



## **APPENDIX 14-2**

### **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT TABLES**

## **Appendix 14-2 Landscape Character Assessment Tables**

Proposed Clonberne  
Windfarm, Co. Galway




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# LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSEMENT TABLES

Galway LCU 5e – North River Clare Basin Unit	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCU	The proposed turbines are located within this LCU. This LCU also extends beyond the LVIA Study Area for effects on landscape character, extending 29km to the south of the nearest proposed turbine, and 27km to the west.
LCU Key Characteristics <i>(GCDP Appendix 4; Landscape Character Assessment)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; “Extensive, largely level plain with low enclosure.</li> <li>&gt; A long-settled working landscape of large regular stone-walled fields.</li> <li>&gt; Extensive areas of bog in east.</li> <li>&gt; Transition zone from bog areas to east.”</li> </ul>
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	This LCU is located within the landscape character type ‘Northern Galway Complex’ which has a rating of Low sensitivity in the GCDP, however it is noted in <i>Appendix 4 Landscape Character Assessment</i> that the “open countryside offers frequent extensive panoramic views from local high points.” The Wind Energy Strategy for County Galway designates large areas of ‘Acceptable in principle’ and ‘Open to Consideration’ in this LCU, including within the Wind Farm Site itself. Taking into consideration the designation within the GCDP, the landscape sensitivity is determined to be <b>Low</b> .
Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCU	As indicated by the ZTV, there is primarily full theoretical visibility within 5km of the nearest turbine. Beyond 5km, the majority of the LCU has theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines with some large patches of no theoretical visibility. Actual on the ground visibility, assessed during site visits determined that there would be more limited visibility in parts of the LCU beyond 5km from the proposed turbines, where the relatively flat topography takes advantage of vegetation screening in the landscape to limit views of the proposed turbines. While there will be locations from beyond 5km where the turbines will be visible, at that distance and within the flat landscape of the LCU, the turbine will appear as smaller background elements where views are available. Viewpoints 9, 15, 5, 6, 11, 10, 7, 8, 3, and 4 are located within this LCU.
Cumulative Effects	<p>The existing Cloonlusk turbines (2 no. in total) are located within this LCU, approx. 11.6 km from the nearest turbine of the Proposed Project. There are intermittent views of these turbines within parts of the LCU in close proximity (e.g. within approx. 3km of the Cloonlusk turbines).</p> <p>In addition, the permitted Cloonascragh Wind Turbine is located to the northeast of these turbines, located approximately 12.2km from the nearest turbine of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>The topography in this LCU is gently undulating, with small intervening hills and rises in elevations serving to restrict combined views of both wind farms. The addition of the Proposed Project to this LCU in combination</p>

	<p>with the existing Cloonlusk turbines and the permitted Cloonascragh turbine, will not amount to Significant effects on landscape character. The scale of the LCU and the screening factors noted, including the distance between the two developments mean that wind turbines will not be a dominant feature of this LCU.</p> <p>The proposed (planning application not yet submitted) Cooloo Wind Farm is also located within this LCU. This proposal includes 9 no. turbines located approximately 5.4km south of the nearest turbine of the Proposed Project. In relation to the addition of the Proposed Project in an uncertain scenario where the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm is submitted to planning, consented, and constructed, there are likely to be some cumulative effects on landscape character arising. This includes views of turbines becoming common over an area including the area in proximity (within 5km) to the Wind Farm Site combined with views in the area surrounding the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm, which is located between 5-9km south of the nearest turbine of the Proposed Project. This will result in a larger area within this part of the LCU where turbines will be visible than if one of these developments were constructed by themselves. This larger cumulative area of visibility of turbines (including the Proposed Project and the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm) will be located in the northeastern part of this LCU. These cumulative effects in an uncertain scenario have been incorporated into the Magnitude of Change determination below.</p> <p>There are no Significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of this LCA. The cumulative effects on landscape character that do arise have been incorporated into the determination of the magnitude of change made below.</p>
<p><b>Magnitude of Change</b>  <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 13-1)</i></p>	<p><b>Substantial:</b> <i>“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.”</i></p>
<p><b>Significance of Effect</b></p>	<p><b>Low x Substantial = Minor/Minor = Moderate (EPA, 2022)</b>  <i>“An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends”</i></p>
<p><b>Mitigation Factors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are large parts of this LCU where there will be no visibility of the Proposed Project, or where the Proposed Project will be seen as a small background feature, and so the highest effects on landscape character will be localised to parts of the LCU in close proximity to the site (i.e. within 5km of the site).</li> <li>➤ The site of the Proposed Project is located within a large area of cutover bog and commercial forestry within this LCU, providing separation from sensitive landscape features (e.g. Levally Lough).</li> <li>➤ The Proposed Project site is located in the east of this LCU which is noted to have extensive areas of bog to the east. Within the overall LCU, the areas of cutover bogland are the least sensitive parts of the LCU in relation to wind farm development. The Proposed Project is sited within the least sensitive part of the overall LCU.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Residual Effect (incl. mitigating factors)</b></p>	<p><b>Moderate (EPA, 2022)</b>  <i>“An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends”</i></p>

Galway LCU 5c – Springfield Basin Unit	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCU	The EIAR Site Boundary overlaps with this LCU. At its closest point, this LCU is located 0.1km north of the nearest proposed turbine, T01.
<b>LCU Key Characteristics</b>  <i>(GCDP Appendix 4; Landscape Character Assessment)</i>	 <i>“Working landscape of medium-large regular fields interspersed with lakes, large bogs and forestry.”</i>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	This LCU is located within the landscape character type ‘Northern Galway Complex’ which has a rating of Low sensitivity in the GCDP, however it is noted in <i>Appendix 4 Landscape Character Assessment</i> that the <i>“open countryside offers frequent extensive panoramic views from local high points.”</i> The Wind Energy Strategy for County Galway designates large areas of ‘Acceptable in principle’ and ‘Open to Consideration’ in this LCU. Taking into consideration the designations within the GCDP, the landscape sensitivity is determined to be <b>Low</b> .
<b>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCU</b>	As indicated in the ZTV, there is primarily full theoretical visibility within 5km of the nearest turbine. The majority of the area within 10km of the nearest turbine has full theoretical visibility with patches of no theoretical visibility. The spread of theoretical visibility decreases further from the site, with large patches of no theoretical visibility between 10-15k from the nearest proposed turbine, as a result of larger undulations and distance from the site. Actual on the ground visibility, assessed during site visits determined that there would be more limited visibility in parts of the LCU beyond 5km from the proposed turbines, where the relatively flat topography takes advantage of vegetation screening in the landscape to limit views of the proposed turbines. While there will be locations from beyond 5km where the turbines will be visible, at that distance and within the flat landscape of the LCU, the turbine will appear as smaller background elements where views are available. Viewpoints 13, 1 and 12 are located within this LCU.
<b>Cumulative Effects</b>	The permitted Clooncon East turbine is located within this LCU, located approximately 11.3km northeast of the nearest proposed turbine (T2) of the Proposed Project. The topography in this LCU is gently undulating, with small intervening hills and rises in elevations serving to restrict combined views of both wind farms. The addition of the Proposed Project adjacent to the border of this LCU in combination with the permitted Clooncon East turbine, will not amount to Significant effects on landscape character. The scale of the LCU and the screening factors noted, including the distance between the two developments mean that wind turbines will not be a dominant feature of this LCU.

	<p>The proposed (planning application not yet submitted) Cooloo Wind Farm is located 6.7km from this LCU at its closest point. There may be some intermittent long-range views of these turbines from local high points within this LCU, although combined views of the Proposed Project and the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm from this LCU will be sparse, and background views of these turbines in combination from a limited number of locations will not amount to Significant effects on landscape character.</p> <p>There are no Significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of this LCA. The cumulative effects on landscape character that do arise have been incorporated into the determination of the magnitude of change made below.</p>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b> <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 13-1)</i>	<b>Moderate:</b> <i>“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.”</i>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Low x Moderate = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities”</i>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are large parts of this LCU where there will be no visibility of the Proposed Project, or where the Proposed Project will be seen as a small background feature, and so the highest effects on landscape character will be localised to parts of the LCU in close proximity to the site (i.e. within 5km of the site).</li> </ul>
<b>Residual Effect (incl. mitigating factors)</b>	<b>Slight (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities”</i>

<b>Galway LCU 5b – Castlegar Basin</b>	
<b>Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCU</b>	At its closest point, this LCU is located approximately 4km east of the nearest proposed turbine, T05. This LCU extends beyond the LVIA Study Area for effects on landscape character, extending approximately 34km southeast from the nearest proposed turbine within the Wind Farm Site.
<b>LCU Key Characteristics</b> <i>(GCDP Appendix 4; Landscape Character Assessment)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>“Extensive, largely level plain with low enclosure.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>A long-settled working landscape of large regular fields with stone wall boundaries.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Enclosed by areas of bog”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm</b>	This LCU is located within the landscape character type ‘Northern Galway Complex’ which has a rating of Low sensitivity in the GCDP, however it is noted in <i>Appendix 4 Landscape Character Assessment</i> that the “open

<b>Development</b>	<p><i>countryside offers frequent extensive panoramic views from local high points.</i>”The Wind Energy Strategy for County Galway designates large areas of ‘Acceptable in principle’ and ‘Open to Consideration’ in this LCU. Taking into consideration the designation within the GCDP, the landscape sensitivity is determined to be <b>Low</b>.</p>
<b>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCU</b>	<p>As indicated on the ZTV, there are large area of full theoretical visibility within 10km of the nearest proposed turbine. Beyond 10km, the majority of the LCU has theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines with some larger patches of no theoretical visibility. Actual on the ground visibility, assessed during site visits, determined that there would be more limited visibility in parts of the LCU beyond 5km from the proposed turbines, where the relatively flat topography takes advantage of screening in the landscape to limit views of the proposed turbines. Considering the distance of the majority of this LCU from the Wind Farm Site, views of the proposed turbines will be background viewed, where the proposed turbines will be seen as small background features within views. Viewpoint 14 is located within this LCU.</p>
<b>Cumulative Effects</b>	<p>There are no existing, permitted or proposed windfarms located within this LCU. The proposed (planning application not yet submitted) Cooloo Wind Farm is located 2.3km west of the closest part of this LCU, with views of these proposed turbines likely to occur frequently from locations within 5km of these turbines from locations in this LCU. The turbines of the Proposed Project are located a larger distance from the border of the LCU than the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm, and there is a very small part of this LCU located within 5km of the Wind Farm Site. Considering the likely limited locations where views of the turbines of the Proposed Project will be visible, or where they will appear as more than small background features within views, there is limited potential for cumulative effects to arise as a result of the addition of the Proposed Project, in relation to the combined or in succession views of the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm and the Proposed Project.</p> <p>There are no Significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of this LCA. The cumulative effects on landscape character that do arise have been incorporated into the determination of the magnitude of change made below.</p>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b> <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 13-1)</i>	<p><b>Slight:</b> <i>“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.”</i></p>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<p><b>Low x Slight = Minor/Negligible = Not Significant (EPA, 2022)</b>  <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.”</i></p>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are large areas within this LCU of no theoretical visibility of the Proposed Project and visibility will be intermittent where it does occur.</li> <li>➤ Considering the distance of the majority of this LCU from the Wind Farm Site, views of the proposed turbines will be background viewed,</li> </ul>

	where the proposed turbines will be seen as small background features within views.
<b>Residual Effect (incl. mitigating factors)</b>	<b>Not Significant (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.”</i>

<b>Galway LCU 5d – Slieve Dart Unit</b>	
<b>Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCU</b>	This LCU is located approximately 6km northwest to the nearest proposed turbine, T03.
<b>LCU Key Characteristics</b>  <i>(GCDP Appendix 4; Landscape Character Assessment)</i>	➤ <i>“Complex zone of low hills, bogs, small lakes and complex and irregular field patterns”.</i>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	This LCU is located within the landscape character type ‘Northern Galway Complex’ which has a rating of Low sensitivity in the GCDP, however it is noted in <i>Appendix 4 Landscape Character Assessment</i> that the <i>“open countryside offers frequent extensive panoramic views from local high points.”</i> The Wind Energy Strategy for County Galway designates large areas of ‘Open to Consideration’ in this LCU. To the north of this LCU there are a number of elevated locations with long-range views to the south where visibility of the Proposed Project may occur. These locations, including Slieve Dart offer some recreational value this LCU. Taking into consideration the designations within the GCDP, the landscape sensitivity is determined to be <b>Medium</b> .
<b>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCU</b>	As indicated by the ZTV, there is primarily full theoretical visibility throughout this LCU. However, as a result of larger topographical undulations in this LCU there are also areas of no theoretical visibility created by topographical screening. Actual on the ground visibility, assessed during site visits determined that there would be more limited visibility in lower lying parts of the LCU, where distance and vegetative screening will result in more limited views of the Proposed Project. However, from a number of elevated locations within the LCU (i.e. Slieve Dart) there will be long-range views to the south, towards the Proposed Project. Viewpoint 2 is located within this LCU.
<b>Cumulative Effects</b>	There are no other existing or proposed turbines existing within this LCU. There may be some very infrequent background views of existing, permitted and proposed turbines located in other LCUs, however, considering the distances involved these will not give rise to Significant cumulative effects on landscape character. The cumulative effects on landscape character that do arise have been incorporated into the determination of the magnitude of change made below.



<b>Magnitude of Change</b> <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 13-1)</i>	<b>Slight:</b> <i>“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.”</i>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Medium x Slight = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities”</i>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	> Considering the distances involved, the vegetated landcover, and the large areas of topographical screening, the majority of views of the proposed turbines likely to arise in this LCU are at elevated locations.
<b>Residual Effect (incl. mitigating factors)</b>	<b>Slight (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities”</i>