

## 11. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

### 11.1 Introduction

This chapter of the rEIA addresses the landscape and visual impacts of the Subject Development in County Donegal. It covers the assessment methodology, a description of the Subject Development and the existing landscape based on relevant guidance. It includes a description of the landscape policy with specific reference to wind energy and the study area in which the Subject Development is located.

The landscape of the area is described in terms of its existing character, which includes a description of landscape values and the landscape's sensitivity to change. The potential impacts in both landscape and visual terms are then assessed, including cumulative impacts.

For the purposes of this rEIA, where the 'Subject Development' is referred to, this relates to the 25 no. Deviations from the Permitted Development, for which substitute consent is being sought and which are described in detail in Chapter 3 of the rEIA. Where 'the Site' is referred to, this relates to the primary study area for the development, as delineated by the rEIA Site Boundary in green as shown on Figure 11-1. Where the 'Permitted Development' is referred to, means the permitted wind farm development including, wind turbine infrastructure, internal site roads and all supporting infrastructure, including the grid connection, which was granted permission by the Board under Planning Ref: ABP-300460-17 as amended by ABP-303729-19. Where the Meenbog Windfarm is referred to, means both the Permitted Development and the Subject Development combined. The landscape and visual assessments are based on a wider study area. Considering the nature of the Subject Development as surface level infrastructure and on the basis of the desktop study and survey work undertaken and the professional judgement of the assessment team, it is considered that no significant effects are likely beyond 1km of the Site. Therefore, the LVIA Study Area comprises all areas within 1km of the EIA Site Boundary in Co. Donegal and Co. Tyrone.

This chapter addresses the landscape and visual impacts of the Subject Development on the character and setting of the landscape.

#### 11.1.1 Statement of Authority

MKO has developed extensive expertise and experience over the last 15 years in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of a range of projects, including large scale wind energy developments. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments were conducted and reported in this Chapter by Saoirse Fitzsimons and Jack Workman.

Saoirse Fitzsimons is an Environmental Scientist and LVIA Specialist with MKO. She is an Affiliate Member of the British Landscape Institute. Her primary role at MKO is producing the LVIA chapter of EIA reports. Saoirse holds an MSc. In Coastal and Marine Environments from the National University of Ireland, Galway where she was awarded The Prof Micheál O Cinnéide Award for Academic Excellence. Since joining MKO, Saoirse has worked widely on renewable energy infrastructure, commercial, recreational, and residential projects. Saoirse is a qualified Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operator and holds an A1/A3 and A2 drone licence.

Jack Workman is chartered as a Technician Member with the British Landscape Institute (TMLI) and he is the Landscape & Visual Project Director at MKO. Jack is an Environmental Scientist and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) specialist. Since starting at MKO, Jack's primary role at MKO has been producing the Landscape and Visual chapter of EIA reports for large scale infrastructure developments. Jack holds an MSc. In Coastal and Marine Environments and a BSc. in Psychology, he is a member of the Landscape Research Group, as well as holding a membership with the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management.

This chapter was reviewed by Michael Watson. Michael is an Environmental Director at MKO, overseeing a team of highly skilled environmental professionals working on EIA for a wide range and scale of projects, in particular large-scale infrastructure, housing, commercial and renewable energy

development. His key strengths include project strategy, expert knowledge of the EIA Directive, and in-depth knowledge of the various disciplines contributing to EIAR and the Habitats Directive. Michael has been the Head of the Environment Team at MKO for over nine years. He is a key member of the MKO senior management team responsible for developing the business, mentoring team members, fostering a positive culture and promoting continuous employee professional development. Michael holds an MA in Environmental Management from NUI Maynooth, is a Member of IEMA, a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a Professional Geologist (PGeo).

### 11.1.2 ‘Do-Nothing’ Scenario

Under the Do-Nothing scenario, the 25 deviations that comprise the Subject Development would be removed and restored to the greatest extent practicable. The Meenbog Wind Farm would then be completed in accordance with the current planning permission (ABP Ref: PA05E.300460). This approach may lead to environmental and landscape and visual effects due to the potentially extensive groundworks required to remove and restore the existing peat cells, portions of access roads, laybys, and hardstands, and peat containment berm. New access road sections and hardstands would then be constructed in the slightly different, and less optimal, locations shown on the permitted Meenbog Wind Farm plans. Unauthorised borrow pits would be backfilled to the greatest extent possible with spoil and peat and revegetated. Unauthorised peat cells would be dismantled, and the stored peat material would be removed from the site for disposal elsewhere.

### 11.1.3 Subject Development Description

The Subject Development comprises of 25 alterations that will be assessed in the rEIAR. Subject deviations are numbered 1-25 from the Substitute consent application and are summarised in Table 3-1 in Chapter 3.

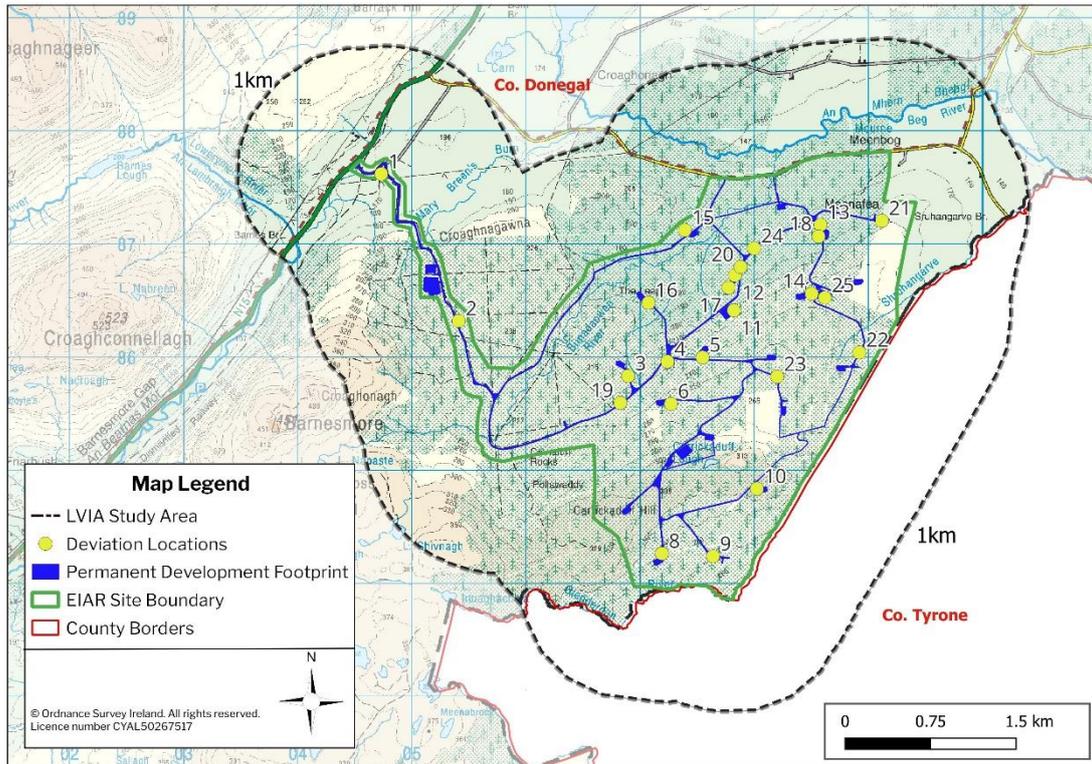


Figure 11-1 Site map including Deviations of Subject Development

All deviations comprised in the Subject Development are surface level infrastructure with low visual exposure outside the immediate setting of their location. There will be no changes to visual amenity and landscape character. The greatest potential for effects from the Subject Development will be direct landscape effects.

## 11.2 Methodology and Assessment Criteria

This section broadly outlines the methodology and the guidance used to undertake the landscape and visual impact assessment of the Subject Development. There are three main sections to this assessment:

- Landscape Baseline
- Visual Baseline
- Likely Significant Effects - outlining the assessment of landscape, visual and cumulative effects.

### 11.2.1 Scope and Definition of Landscape and Visual Impact (LVIA) Study Area

The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (GLVIA3) (The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, UK, 2013), guidance refers to the identification of the area of landscape that is to be covered while assessing landscape and visual effects. The guidelines state:

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

The landscape and visual assessments are based on a wider study area. Considering the nature of the Subject Development as surface level infrastructure and on the basis of the desktop study and survey work undertaken and the professional judgement of the assessment team, it is considered that no significant effects are likely beyond 1km of the Site. Therefore, assessment of landscape and visual effects from locations beyond 1km of the Site boundary are scoped out of this assessment. The LVIA Study Area comprises all areas within 1km of the Site.

The Subject Development is located in Co. Donegal on the border to County Tyrone. Due to the mountainous and heavily vegetated areas within the LVIA Study Area baseline studies and site visits found that there will be no visibility of the Subject Development from receptors within County Tyrone. Therefore, County Tyrone has been scoped out from further assessment.

### 11.2.2 Guidelines

While the legislation and general guidance on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is set out in Chapter 1 of this rEIAR, only guidance specifically pertaining to the Landscape and Visual Impact are outlined below.

Ireland signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention (ELC) in 2002, which introduces a pan-European concept which centres on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning. The Department of Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht published a National Landscape Strategy for Ireland in 2015. The Strategy aims to ensure compliance with the ELC and contains six main objectives, which include developing a national Landscape Character Assessment and Developing Landscape Policies.

In 2000, the Department of the Environment and Local Government (DoEHLG) published ‘*Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities*’, which recommended that all Local Authorities adopt a standardised approach to landscape assessment for incorporation into Development Plans and consideration as part of the planning process. However, this DoEHLG 2000 guidance remains in draft form.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was primarily based on the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition* or GLVIA3 (The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, UK, 2013). Other guidelines also inform the preparation of this landscape and visual impact assessment, which include:

- The Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government (DoEHLG), 2006, (hereafter referred to as the ‘Guidelines’)

### 11.2.3 Baseline Landscape and Visual Information

In order to carry out this assessment, an initial desk study of baseline information was undertaken that has informed the LVIA, and this included the following:

#### Landscape

- Policies and objectives contained in the relevant county development plans (County Donegal) pertaining to landscape.
- Landscape designations in the LVIA Study Area (Amenity Areas; Views and Prospects; Landscape Character Areas).
- Landscape character of the LVIA Study Area.
- Landscape character of the Subject Development based on Site Surveys

#### Visual

- Identification of Visual Receptors in the LVIA Study Area;

### 11.2.4 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments are informed by appraisals conducted during a site visit. In the context of this rEiAR, no photomontages were required as the infrastructure is already built. Photos of the site are included throughout this chapter to aid discussion.

#### 11.2.4.1 Identification of Landscape & Visual Receptors

Section 11.3 below includes the Landscape Baseline. This section reviews the policies and objectives of various planning policy documents relating to landscape, planning and the locational siting of wind farms, as they relate to the Site. The LVIA Study Area is situated in Counties Donegal and Tyrone. The Landscape Baseline states baseline information about the receiving landscape of the Site and its wider setting.

Section 11.4 includes the Visual Baseline. This section identifies key sensitive visual receptors in the LVIA Study Area where visibility of the Subject Development is likely to occur and reports upon the nature of this visibility from visual receptors. Receptors with no visibility of the Subject Development are screened out from assessment in the effects section of the Chapter.

The effects on key sensitive landscape and visual receptors identified in the baseline investigation are assessed in Section 11.5 - *Landscape and Visual Effects* using the methodology reported below. The assessment of effects is informed by desktop studies and site visits.

#### 11.2.4.2 Assessing Landscape Effects

The methodology uses qualitative methods to arrive at an assessment, which is based on the Landscape and Landscape Assessment (2000) Guidelines as well as the GLVIA3 (2013), and the Guidelines were also taken into account.

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

### 11.2.4.2.1 Landscape Effects - Assessing Landscape Sensitivity

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

**Susceptibility to change** can be described as the ability of the landscape receptor (either the overall character, quality of the landscape or a particular landscape feature) to accommodate the Subject Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline (existing) landscape and/or the aims of landscape planning policies and strategies. Table 12-1 below presents differing description criteria for susceptibility to change.

Table 11-1 Description criteria for susceptibility to change.

Susceptibility of landscape receptor to change	Description and example criteria
High	Landscape receptors where the overall character of the landscape receptor or the nature of the individual landscape receptor causes it to have a high susceptibility to change considering its inherent characteristics and where the landscape receptor has a low ability to accommodate the proposed change without undue consequences for the maintenance of its landscape character, and/or its quality or condition, and/or its particular aesthetic and perceptual aspects, and where such change is not in compliance with planning policies/strategies.
Medium	Landscape receptors where the overall character of the landscape receptor or the nature of the individual landscape receptor causes it to have a medium susceptibility to change considering its inherent characteristics and where the landscape receptor has a moderate ability to accommodate the proposed change without undue consequences for the maintenance of its landscape character, and/or its quality or condition, and/or its particular aesthetic and perceptual aspects, with consideration given to planning policies/strategies.
Low	Landscape receptors where the overall character of the landscape receptor or the nature of the individual landscape receptor causes it to have a low susceptibility to change considering its inherent characteristics and where the landscape receptor has a strong ability to accommodate the proposed change without undue consequences for the maintenance of its landscape character, and/or its quality or condition, and/or its particular aesthetic and perceptual aspects, and where such change may be in compliance with planning policies/strategies.

**Landscape value** is a combination of values which are assessed in the landscape baseline, combining any formal landscape designations, and, where there are no designations, judgements based on individual elements of the landscape receptor, for example particular landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities, and combination of these contributors. In addition, it is noted that the GLVIA3 (2013) states that “*there should not be over-reliance on designations as the sole indicator of value*”. The assessments of landscape value undertaken in this report include consideration of various elements that contribute to landscape value of specific receptors, using best practice standards and professional judgement. Where this occurs, landscape value will be judged based on clearly stated criteria. Table 11-2 below presents differing description criteria for landscape value.

Table 11-2 Description criteria for landscape value

Value attached to Landscape elements	Description and example criteria
High	Landscape receptors forming part of designations (e.g. areas of amenity, scenic routes/views) in the development plan, or at a national or international level, or landscape receptors not designated but where the receptor is judged to be of equivalent value using clearly stated criteria including wildness, naturalness, very strong cultural heritage or natural heritage associations and/or very high recreational value.
Medium	Landscape receptors where value is not formally designated but are of value as good examples of high quality, intact landscapes or landscape features and are deemed to be of relatively high scenic quality. Landscapes or landscape receptors that contain some rare elements, include areas or features which are wild or have a sense of naturalness, strong cultural associations or which have recreational value.
Low	Landscapes that are not formally designated and considered as modified. Areas which do not have particularly scenic qualities, do not include rare elements or landscape features and do not have strongly evident cultural or heritage associations.

In combining the assessment of the landscape value of a landscape receptor with the susceptibility to change of that receptor, it is noted here that a judgement of high landscape value does not necessarily imply that this receptor has a high susceptibility to change, and it is emphasised that this relationship is complex. The combination of these, which determines the landscape sensitivity, is undertaken using professional judgement with the rationale for judgements clearly explained in the description of the assessment of effects or in the baseline study. On this basis landscape receptors have been assigned one of the four following sensitivity ratings:

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

It is noted that sensitivity classifications are generally guided by local and national planning policy, particularly for Landscape Character Areas and County Policy in relation to these, as well as County Wind Energy Policy. However, it is noted that in cases where local variations in landscape receptors merit a smaller scale focused assessment that may differ from the policy this is undertaken using professional judgement and is clearly explained in the main body of the report.

#### 11.2.4.2.2 Assessing Magnitude of Change in the Landscape

The Subject Development is part on a wind farm under construction. As is evident throughout this chapter, the Subject Development amounts to little or no change to the existing views of the existing landscape. The term ‘Magnitude of Change’ is used in the impact assessment tables included in this rEIAR. The context of this assessment where the Subject Development already exists in the landscape, the magnitude of the continued impact of the Subject Development is considered. In order to facilitate the impact assessments, and effectively determine the continued impact of the Subject Development, the magnitude of change was determined by considering the change that would occur in a ‘do-nothing scenario’ where the deviations would have been built the Permitted Development strictly in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the planning application.

The magnitude of change in each landscape character area is a combination of the visual presence - size and scale of the change, the extent of the area to be affected, and the duration and reversibility of the effect. The magnitude of change for each landscape character area was assessed using the definitions outlined in Table 11-3 below.

Table 11-3 Magnitude of Landscape Change Assessment Criteria

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

The Landscape Effects Assessment Matrix Table 11-4 below shows the significance of landscape effects, arrived at by combining the landscape receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change classifications. Landscape receptor sensitivity is shown in the first column and magnitude of landscape change is shown in the first row. This table is used as an indicative tool to assist in determining the significance of landscape effects. In different circumstances differing levels of mitigating factors may ultimately result in a different determination of the level of significance. The significance of a landscape effect is based on a balance between the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of effect. The significance of landscape effect is arrived at using a combination of the matrix shown in Table 11-4 and Figure 11-2 below.

Table 11-4 Landscape effects significance assessment matrix

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

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

11-5 below.

Table 11-5 Impact Assessment Significance Classification for Landscape Effects

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

### 11.2.4.3 Assessing Visual Effects

Visual effects relate to changes in views and visual amenity of the surroundings of individuals or groups of people. These may result from changes in content and character of views as a result in changes to the landscape.

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

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

The likely significant effects of the Subject Development in terms of visual and landscape effects are informed by baseline studies and on-site appraisals. The significance of the effect on visual receptors is a combination of the sensitivity of the receptor as well as the magnitude of the change.

#### 11.2.4.3.1 Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Visual Receptor Sensitivity depends on the occupation or activity of the people, as well the extent to which the attention is focused on views and visual amenity, according to the GLVIA3 (2013). Visual receptor sensitivity is assessed as either being Very High, High, Medium, or Low, based on the definition of descriptions and examples set out in Table 11-6 below.

Table 11-6 Visual Receptor Sensitivity Assessment Criteria

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

#### 11.2.4.3.2 Magnitude of Visual Change

The 25 no. deviations which form the Subject Development site have been constructed and therefore exist in the landscape. Therefore, determining the magnitude of change between an ‘Existing’ View and ‘Proposed’ View amounts to no change in scenic amenity and would not effectively describe the current visual impact using standard best practice LVIA methodology (‘Receptor Sensitivity’ X ‘Magnitude of Change’). In order to facilitate the visual impact assessments, and effectively determine the visual impact of the Subject Development, the magnitude of change was determined by considering the change that would occur in a ‘Do-nothing scenario’ where the Subject Development would not be visible in the landscape and instead the Permitted Development would be.

The magnitude of the visual change resulting at each location is a combination of scale of the change, the extent of the area to be affected and the duration and reversibility of the effect. The magnitude of change is determined in accordance with the definitions and descriptions included in Table 11-7 below.

Table 11-7 Magnitude of Visual Change Assessment Criteria

Magnitude of Change	Description
Substantial	Substantial change, where the proposals would result in large-scale, prominent or very prominent change, leading to substantial obstruction of existing view or complete change in character and composition of the baseline through removal of key elements or addition of uncharacteristic elements which may or may not be visually discordant. This includes locations where the Subject Development is fully or almost fully visible over a wide extent, at close proximity to the viewer. This change could be long term or of a long duration.
Moderate	The change in the view may involve partial obstruction of existing view or partial change in character and composition of the baseline through the introduction of new elements or removal of existing elements. Likely to occur at locations where the development is partially visible over a moderate or medium extent, and which are not in close proximity

Magnitude of Change	Description
	to the development. Change may be readily noticeable but not substantially different in scale and character from the surroundings and wider setting.
Slight	The proposals would be partially visible or visible at sufficient distance to be perceptible and result in a low level of change in the view and its composition and a low degree of contrast. The character of the view may be altered but will remain similar to the baseline existing situation. This change could be short term or of a short duration.
Negligible	Any change would only be barely distinguishable from the status quo “do-nothing scenario” in the surroundings. The composition and character of the view would be substantially unaltered, approximating to little or no change.

Visual Effects Assessment Matrix in Table 11-8 below shows the significance of visual effects, arrived at by combining the visual receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change classifications. Visual receptor sensitivity is shown in the left-hand first column and magnitude of visual change is shown in the first row at the top of the table. This table is used as an indicative tool to assist in determining the significance of visual effects. In different circumstances differing levels of mitigating factors may ultimately result in a different determination of the level of significance (see below). The significance of a visual effect is based on a balance between the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of effect. The significance of visual effect is arrived at using a combination of the matrix shown in Table 11-8 and Figure 11-2 below.

Table 11-8 Visual Effects Significance Assessment Matrix

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

The determination of significance uses a seven-point scale, ranging from Major to Negligible. This seven-point scale is translated to the EPA impact assessment classifications of significance, as outlined in Table 11-9 below.

Table 11-9 EPA Impact Assessment Significance Classification for Visual Effects

Matrix Classification Significance	EPA Significance Classification	EPA (2022) Definition of Significance
Major	Profound	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics
Major/Moderate	Very significant	An effect, which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment
Moderate	Significant	An effect, which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Moderate/Minor	Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends

Matrix Classification Significance	EPA Significance Classification	EPA (2022) Definition of Significance
Minor	Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities
Minor/Negligible	Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
Negligible	Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences

### 11.2.4.3.3 Residual Visual Effect

After determining the significance of the visual effect using the above visual effects assessment matrix and significance graph, mitigating factors are taken into consideration to arrive at the final residual effect. In some cases, mitigating factors merit a reduction in classification.

### 11.2.4.4 Determination of Residual Landscape and Visual Effects

The matrices and tables above are tools to aid professional judgement in the determination of the significance of an effect. They are useful in that they provide a transparent, objective, structure to the process of balancing sensitivity and magnitude of change. In the context of the determination of visual effects, the formulaic process created by the use of the matrix above provides an indicative initial assessment, which is clearly demonstrated in the visual assessment tables in Section 0.

However, over-reliance on the formulaic process, which is heavily influenced by the definitions of sensitivity and magnitude of change contained in Table 11-4 and Table 11-8 above, can lead to a failure to properly account for the full range of circumstances and factors at play in the determination of the significance of a visual effect (see section 3.35, GLVIA3, 2013). A wide range of factors, mitigating or otherwise, can factor into such a determination, and it is not possible to capture the complexity involved in balancing all considerations within the necessarily limited definitions contained in these tables. This then naturally results in circumstances whereby the process of the determination of significance using the formulaic method involved with the matrix can result in misrepresentations of the significance of visual effects. It is only with professional judgement, and narrative descriptions of effect, that such complexity can be integrated into the determination of significance. Therefore, the formulaic methods based upon the matrix presented above is combined with professional judgement in the determination of significance. This is illustrated in Figure 11-2 below where the professional judgment of the competent expert is used to properly determine the significance of an effect taking all considerations into account.

A focus is placed upon the narrative description of effects (see section 3.36, GLVIA3, 2013) given the naturally subjective nature of the significance determination process, particularly in relation to visual effects, ensuring that the rationale for the overall judgement is clear (see sections 3.28-3.29, GLVIA3, 2013). The comprehensive assessment of the effects of the deviations included in Section 13.5.6 aims to provide a transparent and robust determination of residual visual effects utilising the graph in Figure 11-2 below in combination with a clear and logical narrative.

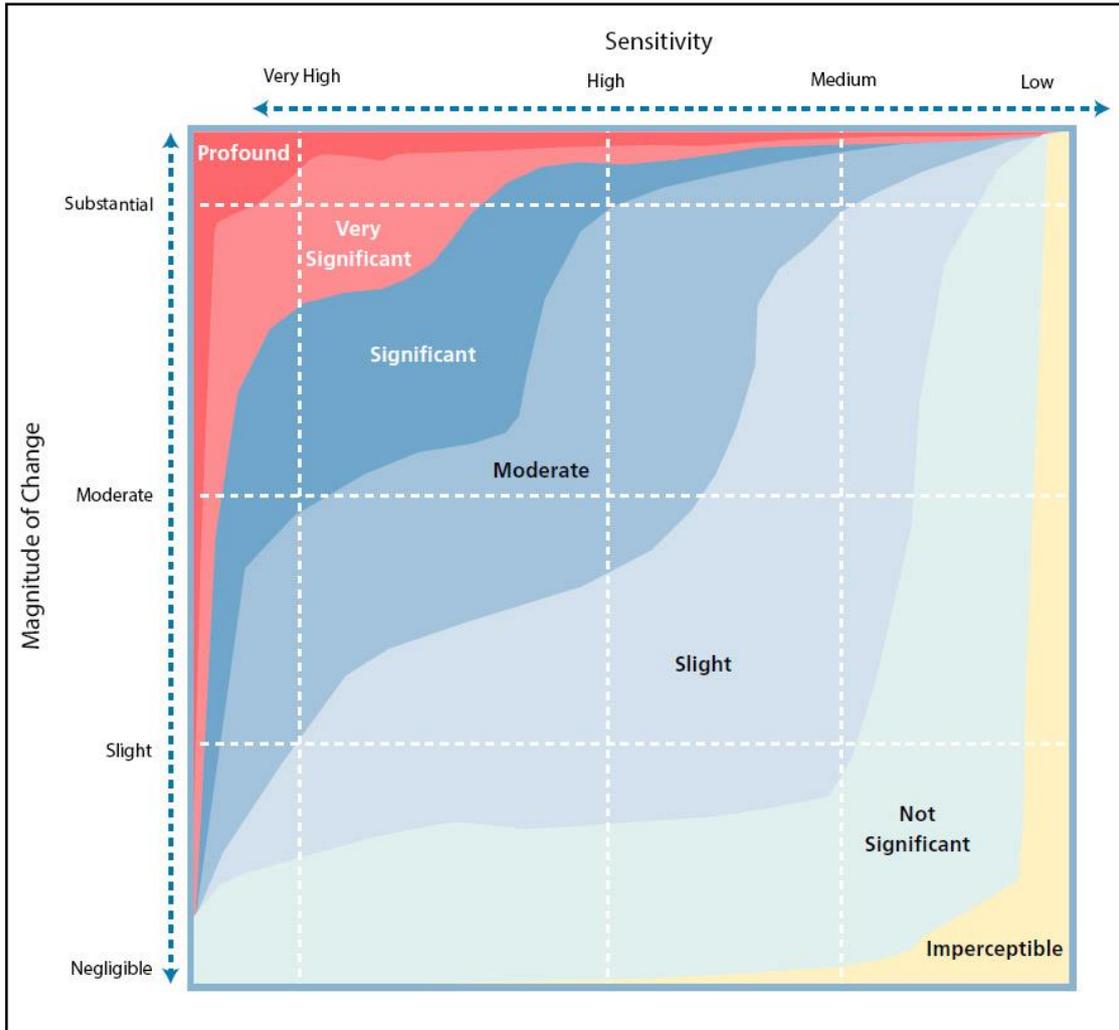


Figure 11-2 Visual Effect Significance Graph (adapted from EPA Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, 2022)

## 11.2.5 Assessment of Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

This chapter assesses the likely landscape and visual impacts of the Subject Development, both independently, as well as in combination with all other existing developments in the LVIA Study Area. The assessments consider the Subject Development in combination with all 'likely future receiving environments' (EPA, 2022) which includes all existing, permitted and proposed developments in the LVIA Study Area.

The effects reported in this chapter and within the impact assessment tables use appropriate and logical narrative to discuss cumulative interactions between the Subject Development and all other developments in the LVIA Study Area. Discussion of cumulative interactions on specific landscape and visual receptors is relative to the effects on that receptor and proportionate to the likelihood of significant landscape and visual effects occurring.

### Assessment of Cumulative Landscape Effects

Assessment of cumulative landscape effects consider where two or more developments have the potential to cumulatively effect the physical fabric of the landscape and specific landscape components and receptors. Cumulative effects on landscape character arise when two or more developments introduce new features into the landscape. In this way, they can change the landscape character to such an extent that they create a different landscape character type, in a similar way to large scale afforestation. That

change need not be adverse; some derelict or degraded landscapes may be enhanced as a result of such a change in landscape character.

### Assessment of Cumulative Visual Effects

The GLVIA3 (2013) guidance also notes that cumulative visual effects can be experienced in combination, where two or more developments are visible from one location, either simultaneously or in succession and these are considered in the assessment of visual effects from this location. Another type of cumulative visual effect includes where two or more developments are seen sequentially, where a viewer moves to another location and sees the same or different developments.

## 11.3 Landscape Baseline

The Landscape Baseline reports relevant policy pertinent to the LVIA, as well as a description of the receiving landscape of the site. This is broken down into the following sections:

- **Landscape Designations and Policy Context** - Policy setting pertaining to the location and nature of the Subject Development site from a landscape perspective based on:
  - Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024
  - Draft Donegal County Development Plan 2024-2030
- **Landscape Character of the site** - A description of the physical landscape and characteristics of the site and its immediate setting, this includes the following considerations:
  - Landscape characteristics based upon findings from a site visit.
- An appraisal of landscape value and the susceptibility of the landscape to change, and a determination of landscape sensitivity.

### 11.3.1 Landscape Designations and Policy Context

This sub-section reviews the policies and objectives of various planning policy documents relating to landscape, planning and the locational siting of wind farms, as they relate to the Site.

The Site is located in County Donegal, therefore, the Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024 (hereafter referred to as the DCDP) and the Draft Donegal County Development Plan 2024-2030 (hereafter referred to as the DDCDP) was consulted to identify landscape designations existent in the LVIA Study Area.

#### 11.3.1.1 Landscape Classifications

Within Section 11.2.2 of the DDCDP three separate Landscape Classifications are identified for Donegal County. These are defined within the section as:

1. **“Areas of Especially High Scenic Amenity (EHSA):** These are sublime natural landscapes of the highest quality that are synonymous with the identity of County Donegal. These areas have extremely limited capacity to assimilate additional development.
2. **Areas of High Scenic Amenity (HSA):** These are landscapes of significant aesthetic, cultural, heritage and environmental quality that are unique to their locality and form a fundamental element of the landscape and identity of County Donegal. These areas have the capacity to absorb sensitively located development of scale, design and use that will enable assimilation into the receiving landscape and which does not detract from the quality of the landscape, subject to compliance with all other objectives and policies of the plan.
3. **Areas of Moderate Scenic Amenity (MSA):** These are primarily landscapes outside Local Area Plan Boundaries and Settlement framework boundaries, that have a unique, rural and generally agricultural quality. These areas have the capacity to absorb additional development that is

*suitably located, sited and designed subject to compliance with all other objectives and policies of the Plan.”*

As seen in Figure 11-3 below, the Subject Development is located within all three Landscape Classification areas. Of the 25 no. deviations assessed in this rEIAR, 5 of these deviations are located within an EHSA. 14 of the 25 no. deviations are located within an HSA and 5 no. within an MSA.

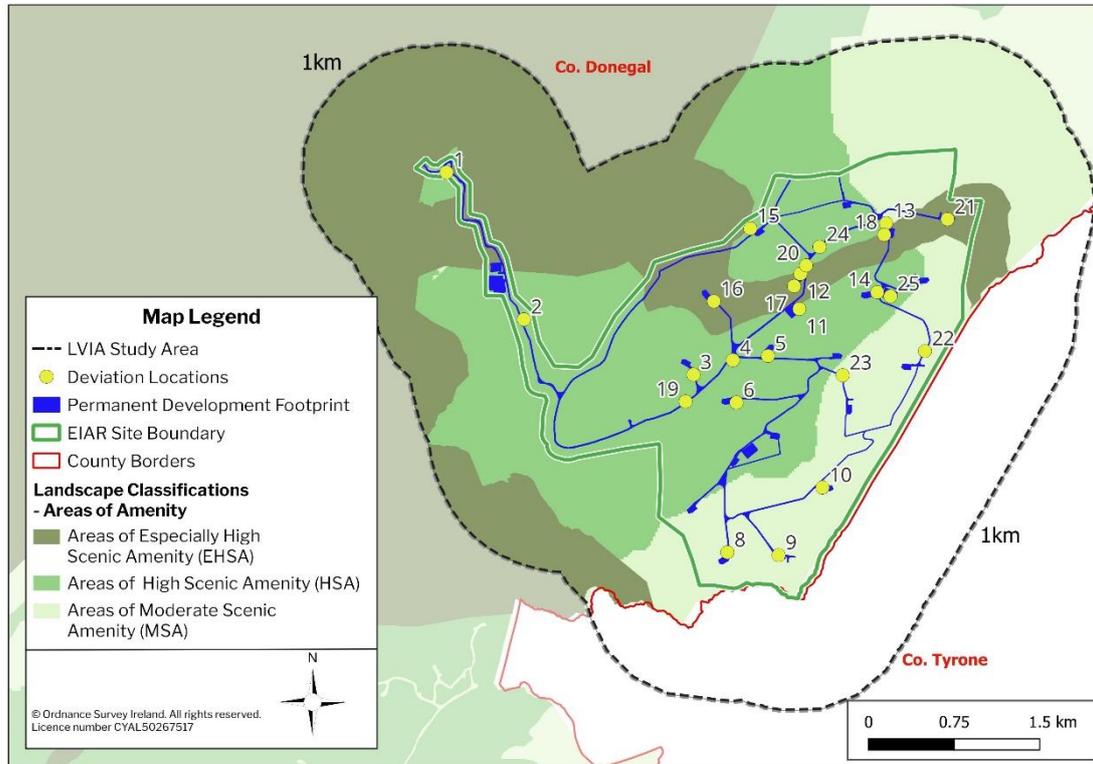


Figure 11-3 Landscape Characteristics of the Subject Development site

### 11.3.1.2 Landscape Character Assessment

Donegal County Council prepared a Landscape Character Assessment in May 2016. This document is discussed in Chapter 7 of the current DCDP and in Section 11.2.2 of the DDCCDP. As stated in the 2016 Landscape Character Assessment, the objectives of this plan are to:

- *“Carry out a Landscape Character Assessment for County Donegal in accordance with National and Regional legislation and Guidelines, the European Landscape Convention 2000 and having regard to existing best practice.*
- *Incorporate the findings of the Seascape Character Assessment of County Donegal, the Settlement Assessment of County Donegal and the Historic Landscape Characterisation of County Donegal into the Landscape Character Assessment.*
- *Collaborate with adjoining planning authorities to ensure cross boundary (and cross-border) continuity of landscape designations.”*

The majority of the Subject Development is located within LCA 40 - Cashelnaven Border and Uplands. This LCA is described as:

*“a vast, mountainous, remote and undeveloped upland area bordering Northern Ireland characterized by peat covered hills and the mountain lakes of Lough Mourne and Lough Carn. The N15, one of the major routes into and through the county travels along the valley floor of Barnesmore gap alongside the freshwater Lough Mourne which providing water to much of east Donegal. There are isolated areas of semi-improved farmland nestled with single rural dwellings throughout this*

*LCA, contrasting greatly with the many large swathes of geometric commercial forestry plantations on the lower slopes and shoulders of the hills.”*

A small section of the Subject Development is also located within Donegal LCA 38 - Bluestack and LCA 41 - Croaghnameal Border & Uplands. Effects on all three LCAs are discussed in further detail in Section 11.5.

### 11.3.2 Landscape Character of the Subject Development

Landscape character refers to the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how people perceive this. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement, and creates the particular sense of place found in different areas. The identification of landscape character as outlined in the Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2000) comprises the identification of primarily physical units (areas defined by landform and landcover) and, where appropriate, of visual units.

#### 11.3.2.1 Site Visit Findings

The Site was visited in December 2023. The assessment of the Site was conducted in conjunction with a visibility appraisal from the public roads surrounding the Site. The Subject Development is located on the same site as the Permitted Development, that is currently under construction. The Site is part of a remote landscape. The Site is a mosaic of conifer forest of various plantation age classes interspersed with shrubs and degraded peat bog. The Permitted Development comprises wind turbine infrastructure, internal site roads and all supporting infrastructure as well as the permitted grid connection. Site visit findings are discussed further in Section 11.4.1 - Views from within the Site.

The landscape surrounding the Site comprises irregular, undulating topography. There is a prominent ridgeline to the southwest of the Site. As seen in Figure 11-4 below, the topography slopes down towards the north of the Site. The elevation of the Site itself ranges from approximately 147m to 321 metres above Ordnance Datum (mAOD).

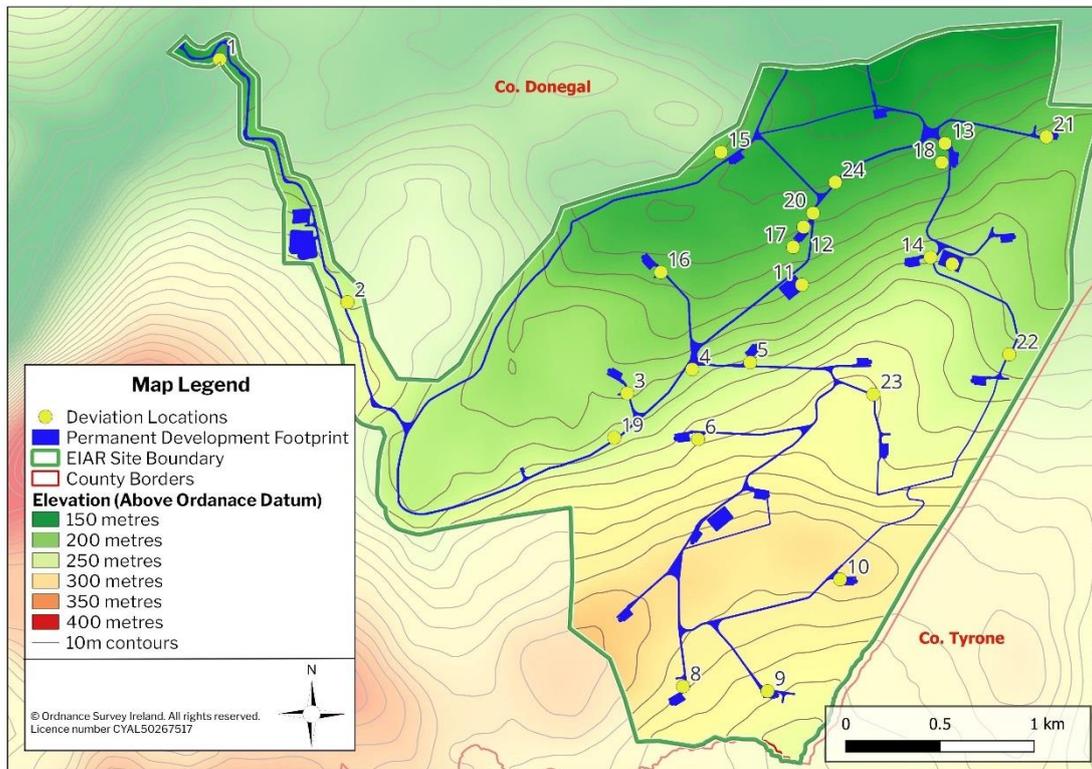


Figure 11-4 Topography of the Subject Development site

## Landscape of the 25 No. Deviations Prior to Construction of the Permitted Development

At a smaller scale, areas where the deviations occurred were predominantly commercial forestry and degraded bog prior to construction of the Permitted Development. Similar to the rest of the Site, these areas were part of a remote landscape of low value.

### 11.3.2.2 Landscape Value and Sensitivity of the Site

Landscape Values were assessed in order to determine the landscape sensitivity of the Site as well as the wider landscape setting and establish the capacity of the immediate landscape in which the Subject Development was built, as it is prescribed by best practice guidance “*as part of the baseline description the value of the potentially affected landscape should be established*” (Page 80, GLVIA3, 2013). Comprehension of the landscape value and its susceptibility to change enables determination of the sensitivity of the landscape at a micro level (the Site) and its capacity to absorb the deviations.

Determination of landscape value takes into consideration the scenic amenity designations, the sensitivity and value designations found in the local landscape policy as well as other indications of landscape value attached to undesignated landscapes. Table 11-10 below describes various factors that aid in identifying landscape value. These factors and indicators were appraised collectively to determine a landscape value for the Site. The Landscape value and susceptibility to change were then considered in forming a landscape sensitivity classification of either **Low**, **Moderate**, **High** or **Very High** for the Site.

Table 11-10 Indicators of Landscape Value

Indicator	Description
Landscape Designations	The Subject Development site is located within EHSA, HSA and MSA areas. It is also located within three Donegal Landscape Character Areas LCA 40 - Cashelhaven Border and Uplands, LCA 38 - Bluestack and LCA 41 - Croaghnameal Border & Uplands.  Within the Landscape Character Assessment, it is noted that ‘forces for change’ in these LCAs are Wind Farms and these deviations are associated with wind farm infrastructure.
Landscape Elements Quality/Condition	This refers to the physical state of the landscape and the condition of individual elements. It is a heavily modified working landscape due to the dominant presence of the existing wind farm infrastructure and forestry and utility of the land for these purposes. The landscape is modified by artificial drainage, access tracks and agricultural infrastructure.
Scenic or Aesthetic Qualities	The part of the site dedicated to commercial forestry has few notable aesthetic qualities. Due to the forestry surrounding the site there are limited long ranging views and views of a scenic quality.
Rarity or Conservation Interests	The site is part of a remote mountainous landscape with degraded peatland and conifer forest. A comprehensive assessment of the Ecology on site is included in Chapter 5 - <i>Biodiversity</i> .
Wildness/Naturalness	The site itself is a partially constructed wind farm with existing access tracks, borrow pits and turbine hard stands. The site is surrounded by mountainous terrain interspersed by blanket bog, coniferous forestry and woodland scrub.
Recreational Value	The site comprises privately owned land and is not used for any public recreational activities.
Cultural Meaning / Associations	There are no national monuments or cultural heritage receptors within the site.

In consideration of the factors detailed in Table 11-10 above, the landscape value of the Site is deemed to be of 'Low' value given the location within a wind farm site, currently under construction. Considering this factor, as well as the small-scale nature of the Subject Development, the susceptibility of the landscape of the Site to the proposed change is 'Low'. Overall, on balance, the sensitivity of this landscape to the Subject Development is deemed to be 'Low'.

### 11.3.3 Landscape Character of the Wider Landscape Setting

The landscape surrounding the Site is an upland, rural landscape. The area is sparsely populated with no major settlements within 5km of the Site. There are several single residential dwellings along the local roads surrounding the Site within 1km. There is a prominent ridgeline to the southwest of the Site. The N15 National Road is located to the northwest of the Site with the Barnesmore Gap located to the west.

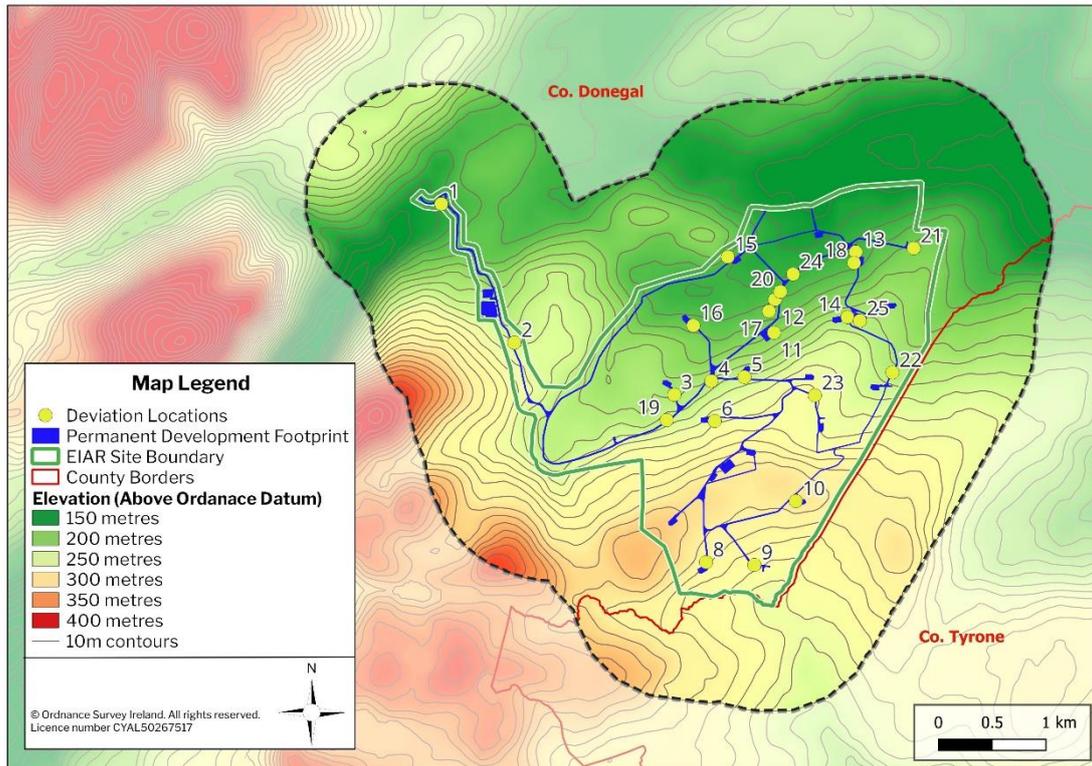


Figure 11-5 Topography of the LVIA Study Area

#### 11.3.3.1 Landscape Character Areas

The Site falls within three Landscape Character Areas for County Donegal. These three LCAs are located within the LVIA Study Area and are listed below and shown in Figure 11-6. A detailed description of each LCA is outline in Table 11-11 below.

- > LCA 38 - Bluestack
- > LCA 40 - Cashelnaven Border & Uplands
- > LCA 41 - Croaghnameal Border & Uplands

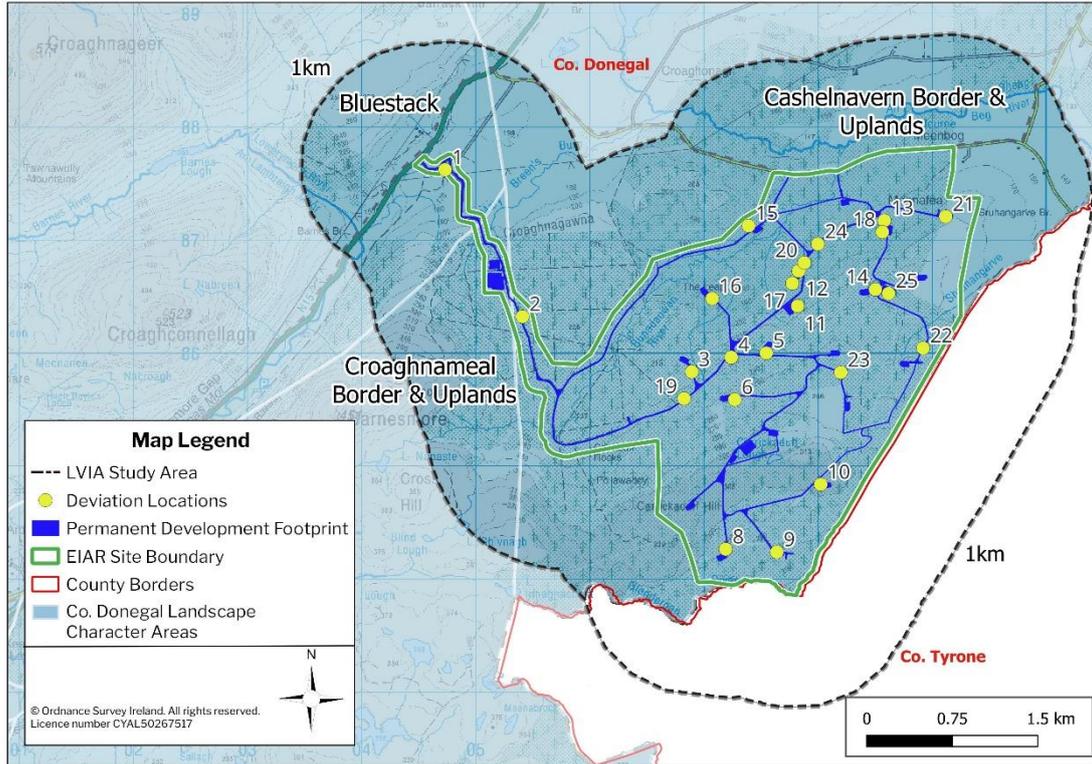


Figure 11-6 Landscape Character Areas

Table 11-11 Landscape Character Areas

LCA	Description	Sensitivity to Change	Visibility
LCA 38 - Bluestack	<i>“Bluestack LCA is a wholly inland landscape within the Gaeltacht dominated by the Bluestack Mountain Range, a vast area of upland mountains, bogs and lakes with dramatic and wide river valleys that form and frame all of the views into and within this LCA. A dispersed low density rural population live in isolated one-off dwellings on the lower slopes of the mountains and within the North-western area of this LCA on agricultural river plains.”</i>	Within the Co. Donegal Landscape Character Assessment, it is noted that one of the defined ‘forces for change’ for this LCA is ‘Wind Farms’. These deviations are associated with wind farm infrastructure and so the sensitivity to change is deemed to be ‘Low’.	There will be very limited visibility of the Subject Development from outside the Site
LCA 40 - Cashelnaven Border & Uplands	<i>“Cashelnaven Border &amp; Uplands LCA is a vast, mountainous, remote and undeveloped upland area bordering Northern Ireland characterized by peat covered hills and the mountain lakes of Lough Mourne and Lough Carn. The N15, one of the major routes into and through the county travels along the valley floor of Barnesmore gap alongside the freshwater Lough Mourne which providing water to much of east Donegal. There are isolated areas of semi-improved farmland nestled with single rural dwellings throughout this LCA, contrasting greatly with the many large swathes of geometric commercial forestry plantations on the lower slopes and shoulders of the hills.”</i>	Within the Co. Donegal Landscape Character Assessment, it is noted that one of the defined ‘forces for change’ for this LCA is ‘Renewable energy development’ (windfarms). These deviations are associated with wind farm infrastructure and so the sensitivity to change is deemed to be ‘Low’.	There will be very limited visibility of the Subject Development from outside the Site
LCA 41 - Croaghnameal Border & Uplands	<i>“Croaghnameal Border &amp; Uplands LCA is a remote area of primarily upland mountainous blanket bog and mountain lakes with significant areas of commercial forestry, particularly along the eastern boundary with Northern Ireland. The northern part of the LCA forms half of the iconic ‘Barnesmore Gap’, a steep sided and wide river valley through which the N15 and the old Donegal Railway line runs, and one of the main vehicular routes into Donegal from the south.”</i>	Within the Co. Donegal Landscape Character Assessment, it is noted that one of the defined ‘forces for change’ for this LCA is ‘Renewable energy development’ (windfarms). These deviations are associated with wind farm infrastructure and so the sensitivity to change is deemed to be ‘Low’.	There will be very limited visibility of the Subject Development from outside the Site

## 11.4 Visual Baseline

The main purpose of establishing the visual baseline is to identify the key visual receptors that should be considered for assessment. The visual baseline exercise uses baseline studies appraisals to determine where no on-site visibility appraisals are required.

### 11.4.1 Views from Within the site

The Meenbog Windfarm as constructed to-date, is the most prominent visual feature within the Site. Plate 11-1 and Plate 11-2 below show two peat cells located within the Site. Plate 11-4 below shows a built road within the Site. Views from within the Site are mainly of degraded peat and coniferous forestry as seen in Plate 11-3 below. As seen within the images below there are very limited long ranging views of the wider landscape as the Site is enclosed by coniferous forestry.



*Plate 11-1 View from within the site of a peat cell and coniferous forestry*



*Plate 11-2 View from an elevated point within the site*



Plate 11-3 Short ranging view of a revegetated peat cell and coniferous forestry within the Site.



Plate 11-4 View of an internal road within the Site.

## 11.4.2 Visibility of the Subject Development

This section of the LVIA chapter describes the existing views towards the Site from the surrounding area. All 25 no. deviations included in the Subject Development are located within the Site boundary. There are very limited views into the Site from the public realm due to screening from vegetation and localised landforms. As all deviations comprising the Subject Development were completed at ground level, it is unlikely that there will be visibility of the Subject Development outside the Site. However, for the avoidance of doubt, a visibility appraisal was conducted from receptors in the public realm in close proximity to the Site as reported below with photographic imagery.

### N15 National Road

Deviation no. 1 is located approximately 250 metres east of the Site entrance along the N15 National Road. Plate 11-5 below shows a view of the Site entrance from the N15 National Road. As seen in the image, there is no visibility past where the road bends in the centre background of the image due to the vegetation screening. Plate 11-6 below shows a view from the N15, south of the Site. Views towards the Site are limited due to the topography and vegetation screening. This visual receptor has been scoped out from further assessment.



Plate 11-5 Entrance to the Site.



Plate 11-6 view towards the site from the south along the N15.

### North West Cycle Trail and Way Marked Walking Route

The North West Cycle Trail runs along the N15 National Road to the west of the Site and along a local road adjacent to the north of the Site boundary. Along this trail there will be no visibility of the Subject Development due to screening from the vegetation along the Site boundary. This visual receptor has been scoped out from further assessment.



*Plate 11-7 View from north of the Site from Corgary Road Co. Donegal towards the Subject Development*

### Residential Receptors

There are several dwellings located along local roads within 1km of the Site. As seen in Plate 11-8 below, the boundary of the Site is vegetated and there are no views of the Site from this location. This is the case for the majority of roads and residential dwellings surrounding the Site. There will be no impact on residential dwellings in close proximity to the Site. These dwellings have been scoped out for further assessment.



*Plate 11-8 View towards the site from Corgary Road in Co. Tyrone*

### 11.4.2.2 Visibility Appraisal Overview

As seen above, there will be no visibility of the Subject Development from visual receptors within the public realm. All visibility of the Subject Development will be restricted to within the Site. As the Site is located on private land and enclosed by forestry and topography, there will be no effects on visual receptors within the LVIA Study Area.

## 11.5 Likely or Significant Landscape and Visual Effects

### 11.5.1 'Do-Nothing' Scenario

Under the Do-Nothing scenario, the 25 deviations that comprise the Subject Development would be removed and restored to the greatest extent practicable. The Meenbog Wind Farm would then be completed in accordance with the current planning permission (ABP Ref: PA05E.300460). This approach may lead to environmental and landscape and visual effects due to the potentially extensive groundworks required to remove and restore the existing peat cells, portions of access roads, laybys, and hardstands, and peat containment berm. New access road sections and hardstands would then be constructed in the slightly different, and less optimal, locations shown on the permitted Meenbog Wind Farm plans. Unauthorised borrow pits would be backfilled to the greatest extent possible with spoil and peat and revegetated. Unauthorised peat cells would be dismantled, and the stored peat material would be removed from the site for disposal elsewhere.

### 11.5.2 Construction Phase Effects

All landscape and visual effects within the construction phase were similar to what occurred during the construction of the permitted infrastructure on the Site. The 25 no. deviations comprising the Subject Development are not located in any key sensitivity areas. Considering the visual enclosure of the Subject Development within the Site, construction of the Subject Development would not have been visible within the public realm. During the construction of the Subject Development, localised, short-term, slight, negative landscape and visual effects would have occurred in the immediate setting of each deviation comprising the Subject Development.

The construction works were short-term in nature and completed as soon as practically possible. All construction activities followed best practise methods to reduce impacts upon the environment and landscape of the Site.

### 11.5.3 Operational Phase Effects

#### 11.5.3.1 Landscape Effects (Operational Phase)

The landscape of the Site has undergone a change in character from its original condition (as an area of degraded peat and forestry) by the introduction of the Subject Development. The Subject Development includes wind farm access roads, peat cells, borrow pits etc. As stated in Section 11.3.2.2, the landscape of the Site was deemed to be 'Low'. The magnitude of change was deemed to be 'Moderate' due to the highly localised setting of the Subject Development. 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a highly localised 'Moderate' magnitude of change amounts to long-term landscape effects of 'Slight' significance upon the physical fabric of the landscape of the Site.

Compared to the character of the Site as a wind farm under construction, the change in character is 'Negligible'.

#### 11.5.3.1.1 Landscape Character Areas

The landscape character areas where the Subject Development is located (Donegal LCA 38, LCA 40 and LCA 41) will undergo a change in the landscape character of these LCAs. The Subject Development will not change the landscape character of these LCAs in any way different from how they would have been changed from the Permitted Development.

Table 11-12 Landscape Character Effects of LCAs within the LVIA Study Area.

LCA	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Residual Effect
LCA 38 - Bluestack	Low	Negligible	Imperceptible
LCA 40 - Cashelnavern Border & Uplands	Low	Negligible	Imperceptible
LCA 41 - Croaghnameal Border & Uplands	Low	Negligible	Imperceptible

### 11.5.3.1.2 Cumulative Landscape Effects

Due to the localised nature of the Subject Development, there will be no interaction between the Subject Development and other developments outside the Site. As discussed throughout the Landscape Baseline in Section 11.3, the Subject Development is located within a permitted wind farm site currently under construction. There will be no significant cumulative effects as a result of the Subject Development in combination with the existing and permitted wind farm infrastructure. The components of the Subject Development were considered cumulatively with a peat slide event that occurred in November 2020 and subsequent consequential remediation works. This peat slide and the Subject Development contribute direct cumulative effects on the landscape of Meenbog Wind Farm. Due to the location of the peat slide within the Meenbog Wind Farm, cumulative landscape effects between the Subject Development and the peat slide will be highly localised, and no cumulative landscape effects will occur outside the Site as a result of the Subject Development. There will be no cumulative effects as a result of the Subject Development with any other existing permitted, or proposed projects in the LVIA Study Area.

### 11.5.3.2 Visual Effects (Operational Phase)

As discussed in Section 11.4 - *Visual Baseline*, no visual receptors within the public realm will have visibility of the Subject Development. All visual effects will be highly localised to the immediate setting of the individual deviation forming part of the Subject Development and within the Site boundary. Table 11-13 below discusses the visual effects of the Subject Development on its immediate setting.

No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of the Subject development. The Subject Development will be most visible within their immediate surroundings; therefore, any landscape and visual effects will be very localised. Visual receptors will be limited to those within the Site in close proximity to each deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'. Overall, the Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. As the Subject Development is surrounded by vegetation, the deviations will not be visible to receptors outside of the immediate setting. A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.

Table 11-13 Visual Assessment Summary

No.	Deviation Description	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Residual Effect
1	Entrance road off N15 (the hairpin bend)	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. This entrance road is located at approximately 167m above ordance datum. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
2	Peat cell southeast of substation	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of Change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
3	T10 access road:	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. This access road is a flat feature located at approximately 217m above ordance datum. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
4	Borrow Pit southwest of T12	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Slight'. It will be visible within its immediate setting. Surrounded by vegetation, the borrow pit will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Slight' magnitude of change amounts to 'Not Significant' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
5	T12 access road	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. This access road is a flat feature,	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to

No.	Deviation Description	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Residual Effect
		receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	surrounded by vegetation and will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
6	Peat containment berm near T8	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of Change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
7	T8 access road (see 7a further above for peat containment berm)	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of Change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
8	T1 access road	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. This access road is a flat feature, surrounded by vegetation and will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
9	T2 access road	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation.

No.	Deviation Description	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Residual Effect
				There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
10	T4 access road	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
11	Borrow pit (BP2) south of T15	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Slight'. This is one of the larger deviations within the Subject Development. It will be visible within its immediate setting. Surrounded by vegetation, the burrow pit will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Slight' magnitude of change amounts to 'Not Significant' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
12	T15 hardstand and access road	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. The hardstand and access road are flat features, surrounded by vegetation and will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
13	T17 access road	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.

No.	Deviation Description	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Residual Effect
14	T13 road alignment (upgrade of existing forestry track)	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
15	Peat cells NW of T18	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of Change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
16	T14 turning head	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
17	Peat cells near T15	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of Change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
18	Peat cells near T17	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual	The Magnitude of Change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to

No.	Deviation Description	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Residual Effect
		receptors will be those within the site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
19	Layby south of T10 with welfare facilities	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
20	Layby northeast of T15	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
21	T19 access road	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. This access road is a flat feature, surrounded by vegetation and will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
22	T9 access road	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation.

No.	Deviation Description	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Residual Effect
				There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
23	Additional storage area and access road to T7	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of Change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
24	Roadside berms and settlement ponds	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation. Visual Receptor Sensitivity is deemed to be 'Low'.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Negligible'. Surrounded by vegetation, this deviation will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Negligible' magnitude of change amounts to 'Imperceptible' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.
25	Assessment of additional excavated borrow pit and peat storage cell at T-13	No sensitive receptors are located within the immediate setting of this deviation. Visual receptors will be those within the Site in close proximity to this deviation.	The Magnitude of change is deemed to be 'Slight'. This is one of the larger deviations within the Subject Development. It will be visible within its immediate setting. Surrounded by vegetation, the borrow pit will not be visible to receptors outside of its immediate setting.	A 'Low' sensitivity balanced with a 'Slight' magnitude of change amounts to 'Not Significant' residual effects on receptors within the immediate setting of the deviation. There will be no residual visual effects on receptors in the public realm.

#### 11.5.3.2.1 **Cumulative Visual Effects**

Due to the localised nature of the Subject Development, there will be no interaction between the Subject Development and other developments outside the Site. As discussed throughout the Visual Baseline in Section 11.4, the Subject Development is located within a wind farm currently under construction. There will be no significant cumulative effects as a result of the Subject Development in combination with the Permitted Development infrastructure. The components of the Subject Development were considered cumulatively with a peat slide event that occurred in November 2020 and subsequent consequential remediation works. Considering the very localised visibility of this peat slide and the very limited and localised visibility of the Subject Development itself, there are no significant cumulative visual effects. There will be no cumulative effects as a result of the Subject Development with any other existing permitted, or proposed projects in the LVIA Study Area.

### 11.6 **Conclusion**

This chapter assesses the likely significant landscape and visual impacts arising as a result of the Subject Development. The Subject Development is suitably sited and scaled within the landscape. Considering the limited visual exposure of the Subject Developments and limited number of sensitive landscape and visual receptors impacted within the LVIA Study Area, the Subject Development will not result in any negative landscape or visual effects.