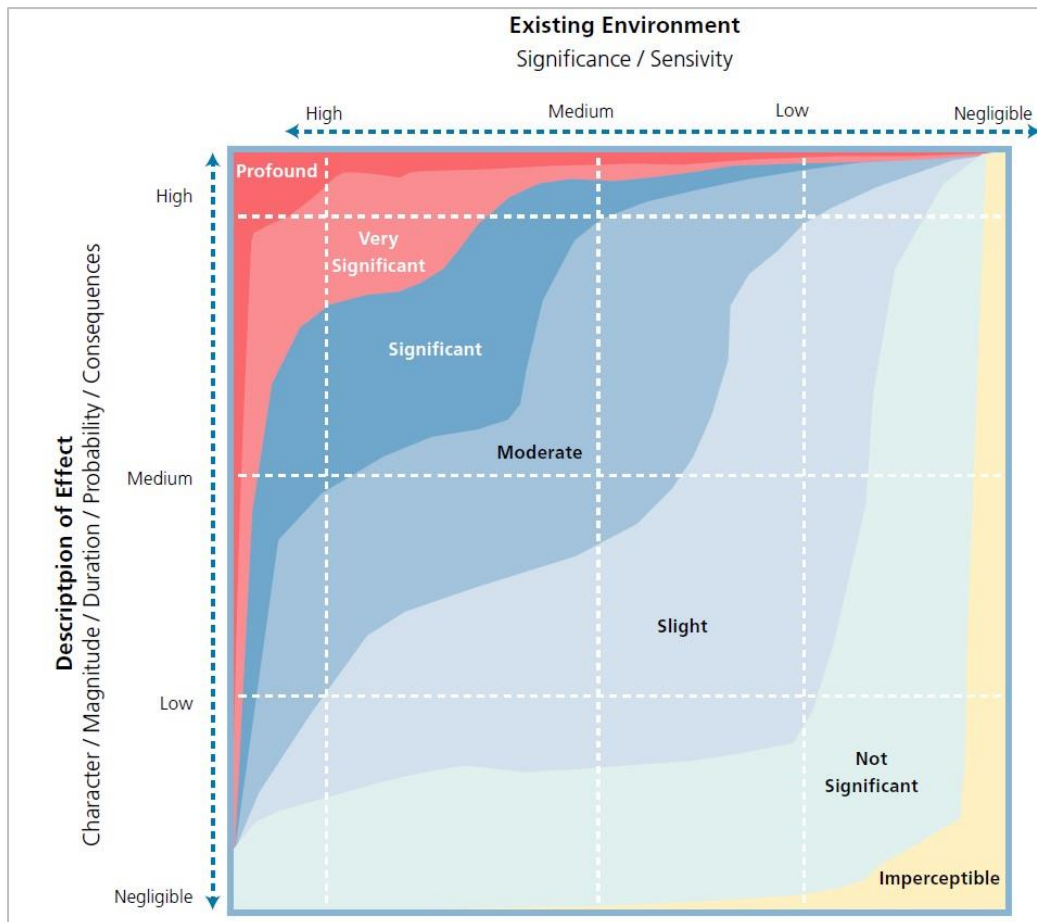


Plate 10.1: Basis for Consideration of Significance of Effects²

² EPA (2022). *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*.

Effects will be assessed for all phases of the Proposed Development. Construction effects are temporary, and short-term effects which occur during the construction / decommission phase only. Operational / residual effects are those long-term effects, which will occur as a result of the presence or operation of the Proposed Development.

The quality of each effect is based on the ability of the landscape character or visual receptor to accommodate the Proposed Development, and the impact of the Proposed Development within the receiving context. Once this is done, the quality of the effect is then assessed as being neutral, beneficial or adverse. A change to the landscape or visual resource is not considered to be adverse simply because it constitutes an alteration to the baseline landscape.

10.3.10 Cumulative Landscape Effects

In addition to landscape and visual effects, it is also important to consider potential cumulative effects. The approach used to determine cumulative effects has drawn on guidance on cumulative impact assessment published by the GLVIA³. Cumulative landscape and visual effects may result from additional changes to the baseline landscape or views as a result of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other developments of a similar type and scale.

The cumulative assessment includes developments that are proposed and approved but not constructed yet and are similar in type and scale to the Proposed Development.

Potential cumulative developments have been reviewed from known planning applications available on Planning Search of Kerry County Council's website and at ABP planning register.

Magnitude of Cumulative Effects

The principle of magnitude of cumulative effects makes it possible for the Proposed Development to have major effects on a particular receptor, while having only minor cumulative effects in conjunction with other existing developments.

The magnitude of cumulative effects arising from the proposed scheme is assessed as **Very High, High, Medium, Low** or **Negligible**, with intermediate categories, based on interpretation of the following parameters:

- The additional extent, direction and distribution of existing and other developments in combination with the Proposed Development.
- The distance between the viewpoint, the Proposed Development, and the cumulative developments; and
- The landscape setting, context, and degree of visual coalescence of existing and Proposed Development and cumulative developments.

Significance of Cumulative Effects

As for the assessment of landscape and visual effects, the significance of any cumulative effects follows a same classification as illustrated in **Plate 10.1**, in **Section 10.3.10**, and will be assessed as **Profound, Very Significant, Moderate, Slight, Not Significant, and Imperceptible**.

³ Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013). *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition*.

10.3.11 Fieldwork

Site surveys carried out by the author of this chapter in June 2023 identified the potential visibility of the Proposed Development within the study area and the adjoining wider landscape, taking into account topography, existing screening vegetation and other localised factors. Viewpoint photography was taken in August 2023 by 3D Design Bureau. Deciduous trees show foliage and therefore does not illustrate the winter season scenario without foliage, i.e., worst-case scenario. However, existing screening provided has been accounted for when determining the magnitude of change of landscape and visual effects.

10.3.12 Zone of Theoretical Visibility Methodology

A bare earth ZTV was prepared using the European Digital Terrain Models (EU DTM) (Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International) at a 30m resolution.

An assumed viewing height of 1.6m above ground level has been used to simulate the eye level of a person of average height.

Elements of the Proposed Development have been modelled as part of the ZTV including:

- the OCGT building at 30m; and
- the OCGT emissions stack at 55m.

10.3.13 Selection of Viewpoints

Viewpoint selection has been carried out according to the following current good practice guidelines:

- Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/2011. *Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*.
- Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013). *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA)*, 3rd Edition.

It is not feasible to take photography from every possible viewpoint located in the study area. Photography has been taken from viewpoints, which are representative of the nature of visibility at various distances and in various contexts. Viewpoint photography is used as a tool to come to understand the nature of the potential residual effects. The selection process of viewpoint locations is as follows:

- The location of viewpoints within the study area is informed by desktop and site surveys as well as ZTV mapping.
- Identification and selection of representative viewpoints showing typical open or intermittent views within a local area, which will be frequently experienced by a range of viewers; and
- Identification and selection of specific viewpoints from key viewpoints in the landscape such as routes or locations valued for their scenic amenity, main settlements etc.

10.4 Baseline Environment

10.4.1 Site Context

The landscape in the surrounding environs of the Proposed Development has been modified by a number of constructed elements, including SSE Tarbert which, when combined with the existing Moneypoint Power Station at the northern shore of the Shannon estuary, forms a significant cluster of industrial power infrastructure along the estuary. The Site is accessed from the N67, which terminates to the west of the existing SSE Tarbert site at the Tarbert Ferry crossing point (Tarbert – Killimer Ferry), connecting counties Clare and Kerry. The landscape to the south of the Site and the existing SSE Tarbert is comprised of fields in agricultural pasture with hedgerows, treelines and interspersed with connecting parcels of woodland associated with Tarbert House. There is a small number of residential receptors located in close proximity to the south and south-west of the Site. The village of Tarbert is the main centre of population in the area and located approximately 1.8km south where the settlement extends along the N69, the main Tralee to Limerick Road, the L1010 local road and the R551 regional road.

The Shannon Estuary is the dominant landscape and visual feature in the area, approximately 2.5km wide at this point and identified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Tarbert Bay is a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) under the Wildlife Act 2000 (as amended).

Across the estuary to the north, the Clare CDP designates the area around Clonderalaw Bay as a 'Heritage Landscape 3: The Fergus / Shannon Estuary'. Heritage Landscapes are described as "*areas where natural and cultural heritage are given priority and where development is not precluded but happens more slowly and carefully*".

The Wild Atlantic Way, a major tourism asset and visitor attraction, the route passes close to the boundary of the Site along the N69. Several segments along this road are identified as scenic views in the Kerry CDP. The Tarbert to Killimer Ferry to the east and Carrigafoyle Castle to the west are Discovery Points on the Wild Atlantic Way.

10.4.2 Landscape Character

The key role of Appendix 7: Landscape Strategy of the Kerry CDP is to assist in the achievement of sustainable development by promoting an approach to landscape planning and management which links objectives and recommendations for landscape character to current planning policies (see Section 10.2.3.1 of this report). Similarly, the Clare and Limerick CDPs also include a classification and description of landscapes and views and prospects in these counties. The relevant landscape categories and assets located within the study area discussed in the following sections.

10.4.2.1 Co. Kerry Landscape Designations

According to the Kerry CDP, there are two landscape designations for the county: 'visually sensitive areas' (VSAs) and 'rural general'. Visually sensitive areas are designated as such due to the combination of their elevated landscape value, sensitivity, and importance, and are particularly sensitive to alteration. Developments proposed within VSAs "*will only be considered subject to satisfactory integration into the landscape and compliance with the proper planning and sustainable development*

of the area". In contrast, general rural landscapes "generally have a higher capacity to absorb development". The Site is not within but adjacent to a VSA south of SSE Tarbert.

The Kerry CDP also provides a classification of the county based on Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The Landscape Review (refer to Appendix 7 in Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028) subdivides the county into landscape types and landscape character areas. The Site is located within landscape type "J - Urban Area". Adjacent agricultural lands to the south are classified as "C - Pasture with mature hedgerows" and the parcel of woodland around Tarbert House is identified as "G - Deciduous Woodland", which is considered a valuable resource in terms of both biodiversity and by contributing to a varied, interesting and attractive landscape.

The Proposed Development is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 2 – The Shannon Estuary where the landcover is as follows:

"In general pasture covers the majority of the area. Some pockets of forestry (coniferous plantations) can also be found. Broad-leaved forestry is found to the north of Tarbert, between the town and the port area on the estuary. Some large peat bogs are also found in the area".

The Shannon Estuary LCA has the following landscape values:

"The northwest of the area is designated as Secondary Special Amenity in the Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021. There are views & prospects eastwards from a local road on the western side of Knockanore, and northwards from the coast road towards the Shannon Estuary. This coast road is also part of the Wild Atlantic Way.

This area includes Knockanore which currently has no landscape designation. Due to its elevation and prominent position in a predominantly flat landscape it could therefore be considered for a landscape designation. The south-eastern part of the area is flat and open, which is overlooked by higher ground, it could therefore be considered for a landscape designation".

Part of the area within this LCA has an overall medium sensitivity, with the remainder having medium/high sensitivity. The entirety of the Site is identified within the descriptions of this LCA as being under an area of high/medium sensitivity. The visual sensitivity of LCA 2 – The Shannon Estuary has been classified as Medium / High.

10.4.2.2 Co. Clare Landscape Designations

To the north of the Proposed Development, across the estuary, the study area covers two Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within Co. Clare as described in Clare CDP 2023-2029:

- Farmed Lowland Ridges: The land cover is pasture, deciduous woodland and scrub and follows a linear ridge topography.; and
- The Farmed Rolling Hills: The land cover consists of a mosaic of forestry and pasture/ grassland, no drumlins and rolling uneven topography. Infrastructure can be highly visible across this landscape type. Views are afforded from more elevated hills across the surrounding areas and to the Shannon estuary.

These two LCTs are grouped into one LCA, i.e., the Shannon Estuary Farmland, which is an area that extends from Ballynacally in the north along the R473, encompassing the Labasheeda peninsula and continuing along the Shannon estuary to Kilrush and is fringed by the Kilrush farmlands to the north.

In addition to the above, the Clare CDP categorises the landscape of the County into three 'Living Landscapes', i.e., *"areas that have similar characteristics for which similar planning policies are applicable"*. The Clare CDP provides a description for these areas which *"outline the vision and future roles of the landscape areas together with policies/objectives that will guide development in these areas"*.

The three categories have differing objectives as follows:

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

The study area includes all three categories. Sections of Heritage and Working Landscapes are located along the coasts while the remainder of the study area covering Co. Clare comprises Settled Landscapes. Heritage Landscapes are located along the coasts of Clonderalaw Bay with Working Landscapes to the east and west of these areas. Working Landscapes to the east include Moneypoint Power Station and ancillary developments.

10.4.2.3 Co. Limerick Landscape Designations

The Limerick CDP) provides information, objectives and policies of relevance to the landscape character assessment and visual environment for the areas on the south bank of the River Shannon and River Shannon Estuary approximately 1km east of the Proposed Development.

The south-eastern section of the study area covers parts of Co. Limerick. This area is located within the Shannon Coastal Zone LCA which is described in the Limerick CDP as:

"This zone comprises a large area of northern Limerick and is bounded on one side by the Shannon Estuary, while its southern boundary is defined by the gradually rising ground, which leads onto the agricultural zone and the western hills to the southwest. The presence of the estuary is the defining characteristic of the region. The landscape itself is generally that of an enclosed agricultural type, essentially that of a hedgerow dominant landscape. This differs from the other agricultural landscapes of the County, in that the field patterns, particularly close to the Estuary, tend to be less regular than those elsewhere in Limerick".

The presence of the estuary is the defining characteristic of the region. The landscape is not awarded a sensitivity rating in the Limerick CDP, however, given the calibre of landscape and seascape attributes and landscape features both natural and manmade and the similarity of quality to the Kerry CDP Shannon Estuary, the landscape value is considered High, the sensitivity is considered Medium – High and the susceptibility to landscape change is considered High.

The Limerick CDP also refers to a range of specific objectives for each LCA; for the Shannon Coastal Zone LCA, a relevant objective includes the following: *“development under the SIFP to adhere to the mitigation measures for landscape management as appropriate”*.

10.4.3 Seascape Character

10.4.3.1 Co. Kerry

There are currently no planning specific references to a Seascape Character Assessment or a definition of seascape designations in the Landscape Review appendix to the Kerry CDP.

10.4.3.2 Co. Limerick

There are currently no planning references to a Seascape Character Assessment or a definition of seascape designations in the Limerick CDP.

10.4.3.3 Co. Clare

The Clare CDP and the associated Landscape Character Assessment includes details on Seascape Character Areas (SCA) along the shores of Co. Clare. Figure 10.2 (refer to Volume III of this EIAR) indicates the location of relevant SCAs located within the study area, namely, the SCA 10 Lower Shannon and the SCA 11 River Shannon.

The SCA 10 Lower Shannon is *“situated between Kilcredaun Point and Lynchs Point (east of Money Point)”* and comprises *“long sand and shingle beaches with an exposed feel when winds are from the southwest”*. In terms of its history and human influences, the Landscape Character Assessment states:

“There is a monastic complex, possibly from the sixth century, and medieval round towers and churches on Scattery Island. It remained a pilgrimage and burial site after the Elizabethan slighting of the monastery and the island's conversion to a defensive fort (its pattern – or penitential round – was suppressed in the early 1800s)”.

The following information is provided in relation to the condition and sensitivity of this SCA:

“The condition of the seascape is moderate becoming poorer closer to the River Shannon SCA. Power stations and windfarms are dominant features degrading views across the water in Co. Kerry and Limerick. Changes would be evident due to low lying and exposed nature of the area”.

The key characteristics of this SCA are:

- The River Shannon in this area is wide, creating a greater coastal than estuarine sense.
- Views from Kilrush to Scattery Island and Hog Island.
- Settlement is concentrated around Kilrush including caravan parks and golf club.
- Pylons and Money Point Power Station are prominent features.
- Kilrush is a designated Heritage Town and Sea Angling Centre.
- Kilrush Marina is a major infrastructure providing 120 berths at all stages of the tide. It has been awarded Blue Flag status.
- Scattery Island is a designated ACA (Architectural Conservation Area); and

- There are views across to Ballylongford and Co. Kerry.

Regarding development along the coastline, the Landscape Character Assessment states that:

- *“Liaison with Kerry and Limerick County Council should be undertaken with reference to all proposed developments along their coastline”.*
- Forces for change: *“Coastal development in prominent locations which would detract from the seascape value of the area e.g., power station, wind farms, marinas, etc. within view on the Kerry and Limerick coastline...”;* and
- Principles for Seascape Management: *“... Linear urban development should be avoided, and all other development should be screened appropriately”. “Views to the coastline of Limerick and Kerry should be retained”. “Promote agricultural and environmental schemes to avoid dereliction of coastal based landscapes ...”.*

The SCA 11 River Shannon *“extends from Limerick to east of Money Point”* and *“is bounded by Kerry Head to the South and Kilrush farmlands to the North”*. Its geology and landform are described as:

“The River Shannon SCA consists of a shallow low-lying and muddy linear coastline. This area is composed of a prominently ridged landscape, with linear hills aligned south-west to north-east. The coastal fringe is flatter and slopes towards the Shannon. It also becomes increasingly flatter towards Kilrush”.

In terms of its condition and sensitivity:

“The estuary is in moderate to good condition. However, industrial, and commercial activity dominates the view from land to sea.

Low lying, flat and open views to sea increase the area's sensitivity to change particularly from shipping and industrial activities”.

The key characteristics of this SCA are:

- Coastal fringe is flatter and slopes down towards the sea.
- Views to scattered farmhouse settlements.
- Deep water berthing facilities.
- Views of shipping, commercial, industrial activity, pastureland and forestry.
- Focal point for travelling the waterways of Ireland.
- Shannon Airport is a landmark transport node of transcontinental significance (also, Fergus Estuary Seascape Area below); and
- Car ferry service to Tarbert along the north coast of Co. Kerry.

Regarding development along the coastline, the Landscape Character Assessment states that:

- Forces for change: *“Visible impacts of shipping and commercial activity Plantations of coniferous forestry ...”;* and

- Principles for Seascape Management: “... *Best practice forestry guidelines should be adhered to in order to avoid inappropriately siting or design of plantations. Infrastructural developments including road widening along the coastline should consider local landscape character. Linear development along the coastline should be avoided and all other development should be screened appropriately. ...*”.

10.4.3.4 National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

The NMPF sets out the following planning policies in relation to seascape and landscape:

‘Seascape and Landscape Policy 1: *Proposals should demonstrate how the likely significant impacts of a development on the seascape and landscape of an area have been considered. Proposals will only be supported if they demonstrate that they, in order of preference:*

- avoid,*
- minimise, or*
- mitigate*
significant adverse impacts on the seascape and landscape of the area.
- If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals must set out the reasons for proceeding.*

This policy should be included as part of statutory environmental assessments’.

It also states the following (extract):

‘Many areas of our coastline are distinctive for their natural beauty and their diverse range of activities.

This policy aims to make sure that proposals consider their potential impacts on the seascape and landscape of an area. This is not only important for the protection of iconic views and character but also to aid in the process of enabling development where it is most appropriate.

The effects of development, such as through wind and tidal energy projects, port development, coastal defences, cable landings and pipelines, on an area’s seascape and landscape should be considered.

This is not only for individual areas, but also for the contributions they make to nationally designated sites and their settings. Increased footfall from tourism and recreation activities may raise the awareness of an area, but it can also change marine character and the visual resource. Routing and site selection are important tools in ensuring that impacts on seascape and landscape are minimised and mitigated ...

The final part of this policy identifies the need to set out the reasons for proceeding where significant adverse impacts on the seascape and landscape of the area cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated. Where this is required, reasoning should include how optimisation of space might be achieved, what measures are proposed to minimise and mitigate significant adverse impact (if such steps are not possible, a description of why this is), as well as setting out the reasons why a given proposal should proceed in light of the likely impact ...’.

As part of the definition and classification of Ireland's Seascapes a Regional Seascape Character Assessment (RSCA) coordinated by the Marine Institute was prepared.

Seascape character assessment represents a core component of the evidence base for Marine Spatial Planning and marine policy formulation. Seascape character assessment (SCA) has emerged as a method for assessing, characterising, mapping, and describing seascape character.

Seascape is defined as 'an area of sea, coastline, and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land with sea, by natural and/ or human factors', according to the definition from 'An Approach to Seascape Character Assessment, Natural England 2012.

The assessment distinguishes between Regional Seascape Character Types and Regional Seascape Character Areas and provides a high-level description of these without classifying the landscape and visual value and sensitivity of these designations.

The Shannon Estuary, including onshore areas of Counties Kerry, Clare and Limerick and captured within the study area, is located within the following seascape character:

Regional Seascape Character Type: 2 – Large Estuary

The Shannon Estuary is part of this character type and has the following principal drivers:

- *'Partially enclosed coastal body associated with confluence of large rivers.*
- *Complex tidal patterns of tidal channels associated with ebb and flow of tidal streams. Mudflats, and small islands present.*
- *Commonly zone of deposition Sloping landform with inlets and small islands.*
- *Deciduous woodland fringes occasional shorelines.*
- *Transitional zone between freshwater and marine with rich habitat for a range of flora and fauna; and*
- *Long history of human activity and habitation associated with sheltered rich estuarine environment'.*

Regional Seascape Character Area: SCA8 – Shannon Estuary and Tralee Bay

The below is an extract of a wealth of information provided in the overall assessment document:

"The SCA extends eastwards from Limerick including the Shannon Estuary, Mouth of the Shannon from Kilcredaun Point to Kilconley Point, extending landward to the north at Loop Head, encompassing Kerry Head and Brandon Head (Brandon Point/ Dulick Point). This SCA extends 12 nautical miles offshore".

Vistas and Views (extract)

- *"Within the estuary views are across the channel with parts of the views framed by the indented shoreline and strips of woodland close to the shoreline, often associated with former demesne landscapes. The vertical features of industrial units such as the towers of Moneypoint and Tarbert help to situate views within this area as it largely low lying and sloping to the shoreline. Whilst industrial elements can be a feature within this part of the SCA, the eye is often drawn*

to the interesting and diverse inlets with wooded shorelines, small rocky shores and a dynamic intertidal zone.

- *At the elevated parts of this SCA, the views become expansive and long views are possible north and south; where sea stacks and cliffs are visible, they draw the eye and the crashing waves against the rocks can dominate the view.*
- *Lighting – clusters of lighting associated with the larger settlements and villages can be seen across the estuary and along the coast. Lighting at Tarbert, Moneypoint, Auginish can be seen associated with stacks and chimneys. The light spill from Limerick City is also visible closer to the city”.*

10.4.4 Future Baseline

In the absence of the Proposed Development, the future landscape and visual baseline across the Proposed Development site is anticipated to remain broadly similar as stated above. However, changes to the adjacent existing SSE Tarbert Power Station buildings may occur and other power generating facilities adjacent to the site may be developed (refer to Section 10.5.3 Cumulative Effects) affecting the landscape and seascape character as well as the visual amenity.

10.4.5 Scenic Routes, Views & Prospects

A number of scenic routes and views & prospects are located within the study area and are listed below and mapped in Figure 10.1 (refer to Volume III of this EIAR).

County Kerry

- Views east and southeast of Tarbert Bay along the N69. This section is also part of the Wild Atlantic Way driving route.
- Estuarine views east and northeast along sections of the L6010 towards Carrigafoyle Castle north of Ballylongford. This section is also part of the Wild Atlantic Way driving route.
- Views west of Lislaughtin Abbey from a short section of the L1010 northeast of Ballylongford.

County Limerick

- N69 between Tarbert and Foynes included a looped route south across higher ground to Glin.

County Clare

- Coast road southeast of Cappagh to Carrowdotia South including sections of the N67.

10.4.6 The Wild Atlantic Way

According to Fáilte Ireland, the Wild Atlantic Way is a “*defined touring route, stretching along the Atlantic coast from Donegal to West Cork*”.

Sections of this touring route are located within the study area in Co. Kerry, Co. Limerick and Co. Clare as mapped in Figures 10.1 (refer to Volume III of this EIAR). Sections of designated views and prospects as well as scenic routes use the same route/ locations as the Wild Atlantic Way.

Sections of the Wild Atlantic Way located within the study follow the route of the R551 in either direction to Ballylongford and Tarbert, the L6010 to Carrigafoyle Castle, the N67 between Tarbert and Tarbert

Ferry Port, the Tarbert-Killimer Ferry Route, sections of the N67 between Killimer and Kilrush but deviating from N67 to the coastal road and the R473 into Kilrush before joining the N67 again. It also extends east from Tarbert towards Foynes along the N69.

The Kerry CDP states the following:

“The Wild Atlantic Way has a number of existing viewing points along its route. In order to maximise the potential of the Wild Atlantic Way these existing viewing points will be protected. The Council will work with Fáilte Ireland in the sustainable development of these viewing points, and the identification of additional viewing locations along the route”.

All of the aforementioned scenic routes and views are part of the Wild Atlantic Way and are considered in this assessment.

10.4.7 Receptor Groups

The main receptor groups within the study area are as follows:

- Residents.
- Vehicle Users including Ferry Users; and
- Visitors.

10.4.7.1 Residential

Residential receptors will have a High sensitivity to visual changes as views will be experienced on a daily basis and therefore, even the smallest change in the landscape character or visual amenity will be noticed. Residences located within the Co. Kerry part of the study area are sparse and scattered across the area and along the local and regional roads. There are some clusters of dwellings in villages such as Tarbert and Glin. Long distance visibility from residences is often screened by vegetation or undulating topography. However, open views north towards the Shannon Estuary can be experienced from elevated locations and where intervening vegetation is low. The closest dwellings to the Proposed Development comprise a group of dwellings along the N67 and a minor road adjacent to SSE Tarbert within approximately 400m. Other residents are located in Tarbert along the N67, N69, and L1010 approximately 1.7km south at their closest.

Residences within Co. Clare follow a similar pattern as in Co. Kerry and are sparsely dispersed across the study area. Views across the Shannon Estuary are available from the Coast Road and from elevated locations along the N67, R846, and beyond.

Residences located in Co. Limerick and within the eastern most section of the study area concentrate also along the main roads such as the N69 and are otherwise scarcely scattered along local roads.

10.4.7.2 Vehicle Users including Ferry Users

Vehicle users along local, regional, and national roads within the study area include ferry passengers between Tarbert and Killimer. The sensitivity of vehicular / ferry users is usually considered Low as receptors often travel to get from one place to another with little attention for views. However, the study area contains a number of scenic roads, protected views and prospects, the Wild Atlantic Way touring route as well as panoramic views of the Shannon Estuary when crossing the Shannon. Users along

these routes are considered to have a Medium to High sensitivity. Vehicular traffic of residents of the local area around the Proposed Development, in particular where views are an important component on their way to or from home.

10.4.7.3 Visitors

The study area contains a number of scenic roads and protected views and prospects as well as the Wild Atlantic Way touring route. The visual amenity is part of the experience for visitors/ tourists travelling along these designated routes and will therefore have a High sensitivity to the quality of the components of the landscape character and visual amenity.

10.5 Potential Effects

The following potential direct and indirect landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development, and their duration and nature, have been identified. The booklet of Photomontages submitted with the planning application (refer to EIAR Volume II Appendix 10A) illustrates the location of the Proposed Development from selected representative viewpoints within the study area.

10.5.1 Effects at Construction

Full details of the construction phase of the Proposed Development are presented in Chapter 5: Description of the Proposed Development. The construction phase will take place over a 29-month period.

Landscape and visual effects during the construction stage will be mainly experienced within the Site, in its vicinity as well as along the Shannon Estuary, its shores and adjoining elevated landscape areas along Counties Kerry, Clare and Limerick. Locations affected include open views of the Site, views across the Shannon Estuary, and views along the local road network where construction traffic will travel within Counties Kerry and Limerick. Construction activity will generally include the movement of machinery, equipment, and site workers. Cranes lifting materials and structures into position, and the temporary storage of materials within the Site.

10.5.1.1 Construction Phase – Landscape Effects

Construction effects on the landscape character resulting from the Proposed Development will be direct and indirect, mainly temporary, and result from the following:

- Loss of existing vegetation and habitat.
- Soil stripping, earthworks, grading.
- Effects of temporary to short-term site infrastructure such as site traffic, construction compounds, soil storage areas etc. especially those located in areas close to visual receptors.
- Physical effects arising from construction of the Proposed Development will be confined to the Site.

The receiving environment is identified as Landscape Character Area (LCA) 2 – The Shannon Estuary in the Kerry CDP and has a medium to high landscape sensitivity. Direct and long-term change will occur locally where the Proposed Development will be physically located. The magnitude of landscape change during construction is considered Low and the resulting significance/quality is **Slight / Adverse**.

Effects on the landscape character resulting from construction works will be temporary, short term and reversible. Construction will visually affect views at a local level. However, it will not alter the landscape character considering the existing industrial nature of the setting.

Outside of the Site, indirect effects of construction works will not result in the permanent loss of key features such as the overall landscape structure as the adjacent existing SSE Tarbert HFO Power Station is already a prominent and distinct industrial feature in the landscape character. Together with Moneypoint Power Station, located across the Shannon Estuary along the Co. Clare shoreline, it forms a significant industrial cluster in the estuarine environment. The magnitude of indirect landscape change during construction is considered low, within an area of medium to high landscape value with high sensitivity. The resulting landscape significance / quality will be **Slight / Neutral**.

10.5.1.2 Construction Phase – Seascape Effects

County Kerry has currently no Seascape Character Assessment. The County Kerry shores are captured by the Regional Seascape Character Assessment (RSCA), which includes onshore sections along the Shannon Estuary.

The Site is located within the following seascape character:

- Regional Seascape Character Type 2: Large Estuary
- Regional Seascape Character Area SCA8: Shannon Estuary and Tralee Bay

The Proposed Development is located onshore and will result in direct effects on the seascape character area and type during the construction phase. Construction works will be located adjacent to existing industrial character components (Tarbert HFO Power Station) of the Shannon Estuary and will intensify locally the industrial nature of the seascape character. Effects as a result from construction works on the seascape character are therefore considered medium and their significance / quality will be **Moderate / Adverse** within the Site.

Outside of the Site boundary, the seascape character of either designation will not alter due to the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development and the associated construction works. The Proposed Development is only a small component in the overall size of the seascape character area and type. In the absence of a classification of the value and sensitivity of seascape character, and based on the descriptions provided in the RSCA, a medium value and high sensitivity rating has been applied to both designations. Effects as a result from construction works on the seascape character are therefore considered low and their significance / quality will be **Slight / Adverse** within approximately 4km radius from the Site boundary. Beyond 4km, the magnitude of seascape character effects will reduce to very low and their significance / quality to **Not Significant / Neutral**.

The seascape character areas (SCA) identified by Clare County Council, namely SCA 10 Lower Shannon and SCA 11 River Shannon are indirectly affected by construction works. Similar to the RSCA designations, the seascape character of SCA 10 & 11 will not alter due to the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development and the associated construction works. The Proposed Development is located outside of these character areas. However, it is acknowledged that there is intervisibility between the Shannon Estuary shorelines and changes to the seascape character can affect either side. In the absence of a classification of the value and sensitivity of both seascape character areas and

based on the descriptions provided in the Seascape Character Area Assessment of County Clare, a medium value and high sensitivity rating has been applied to both designations. Effects as a result from construction works on the seascape character areas are therefore considered low and their significance / quality will be **Slight / Adverse** within approximately 4km radius from the Site boundary. Beyond 4km, the magnitude of seascape character effects will reduce to very low and their significance / quality to **Not Significant / Neutral**.

10.5.1.3 Construction Phase – Visual Effects

Visual effects during the construction stage will be experienced in the vicinity of the Site, from locations with open views of sections of the Proposed Development, including views across the Shannon Estuary from the Tarbert – Killimer Ferry, along locations of the northern shores and the associated elevated landscapes of County Clare as well as the southern shores towards Glin in Co. Limerick, west of the existing SSE Tarbert Power Station along the shores of Co. Kerry, and along the local road network where construction traffic will travel. Construction activity will not be visible to all of the visual receptors located within the study area due to intervening landform, vegetation and the distance from the Proposed Development. Construction works resulting in visual effects will include movement of machinery and equipment within the Site, scaffolding, cranes, other tall equipment, and construction traffic along the local road network.

Visual effects and their significance / quality at construction phase will cause a noticeable change in existing views over a wide area. The construction of the Proposed Development will slightly intensify the existing visual industrial character of the Site and will be most noticeable within close to middle distance views within approximately 4km distance from the boundary of the Site where open views along or across the estuary are available, particularly from elevated areas to the north along the R486, from the east along the local road through Lackyle and to the south-east, on elevated ground along the Glin loop Scenic Drive. The sensitivity of views ranges from high for residents to medium for vehicle users. The visibility of construction activities in these views will be **short term**. The magnitude of visual change will range from medium to low in short and middle-distance views. Their significance / quality will range from **Significant / Adverse to Slight / Neutral**.

Long distance discernible views will extend to a distance of up to approximately 5km at Glin Quay and up to 6km where views of the taller components will be glimpsed along the N67 coast road. At this distance, the scale of the Proposed Development will only occupy a small percentage of available open and panoramic views. The sensitivity of views ranges from high for residents to medium for vehicle users. The visibility of construction activities in these views will be **short term**. The magnitude of visual effects ranges from low to negligible and their significance / quality from **Slight / Neutral to Not Significant / Neutral**.

10.5.2 Effects at Operation

10.5.2.1 Landscape Effects

The following potential direct and indirect landscape effects arising from the Proposed Development have been identified, along with their duration and quality.

Direct and long-term change will occur locally where the Proposed Development will be physically located.

The receiving environment is identified as Landscape Character Area (LCA) 2 – The Shannon Estuary in the Kerry CDP and has a medium to high landscape sensitivity.

The Proposed Development will slightly intensify the existing industrial character of the Site but not alter the landscape character locally or in the wider study area due to its scale, nature, and location adjacent to the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station, which will remain the most prominent industrial feature along the southern shoreline of the Shannon Estuary.

It is anticipated that the development will introduce an additional industrial component to the existing industrial landscape character of the Site within approximately 4km radius from the SSE Tarbert Site. The magnitude of landscape change during operation is considered Low, within an area of medium to high landscape value with high sensitivity. The resulting significance / quality is **Not Significant / Neutral**.

10.5.2.2 Seascape Effects

Direct effects on the Regional Seascape Character Type 2: Large Estuary, and Regional Seascape Character Area SCA8: Shannon Estuary and Tralee Bay at operation are considered Low and their significance / quality will be **Slight / Adverse**. The Proposed Development will intensify the industrial character of SSE Tarbert.

Outside of the Site boundary, the seascape character of either RSCA designation will not alter due to the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is only a small component in the overall size of the seascape character area and type. Effects at operation are therefore considered low and their significance / quality will be **Slight / Neutral** within approximately 4km radius from the Site boundary. Beyond 4km, the magnitude of seascape character effects will reduce to very low and their significance / quality to **Not Significant / Neutral**.

The seascape character areas (SCA) identified by Clare County Council, namely SCA 10 Lower Shannon and SCA 11 River Shannon are indirectly affected by the Proposed Development at operation. Similar to the RSCA designations, the seascape character of SCA 10 and 11 will not alter due to the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is located outside of these character areas. However, it is acknowledged that there is intervisibility between the Shannon Estuary shorelines and changes to the seascape character can affect either side. Effects on the seascape at operation are considered low and their significance / quality will be **Slight / Neutral** within approximately 4km radius from the Site boundary. Beyond 4km, the magnitude of seascape character effects will reduce to very low and their significance / quality to **Not Significant / Neutral**.

Table 10.12: Summary of Landscape and Seascape Effects at Operation

Receptor	Landscape Value	Landscape Sensitivity	Magnitude of Landscape Change	Significance / Quality of Landscape Effects
Kerry (LCA) 2 – The Shannon Estuary	High	Medium / High	Low	Not Significant / Neutral
Clare LCA Shannon Estuary Farmland	High	High	Low	Not Significant / Neutral

Receptor	Landscape Value	Landscape Sensitivity	Magnitude of Landscape Change	Significance / Quality of Landscape Effects
Limerick LCA Shannon Coastal Zone	High	High	Low	Not Significant / Neutral
Seascape Character Area 'Lower Shannon'	Medium	High	Low	Slight / Adverse
Seascape Character Area 'River Shannon'	Medium	High	Low	Slight / Adverse
Regional Seascape Character Type: 2 – Large Estuary (direct - at site)	Medium	High	Low	Slight / Adverse
Regional Seascape Character Area: SCA 8 – Shannon Estuary and Tralee Bay (direct – at site)	Medium	High	Low	Slight / Adverse
Regional Seascape Character Type: 2 – Large Estuary (indirect - within 4km of the site boundary)	Medium	High	Low	Slight / Neutral
Regional Seascape Character Area: SCA 8 – Shannon Estuary and Tralee Bay (indirect - within 4km of the site boundary)	Medium	High	Low	Slight / Neutral

10.5.2.3 Visual Effects

The main visual receptor groups are residents, vehicle travellers including ferry / ship passengers, workers and visitors. Residents will have the highest sensitivity to change than road users or ferry passengers. Road users and workers will focus mainly on traffic or their commercial tasks and not primarily on available views. Ferry / ship passengers will see the Proposed Development in conjunction with the prominent existing Tarbert HFO Power Station and Moneypoint Power Station structures. Visitors will also have a high sensitivity to changes in views, however, different to residents, they do not experience these changes on a daily basis and may not know the difference between the current situation and the historic condition.

Visual effects will mainly relate to the introduction of a new large industrial facility onshore adjacent to the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station.

The immediate surrounding of the Site is sparsely populated. The closest residential dwellings in the immediate environment of the Proposed Development are located off the N67 and approximately 350m south of the Tarbert HFO Power Station.

The larger settlement of Tarbert further south along the N67 includes a number of residences along its road network. The majority of views from these residential properties will be screened by intervening topography and vegetation. The highest visual change will be noticeable along sections of the N67

within approximately 800m from the Site to the south as illustrated in Viewpoints / Photomontages 03 & 04, which are described in detail herein. Views from the remaining areas beyond 500-800 m within County Kerry will quickly become screened by intervening vegetation and topography and only the stacks of the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station will remain visible if at all.

Viewpoints / Photomontages 05, 06 & 07 illustrate views from within 4-6km from the Site boundary. Viewpoint / Photomontage 8 illustrates a middle-distance view to the southwest at approximately 4 km distance.

The Proposed Development will add an industrial facility adjacent to the prominent existing Tarbert HFO Power Station. It will be seen in all available views in conjunction with the more prominent Tarbert HFO Power Station. In that respect, and considering the zoning of the site for industry, the proposed development is not uncharacteristic in available views. However, it will intensify slightly the industrial character of estuarine views. It will create a new point of focus in available close distance views (within approximately 1km of the Site). The significance / quality of visual effects is considered to range from slight / neutral to moderate / adverse depending on the openness of the view and the extent of intervening topography and existing vegetation. Some close distance views are fully screened by intervening topography, vegetation, and the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station. Considering the location and the middle to long distance nature of views within 1 – 8km from the Site boundary, visibility will also depend on weather conditions and the level of haziness.

The majority of open views of the Proposed Development will be experienced from the Co. Clare side of the Shannon Estuary, where middle to long distance open views of the Proposed Development will be possible. This includes most coastal roads within the study area as well as elevated sections of the N67 and R486 and adjoining local roads, refer to Viewpoints / Photomontages 01, 09 - 13. Visibility is generally considered middle to long distance in nature (beyond 1km) due to the width of the estuary. Despite the distance, the Proposed Development will be discernible, but it will not become a new focus point or landmark as the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station will remain dominant in views from the shoreline. The Proposed Development will be a new component in often panoramic views across the estuary into Co. Kerry. It will be seen in conjunction with existing wind turbines including Leanamore Wind Farm and Tullahennel Wind Farm in Co. Kerry and Money Point Power Station and its chimney stacks in Co. Clare. Similar as for views in County Kerry, existing views contain already large scale industrial or light industrial developments, and the Proposed Development will therefore not be out of character. Visual effects are considered to range from very low to low and the significance / quality from Imperceptible / Neutral to Slight / Neutral depending on the distance and panoramic nature of the views.

Photomontages submitted with this planning application (refer to EIAR Volume II, Appendix 10A) illustrate the location of the Proposed Development in views from various directions and at different distances. A detailed description of each viewpoint (as mapped in EIAR Volume III, Figure 10.1) is included herein and should be read in conjunction with the photomontage booklet, submitted with this planning application.

Viewpoint 01 – Killimer Ferry Terminal, Co. Clare

Existing View This viewpoint is located at Killimer Ferry Terminal, approximately 2.85km north of the Site. This location is representative of the view experienced by ferry passengers, commuters, tourists and day trippers and forms part of the Wild Atlantic Way route. In the foreground the Killimer ferry pier extends into the waters of the Shannon Estuary, a busy shipping channel. The buildings and other components of the existing SSE Tarbert site are prominent in this view, the two emissions stacks are the tallest elements in the landscape, breaking the horizon of the hillside. To the southeast (towards Limerick) the topography rises gently and comprises of a rural landscape in agricultural use. To the west, (right of this image) the land holding, and Site boundary extend along the Kerry shoreline and has an intensely industrial appearance. The landscape in the far distance is generally low lying and has a rural landscape character. The Tarbert Lighthouse and a section of the Tarbert ferry pier are also visible to the left of the Site.

The value of this view is considered Medium. The sensitivity is considered Medium, and the visual receptors are vehicle users and ferry passengers with a Medium susceptibility to change.

Predicted View The Site is part of the larger SSE Tarbert site and, from this viewpoint, fronts the Site along the estuary shoreline and wraps around the west side of the existing power station structures. The proposed Denim Water Tanks and storage Dry and Bulk Tanks are located in the north of the Site, closest to the viewer. The proposed façade treatment and the colours of tanks consist of a palette of four main colours selected from the surrounding environment which range within a muted light grey and green spectrum which will help the integration of the built structures into the surrounding landscape.

The magnitude of visual change to the view is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development does not alter the existing character or impair the visual amenity of the existing composition. The Proposed Development will be clearly visible and intensify the existing industrial nature of the Site but will not introduce any elements uncharacteristic to the view. The visual significance and quality will be **Slight** and **Neutral**.

Viewpoint 02 – Shannon Estuary (from Tarbert – Killimer ferry)

Existing View This viewpoint is taken from the ferry deck crossing the Shannon Estuary as it approaches Tarbert pier. The existing Tarbert HFO Power Station is the most prominent feature in this view. The Site wraps around the west side of the existing buildings. The viewpoint (while transient) permits an open view across the estuary from mid-distance. The Site has an intensely industrial character with limited vegetation or available screening. The low-lying landscape to the west is punctuated with electricity pylons servicing overhead powerlines running in a northeast to southwest alignment. The relatively low-lying nature of the surrounding rural landscape is apparent.

The value of this view is considered Medium. The visual receptors are ferry passengers and users of other marine vessels traversing a similar route along the estuary channel. The sensitivity and susceptibility to change is considered Medium.

Predicted View The Photomontage illustrates the components of the proposal fronting the shoreline including the cluster of storage tanks, and west of the existing power station the block form of the OCGT

turbine housing and the OCGT emissions stack are prominent features on the landscape intensify the existing industrial nature of the view.

The magnitude of visual change to the site is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development does not alter the existing character or impair the visual amenity of the existing composition. Clearly visible, the Proposed Development will intensify the existing industrial nature of the Site but will not introduce any elements uncharacteristic to the view or become a dominant new feature. The visual significance / quality will be **Slight / Neutral**.

Viewpoint 03 – Site Access point– N67

Existing View This viewpoint is representative of views north along the N67 leading to the Tarbert Ferry pier. The steel gates located at the centre of this image is the access point to SSE Tarbert. The character of the view has an overall rural nature with a prominent industrial element. The existing power station and parts of the existing electrical substation protrude above the vegetation in the foreground. The lands to the south of the Site include areas of visual amenity and are considered a 'visually sensitive area'. Views & Prospects from the N67 / coast road on the eastern side of SSE Tarbert site, facing east and north afford open vistas across the Shannon Estuary and are orientated away from the Proposed Development. The N67 forms part of the Wild Atlantic Way touring route.

Sensitive visual receptors include vehicle users. The value of this view is considered Medium. The sensitivity is considered Medium and susceptibility to change is considered Low.

Predicted View The Photomontage illustrates the proposed built form in a wireline image - outlining where the Proposed Development will be located on the Site. The proposal is largely screened from view by the intervening-built structures, topography and existing vegetation. A section of the OCGT structure, similar in scale and form to the existing buildings will become part of the larger built environment, intensifying the industrial character of the composition.

The magnitude of visual change to the Site is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development does not alter the existing character or impair the visual amenity of the existing composition. The Proposed Development will intensify the existing industrial nature of the Site but will not introduce any elements uncharacteristic to the view. The visual significance and quality will be **Not Significant** and **Neutral**.

Viewpoint 04 – N67 – Visually Sensitive Area

Existing View This viewpoint is located along the N67, a busy national route serving the Tarbert ferry terminal south of the Site. This viewpoint is located in a 'visually sensitive area' in the Kerry CDP where designated views orientate east of the open waters of the estuary. This viewpoint orientates north towards the Site and permits an open vista of existing Tarbert HFO Power Station and captures a section of the Tarbert pier across the waters of Tarbert Bay. The existing Tarbert HFO Power Station, the electrical components of the substation to the west and the two tall chimney stacks are dominant features in this view. Treelines and hedgerows front the N67. The Power station is a landmark in this view from this distance where becomes quickly apparent as the observer travels along the N67 towards Tarbert pier.

Visual receptors of this view include vehicle users. The value of this view is considered Medium. The sensitivity is considered High and susceptibility to change is considered Medium.

Predicted View A section of the OCGT structure, similar in scale and form to the existing buildings will become part of the larger built environment - lengthening the nautical themed built form of the existing power plant and slightly intensifying the industrial character is the composition. The proposed 55m emissions stack protrudes above the existing power station, the colour palette chosen from the surrounding environment allows the Proposed Development to assimilate into its setting.

The magnitude of visual change to the Site is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development does not alter the existing character or impair the visual amenity of the existing composition. The Proposed Development will intensify the existing industrial nature of the Site but will not introduce any elements uncharacteristic to the view. The visual significance and quality will be **Slight** and **Neutral**.

Viewpoint 05 – Scenic route loop to Glin, Co. Limerick

Existing View This viewpoint is located approximately 4.8 km south from the Site on higher ground at the crossroads of the L1233. The L1233 is a designated scenic route in the Limerick CDP forming a loop with the N69 affording several vantage points across the estuary along this stretch of road. The viewpoint permits panoramic views across the landscape towards Tarbert Bay, the Shannon Estuary, and the southern shores of Co. Clare.

The foreground is rural in nature comprised of small fields in agricultural use and bound with native hedgerows and hedgerow trees. There are a number of residential dwellings in this area on single plots, some are screened from view by vegetation. The Shannon Estuary is frequently used for leisure boating and is also an active shipping corridor. The Tarbert HFO Power Station is a prominent feature in this panoramic view in the mid distance. Together with the existing Moneypoint Power Station and Wind Farm, it forms a significant industrial cluster along the shores of the Shannon Estuary.

The value of this view is considered High. Sensitive receptors in this area include vehicle users and residents. The sensitivity is High and susceptibility to change is considered Medium.

Predicted View The Proposed storage tanks are located north of the existing power station and are not visible from this location. The proposed OCGT structure protrudes slightly above and to the west of the existing power station buttressing the built form. The OCGT stack is not visible from this location.

The magnitude of visual change to the Site is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development does not alter the existing character or impair the visual amenity of the existing composition. The Proposed Development will intensify slightly the existing industrial nature of the Tarbert HFO Power Station complex but will not introduce any elements uncharacteristic to the view. The visual significance and quality will be **Not Significant** and **Neutral**.

Viewpoint 06 – Scenic route loop to Glin, Co. Limerick - Night-time conditions

Existing View: As described for Viewpoint 05 above. This image was captured at twilight to explore any impact on visual amenity of the area under night sky conditions. This view is located on higher ground

at the crossroads of the L1233 crossroads and permits an open view of the night sky, the reflection of light on the water and some lighting conditions in the area. Existing lighting includes a number of streetlights along the N69 towards Tarbert Village, the white lights and the red stack lights on the Tarbert HFO Power Station, various lights at Moneypoint Power Station and red aviation lights on the wind turbines of Moneypoint Wind Farm. Other lit up areas include the Killimer Ferry Terminal across the Shannon Estuary and a number of other light points scattered across the County Clare countryside in the distance.

The value of this view is considered High. Sensitive receptors in this area include vehicle users and residents. The sensitivity is High and susceptibility to change is considered Medium.

Predicted View The Proposed Development is barely discernible from this location under night-time conditions. The lighting of the Proposed Development will not be discernible from this location resulting in **no visual effects**.

Viewpoint 07 – Glin shoreline, Co. Limerick

Existing View The viewpoint was captured from the shoreline at Glin approximately 5.6km east the Site. The viewpoint is located adjacent to the N69, a designated scenic route in the Limerick CDP. The view across Glin Quay affords an open vista across the Shannon Estuary. Tarbert HFO Power Station and Moneypoint Power Station appear both at the centre of the image in the background. The mouth of the estuary between them is almost imperceptible. The gently undulating and low topography along either side of the Shannon Estuary in Co. Kerry and Co. Clare form the horizon.

The value of this view is considered High. Visual receptors include the local community and vehicle users. The sensitivity is considered High and susceptibility to change is considered Medium.

Predicted View The introduction of the Proposed Development to the Site is barely discernible, a slight intensification of build form will become recognisable north of the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station.

The magnitude of visual change in this view is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development does not alter the existing character or impair the visual amenity of the existing composition. The Proposed Development will visually integrate into the existing industrial complex at Tarbert HFO Power Station and, in this view, also with the industrial components of Moneypoint Power Station. The Proposed Development will not introduce any elements uncharacteristic to the view. The visual significance and quality will be **Not Significant and Neutral**.

Viewpoint 08 – Lackyle, Co. Clare

Existing View This viewpoint is located in Lakyle, a small headland along the County Clare shoreline, approximately 3.9km north-east of the Site. The unnamed road has a northeast to southwest alignment permitting an open view of the estuary and a direct view towards the Site in the mid distance. A number of residential dwellings and local overhead distribution lines are located along this road, including several vernacular style cottages fronting the road in a broadly north - south orientation. Lands west of this road and a section of lands close to the shoreline are designated as Heritage Landscapes in the Clare CPD.

The value of this view is considered Medium. The visual receptors include residents and vehicle users. The sensitivity is considered High and susceptibility to change is considered Medium.

Predicted View The photomontage illustrates the components of the proposal fronting the shoreline including the cluster of storage tanks, and west of the existing power station - the block form of the OCGT turbine housing and the OCGT emissions stack are also discernible leading to a slight intensification of the existing industrial elements within this view.

The magnitude of landscape change to the Site is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development does not alter the existing character or impair the visual amenity of the existing composition. The Proposed Development will slightly intensify the existing industrial nature of the Site but will not introduce any elements uncharacteristic to the view. The visual significance and quality will be **Slight** and **Neutral**.

Viewpoint 09 – Knock Pier, Co. Clare

Existing View This viewpoint is located at Knock Pier, Co. Clare, adjacent to the R486 regional road approximately 4.7km from the Site. The pier has open views across Clonderlaw Bay and towards the prominent existing Tarbert HFO Power Station. The gently rolling landscape Kerry and Limerick landscape across the estuary is rural in character. However, existing overhead transmission line towers and wind turbines are prominent features on the ridgeline (Co. Kerry) in the background.

The value of this view is considered High. The visual receptors are the local community and boat users at the pier. The sensitivity is considered High and susceptibility to change is considered Medium.

Predicted View The Proposed development site wraps around the west side of the existing power station structures. The photomontage illustrates the components of the Proposed Development fronting the shoreline including the cluster of storage tanks, the muted colour palette integrates the built form into the landscape. The nature of the view will remain largely similar, the block form of the OCGT turbine plant and the OCGT emissions stack are discernible features on the landscape slightly intensifying the existing industrial site conditions.

The magnitude of visual change to the Site is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development does not alter the existing character or impair the visual amenity of the existing composition. The Proposed Development will slightly intensify the existing industrial nature of the Site but will not introduce any elements uncharacteristic to the view. The visual significance and quality will be **Slight** and **Neutral**.

Viewpoint 10 – R486, Co. Clare

Existing View This viewpoint is located along a stretch of R486 at Burrane on the northern shore of the Estuary in County Clare. This elevated viewpoint is located approximately 3km from the Site and approximately 550m east Killimer Ferry Terminal. A number of residential dwellings are located along this section of the road and tend to have a broadly north south orientation. The southern shoreline of Shannon Estuary is a designated as Heritage Landscape in the Clare CDP. This section of road has a low hedgerow boundary permitting open views towards the estuary and the Site. To the west, the white tanks at SSE Tarbert owned by the National Oil Reserve Agency stand out against the rolling vegetation of the backdrop.

The value of this view is considered High. There sensitive receptors in this area are adjacent residential dwellings and vehicle users along the R486. The sensitivity is High and susceptibility to change is considered Medium.

Predicted View The Proposed storage tanks are located north of the existing power station and screen some of the existing building parts of Tarbert HFO Power Station. The proposed OCGT structure protrudes to the west of the existing power station buttressing the built form. The OCGT stack is visible from this location.

The magnitude of visual change to the Site is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development does not alter the existing character or impair the visual amenity of the existing composition. The Proposed Development will intensify the existing industrial nature of the Site but will not introduce any elements uncharacteristic to the view. The visual significance and quality will be **Slight** and **Neutral**.

Viewpoint 11 – R486, Co. Clare – Night-time conditions

Existing View As described for Viewpoint 10 above. This image was captured at twilight to explore any impact on visual amenity of the area under night sky conditions. The low hedgerow permits an open view of the Site under night sky conditions. The existing lighting of Tarbert HFO Power Station as well as the associated amber jetty lights and the aviation warning lights at the SSE stacks are discernible.

The value of this view is considered High. There sensitive receptors in this area are adjacent residential dwellings and vehicle users along the R486. The sensitivity is High and susceptibility to change is considered Medium.

Predicted View The Proposed Development will screen sections of the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station and reduce the overall recognisable lighting. New lights attached to proposed storage tanks will be discernible. The magnitude of visual change to the Site is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development will reduce the overall visible lighting from this viewpoint. The visual significance and quality will be **Slight** and **Beneficial**.

Viewpoint 12 – Coast Road N67, Co. Clare

Existing View This viewpoint is located Ballymacrinay along the N67 coast road, approximately 8km from the Site. This section of the coast road is designated a Scenic Route in the Clare CDP and form's part of the Wild Atlantic Way. The view across Ballymacrinan Bay and the headland at Moneypoint affords open mid distance view across the landscape where the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station structures and chimneys stacks can be glimpsed protruding above the mid horizon [next to the yellow gantry]. Moneypoint Power Station and Moneypoint Wind Farm are the prominent features in the middle ground, partially screening Tarbert HFO Power Station located in the background.

The value of this view is considered High. Sensitive receptors include vehicle users and residents. The sensitivity is High and susceptibility to change is considered Medium.

Predicted View The introduction of the Proposed Development to the Site is barely discernible, a slight intensification of build form may be detected on a clear day.

The magnitude of visual change is considered **Very Low**. The Proposed Development does not alter the visual amenity or add prominent industrial features to the view. The significance and quality of visual effects will be **Imperceptible** and **Neutral**.

Existing View Viewpoint 13 – Cappa Pier, Co. Clare

This viewpoint was captured on Cappa Pier at Cappa Village southwest of Kilrush, Co. Clare approximately 9.6km from the Site. Cappa Pier is located adjacent to the Wild Atlantic Way driving route and a designated Scenic Route in the Clare CDP. The intervening landscape and rugged shoreline are designated Heritage Landscape by the Clare CDP. The shoreline includes manmade retaining walls, streetlights and a number of residences along the Coast Road in the middle ground as well as a raised headland. The tallest built elements in this view are the stacks of Moneypoint Power Station, and a number of turbines associated with Money Point Wind Farm, which protrude above the vegetation in the middle distance.

The value of this view is considered High. Sensitive receptors include the local community and boat users at the pier. The sensitivity is High and susceptibility to change is considered High.

Predicted View The Proposed Development will not be visible from this location resulting in **no visual effects**.

Viewpoint 14 – Carrigafoyle Castle, Co. Kerry

Existing View This viewpoint is captured through a window on the upper floors of Carrigafoyle Castle, approximately 8km west from the Site. The castle is located on an island in an inter-tidal zone of Ballylongford Bay and was built in the late 15th, early 16th century. The Historic Environment Viewer (2023) describes it as: *“a single tower of five storeys which rises to a height of over 24.4m and is constructed of small stones neatly laid”*. The castle is a Discovery Point on the Wild Atlantic Way route and falls within a VSA envelope of protected views east of the L6010 Local Road in the Kerry CDP. This location affords open distant vistas across the Shannon Estuary including Moneypoint Power Station and wind farm as well as the surrounding low-lying landscape towards the Site. The two existing tall chimneys stacks on the SSE Tarbert site protrude slightly above the land mass in the distance.

The value of this view is considered High. Sensitive receptors are visitors to the castle. The sensitivity is High and susceptibility to change is considered High.

Predicted View The Proposed Development will not be visible from this location resulting in **no visual effects**.

A summary of visual effects is provided in Table 10.13.

Table 10.13: Summary of Visual Effects at operation

Viewpoint	Receptor Groups	Visual Susceptibility	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Visual Change	Significance / Quality of Visual Effects
Viewpoint 1	Vehicle users, Ferry Passengers	Medium	High	Low	Slight Neutral
Viewpoint 2	Ferry Passengers, Other users of marine vessels	Medium	Medium	Low	Slight Neutral
Viewpoint 3	Vehicle users	Low	Medium	Low	Not significant Neutral
Viewpoint 4	Vehicle users	Medium	High	Low	Slight Neutral
Viewpoint 5	Residents, Vehicle users	Medium	High	Low	Not significant Neutral
Viewpoint 6 (Night-Time)	Residents, Vehicle users	Medium	High	None	None
Viewpoint 7	Local community, Vehicle users	Medium	High	Low	Not significant Neutral
Viewpoint 8	Residents, Vehicle users	Medium	High	Low	Slight Neutral
Viewpoint 9	Local community, Boat users	Medium	High	Low	Slight Neutral
Viewpoint 10	Residents, Vehicle users	Medium	High	Low	Slight Neutral
Viewpoint 11 (Night-Time)	Residents, Vehicle users	Medium	High	Low	Slight Beneficial
Viewpoint 12	Residents, Vehicle users	Medium	High	Very Low	Imperceptible Neutral
Viewpoint 13	Local community, Boat users	High	High	None	None
Viewpoint 14	Visitors	High	High	None	None

10.5.2.4 Effects on Scenic Routes / View & Prospects

Visual effects on scenic routes / views & prospects were examined during a site visit of the study area in June 2023 by the author of this chapter. A summary of visual effects on designated scenic routes is provided in Table 10.14. Further details on the effects on scenic routes / views & prospects are included in the relevant individual photomontage descriptions in Section 10.5.2.3.

Table 10.14: Summary of Visual Effects on Scenic Routes

Viewpoint / Photomontage	Scenic Route	Visual Susceptibility	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Visual Effects	Significance / Quality of Visual Effects
Photomontage 01 (County Clare)	Wild Atlantic Way	Medium	High	Low	Slight Neutral
Photomontage 03 (County Kerry)	Views east and southeast of Tarbert Bay along the N69. Section of Wild Atlantic Way.	Low	Medium	Low	Not significant Neutral
Photomontage 04 (County Kerry)	Views east and southeast of Tarbert Bay along the N69. Section of Wild Atlantic Way.	Medium	High	Low	Slight Neutral
Photomontage 05 (County Limerick)	Shannon estuary from Foynes to Glin	Medium	High	Low	Not significant Neutral
Photomontage 06 (County Limerick)	Shannon estuary from Foynes to Glin	Medium	High	None	None
Photomontage 07 (County Limerick)	Shannon estuary from Foynes to Glin	Medium	High	Low	Not significant Neutral
Photomontage 12 (County Clare)	Coast road southeast of Cappagh to Carrowdotia South. Section of Wild Atlantic Way.	Medium	High	Very Low	Imperceptible Neutral
Photomontage 13 (County Clare)	Coast road southeast of Cappagh to Carrowdotia South. Section of Wild Atlantic Way.	High	High	None	None
None	Estuarine views east and northeast along sections of the L6010 towards Carrigafoyle Castle north of Ballylongford. Section of Wild Atlantic Way.	High	High	None	None
None	Views west of Lislaughtin Abbey from a short section of the L1010 northeast of Ballylongford. Section of Wild Atlantic Way.	High	High	None	None

10.5.2.5 Lighting Effects

Photomontages 6 and 11 illustrate the Proposed Development at night-time. Visual effects have been described in Section 10.5.2 and are summarised in Table 10.13.

External lighting is proposed throughout the Site. It is proposed that lighting will not be required during night-time except in circumstances where access is required, which cannot be delayed until daytime.

10.5.3 Cumulative Effects

In addition to landscape and visual effects, it is also important to consider cumulative landscape and visual effects. Significant cumulative effects may occur where a number of similar developments

combine to increase the prevalence of that type of development within a landscape or view to the extent that they become a defining characteristic. In order to ensure a reasonable and proportionate cumulative assessment, only developments that are considered to be similar in scale, type and nature to the Proposed Development have been considered in the assessment of cumulative effects within this report. The assessment of cumulative effects is based on a scenario which assumes that all other identified developments of similar nature have been constructed. The cumulative assessment evaluates the additional change resulting from the Proposed Development in relation to the theoretical baseline scenario and follows a same methodology to that used for the landscape and visual assessments.

There is the potential for cumulative effects to occur in combination with other sources in the study area.

A desktop planning history search using the Kerry County Council (KCC), Limerick County Council (LCC), Clare County Council (CCC), and ABP Online Planning Systems noted a number of relevant planning applications located within Co. Kerry, which could combine with the Proposed Development to create a cumulative impact on landscape assets and visual amenity.

A list of relevant cumulative developments considered which potentially result in cumulative landscape and visual effects is included in Table 10.15 including a summary of cumulative effects. Cumulative effects are described in further detail herein.

Table 10.15: Summary of relevant cumulative developments

Kerry County Council / An Bord Pleanála (ABP) Planning Ref. No.	Applicant Details	Location	Grant / Due Date	Cumulative Effects / Quality of Effects
23350	EirGrid Plc.	SSE Tarbert Site	Not Determined yet (Decision Due Date 07/12/2023)	Slight / Neutral
ABP-315838-22	EirGrid Plc.	SSE Tarbert Site	Further Information Requested	Moderate / Adverse
18392	SSE Renewables (Ireland) Limited	SSE Tarbert Site	Granted Conditional 15/01/2019	Slight / Adverse
18878	Shannon Clean Tech Ltd	Battery energy storage system (BESS) facility	Granted Conditional 23/09/2019	Not Significant / Neutral
19115	Glencloosagh Energy Limited	Grid stabilisation facility	Granted Conditional 25/10/2019	Not Significant / Neutral
20850	Kilpadouge Green Energy Ltd	Peaker Power Plant	Conditional 12/11/2020	Not Significant / Neutral
21549	Donal Murphy Glencloosagh Energy Limited	Inertia synchronous compensator (HISC) compound	Granted Conditional 19/07/21	Not Significant / Neutral
18520	ESB	Battery energy storage system	Granted Conditional 24/07/2018	Imperceptible / Neutral

Kerry County Council / An Bord Pleanála (ABP) Planning Ref. No.	Applicant Details	Location	Grant / Due Date	Cumulative Effects / Quality of Effects
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		(BESS) facility close to Moneypoint Power Station		
19746	ESB	300 to 400 MVA (electrical rating) synchronous condenser within Moneypoint Power Station	Granted Conditional 20/11/2019	Imperceptible / Neutral

Planning Application 23350: Works to the Tarbert substation compound and 220kV underground cabling. This application is located within the Site occupying 6.9ha and is located directly adjacent to the Proposed Development. Planning determination has not been issued yet and further information has been submitted by the applicant to An Bord Pleanála.

There is a likelihood that construction works associated with Application 23350 could coincide with the construction of the Proposed Development creating cumulative effects resulting from additional construction machinery on the Site and adjacent roads where construction traffic will travel. The proposed underground cabling will route will traverse the SSE Tarbert site. No specific landscape mitigation has been proposed for this development. Cumulative landscape and visual effects at construction are considered low and temporary. The significance and quality of cumulative effects is considered **Slight and Neutral**.

Planning Application ABP-315838-22: Development of Temporary Emergency Generation (TEG) located approximately 170m to the south-west of the Proposed Development. It will comprise three open cycle gas turbine units including 30m flue gas stacks (and balance of plant); liquid fuel storage and offloading facility; connection equipment; and connection to the existing electrical substation. The TEG will be nearing completion and approaching commissioning by the time the construction starts on the Proposed Development (subject to the grant of planning consent) so there will be limited cumulative impact from construction activities on site. It is considered likely that the three 30m flue gas stacks will be visible 'in combination' with the Proposed Development and cumulative visual effects will likely be experienced on the visual amenity in the study area.

The TEG will remain in place with an approximate two or three-year operational overlap with the Proposed Development depending on when planning permission for the Proposed Development is granted and construction commences. The three 30m flue gas stacks will combine with the 55m high emissions stack of the Proposed Development will intensify the industrial character of the built environment. The TEG is a temporary project which will be removed after 2028 when any cumulative impact will cease. When visible in combination, cumulative landscape and visual effects are considered medium as both developments reinforce the industrial character and industrial visible elements in

available open views across the Shannon Estuary. The significance and quality of temporary cumulative effects is considered to be **Moderate and Adverse**.

Planning Application 18392: Construction of a Battery Storage facility with a total site area of up to 2.2278ha, to include 50 no. self-contained battery container units with associated HVAC cooling units, 13 converter and 13 step up transformer container units, associated compound cabling and ducting, a grid transformer, a single storey substation / control building with welfare facilities, a cable route grid connection to the existing ESB substation building, maintenance lighting, security fencing, a CCTV monitoring system, and all associated ancillary infrastructure on lands within the Tarbert generating facility.

A ten-year planning permission is being sought to construct this development so there is the potential that construction of the battery storage facility could coincide with the construction of the Proposed Development resulting in temporary cumulative effects during the construction phase on the landscape character as well as on the visual amenity from combined construction traffic activities. No specific mitigation measures have been proposed. Temporary cumulative landscape and visual effects will be low. The significance and quality is considered **Slight and Adverse**.

Planning Applications 18878, 19115, 20850 and 21549: These four applications relate to various elements of an electricity power generator at the Peaker Plant and battery energy storage system facility on a site 1.8km to the south-west of the Proposed Development. Elements of this development have already been constructed and are located on a site on higher ground. Given the distance between these two developments, which includes intervening mature vegetation associated with Tarbert Demesne (NIAH 2051), it is unlikely that construction will be intervisible or combine to create cumulative effects on the landscape assets or visual amenity. The magnitude of temporary cumulative effects are considered very low, and their significance and quality is considered **Not Significant and Neutral**.

The remaining two applications relate to Moneypoint Power Station which is located on the northern shore of the Shannon Estuary within County Clare. They are located approximately 4km to the north-west of the Proposed Development.

Planning Application 18520: 7.5MW capacity battery storage facility within a secured compound, on a 0.4ha site. Considering the distance between this application and the Proposed Development on a site with existing electrical infrastructure, it is unlikely there will be any cumulative impact because it is not likely that construction activities will combine to create cumulative effects on the landscape assets or visual amenity within the study area. The magnitude of cumulative landscape and visual effects is very low. The significance and quality of cumulative effects is considered **Imperceptible and Neutral**.

Planning Application 19746: Construction of a 300 to 400 MVA (electrical rating) synchronous condenser which will be situated in a 1.8ha site. Considering the distance between this application and the Proposed Development on a site with existing electrical infrastructure, it is unlikely there will be any cumulative impact as it is not likely that construction activities will combine to create cumulative effects on the landscape assets or visual amenity within the study area. The magnitude of cumulative landscape and visual effects is very low. The significance and quality of cumulative effects is considered **Imperceptible and Neutral**.

10.5.4 Effects during Decommissioning

Effects arising from the process of decommissioning of the Proposed Development are considered to be of a similar nature and duration to those arising during the construction process as described in **Section 10.5.1**. Where this assessment refers to potential construction effects, these are also representative of predicted decommissioning effects. Further details on the process of decommissioning is included in Volume I, Chapter 5: Description of the Proposed Development.

10.6 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation is a term used to describe the measures that are employed to address environmental effects. The purpose of mitigation is to avoid, reduce and where possible remedy or offset, any significant adverse direct and indirect effects on the environment arising from the Proposed Development.

Embedded mitigation measures form an integral, committed, and deliverable part of the Proposed Development design or comprise standard construction practices. They are assumed to be implemented and are therefore factored into the determination of residual significant effects. The following embedded mitigation measures have been identified.

The Proposed Development has been designed, as far as practicable, to avoid adverse effects on the landscape and views through consideration of options, appraisal, and refinement. Modifications made to the design of the Proposed Development to avoid and reduce effects include mainly limiting the footprint of the Proposed Development, siting of components, and, where possible, minimise impacts on established vegetation and features that contribute to landscape character and visual amenity. Considering the location and nature of the Site adjacent to the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station and along the shore edge of the Shannon Estuary, landscape planting measures are not proposed as they will not be effective in providing additional screening for the Proposed Development.

Facade Colour Scheme

The Proposed Development is located in a prominent setting close to the N67 with a low-lying landscape as a backdrop, particularly when seen from the County Clare side. The principal visual mitigation measures for the Overall Proposed Development is therefore inherent in the design of its architecture and its colour scheme.

With the primary objective to minimise the visual impact of the built structures and to allow the buildings to be as unobtrusive as feasible against their backdrop, the proposed colour scheme was drawn from colours found in the surrounding local landscape.

The building colours consist generally of a mix between the following four main colours, which range all within a muted light grey and green spectrum.



The colours pick up existing colours of the landscape across the estuary landscape and its hinterland against which the Proposed Development built structures will be seen in the majority of views. The proposed colour scheme will help to take the attention away from individual buildings and roofscapes and help blending-in the proposed built structures better with the landscape in available views from local residences, the public road network, including (elevated) scenic routes and from the estuary itself.

Sections of Proposed Development will still become a new focus point in a number of available views, particularly the storage tanks along the shoreline as well as the taller elements of the proposal. The implementation of the proposed colour scheme will help to take the attention away from the Proposed Development and make it one of several other existing industrial facilities across available views rather than pinpointing it with bright colours, which will otherwise emphasise further the existence of the proposed industrial structures in available views. The colours will also work with varying weather and visibility conditions, where their muted colours can quickly blend in.

A similar colour scheme has been applied to the constructed ESB substation near Kilmorna, Co. Kerry, which successfully helped the integration of the built structures into the surrounding landscape in close and distant views including designated scenic views across the River Feale valley.

Similar muted colours have also been applied to new or refurbished oil tanks on Whiddy Island helping to integrate these structures in available views. While the tanks cannot be missed, their colour helps to avoid making them stand out. The capping of some of the tanks was not changed in colour and left in a light grey which keeps drawing the attention of the viewer. This emphasises the need of muted colours not just on facades but also on roof structures.

Lighting

Although not required to reduce any significant adverse effects, the following mitigation measures will be implemented as part of good lighting design practice:

- All proposed luminaires in the lighting design strategy are approved International Dark Sky Association (IDA) luminaires; any other exterior lighting will follow this principle.
- Utilise back shields, glare cowls, louvres and similar to minimize / obscure source intensity towards the adjacent hedges and nearby residences; use reflector types that redirect light back downward to desired work areas.
- Confine lighting to the task area (use horizontal cut-off optics and zero tilt angles, particularly for floodlights).

- Give careful consideration to luminaire positioning and orientation; all floodlight luminaires to be oriented downward or at very low angles to provide lighting only to the areas directly below and adjacent to a given pole.
- Ensure low colour temperature lamps (CCT) ≤ 3000 K are in use where possible; and
- Maximise times where lighting can be shut off or dimmed.

10.7 Residual Effects

Effective implementation of the proposed embedded mitigation measures, as described in Section 10.6, will have a beneficial impact and help to minimise landscape and visual effects associated with the Proposed Development. Sensitive design and colouring of the proposed building structures as proposed above will help integrating the Proposed Development into the surrounding environment.

Given the nature of the Site, the scale and location of the Proposed Development, the mitigation measures focus on architectural mitigation and minimising lighting during night-time. These measures will be implemented immediately and come into effect following the completion of construction works.

The majority of visible built structures in available views will remain as at the time of the completion of construction works (façade design and colour scheme, lighting design). The proposed colour scheme will help integrating the Proposed Development in available views. The magnitude and significance of landscape, seascape and visual effects during the operational phase will therefore remain the same as described in Section 10.5.

10.7.1 Decommissioning Phase

As outlined in Chapter 5 Description of the Proposed Development, measures will be undertaken by the Applicant during decommissioning to ensure that there will be **No Significant, Adverse** environmental effects from the removal of built structures. General mitigation measures that will be implemented are outlined in Volume I, Chapter 5. As a result, additional potential impacts and associated effects arising during the decommissioning phase are not anticipated above and beyond those already assessed during the construction phase.

10.8 Do Nothing Scenario

All components of the environment are constantly changing due to a combination of natural and human processes. When predicting likely direct and indirect effects it is important to remember that there are two available for comparison: the existing environment, i.e., the baseline as described in Section 10.4, and the environment as it will be in the future if no development of any kind were to take place – the ‘do nothing’ impact.

In landscape terms, if the Proposed Development did not go ahead, the character of the Site will remain an industrial brownfield site with areas of scrub. The significance will be **Imperceptible** and **Neutral**.

In visual terms, the industrial components in available views will remain similar without significant changes to the visual amenity. Likely changes will relate to changes to the existing vegetation due to maturing, pruning or natural development / decay. The significance will be **Imperceptible** and **Neutral**.

10.9 Summary

10.9.1 Landscape and Seascape Effects at Construction

Landscape, seascape and visual effects and their significance at construction stage will be temporary to short-term adverse.

Localised direct and landscape effects will arise within the Site, which is located within LCA 2: The Shannon Estuary. Considering the existing nature and location beside the existing SSE Tarbert Power Station, direct landscape effects are not considered significant.

Indirect landscape effects outside the Site will not be significant as a permanent loss of key features, such as the overall landscape structure, as the adjacent existing Tarbert HFO Power Station compound is already a prominent and distinct industrial feature in the landscape character. Together with Moneypoint Power Station, located across along the Co. Clare shoreline of the Shannon Estuary, it forms a significant industrial cluster in the estuarine environment.

Localised direct effects on the seascape character will arise within the Site, which is located within Regional Seascape Character Type 2: Large Estuary, and Regional Seascape Character Area SCA8: Shannon Estuary and Tralee Bay. Considering the existing nature and location beside the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station, direct seascape effects are not considered significant.

Outside of the Site boundary, the seascape character, including seascape character areas (SCA) identified by Clare County Council, namely SCA 10 Lower Shannon and SCA 11 River Shannon, will not alter due to the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development and the associated construction works. The Proposed Development is only a small component in the overall size of the seascape character area and type. Seascape effects are therefore considered not significant in the wider study area.

10.9.2 Visual Effects at Construction

Visual effects during the construction stage will be experienced in the vicinity of the Site, from locations with open views of sections of the Proposed Development, including views across the Shannon Estuary from the Tarbert – Killimer Ferry, along locations of the northern shores and the associated elevated landscapes of Co. Clare as well as the southern shores towards Glin in County Limerick, west of the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station along the shores of Co. Kerry, and along the local road network where construction traffic will travel. Construction activity will not be visible to all of the visual receptors located within the study area due to intervening landform, vegetation and the distance from the Proposed Development. However, while construction works will be widely noticeable, they will be significant locally only, within approximately 500m - 1km from the Site. The effects of distance will reduce potential significant effects quickly to not significant. The construction of the Proposed Development will slightly intensify the existing visual industrial character of the Site and will be most noticeable within close to middle distance view within approximately 4km distance from the boundary of the Site where open views are along or across the estuary are available, particularly from elevated areas to the north along the R486, from the east along the local road through Lackyle and to the southeast, on elevated ground along the Glin loop Scenic Drive.

Long distance discernible views will extend to a distance of up to approximately 5km at Glin Quay and up to 6km where views of the taller components will be glimpsed along the N67 coast road. At this distance, visual effects will not be significant.

10.9.3 Landscape Effects at Operation

Direct and long-term change will occur locally where the Proposed Development will be physically located. The Proposed Development will slightly intensify the existing industrial character of the Site but not alter the landscape character locally or in the wider study area due to its scale, nature and location adjacent to the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station, which will remain the most prominent industrial feature along the southern shoreline of the Shannon Estuary. While the Proposed Development will introduce an additional industrial component to the existing industrial landscape character of the Site it will not result in significant landscape effects as it will integrate into the existing industrial setting of the area.

10.9.4 Seascape Effects at Operation

Direct effects on the Regional Seascape Character Type 2: Large Estuary, and Regional Seascape Character Area SCA8: Shannon Estuary and Tralee Bay at operation are considered not significant. While the Proposed Development will intensify slightly the industrial character of the Tarbert HFO Power Station complex, the development will not be uncharacteristic in the existing seascape character of the Site.

Outside of the Site boundary, the seascape character will not alter due to the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is only a small component in the overall size of the seascape character area and type and will not result in significant seascape effects.

10.9.5 Visual Effects at Operation

The main visual receptor groups are residents, vehicle travellers including ferry / ship passengers, workers and visitors. Residents will have the highest sensitivity to change than road users or ferry passengers. Vehicle users and workers will focus mainly on traffic or their commercial tasks and not primarily on available views. Ferry passengers will see the Proposed Development in conjunction with the prominent existing Tarbert HFO Power Station and Moneypoint Power Station structures.

The Proposed Development will add an industrial facility adjacent to the prominent existing Tarbert HFO Power Station. It will be seen in all available views in conjunction with the more prominent Tarbert HFO Power Station. In that respect, and considering the industrial character of the Site, the Proposed Development is not uncharacteristic in available views. However, it will intensify slightly the industrial character of estuarine views.

The highest visual change will be noticeable along sections of the N67 within approximately 800m from the Site to the south as illustrated in Viewpoints / Photomontages 03 & 04. Views from the remaining areas beyond 500-800 m within County Kerry will quickly become screened by intervening vegetation and topography and only the stacks of the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station will remain visible if at all.

Viewpoints / Photomontages 05, 06 & 07 illustrate views from within 4-6km from the Site boundary. Viewpoint / Photomontage 8 illustrates a middle-distance view to the southwest at approximately 4 km distance. Considering the location and the middle to long distance nature of views within 1 – 8km from the Site boundary, visibility will also depend on weather conditions and the level of haziness.

The majority of open views of the Proposed Development will be experienced from the Co. Clare side of the Shannon Estuary, where middle to long distance open views of the proposal will be possible. This includes most coastal roads within the study area as well as elevated sections of the N67 and R486 and adjoining local roads, refer to Viewpoints / Photomontages 01, 09 - 13. Visibility is generally considered middle to long distance in nature (beyond 1km) due to the width of the estuary. Despite the distance, the Proposed Development will be discernible, but it will not become a new focus point or landmark as the existing Tarbert HFO Power Station will remain dominant in views from the shoreline.

Similar as for views in Co. Kerry, existing views contain already large scale industrial or light industrial developments, and the Proposed Development will therefore not be out of character.

10.9.6 Effects at Decommissioning

Effects arising from the process of decommissioning of the Proposed Development are considered to be of a similar nature and duration to those arising during the construction process as summarised in Section 10.9.1 and 10.9.2.

10.10 References

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