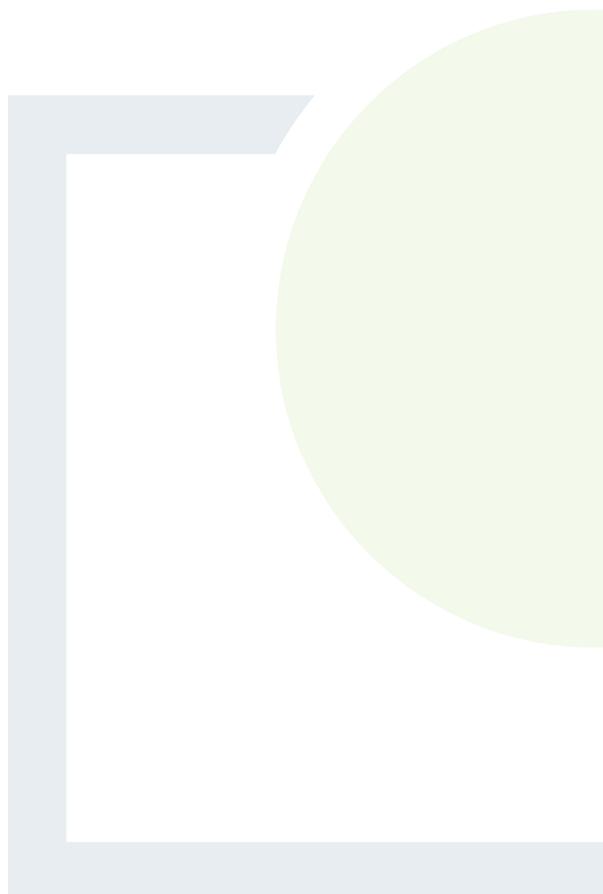




CONSULTANTS IN ENGINEERING,
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& PLANNING

APPENDIX 15.1

Visual Impact Assessment



Appendix 15.1

Appraisal of Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Degree of Associated within each Criterion

Strong association	Moderate association	Mild association	Negligible association

Receptor Sensitivity Criterion and Analysis at each Viewshed Reference Point (VRP)

Values associated with the view	VP1	VP2	VP3	VP4	VP5	VP6	VP7	VP8	VP9	VP10	VP11	VP12	VP13	VP14	VP15
Susceptibility of viewers to changes in views															
Recognised scenic value of the view															
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas															
Primary views from residences															
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)															
Viewer connection with the landscape															
Provision of vast, elevated panoramic views															
Sense of remoteness / tranquillity at the viewing location															
Degree of perceived naturalness															
Presence of striking or noteworthy features															
Sense of Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance															
Rarity or uniqueness of the view															
Integrity of the landscape character within the view															
Sense of place at the viewing location															
Sense of awe															
Overall sensitivity assessment	ML	ML	M	ML	ML	ML	ML	M	ML	ML	M	ML	ML	ML	ML

N = Negligible; L = low sensitivity; ML = medium-low sensitivity M = medium sensitivity; HM = High-medium sensitivity; H = high sensitivity; VH = very high sensitivity

Values associated with the view	VP16	VP17	VP18	VP19
Susceptibility of viewers to changes in views	■	■	■	■
Recognised scenic value of the view				■
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas	■			■
Primary views from residences			■	
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)	■	■	■	■
Viewer connection with the landscape	■	■	■	■
Provision of vast, elevated panoramic views	■		■	■
Sense of remoteness / tranquillity at the viewing location	■	■	■	■
Degree of perceived naturalness	■	■	■	■
Presence of striking or noteworthy features				■
Sense of Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance	■	■	■	■
Rarity or uniqueness of the view	■	■	■	■
Integrity of the landscape character within the view	■	■	■	■
Sense of place at the viewing location	■	■	■	■
Sense of awe				
Overall sensitivity assessment	M	ML	M	HM

N = Negligible; **L** = low sensitivity; **ML** = medium-low sensitivity **M** = medium sensitivity; **HM** = High-medium sensitivity; **H** = high sensitivity; **VH** = very high sensitivity

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP1	The Pastures housing development, Charleville	5.4km (T1)	SW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centres of population 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>By way of context, this location is from a marginally elevated, <i>cul de sac</i> housing development called The Pastures, on the north-western fringe of the town's development, whereas the town of Charleville is fractionally more low-lying.</p> <p>In this view, a foreground of a roadside and then pasture, gives way to tree-lined hedgerows, pylons and utility poles. Beyond this, a housing development is located, above which the low and partially tree-lined skyline of a low hill is visible. Two turbines (i.e. Rathnacally wind farm) can be clearly seen to the east (i.e. left) of that housing, whereas further west (i.e. right), two further turbines (i.e. Boorland wind farm) can be discerned at a greater distance.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>Located over 5km away, the blade tips of the proposed development will be substantially screened, and less noticeable than existing, neighbouring turbines while no proposed hubs will be visible. Only the blades of two of the six turbines are likely to be visible partially rotating above the distant rooflines, although when the trees are in leaf (i.e. April-October) this will be even less discernible. Thus, overall, the visual presence is deemed to be subdominant.</p> <p>Aesthetically, this view will be a slightly ambiguous view of two, partially-visible rotating blade sets above a distant skyline. However, such views will not be out of context given the adjacent turbines, and may be read from this location as an extension of the existing Rathnacally wind farm. Even if noticed, the proposal would not have a marked effect on the visual amenity of the scene.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Low	Slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP2	Dooley's Crossroads, Newtown Ballyhay	3.8km (T3)	W
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views; Amenity and heritage feature 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>This viewpoint is located outside a local, national school and along Kilmallock Cycle Hub Route 1; what is considered to be the most accessible 'gateway' to the Ballyhoura Mountains from the N20, Charleville or Buttevant.</p> <p>The foreground is one that is rather busy for the rural context, particularly with a strong vertical imprint from roadside utility poles. In this view the school buildings are located to the north (i.e. right) of the road, whereas to the south a field of pasture is visually abutted by dense, mature trees lines along what is the Cork-Dublin Intercity rail line. Consequently, views in a westward direction are curtailed by these thick, mature treelines.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>Above and through the bare, winter vegetation of the aforementioned treelines, all six of the proposed turbines will have the capacity to be discerned from this location. However, only three of the blade sets will rotate partially above the treelines, thereby being more noticeable than the other three turbines will be. However, in terms of noticeability, the proposal is substantially screened and modest in scale, whose visual presence is accordingly deemed to be subdominant.</p> <p>Aesthetically, this view will be a somewhat slightly ambiguous view of the proposed blade sets, as none will rotate clearly above the treeline and some will only be partially discernible between bare branches (and not visible when the trees are in-leaf). However, the proposed development will not be out of context with this productive rural setting, in which wind turbines are a common feature. In addition, the muscular vertical imprint of the foreground utility poles will help temper the visual impact of the proposed turbines.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Low	Slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP3	Ballyhoura Way at Ballyhoura Hills	8.0km (T3)	W
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity and heritage feature 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium		
Existing View	<p>The Ballyhoura Mountains are a well-used resource for the wider community, particularly for walking/trekking and mountain biking. In addition, it is nationally renowned for hosting the premier Mountain biking trails in the country, which attracts visitors from afar. The Ballyhouras also have two windfarms along their western end (i.e. near this location): the Buttevant wind farm and the Castlepook wind farm, containing 20 turbines between them.</p> <p>The context of this location is from a track that both the Ballyhoura Way (National Way Marked Trail) and the Ballinaboola Loop (National Loop Walk) align. An adjacent area of relatively recent clear felling allows for views in the direction of the site, largely not attainable elsewhere along this hill range, owing to more mature conifer forestry blocks. The foreground to mid-distance in this scene is comprised of swathes of young conifer plantations, with more distant lowlands visible beyond. Two turbines (i.e. Rathnacally wind farm) can be clearly seen, whereas further west (i.e. left), two further turbines (i.e. Boorland wind farm) can be discerned.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>All six proposed turbines will be fully visible from this location, at a distance of 8km. From this elevated angle, these will be fully revealed but as a modest-scale background feature, in combination with multiple other turbines in many directions. While noticeable, the proposed development will be one of several elements - including four other wind farms - visible from this panoramic setting. Thus, its visual presence is deemed to be sub-dominant.</p> <p>Aesthetically, this will be a clear and legible view of the proposed turbines that will reveal a loose, staggered linear layout appropriate to the context. The regular spacing of the proposed turbines will present as a simple and obvious rhythm. The proposed development will be compatible with this progressive rural setting, where wind turbines are a common feature. Even when seen, the proposal would not have a patent effect on the visual amenity of the scene.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Low	Slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP4	N20 at Shinanagh Bridge	3.3km (T6)	NW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major route • Local community views • Amenity and heritage feature 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>Set within the central study area, this marginally elevated section of the N20, linking Charleville-Mallow and Limerick City-Cork City, is where it crosses over the Dublin-Cork rail line, which allows for considerably more elevated views in the broader directions of the site than is otherwise attainable from this busy National road. This location is also adjacent to where the Ballyhoura Way (National Way Marked Trail), where it crosses the N20. Upon a lower elevation, this busy foreground reveals a car park beside a residence, beyond which the pastoral patchwork of the study area can be seen. There is a strong vertical imprint present, owing to the car park lighting poles and utility poles. Stacked, mature hedgerows obscure much of the more distant views, although the ridgeline of a notably low distant hill can be seen. In the extreme north (i.e. right) of this vista, one existing turbine from the Rathnacally Wind Farm is visible, in a setting in which wind energy infrastructure is a regular, well-established feature.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>Gathered to either side of a foreground utility pole, and at a distance of over 3km, three of the proposed turbines will be noticeable from this elevated location, while the blade sets of a fourth will be discernible through bare winter branches of a nearby tree. This trio of partially visible turbines (i.e. their hubs are mostly obscured, while their blade sets are partially so) will present at a modest but manifest scale, but will be largely seen as a background feature to a complex foreground. Thus, the visual presence of the proposal is deemed to be sub-dominant.</p> <p>In terms of aesthetics, the proposal will present with a degree of visual clutter at this precise location, owing to the confluence of utility poles and lighting poles, but this will otherwise be a clear and legible view of turbines rising out of background farmland. In addition, the proposed development will be attuned to this productive, anthropocentric setting, where wind turbines are a well-worn feature. Even when seen, the proposal would not have a striking impact upon the visual amenity of the scene.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium low	Low	Slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP5	Ballyhoura Way north of Churchtown	2.6km (T6)	N
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views Amenity and heritage feature 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>By way of context, this location is approx. 800m north of Churchtown town centre. However, no clear views in the direction of the site were apparent from the public sphere in that town. Consequently, this location was selected as it's closer to the site, as well as being along the Ballyhoura Way, while being moderately developed (i.e. more than 10 residences within approx. 200m of this location). Located upon a lowland sweep less than 3km from the nearest proposed turbine, a foreground, large field of pasture is evident, as well as roadside residences and multiple utility poles along a local road leading towards the site. More distantly, tall treelines obscure more distant views in the direction of the site.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>Owing to the aforementioned trees, the proposed development will be substantially screened from this location. However, one proposed turbine will be more visible between and above intervening trees and would be at a noticeable scale. Less apparent will be the blade sets of a further three turbines that will be partially visible rotating behind bare winter vegetation, although these are unlikely to be visible when the trees are in-leaf. The proposal will present as one of several other turbines visible from this broad view. Accordingly, the visual presence is deemed to be Sub-dominant.</p> <p>In terms of aesthetics, this will be a cluttered and slightly ambiguous view of turbines in alignment with the road and its residences. The proposed wind farm, as opposed to individual turbines, will be more discernible than visible, owing to the patchy inconsistency of visibility of the proposed turbines in relation to intervening treelines. Furthermore, visibility of the scene will be notably less attainable from April-October, when the trees are in leaf.</p> <p>On balance, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium low	Low	Slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP6	Residences on local road southeast of site	946m (T6)	N
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>Beside and near this location, several residences are perched upon this low hillside to avail of rural views to the south (i.e. the opposite direction to the site). For the most part, medium-height roadside vegetation curtails views in the direction of the site, which is less than 1km from the location of the nearest turbine. Thus, owing to the relative proximity of the site, this location was selected owing to this cut/maintained roadside hedge presenting with the best possibility of views in the direction of the site.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>The blade tips of all the proposed turbines, along with the upper level of the proposed telecommunications mast, will have the potential to be seen from this location, to varying degrees, although only one hub is likely to be seen. While this will be an oblique angle to road users, that will not be the case for local residents, albeit those resident's primary views will continue to be those out to the south. While the proposal will be substantially screened, the elements visible will be large scale moving components less than 1km away that will likely draw attention to themselves. On balance, the visual presence is deemed to be co-dominant.</p> <p>Aesthetically, there will be some contextual confusion in this vista that will arise from large and relatively close turbines blades rotating above the foreground hedge. The visual context will result in the landscape setting in which the turbines will be anchored in not being visible. Furthermore, there will be turbine clutter to the right (i.e. east) of this scene, which will likely lead to some visual disharmony.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Medium.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Medium	Moderate-slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP7	L1322 at Coolcaum townland	746m (T3)	SW/W/NW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>A roadside field entrance along a local road only allows for this view in the direction of site. However, for the most part along this road, which angles for some distance within 1km of the nearest proposed turbines, views in the direction of the site are impeded by roadside vegetation. In this scene, behind/over/through a medium-height roadside hedgerow, a relatively large and flat pastoral field is evident. Relatively low, stacked hedgerows/ treelines extend beyond it, while more to the north (i.e. right) of the scene, one of the existing turbines from the Rathnacally wind farm is visible</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>This will present as a clear and close view of all the proposed turbines, owing to the absence of any effective roadside or intervening vegetative screening. While conspicuous in its proximity and scale, the proposal will not be spatially dominant. Be that as it may, the proposal will be deemed to have a dominant visual presence</p> <p>Aesthetically, the proposal will be a highly legible and declarative view of a wind farm, but one that will not be over-scaled relative to the underlying terrain and prevailing landcover pattern. One set of overlapping turbines at this precise location will be visible, but this will alter with any movement by road users along this road and there will be a clear scale differential/spatial separation between those turbines (i.e. these turbines will be overlapping, rather than stacked).</p> <p>On balance of these factors, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be High-medium</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	High-medium	Moderate

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP8	Cooline Cemetery, Cooliney townland	1.1km (T1)	SW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Community views Amenity & Heritage feature 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium		
Existing View	<p>This small cemetery dates to the 13th Century, and features the ruins of a church where religious services ceased in the 18th Century, but burials appear to have been maintained to the present day (i.e. recently deceased community members evident on gravestones). Views in the direction of the site are not attainable from within the actual cemetery. However, a small, narrow pedestrian laneway connecting the road to the cemetery has irregular vegetation aligning it and it is at one such opening in the vegetation where this location has been identified. Through the landside vegetation, a pastoral field is apparent, beyond which are a treeline and a rural residence. Little can be discerned beyond the mid-distance, only minute glimpse of an extensive rural sphere beyond.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>All but one of the proposed turbines will be screened from this location. However, movement of a partially visible single set of rotating blades 1.1km away may draw some attention, although this will be at an obscured/unlikely viewing angle to visitors to the cemetery walking along this laneway. Overall, the visual presence of the proposed development is deemed to be minimal.</p> <p>Owing to the heavy degree of clutter created by intervening vegetation, there will be a slight degree of ambiguity in relation to the nature and context of the development. However, the proposal may not be noticed by a casual observer and even if noticed, would not detract from the visual amenity of this busy, shortened scene.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low-negligible.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP9	Local residences at Fiddane townland	846km (T2)	S/SW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>A roadside field entrance only permits this view in the direction of the site. However, for the most part along this road, which angles at times within 900m north of the nearest proposed turbines, views in the direction of the site are impeded by roadside vegetation. In this scene, a tree-lined field boundary to the east (i.e. left) of the view is apparent, as is relatively open landscape elsewhere in the vista. From this marginally elevated location in relation to the site, views of the site are widely attainable, including the tall, thin telecommunication tower within it.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>This scene is principally one of two halves. To the east, the aforementioned tree-lined field boundary will partially screen four of the proposed turbines, to varying degrees. On the western side of the view, there will be an unambiguous view of two turbines above low vegetation, rotating clear of the skyline; a turbine that will tend to highlight the location of the other proposed turbines amongst the trees. Despite the varying levels to which each turbine will be screened, the presence of these large moving elements rotating less than 900m away, in tandem with a tall (stationary) telecommunications tower, will result in the visual presence being Dominant to Co-dominant.</p> <p>In terms of aesthetics, there will be ambiguity and clutter associated with this close view of moving blade sets through/above the aforementioned treeline. This will continually modify with any movement by road users along this road and there will be a perceptible scale differential/spatial separation between the turbines. The proposed layout may appear discordant from this exact location, but not spatially dominant or over-scaled relative to the underlying landform. In addition, such field entrance views tend to be momentary for most road users, while at an oblique angle to the road. Be that as it may, that will not be the case for most residents near this location.</p> <p>On balance, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Medium.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Medium	Moderate

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP10	Local residences at Cloonkeen townland	1.1km (T4)	SW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Community views 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>This view is permitted by an approx. 10m-wide field entrance off this relatively quiet local road, and at a location that is marginally elevated in relation to the site. This results in relatively extensive and/or unimpeded views of most of the site, little more than 1km from the nearest proposed turbine. However, mostly along this road, dense roadside vegetation curtails views in the direction of the site. In the foreground, a pastoral field, an agricultural laneway and a two-storey residence are evident sloping down towards lower ground. A darker-hued, bog-like hollow can be perceived in the distance, which marks part of the site, upon which a tall thin telecommunications tower is discernible.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>The proposal will present as an unambiguous view of a wind farm just over 1km from this roadside, visible across a darker-hued, bog-like hollow. It will be a prominent and noticeable middle ground feature of a vast sweeping view, and such large, moving elements near to here will draw attention to themselves. While it will introduce a much higher intensity of built development into this scene, the proposed turbines will not be spatially overbearing in this downhill view. Be that as it may, the visual presence is deemed to be dominant.</p> <p>Aesthetically, this will be a clear and legible view of the proposed turbines and a tall, thin proposed telecommunications mast, in a setting that can accommodate the extent of the scheme and height of turbines, despite a minor degree of scale disparity with the foreground dwelling and one instance of turbine overlap. The proposal will be an important part of the available vista and will be one of the most noticeable elements in it, appreciably reducing the visual amenity of the scene.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be High-medium.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	High-medium	Moderate

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP11	Cemetery at Killabraham South townland	2.9km (T4)	E
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Community views Amenity & Heritage feature 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium		
Existing View	<p>This location is distinctively elevated in relation to the site, which lies less than 3km east of this small local cemetery, where burials appear to have been maintained to the present day (i.e. recently deceased community members evident on gravestones). Unlike most locations along the roads in the central study area, the lack of any foreground vegetation surrounding this cemetery does not obscure views in the direction of the site but allows for commanding views across the central study area and beyond, for upwards of 180 degrees. However, it is worth noting that roadside views in the direction of the site are very challenging to attain, owing to a mid-height roadside hedgerow. To the far east (i.e. left) of the scene, the two turbines from the Rathnacally wind farm are evident.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>The proposal will present at a modest but noticeable scale, offering clear and full visibility of the proposed turbines from this uphill locale. It will be a readily noticeable element in this vista, albeit in the context of a broad, sweeping vista. Thus, the visual presence of the proposal is deemed to be co-dominant.</p> <p>In terms of aesthetics, there will be a clear and legible view of the proposed wind farm from this location. There will be a minor overlap of turbine pairs, albeit with spatial separation between them. It will not be spatially dominant or over-scaled, relative to the underlying landform in this broad, productive landscape where wind turbines are a common feature.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Medium-low</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Medium-low	Moderate-slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP12	Dromina GAA club, Dromina	4.7km (T4)	E/SE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Community views • Amenity & Heritage feature • Centres of population 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>At the fringes of the central study area, this location is at the GAA grounds of the small village of Dromina. There is no potential of views of the proposed turbines from within most of the village, apart from isolated micro-locales such as these GAA club grounds. Beyond the Gaelic grounds, a low hill with strong treelines obscured views in the direction of the site. Please note: this location is at the top of embankment for would-be supporters and, therefore, represents the worst of all worst case scenarios of potential views of the proposed wind farms from Dromina.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>Over 4.5km away, the blade tips of one turbine will be discernible from this location, though very unlikely to be noticed. Even if spotted, the proposal will have no impact upon the visual amenity of the scene.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Negligible.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium low	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP13	Housing development, Buttevant	8.2km (T6)	NW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre of population 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>The context of this view is from marginally elevated terrain to the west of Buttevant town centre, at the most northern point (i.e. 'dead end' of a <i>cul de sac</i> housing development). In that regards, it represents the most likely unimpeded views, from the public sphere, in the direction of the site from Buttevant. To the northeast of this vista, the town's development can be easily seen, while otherwise sweeping pastoral fields and thick, tree-clad field boundaries can be seen. A distant turbine from the Rathnacally wind farm is discernible on the skyline.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>To the northwest, partially above and partially between intervening treetops, the rotating blade tips of upwards of the three turbines will be partially visible, over 8km away. Although substantially screened, such moving blade sets amongst skyline elements may draw some attention from the onlooker. Overall, the visual presence is deemed to be sub-dominant to Minimal.</p> <p>Aesthetically, this view will present as a slightly ambiguous scenario, owing to blade tips rotating on the skyline amongst treetops, as there will be no visual context of those turbines' landscape positional context. Even if seen from this location, the proposal will have no material impact upon the inherent visual amenity, in a vista already informed by wind energy infrastructure.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low-negligible</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium low	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP14	R578 at Knockilly townland	13.5km (T4)	NE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major route 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	<p>Outside the central study area, unimpeded views in the direction of the site are very challenging to attain in the south-western quadrant of the wider study area, owing to terrain combining with tall/thick/densely-vegetated roadside hedgerows. This location along the R578, which connects the village of Dromina with the town of Newmarket, is reflective of such dense vegetative roadside screening; in what is one of few sections of this road where theoretical visibility of the proposed development (i.e. in a bare ground scenario) is attainable.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>Owing to the aforementioned tall/thick/densely-vegetated roadside hedgerows, no views of the proposed development will be attainable from this location.</p> <p>Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Negligible.</p>		
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.</p>		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP15	N20 at Baltydaniel West townland	14.4 km (T6)	NW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major route 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	This busy section of the N20, between Buttevant and Mallow, allows for theoretical views (i.e. in a bare ground scenario) in the direction of the site for road users travelling north, albeit more than 10km from the site. However, robust roadside vegetation tends to curtail views in the direction of the site along this heavily used National Road.		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	Owing to the aforementioned robust roadside vegetation, no views of the proposed development will be attainable from this location. As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Negligible .		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP16	Doneraile Estate, Doneraile	13.4km (T6)	NW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage & Amenity feature; Centre of population 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium		
Existing View	The context of this view is that of the stately and aesthetic Doneraile Estate, which aligns the northern side of the town of Doneraile and is set on the banks of the Awbeg river. The estate is, in effect, a well-managed public parkland under the stewardship of the OPW and used widely by the local community, in particular. The recently restored Doneraile Court dates from the 1720s, and is also open to the public. As with so many intact historical estates of that period, a thick (i.e. 50-100m) band of mature woodland borders the parkland, abutting the estate's boundary walls; mature trees that tend to obscure more distant views.		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	Owing to the aforementioned band of mature woodland, no views of the proposed development will be attainable from this location. As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Negligible .		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP17	N20 at Ballyfookeen townland, Co. Limerick	12.8km (T1)	S/SE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major route 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-Low		
Existing View	This busy section of the N20, between Charleville and Limerick City, allows for theoretical views (i.e. in a bare ground scenario) in the direction of the site for road users travelling south, albeit more than 10km from the site. However, robust roadside vegetation tends to curtail views in the direction of the site along this heavily used National Road.		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	Owing to the aforementioned robust roadside vegetation, no views of the proposed development will be attainable from this location. As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Negligible .		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP18	Elevated road at Gortroe Townland	15.3km (T2)	SE
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevated residential views 		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium		
Existing View	<p>An isolated hillside rises in the north-western quadrant of the study area, about the townlands of Gortroe and Corronoher, approx. 15km northwest of the site. Several elevated south-facing residences are located across this hillside, and the location of this viewpoint is set before the entrance to one. In addition, there are multiple stretches along this road where an absence of tall or mid-height roadside vegetation allows for distant views in the direction of the site. Several of the existing turbines within the central study area are faintly discernible from this location.</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>Along with several of the existing turbines within the central study area, some of the proposed turbines will be faintly discernible to the stationary observer (e.g. residents rather than road users) from this location. However, distance over scale combined with the resulting low visual contrast across more than 15km will result in a visual presence of Minimal.</p> <p>When visible, the proposal will present with an unambiguous layout rising above distant skyline. It is highly likely, however, that the proposed turbines will only be viewed in tandem with the adjacent (existing) turbines. In that regard, and from this considerable distance, the proposed development will not have material impact upon the visual amenity of the scene.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low-negligible</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP19	Lough Gur	27.4km (T1)	SW
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key view • Amenity and heritage feature 		
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium		
Existing View	<p>The Lough Gur complex is a site of international archaeological and cultural renowned, located in southern Co. Limerick. Although located approx. 27km from the nearest proposed turbine (and, therefore, approx. 7km outside the study area), it has been included in this Visual Impact Assessment out of an abundance of caution.</p> <p>The Lough Gur complex is centred on a shallow, horseshoe shape at the base of Knockadoon Hill, with a lakeside visitor centre, car park. However, the largest stone circle in Ireland, and accompanying dolmen and the remains of stone age houses, is located to the north of the lake. Closer to the lake there is also a (Castle) Tower House and the ruins of a Norman Castle (Black Castle). The lake and the surrounding area is known to be one of Ireland's most important archaeological sites, with humans having lived here continuously since Neolithic times (i.e. the last 5000-6000 years).</p> <p>A short lakeside walk terminates with a short, steep walk up a wooded hillside that looks down over the lake. From this viewing location (i.e. the location of this viewpoint), beside some benches, distant views in the direction of the site can be availed. However, it is worth noting that this elevated location - only attained at the end of this pathway - is the only section of the complex that is accessible to the public, which experiences potential visibility of the proposed development (i.e. even in a bare ground scenario, the other elements and areas of the Lough Gur complex will experience not potential views of the proposed turbines).</p>		
Visual Impact of proposed wind farm	<p>Along with some existing turbines within the central study area, some of the proposed turbines will be faintly discernible to the stationary observer from this location. However, distance over scale, the resulting low visual contrast across more than 27km and an engaging lower fore-to-middle ground will mean the proposed development is unlikely to be noticed. Thus, its visual presence is deemed to be Minimal.</p> <p>Where and when visible, the proposed development will present with an unambiguous layout rising above a much distant skyline. However, it will remain very much a far-flung feature of this rural context that will be barely and infrequently visible.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Low-negligible.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined at Section 15.2 the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	High-medium	Low-negligible	Imperceptible



**FEHILY
TIMONEY**

**CONSULTANTS IN ENGINEERING,
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
& PLANNING**

APPENDIX 15.2

LVIA Maps



LVIA viewpoint locations selected for the Annagh Wind Farm project

