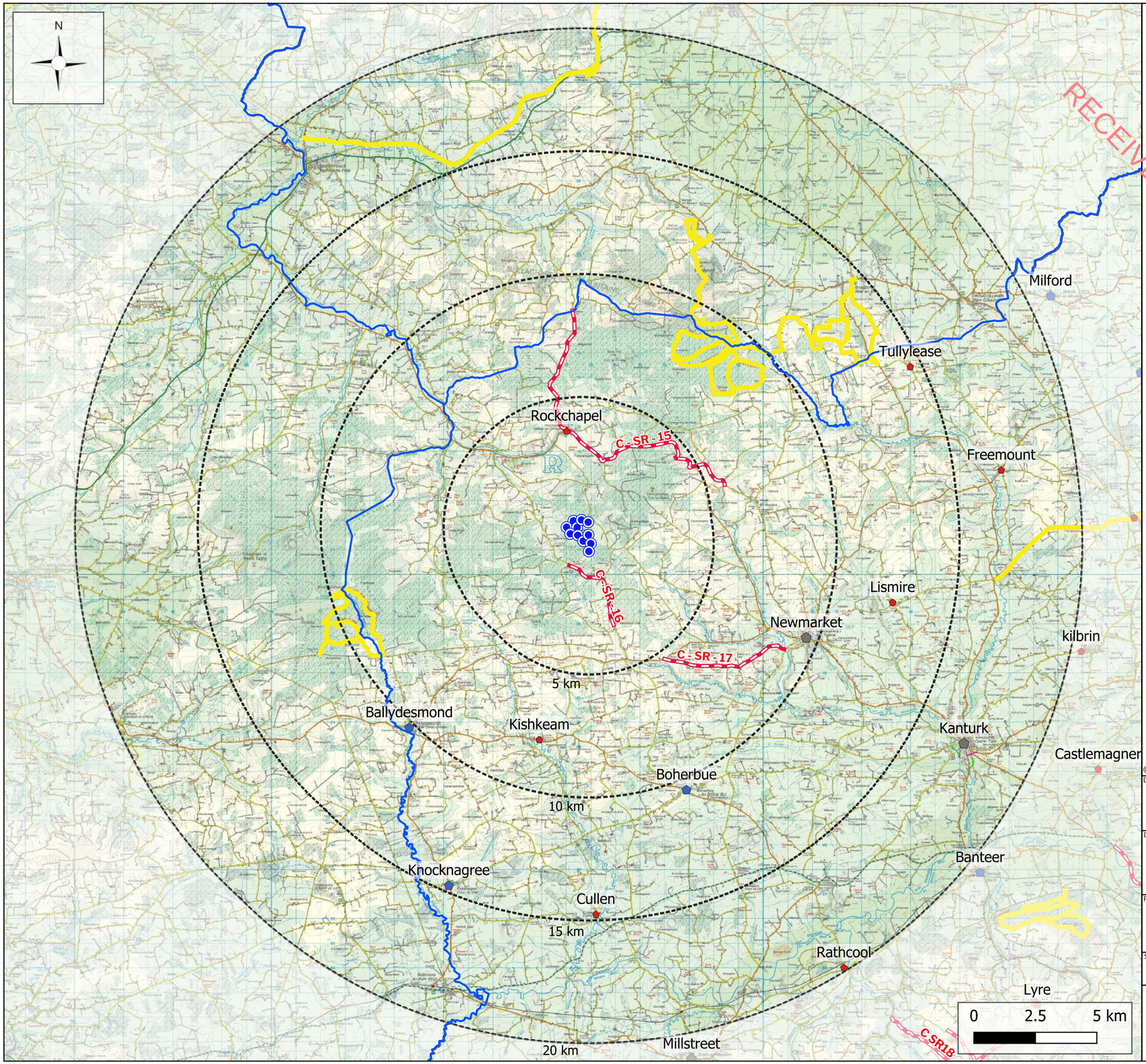
13.5 Visual Baseline

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 Taurbeg turbines already exist within the landscape, the focus of this section is to determine the extent to which the Taurbeg 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 was the identification of the 6 No. representative viewpoints which are included in the Volume 2 Visualisation Booklet used as part of the visual impact assessment.

13.5.1 Visibility of the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm – Views towards Taurbeg Wind Farm

This section reports the visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from key sensitive visual receptors during on-site visibility appraisals. Receptors were visited where ZTV indicated the existing turbines would be theoretically visible. This section also identified receptors and locations used as Viewpoints. Viewpoints are locations from which visual effects are assessed using photographic visualisations (see Section 13.2). Overall on site surveys determined the existing Taurbeg turbines are only visible from a very small number of receptors in a very sparsely populated rural landscape. To this end, the following visual receptors have been identified within the LVIA Study Area:

- Settlements;
- Residential Receptors in close proximity;
- Waymarked Walking Routes, Scenic Routes and Three Counties Scenic Area;
- Transport Routes.



Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- County Borders
- Existing Taurbeg Turbines
- Co. Cork Scenic Route
- Waymarked Trails

Settlement Hierarchy

- Main Town
- Key Village
- Village

Drawing No.

Figure 13-13

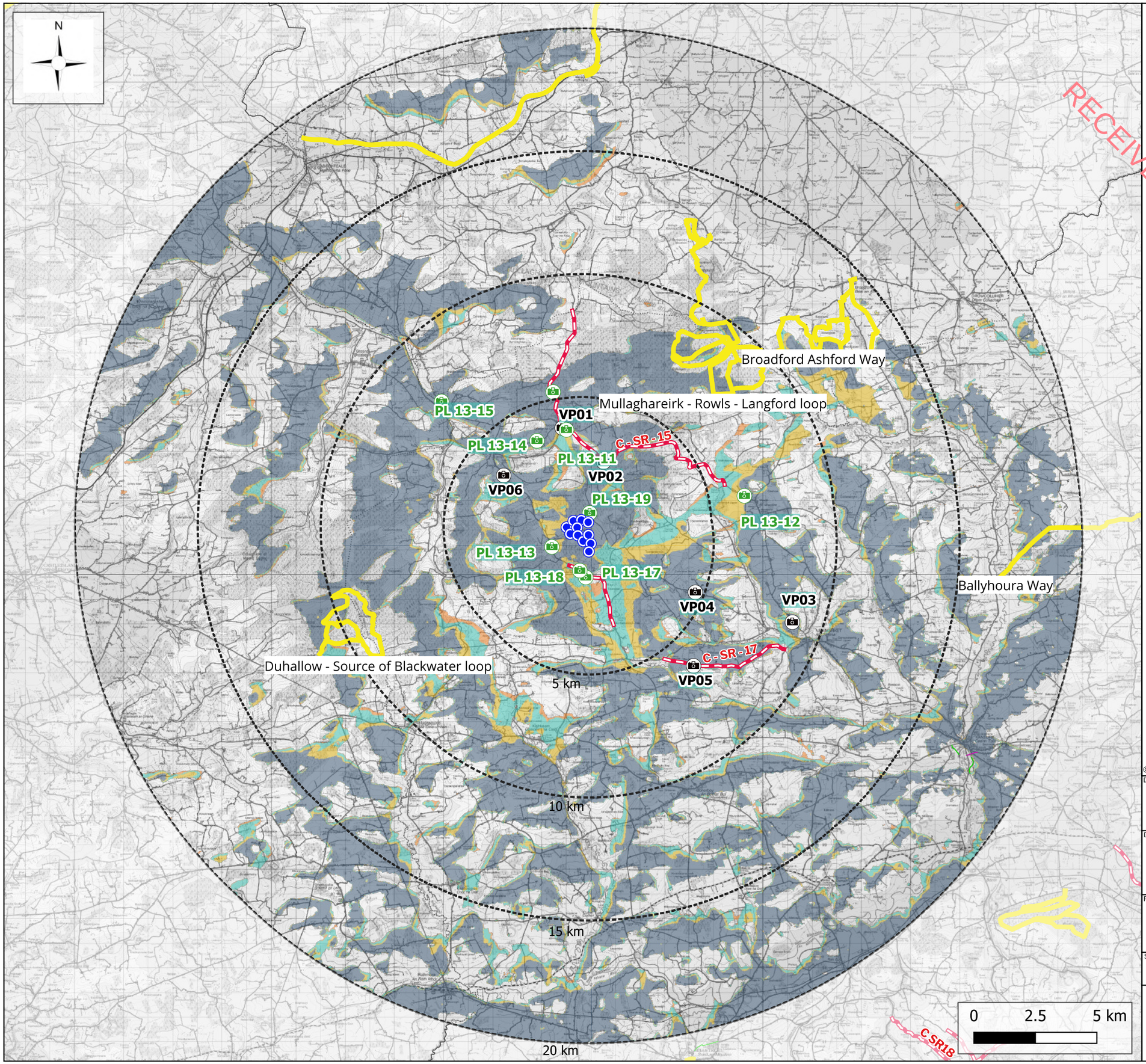
Drawing Title

Visual Baseline

Project Title

Taurbeg Wind Farm Extension of Operational Life

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:150,000	231030	24.05.2025	KC	JW



Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- County Borders
- Existing Taurbeg Turbines
- Viewpoint Locations
- Plate Locations
- Waymarked Trails
- Co. Cork Scenic Routes

Settlement Hierarchy

- Town
- Small Village
- Village
- Rural Cluster

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 1-3 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 4-7 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 8-10 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 11 Turbines Theoretically Visible

Drawing No.

Figure 13-14

Drawing Title

Visual Baseline with ZTV

Project Title

Taurbeg Renewable Energy Development

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:150,000	231030	14.11.2024	KC	JW

13.5.1.1 Settlements

Rockchapel

The closest settlement to the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is Rockchapel which is located approximately 3.5km north of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm as seen in Figure 13-13. Rockchapel is designated as a village within the CCDP 2022-28 settlement hierarchy. Rockchapel is located within a narrow valley at a lower elevation to it's the immediate surrounding setting. Rockchapel has no visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from within the village itself as seen in Plate 13-11 below. There is visibility of the existing Taurbeg turbines from higher elevated vantage point to the north of Rockchapel as seen in Viewpoint 1, which is located at Grotto Terrace overlooking the village of Rockchapel. Rockchapel is scoped in for further assessment.

Plate 13-11 View South towards the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from within the Village of Rockchapel

Newmarket

The largest settlements within the LVIA Study Area are Newmarket and Kanturk. Newmarket is located approximately 9km from the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. There is no visibility within the actual town of Newmarket itself. A local road named Kerry Road in Newmarket is elevated with intermittent vegetation lining the local road. Between intermittent mature trees there are long ranging views across the landscape on this local road in the direction of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. The turbines are visible in the background of the view. Viewpoint 3 represents views from the immediate setting of Newmarket, with more open views and residential dwellings in closer proximity to the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Newmarket is scoped in for further assessment.

Kanturk

Kanturk is located approximately 16.9km from the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Visibility appraisals determined there is no actual visibility of the existing Taurbeg turbines from Kanturk or its immediate setting. Visibility is restricted due to the nature of the built environment on the outskirts of the town and the vegetation which line the field patterns and the transport routes. Kanturk is scoped out from further

assessment considering there is no actual visibility from the town. There are no impacts on the settlement of Kanturk.

Boherbue

Boherbue is designated as a key village in the CCDP 2022-28 settlement hierarchy and is located approximately 10.4km south of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, with full theoretical visibility. On site surveys carried out in 2024 determined that there is no actual visibility within Boherbue itself due to the built-up nature and there is no visibility within the immediate setting of Boherbue. Considering the dense vegetation lining the transport routes surrounding Boherbue there are no open views of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Boherbue is scoped out from further assessment considering there is no actual visibility.

Meelin

Meelin is not a designated settlement in the CCDP 2022-28; however, it is a rural cluster with open views towards the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from adjacent local roads, as seen in Plate 13-12 below. There is no visibility from within the settlement itself. Meelin is scoped in for further assessment.

Plate 13-12 View West from a Local Road in Close Proximity to Settlement Cluster Meelin

Other settlements within the LVIA Study Area

Within 10km of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, there are no other settlements. Beyond 10km, three settlements have full theoretical visibility: Rathmore (Co Kerry), Knocknagashel (Co Kerry) and Mountcollins (Co Limerick). However, on site visibility appraisals determined that there is no visibility from within the settlements themselves. Considering their setback distance from the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, there will be no significant impacts on these settlements, and they are scoped out of further assessment.

Residential dwelling to the west of the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm

Plate 13-13 below shows a view from a residential dwelling (H33) located to the west of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, approximately 821m from the nearest existing turbine T8. The residential dwelling is located on an elevated vantage point with views orientated in the opposite direction to the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. This dwelling is located at a setback distance greater than 500m which complies with the 2006 WEDGs in relation to turbine setback from residential receptors. The existing turbines also adhere to the 2019 draft WEDGs in relation to turbine setback from residential receptors i.e. a minimum 4 x tip height (108.2m x 4 =432.8m). Note however no update or final 2019 WEDGs were subsequently published. Viewpoints 1, 2 and 4 represent views from residential receptors with

open views towards the existing Taurbeg turbines. These Viewpoints are discussed below in Section 13.7.2.2.2

Plate 13-13 View East from a Local Road and Residential Dwelling in Close Proximity to the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm

Residential Dwellings to the northwest of the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from an elevated vantage point west of Rockchapel

Residential Dwellings to the west of Rockchapel located on an elevated vantage point have long ranging views across the landscape towards the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Plate 13-14 is located approximately 3.9km northwest of the nearest existing Taurbeg turbine T5. The residential dwellings are orientated with their primary visual amenity to the south, in the direction of the existing Taurbeg turbines (middle wind farm) and the cumulative wind farms Glentane (right wind farm) and Knockacummer Wind Farm (left wind farm). The existing turbines are located in the background of the image and do not obstruct any views of the ridgeline and rolling hills. Considering the residential dwellings are setback from the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm by field patterns and the elevation changes, no significant effects are deemed to arise.

Plate 13-14 View South from an Elevated Vantage Point on a Local Road - Stagmount

13.5.1.2 Waymarked Walking Routes, Scenic Routes and Three Counties Scenic Area

Waymarked Trails

Sixteen waymarked trails were identified in the LVIA Study Area. As seen in Figure 13-14, all the trails have very limited theoretical visibility. Small portions of the Mullaghareirk-Rowls-Langford Loop, Broadford Ashford Way, Duhallow - Source of Blackwater Loop and Ballyhoura Way have theoretical visibility. The closest waymarked trail is the Mullaghareirk-Rowls-Langford Loop, located approximately 7.3km from the nearest existing turbine, T7, with full theoretical visibility at its nearest

point to the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. However, the trail has no actual visibility due to it being visually screened by coniferous forestry. There are no significant impacts on any waymarked walking trails considering there is no or very limited visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from all trails. All waymarked trails have been scoped out from further assessment.

Three Counties Scenic Area

Plate 13-15 below shows the view near to the 'Three Counties Scenic Area'. The area contains a small public park at the point where the county borders of Cork, Kerry and Limerick meet. The image below is captured from an elevated vantage point. The existing Taurbeg Turbines are visible from this view. However, there is very limited visibility of the existing Taurbeg Turbines from the lower elevation at the 'Three Counties Scenic Area'.

Plate 13-15 View Southeast from an Elevated Vantage Point Overlooking the Three Counties Scenic Area and Agricultural Landscape

Cork Designated Scenic Route 15

Plate 13-16 shows a view from the approach road, north of Rockchapel, looking towards the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from designated scenic route 15. The coniferous forestry visually screens views of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm for the most part when approaching the village of Rockchapel. Open Views of the existing Taurbeg turbines on the Cork designated scenic routes 15 are represented by Viewpoints 1 and 2 in the Visualisation Booklet.

Plate 13-16 View South from Designated Scenic Route 15 towards the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm on approach to the Village Rockchapel

Cork Designated Scenic Route 16

County Cork designated Scenic Route 16 is the closest designated scenic route to the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. On this scenic route, there are large areas of theoretical visibility, as seen above in Figure 13-14. Plate 13-17 below shows there is no visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from areas on designated scenic route 16 due to Taur hill visually screening the existing turbines. The existing Glentane Wind Farm is visible from this scenic route to the west of the designated scenic route. The scenic view is to the southwest from designated scenic route 16, which has views in the opposite direction to the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm onto the upland areas of Co Kerry.

Plate 13-17 View northwest from Designated Scenic Route 16 towards the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm

Plate 13-18 illustrates the one of the very few views where the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is visible from designated scenic route 16. T10 is partially visible due to the incline in the topography to the north of the local road.

Plate 13-18 View North from Designated Scenic Route 16 towards the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm.

13.5.1.3 Transport Routes

L5005 Local Road

Numerous local roads surround the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. The L5005 local road travels from south of Rockchapel ascending to the wind farm entrance. L5005 has limited visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm until very close proximity to the Site, as seen in Plate 13-19. The coniferous forestry visually screens views towards the existing turbines for the majority of the L5005 local road.

Plate 13-19 View South from Local Road near the Entrance of the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm

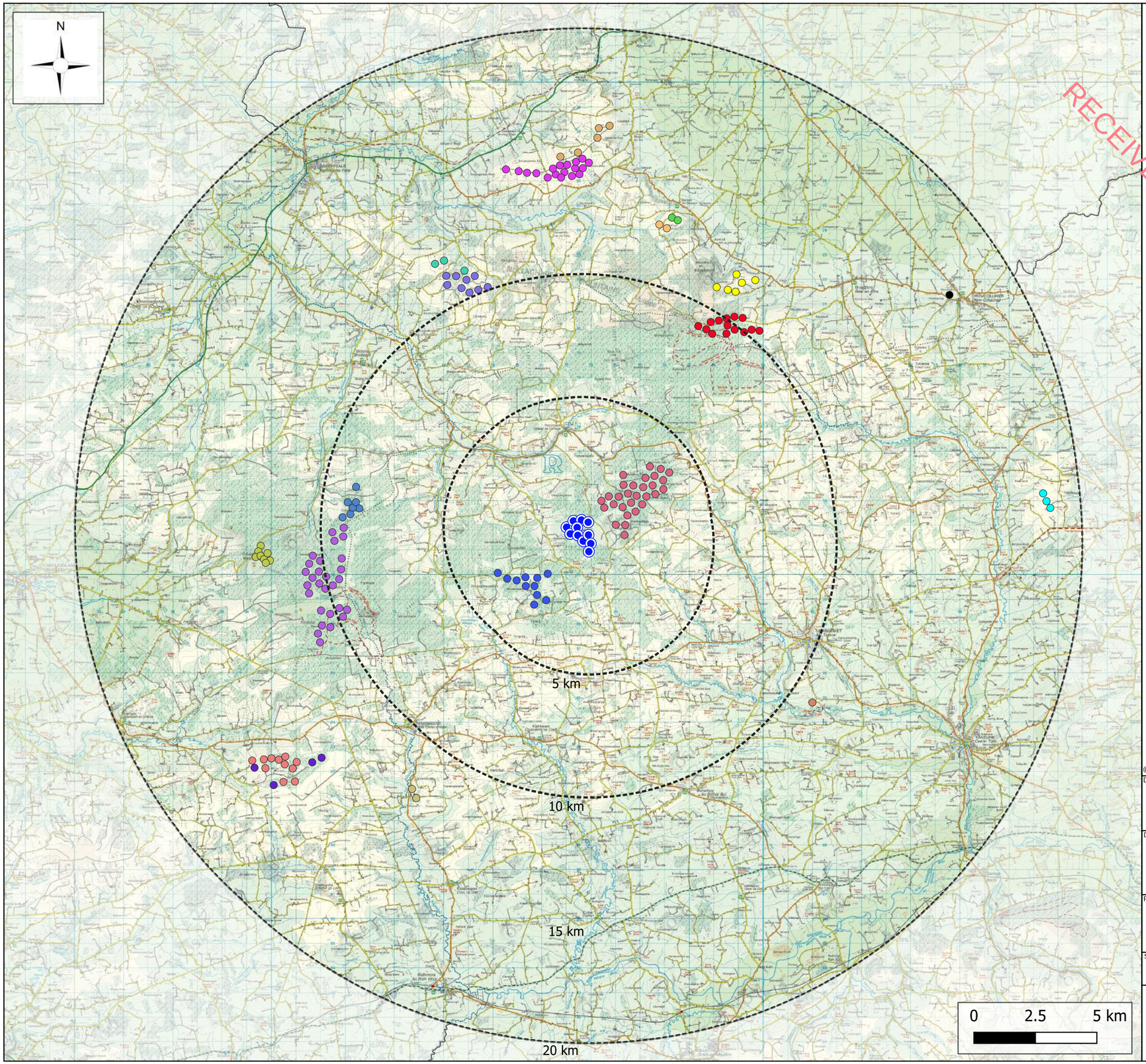
R576 Regional Road

The R576 regional road traverses from Newmarket located south of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, through Rockchapel located north of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. There is very limited theoretical visibility from R576 within 5km of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. On-site visibility appraisals carried out in 2024 determined that actual visibility is even less considering the visual screening by coniferous forestry, residential dwellings and farm sheds. The R576 is represented by Viewpoint 2, captured at one the few locations where the existing Taurbeg turbines are visible from R576.

13.6 Cumulative Context

In terms of cumulative landscape and visual effects, other wind energy projects are of primary focus, as 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 20km of Taurbeg Wind Farm, were identified by searching past planning applications lodged through the various planning authority (Cork 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 any permitted wind energy developments had been constructed.

As shown in the cumulative baseline map, the cumulative wind farm search did not identify any permitted or proposed wind farms in close proximity to the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Considering that the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm 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 is included in the Photographic Visualisation Booklet and in imagery in Section 13.5.1 of this report.



Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- County Borders
- Existing Taurbeg Turbines

Other Turbines within the LVIA Study Area

- Ballagh WF
- Coolleagrean WF
- Cordal WF
- Dromcolliher Wind Turbine
- Dromdeeveen WF
- Glentane WF/ Glentanemacelligot WF
- Gortnaclogh WF
- Kilberehert WF
- Knockacummer WF
- Knockawarriga WF 1
- Knockawarriga WF 2
- Mauricetown/ Ashford WF
- Mount Eagle WF
- Newmarket Wind Turbine
- Rathcahill WF
- Scartaglen WF 1
- Scartaglen WF 2
- Tournafulla WF
- WED Cross

Drawing No.

Figure 13-15

Drawing Title

Cumulative Context

Project Title

Taurbeg Wind Farm Extension of Operational Life

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:150,000	231030	11.12.2024	KC	JW

Within 5 km of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, there are two existing wind farms, Knockacummer Wind Farm located to northeast, and Glentane Wind Farm located to the southwest as seen in Figure 13-15 above. The focus of the assessment of cumulative effects in this chapter focusses on the interactions with these two existing developments. Taurbeg Wind Farm is located between these two existing wind farms. When viewed from a distance, the three existing wind farms take up a wide spatial extent across the upland areas from certain vantage points. However, on site visibility appraisals determined that cumulative views of all three wind farms are localised to within 10 km, where there are wide open views of the upland landscape. Viewpoints 1, 3, 4 and 5 show clear, visible separation between the existing wind farms. It is evident from these viewpoints that the three existing wind farms are located on separate landforms within the landscape. The existing Taurbeg Wind Farm and the existing Knockacummer Wind Farm appear as one wind farm in viewpoint 2, with the existing Taurbeg turbines located in the background of the image beyond the Knockacummer turbines. This is due to the close proximity of the viewpoint to Knockacummer Wind Farm.

There are several other wind farms located within the LVIA Study Area, all located in the uplands of the Mullaghareirk Mountain range stretching from Co. Limerick to Co. Kerry. These other existing turbines cannot generally be viewed in conjunction with the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Considering the landforms surrounding the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, there is very limited cumulative visibility of Taurbeg Wind Farm with the other existing wind farms. However, the other wind farms are visible throughout the majority of the LVIA Study Area considering their spread and number within the upland landscape.

13.7 Likely and Significant Landscape and Visual Effects

13.7.1 'Do-Nothing' Scenario

If the Proposed Lifetime Extension were not to proceed, the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm turbines will be decommissioned in 2026, as per the existing permission. A 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 4-3.

If the Proposed Lifetime Extension 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. Should this occur, the impact would be neutral in the context of this EIAR.

If the Proposed Offsetting Measures were not to proceed, existing land use of plantation forestry and agricultural practises within the Proposed Offsetting Lands would continue and the Proposed Offsetting Measures would not take place.

13.7.2 Extended Operational Phase Effects

This planning application is applying for a 10 year extension to the operational life of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. In terms of duration, as per the EPA (2022) guidance for information to be contained in EIARs, 10 years constitutes to 'Medium-Term' effects. Whether a visual effect is deemed to be positive, negative, or neutral, involves a degree of subjectivity. For example, what appears to be a positive effect to one viewer could be deemed to be negative by another viewer. However, this Chapter assumes that all landscape and visual effects will be 'Negative'. Therefore, all effects reported in this section are **'Medium-Term'** and **'Negative'**.

13.7.2.1 Landscape Effects

The Existing Wind Farm Site – Landscape Effects

The infrastructure of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is directly located on peatlands in an upland area of the Taurbeg hill surrounded by commercial forestry. The landscape of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is an existing wind farm and is deemed to be of **'Low'** landscape sensitivity. The magnitude of effect from the Proposed Lifetime Extension is deemed to be **'Moderate'**. Therefore, resulting in Medium Term **'Slight'** landscape effects. It must be acknowledged that the wind farm infrastructure including the turbines, site access roads, turbine hardstands, substation and grid infrastructure are existing infrastructure. Therefore, ultimately, there will be **no change** to the existing character and landscape of the Site as a result of the Proposed Lifetime Extension.

The landscape and visual effects of non-turbine components of the wind farm (substation, roads, hardstands etc...) are highly localised to the upland environment Site itself. These ancillary elements of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm (non-turbine infrastructure) are discernible from receptors in the wider landscape setting and therefore have no impact on the wider landscape and its characteristics. The non turbine components are therefore not considered further in this chapter. As stated in Section 13.1.1.1, the existing turbines are the 'essential aspects' of the development from a landscape and visual perspective and are the key features sand focus of the impact assessments reported in the following sections of this Chapter.

The following sections report how the Proposed Lifetime Extension impacts the character of the landscape and specific landscape receptors.

13.7.2.1.2 Effects on Designated Landscape Character Types and Areas

An assessment of the effects on landscape character was undertaken for four Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within the 15km LCA Study Area which were identified previously as having potential for visibility of the existing Taurbeg turbines, see Landscape Receptor Preliminary Analysis in Section 13.4.4.1. The assessment criteria and grading scales that aided the assessment of landscape effects are detailed in Section 13.2.6. Individual assessments were carried out for each LCT and LCA. The tables below assess the landscape effects on LCTs and LCAs from the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm.

Table 13-12 Landscape Character Assessment - LCT 14a - Fissured Marginal and Forested Rolling Uplands

LCT 14a – Fissured Marginal and Forested Rolling Uplands	
Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCT	The 11 no. existing turbines are located within this LCT. At its furthest point this LCT stretches approximately 9.7km from the nearest existing turbine.
LCT Key Characteristics *(Draft Landscape Strategy 2007)*	› *"Includes the Mullaghareirk Mountains.* › *Topography of this landscape is one of relatively steep and rolling mountainous upland, fissured by narrow river valleys and which slopes towards broad flat ground.* › *Fields comprise grassland, much of which is of marginal agricultural quality, while there are also some areas of broadleaf woodland.* › *Soils on these slopes and valley bottoms tend to be of poor quality and include blanket peat on upper slopes, which have resulted in intensive coniferousconiferous plantations. Character Areas Map."*
Landscape Sensitivity (Definition from Section 13.2.6.1)	CCDP has provided their own landscape sensitivity designations for LCT 14a. The designations within the CCDP, the landscape sensitivity is determined to be **Medium.** The LCT is within an area designated as 'Normally Discouraged'. However, at the time of construction of the Taurbeg Wind Farm, the Draft Landscape Strategy 2007 designated this area as an area strategic for wind farm developments.
Visibility of the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm within the LCT	The northwest and west of this LCT have clear open views towards the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from the local roads and residential dwellings in close proximity. Beyond 5km, there are very limited views of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm due to dense vegetation along the local roads, undulating landscapes and coniferous forestry.
'Do-Nothing' Scenario	In a Do-Nothing Scenario, 11 No. Turbines of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm will be decommissioned when their planning permission expires in 2026. In a Do-Nothing Scenario, these turbines will not be visible within this LCT, reducing the number of turbines effecting the landscape of this LCT
Cumulative Landscape Effects	Two other existing wind developments are located within LCT 14a along with the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Knockacummer and Glentane Wind Farms are located southern extent of LCT 14a and northern extent LCT 11.

	The existing Glentane Wind Farm (11 No. turbines) is located to the southwest of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Glentane Wind Farm for the most part is visible in combination with the existing Taurbeg turbines. They appear visually separated from vantage points throughout the LCT due to their siting on separate, distinct landforms, in differing field patterns and within separate stands of coniferous forestry. The existing Knockacummer Wind Farm is the largest wind farm in the LCA Study Area (29 No. turbines). Knockacummer Wind Farm is located in the immediate setting of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm to the northeast. From beyond 3km, the existing Taurbeg and Knockacummer Wind Farms appear visually separated due to their siting on separate, distinct landforms, in differing field patterns and within separate stands of coniferous forestry. Viewpoint 2 was captured from close proximity, with the two wind farms appearing as one; this is one of very few vantage points where the two wind farms may appear in this manner. In general, the two wind farms appear coherent across the ridgeline of the upland landscape. The three wind farms of Taurbeg, Knockacummer and Glentane can be viewed in combination, as seen in viewpoints 3 and 4. The combination of the existing turbines is viewed along the ridgeline in the background of the images. The existing Taurbeg turbines are located between the other two wind farms, Knockacummer Wind Farm and Glentane Wind Farm. The three wind farms are of a wide horizontal extent from viewpoint 4. Viewpoint 3 is captured at a greater set back distance where the existing turbines do not take up a large portion of the view. All three existing wind farms are visible from designated scenic route 15 within this LCT. However, as shown in viewpoints 1 and 2, the existing turbines do not disrupt highly sensitive views and are viewed in the background of the images. In combination, the three wind farms contribute cumulative landscape effects on the character of this LCT.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.6.3)	**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	**Medium × Moderate = Moderate/Minor = Moderate (EPA 2022)** *"An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends."*
Mitigating Factors	› The Co. Cork Draft Landscape Strategy 2007 designated LCT 14a is a strategic area for wind farms at the time of the orginal planning permission and construction of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. › There is very limited visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from this LCT in comparison to ZTV map (See Figure 13-12) due to the roadside vegetation and coniferous foresty to the north and

	south-west, which visually screen the existing Taurbeg turbines from seisntive receptors within this LCT.
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 Landscape Character Assessment - LCT 11 – Broad Marginal Middle Ground Valleys

LCT 11 – Broad Marginal Middle Ground Valleys	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCT	LCT 11 – Broad Marginal Middle Ground Valleys is located approximately 550m from the nearest existing turbine (T10).
LCT Key Characteristics *(Draft Landscape Strategy 2007)*	› *"The main agricultural land use is dairy farming.* › *Small to medium size fields bounded by mixed broadleaf hedgerows.* › *The hedgerows and vegetation that forms the road boundaries is of medium height and in some areas it restricts views of the surrounding landscape.* › *Relative evenness of terrain across the broad shallow valley of the River Blackwater, fed by several tributaries draining the higher ground to the north and south.* › *At higher altitudes, the ground rises relatively steeply to meet a more mountainous landscape, while lower down the ground spreads out into gently sloping fertile land."*
Landscape Sensitivity (Definition from Section 13.2.6.1)	CCDP has provided their own landscape sensitivity designations for LCT 11. The designations within the CCDP for the landscape sensitivity is determined to be **High.** It should be noted that the existing Taurbeg turbines are setback from the Rivers Blackwater and Dalua and do not alter the scenic setting or the physical fabric of these landscape receptors.
Visibility of the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm within the LCT	There is very limited visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from LCT 11 due to dense vegetation along roadsides and undulating landscapes which afford limited open views towards the existing turbines. The primary areas with visibility of the existing turbines within LCT 11 are of higher elevated vantage points overlooking the landscape and valleys. There is very limited visibility of the existing turbines from prominent landscape receptors such as The River Blackwater and River Dalua. The existing Taurbeg turbines do not significantly impact the sensitivities, visual characteristics and setting of these prominent rivers.
'Do-Nothing' Scenario	In a Do-Nothing Scenario, 11 No. Turbines of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm will be decommissioned when their planning permission expires in 2026. In a Do-Nothing Scenario, these turbines will not be visible within this LCT, reducing the number of turbines effecting the landscape of this LCT

Cumulative Landscape Effects	Three existing wind farms are located within LCT 11: Knockacummer Glentane and WED Cross (2 No. turbines) Wind Farms. The existing Taurbeg turbines are located approximately 550m outside this LCT. The existing Taurbeg turbines are viewed in combination with the Knockacummer and Glentane Wind Farms to the north of this LCT. Viewpoints 3, 4 and 5 represent views from this LCT and show that the existing wind farms are viewed in a visually coherent manner across the upland landscape in the background of the images. The three wind farms are of a wide horizontal extent in viewpoints 4 and 5. However, they do not obstruct any highly sensitive views and do not significantly alter the setting of the landscape. The WED Cross Wind Farm is located to the very west of this LCT on the Cork Kerry Border in the townland of Lackanastocka. There is no combined visibility of the WED Cross Wind Farm with existing wind farms Knockacummer or Glentane, within this LCT. There is likely to be no significant cumulative landscape effects on this LCT from the Proposed Lifetime Extension.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.6.3)	**Slight** *"The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium- to short-term and/or reversible."*
Significance of Effect	**High × Slight = Moderate/Minor = Moderate (EPA 2022)** *"An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends."*
Mitigating Factors	› Although the existing Taurbeg Turbines are visible from this LCT, they do not significantly impact key landscape and visual sensitivties within this LCT. › There is very limited visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm due to the undulating landscape, the landform Taurhill, roadside vegetation and coniferous foresty to the south and west. › The exsiting Taurbeg turbines are setback from prominent rivers within the LCT such as River Blackwater and Dalua and does not alter or disrupt the setting of these rivers.
Residual Effect	**Slight (EPA 2022)** "An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities."

Table 13-14 Landscape Character Assessment - LCA 10 – Mount Eagle and Upper Clydagh River Valley

LCA 10 – Mount Eagle and Upper Clydagh River Valley

Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	*LCA 10 – Mount Eagle and Upper Clydagh River Valley* is located approximately 6km from the nearest existing turbine (T5).
LCA Key Characteristics *(Volume 1 – Appendix 7)*	› *The Clydagh and Owveg River valleys split the area. Both of these rivers flow in a northerly direction towards the River Feale. In between these valleys and to their sides are higher areas which contain smaller river valleys.* › *Pasture covers a large part of the western and northern part of the area. There would also be almost an equal amount of coniferous forestry in the area, with a significant area of this in the southeastern corner. Forestry is also found in the western part of the area. Moors and heathland, along with peat bog can also be found, reflective of the elevated nature of parts of the area.* › *The area falls generally from the south to the north. There would be views from the N21 in this direction.* › *The southeastern corner is designated an area of Secondary Special Amenity in the Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021. Archaeological landscape as listed in the Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021 in the Brosna area. There are also views & prospects on the N21. This area is in general elevated, with views across the area. A landscape designation could therefore be considered for this area.*
Landscape Sensitivity (Definition from Section 13.2.6.1)	KCDP has provided their own landscape sensitivity designations for LCA 10. The designations within the KCDP for the landscape sensitivity is determined to be **Low/Medium.** There are two KCDP landscape designations within this LCA. However as discussed above in Section 13.4.1.2, there will be no direct landscape effects on these designations. The LCA has been highly modified by humans for coniferous forestry and wind farms.
Visibility of the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm within the LCA	The ZTV shows primarily full theoretical visibility within 10km of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. The majority of the ZTV within 10km of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from within LCA 10 is within agricultural fields, coniferous forestry, and local roads, which are of low sensitivity. On-site appraisals determined there is a lot less visibility due to the hills of the Mullaghareirk Mountain range surrounding the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm and coniferous forestry located in in the direction of the turbines. Some elevated vantage points with agricultural fields and local roads have visibility.
'Do-Nothing' Scenario	In a Do-Nothing Scenario, 11 No. Turbines of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm will be decommissioned when their planning permission expires in 2026. In a Do-Nothing Scenario, these turbines will not be visible within this LCA, reducing the number of turbines effecting the landscape of this LCA
Cumulative Landscape Effects	There are three existing wind farms located within this LCA: Cordal 1 (28 turbines), Coolleagrean (7 turbines) and Mount Eagle 1 (8 turbines). These three wind farms are located within Co. Kerry's designated visually sensitive areas. The existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is not visible in combination with Coolleagrean or Cordal 1 Wind Farms. There is visibility from Mount Eagle 1 Wind Farm, of the existing Taurbeg turbines

	On balance, there is likely to be no significant cumulative landscape effects on this LCT from the Proposed Lifetime Extension.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.6.3)	**Slight** *"The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium- to short-term and/or reversible."*
Significance of Effect	**Medium × Slight = Minor = Slight (EPA 2022)** "An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities."
Mitigating Factors	› The existing Taurbeg Turbines do not alter the material and physical fabric of this LCA. › Althiugh the exsiting Taurbeg Turbines are visible from this LCT, they do not significantly imopact key landscape and visual sensitvities within this LCA. › There is very limited visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm due to the undulating landscape, the landform Taurhill, vegetation along the roads and coniferous foresty. › The exsiting Taurbeg turbines are setback from any desisgnted landscapes within the LCA and does not significantly alter the setti g of these designated landscapes.
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 Landscape Character Assessment - LCA 07 - Southern Uplands

LCA 07 – Southern Uplands	
Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	*LCA 07 – Southern Uplands* is located approximately 6.7km from the nearest existing turbine (T5).
LCA Key Characteristics *(Chapter 6 – Table 6.1)*	› *"The Mullaghareirk range of hills, which straddles the County Limerick, Cork and Kerry boundaries, is the principal defining feature of this landscape character area.* › *This is a gently undulating range of hills, which rises to almost a plateau near the Cork border.* › *Vegetation cover ranges from improved hill grassland, which tends to be wet in nature to disturbed peatland habitats, such as blanket bog, dry and wet heath.*

	› *Few of these habitats are intact, occurring only in patches interrupted by coniferous forestry and improved grassland.* › *Coniferous forestry, most of which is nearing maturity, is a dominant feature of this area."*
Landscape Sensitivity	The LDP does not provide landscape sensitivity ratings. LCA 07 is an upland area. The landscape has been highly modified landscape for coniferous forestry and agriculture. It features upland areas with long-ranging views across the landscape looking onto the Mullaghareirk Mountain range. There is one designated views and prospects within this LCA; however, there is no visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. There are no other designated landscape sensitives within this LCA. On balance, the landscape sensitivity is deemed to be **Low.**
Visibility of the Existing Taurbeg Wind Farm within the LCA	The ZTV shows primarily no theoretical visibility within this LCA with a large area of full theoretical visibility to the west within the LCA. Site surveys carried out in 2024 determined that visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm only occurs in areas of elevated vantage point with opens views to the south across the landscape. These views only occur at the townlands of Caherhayes, Mountcollins and Acres (See Plate 13-15), where the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is visible in the background.
'Do-Nothing' Scenario	In a Do-Nothing Scenario, 11 No. Turbines of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm will be decommissioned when their planning permission expires in 2026. In a Do-Nothing Scenario, these turbines will not be visible within this LCA, reducing the number of turbines effecting the landscape of this LCA
Cumulative Landscape Effects	Existing wind farms Knockawarriga, Tournafulla, Dromdeeveen, Rathcahill, Gortnacloghy and Mauricetown are all located within this LCA. The existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is visible from this LCT on elevated vantage points where there are open views across the landscape in the direction of the turbines. The existing Taurbeg turbines can be seen in combination with the Knockawarriga Wind Farm intermittently at Mountcollins village. When viewed in combination, the existing Taurbeg turbines appear small at scale from this distance and sited in the background of the view. On balance, there is likely to be no significant cumulative landscape effects on this LCT from the Proposed Lifetime Extension.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.6.3)	**Slight** *"The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium- to short-term and/or reversible."*
Significance of Effect	***Low × Slight = Minor/Negligible = Not Significant (EPA 2022)***

	"An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences."
Mitigating Factors	› The existing Taurbeg turbines are only visible from elevated vanatge points within this LCA, such as near the village of Mountcollins. › The exsiting Taurbeg turbines in the background of the view from this LCA. › There are no designtaed landscapes within this LCA. › The landscape baseline of the this LCA ultimatley remains the same.
Residual Effect	**Not Significant (EPA 2022)** "An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences."

Discussion of Landscape Effects on LCTs

As demonstrated in the Landscape Character Assessment tables above, no significant landscape effects are likely to occur in any of the LCTs and LCAs within the LCA Study Area. The greatest effects from the Proposed Lifetime Extension will occur on LCT 14a - Fissured Marginal and Forested Rolling Upland, where the existing Taurbeg turbines are located as seen in Table 13-12. A landscape effect of 'Slight' from the Proposed Lifetime Extension will occur on LCT 11 - Broad Marginal Middle Ground Valleys. The existing Taurbeg turbines are located in close proximity to LCT 11 at 550m as seen in Table 13-13. LCA 10 – Mount Eagle and Upper Clydagh River Valley and LCA 07 - Southern Uplands will have no significant effects on the Proposed Lifetime Extension as seen on Table 13-14 and Table 13-15.

13.7.2.2 Visual Effects

13.7.2.2.1 *Selection of Viewpoints*

Photographic visualisations were used to aid the assessment of the visual effects arising as a result of the existing Taurbeg turbines from 6 no. viewpoint locations, which are presented in EIAR Volume 2: Photographic Visualisations Booklet. These 6 No. viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 13-14. The locations chosen for viewpoints follow a detailed and extensive process, including review of baseline information, site visits, and high-quality photography at multiple locations within the LVIA Study Area. Many locations, which based on a desktop review had the potential for views of the existing Taurbeg turbines, had complete intervening visual screening or were visually screened to such an extent that the completion of photographic visualisations was not considered useful in terms of the assessment process, i.e., little or no visibility towards the existing turbines.

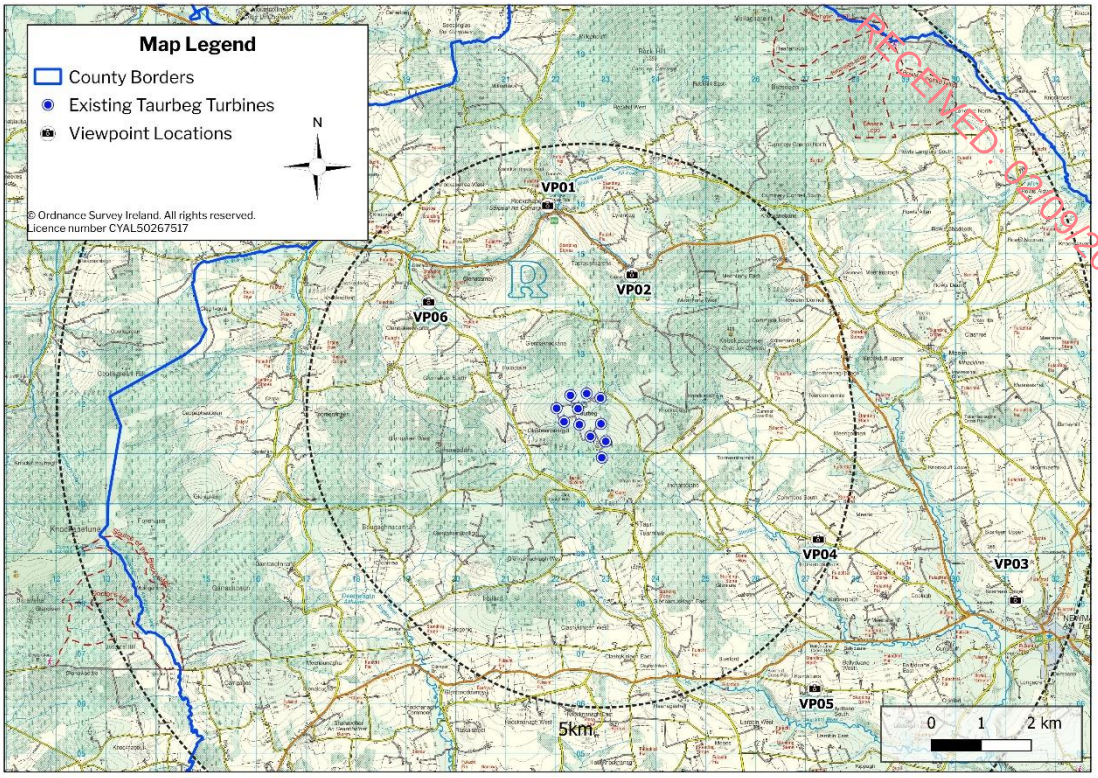


Figure 13-16 Photographic Visualisation Booklet Viewpoint Locations

The location specific details of the 6 No. viewpoints and the receptors they represent are described in the top row in each table below, and their locations are illustrated in Figure 13-16 above.

It is not possible to present every view and every location by means of viewpoints. The choice of viewpoint locations is influenced by both the views available and the type of viewer. Care was taken to provide a range of views from various geographic perspectives (distance, orientation, and elevation).

13.7.2.2.2 Viewpoint Assessment Tables

The following tables assess visual effects arising as a result of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from the 6 No. viewpoints. The existing Taurbeg Wind Farm contains already built infrastructure, which is operational, and currently visible in the existing landscape. As is evident by the visualisations, the Proposed Lifetime Extension amounts to little or no change to the current views of the existing turbines. As detailed in the methodology, the term 'Magnitude of Change' is used in the impact assessment tables below. In the context of this assessment, where the turbines already exist in the landscape, the magnitude of the continued impact of the turbines is considered. In order to facilitate the visual impact assessments included in this Chapter and effectively determine the continued visual impact of the existing turbines, the magnitude of change was determined by considering the change that would occur against a 'do-nothing scenario' where the turbines would become absent from the landscape.

The wireline visualisations in the *Photographic Visualisation Booklet* are useful visual aids for the identification of other wind energy developments in the landscape and discussion of cumulative visual effects reported in the tables below.

Table 13-16 Viewpoint Assessment Tables

Viewpoint 1 – Designated Scenic Route 15 - Rockchapel			
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View from designated scenic route 15 north of the village Rockchapel. › Approximately 3.7km north of existing turbine T5. › Grid Reference: E 521805.548 N 616028.692 › No. of turbines visible: 3/11		
LCA and Sensitivity	LCT 14a – Fissured Marginal and Forested Rolling Upland – **Low/Medium**	**Visual Receptor(s) and Sensitivity**	Designated scenic route 15 – **High** Residents – **Medium** Rockchapel - **Medium**
'Current View' Description	The image shows an elevated view overlooking the village of Rockchapel located within the River Feale Valley. The topography ascends to the background of the image to Taurbeg hill. Dense vegetation and tall treelines line the agricultural farmland south of Rockchapel. There are large areas of coniferous forestry located on Taurbeg hill which visually screen the towers of the existing Taurbeg turbines.		
Do - Nothing Scenario	In a "Do-Nothing" scenario, the 11 No. turbines of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm will be decommissioned. Hence, all turbines would become absent from this view.		
Proposed View Description (focus on description of the existing turbines)	From this viewpoint location, 3 No. of the existing turbines are visible along the horizon in the image. T3 and T6 blade tips are visible above Taurbeg hill and the treeline of coniferous forestry. T5 is the most prominent and clearly visible above the treeline; however, T5 is visible in the background of the image and does not obstruct any scenic views.		
Cumulative Effects	The existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is located between Glentane Wind Farm on the right and Knockacummer Wind Farm on the left. The Glentane turbines are identified in the wireline view but are not actually visible from this viewpoint due to visual screening from a tract of forestry. Many turbines of the Knockacummer Wind Farm are visible across the skyline in the left of the view and cause some visual effects from this viewpoint. Only one Taurbeg turbine is clearly visible, and only blades are visible on two other Taurbeg turbines, it therefore has a very limited contribution to the cumulative visual effects experienced from this viewpoint. Knockacummer Wind Farm extends further left from this image. There is visible separation between Taurbeg and Knockacummer turbines. They are sited on separate and distinct landforms. No likely significant cumulative effects are deemed to arise at this viewpoint.		
Sensitivity of Visual Receptor(s) (Definition – from Section 13.2.7.1)	**High** Viewpoint 1 was captured on a Co. Cork designated scenic route which represents receptors of 'High' sensitivity on account of this designation. This viewpoint is captured on an elevated vantage point overlooking village of Rockchapel, which is the closest settlement to the existing Taurbeg turbines.		

Viewpoint 1 – Designated Scenic Route 15 - Rockchapel	
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.7.2)	**Slight** *"The proposal would be partially visible or visible at sufficient distance to be perceptible and result in a low level of change in the view and its composition and a low degree of contrast. The character of the view may be altered but will remain similar to the baseline existing situation.*
Significance of Effect	**High × Slight = Moderate/Minor = Moderate (EPA, 2022)** *"An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends."*
Mitigation Factors	› The existing turbines are sited in sparsely settled upland landscape with adequate setback distance from the high-sensitivity designated Scenic Route 15. › This photo visualisation does not represent all views from SR 15 or Rockchapel village; the existing turbines will primarily be visually screened behind areas of mature vegetation, residential dwellings and the local topography along the route and within the settlement. › Whilst SR 15 is a designated scenic route in the CCDP and considered high sensitivity, it is not a well-trafficked tourism route and is unlikely to be considered a destination of national renown drawing high numbers of travellers.
Residual Effect (incl. mitigating factors)	**Slight (EPA, 2022)** *"An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities."*

Viewpoint 2 – Designated Scenic Route 15			
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View from designated Scenic Route 15 in the townland Meentinny West › Approximately 2.5km northeast of existing turbine T6. › Grid Reference: E 523492.717 N 614644.109 › No. of turbines visible: 3/11		
LCA and Sensitivity	LCT 14a – Fissured Marginal and Forested Rolling Upland – **Low/Medium**	**Visual Receptor(s) and Sensitivity**	Designated Scenic Route 15 – **High** Residents – **Medium** R567 Regional Road – **Low**
'Current View' Description	The image comprises a small agricultural field, commercial forestry and other mature vegetation throughout the image. A residential dwelling is located to the left of the image.		
Do - Nothing Scenario	In a "Do-Nothing" scenario, 11 No. turbines of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm will be decommissioned. Hence, all turbines would become absent from this view.		

Viewpoint 2 – Designated Scenic Route 15	
Proposed View Description (focus on description of the existing turbines)	From this viewpoint location, 3 No. of the existing Taurbeg turbines are visible in the background of the image (as identified in the wireline view, the turbines seen to the left of the image in closer proximity to this viewpoint are the existing Knockacummer turbines). T9, T10 and T11 of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm are visible above the treelines in the distant background. The remaining existing Taurbeg turbines are visually screened by the localised topography, coniferous forestry and other mature treelines.
Cumulative Effects	The existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is located in the background beyond Knockacummer Wind Farm. The two wind farms are viewed as one wind farm from this viewpoint. Knockacummer Wind Farm extends further left from this view; however, the Knockacummer turbines are primarily visually screened by local topography, vegetation and one residential dwelling. No likely significant cumulative effects are deemed to arise at this viewpoint.
Sensitivity of Visual Receptor(s) (Definition – from Section 13.2.7.1)	**Medium** Although this viewpoint was captured on designated Scenic Route 15 which is of high-sensitivity, there are no unique or distinctive scenic views from this section of SR15. A residential dwelling is the closest residential receptor to the existing Taurbeg turbines. However, it is located at a setback distance of 2.5km and its views are orientated in the opposite direction to the existing Taurbeg turbines.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.7.2)	**Slight** *"The proposal would be partially visible or visible at sufficient distance to be perceptible and result in a low level of change in the view and its composition and a low degree of contrast. The character of the view may be altered but will remain similar to the baseline existing situation."*
Significance of Effect	**Medium × Slight = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2022)** *"An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities."*
Mitigation Factors	› Only one residential receptor is experiencing visual effects as shown in the photo visualisation from this view. › The existing turbines are sited in sparsely settled upland landscape with adequate setback distance from the high-sensitivity designated Scenic Route 15. The existing turbines (Knockacummer and Taurbeg) do not impact the key scenic sensitivities of the designated scenic route. › Whilst SR 15 is a designated scenic route in the CCDP and considered high-sensitivity, it is not a well-trafficked tourism route and is unlikely to be considered a destination of national renown drawing high numbers of travellers.
Residual Effect (incl. mitigating factors)	**Slight (EPA, 2022)** *"An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities."*

Viewpoint 3 – Newmarket			
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View from Scarteen road in the townland Scarteen Lower and representing the town Newmarket. › Approximately 8.7km southeast of existing turbine T10. › Grid Reference: E 531168.499 N 608129.779 › No. of turbines visible: 6		
LCA and Sensitivity	LCT 11 – Fissured Marginal and Forested Rolling Upland – **High**	**Visual Receptor(s) and Sensitivity**	Newmarket – **Medium**
'Current View' Description	The image shows a long-ranging view across a sparsely settled and rural landscape which comprises of agricultural fields, hedgerows, trees and occasional residential dwellings throughout the image. The topography descends to the left of the image. The existing Glentane and Knockacummer turbines are visible within the current view.		
Do - Nothing Scenario	In a "Do-Nothing" scenario, 11 No. turbines of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm will be decommissioned. Hence, all turbines would become absent from this view.		
Proposed View Description (focus on description of the existing turbines)	6 No. existing Taurbeg turbines are visible from this viewpoint in a linear array above the distant horizon. T1, T10 and T11 are clearly visible from this view, however, a mature tree line in the middle distance visually screens the remaining 5 existing turbines from this view. Although all turbines would likely be visible in winter months when these trees have lost their foliage. At this distance (8.7km) the existing Taurbeg turbines are relatively small features and comprise a small portion of the long ranging landscape view.		
Cumulative Effects	The existing Taurbeg turbines are located between the existing Glentane Wind Farm on the left and the existing Knockacummer Wind Farm on the right. The three windfarms are viewed as a linear array across the background of this view. The Knockacummer and Taurbeg Wind Farms are viewed as a continuous wind farm in the background of the image. Cumulative visual effects arise.		
Sensitivity of Visual Receptor(s) (Definition – from Section 13.2.7.1)	**Medium** This viewpoint was captured within the immediate setting of the largest town the in the LVIA Study Area, Newmarket. Newmarket is setback by an undulating rural landscape from the existing Taurbeg turbines at 8.7km.		
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.7.2)	**Slight** *"The proposal would be partially visible or visible at sufficient distance to be perceptible and result in a low level of change in the view and its composition and a low degree of contrast. The character of the view may be altered but will remain similar to the baseline existing situation.*		
Significance of Effect	**Medium × Slight = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2022)**		

Viewpoint 3 – Newmarket	
	"An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities."
Mitigation Factors	› This is one of the few views of the existing Taurbeg turbines from Newmarket. › There is limited visibility from the immediate setting of Newmarket. › The existing turbines are sited in sparsely settled upland landscape with adequate setback distance from the town of Newmarket. › The number of residential receptors experiencing visual effects as shown in the photo visualisation is few.
Residual Effect (incl. mitigating factors)	**Slight (EPA, 2022)** *"An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities."*

Viewpoint 4 – Commons South			
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View from a local road in the townland of Commons South. › Approximately 4.6km southeast of existing turbine T10. › Grid Reference: E 527219.744 N 609346.253 › No. of turbines visible: 11/11		
LCA and Sensitivity	LCT 11 – Broad Marginal Middleground Valleys – **High**	**Visual Receptor(s) and Sensitivity**	Resident Dwellings – **Medium** Local Road - **Low**
'Current View' Description	The image shows a medium-ranging view towards Taurbeg hill from an elevated vantage point. The image comprises a local road, vegetation lining the local road and rolling hills in the background. Coniferous forestry can be viewed across the rolling hills. A residential dwelling is located at the right foreground of the image. The existing Glentane and existing Knockacummer turbines are visible in the current view.		
Do - Nothing Scenario	In a "Do-Nothing" scenario, 11 No. turbines of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm will be decommissioned. Hence, all turbines would become absent from this view.		
Proposed View Description (focus on description of the existing turbines)	The existing Taurbeg turbines are located in the uplands in the background of the image. Most of the existing Taurbeg turbines are clearly visible from this view. Several turbines are partially visible as they are located on the northern slopes of Taurbeg hill with the towers and nacelles visually screened by the intervening landform (e.g. T8 and T3).		
Cumulative Effects	The existing Taurbeg turbines are located between existing Glentane Wind Farm at the left of the image and existing Knockacummer Wind Farm to the right. The three wind farms take up a wide horizontal extent across the		

Viewpoint 4 – Commons South	
	ridgeline in the background of the image and cumulative visual effects do arise. From this vantage point, the three wind farms are visually separated and are seen on separate and distinct landforms.
Sensitivity of Visual Receptor(s) (Definition – from Section 13.2.7.1)	**Medium** This viewpoint represents a cluster of approximately 7 residential receptors at a setback distance of 4.6km to the existing Taurbeg turbines.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.7.2)	**Moderate** *"The change in the view may involve partial obstruction of existing view or partial change in character and composition of the baseline through the introduction of new elements or removal of existing elements. Likely to occur at locations where the existing turbines are partially visible over a moderate or medium extent, and which are not in close proximity to the proposed development. Change may be readily noticeable but not substantially different in scale and/or character from the surroundings and wider setting."* The magnitude of change is deemed medium on account of cumulative.
Significance of Effect	**Medium × Moderate = Moderate/Minor = Moderate (EPA, 2022)** *"An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends."*
Mitigation Factors	› The number of residential receptors experiencing visual effects as shown in the photo visualisation is few. › The primary residential visual amenity of the residential dwelling is orientated in the opposite northeast to southwest direction, which is the opposite direction to the existing turbines within the current view.
Residual Effect (incl. mitigating factors)	**Slight (EPA, 2022)** *"An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities."*

Viewpoint 5 – Designated Scenic Route 17	
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View from designated Scenic Route 17 in the townland of Barnacurra. › Approximately 6.2km southeast of existing turbine T10. › Grid Reference: E 527149.403 N 606355.459 › No. of turbines visible: 8/11

Viewpoint 5 – Designated Scenic Route 17			
LCA and Sensitivity	LCT 11 – Broad Marginal Middleground Valleys – **High**	**Visual Receptor(s) and Sensitivity**	Designated Scenic Route 17 – **High.** Residential - **Low**
'Current View' Description	The image shows a long-ranging view across the landscape onto rolling hills in the background of the image. The image comprises agricultural fields and low hedgerows lining the field patterns. Coniferous forestry is seen across the rolling hills in the background of the image. Occasional residential dwellings and farm buildings are visible throughout the image, it is a very sparsely populated rural landscape. The existing Taurbeg turbines and existing Knockacummer turbines are visible in the current view.		
Do - Nothing Scenario	In a "Do-Nothing" scenario, all 11 No. turbines of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm will be decommissioned. Hence, all turbines would become absent from this view.		
Proposed View Description (focus on description of the existing turbines)	The majority of the existing Taurbeg turbines are visible upon and just beyond Taurbeg hill. The hill partially screens some of the existing turbines from view. T2 and T10 are clearly visible from this view as they are sited on top of Taurbeg hill and not beyond the ridgeline.		
Cumulative Effects	The existing Taurbeg turbines are located to the left of the existing Knockacummer Wind Farm which comprises a large horizontal array of turbines across the uplands in the background of the view. There is clear visible separation between the two wind farms as they are sited on separate and distinct landforms. Cumulative visual effects occur as the existing wind farms combined take up a wide horizontal extent across the background of the image. It should be noted that all the Glentane turbines are visible beyond the hay bales in the foreground (see the wireline view), further extending the horizontal extent of the existing turbines across the landscape in the background of the image. However, the existing Knockacummer turbines take up a much wider spatial extent to the existing Taurbeg turbines, which are partially visually screened by the topography. The existing turbines do not obstruct any views but are visible from the designated scenic route.		
Sensitivity of Visual Receptor(s) (Definition – from Section 13.2.7.1)	**High** The viewpoint was captured on SR 17, which is a designated scenic route within the CCDP 2022-28. Therefore, the overall sensitivity for this viewpoint is high.		
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.7.2)	**Slight** *"The proposal would be partially visible or visible at sufficient distance to be perceptible and result in a low level of change in the view and its composition and a low degree of contrast. The character of the view may be altered but will remain similar to the baseline existing situation.*		
Significance of Effect	**High × Slight = Moderate/Minor = Moderate (EPA, 2022)**		

Viewpoint 5 – Designated Scenic Route 17	
	"An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends."
Mitigation Factors	› The existing turbines are sited in sparsely settled upland landscape with adequate setback distance from the high-sensitivity designated Scenic Route 17. › This photo visualisation does not represent all views from SR 17. Primarily, the existing turbines will be intermittently visible behind areas of mature vegetation and the local topography along the route. › Whilst SR 17 is a designated scenic route in the CCDP and considered high-sensitivity, it is not a well-trafficked tourism route and is unlikely to be considered a destination of national renown drawing high numbers of travellers.
Residual Effect (incl. mitigating factors)	**Slight (EPA, 2022)** *"An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.."*

Viewpoint 6 – Glenakeel North			
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View from L1003 local road in the townland of Glenakeel North. › Approximately 3.3km northwest of existing turbine T5. › Grid Reference: E 519424.612 N 614098.376 › No. of turbines visible: 10/11		
LCA and Sensitivity	LCT 14a – Fissured Marginal and Forested Rolling Upland – **Low/Medium**	**Visual Receptor(s) and Sensitivity**	Residential Dwellings – **Medium**
'Current View' Description	The image shows a medium-ranging view towards Taurbeg hill, which is visible in the background of the image framed on either side by a small valley. The image comprises the L1003 local road, coniferous forestry, agricultural fields and residential dwellings to the right of the image.		
Do - Nothing Scenario	In a "Do-Nothing" scenario, all 11 No. turbines of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm will be decommissioned. Hence, all turbines would become absent from this view.		
Proposed View Description (focus on description of the existing turbines)	The existing Taurbeg turbines are visible in the background image. They are irregularly spaced and clustered upon the most elevated landform. All turbines are viewed above the horizon and do not overlap or interfere with the complexity of lower ground. The existing met mast is visible from this location between T3 and T8. Several existing turbines are located behind the ascending topography with their lower towers visually screened. T7 is completely visually screened by the landform of Taurbeg hill.		

Viewpoint 6 – Glenakeel North	
Cumulative Effects	No other wind farms are visible and there are no cumulative effects from this viewpoint.
Sensitivity of Visual Receptor(s) (Definition – from Section 13.2.7.1)	**Medium:** The residential receptors located at this viewpoint have open views towards the existing Taurbeg turbines. The residential receptors are located approximately 3.3km from the existing Taurbeg turbines. Siting of the existing turbines adheres to the <500m setback distance from residential receptors recommended in the WEDGS (DoEHLG, 2006).
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 13.2.7.2	**Moderate** *"The change in the view may involve partial obstruction of existing view or partial change in character and composition of the baseline through the introduction of new elements or removal of existing elements. Likely to occur at locations where the existing turbines are partially visible over a moderate or medium extent, and which are not in close proximity to the proposed development. Change may be readily noticeable but not substantially different in scale and/or character from the surroundings and wider setting."*
Significance of Effect	**Medium × Moderate = Moderate/Minor = Moderate (EPA, 2022)** *"An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends'*
Mitigation Factors	› The landform of Taurbeg hill visually screens the lower portion of the towers and hardstands for the majority of the exiting Taurbeg turbines, with T7 completely visually screened by Taurbeg hill. › The number of residential receptors experiencing visual effects as shown in the photo visualisation is few. › The existing Taurbeg turbines are setback approximately 3km from visual receptors represented by this viewpoint.
Residual Effect (incl. mitigating factors)	**Moderate (EPA, 2022)** *"An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends."*

No 'Significant' residual visual effects were found at any of the 6 viewpoint locations. A residual visual effect of '**Moderate'** was deemed to arise at viewpoint 6. Viewpoint 6 was deemed a 'Moderate' residual visual effect due to the residential receptors with views overlooking the valley in the direction of the existing Taurbeg turbines. However, there are very few residential receptors experiencing visual effects as shown in viewpoint 6 and the turbines are well setback at a distance of 3km. A residual effect of '**Slight'** was deemed to arise at the remaining four viewpoints.

13.7.2.2.3 *Summary of Visibility Appraisal*

Visibility appraisals determined that there is great variation in the degree of visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm depending on geographic location, proximity and local landscape characteristics. In general, actual visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is far less than is shown by ZTV mapping. The wind farm is largely screened from view due to coniferous forestry and the topographic characteristics of the Mullaghareirk Mountain Range and other hills surrounding the Site. Where the existing turbines are visible, they appear irregularly spaced and clustered around the uplands of Taurbeg Hill, well set back from visual receptors. To the north, visual receptors are typically located at lower elevations in the narrow valleys of the Mullaghareirk Range and to the south the landscape is a very sparsely settled rural agricultural landscape. The existing turbines are well set back from large population centres and well trafficked road networks and are therefore seen from a very small number of visual receptors, therefore causing landscape and visual effects for a relatively small number of receptors. The existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is setback from high-sensitivity visual receptors by features of the rural landscape such as extensive field patterns, rolling hills and coniferous forestry. Views of the existing turbines will be intermittent as a result of the numerous rolling hills, local terrain and vegetation in the landscape. The greatest potential for significant visual effects is upon residential visual amenity, and less so on other sensitive visual receptors such as recreational amenities and protected scenic amenities. Overall, the existing Taurbeg turbines are only visible from a very small number of receptors in a very sparsely populated rural landscape.

13.7.2.2.4 Residential Visual Amenity

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines (WEDGs) for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG) were published in 2006. The Draft Revised WEDGs (DoHPLG) were consulted on in 2019. Note however no update or final 2019 WEDGs were subsequently published. The existing Taurbeg Wind Farm was granted planning permission in 2003 and became operational in 2006. Therefore, the WEDGs (DoEHLG, 2006) had not yet been published prior to the consent and commissioning of Taurbeg Wind Farm. Current best practice for wind farm design in relation to residential visual amenity is a minimum 500m setback distance as set out in the WEDGs (DoEHLG, 2006). In the case of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, the turbines are well set back from residential visual amenity. The closest dwelling (H10) is located at a setback distance of 731m from T8. As illustrated in Figure 13-17, the turbines are set back from residential receptors, far beyond the standard set back distances set out in the WEDGs (DoEHLG, 2006). The existing turbines also adhere to the 2019 Draft WEDGs in relation to turbine setback from residential receptors i.e. a minimum 4 x tip height (108.2m x 4 =432.8m).

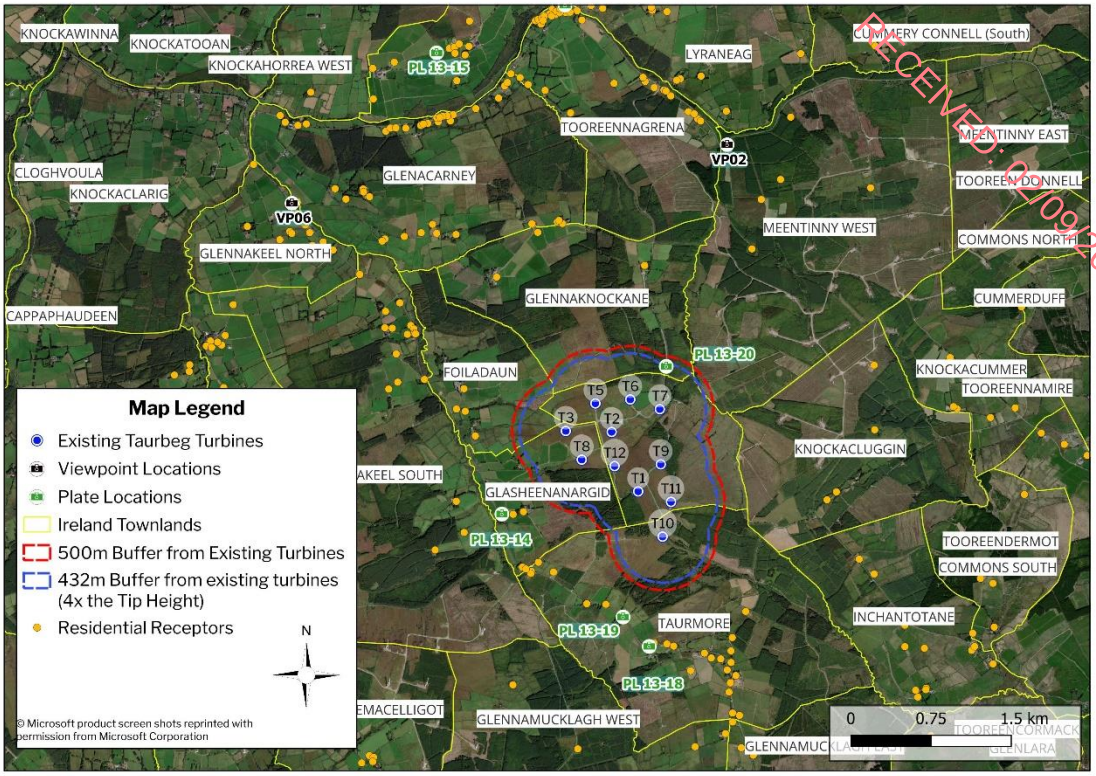


Figure 13-17 Residential Receptors in Close Proximity to the Existing Taurbeg Turbines

Section 13.5.1, in the visibility appraisal of this Chapter discusses the visibility from residential receptors with clear open views of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Viewpoints 2 and 6 represent views from residential dwellings within 4km of the existing Taurbeg turbines and have open views towards the Site.

Photographic visualisations are one of the tools employed during the LVIA in order to inform the assessment of landscape and visual effects. It would be a disproportionate measure to include an individual photographic visualisation from every residential dwelling, and this is not required to conduct a thorough and robust assessment of landscape and visual effects. In line with the guidance laid out in the GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013), the viewpoints selected for the LVIA conducted were informed by a range of factors, including "*ZTV analysis, fieldwork, and desk research*" (para 6.18, GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013), Furthermore, the GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013), states that representative viewpoints are:

> *"selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptors, where larger numbers of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ" (para 6.19 GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013)).*

The assessment of visual effects on the small number of residential receptors in very close proximity to the Site in the townlands of Tauremore, Glasheenanargid, Foiladaun, Glennakeel North and Meentinny West were informed by Visibility Appraisals and Photographic Visualisations– See Section 13.5.1 and 13.7.2.2.2 previously. The townlands are shown above in Figure 13-17.

Tauremore located immediately to the south of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm consists of a rural, clustered settlement. Views towards the Site are presented by Plate 13-17 and Plate 13-18 in Section 13.5.1. The localised landform Taur hill is located to the south of the Site and visually screens views of the existing Taurbeg turbines from the majority of residential receptors in this town land. An overall residual visual effect of **'Not Significant'** was deemed to arise from the Proposed Lifetime Extension.

Residential Receptors in the townland of Foiladaun which are of 'High' sensitivity have limited visibility of the existing Taurbeg turbines due to dense roadside screening. The residential receptors in the

townland of Foiladaun are located on the side of the gently sloping valleys. The undulating landforms of Taurbeg hill further visually screen the existing Taurbeg turbines from residential receptors in the townland of Foiladaun. Considering there is limited visibility of the existing Taurbeg turbines from residential receptors in Foiladaun, the visual effects are deemed to be **'Not Significant'.**

Plate 13-20 Residential Receptor located approximately 821m from the nearest existing Taurbeg turbine T8 in the townland of Glasheenanargid

The residential receptor (H33) located in the townland of Glasheenanargid are of 'High' sensitivity due to being located approximately 821m from the nearest existing turbine T8 as stated in Section 13.5.1. Plate 13-13 represents views towards the existing Taurbeg turbines from the residential receptor, H33. The Residential receptor is located on an elevated point with views in the opposite direction to the existing Taurbeg turbines. There is dense vegetation located behind the residential receptor, which further visually screen views of the existing Taurbeg turbines. On balance, an overall residual visual effect of '**Slight'** is deemed to arise on this residential receptor.

Viewpoint 2 represents views from the townland of Meentinny West. There is one residential receptor in the townland of Meentinny West with visibility. As seen in Table 13-16 – Viewpoint 2, the overall residual effect is deemed to be **'Slight'.**

The greatest effects on residents' visual amenity will occur at residential receptors located on the L1003 local road to the northwest of the existing Taurbeg turbines in the townland of Glennakeel North. Viewpoint 6, located approximately 3.3km from the nearest turbine T5, was deemed to have a sensitivity of **'Medium'.** Considering that views of the residential receptors located in close proximity to Viewpoint 6 are focused in the direction of the turbines, the magnitude of change is deemed to be '**Moderate'.** However, the turbines do not disrupt any scenic views and are located on and behind the ridgeline. Overall, this viewpoint is deemed to have a **'Moderate'** Medium-Term' residual visual effect.

13.7.2.3 Proposed Offsetting Lands-Landscape and Visual Effects

Section 13.4.3 describes the character of the Proposed Offsetting lands. As reported in Section 13.4.3, these lands are highly modified by forestry and agriculture, and landscape sensitivity of the Proposed Offsetting lands is 'Low'. The character of the Proposed Offsetting lands will be altered by the restoration of farmland through planting wildlife crop, hedgerow management and predator fencing as well as permanent removal of forestry. The magnitude of change is deemed to 'Slight' and highly localised. Once the Proposed Offsetting Measures have been implemented, landscape effects on the Proposed Offsetting lands themselves will be Positive, Long-Term and '**Not Significant'.**

As reported in Section 13.4.3, the Proposed Offsetting lands are located within an area designated as 'visually sensitive' in the KCDP, it is a large landscape area considered to be 'High' sensitivity. This 'visually sensitive' designation comprises a large area of the landscape and the Proposed Offsetting lands are very small portion of this landscape. As the proposed interventions will cause highly localised changes to the landscape, they will have a 'Negligible' magnitude of change to the character and visual

sensitivities of the designated area. Overall residual landscape effects in the visually sensitive area is 'Not Significant'.

Designated scenic route KY-SR-1 is located adjacent to the Proposed Offsetting lands as described in Section 13.4.3 and shown in Figure 13-11. Designated KY-SR-1 represents receptors of '**High**' sensitivity. The high quality scenic amenity from this scenic route is directed out towards the open landscape to the west from the elevated vantage point from the western side of Mount Eagle. The Proposed Offsetting lands are located to the east and north of the scenic route and will therefore not impact the key scenic views and sensitivities from this designated scenic route. The visual changes to the landscape include changes to landcover arising from deforestation of forestry, enhancement of hedgerows and planting and changes to the composition of grassland. A 'Negligible' magnitude of change is deemed to arise for local receptors and designated scenic route KY-SR-1. The overall residual visual effects arising from the proposed measures within the Proposed Offsetting lands are deemed to be Positive, Long-Term and **'Not Significant'.**

13.7.2.4 Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

Cumulative Landscape Effects

As reported and mapped previously in Section 13.6: 'Cumulative Context', the existing Knockacummer Wind Farm and the existing Glentane Wind Farm are located to either side of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. All three wind farms are located in the same upland landscape, part of the Mullaghareirk Mountain range. Therefore, Taurbeg Wind Farm is seen within the same visual unit as Glentane and Knockacummer Wind Farms. However, stands of coniferous forestry and distinct local landforms (Knockacummer hill and Foilard) separate Taurbeg Wind Farm from the other two. These three existing wind farms collectively contribute to cumulative effects on the landscape at the southern extent of the Mullaghareirk Mountain Range. As reported in the LCA Assessment Tables previously (Table 13-12, Table 13-13, Table 13-14 and Table 13-15) the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm contributes to cumulative effects on the character of both LCT 14a and LCT 11 in combination with Glentane and Knockacummer Wind Farms. The impact assessment tables account for cumulative landscape effects and the residual landscape effects on these LCT 14a and LCT 11 were Moderate and Slight respectively.

There are no designated high-sensitive landscapes within the CCDP 2022-28 within the LVIA Study Area (e.g. No Co. Cork High Value Landscapes). The existing Taurbeg, Knockacummer and Glentane Wind Farms are visible from designated scenic routes across a wide horizontal extent; however, they are located in the background of views and do not disrupt any designated scenic views as seen in the *Photographic Visualisation Booklet.*

The *Photographic Visualisation Booklet* effectively illustrates the representative cumulative effects on the landscape character of this area. The visual effects of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm in combination with the existing Glentane and Knockacummer turbines (and other developments) were comprehensively analysed and discussed previously in Section 13.7.2.2.2 Viewpoint Assessment Tables.

Cumulative impacts on the character of the wider landscape are likely to be greatest where the existing turbines are visible in conjunction with other wind farm developments. As shown in the Cumulative Context map, there are many other wind energy developments in the wider landscape of the LVIA Study Area. Most of these other wind energy developments (except Glentane and Knockacummer Wind Farm) are well set back and separate from the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm and have no visual or landscape connectivity and therefore the contribution of Taurbeg Wind Farm to these cumulative effects is limited. The setback distances between projects and the narrow valleys between prominent landforms create relatively small and separate visual units within the upland areas of the Mullaghareirk Mountain Range. These characteristics give this landscape the capacity to absorb and accommodate multiple wind energy developments, thus the cumulative effects to the landscape are deemed

acceptable. On balance, there will be no significant cumulative effects on the landscape of the LVIA Study Area from the Proposed Lifetime Extension.

Cumulative Visual Effects

In the case of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, there are many scenarios and interactions where cumulative visual effects may occur. These scenarios include interactions between the existing Taurbeg turbines and other energy developments (wind farms or grid infrastructure), as well as those with other man-made landscape features (quarries, transport networks and overhead telecommunication lines) and land uses. Guidance for the assessment of cumulative effects of onshore wind farms (SNH, 2012; NatureScot, 2021) clearly states the following:

> *'At every stage in the process the focus should be on the key cumulative effects which are likely to influence decision making, rather than an assessment of every potential cumulative effect';*
>
> *'The level of information generated can distract attention from the most significant cumulative effects which are likely to influence the consenting decision. Assessments should therefore focus on the most significant cumulative effects and conclude with a clear assessment of those which are likely to influence decision making'.*

Following this guidance, a primary focus is given to the cumulative effects likely to occur as a result of other existing, permitted and proposed wind turbines identified in the LVIA Study Area, as other wind energy developments are likely to cause the greatest and most significant cumulative and in combination visual effects. Cumulative visual effects were assessed previously in Section 13.7.2.2.2: *Viewpoint Assessment Tables,* where discussion of cumulative visual effects was incorporated into the impact assessments from the 6 No. Viewpoints.

There are 19 No. other existing wind farms located within 20km of the existing turbines (2 no. of these comprise of single turbines). These wind farms are located primarily in the upland areas of the Mullaghareirk Mountain range and foothills. On-site surveys carried out in 2023 and 2024 determined that the existing Taurbeg turbines are only visible with two other existing wind farms within the LVIA Study Area, Glentane and Knockacummer Wind Farms. The *Photographic Visualisation Booklet* illustrates views of the combined wind farms.

The combined wind farms are viewed across a wide horizontal extent on the upland areas of the southern extent of the Mullaghareirk Mountain range. Viewpoints 1, 3, 4 and 5 show the combined turbines to be visible as an extended linear array of turbines upon elevated ridgelines in the background of the images. There is typically visual separation between the three wind farms by slight valleys between separate and distinct landforms. The combined wind farms have the greatest effects from viewpoints 4 and 5 due to the wide horizontal extent of the existing turbines visible across the ridgeline. In general, the collective group of turbines are visible in a linear layout across the ridgeline in a coherent manner. On site visibility appraisals determine that the existing Taurbeg, Glentane and Knockacummer Wind Farms do not surround or enclose any visual receptors in the LVIA Study Area.

Viewpoint 1 shows the combined views of the existing Taurbeg and Knockacummer Wind Farms from the designated scenic route 15 and approach road to Rockchapel from the north. In that view, the existing Taurbeg turbines are located behind the ridgeline, with only three turbines visible. The combined wind farms are visually separated by distinct landforms, as well as coniferous forestry and differing field patterns. The combined wind farms make up a small portion of the horizontal extent, with no turbines visible to the right of the image. The combined wind farms are located in the background of the image and do not disrupt any scenic views from the designated scenic route. Viewpoint 5 was captured on designated scenic route 17, and the combined view of the existing turbines does not obstruct designated scenic routes of high sensitivity.

Viewpoint 2 represents views from designated scenic route 15 to the northeast of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Taurbeg and Knockacummer Wind Farm appear as one wind farm from this view. The existing turbines are viewed above the treeline of coniferous forestry. Three Knockacummer and three Taurbeg turbines are visible from this view. The Taurbeg turbines are located beyond the Knockacummer turbines in the background of the view. The existing turbines do not obstruct any designated scenic routes from this viewpoint. Overall, the combined visibility of the existing windfarms Taurbeg, Glentane, and Knockacummer appears in a coherent ridgeline in the background of the viewpoints.

As shown in the Cumulative Context map, there are many other wind energy developments in the wider landscape of the LVIA Study Area. Most of these other wind energy developments (excepting Glentane and Knockacummer Wind Farm) are well set back and separate from the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm and have no visual or landscape connectivity and therefore the contribution of Taurbeg Wind Farm to these cumulative effects is limited. The setback distances between projects and the narrow valleys between prominent landforms create relatively small and separate visual units within the upland areas of the Mullaghareirk Mountain Range. These characteristics give this landscape the capacity to absorb and accommodate multiple wind energy developments, thus the cumulative effects to the landscape are deemed acceptable. On balance, there will be no significant cumulative effects on visual receptors within the LVIA Study Area from the Proposed Lifetime Extension.

13.7.3 Decommissioning Phase

Decommissioning of the existing Taurbeg wind farm is currently set to be carried out in 2026, i.e. 20 years from the grant of permission for the 11 No. turbines, under the current planning permission. The Proposed Lifetime Extension would extend the operation of the existing wind farm for a further 10 years, thereby postponing decommissioning until 2036.

Condition 7 of the current planning permission states:

> '*The structures shall be removed at the expiration of a period of 20 years beginning on the date of commissioning of the development.*'

As part of the Proposed Lifetime Extension, a Decommissioning Plan is presented in Appendix 4-3 of this EIAR.

The landscape and visual effects during decommissioning are anticipated to be of a similar nature as those occurring during the original construction phase. The most important element of decommissioning from a landscape and visual impact perspective is the dismantling and removal of the wind turbines. The process of turbine dismantling and removal will occur for a limited period and will predominately involve cranes being set-up adjacent to the turbines during the dismantling process.

Upon decommissioning of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, the wind turbines would be disassembled in reverse order to how they were erected. It is proposed to leave turbine foundations in place underground and to cover them with earth and reseed as appropriate. Leaving the turbine foundations in-situ is considered a more environmentally prudent option, as to remove that volume of reinforced concrete from the ground could result in significant environment nuisances such as noise, dust and/or vibration.

During decommissioning of the wind farm, it is intended to limit groundworks other than to rehabilitate constructed areas such as turbine bases and hardstanding areas. This will be done by covering with topsoil to encourage vegetation growth and reduce run-off and sedimentation. The turbines will be removed and transported off-site, and the turbine concrete bases will remain in the ground and backfilled.

It is proposed that existing roadways within the Site will be left in-situ, as appropriate, to facilitate on-going access and commercial forestry uses. It is proposed to leave underground cables in place, as they are installed below a level likely to be impacted by typical agricultural works.

Removal of the turbines and ancillary infrastructure from the Site will result in a Short-term, Slight, Negative visual effect. The Decommissioning Plan included as Appendix 4-3 of this EIAR will be agreed with the Local Authority prior to any commencement of decommissioning activities. The plan provides details of the methodologies to be employed throughout decommissioning, the environmental controls to be implemented, the Emergency Response Procedure to be adopted, the methods for reviewing compliance and an indicative programme of decommissioning works.

13.8 Conclusion

It is important to re-iterate that Taurbeg Wind Farm is an existing project, and this EIAR is being prepared in support of a planning application to extend the operational lifespan of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm beyond 2026 by a further 10 years.

This Chapter assesses the likely significant landscape and visual impacts arising as a result of the Proposed Lifetime Extension. Although all elements of the project are assessed, the Chapter focuses upon the turbines, as they are deemed to be the essential aspects of the proposal under assessment from a landscape and visual perspective (see Section 13.2.1 previously). This Chapter describes the baseline landscape and assesses the direct effects on the landscape of the Site, as well as effects on landscape character and the impact on sensitive landscape receptors and LCTs and LCAs. Visibility of the existing turbines was assessed from receptors within a study area extending 20km from the existing turbines and visual effects were determined from information gathered during multiple site visits as well as other tools such as ZTV mapping and photographic visualisations.

The Site is located in an upland area in the Mullaghareirk Mountains, an undulating landscape consisting of coniferous forestry and peatlands. The sensitivity of the landscape within the Site was deemed to be 'Low' considering the landscape has been highly modified for coniferous forestry; agriculture and the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm itself. The magnitude of effect was deemed to be 'Moderate' considering the continued impact of the wind farm on the character of this upland landscape. Overall, the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is deemed to have Medium-term, **'Slight',** Negative landscape effects within the Site itself, which will be highly localised to the Taurbeg Wind Farm itself.

The wider landscape setting consists of rolling hills, narrow valleys and landforms such as Knockacummer hill, Taur hill and Foilard hill, which slightly enclose the infrastructure of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. There are two other existing wind farms in close proximity to the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. Glentane Wind Farm is located to the southwest and Knockacummer Wind Farm to located to the northeast of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm. The three wind farms combined are mostly visible within the same visual unit, as shown in viewpoints 3, 4 and 5. The three wind farms appear visually separate on distinct landforms, although collectively comprise an extensive linear array of turbines upon upland ridges. The three wind farms combined are of a wide horizontal extent as seen in viewpoints 4 and 5 but are coherent in siting and design as they appear in a linear layout across the ridgelines in the background of the views.

The Proposed Lifetime Extension will have the highest effect on LCT 14a – *Fissured Marginal and Forested Rolling Upland*. The residual effects on this LCT were deemed to be **'Moderate.'** However, there is limited visibility of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm from a large proportion of this LCT, far less than shown in the ZTV map (See Figure 13-12). Due to the nature of boundary vegetation, forestry, and localised undulations, visual exposure of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm is limited in this LCT and there are no significant effects on its key characteristics and sensitivities. A residual effect of 'Slight' was given to LCT 11 - *Broad Marginal Middle Ground Valleys*. Kerry LCA 10 - *Mount Eagle and*

Upper Clydagh River Valley and Limerick LCA 07 – *Southern Upland* were deemed to have a residual effect of 'Not Significant'.

Once the Proposed Offsetting measures are implemented, they will have a positive Long-Term landscape and visual effect on the upland landscape of Mount Eagle. The Proposed Offsetting lands will be improved through restoration of farmland and permanent removal of forestry. The residual landscape and visual effects were deemed to 'Not Significant'.

Visual effects arising as a result of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm are localised and have the greatest impact on residential receptors. Viewpoint 6, which represents residential receptors on the L1003 local road with open views of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, was deemed to have a residual Medium-Term **'Moderate'** visual effect. However, the residential dwellings are well setback from the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm by approximately 3km and there are very few residential receptors which experience the view and visual effects shown in viewpoint 6. The remaining four viewpoints, which represent designated scenic Route 15, designated scenic route 17 and residential receptors with open views towards the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, were deemed to have Medium-term **'Slight'** residual visual effects.

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines (WEDGs) for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG) were published in 2006. The Draft Revised WEDGs (DoHPLG) were consulted on in 2019. Note however no update or final 2019 WEDGs were subsequently published. The existing Taurbeg Wind Farm was granted planning permission in 2003 and became operational in 2006. Therefore, the WEDGs (DoEHLG, 2006) had not yet been published prior to the consent and commissioning of Taurbeg Wind Farm. Current best practice for wind farm design in relation to residential visual amenity is a minimum 500m setback distance as set out in the WEDGs (DoEHLG, 2006). In the case of the existing Taurbeg Wind Farm, the turbines are well set back from residential visual amenity. The closest dwelling (H10) is located at a setback distance of 731m from T8. The turbines are set back from residential receptors, far beyond the standard set back distances set out in the WEDGs (DoEHLG, 2006) The existing turbines also adhere to the 2019 Draft WEDGs in relation to turbine setback from residential receptors i.e. a minimum 4 x tip height (108.2m x 4 =432.8m).

The townlands of Tauremore, Glasheenanargid, Foiladaun, Glennakeel North and Meentinny West were assessed in relation to residential receptors in the immediate setting of the existing Taurbeg turbines. The greatest visual effects will occur on residential receptors in the townland of Glennakeel North which are represented by Viewpoint 6. A residual effect of **'Moderate'** was deemed to arise on residential receptors in close proximity to this viewpoint. However, the residential receptors located in close proximity to viewpoint 6 are located at a setback distance of approximately 3km. The residential receptors in the townlands of Meentinny West represented by viewpoint 2 and Glasheenanargid represented by Plate 13-20 were deemed to have an overall residual effect of **'Slight'.** An overall residual effect of **'Not Significant'** was deemed to arise on residential receptors in the townlands of Tauremore and Foiladaun.

Overall, the existing Taurbeg turbines are only visible from a very small number of receptors in a very sparsely populated rural landscape.

CH.13 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

END OF PART 3