13.5 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 ZTV mapping as a tool to determine where no on-site visibility appraisals are required. However, as the turbines relating to the Proposed Development exist within the existing landscape, the focus of this section is to determine the extent to which the existing turbines are visible from visual receptors in the LVIA Study Area as determined from on-site visibility appraisals. An outcome of the visual baseline exercise is to identify the 5 no. representative viewpoints for inclusion in the Volume 2 Visualisation Booklet which are used as part of the visual impact assessment.

13.5.1 Visibility Appraisal

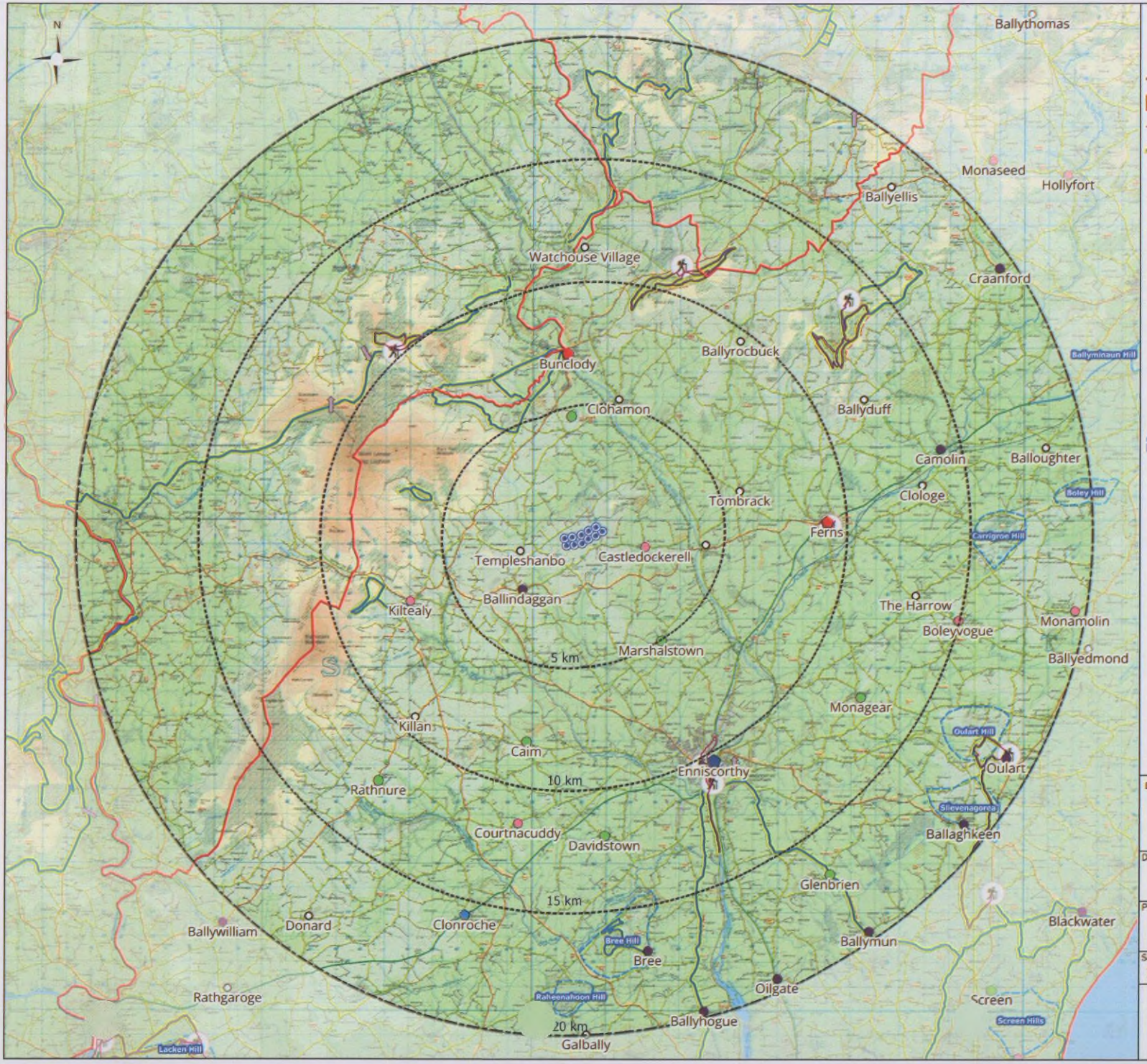
This section of the LVIA chapter describes the views of the Proposed Development from the surrounding landscape that are available as determined from a site visit conducted in November 2023. Particular focus is given to the views from roads, houses, and areas of amenity value within the LVIA Study Area.

13.5.1.1 Visual Receptors

The main purpose of establishing the visual baseline is to identify the key sensitive visual receptors that were assessed on site, where ZTV indicated the existing turbines would be theoretically visible and which receptors should be considered for viewpoint selection. Viewpoints are locations from which visual effects are assessed using photographic visualisations (See Section 13-1 – LVIA Methodology). To this end, the following visual receptors have been identified within the LVIA Study Area:

- Transport Routes – R745 Regional Road, N80 National Road, N30 National Road, R702 Regional Road, R746 Regional Road
- Settlements – Marshalltown, Castledockrell, Kilmyshall, Templeshanbo, Ballindaggan.
- Residential Receptors in close proximity
- Distinctive Landscapes – Oulart Hill and Vinegar Hill

These visual receptors are identified in the visual baseline and ZTV maps below (Figure 13-13) and are discussed under the relevant heading. During a site visit conducted in November 2023, the likely visibility of the existing turbines was appraised from receptors where the ZTV has indicated theoretical visibility.



Map Legend

- Proposed Development Turbines
- LVIA Study Area
- County Borders
- Co. Wexford Walking Trails
- Way Marked Walking Trails
- OSi Viewing Points

Wexford Settlement Hierarchy

- Key Towns
- Large Towns
- Service Settlements
- Strategic Settlements
- Large Villages
- Small Villages Category 1
- Small Villages Category 2
- Rural Nodes

Co. Wexford Landscape Character Units

- Distinctive Landscapes

Drawing No.

Figure 13-12

Drawing Title

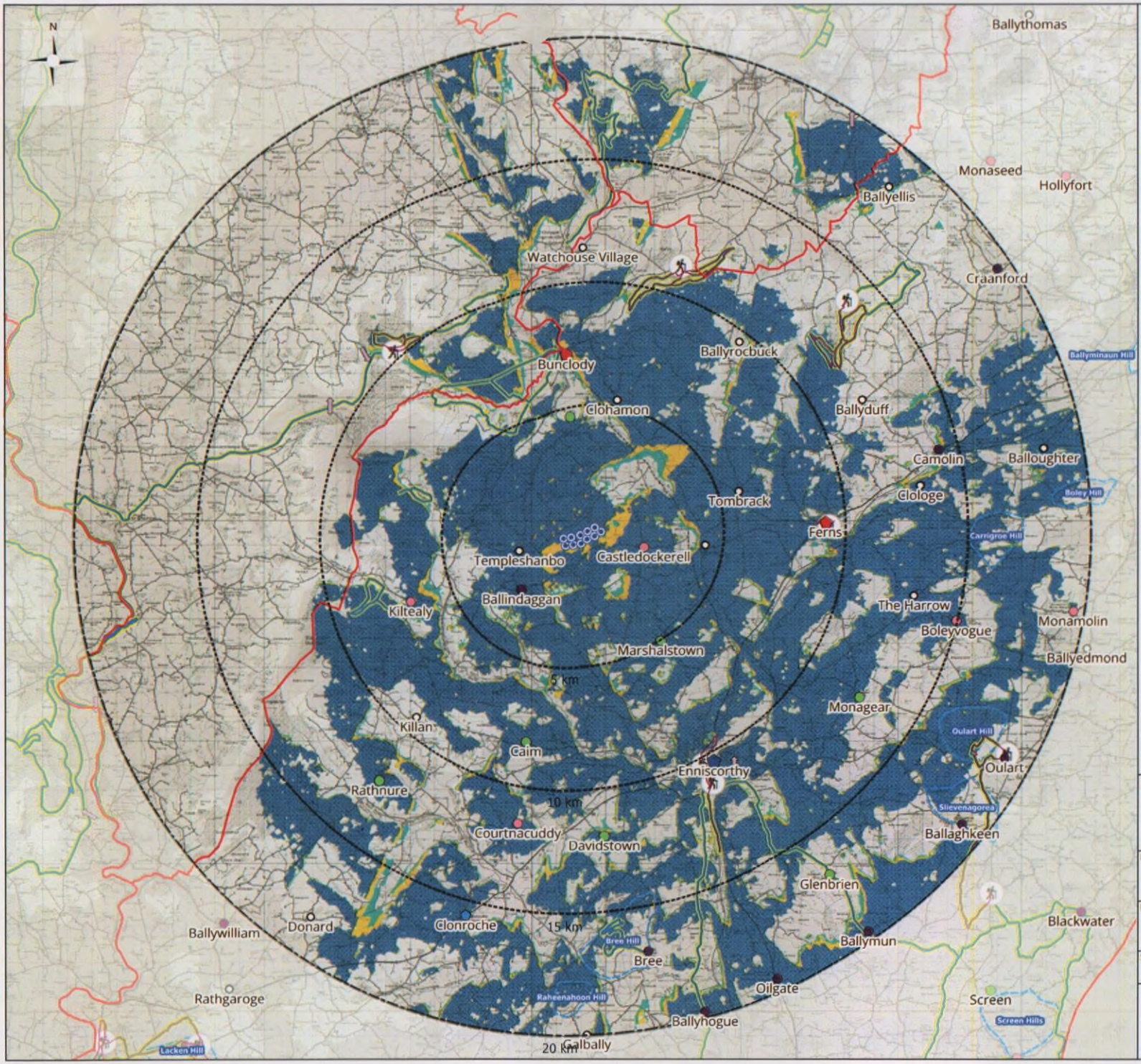
Visual Baseline

Project Title

Castledockrell Wind Farm Extension of Operational Life

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:150,000	210847	05.03.2025	SF	JW

MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants



Map Legend

- Proposed Development Turbines
- LVIA Study Area
- County Borders
- Co. Wexford Walking Trails
- Way Marked Walking Trails
- OSi Viewing Points

Wexford Settlement Hierarchy

- Key Towns
- Large Towns
- Service Settlements
- Strategic Settlements
- Large Villages
- Small Villages Category 1
- Small Villages Category 2
- Rural Nodes

Co. Wexford Landscape Character Units

- Distinctive Landscapes

Zone of Theoretical Visibilty

- 1-4 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 5-8 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 9-11 Turbines Theoretically Visible

Drawing No.

Figure 13-13

Drawing Title

Visual Baseline & ZTV

Project Title

Castledockrell Wind Farm Extension of Operational Life

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:150,000	210847	05.03.2025	SF	JW

MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants

13.5.2 Visibility of the Proposed Development – Views towards Castledockrell Wind Farm

There are very limited views towards the Proposed Development from outside 5km of the existing turbines due to the topographical and vegetation screening. Views of the existing turbines beyond 5km are limited to areas of high elevation. In close proximity, the existing turbines appear as a coherent wind farm within the landscape.

R746 Regional Road – North of the Site

Plate 13-6 below displays an open view from the R746 Regional Road facing southeast, within 5km of the Site. From this location, the existing turbines are visible, elevated on a hill, in the background of the view. The ZTV shows predominantly full theoretical visibility along most of this regional road, however, in reality, visibility of the Proposed Development is very limited on much of the road due to screening from roadside vegetation and hedgerows which exists year-round.

Plate 13-6 View from the R746

N80 National Road – Southeast of the Site

The N80 National Road is located approximately 4km from the Proposed Development site at its closest point. For much of this National Road, there is extremely limited to no visibility of the proposed development site. Plate 13-7 below shows what the turbines look like from an unobstructed section of the road, i.e. no vegetation or hedgerow. Vegetation, hedges, and trees can also be seen in the image limiting views towards the site from this location. From many areas within the LVIA Study Area, vegetation, treelines, and topography restrict views towards the site.

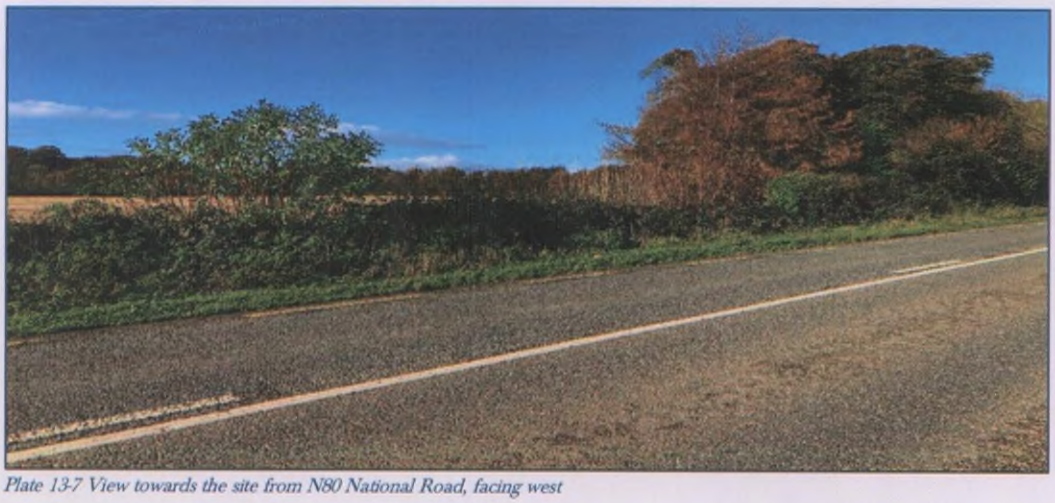


Plate 13-7 View towards the site from N80 National Road, facing west

N30 National Road/R702 Regional Road

Plate 13-8 below is taken from the R702/N80 National Road layby approximately 8km from the Proposed Development site at its closest point. The existing turbines can be seen in the centre left of the image, along a ridgeline. The photograph was captured from an elevated layby on the R702/N30, which allows the turbines to be visible. However, for the majority of both of these roads, the turbines are not visible due to screening by vegetation and topography.

Plate 13-8 View from R702/N80 facing North

R745 Regional Road

Plate 13-9 below shows a view northeast along the R745 Regional Road, approximately 2.2km form the nearest existing turbine. From this location the existing turbines are visible, elevated on a hill, in the background of the view. Visibility is limited along the majority of this road due to the hedgerows along the roadside which screen much of the turbines when travelling along this regional road.

Plate 13-9 View Northeast from the R745 Regional Road

Settlements

Marshalstown

Plate 13-10 below shows a northerly view from the townland of Marshalstown, approximately 5km from the Proposed Development site. The existing turbines are visible in the background centre of the image and appear coherent and evenly spaced along the ridgeline. From within the village of Marshalstown the visibility of the Proposed Development is very limited due to vegetation and topography screening.

Plate 13-10 View from Marshalstown looking north-west

Castledockrell

Plate 13-11 below shows an easterly view from the village of Castledockrell, approximately 1.5km from the closest turbine. The turbines can be seen throughout the centre of the image. Within the village of Castledockrell views are limited due to screening from infrastructure.

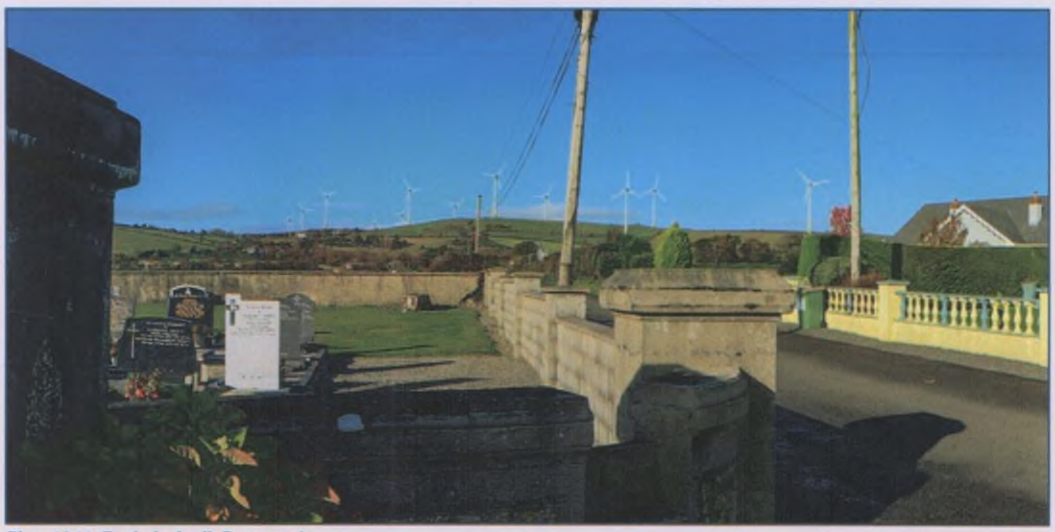


Plate 13-11 Castledockrell Graveyard

Kilmyshall

Plate 13-12 shows a southerly view from the L2007 local road in Kilmyshall approximately 4km from the Proposed Development site, on front of Kilmyshall National School. There are open views toward the Proposed Development site from this elevated location and the existing turbines can be seen in a neat linear pattern the background of the view along the ridgeline.

Plate 13-12 View from Kilmyshall looking south

Templeshanbo

Templeshanbo is located approximately 1.9 km from the nearest existing turbine. Plate 13-13 below shows the Proposed Development from the townland of Bolabeg, in close proximity to Templeshanbo. The existing turbines are visible in the background of the view elevated, on the hill.

Plate 13-13 view from the townland of Bolabeg

Ballindaggan

The village of Ballindaggan is located approximately 2.5km southwest of the Proposed Development site. Plate 13-14 below shows a view towards the Proposed Development from the R745 road out of Ballindaggan to the east. The existing turbines can be seen in the background of the image elevated on the hill. Visibility within the village itself is very limited due to screening from vegetation and infrastructure.

Plate 13-14 view from Ballindaggan

Residents in Close Proximity to the Proposed Development

There are 74 no. residential dwellings within 1km of the Proposed Development. In the case of the existing Castledockrell Wind Farm, there are a number of properties which exist within the 4x tip height buffer (i.e. 480m) and within 500m of the existing turbines. When the wind farm was originally permitted in 2005, the DoEHLG had not yet published the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) (the Guidelines), which required a minimum setback distance of 500m or 4 x tip height from existing turbines. The original Castledockrell Wind Farm instead adopted a nominal setback distance of 275m as no governmental guidance was available at the time.

During site visits in November 2023, visibility appraisals determined that residential receptors within 500m of the turbines had the greatest potential for significant visual effects. The area surrounding the existing turbines is sparsely populated, with dwellings sporadically dotted throughout the landscape. Some residential receptors located in close proximity to the site have views of the existing turbines and are likely to have the greatest visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development. VP04 represents residential properties located in close proximity to the Proposed Development and was selected for inclusion in the Photographic Visualisation Booklet and is assessed in the viewpoint assessment table in section 13.6.1.2. The following representative viewpoints are located in proximity to residential receptors and settlement centres within 500m from the existing turbines.

Plate 13-15 below shows a view west from the border between the townlands of Tomatee and Bolabeg, approximately 300m east from the existing turbines. The hedges and treelines surrounding the dwellings provide some screening from the existing turbines. In the background of the image, the Blackstairs mountain range can be seen, including Mount Leinster, Blackrock Mountain and Blackstairs Mountain. These mountains provide visual scenic amenity to residential receptors in this area. The view west/northwest provide open, expansive views of the Blackstiars mountain range, as can be seen in Plate 13-16 below. As the existing turbines are in located the opposite direction of this view, they do not detract from the scenic amenity provided by the Blackstairs mountain range.

Plate 13-15 A view west from the border between the townlands of Bolabeg and Tomatee

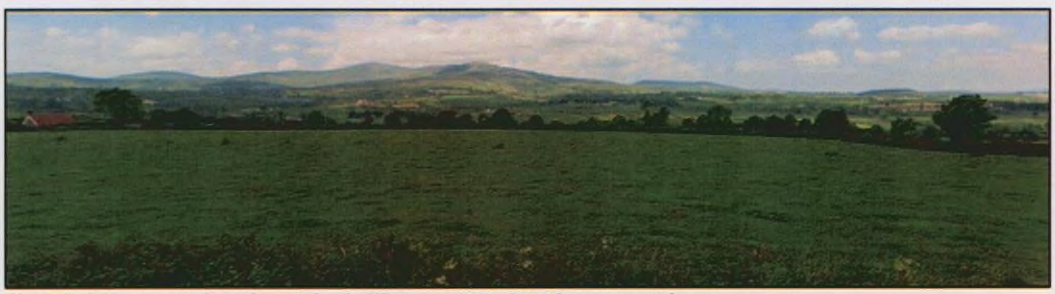


Plate 13-16 A view west from the townland of Tomatee, 300m from the existing turbines.

Site visits also determined that whilst the existing turbines will likely be seen from some gardens (where screening does not occur) and local roads, many dwellings are orientated away from the existing turbines. This means that the existing turbines will mostly comprise of peripheral views and will not take up primary views from living rooms and kitchens which often are in the direction of the Backstairs mountains.

With increased distance from the existing turbines the scale of the turbines reduces and so the effects of residential visual amenity reduce significantly, as seen in Plate 13-17 below, which is located approximately 1.7km from the nearest existing turbine. From this location the turbines are seen in the background of the view, not obstructing any views of a scenic quality and are often screened through treelines and hedgerows.

Plate 13-17 View south-east from townland of Gorteen

Distinctive Landscapes

Vinegar Hill

Plate 13-18 below shows a north westly view of the Castledockrell turbines from Vinegar Hill, which is located just outside of Enniscorthy. The existing turbines are located approximately 11 km north-west from this point. The turbines do not detract from the landscape setting of this site. To the west, there are views of Enniscorthy town and the Blackstairs mountain range. Distance and vegetation help to screen Proposed Development site from this Distinctive Landscape. The existing turbines occupy a small horizontal extent of this viewpoint.

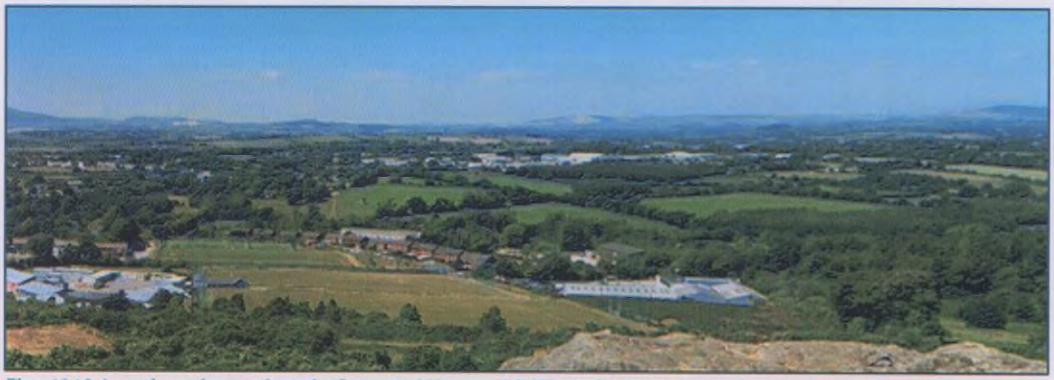


Plate 13-18 A north westly view from the Summit of Vinegar Hill. The turbines are seen in the centre right of the image.

Oulart Hill

Plate 13-19 below shows a view from the path to the summit of Oulart Hill. The existing turbines can be seen in the central background of the image and are approximately 16km from this point. As can be seen in Plate 13-19 the existingturbines occupy a limited horizontal and vertical extent within views. From most of this Distinctive Landscape, there is zero visibility of the turbines due to vegetation and topography. Plate 13-20 below shows the view in the same direction at the summit of Oulart Hill, next to the 1798 Tulach a' tSolais sculpture. From here, the trees surrounding the site screen the existing turbines.

Plate 13-19 Westerly view from path to the summit of Oulart Hill

Plate 13-20 View northwest from the summit of Oulart Hill

Plate 13-21 View of the Summit of Oulart Hill

Tourism Destinations

Backstairs Mountain Range

Figure 13-14 below shows the zone of theoretical visibility of the existing turbines on the Blackstairs Mountain Range. As seen in the ZTV below, there is no theoretical visibility of the turbines to the west of the mountains. From the peak of these mountains the turbines will be visible however, they will be absorbed in the landscape of the panoramic views. The Way Marked walking trails located throughout the mountain range have limited visibility of the turbines due to the topography and vegetation in the landscape.

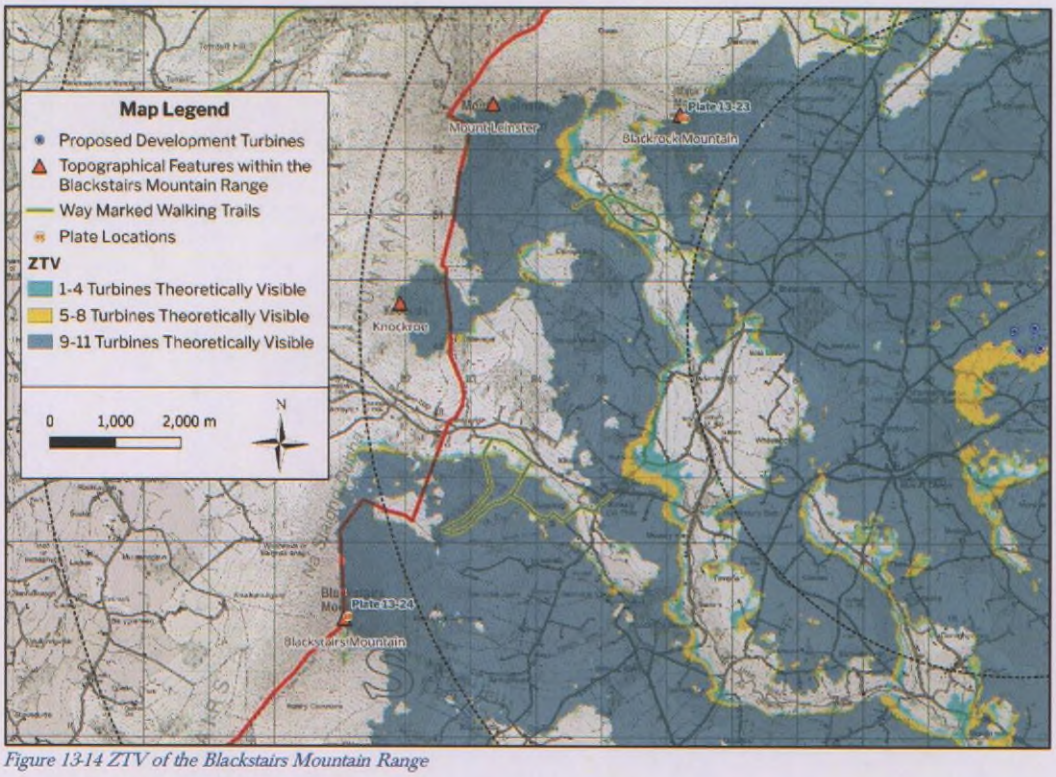


Figure 13-14 ZTV of the Blackstairs Mountain Range

Plate 13-22 below shows a view from the peak of Blackrock Mountain. From this location the turbines are barely distinguishable in the view. Views from Mount Leinster in this direction will be similar to Plate 13-22 and Plate 13-23 below. The walking trail to the peak of Mount Leinster is located on the west of the mountain, therefore there will be no views of the existing turbines until the peak of the mountain. From here the existing turbines will be absorbed into the panormic views of the landscape.

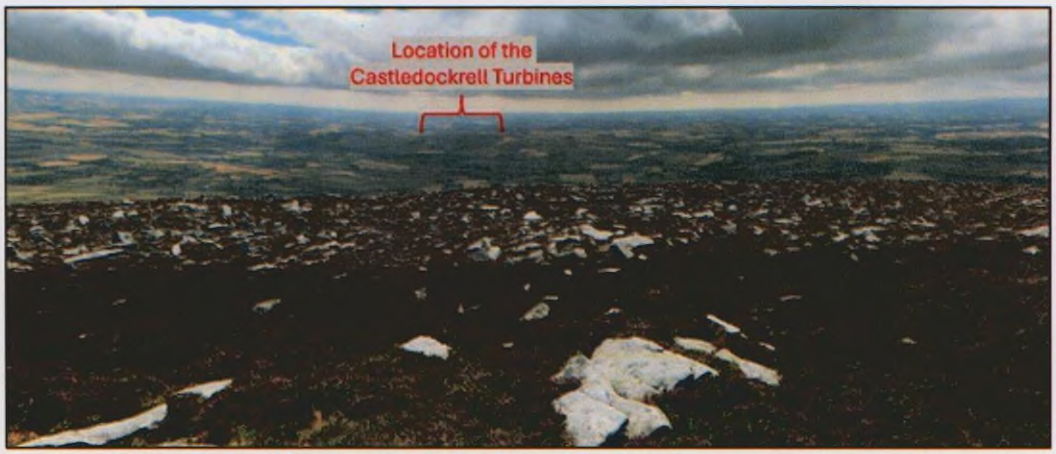


Plate 13-22 View from Blackrock Mountain northwest of the Proposed Development

Plate 13-23 below shows a view towards the Proposed Development from Blackstairs Mountain. Visual effects from these location will be imperceptible.

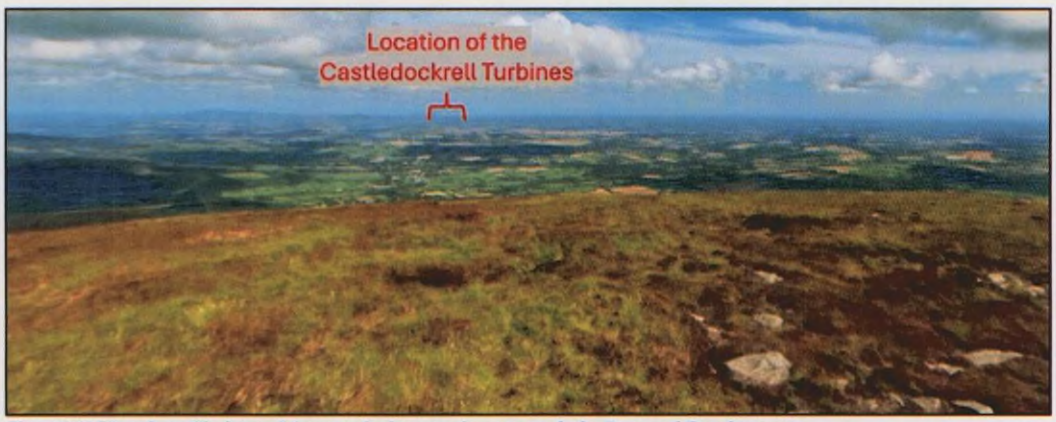


Plate 13-23 View from Blackstairs Mountain looking northeast towards the Proposed Development

13.6 Cumulative Baseline

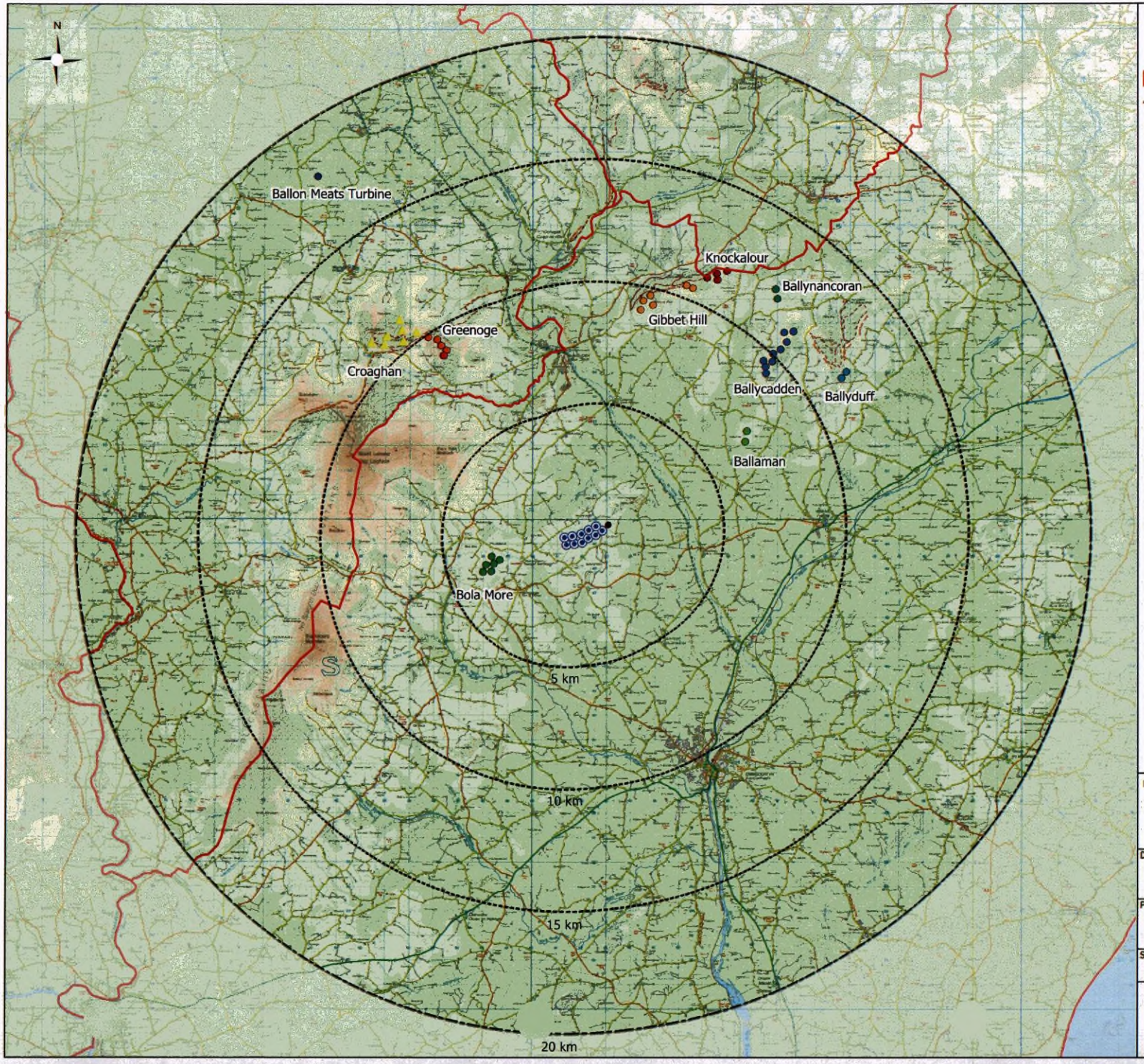
In terms of cumulative landscape and visual effects, other wind energy projects are of primary focus, as only these would be described only these would be described as very tall vertical elements in the landscape with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects. Other wind energy developments, within 20 km of Castledockrell Wind Farm, were identified by searching past planning applications lodged through the various planning authorities (Wexford County Council, Carlow County Council and Wicklow County Council and An Bord Pleanála) online planning portals. The information identified in the initial planning search was then used to verify, by means of a desk-based study and ground-truthing, whether the permitted wind energy developments had been constructed.

There are no permitted or proposed windfarms within the 20km Study Area. The list of existing, wind turbines presented within the search area to 20km are listed in Table 13-11 below:

Table 13-11 Cumulative Baseline: other wind farms within 25km of the Castledockrell Wind Farm

Wind Farm	Status	No. of Turbines	Hub and Blade Dimensions
Up to 5km			
Castledockrell Turbine 12	Existing Operational	1	Tip Height 120m, Rotor Diameter 71m
Bola More	Existing Operational	6	Tip height 126m; Rotor Diameter 82m
5 to 10km			
Ballaman	Existing Operational	2	Tip Height 130m; Rotor Diameter 90m
Ballycadden	Existing Operational	9	Tip Height 126m; Rotor Diameter 85m
Ballynancoran	Existing Operational	2	Tip Height 118m; Rotor Diameter 82m
Greenoge	Existing Operational	4	Tip Height 87m; Rotor Diameter 60m
Greenoge/Kilbranish	Existing Operational	1	Tip Height 125m; Rotor Diameter 90m
Gibbet Hill	Existing Operational	6	Tip Height 125m; Rotor Diameter 90m
10 to 15km			
Croaghan	Proposed	7	Tip Height 178m; Rotor Diameter 138m
Ballyduff	Existing Operational	2	Tip Height 110m; Rotor Diameter 71m
15 to 20km			
Knockalour	Existing Operational	4	Tip Height 126m; Rotor Diameter 82m
Ballon Meats	Existing operational	1	Tip Height 80m; Rotor Diameter 39m

There are 1 existing wind farms and one proposed wind farm within 20km of the existing Castledockrell Wind Farm. These existing, turbines can be identified on the Cumulative Baseline map shown below in Figure 13-15.



Map Legend

- Proposed Development Turbines
- County Borders
- LVIA Study Area

Cumulative Wind Farms within 20km

- Castledockrell T12 (Existing)
- Ballaman (Existing)
- Ballon Meats Turbine (Existing)
- Ballycadden (Existing)
- Ballyduff (Existing)
- Ballynancoran (Existing)
- Bola More (Existing)
- Gibbet Hill (Existing)
- Greenoge (Existing)
- Greenoge/Kilbrannish II (Existing)
- Knockalour (Existing)
- Croaghan (Proposed)

Drawing No.

Figure 13-15

Drawing Title

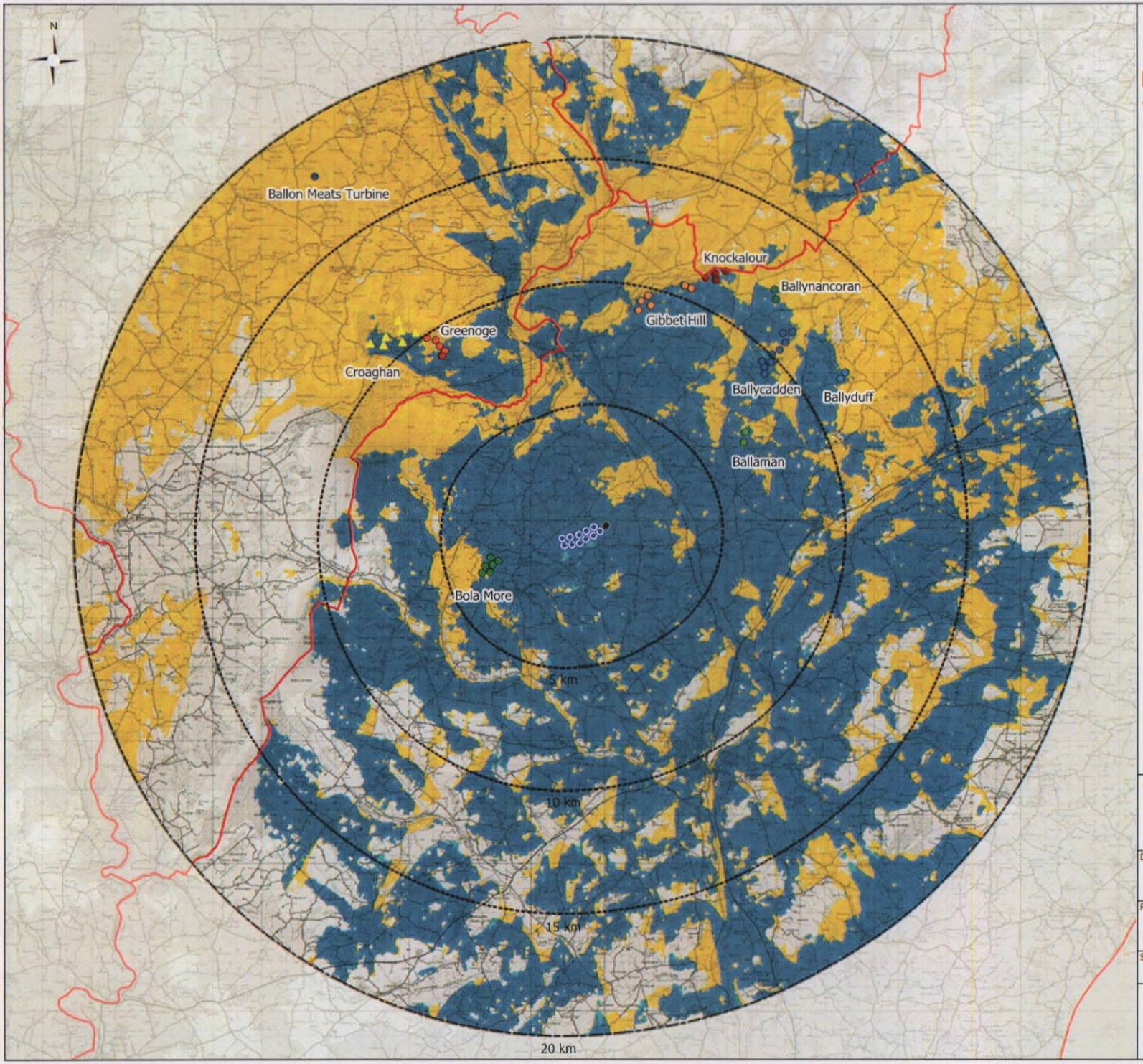
Cumulative Baseline

Project Title

Castledockrell Wind Farm Extension of Operational Life

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:150,000	210847	05.03.2025	SF	JW

MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants



Map Legend

- Proposed Development Turbines
- County Borders
- LVIA Study Area

Cumulative Wind Farms within 20km

- Castledockrell T12 (Existing)
- Ballaman (Existing)
- Ballon Meats Turbine (Existing)
- Ballycadden (Existing)
- Ballyduff (Existing)
- Ballynancoran (Existing)
- Bola More (Existing)
- Gibbet Hill (Existing)
- Greenoge (Existing)
- Greenoge/Kilbrannish II (Existing)
- Knockalour (Existing)
- Croaghan (Proposed)

Comparative Cumualtive ZTV

- Only Proposed Development Turbines Theoretically visible
- Only Cumulative Turbines Theoretically Visible
- Both Proposed Development and Cumulative Turbines Theoeretically Visible

Drawing No.

Figure 13-16

Drawing Title

Comparative Cumulative ZTV

Project Title

Castledockrell Wind Farm Extension of Operational Life

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:150,000	210847	05.03.2025	SF	JW

MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants

13.6.1 Comparative Cumulative Theoretical Visibility

Figure 13-16 above compares the cumulative theoretical visibility of all existing wind farms (represented in navy) with any additional theoretical visibility of turbines as a result of the continued operation of the existing Castledockrell Wind Farm. As seen on the cumulative ZTV map above there are very limited geographical areas where only the existing Castledockrell turbines are theoretically visible, and no turbine of other wind farm developments are theoretically visible (See teal colour block in legend - not discernible on ZTV map). There is a large area of the LVIA Study Area where there is theoretical visibility of turbines without theoretical visibility of the existing Castledockrell turbines. Overall, there are very limted additional areas with theoretical visibility of turbines caused by the continued operation of the Castledockrell Wind Farm.

The ZTV does not account for localised undulations in topography and other screening factors, and actual visibility is often far less than is indicated by the ZTV. Whilst the cumulative ZTV is a useful tool to aid assessment of cumulative effects and screen out areas where certain cumulative impacts will not occur. Considering that the Proposed Development and all other surrounding wind energy developments are built and operational, the cumulative landscape and visual impact assessments in this chapter were predominantly guided by visibility appraisals conducted during site visits. Cumulative assessments in this chapter have also been informed by the photographic imagery captured in the field which are included in the Photographic Visualisation Booklet and in imagery in section 13.5.5 of this report.

13.6.2 Photographic Visualisation Booklet - Cumulative Views

As detailed in Section 13.2. of this report, all other existing, wind farms are included in the visualisations in the Volume 2: Photographic Visualisation Booklet.

- **Existing View, and Existing Wireline View** – Turbines of existing wind energy developments (including the existing Castledockrell turbines) currently operational in the baseline landscape at the time of conducting this LVIA;

The Assessment of Cumulative Effects

An assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects are included in the assessment of effects detailed in 13.6.3.2. Likely cumulative landscape effects are assessed in the landscape character assessment tables in Section 13.6.3.1.1 and likely cumulative visual effects are assessed in the viewpoint assessment tables in Section 13.7.3.2. The results of the cumulative landscape and visual assessments are detailed in Section 13.7.3.3.

13.7 Likely or Significant Landscape and Visual Effects

13.7.1 'Do-Nothing' Scenario

If the Proposed Development were not to proceed, the existing 11 turbine Castledockrell Wind Farm would be decommissioned in August 2025, as per the existing permission. If the Proposed Development were not to proceed, the opportunity to generate renewable energy and electrical supply to the national grid would be lost, as would the opportunity to further contribute to meeting Government and EU targets for the production and consumption of electricity from renewable resources and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Significant decommissioning phase excavations works would be required under the current Planning Condition 3(1) as this requires the site is returned to its original state. Turbines (including foundations) must be dismantled and removed from the site. The site must be reinstated including all access roads.

A more environmentally sensitive Decommissioning Plan is proposed as part of this Lifetime Extension application and is detailed further in Section 4.7 in Chapter 4 of this EIAR, and in Appendix 4-4.

Should this occur, the impact would be considered neutral in the context of this EIAR.

13.7.2 Construction Phase Effects

The Construction stage of the Proposed Development will only consist of the construction of a new wastewater holding tank which will serve the existing onsite 110kV substation. Groundworks associated with the construction of the proposed wastewater holding tank will be minimal, however, all relevant site health and safety measures will be followed. Further detail on this is provided in Chapter 5 of this EIAR.

13.7.3 Operational Phase Effects

13.7.3.1 Landscape Effects

No direct landscape effects will occur at the Proposed Development site as a result of the proposed extension of operation. The lands within the site will continue to be used for renewable energy generation and small-scale agriculture. The following sections report how the continued operation of the Proposed Development impacts the character of the landscape and specific landscape receptors.

13.7.3.1.1 *Landscape Character Units*

An assessment of the effects on landscape character was undertaken for the five Landscape Character Units within the LVIA Study Area for Landscape Character (within 15 km from the Proposed Development site). Those that were identified as having potential for visibility of the existing turbines in the Landscape Receptor Preliminary Assessment previously in Section 13.3.2. The assessment criteria and grading scales which aided the assessment of landscape effects are detailed in Section 13.2.6. The individual assessments for each LCU are presented in table 13-12 below.

Table 13-12 Uplands LCU Landscape Character Assessment Table

Uplands	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCU	The existing turbines are located within this LCU.
LCU Key Characteristics *(Appendix 10 (WCDP 2022-28))*	› ***Low intensity agriculture and stock rearing, coniferous forestry plantations and areas of transitional vegetation. Higher ground is characterised by poor drainage, higher wind/rainfall, limited vegetation and land use.*** › ***This landscape contains elevated and steeper land, ridges and skylines, which are prominent in the overall landscape and which are generally more sensitive to development.*** › ***Recently constructed wind farms have become a feature in this landscape.***
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	The Proposed Development site, as well as the entirety of the Uplands LCU is designated as sensitive to wind farm development. The Uplands area is designated in Volume 10 of the WCDP as "Not Normally Permissible" and having "Limited capacity to absorb further development". This is due to the landscape having reached capacity for new wind farm development. The WCDP classified the overall sensitivity of the LCU to development as High. Considering these designations, this LCU is determined to have a **High** Sensitivity to wind farm development.
Visibility of the Proposed Development within the LCU	Within 5km of the Proposed Development site, the ZTV within this LCU shows predominately full theoretical visibility. However, beyond 5km the theoretical and actual visibility reduces due to vegetation and topography screening. Beyond 10km there are large areas where there is no theoretical visibility. Viewpoints 03, 04 and 05 are located within this LCU.
Do-Nothing Scenario	In a Do-Nothing Scenario, the existing 11 no. turbines will be decommissioned when their planning permission expires in 2025. In a Do-Nothing Scenario, these turbines will not be located within this LCU, reducing the number of turbines effecting the landscape of this LCU.
Cumulative Context	The existing Castledockrell T12, Bola More, Gibbet Hill, Ballaman, Ballyduff, Ballycadden, Ballynacoran and Knockalour turbines are located within this LCU. The existing Greenoge and proposed Croaghan turbines are located in Carlow LCA 1 – Blackstairs and Mount Leinster, adjacent to this LCU.
Cumulative Landscape Effects	Considering the number of turbines sited in this LCU, cumulative landscape effects do occur, and the Proposed Development does contribute toward these cumulative effects. As seen in the cumulative ZTV (Figure 13-16), there is theoretical visibility of the existing turbines with other wind farms in a large part of this LCA. There are very limited areas within the LCA where there is only theoretical visibility of the existing turbines. The continued presence of the existing turbines will not change the baseline landscape of this LCU. In addition, given the presence of other wind farms within, and visible from, this LCU, the decommissioning and removal of

Uplands	
	these turbines would also not substantially reduce visibility of wind turbines throughout this LCU.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.5.2.2 of this report	**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.***
Significance of Effect	**High x Moderate = Moderate = Significant (EPA, 2022)** An effect, which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Mitigating Factors	› As noted in the LCU Descriptions (WCDP) the landscape "*contains elevated and steeper land, ridges and skylines*" which limits visibility across the landscape, reducing the spatial extent of the area within this LCU where the existing turbines will be visible. › Actual on the ground visibility of the existing turbines is generally concentrated in locations in closer proximity to the turbines, with large areas to the north and south of this LCA having no actual visibility of the turbines, or where turbines appear as very small elements within the backgrounds of views from elevated points. › This sparsely populated upland area offers capacity to accommodate wind farm development by limiting the areas over which turbines will be visible › Appendix 10 of the WCDP states *"Recently constructed wind farms have become a feature in this landscape."* Castledockrell is an existing wind farm that is a feature of this landscape.
Residual Effect	**Moderate (EPA, 2022)** An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends

Table 13-13 Lowlands LCU Landscape Character Assessment Table

Lowlands	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCU	The existing Castledockrell turbines are located 2km from the closest point of this LCU.
LCU Key Characteristics *(Appendix 10 (WCDP 2022-28))*	› *Predominantly fertile lands with higher levels of population and intensive agriculture.* › *Slope and topography occurs in a shallow/ gradual transition.* › *Extensive views across large fields.* › *Number of prominent hills which provide more enclosure and 'punctuation' within the overall landscape.*

Lowlands	
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	The overall landscape sensitivity of the LCU is "Low/Moderate" as designated in Table 7-3 within Volume 7 of the WCDP. The hills and ridges present in this LCU mean that the visibility of the existing turbines is limited and these features of the LCU provide a higher capacity to absorb development. Table 7 of Volume 10 within the WCDP, states the capacity of this landscape for wind farm development is "High capacity outside of the exclusion zones for settlements and the natural heritage designations". Therefore, taking into account these designations, as well as the absence of sensitive receptors in the landscape, this LCU is determined to have a **Low** Sensitivity to wind farm development.
Visibility of the Proposed Development within the LCU	Within 5km of the Proposed Development site, the ZTV within this LCU shows predominately full theoretical visibility. Beyond 5km there are large areas of full and no visibility. In reality, due to vegetation screening, beyond 5km actual visibility of the existing turbines is limited to areas of high elevation. Viewpoints 01 and 02 are located within this LCU.
Do-Nothing Scenario	In a Do-Nothing Scenario, the existing 11 no. turbines of the existing Castledockrell Wind Farm will be decommissioned when their planning permission expires in 2025. In a Do-Nothing Scenario, these turbines will not be visible within this LCU, reducing the number of turbines effecting the landscape of this LCU.
Cumulative Context	There are no existing, proposed or permitted turbines within this LCU. Other existing, permitted and proposed wind farms in the Uplands LCU are visible from areas within this LCU.
Cumulative Landscape Effects	As seen from the Comparative Cumulative ZTV (Figure 13-16) there is theoretical visibility of other wind farm developments with the existing turbines. There are no areas within this LCU where there is only visibility of the existing turbines. On site appraisals determined that there is very limited visibility of the existing turbines from within the majority of this LCU fand it therefore has a very limited contribution to cumulative effects on the landscape character.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.5.2.2 of this report	**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.
Significance of Effect	**Low x Negligible = Negligible = Imperceptible (EPA, 2022)** An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences
Mitigating Factors	› Actual on the ground visibility of the existing turbines is generally concentrated in locations in closer proximity to the turbines, with large areas of this LCA having no actual visibility of the turbines, or where turbines appear as very small elements within the backgrounds of views from elevated points. › As noted in the LCU Descriptions (WCDP) the landscape "*has characteristics which provide it with a higher capacity to absorb*

Lowlands	
	development without causing significant visual intrusion. **"which** limits visibility across the landscape, reducing the spatial extent of the area within this LCU where the existing turbines will be visible.
Residual Effect	**Imperceptible (EPA, 2022)** An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences

Table 13-14 River Valley LCU Landscape Character Assessment Table

River Valley	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCU	The existing turbines are located 3.8km from the closest point of this LCU.
LCU Key Characteristics *(Appendix 10 (WCDP 2022-28))*	› ***Similar characteristics to lowlands but have a more scenic appearance due to the presence of the rivers and their associated riparian and woodland habitats.***
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	The overall landscape sensitivity of the LCU as designated in Table 7-3 within Volume 7 of the WCDP is "Moderate/High". Volume 10 of the WCDP states that the River Valley LCU's " *Capacity to absorb wind farm development in this area is low due to scenic value and natural heritage designations*". Therefore, considering these designations, this LCU is determined to have a **High** Sensitivity to wind farm development.
Visibility of the Proposed Development within the LCU	Within 5km of the Proposed Development site, the ZTV within this LCU shows mostly full theoretical visibility of the existing turbines. Beyond 5km there is a mix of full, partial and no theoretical visibility. On site appraisals determined that actual visibility of the existing turbines was very limited from this LCU due to the intervening vegetation in the landscape. Viewpoint 01 is located in close proximity to this LCU and is representative of views from this LCU.
Do-Nothing Scenario	In a Do-Nothing Scenario, the existing 11 no. turbines of the will be decommissioned when their planning permission expires in 2025. In a Do-Nothing Scenario, these turbines will not be visible within this LCU, reducing the number of turbines effecting the landscape of this LCU.
Cumulative Context	There are no existing, proposed or permitted turbines within this LCU. Other existing, permitted and proposed wind farms in the Uplands LCU are visible from areas within this LCU.
Cumulative Landscape Effects	As seen from the Comparative Cumulative ZTV (Figure 13-16) there is theoretical visibility of other wind farm developments with the existing turbines. There are no areas within this LCU where there is only visibility of the existing turbines. On site appraisals determined that there is very limited visibility of the existing turbines from within the majority of this LCU and it

River Valley	
	therefore has a very limited contribution to cumulative effects on the landscape character.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.5.2.2 of this report	**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.
Significance of Effect	**High x Negligible = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2022)** An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities
Mitigating Factors	› The majority of this LCU is situated at a lower base elevation than the existing turbines, due to the screening from vegetation in the intervening landscape actual visibility is a lot less than indicated on the ZTV.
Residual Effect	**Not Significant (EPA, 2022)** An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.

Table 13-15 Oulart Hill Landscape Character Assessment Table

Oulart Hill	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCU	The existing turbines are located 16km from the closest point of this LCU.
LCU Key Characteristics *(Appendix 10 (WCDP 2022-28)) & (County Wexford Landscape Character Assessment 2022-2028)*	› *Hills and Ridges - offer broad views across the surrounding landscape.* › *have a significant presence all across County Wexford, and there are often broad views across the surrounding landscape from them.*
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	The overall landscape sensitivity of the LCU in the WCDP is "High." as designated in Table 7-3 within Volume 7 of the WCDP. Volume 10 of the WCDP designates wind energy developments as *Not Normally Permissible* within this LCU and the capacity for wind energy developments is *"Low capacity due to the scenic, tourism and recreation value, geological, archaeological or nature conservation interests"*. This LCU is therefore determined to have a **High** sensitivity to wind farm development.
Visibility of the Proposed Development within the LCU	As seen in ZTV Mapping (Figure 13-3) this LCU has predominantly full theoretical visibility of the existing turbines. However, there is a significant area with no theoretical visibility. As this LCU is a hill, with forestry the existing turbines are only visible when at the highest points of elevation, and when facing in a westerly direction. Plates 13-14 and 13-15 are taken from this LCU, where there is a more detailed discussion of actual visibility of the existing turbines.