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13.

## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

13.1

### Introduction

This chapter comprises a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The LVIA assesses the likely significant direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual amenity. The LVIA reported in this chapter was informed by desktop studies and receptor mapping, site visits, verified photomontages, and an impact assessment methodology which follows best practice guidance for LVIA. The LVIA also includes assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects. This chapter is accompanied by one volume and five appendices:

- *EIAR Volume 2: Photomontage Booklet*, presenting existing and cumulative imagery of the proposed turbines in multiple fields of view from selected viewpoints;
- *Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology*, outlining the detailed methodology of the assessment conducted in this Chapter;
- *Appendix 13-2: LCA Assessment Tables*, assessing landscape, visual and cumulative effects of designated Landscape Character Areas (LCAs);
- *Appendix 13-3: Photomontage Visual Impact Assessment Tables*, assessing landscape, visual and cumulative effects of the selected viewpoints presented in the *Photomontage Booklet*;
- *Appendix 13-4: A0 LVIA Baseline Map*, showing all baseline landscape features, viewpoints, and visual receptors;
- *Appendix 13-5: Photowire Visualisation Booklet*, presenting supplemental 'early draft-stage' wireline visualisations known as 'photowires' from additional selected locations representing views of the proposed turbines.

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13.1.1

### Statement of Authority

MKO has developed extensive expertise and experience over the last 20 years in the LVIA of large-scale infrastructure developments for Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR). The MKO Landscape and Visual team have produced LVIA across a diverse range of project types, including renewable energy and grid infrastructure; residential developments; transport infrastructure; extraction infrastructure; and a range of other projects requiring EIAR.

This chapter was written by Dija Mazonaitė with guidance and direction from Jack Workman, and oversight by Michael Watson.

Jack Workman MSc., TMLI, is the Landscape & Visual Project Director at MKO and is chartered as a Technician Member of the British Landscape Institute. Jack is an environmental scientist and an LVIA specialist with an academic background in the field of Environmental Science and Geography. Jack's primary role at MKO is scoping and writing LVIA for EIARs with over 5 years' experience managing all aspects of LVIA for a broad range of commercial infrastructure developments. Jack holds a BSc. in Psychology, and an MSc. in Coastal and Marine Environments (Physical Processes, Policy & Practice). Jack is an active participant in the National Landscape Forum, presenting in 2023 and 2024 on the topic of LVIA, he also regularly delivers guest lectures for students on the topic of LVIA at top third level institutions in Ireland including University of Galway, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and University College Cork. Jack holds a membership with the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management and is also a member of the Landscape Research Group.

Dija Mazonaitė is a Project Environmental Scientist and LVIA Specialist at MKO. Dija has a BSc (Hons) in Geography & Geosystems and was recognised as a University Scholar at the University of Galway. Dija's primary role at MKO is producing the LVIA chapter of EIA reports for large infrastructure developments, with 3 years' experience managing all aspects of LVIA for a broad range of infrastructure developments. Since joining MKO, Dija has conducted and project managed all aspects of LVIA for a



broad range of commercial infrastructure developments including wind and solar energy projects, grid infrastructure, extraction industry and Strategic Housing Developments. Dija's key strengths include proficiency in GIS tools such as ArcGIS and QGIS, conducting landscape and visual impact assessments and capturing image data through drone surveys and photomontages. Dija is an affiliate member with the Landscape Institute and is also a member with IEMA, with qualifications to fly drones in the A1/A3 subcategories.

Michael Watson is the Environment Division Director in MKO who has over 25 years' experience in the environmental sector. Following the completion of his master's degree in environmental resource management, Geography, from National University of Ireland, Maynooth he worked for the Geological Survey of Ireland and then a prominent private environmental consultancy prior to joining MKO in 2014. Michael's professional experience includes managing Environmental Impact Assessments and Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments on behalf of clients in the wind farm, waste management, commercial and industrial sectors nationally. Michael worked on the capture and development of photomontages as well as compiling the Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments for some of the first wind turbines being proposed in Ireland in the early 2000's and has been compiling and reviewing LVIA chapters for multiple wind farm projects each year since 2014. Michael is a key member of the MKO senior management team and as head of the Environment Division has responsibilities to mentor various grades of team members, foster a positive work environment and promote continuous professional development for employees. Michael also has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Geography and Economics from NUI Maynooth, is a Member of IEMA, a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv).

### 13.1.2 Project History & Measures to Address Reasons for Refusal

The previous wind turbines that operated at the Site were granted planning permission in 2002 and the wind farm was constructed and became operational in 2006. The turbines were removed in June 2018 for reasoning outlined in Section 1.1. The development consisted of 10 turbines, with a hub height of 50m and a total tip height of 75m. In 2020, an application was made to Cork County Council, for 7 turbines with a tip height of 178.5m, which was subsequently refused by An Coimisiún Pleanála, details pertaining to the refusal reason are outlined in Chapter 3 of this EIAR. Part of the refusal was based on concerns regarding visual amenity and landscape character, as outlined in the following excerpt:

*"Having regard to the existing natural character of the receiving environment, it is considered that the combined effect of the height, scale and disposition of the proposed turbines would lead to excessively dominant features and a visually obtrusive form of development within the local landscape, would detract from the existing natural character of the area and would contribute to the erosion of the visual and environmental amenity of the area" (ACP-315656-23, 2024)*

In response to these concerns, iterative design revisions have been undertaken to ensure the Proposed Development incorporates key design considerations informed by An Coimisiún Pleanála's decision. Further detail of these design iterations is outlined in Section 3.2.5. As discussed throughout this LVIA chapter and accompanying appendices, the following design measures have been implemented in order to mitigate and eliminate where possible the potential for landscape and / or visual effects:

- **Reduced Turbine Height:** The proposed turbines have a maximum tip height of 156.5 metres, as opposed to the previously proposed 178.5 metres, achieving a 22-metre reduction in the proposed turbine tip height.
- **Reduced Scale and Extent:** The Proposed Development consists of a three-turbine layout instead of the previously proposed seven, significantly reducing the overall scale and spatial extent of the wind farm. As demonstrated throughout this chapter, the proposed turbines occupy a very limited horizontal extent within the landscape.
- **Optimised Siting:** The revised layout strategically positions the three turbines within a well-defined topographical setting, enclosed by landforms to the north, east, and northwest. This placement reduces visual exposure, with the turbines sited at lower

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base elevations relative to surrounding ridgelines to further integrate them within the landscape and eliminate views from sensitive locations such as Gougane Barra, whilst also utilising the existing on-site wind farm infrastructure.

Combined, it is demonstrated in this EIAR and via the visualisation tools that accompany it, that these measures have addressed both Cork County Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála's concerns with regards to the proposed turbines being excessively dominant features and a visually obtrusive form of development within the local landscape.

### 13.1.3 Proposed Development Description

The Proposed Development comprises the construction of 3 No. wind turbines and all associated works. The proposed turbines will have an overall tip height of 156.5m.

As detailed in Section 1.1.1 in Chapter 1 (Introduction), for the purposes of this EIAR, the various project components are described and assessed using the following references: 'Proposed Development', 'proposed turbines', the 'Site', the '2020 Application' and the 'Kealkill Wind Farm'. Please see Section 1.1.1 of this EIAR for further details. A detailed description of the Proposed Development is provided in Chapter 4 (Description of the Proposed Development) of this EIAR.

A detailed description of the Proposed Development is provided in Chapter 4 of this EIAR.

#### 13.1.3.1 Essential Aspects of Proposed Development from Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Perspective

This LVIA follows 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition' (hereafter, GLVIA3) published by Landscape Institute (LI) & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013) as well as 'Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA3: Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2024-01' (hereafter, LI TGN 24-01) published by the Landscape Institute (LI) (2024). This guidance states that:

*"It is important to make sure that the project description provides all the information needed to identify its effect on particular aspects of the environment. For LVIA, it is important to understand, from the project description, the essential aspects of the scheme that will potentially give rise to its effect on the landscape and visual amenity."*

For the purposes of this Chapter, it is deemed that the tall, vertical nature of the proposed turbines make them the most prominent element from a landscape and visual perspective, therefore having the most potential to give rise to significant landscape and visual effects. In this regard, the proposed turbines are deemed to be the 'essential aspect' of the Proposed Development which will give rise to effects on the landscape and visual amenity and therefore are the primary focus of the LVIA conducted in this chapter.

The proposed 30m meteorological mast is also a tall vertical structure; therefore, it is included in the photomontage booklet and is fully considered throughout this chapter. However, it will be substantially less visible than any turbine given its shorter and slender lattice form.

Other components of the Proposed Development including the existing onsite 38kV substation, are not deemed to be as visually prominent as the proposed turbines, however, they do have the potential to give rise to localised landscape and visual effects. These elements are given full consideration throughout this chapter.

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13.1.4

## Mitigation by Best Practice Wind Farm Design

Through the iterative project design process, informed by early-stage impact assessment work and landscape modelling, as well as ZTV mapping (see Section 13.3.1 ZTV Mapping) and photomontage visualisations (see Section 13.5.4: Viewpoint Selection: Photomontage and Photowire Locations), every effort has been made to bring forward the optimum design for the Proposed Development with respect to landscape and visual factors. In reality, this process is a continuation of the iterative design process since the refusal, on visual grounds, of the previous application (Pl Ref 20/350 / ACP-308244-20 / ACP-315656-23). While it is considered that that layout and scale was appropriate for this Site, significant additional project re-design has been implemented to further reduce the potential for landscape and visual effects and allay the consenting authorities concerns.

This LVIA has identified the key benefits of the Site location and project design, in mind of wind-energy-related and landscape-related planning considerations. The key factors with respect to landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Development design, are briefly introduced below and comprehensively analysed in Section 13.7.

The Proposed Development layout that is the subject of this LVIA incorporates the following landscape and visual design considerations for best practice wind farm design:

- The turbines are located within an area surrounded by ridges of high elevations which limits open views of the proposed turbines from large areas within the LVIA Study Area (see definition in Section 13.2.1 below), particularly from potentially sensitive receptors such as settlements or cultural heritage/amenity areas. In particular, Gougane Barra, as well as the high value West Cork Peninsula, and other High Value Landscapes (HVL) of County Cork, have little to no theoretical visibility (Note the ZTV outputs in Figure 13-1).
- The Proposed Development is sited in an area of West Cork which has areas of very high landscape value and sensitivity. The special landscape qualities contributing to this sensitivity are attributed to the dramatic coastal and mountainous landscape to the south-west of the Site around Bantry Bay, as well as the enclosed landscape of Gougane Barra to the north of the Site. As demonstrated by all of the photomontages, and as comprehensively discussed in Section 13.7, the Proposed Development does not obstruct or intrude upon the key scenic or landscape sensitivities of the area - the dramatic seascape and mountains to the south-west or the enclosed hamlet of Gougane Barra.
- Many key settlements are situated within the lower-lying depressions of the landscape, benefiting from natural topographical screening that mitigates the visual exposure within the wider LVIA Study Area.
- Residential receptors in close proximity to the proposed turbines are predominantly located at lower elevations, often within valleys or enclosed topographical formations. These landscape characteristics provide a high degree of visual containment, further minimising the visual extent of the proposed turbines.
- Chapter 6 of the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) reports 'Aesthetic Considerations in Siting and Design' for Wind Energy Developments and includes the following text: '*It is preferable to avoid locating turbines where they can be seen one behind another, when viewed from highly sensitive key viewpoints (for example, viewing points along walking or scenic routes, or from designated views or prospects), as this results in visual stacking and, thus, confusion.*' Compared to the previously permitted and operated 10 turbine development as well as the proposed 7 turbine application, the Proposed Development involves a reduction of the number of visible turbines from 10 (originally permitted and operated) to 3. This reduction in turbine numbers results in decreased visual stacking, reduced visual clutter, and an overall clearer, more cohesive composition within the landscape. Overall, the 3 turbines are well-integrated into the upland landscape, with surrounding topographical features minimising visibility across

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the LVIA Study Area (see Section 13.2.1 below for definition) and ensuring they appear appropriately scaled within their setting.

- Turbines previously operated at the Site and wind farm supporting infrastructure is still present at the Site. Thus, the Site is characterised as a heavily modified human landscape with limited aesthetic qualities within the Site itself. Therefore, the Site is deemed capable of effectively absorbing the Proposed Development.
- The proposed turbines have been strategically sited to ensure they are visually balanced within the landscape when they are visible, as demonstrated by the photomontages produced in Volume 2: Photomontage Booklet. As can be seen by the photomontages, the proposed turbines are most often arranged neatly in a linear array.
- As demonstrated by all of the photomontages, when the proposed turbines are visible, they are seen in an upland plateau, relatively contained by distinctive landform features; The proposed turbines have been strategically sited along the infrastructure of the previously existing turbines, thereby limiting the need for extensive vegetation removal and minimising disturbance to the surrounding landscape, maintaining the overall integrity of the Site.
- The turbine layout has been designed to create a coherent arrangement of turbines, contiguous and connected to each other visually and within consistent spacing in line with the guidance for design and siting of wind farms within a Transitional Marginal Landscape in the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government (DoEHLG), 2006, (hereafter referred to as the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006)), and regard to the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DoHPLG, 2019) (hereafter referred to as the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019)).
- Siting of the proposed turbines adheres to the minimum 500m set back distance in the current Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and also the recommended 4 times tip height set back distance to third party properties, explicitly set out for residential visual amenity, prescribed by the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).
- The proposed turbines are strategically positioned within an area classified as 'Open to Consideration' for wind energy infrastructure, according to the Wind Energy Strategy of County Cork.
- The layout of the turbines has been carefully adjusted to avoid sky lining, where turbines would appear prominently on the horizon and could be seen from long distances. By positioning the turbines slightly below the ridge line and within natural undulations of the terrain, the visual impact from surrounding areas is minimised.
- In the few locations where the proposed turbines are visible in combination with the coast or seascape setting of Bantry Bay (e.g. Photomontage Viewpoint 1 and Viewpoint 2), the turbines are set back distances >17km from these receptors and the coastline. In such instances, the turbines are visible as very small features comprising a small horizontal extent in the distant background of these views. In these instances (VP1 and VP2 views from the southwest) the development as a whole is seen within a saddle of lower ground between two elevated peaks, achieving visual balance in the landscape. Considering the distance and coherency of the layout of the wind farm, there is no significant impact on these receptors near the coast and Bantry Bay.
- The existing onsite 38kV substation is sited within surrounding coniferous forestry in the Site and will be entirely screened from view outside of the immediate proximity to the Site.
- The internal site road layout makes use of the existing tracks wherever possible (to be upgraded for construction and the delivery of wind turbine components), to minimise the requirement for new tracks within the Site.

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- The turbines will **not be** visible from Gougane Barra itself, including its lakes and walking trails, which is a key sensitive location of concern to the local authority and surrounding community.
- **Gougane Barra**, as well as the high value **West Cork Peninsula**, and other High Value Landscapes (HVL) of County Cork have little to no theoretical visibility.

During the initial site selection process, landscape sensitivity was identified as a key constraint and so landscapes considered to be less sensitive are preferred over sites with more sensitivity to change. The site location and current layout minimise the theoretical potential for visibility and the site visits and assessment tools show that the actual visibility is far less than the theory. Where visibility does occur, the design is in accordance with best practice and a coherent project which neatly assimilates with the receiving landscape and is sympathetic to its neighbouring wind turbines.

### 13.1.5 Scoping Replies & Pre-Planning Meetings

A scoping and consultation exercise has been carried out by MKO, as detailed in Chapter 2 of this EIAR. A pre-planning consultation meeting took place with Cork County Council (CCC) on 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2025. During this meeting, CCC requested that photomontages be prepared from the same viewpoint locations used for the previous 7-turbine wind farm application.

In response to this request, photomontage viewpoints 1–12 (out of 16 total) were captured from the same general locations as those used in the previous 7-turbine wind farm application. These viewpoints represent the same receptors and illustrate the reduced turbine height, scale, and spatial extent associated with the Proposed Development. Furthermore, four new viewpoints were selected to provide a more comprehensive assessment of potential visual impacts across the LVIA Study Area.

It is noted that, given the time elapsed since the previous application (submitted in 2019), some changes in the landscape have occurred. Consequently, several viewpoint locations have been slightly adjusted from their original coordinates to reflect any landscape changes and to ensure consistency with current industry best practice for LVIA.

CCC had also noted that that the Applicant should be clear with respect to the alterations from the previous planning application (Pl Ref 20/350 / ABP Ref. 308244-20 / ABP Ref. 315656), specifically in regard to the reduced scale of the turbines and turbine locations.

In response to this request, the proposed turbines have a maximum tip height of 156.5 metres, as opposed to the previously proposed 178.5 metres, achieving a 22-metre reduction in the proposed turbine tip height. Furthermore, the Proposed Development consists of a three-turbine layout instead of the previously proposed seven, reducing the overall scale and spatial extent of the wind farm. As demonstrated throughout this chapter, the proposed turbines occupy a very limited horizontal extent within the landscape.

In addition to feedback received from CCC, relevant observations from other consultees with regard to 'Landscape and Visual' considerations were also considered when compiling this chapter. Sport Ireland noted the presence of St. Finbarr's Way located approximately 1.5 km west of the Site. Fáilte Ireland requested that the potential impact of the Proposed Development be fully considered in light of key tourism amenities in the area, such as Gougane Barra and the Wild Atlantic Way region, with particular regard to walking trails and visitor attractions in proximity to the Site.

A summary of the topics discussed at the pre-planning meeting is included in Section 2.8 of Chapter 2 of this EIAR. All feedback and communications detailed in Chapter 2 have been taken on board when compiling this chapter and assessment.

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## 13.2

## Brief Methodology and Assessment Criteria

This section briefly outlines the guidance and methodology used to undertake the LVIA of the Proposed Development; the full detailed description of the methodology is provided in *Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology*.

There are five main sections to this assessment:

- Visibility of the Proposed Development (e.g. ZTV mapping);
- Landscape baseline;
- Visual baseline;
- Cumulative context with respect to other wind farm developments within the LVIA Study Area;
- Likely and significant effects – summarising all landscape, visual and cumulative effects of the Proposed Development determined by this LVIA.

## 13.2.1

### Scope and Definition of LVIA Study Area

The proposed turbines are the key focus of the assessments in this Chapter as the proposed turbines are the primary essential aspect of the Proposed Development under assessment of the LVIA (as detailed previously in Section 13.1.2).

GLVIA3 (LI, IEMA, 2013) refers to the identification of the area of landscape that is to be covered while assessing landscape and visual effects, it states:

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

Landscape and visual baseline mapping and viewpoint selection are based on a wider study area referred to as the ‘LVIA Study Area.’ The geographical parameters for this LVIA were determined by desktop studies, survey work undertaken, the professional judgement of the assessment team, experience from other relevant projects and policy guidance or standards, such as:

- *Appendix 3, Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006)* (including reference to the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019)
- *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition – GLVIA3, (Landscape Institute & IEMA, 2013) and Clarifications in LI TGN 24/01 (LI, 2024).*

The distance at which the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is set from a proposed wind farm development defines the parameters of the LVIA Study Area. The LVIA Study Area was chosen to a distance of 25km from the proposed turbines for landscape and visual effects, due to the proximity of ‘West Cork Peninsula’, a landscape of *very high* sensitivity in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028. This landscape may also be classified as of international renown due to its high scenic value along the Cork coastline. Therefore, the 25km LVIA Study Area was chosen as per Guidance:

*“In areas where landscapes of national or international renown are located within 25km of a proposed wind energy development, the Zone of Theoretical Visibility should be extended as far (and in the direction of) that landscape. This reflects the fact that highly sensitive landscapes deserve extra special treatment by developers and planners” Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) Page 95; Page 152, Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).”*

Through experience conducting LVIA for other wind energy development projects, the assessment team determined that no significant effects on landscape character are likely to arise beyond distances of 15km

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from the proposed turbines. Therefore, a study area of 15km, hereafter referred to as the ‘LCA Study Area’, is deemed appropriate for effects on landscape character in relation to the assessment of effects upon designated Landscape Character Areas (LCAs).

Furthermore, as prescribed by best practice guidance, the professional judgement of the assessment team, the following topic areas have been scoped out of the assessment:

- Effects on landscape and visual receptors that have minimal or no theoretical visibility (as predicted by the ZTV) and/or very distant visibility, and are therefore unlikely to be subject to significant effects;
- Effects on designated sensitive landscape receptors beyond a 25km radius from the proposed turbines, from where it is judged that potential significant effects on key characteristics and/or special qualities, or views are judged unlikely to occur;
- Effects on landscape character and designated Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) beyond a 15 km radius from the proposed turbines, where it is judged that potential significant effects on landscape character are unlikely to occur;
- Effects on visual receptors beyond a 25km radius from the proposed turbines, where it is judged that potential significant effects are unlikely to occur;
- Cumulative landscape and visual effects beyond a 25km radius from the proposed turbines, where it is judged that potential significant cumulative effects are unlikely to occur.

### 13.2.2 LVIA Guidance

The legislation and general guidance on Environmental Impact Assessment is set out in Chapter 1 of this EIAR. The LVIA reported in this chapter was guided and informed by guidance documentation specifically pertaining to the LVIA. Details of the guidance used to conduct this LVIA are outlined in the LVIA Methodology Appendix – *Appendix 13-1*.

### 13.2.3 Baseline Landscape and Visual Information

An initial desk study of baseline information was undertaken that has informed the LVIA, divided into ‘Landscape Baseline’ and ‘Visual Baseline’ components, as follows:

#### Landscape Baseline

- Policies and objectives contained in the relevant county development plan (County Cork and County Kerry) pertaining to landscape and wind energy.
- Landscape designations in the LVIA Study Area (High Value Landscapes; Views and Prospects; Landscape Character Areas)
- Landscape characteristics of designated LCTs in the LCA Study Area
- Landscape character of the Proposed Development based on:
  - Site Surveys undertaken in 2022-2025
  - Characterisation of the Site as defined in relation to specific Landscape Character Types defined in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019);

#### Visual Baseline

- Identification of visual receptors in the LVIA Study Area;
- Preliminary analysis of visibility of the Proposed Development from visual receptors using ZTV mapping and on-site visibility appraisals.
- Visibility in close proximity according to a Route Screening Analysis (RSA), a method developed by MKO to quantify visual screening relative to the proposed turbines.

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## 13.2.4 Assessment of Potential Impacts

The LVIA process used in this Chapter is presented in *Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology* and includes clearly documented methods based on guidelines of the GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2019) as follows.

First, this LVIA considers landscape and visual ‘Sensitivity’ balanced with the ‘Magnitude of Change’ to determine the likely significance of effects. Second, mitigating factors are then considered to arrive at ‘Residual’ landscape and visual effects. Third, residual landscape and visual effects are graded upon an ‘impact assessment classification of significance’ scale, as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency of Ireland (EPA, 2022) ranging as follows: ‘Imperceptible’, ‘Not Significant’, ‘Slight’, ‘Moderate’, ‘Significant’, ‘Very Significant’ or ‘Profound’.

Photomontages are used as an illustrative tool to assess potential impacts, whereby the potential landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the proposed turbines are assessed from viewpoint locations representative of prominent landscape and visual receptors located within the LVIA Study Area. Throughout this Chapter, ‘theoretical visibility’ is referred to, based on ZTV mapping (see below Section 13.3: Visibility of the Proposed Development), and is assessed to compare ‘theoretical’ versus ‘actual’ visibility. The detailed methods used to produce ZTV maps and photomontages are included in *Appendix 13-1*.

## 13.2.5 LVIA: Wind Energy Context

Given Ireland’s renewable energy targets which have been set by the State for onshore renewable wind energy development, i.e., 9GW of onshore wind<sup>1</sup>, wind turbines will form a new component in the working landscape for the foreseeable future. The focus for visual impact assessment of wind energy developments is therefore distance, arrangement, location and potential disruption to key scenic sensitivities rather than a commonly misconceived focus on whether turbines are visible or not from a particular vantage point. The outcome of the visual impact assessment, with regards to the EPA (2022) definition of significance, is calibrated in the overall context of LVIA of wind energy developments in Ireland and what is acceptable in the context of emerging baseline trends and the acceptability of wind turbines within views as a result of national policy.

Over time, wind turbines have, and will become, a more familiar and accepted component of the Irish landscape, particularly in working rural contexts. Accordingly, their presence may not carry the same level of perceived visual intrusion as less common or incongruous forms of development. In this context, the calibration of visual impact significance reflects both the policy-driven imperative for renewable energy development and the evolving visual baseline in parts of the Irish landscape. While the visibility of turbines remains an important consideration, it does not in itself equate to significant visual impact.

Key factors of focus in the overall impact assessment on visual receptors in relation to photomontages are:

- The scale of the turbines as a result of setback distance;
- The number of turbines visible;
- Full or partial visibility of turbines e.g. are they partially screened by features;
- Horizontal extent how do the turbines comprise the field of view;
- Overall visual coherency with regards to form and arrangement and how the turbines correspond to the landscape from a particular vantage point as per best practice siting and design guidance.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Climate Energy and the Environment (2025) Climate Action Plan 2025

## 13.3 Visibility of Proposed Development

### 13.3.1 ZTV Mapping: Theoretical Visibility of the Proposed Turbines

ZTV mapping is an important step in the LVIA process, in that it clearly shows which areas have theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines and which areas have no theoretical visibility.

The ZTV mapping methodology outlined in *Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology* (Section 1.5: Visibility Mapping: ZTV) was used to examine the theoretical visibility of the 3 no. proposed turbines from all landscape and visual receptors within the LVIA Study Area, using the half-blade height of the wind turbines as points of reference, called the Half-Blade ZTV or ZTV, and with the associated map(s) called the ZTV map. As noted in *Appendix 13-1*, actual visibility on the ground is significantly less than predicted by the ZTV mapping due to intervening factors including on-site screening from natural and man-made features, atmospheric weather and/or localised topography.

Generation of the Half-Blade ZTV utilises large-scale topographical data (interpolation across 10m OSi contour data) and does not account for topographical variation of smaller scale (e.g. <10m). Therefore, in reality, small, localised undulations in topography are likely to further inhibit visibility of the proposed turbines that may not be represented in the ZTV maps. Other features of the landscape such as vegetation and man-made elements are also likely to obscure the proposed turbines from view from many areas where the Half-Blade ZTV indicates there is full visibility. In this regard, the ZTV maps are a useful tool to indicate where there is no visibility of the proposed turbines, and thus any receptors located in these areas can be screened out from further assessment.

### 13.3.2 Half Blade ZTV of the Proposed Turbines

A ZTV map of the proposed turbines is shown below in Figure 13-1. The ZTV mapping methodology is comprehensively outlined in Section 1.3 of Appendix 13-1. Separate colour bands are used on each ZTV map presented in this chapter to indicate the number of proposed turbines of which the half blade will potentially be visible. The legend on each map shows the number of theoretically visible proposed turbines for each corresponding colour, which are as follows:

- > Teal: 1 turbine theoretically visible
- > Yellow: 2 turbines theoretically visible
- > Navy: 3 turbines theoretically visible

Figure 13-2 shows the topographical features and elevation gradients existent within the receiving landscape of the LVIA Study Area. The geography of these topographical features defines the distribution of theoretical visibility illustrated in Figure 13-1.

The proposed turbines are situated alongside an elevated ridgeline, visually enclosed by large landforms such as Conigar Mountain to the northwest and the Doughill and Douce Mountains to the east. These topographical features, prominent in the rolling landscape of West Cork, form a natural valley around the proposed turbines, providing a degree of visual enclosure. The Conigar Mountain extends into the Shehy Mountain Range further northwest, located along the County Cork and County Kerry border. These topographical features, along with other localised undulations within the broader LVIA Study Area, result in limited theoretical visibility within the wider LVIA Study Area, as shown in Figure 13-1.

Approximately 10 kilometres to the southeast is the Shehy Beg Mountain, peaking at 546 meters, further contributing to the topographical screening of the proposed turbines. Beyond these peaks, the landscape is predominantly flat and low-lying, characteristic of an agricultural setting apart from three additional topographical features to the north, including the Maughanaclea Hills, Nowen Hills, and Mullaghmesha. The terrain gradually descends towards Bantry Bay and the coast, further enhancing the natural

topographical screening that limits visibility within the broader study area, as seen in the Zone of Theoretical Visibility map in Figure 13-1.

**Description of Theoretical Visibility within 5km of the Proposed Turbines**

As illustrated in Figure 13-2, the proposed turbines are located within a valley enclosed by distinctive topographical features. The Conigar Mountain is located to the north-west, while the Doughill and Douce Mountains are located to the east, creating a topographical enclosure, effectively visually screening any long-range views of the proposed turbines from within the valley.

Due to the prominent topographical screening provided by these mountains, theoretical visibility is significantly restricted within a 5km radius. These topographical features act as visual barriers, confining the turbines within a well-defined visual perimeter. As shown in Figure 13-1, due to the topographical screening, no theoretical visibility will occur to the northwest, beyond the Conigar Mountain, towards Gougane Barra. Similarly, no visibility will occur to the east, beyond the Doughill and Douce mountains, as well beyond the localised peaks in elevation to the south-west.

**Description of Theoretical Visibility beyond 5km of the Proposed Turbines**

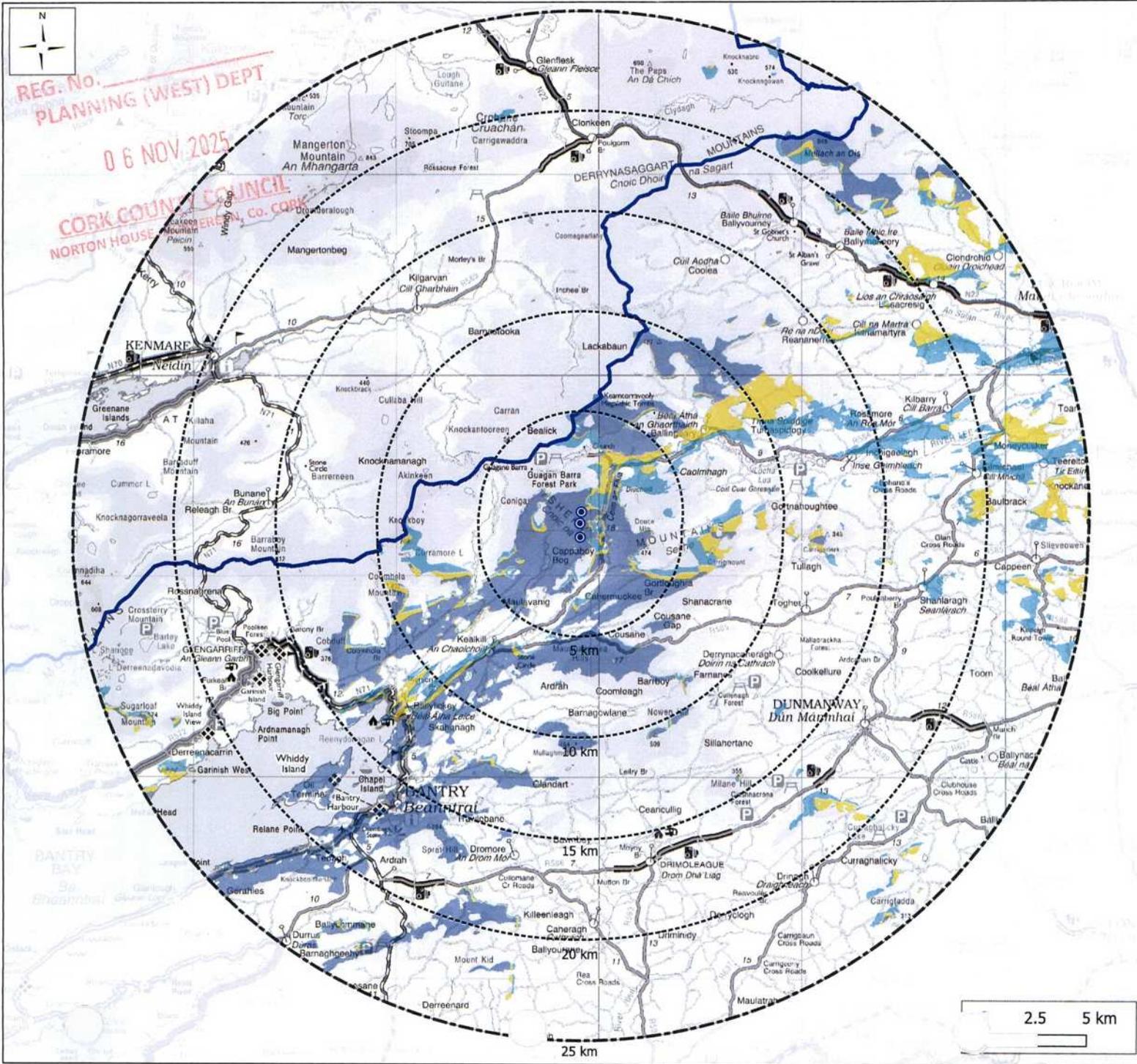
Beyond 5km, theoretical visibility is extremely limited within the wider LVIA Study Area, particularly to the south-east and north-west of the Proposed Development, as illustrated in Figure 13-1 and Figure 13-2 above. The Conigar Mountain extends the mountainous terrain in a northwest direction, towards the Shehy Mountain Range, while mountain peaks of Doughill, Douce, Shehy Beg, Maughanaclea and Mullaghmesha hills follow from east of the proposed turbines in a southerly direction. Patches of full theoretical visibility are indicated on the peak vantage points of these mountains within 10km of the proposed turbines. Beyond this distance, there is no theoretical visibility in the northwest direction and little to no direction to the east and south due to topographical screening.

Pockets of full theoretical visibility extend westward within the lower elevations along Bantry Bay, with a number of small undulations in topography giving rise to some areas of no theoretical visibility. To the north-east, east and south, visibility is primarily limited to pockets of partial theoretical visibility at elevated vantage points within the wider study area. Theoretical visibility is restricted due to significant topographical screening from the mountainous terrain.

In general, the ZTV indicates that the siting of the proposed turbines on lower terrain and the topographical characteristics of the surrounding landscape greatly reduce theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines from a large proportion of the LVIA Study Area. This includes extensive areas beyond 10km of the proposed turbines, particularly to the north-west, east, and south of the Site.

As depicted in Figure 13-1 and discussed above, there is primarily little to no theoretical visibility to the north-west, where County Kerry is situated, due to topographical screening. Consequently, no visual or landscape effects are anticipated within this county. Based on the professional judgement of the LVIA specialists at MKO, County Kerry has been scoped out from assessment within this LVIA and will not be addressed any further within the remainder of this chapter.

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**Map Legend**

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbine Locations
- County Border

**Zone of Theoretical Visibility**

- 1 Turbine Theoretically Visible
- 2 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 3 Turbines Theoretically Visible

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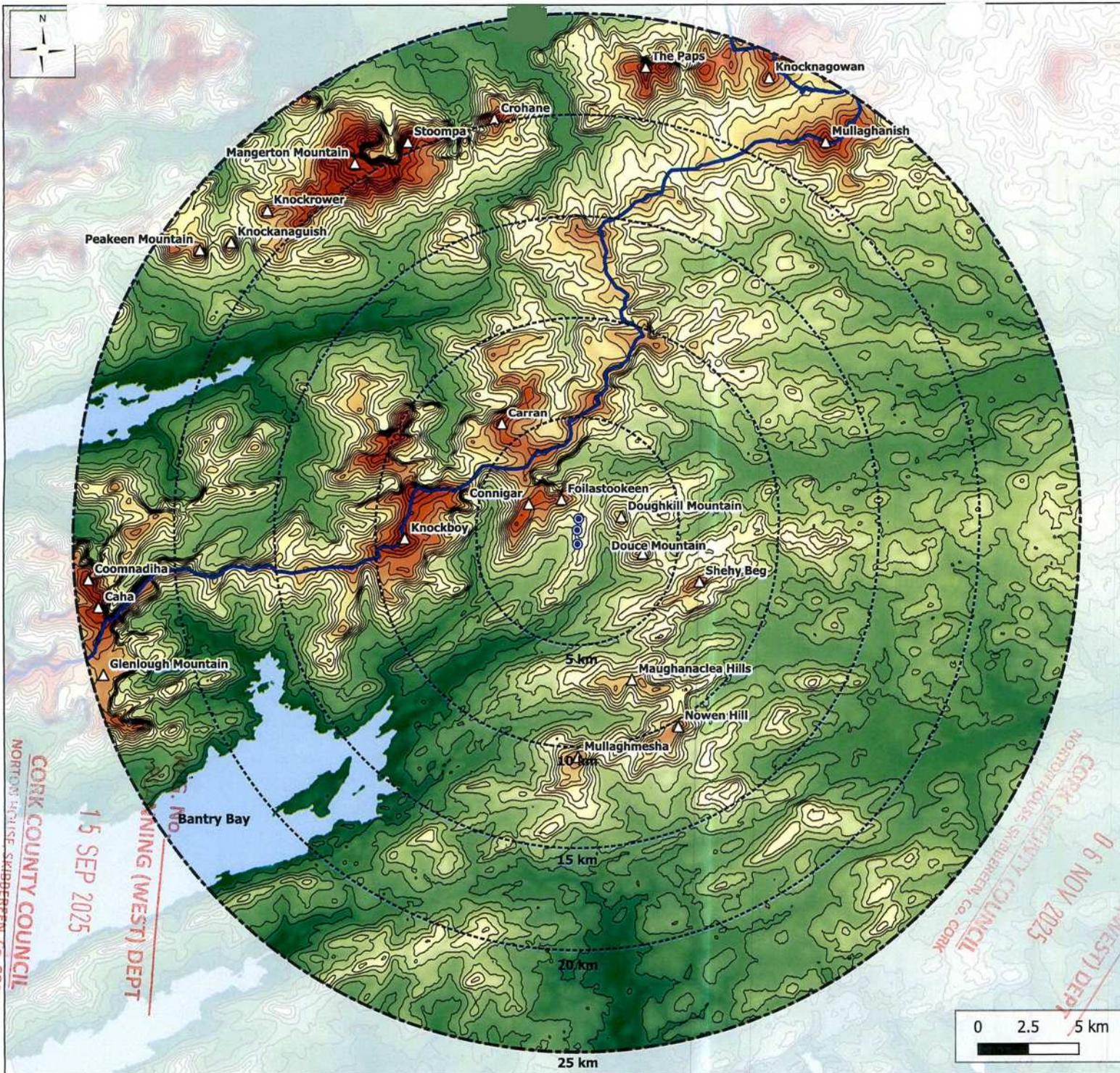
**Figure 13-1**

Drawing Title: **Half-Blade ZTV Map**

Project Title: **Curraglass Wind Farm**

Scale 1:180,000	Project No. 240614	Date 11.08.2025	Drawn By DM	Checked By JW
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**MKO** Planning Environment Consultant



### Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbine Locations
- ▭ County Border
- Elevation (Above Ordnance Datum)**
- 150m
- 300m
- 450m
- 600m
- △ Topographical Features
- 40m Contours

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Figure 13-2

### Physical Landscape Features Map

### Curraglass Wind Farm

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
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### 13.3.2.2 On-Site Appraisal of Actual Visibility During Field Surveys

As mentioned previously, the ZTV map is a useful tool to indicate areas where there will be no visibility of the proposed turbines. In practice, vast areas of the LVIA Study Area which have an indication of full theoretical visibility by the ZTV map previously, are likely to have no visibility of the proposed turbines due to other screening factors existent within the landscape.

Multiple field surveys were conducted during 2024 and 2025 to determine the actual visibility from locations where the ZTV has indicated theoretical visibility. These surveys determined that screening from localised undulations in topography, vegetation and man-made elements substantially reduce the likelihood of viewing turbines in vast areas of the LVIA Study Area, in particular to the north, south and east of the proposed turbines.

In most instances, visual screening caused by the undulating and highly vegetated landscape beyond 5km from the proposed turbines did not permit open views in the direction of the proposed turbines. Visibility is only likely to occur in isolated, elevated vantage points where open, long-ranging landscape views in the direction of the proposed turbines were found. Representative photomontages were captured from elevated locations where open views towards the proposed turbines were found. Visual effects arising from such locations are assessed in Section 13.7 - *Likely Significant Landscape and Visual Effects*.

#### Disproportionate Visual Screening Effect

Any landscape feature that blocks a view and prevents a clear onward view has a 'visual screening effect,' whether it is a one-metre-tall wall, a two-metre-high roadside hedgerow, a five-metre-high building, or a 15-metre tree. As a full visual screen, such features only allow a person to see over them, thereby pushing the person's line of sight higher into the sky rather than along the level of the ground.

The impact of visual screening elements such as vegetation (forestry, road-side hedgerows, and trees) and buildings (particularly within cities, towns, and villages) on long range visibility are accentuated in flat lowland landscapes, this is called a disproportionate visual screening effect. The graphic in Figure 13-3 below best explains this 'disproportionate screening effect'. A ZTV may indicate full theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines from an open field or roadway. However, when a receptor is located at the same base elevation as a turbine, a feature such as a distant treeline has the capacity to greatly restrict or completely obscure visibility of the proposed turbine. Distance becomes a substantial factor determining visibility of proposed turbines as it is difficult to see beyond a few kilometres above visual screening within a flat landscape.

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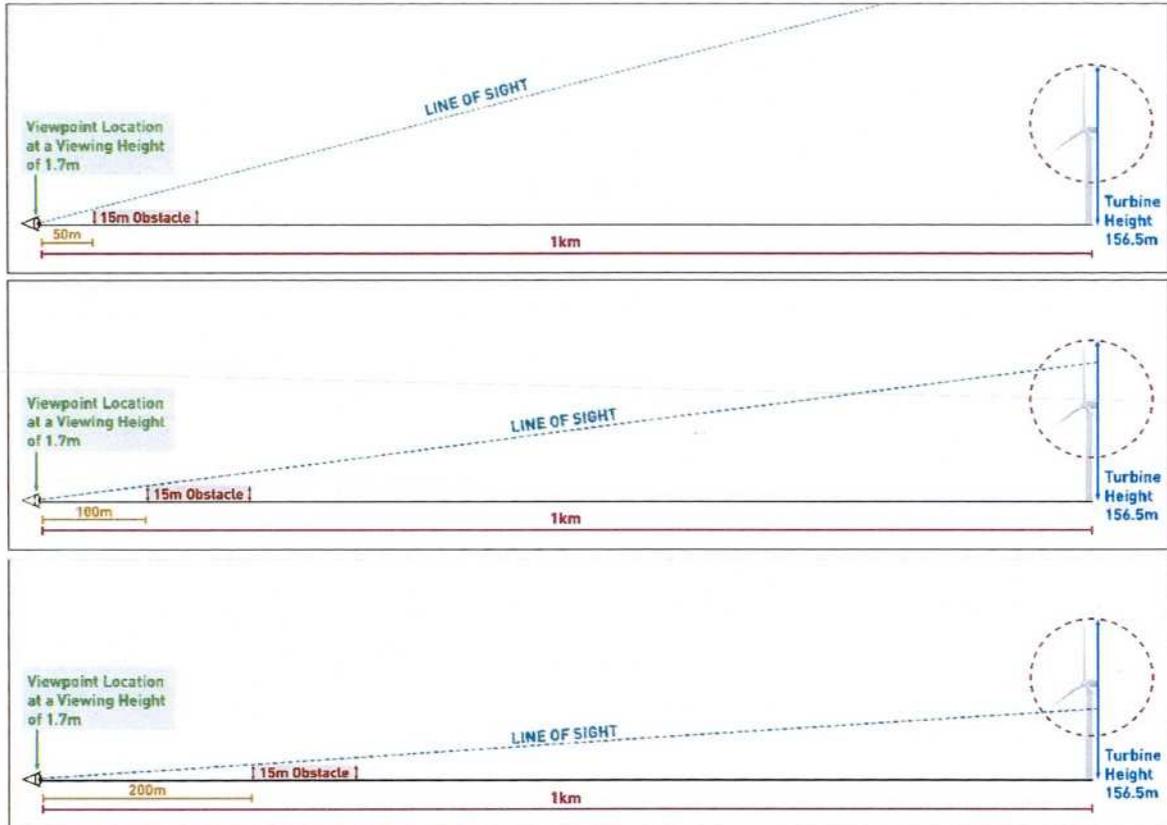


Figure 13-3 Disproportionate Visual Screening Effect

Figure 13-3 above illustrates the disproportionate screening effect that small features in the landscape can have on screening a proposed wind turbine from view. The figure shows a 156.5-metre-tall wind turbine located one kilometre from a viewing location. The illustration in Figure 13-3 is modelled proportionally to ensure measurement accuracy and scaled to fit this report. A 15-metre-tall obstacle, such as a treeline is used as the landscape feature giving rise to the visual screening effect. In the three examples shown, the 15-metre obstacle is shown at 50 metres, 100 metres and 200 metres from the viewing location, and the resultant line of sight is shown as a blue line running from the viewing location upwards over the top of the obstacle.

### 13.3.2.3 Visibility in Close Proximity: Route Screening Analysis (RSA)

In this LVIA, Route Screening Analysis (RSA) was carried out within a 3km radius of the proposed turbines and on all major roads extending to 5km. In some instances, where designated scenic routes or renowned walking/cycling trails are present (e.g. Gougane Bearra Cycling Route) on a local road beyond 3km, have also been included in the RSA. RSA was conducted to comprehensively demonstrate the varying characteristics of the degree of visual screening existent along the local road network and to record the actual visibility of the proposed turbines in comparison to the theoretical visibility indicated by ZTV mapping. The full methodology is outlined in *Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology* (Section 1.5.3: On-Site Visibility Appraisal: RSA).

The RSA visual screening categories are:

- > **'Little/No'** visual screening: areas of the road that are mainly open with open views in the direction of the proposed turbines (see example below in Plate 13-1);
- > **'Intermittent/Partial'** visual screening: areas of the road where there are intermittent or partial views in the direction of the proposed turbines (see Plate 13-2);
- > **'Dense/Full'** visual screening: areas of the road with dense visual screening, sufficient to block views in the direction of the proposed turbines (see Plate 13-3).

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Below, Figure 13-4 maps the quantified results of the RSA, showing the extent to which each visual screening classification is present on all public roads within 3km of the proposed turbines, and on major roads extending to 5km, using the following colour scheme: Little/None (green); Intermittent/Partial (blue); Dense/Full (orange).



Plate 13-1 Example of Little/No Screening (captured along the L-87812 Local Road)



Plate 13-2 Example of Intermittent/Partial Screening (captured along the L-87812 Local Road)

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Plate 13-3 Example of Dense/ Full Screening (captured along the L-2412 Local Road)

### 13.3.2.4 RSA Summary and Visibility Appraisal

#### Summary of RSA Results

'Little/No' visual screening was recorded along 43% of the surveyed roads and was the most common class recorded. 'Intermittent/Partial' visual screening was recorded along 20% of the roads and was the least common class recorded. 'Dense/Full' visual screening was recorded for 37% of roads.

The RSA map depicted below in Figure 13-4 indicates a 'mosaic' pattern of visual screening evident along the transport routes within 5km of the proposed turbines. This suggest that in a journey scenario along these routes, there will be glimpses of turbine visibility mixed with areas of open visibility with stretches of Intermittent/Partial or Dense/Full visual screening.

Given that there is at least some level of visual screening present along the majority (57% = Intermittent + Dense screening combined) of all public roads within 3km and those extending to 5km, this demonstrates that the widespread theoretical visibility indicated on the ZTV in close proximity to the proposed turbines is not fully representative of the actual on-the-ground visibility of the proposed turbines. Site visits and the RSA determined that most open visibility of the proposed turbines occurs from the L-7406, L-8776, L-87812 and L-8781 local roads.

An overview of the visual screening recorded during the RSA along prominent transport routes within 5km of the proposed turbines is presented below in Table 13-1, followed by discussion.

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Table 13-1: Distribution of Roadside Visual Screening Recorded during RSA

Visual Screening Class	Length of Road Mapped in Figure 13-4.	Percentage Distribution of Visual Screening on Surveyed Roads
'Little/No'	15km	43%
'Intermittent/Partial'	8.km	20%
'Dense/Full'	18km	37%

### C-SR28 Scenic Route / Bearra Gougane Barra Cycling Route (R584 and R548 Regional Roads, L-8780, L-8776, L-5844, L-8779 Local Roads)

Within 5km from the nearest proposed turbine, the Bearra Gougane Barra Cycling Route travels in northeast – southwest direction. Directly northeast and to the east, the portions of the R584 and R548 Regional Roads of the Cycling Route are primarily characterised by Dense/Full visual screening, with pockets of Partial/Intermittent visual screening. Stretches of No/Very visual screening are more frequent east of the proposed turbines, along the L-8780 local road.

To the south, the R584 Regional Road predominantly characterised by Dense/Full visual screening, with occasional pockets of Intermittent/Partial visual and Little/No visual screening. Along the L-8776 and L-8544 local roads, visual screening becomes variable, with stretches of Little/No visual screening becoming most prominent.

Views from the Bearra Gougane Barra Cycling Route and the C-SR28 scenic route are assessed in this Chapter, represented by VP4, VP7, VP8, VP9, VP10, PWVP – C, PWVP – D, PWVP – F.

### C-SR27 Scenic Route (L-7406)

The small section of the C-SR27 Scenic Route is located to the north of the proposed turbines. Visual screening along this road is primarily Little/No visual screening along the elevated points along this road. Views from this road are assessed in this Chapter, represented by VP11 and PWVP – B.

### Gougane Barra Loop

Located north-west of the proposed turbines, the local road branching off the R584 Regional Road and forming a loop within Gougane Barra is predominantly characterised by Dense/Full visual screening, with occasional pockets of Partial/Intermittent and Little/No visual screening. Although there are some stretches with Little/No visual screening within this loop, the ZTV map in Figure 13-1 shows that no theoretical visibility occurs along this road. As such, no visibility of the proposed turbines will occur from along the roads within Gougane Barra.

### Local Roads to the South-West

The local roads located directly south-west of the proposed turbines (L-87811 and L-87812) are primarily characterised as stretches of Partial/Intermittent and Little/No visual screening, with small pockets of Dense/Full visual screening. These local roads merge with the L-8781 local road, which has variable visual screening with equal very small portions of Little/No up to Dense/Full visual screening.

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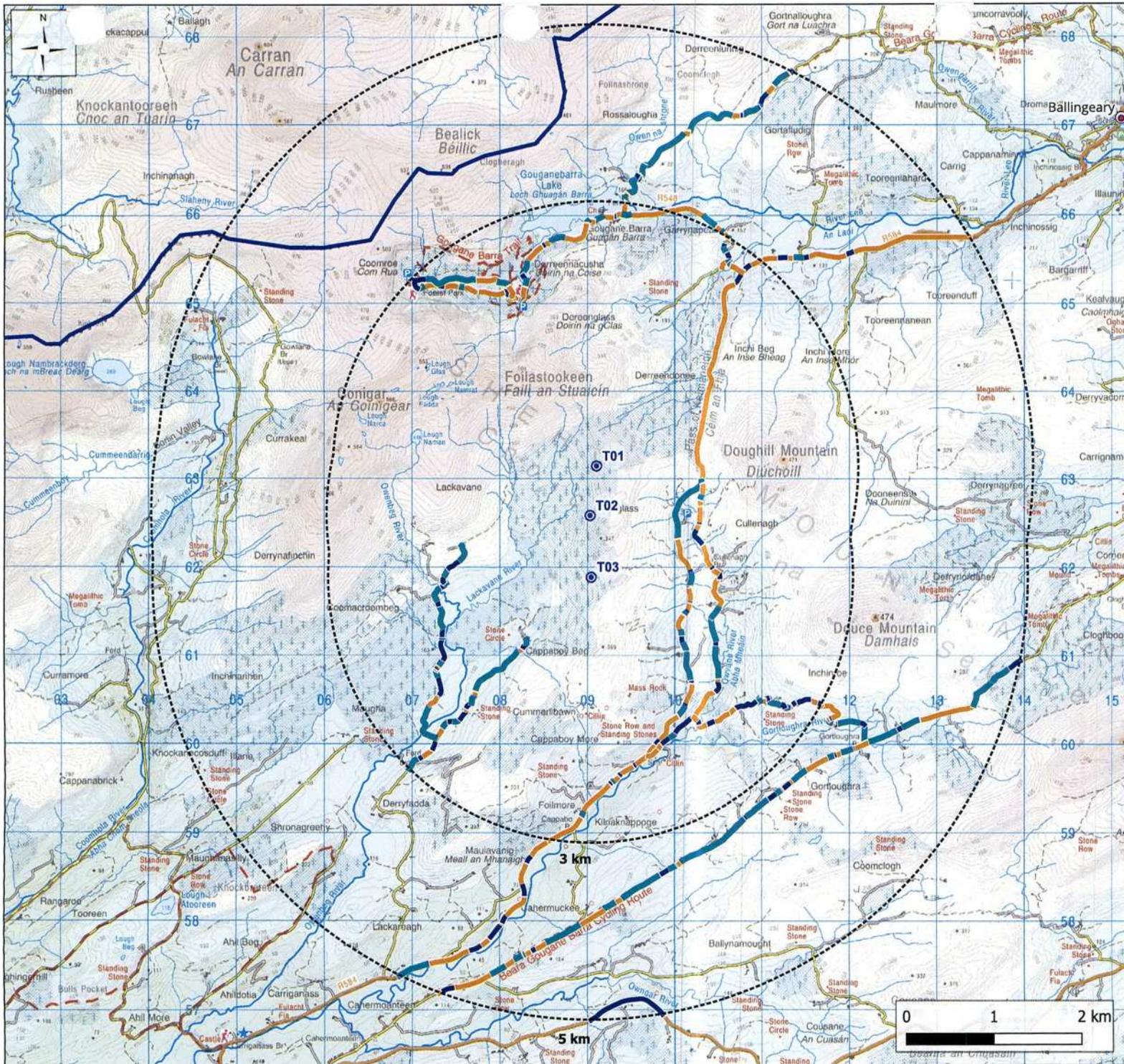
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**Map Legend**

- 5km Route Screening Buffer
- Proposed Turbine Locations
- County Border
- Route Screening Analysis**
- Little / No Visual Screening
- Intermittent / Partial Visual Screening
- Dense / Full Visual Screening

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**Figure 13-4**

**Route Screening Analysis**

Project Title

**Curraglass Wind Farm**

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
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## 13.4 Landscape Baseline

The Landscape Baseline section details relevant policies pertinent to this LVIA, as well a description of the receiving landscape of the Site and its wider setting.

This section is divided into:

- **Landscape Designations and Policy Context** pertaining to the location and features of the Site and its surrounding area based on the developments plans for County Cork and County Kerry and their relevant appendices;
- **Landscape Character of the Site** describing the localised physical characteristics of the Site and its immediate setting, based on:
  - Site visit findings from 2024 and 2025.
- **Landscape Sensitivity** assigning 'Sensitivity' rating to the Site and its surrounding area according to the 'Value' and 'Susceptibility to Change' based on the appraisal of multiple indicators:
  - Landscape designations;
  - Quality/condition of landscape elements;
  - Scenic/aesthetic qualities;
  - Rarity/conversation status;
  - Wildness/naturalness;
  - Recreational value;
  - Cultural meaning/associations;
- **Landscape Character of the Site as defined in the Guidelines (DoEHLG,2006) & Draft Guidelines (DoEHLG,2019)**, describing the landscape setting of the Site and reviewing the relevant policies and siting guidance;
  -
- **Landscape Character of the Wider Setting** assessing the designated character areas of the Site and its surrounding area based on:
  - Identification of Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within 15 km of the proposed turbines (i.e. LCA Study Area);
  - Preliminary assessment of LCAs based on ZTV mapping.

### 13.4.1 Landscape Designations and Policy Context

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

The Proposed Development is located in County Cork, therefore, the Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (hereafter referred to as the CCDP) was consulted to identify landscape designations existent in the LVIA Study Area. Additionally, general landscape policy and landscape policy pertaining to wind energy development are also included in this section of the LVIA, providing context for the selection of the Site as a landscape suitable for a wind energy development.

#### 13.4.1.1 County Cork Development Plan 2022-2028 (CCDP)

##### 13.4.1.1.1 General Landscape Policy

The CCDP describes landscapes as *"all aspects of our natural, built and cultural heritage"* and states that landscapes are *"an important part of people's lives, giving individuals a sense of identity and belonging, contributing to our wellbeing"*.

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Furthermore, *Section 14-7* of the CCDP notes that the “*coastal and countryside landscapes of County Cork are a key green infrastructure asset not only for their intrinsic value because of their importance in terms of recreation, tourism and other uses*”.

*Section 14-8* of the CCDP then outlines the policy related to landscape and visual amenity within County Cork. The CCDP references the Landscape Character Assessment of County Cork (hereafter, the LCACC), which includes an “*evaluation of each landscape character type in terms of its Landscape Value, Sensitivity and Importance*”. The LCACC is contained in the ‘*Draft Cork County Landscape Strategy 2007*’ (hereafter, the *Draft Landscape Strategy*) which identifies Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). Those LCTs and LCAs located within the LVIA Study Area are outlined in the sub-sections below.

The CCDP contains the following general landscape policies and objectives:

**“GL 14-9 Landscape:**

- a) *Protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Cork’s built and natural environment.*
- b) *Landscape issues will be an important factor in all land-use proposals, ensuring that a pro-active view of development is undertaken while protecting the environment and heritage generally in line with the principle of sustainability.*
- c) *Ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.*
- d) *Protect skylines and ridgelines from development.*
- e) *Discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amounts of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.*

**GL 14-10 Draft Landscape Strategy:**

*Ensure that the management of development throughout the County will have regard for the value of the landscape, its character, distinctiveness and sensitivity as recognised in the Cork County Draft Landscape Strategy and its recommendations, in order to minimise the visual and environmental impact of development, particularly in areas designated as High Value Landscapes where higher development standards (layout, design, landscaping, materials used) will be required.*

**GL 14-11 Draft Landscape Strategy, Land Use Plans and Policy Guidance:**

*Have regard to the Draft Cork County Landscape Strategy (2007) in the preparation of plans and other policy guidance being prepared during the lifetime of the Plan.*

*Review and update the Draft Cork County Landscape Strategy as soon as is practicable following the publication of a National Landscape Character Assessment as well as taking into account any associated guidelines.*

*Whilst advocating the protection of such scenic resources the Plan also recognises the fact that all landscapes are living and changing, and therefore in principle it is not proposed that this should give rise to the prohibition of development along these routes, but development, where permitted, should not hinder or obstruct these views and prospects and should be designed and located to minimise their impact. This principle will encourage appropriate landscaping and screen planting of developments along scenic routes.”*

Regarding the above-mentioned terminology shown in bold, it should be emphasised that this LVIA takes consideration of potential impacts based on the designation of both landscape and visual sensitivity and discusses mitigation measures to mitigate any potential for significant landscape and visual effects, cognisant of the specific development management requirements set out above. There are additional Development Management Requirements set out in the following section related to specific designations in the CCDP.

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The following subsections address the specific elements covered by this planning policy including the designations of the Landscape Character Assessment, the designated Views and Prospects, as well as the High Value Landscapes.

### 13.4.1.1.2 Landscape Character Assessment

Section 14.7.1 refers to landscapes as “an important part of people’s lives, giving individuals a sense of identity and belonging, contributing to our wellbeing”. The Landscape Character Assessment is contained in the *Draft Landscape Strategy 2007* and identifies 76 designated Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The LCAs were then amalgamated into a set of 16 generic Landscape Character Types (LCTs) based on similar physical and visual characteristics. The *Draft Landscape Strategy 2007* designates Landscape Character Types as “bigger, generic units with similar physical and visual characteristics.”

As there is very little detail on the Co. Cork LCAs, it is assumed that the LCTs are to be viewed as the equivalent to LCAs identified in other counties of Ireland. Therefore, for the purposes of this LVIA, assessment of landscape character considers the LCT designations instead of the LCAs. This is because the LCT designations are more detailed and contain specific landscape value and sensitivity designations in the CCDP and are therefore most appropriate for use. LCTs are assigned ‘sensitivity’ and ‘importance’ ratings in the *Draft Landscape Strategy*, as well as in *Volume 1* of the CCDP. Therefore, the LCTs are used in the LCACC for the assessment of effects on landscape character in this LVIA.

The Cork LCTs which are located within the 15km LCA Study Area are outlined below:

- LCT 4 – Rugged Ridge Peninsulas (Castletownbere-Bantry-Schull)
- LCT 6a – Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys (Blarney – Ballincollig – Carrigaline – West Dunmanway)
- LCT 9 – Broad Marginal Middleground and Lowland Basin
- LCT 12a – Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground (Ballyvourney Gaeltacht)
- LCT 12b – Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground
- LCT 15a – Ridged and Peaked Upland (Mullaghanish to Millstreet)
- LCT 15b – Ridged and Peaked Uplands (Millstreet)
- LCT 16a – Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Gougane Barra)
- LCT 16b – Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Cullenagh Lake)
- LCT 16c – Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Foilanumera)

These LCAs can be seen on Figure 13-9 below. The Proposed Development itself is located within LCT 15a – Ridged and Peaked Upland (Mullaghanish to Millstreet). The *Draft Landscape Strategy* describes this LCA as:

*“The ridged, peaked and forested upland landscape type flanks much of the mid-western boundary of County Cork, from the vicinity of Bantry in the south to Millstreet in the north. This landscape type has been glaciated and comprises a fairly rugged and rolling mountainous topography at a relatively high elevation.”*

A full description of the key characteristics of LCTs screened in for further assessment below in Section 13.4.3.2 are included in the LCT impact assessment tables comprising Appendix 13-2.

As stated above, the LCTs described in the Draft Landscape Strategy contain a mixture of sensitivities and values. The sensitivity of the landscapes within County Cork are discussed in the following sub-section.

### 13.4.1.1.3 Landscape Sensitivity Designations

Section 1.1 of the *Draft Landscape Strategy* defines Landscape Sensitivity as “the measure of a landscape’s ability to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and values.”

Section 14.8.3 of the CCDP discusses the values and sensitivities assigned for LCTs in the *Draft Landscape Strategy* and states that each landscape character type is valued in terms of its “Landscape Value, Sensitivity and Importance” and defines the ‘value’ as “the environment or cultural benefits, including services and functions,

which are derived from various landscape attributes"; thus value in this LVIA is evaluated in terms of its Landscape Value, Sensitivity and Importance according to the CCDP.

Section 14.8.4 defines the 'sensitivity' of each character type as "the ability to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and values." The sensitivity of the different LCTs in County Cork are categorised into four classes: Low, Medium, High, and Very High. These sensitivity classes are assigned to each LCT, along with a landscape importance of "Local, County, or National" value within the *Draft Landscape Strategy*.

The Proposed Development is located within LCT 15a – Ridged and Peaked Upland (Mullaghanish to Millstreet). Appendix F of the CCDP designated LCT 15 with a 'High' Landscape Value, 'High' Landscape Sensitivity and level of Local Importance.

According to the CCDP, High Sensitivity Landscapes are defined as:

*"[V]ulnerable landscapes with the ability to accommodate limited development pressure. In this rank, landscape quality is at a high level, landscape elements are highly sensitive to certain types of change. If pressure for development exceed the landscape's limitations the character of the landscape may change."*

Section 14.8.8 of the CCDP notes that "Landscape Character Types which have a very high or high landscape value and high or very high landscape sensitivity and are of county or national importance are considered to be our most valuable landscapes and therefore are designated as High Value Landscapes (HVL)." These are shown in Figure 14.2 of the CCDP.

It is acknowledged that the *Draft Landscape Strategy* designated LCT 15 with a level of County Importance, contrary to the current CDP (designation of Local Importance). The 'County Importance' designation in the *Draft Landscape Strategy* would suggest that LCT 15a is an HVL. However, according to the current CCDP, LCT 15a does not attain HVL status and remains classified under Local Importance as illustrated in Figure 14.2 of the CCDP. Consequently, within this LVIA chapter, LCT 15 is regarded as being of Local Importance, based on the prevailing county development plan. This is further addressed in the subsection section below.

### High Value Landscapes

The *Draft Landscape Strategy* designates a landscape value to each LCT, stating that "value represents aesthetic, ecological, historical, socio-cultural, religious and other characteristics of the LCA" and that the Landscape Type Values are defined on the basis of Landscape Area Values. The *Draft Landscape Strategy* notes further that the "overall value of the landscape types represents evaluation on a larger scale for the wider generic areas."

The *Draft Landscape Strategy* establishes value classifications of 'Very Low, Low, Medium, High or Very High'.

As noted previously, Section 18.8.8 of the CCDP notes that "Landscape Character Types which have a very high or high landscape value and high or very high landscape sensitivity and are of county or national importance are considered to be our most valuable landscapes and therefore are designated as High Value Landscapes (HVL)".

Section 14.8.9 of the CCDP states further that:

*"Within these High Value Landscapes, considerable care will be needed to successfully locate large-scale developments without them becoming unduly obtrusive. Therefore, the location, siting and design of large-scale developments within these areas will need careful consideration and any such developments should generally be supported by an assessment including a visual impact assessment which would involve an evaluation of visibility and prominence of the Proposed Development in its immediate environs and in the wider landscape."*

As noted above, while LCT 15a (containing the Site) is of 'High Landscape Value' and has a 'High Landscape Sensitivity' in the CCDP, it is only assigned of 'Local' Importance, therefore it is not designated as an HVL.

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Consequently, as the Proposed Development is not located within an HVI, it will not materially alter the physical fabric of one.

There are three Landscape Character Types (LCTs) classified as High Value Landscapes within the LVIA Study Area. They are:

- > LCT 4 - Rugged Ridge Peninsulas (Castletownbere-Bantry-Schull)
- > LCT 16a - Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Gougane Barra)
- > LCT 8 - Hilly River and Reservoir Valleys

These LCTs are assessed in Appendix 13-2 as Landscape Character Types in their own right. However, due to their high sensitivity, these High Value Landscape LCTs are also assessed as sensitive landscape receptors in terms of their sensitive landscape value in Section 13.7 - *Likely Significant Landscape and Visual Effects*, as per *Policy GI 14-10* quoted above.

### 13.4.11.4 Views and Prospects

The CCDP notes that County Cork "contains many vantage points from which views and prospects of great natural beauty may be obtained over both seascape and rural landscape" and that this "scenery and landscape are of enormous amenity value to residents and tourists and constitutes a valuable economic asset". The CCDP are of important and valuable Views and Prospects within the county. The CCDP contains the following relevant policy objectives within Section 14.9 in relation to Scenic Routes, Views and Prospects:

#### **"GI 14-12: General Views and Prospects**

Preserve the character of all important views and prospects, particularly sea views, river or lake views, views of unspoilt mountains, upland or coastal landscapes, views of historical or cultural significance (including buildings and townscapes) and views of natural beauty as recognised in the Draft Landscape Strategy.

#### **GI 14-13: Scenic Routes**

Protect the character of those views and prospects obtainable from scenic routes and in particular stretches of scenic routes that have very special views and prospects identified in this Plan. The scenic routes identified in this Plan are shown on the scenic amenity maps in the CDP Map Browser and are listed in Volume 2 Heritage and Amenity Chapter 5 Scenic Routes of this Plan.

#### **GI 14-14: Development on Scenic Routes**

a) Require those seeking to carry out development in the environs of a scenic route and/or an area with important views and prospects, to demonstrate that there will be no adverse obstruction or degradation of the views towards and from vulnerable landscape features. In such areas, the appropriateness of the design, site layout, and landscaping of the Proposed Development must be demonstrated along with mitigation measures to prevent significant alterations to the appearance or character of the area.

b) Encourage appropriate landscaping and screen planting of developments along scenic routes (see Chapter 16 Built and Cultural Heritage)."

#### **GI 14-15: Development on the Approaches to Towns and Villages**

Ensure that the approach roads to towns and villages are protected from inappropriate development, which would detract from the setting and historic character of these settlements."

Regarding the above-mentioned terminology shown in bold, it should be emphasised that this LVIA takes consideration of potential impacts based on the designated views and prospects, and scenic routes. As discussed in detail in Section 13.4.4 Landscape Character from Wind Energy Development Guidelines, and the photomontages produced in Volume 2: Photomontage Booklet (and assessed in Appendix 3 - Photomontage Assessment Tables), the Site adheres to the recommended guidance in relation to siting and design of the Site and does not have a significant residual effect on the scenic routes or views and prospects of County Cork.

There are 118 designated Scenic Routes across the County and 21 are located within the LVIA Study Area. The closest scenic route (SR-28) is located 980m east from the nearest proposed turbine (T2). These scenic routes are detailed in full in Table 2.5.1 of Volume 2 of the CCDP and are shown on Figure 13-5 – Landscape Baseline. As these 21 No. scenic amenity designations are of a visual nature, they are comprehensively addressed in Section 13.5 of this Chapter – Visual Baseline, where ZTV mapping and on-site appraisals determine the likely visibility of the Proposed Development from each route. The 21 Scenic Routes located within the LVIA Study Area are discussed in further detail below in 13.5 Visual Baseline.

### 13.4.1.15 Wind Energy Strategy

The Wind Energy Strategy of County Cork is contained in Section 13.6.3 of Volume 1. This section states that:

*“The Cork County Council developed a wind energy strategy for County Development Plan 2014 using the guidance provided in the “Planning for Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006” and the SEAI Manual ‘A Methodology for Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategies’ April 2013”.*

Section 13.6.5 also contains the following relevant planning objectives in relation to wind energy developments:

#### ET 13-4: Wind Energy:

*“In order to facilitate increased levels of renewable energy production consistent with national targets on renewable energy and climate change mitigation as set out in the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030, the Climate Action Plan 2021, and any updates to these targets, and in accordance with Ministerial Guidelines on Wind Energy Development, the Council will support further development of on-shore wind energy projects including the upgrading, repowering or expansion of existing infrastructure, at appropriate locations within the county in line with the Wind Energy Strategy and objectives detailed in this chapter and other objectives of this plan in relation to climate change, biodiversity, landscape, heritage, water management and environment etc.*

#### ET 13-5: Wind Energy Projects:

*On-shore wind energy projects should focus on areas considered ‘Acceptable in Principle’ and ‘Areas Open to Consideration’ and generally avoid “Normally Discouraged” areas as well as sites and locations of ecological sensitivity.*

#### ET 13-9: National Wind Energy Guidelines:

*Development of onshore wind should be designed and developed in line with the ‘Planning Guidelines for Wind Farm Development 2006’ and ‘Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019’ and any relevant update of these guidelines.”*

As detailed in the following sections of this chapter, it has been demonstrated through the review of the landscape of the Site that it is considered an acceptable landscape for wind energy development in line with the current wind renewable energy strategy. The CCDP identifies and designated different areas of the landscape of Co. Cork into 4 No. classifications relating to their suitability for wind energy development:

- > Urban Areas
- > Areas Open to Consideration
- > Areas Acceptable in Principle
- > Areas Normally Discouraged

These designations are shown in Figure 13.3 of the CCDP and are reproduced in Figure 13.5 below. The Proposed Development is located within an area designated as ‘Open to Consideration’, which the CCDP states that:

*“This area comprises almost 50% of the County area. Within these areas there are locations that may have potential for wind farm developments but there are also some environmental issues to be considered.*

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*This area has variable wind speeds and some access to the grid. Urban areas, metropolitan/town green belts, and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) within this area are not generally considered suitable for wind farm developments. The area excludes Natura 2000 sites. Any proposals within Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub Basin Catchments or in other sensitive catchments must be able to demonstrate that they have been designed in a manner which prevents any risk of peat slippage or erosion; and ensures the ongoing protection of water quality and the maintenance of natural hydrological processes. The cumulative effect of wind energy developments with regard to landscape and visual impacts and also impacts on Natura 2000 sites will also be a consideration. High design standards in terms of environmental protection measures are likely to be required to be included in projects located in sensitive catchments."*

The CCDP has the following objective in relation to areas designated as "Open to Consideration":

**ET 13-7: Open to Consideration:**

"Commercial wind energy development is open to consideration *in these areas where proposals can avoid adverse impacts on:*

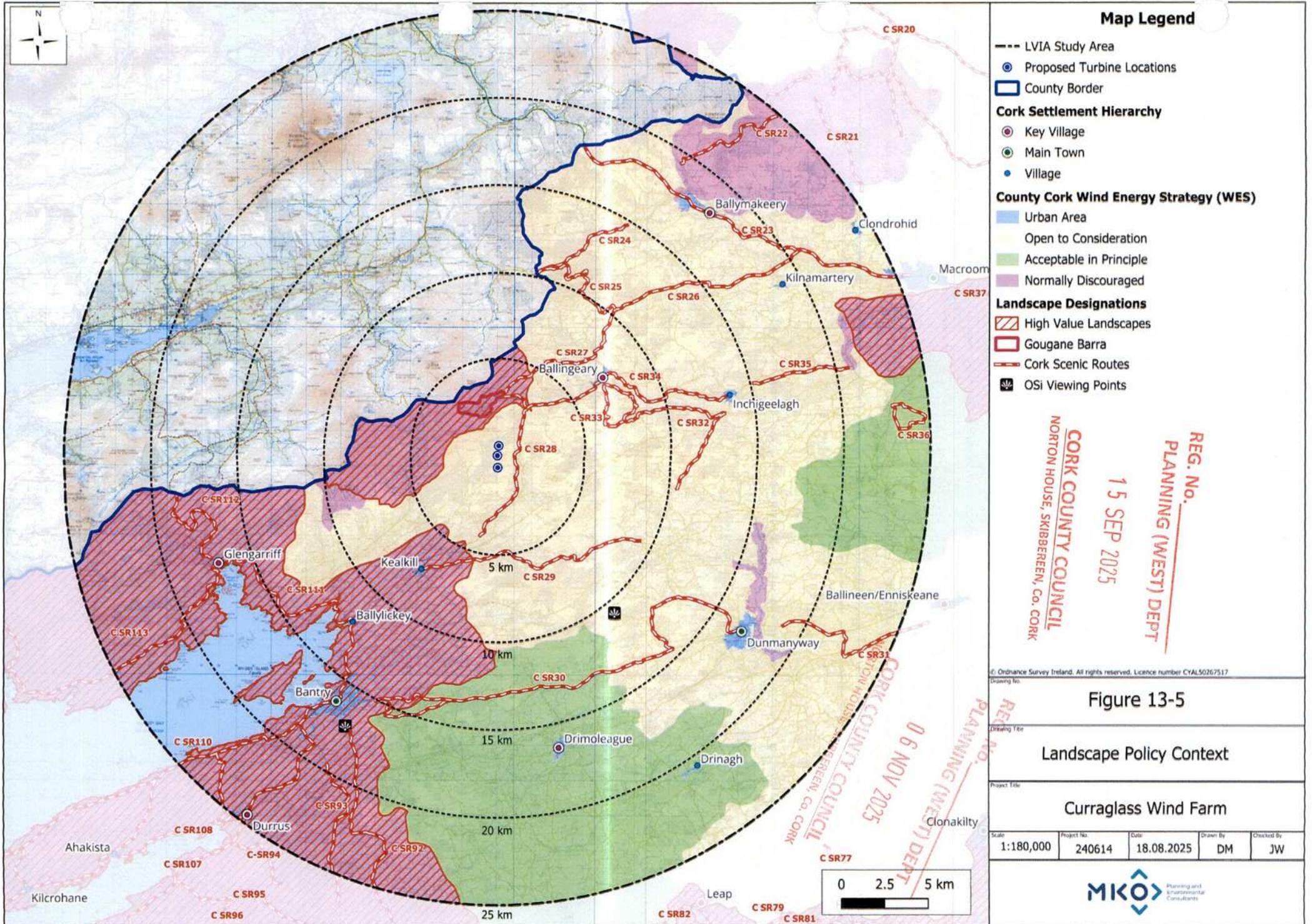
- *Residential amenity particularly in respect of noise, shadow flicker and visual impact;*
- *Urban areas and Metropolitan/Town Green Belts;*
- *Natura 2000 Sites (SPA's and SAC's), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's), proposed Natural Heritage Areas and other sites and locations of significant ecological value;*
- *Architectural and archaeological heritage;*
- *Visual quality of the landscape and the degree to which impacts are highly visible over wider areas;*
- *In planning such development, consideration should also be given to the cumulative impacts of such proposals."*

Regarding the above-mentioned terminology highlighted in bold, it should be emphasised that this LVIA takes into consideration the potential landscape and visual impacts arising from the Proposed Development, including the assessment of cumulative effects. As shown previously by the ZTV map in Figure 13-1, the Proposed Development has a limited extent of theoretical visibility over the entirety of the LVIA Study Area. Where theoretical visual exposure is shown, in line with *Objective ET 13-7*, the assessment in this LVIA addresses the potential landscape and visual impacts on the wider landscape, with the impact on residential amenity is assessed in Section 13.7 below, where mitigation measures for any potential adverse visual impacts are detailed.

Overall, the assessment in this LVIA concludes that siting of the Proposed Development within this remote area, designated as '*Open to Consideration*', is viable for wind energy development, in line with the requirements set by the CCDP related to landscape and visual amenity.

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**Map Legend**

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbine Locations
- County Border
- Cork Settlement Hierarchy**
- Key Village
- Main Town
- Village
- County Cork Wind Energy Strategy (WES)**
- Urban Area
- Open to Consideration
- Acceptable in Principle
- Normally Discouraged
- Landscape Designations**
- ▨ High Value Landscapes
- ▨ Gougane Barra
- Cork Scenic Routes
- OSi Viewing Points

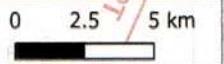
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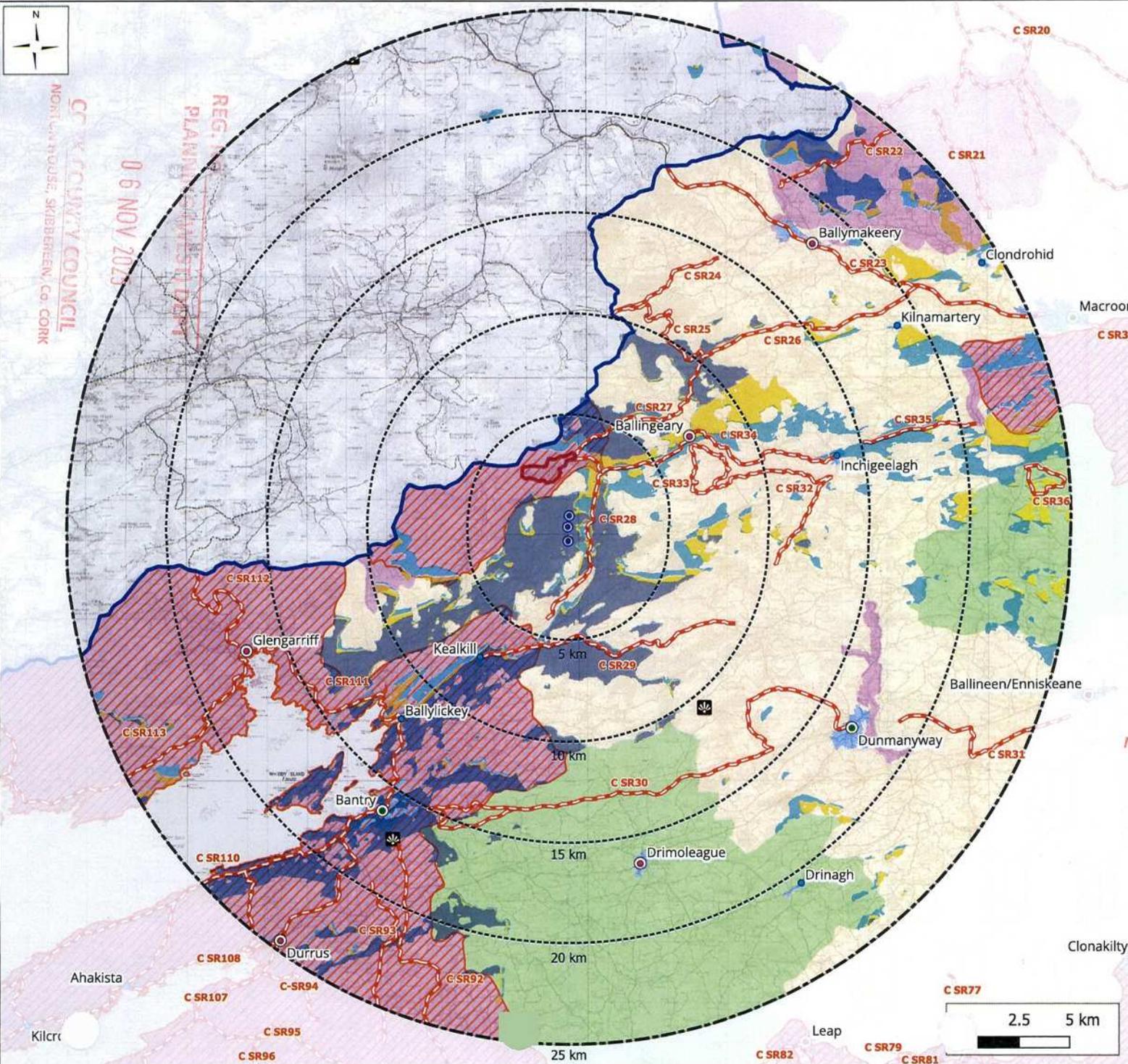
**Figure 13-5**

**Landscape Policy Context**

Project Title				
<b>Curraglass Wind Farm</b>				
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### Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- Proposed Turbine Locations
- ▭ County Border
- Cork Settlement Hierarchy**
- Main Town
- Key Village
- Village
- Landscape Designations**
- ▨ Cork High Value Landscapes
- ▭ Gougane Barra
- Cork Scenic Routes
- 🏞️ OSi Viewing Points
- County Cork Wind Energy Strategy (WES)**
- ▭ Urban Area
- ▭ Open to Consideration
- ▭ Acceptable in Principle
- ▭ Normally Discouraged\*
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)**
- ▭ 1 Turbine Theoretically Visible
- ▭ 2 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- ▭ 3 Turbines Theoretically Visible

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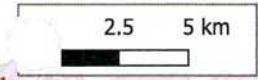
**Figure 13-6**

Drawing Title  
**Landscape Policy Context with ZTV**

Project Title  
**Curraglass Wind Farm**

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
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## 13.4.2 Landscape Character of the Site

Landscape character refers to the distinct, recognisable, and consistent pattern of elements that occur in a particular type of landscape and how people perceive this. It reflects particular combinations of natural components such as geology, landform, soils, cultural perception, and vegetation with human influence such as land use and human settlement. The identification of landscape character as outlined in the *Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities Guidelines* (DoEHLG, 2000) comprises the identification of primarily physical units (areas defined by landform and landcover) and, where appropriate, of visual units.

The Site was visited multiple times during the years 2024 and 2025 where a preliminary assessment of topography, drainage, landcover and land use was conducted in conjunction with other LVIA surveys. Information gathered during these visits have informed the following descriptions for the Site.

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The Site Overview

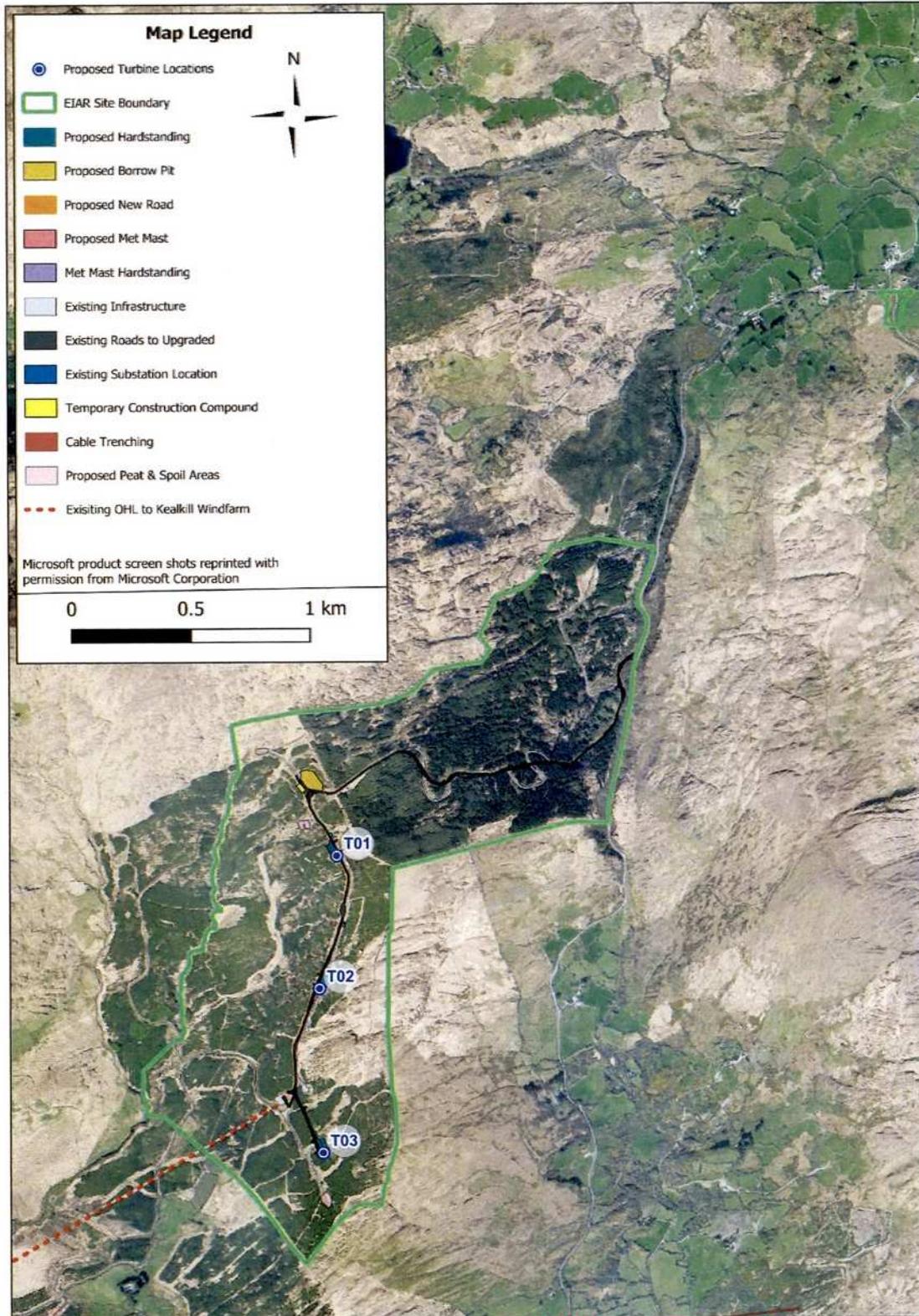


Figure 13.7: Aerial View of the Site

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The Site is characterised by an area of land that has been heavily modified by human activity, featuring historic wind farm infrastructure and expanses of commercial forestry tracts. The Site, located along an elevated ridgeline within the Shehy Mountains, is nestled between the undulating features of Doughill Mountain to the east and Foilastookeen and Conigar Mountains to the west. As seen in Plate 13-4 below, the surrounding mountain moorland landscape, interspersed with agricultural farmland and commercial forestry, contributes to the region's diverse landscape character of multiple land-uses.



Plate 13-4 Drone Image: Views south-west from approx. 500m west of turbine T1

### Landform and Drainage

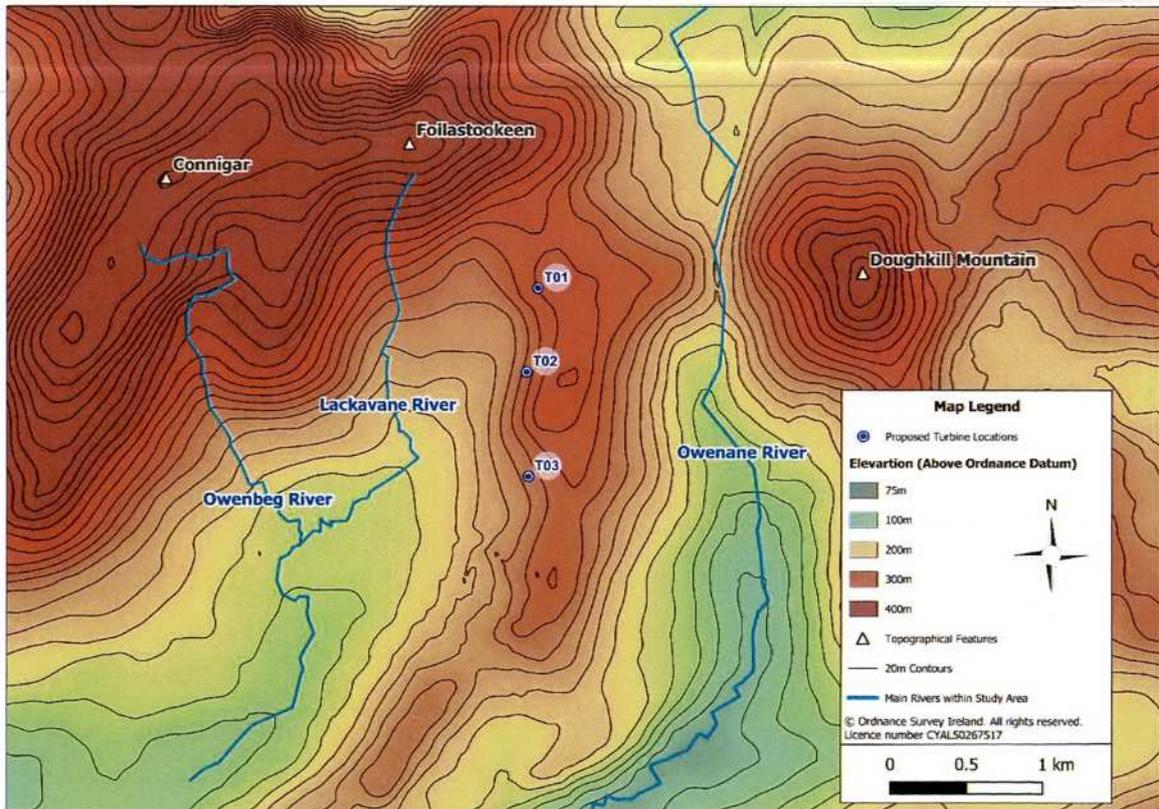


Figure 13-8 Topography of the Site

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The encompassing mountains and the naturally undulating topography surrounding the Site provides significant visual screening, particularly beyond a 5km radius. This effectively encloses the Site within these distinctive topographical features, as illustrated in Figure 13-1 previously.

The Owenbeg and Lackavane Rivers, located to the west of the proposed turbines, and the Owvane River, situated to the east of the proposed turbines, follow the valleys formed by the natural contours of the landscape. These rivers contribute to the area's undulating terrain, which provide the natural topographical screening.

**Landcover and land-use**

Landcover is the term used to describe the combinations of vegetation and land-use that cover the land surface. It comprises the more detailed constituent parts of the landscape and encompasses both natural and man-made features.

The land cover of the Site primarily consists of commercial forestry (see Plate 13-4 previously) and wind farm infrastructure and existing access roads (see Plate 13-5 below). The landscape is marked by the presence of mature vegetation and areas where tree felling has occurred, as seen in Plate 13-5 and Plate 13-6 below. The condition of the landscape is degraded in several locations due to extensive human activities. Consequently, the Site presents itself as a heavily modified human landscape.



Plate 13-5 Views north from within the Site, towards turbine T2

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Plate 13-6 Views north-east from within the Site, from the where turbine T3 is located

The existing wind farm infrastructure is evident, with certain areas showing signs of natural regeneration by vegetation and shrubs. The site access roads lead to level, stable gravel surface, which previously supported exiting turbines. This can be seen in Plate 13-7, where proposed turbine T2 is proposed to be built on the graded site of a former turbine.



Plate 13-7 Views west, towards the approximate location of turbine T1

Notably, an operational substation, which remains an active node on the national electricity grid, is also situated within the Site (see Plate 13-8 below). As discussed in detail in Chapter 4, it is proposed to connect the proposed turbines to the existing onsite 38kV substation. The existing substation is located approx. 271m north-west from proposed turbine T3 and is enclosed by dense commercial forestry with some open views of the undulating topography in the distant background. It is intended to connect the proposed turbines to the national grid via the existing onsite 38kV substation located within the Site. The existing onsite 38kV substation connects to an existing 38kV overhead line.

The mixed utilisation of the landscape represents it as a mosaic landscape comprising both natural and artificial elements, significantly influenced by considerable amounts of human intervention and modification.

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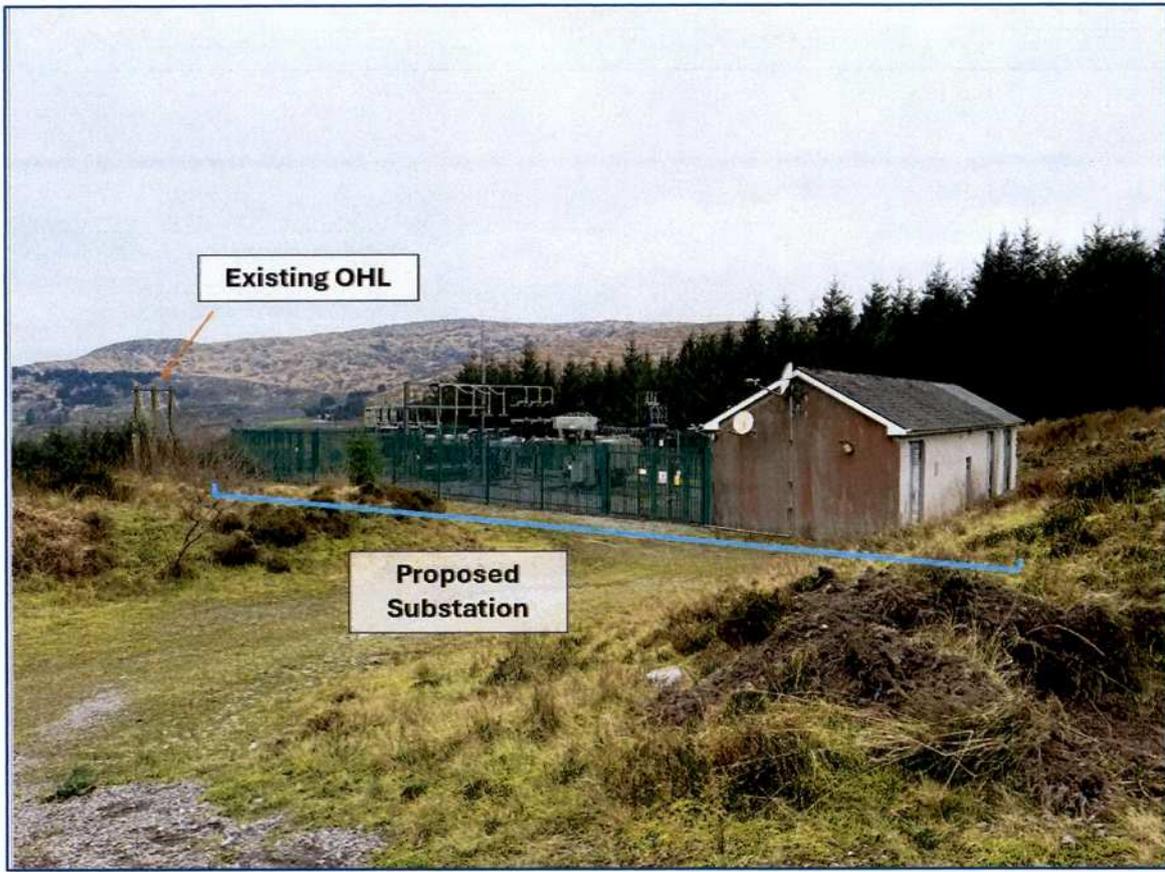


Plate 13-8 Existing onsite 38kV substation within the Site, located approx. 271m north-west of turbine T3

### Views within the Site

Much of the views within the Site itself, particularly in the vicinity of the turbines, depict a landscape that has been extensively modified by human activities. The view within the Site primarily consists of dense commercial forestry, often screening external views (seen in Plate 13-9 below), with existing wind farm infrastructure. As a result, the landscape is degraded in several locations by anthropogenic influences and has little to no scenic or aesthetic values contributed to the Site itself.

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*Plate 13-9 Views south from within the Site, approx. 80m west of turbine T3*

However, given the topography of the Site, existing roads within the EIAR Site Boundary, and openings within the tracts of forestry have open views extending into the wider landscape, as seen in Plate 13-10 below. These views reveal a rolling mountainous terrain interspersed with agricultural fields and stretches of commercial forestry. There is a sense of remoteness and isolation, with sparse residential structures within the wider landscape.



*Plate 13-10 Small opening in the forestry track within the Site, approx. 100m east from the existing substation*

The wider views from within the Site are primarily comprised of a vast mountain moorland, representative of a mixed-use agricultural and commercial forestry landscape, heavily influenced by human intervention and modification. Furthermore, existing wind farms are visible within the broader landscape from certain vantage points within the Site, as illustrated in Plate 13-12 below.

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Plate 13-11 Views south-west from within the Site, approx. 30m east of the existing onsite 38kV substation



Plate 13-12 Views from a local road within the EIAR Site Boundary, approx. 930m east from turbine T1

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### 13.4.3 Landscape Sensitivity of the Site: Landscape Value & Susceptibility to Change

Landscape ‘Value’ was assessed in order to determine the landscape ‘Sensitivity’ of the Site as well as the wider landscape setting and establish the capacity of the immediate landscape in which the Proposed Development will be built, as is prescribed by best practise guidance (GLVIA3, LI & IEMA, 2013, p.80):

*‘...as part of the baseline description the value of the potentially affected landscape should be established’.*

Comprehension of the Landscape Value and Landscape ‘Susceptibility to Change’ (to wind farm development) enables determination of the sensitivity of the landscape at a micro-level (meaning, the landscape of the Site) and its capacity to absorb the infrastructure of a wind farm development.

The table below considers the collective appraisal of seven indicators of landscape Value in the LVIA guidance (listed below). Landscape Value and Susceptibility to Change are then combined to assign an overall Sensitivity rating of the site.

The determination of landscape Value takes into consideration the scenic amenity designations and landscape sensitivity and value designations found in the local landscape policy, as well as other indications of landscape value attached to undesignated landscapes.

Below, Table 13-2 describes the following seven indicators appraised collectively to establish landscape Value and Susceptibility to Change, which were then considered in forming the overall landscape Sensitivity classification of the site:

- > Landscape designations (LCA setting, Scenic Routes and Views, amenity areas, etc.);
- > Quality/condition of landscape elements;
- > Scenic/aesthetic qualities;
- > Rarity/conversation status;
- > Wildness/naturalness;
- > Recreational value;
- > Cultural meaning/associations.

The ratings of Value and Susceptibility range from High, Medium, or Low, while the overall Sensitivity is assigned as **Very High, High, Medium or Low**, following criteria outlined in the full detailed methodology, presented in *Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology* (Section 1.7: Assessing Landscape Effects).

Table 13-2: Analysis of Indicators of Landscape Value and Susceptibility to Change

Indicator	Description
Landscape Designations	<p>The Site is located within LCT 15a of County Cork – Ridged and Peaked Uplands (Mullaghanish to Millstreet). The CCDP designated this LCT with a ‘High’ Landscape Value and a ‘High’ Landscape Sensitivity, however, the CCDP designates this LCT with only a level of ‘Local’ Importance in the CCDP.</p> <p>As the LCT is only of Local Importance, the Site is not located within any protected or sensitive landscape designation of any local landscape policy or High Value Landscape designation. It is acknowledged however, that the closest High Value Landscape (LCT 16a – Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Gougane Barra)) is located 1.3kmm north-west from the nearest proposed turbine (T1).</p> <p>Furthermore, as discussed in Section 13.4.1.1.3 previously, the CCDP notes that, while High Sensitivity Landscapes are “high level” and that these “landscape</p>

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Indicator	Description
	<p><i>elements are highly sensitive to certain types of change</i>”, these landscapes still do have “<i>the ability to accommodate limited development</i>”, noting that future development is anticipated within this landscape type. Additionally, the Site is located within an area designated as ‘Open to Consideration’, in the Wind Energy Strategy of the CCDP.</p> <p>No designated scenic views or routes are located within the Site itself, although, the closest scenic route is SR-28, located approximately 980m east of the nearest proposed turbine (T2).</p>
Landscape Elements Quality/Condition	<p>This refers to the physical state of the landscape of the Site and the condition of each of its individual elements.</p> <p>The landscape of the Site is of a former wind farm, with existing wind farm infrastructure still present. It is within a landscape of commercial forestry with mature vegetation and tree felling present on-site. The condition of the landscape is degraded in several locations due to extensive human activities. Consequently, the Site presents itself as a heavily modified human landscape.</p>
Scenic/Aesthetic Qualities	<p>The Site itself has some rural aesthetic qualities due to its remote siting within an upland landscape. However, the heavy human influence arising from a pre-existing windfarm and commercial forestry detracts somewhat from the aesthetic quality of the Site.</p>
Rarity or Conservation Interests	<p>The Site is part of a remote mountainous landscape with transitional woodland scrub and conifer forest interspersed. Much of the Proposed Development is located within Improved Agricultural Grassland (GA1) or Wet Grassland (WS1). A comprehensive assessment of the ecology of the site is included in Chapter 6: Biodiversity and proposed enhancement measures are included in <i>Appendix 6-5: Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan</i> of this EIAR.</p>
Wildness/Naturalness	<p>This refers to the present degree of human interference on the landscape of the Site.</p> <p>There is a sense of wildness associated with the relatively remote and unpopulated nature of this upland landscape of the proposed turbines. However, the entirety of the Site, a previously the Kealkill Wind Farm, is comprised of a highly managed area of coniferous forestry plantation. Therefore, while there is a degree of wildness and naturalness within the site, despite its natural elements, the Site is considered to be a landscape influenced by high levels of human modification and interference.</p>
Recreational Value	<p>There is little to no recreational value within the Site itself. Two walkways (‘Pass of Keimaneigh’ to the east, and ‘Sli Galetacht Mhuscraí’ to the north-west) partially traverse the EIAR Site Boundary, however, views mainly consist of a heavily modified human landscape.</p>
Cultural Meaning/Associations	<p>There are no known recreational uses of the Site. The nearest recreational area is Gougane Barra Forest Park to the north (approx. 1.9km north from proposed turbine T1), which will have no visibility of the proposed turbines.</p>

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Considering the collective appraisal of the indicators detailed above in

Table 13-2, this LVIA determines the following ratings for the Site:

- > Landscape Value = Low
- > Landscape Susceptibility to Change = Medium
- > **Overall Sensitivity = Medium**

In consideration of the factors detailed in the table above, and the designations outlined in the CCDP, the landscape value of the Site is deemed to be 'Low.' The Site is predominantly located within a modified working landscape of a previously existing wind farm with minimal aesthetic qualities attributable to the Site itself. There is little to no recreational value to the Site itself, considering that it's a human modified landscape of commercial forestry and the existing wind farm infrastructure. However, it is taken into account that some walking trails traverse the EIAR Site Boundary, with some scenic routes in close proximity to the EIAR Site Boundary. In consideration of these factors, the susceptibility of the Site to the proposed change is considered 'Medium.' On balance, the landscape sensitivity of the Site is deemed 'Medium.'

13.4.4

## Landscape Character from Wind Energy Development Guidelines

This section considers the context of the Proposed Development based on siting and design guidance in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) with respect to landscape and visual effects. Here, we identify the appropriate defined landscape character type and describe the landscape type of the Site in that context.

Section 6.9 of the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) is called 'Landscape Character Types as a Basis for Guidelines' and offers guidance for the siting and design specifically of wind energy developments in multiple landscape contexts, defining six landscape character types representing most situations where wind turbines may be proposed. These are:

- > 'Mountain Moorland'
- > 'Hilly and Flat Farmland'
- > 'Flat Peatland'
- > **'Transitional Marginal Landscape' – category selected by this assessment**
- > 'Urban/Industrial'
- > 'Coastal'

The guidance is intended to be indicative and general and notes that it represents the 'best fit' solutions to likely situations. The guidelines note that, in the case where a wind energy development is located in one landscape character type but is visible from another, it will be necessary to decide which of the landscape types more strongly influences the approach adopted for the LVIA.

Based on information gathered during site visits (see Section 13.4.2) and visualisations presented in the *EIAR Volume 2: Photomontage Booklet*, as well as from other mapping and imagery present in this Chapter, this LVIA selects the 'Transitional Marginal Landscape' character type as best representative of the landscape in which the proposed turbines are located. Therefore, the best practice siting and design strategies prescribed for this landscape character type from the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) are presented below, which were considered during the design of the Proposed Development.

### 'Transitional Marginal Landscape'

The key characteristics of Transitional Marginal Landscape as stated in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006, p.59) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019, p.110) are:

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- 'Comprises something of both mountain moorland and farmland, thus involving a mix of small fields, tight hedgerows and shelterbelts;
- May include relatively rugged and rocky terrain, and thus a reasonable degree of spatial enclosure;
- Higher ground tends to be wet and boggy. Lower areas are usually cultivated and managed as fields;
- Houses and farmsteads are usually fairly common; and
- This landscape type bridges the organised and intensively managed farmland and the more naturalistic moorland'.

This LVIA considers the importance of the following design consideration for Transitional Marginal Landscapes according to the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019, p.111):

*'The essential key here is one of respect for scale and human activities. These landscapes are often relatively small-scale due to spatial enclosure provided by hills and wind energy developments should respond sensitively to this intimacy.'*

Siting and design guidance for the following six considerations of this landscape type according to the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and with respect to the development are outlined below: **location, spatial extent, spacing, layout, height and cumulative effect.**

All relevant guidance quotations shown below are taken from the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).

### Location

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019):

*'As wind energy developments, for reasons of commercial viability, will typically be located on ridges and peaks, a clear visual separation will be achieved from the complexity of lower ground. However, wind energy developments might also be located at lower levels in extensive areas of this landscape type, where they will be perceived against a relatively complex backdrop. In these situations, it is important to minimise visual confusion such as the crossing by blade sets of skylines, buildings, utility lines and varied landcover.'*

In terms of **location**, the proposed turbines are strategically positioned on a lower base elevation of a ridge, providing a distinct visual separation from the complexity of the lower ground features. Additionally, the proposed turbines maintain a reasonable set-back distance from dwellings, adhering to the 500m set-back distance recommended in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), as well as the 4-times-turbine-height set-back distance recommended in the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019). Photomontages in *Volume 2: Photomontage Booklet* show limited instances where visual interference and visual confusion with other landscape elements occurs.

### Spatial Extent

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019):

*Wind energy developments in these landscapes should be relatively small in terms of spatial extent. It is important that they do not dominate but achieve a balance with their surrounds, especially considering that small fields and houses are prevalent.*

- 4(a) Wind energy development with regular spacing and linear layout - may not be appropriate due to the undulation of landform as well as limited field pattern.
- 4(b) Wind energy development with irregular spacing and random layout - is more appropriate given the relative undulation of the setting.

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- 4(c) Large wind energy development straddling two landscape character types within the same visual unit – this creates a visual ambivalence and, thus, negative tension between the two-character types involved.

In terms of **Spatial Extent**, the proposed turbines occupy a limited horizontal spatial extent. The proposed turbines are located within a valley, on the lower base of a ridge, visually separated by valleys. Strategically positioned along the lower base of a ridgeline, the turbines benefit from visual separation by the surrounding valleys, preventing them from dominating within the landscape.

### Spacing

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019):

*'All options are possible, depending on the actual landscape characteristics. However, irregular spacing is likely to be most appropriate, given the complexity of landform and land cover typical of these landscapes, and the absence of extensive swaths of fields of regular and rectilinear pattern'.*

In terms of **spacing**, the proposed turbines follow an irregular spacing pattern, which is most appropriate given the complex landform and the absence of regular fields within the landscape. This irregular spacing ensures that the turbines blend naturally with the natural contours of the landscape and variations of the undulating terrain, enhancing their visual integration within the landscape. As illustrated in *Volume 2: Photomontage Booklet*, this approach helps to create a more cohesive and aesthetically pleasing arrangement of the turbines.

### Layout

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019):

*'The likely location of wind energy developments on ridges suggests a linear or staggered linear layout whereas on broader hilltops they could be linear or clustered. Grid layouts are less likely to succeed aesthetically unless there is an open continuity of similar landcover'.*

In terms of **layout**, the proposed turbines follow a linear layout on the ridge, which conforms with the ridge's shape. This careful alignment with the topography enhances the visual integration of the turbines within the landscape, ensuring that they blend seamlessly with their surroundings.

### Height

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019):

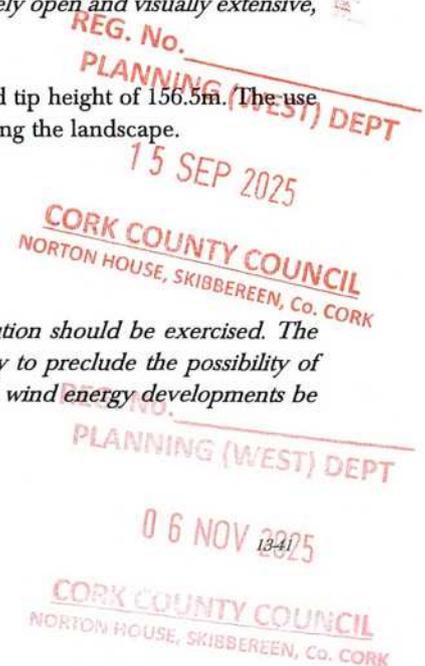
*'In small-scaled enclosed areas, short turbines are preferred in order to avoid their spatial dominance and to ensure visual balance. However, where the upper ground is relatively open and visually extensive, taller turbines may be more appropriate'.*

In terms of **height**, given the site's landform, the proposed turbines have a reduced tip height of 156.5m. The use of shorter turbines will assist in ensuring visual balance and will avoid overwhelming the landscape.

### Cumulative Effect

From the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) and Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019):

*'This would have to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but great caution should be exercised. The spatial enclosure often found in transitional marginal landscapes is likely to preclude the possibility of seeing another wind energy development. However, should two or more wind energy developments be*



*visible within a confined setting a critically adverse effect might result, depending on turbine height and wind energy development extent and proximity’.*

In terms of **cumulative effect**, there are no adjacent wind energy developments in the immediate vicinity of the proposed turbines and all other wind farms are located at a sufficient distance from the proposed turbines. The closest cumulative development is the pre-application Maughanaclea Wind Farm, located approximately 3.6km south of the Site. However, as discussed in detail in Section 13.7.3.8, the proposed turbines are visually enclosed by surrounding hills and undulating landforms, resulting in limited intervisibility with other cumulative wind farms (such as the pre-application Maughanaclea Wind Farm). As such, the proposed turbines are not visible within a confined setting, as described in the guidance above. While there are occasionally combined or successive views from elevated vantage points, these occur at long distances from the proposed turbines, where the proposed turbines and cumulative turbines appear separated and distinct within an open and expansive landscape.

### 13.4.5 Landscape Character of Wider Setting

Landscape character refers to the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how people perceive this. It reflects combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement, creating the sense of place found in different areas.

The proposed turbines are strategically positioned on the western side of an elevated ridgeline. The area is predominantly rural and agricultural, characterised by coniferous forestry plantations that reflect the typical land use patterns of the upland landscape surrounding the Site. The broader landscape is primarily rural and agricultural, with settlements dispersed throughout. The closest settlement, Ballingearry, is located approximately 7.25 km northeast from the nearest proposed turbine (T1).

Surrounding the Site, much of the land is used for agricultural purposes, interspersed with tracts of commercial forestry. Extensive areas of mountain moorland are also present, contributing to the diverse landscape character of the region. The patchwork of agricultural fields, bordered by hedgerows and stone walls, reflects traditional land-use patterns. The commercial forestry is composed mainly of conifer plantations, creating a stark contrast with the more open moorland areas. In the distance, rolling hills and low-lying valleys add a sense of depth and scale to the wider landscape. Overall, the various landscape elements form a mosaic of various land-uses.

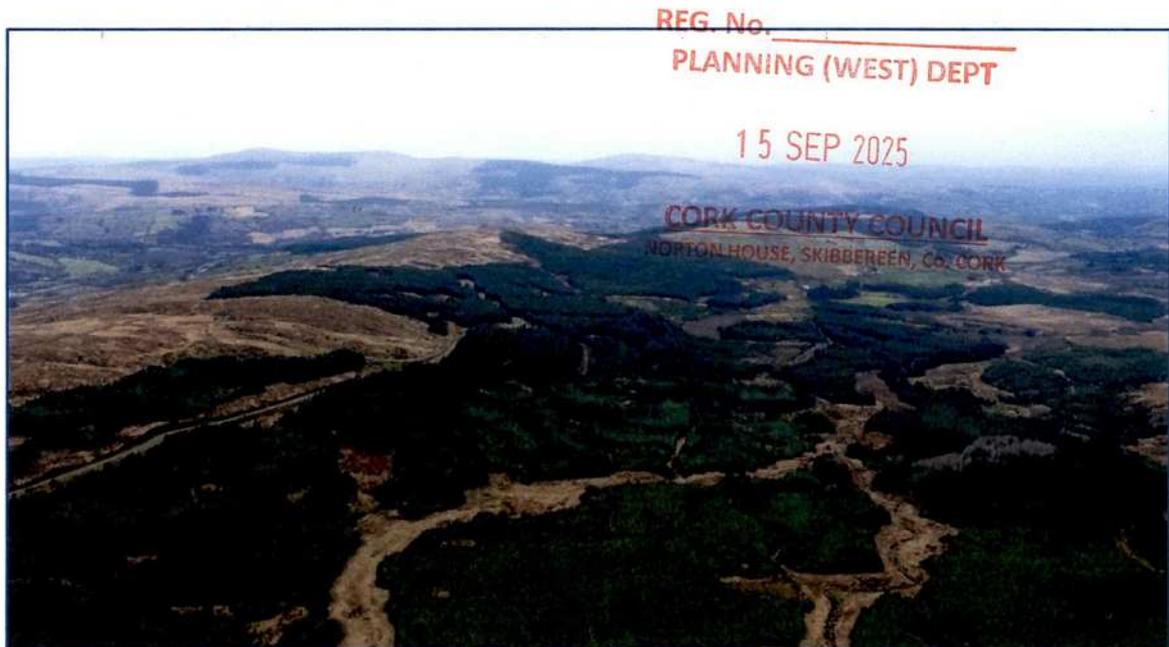


Plate 13-13 Drone Image: Views south overlooking the Site and the wider landscape. Located approx. 450m west from the nearest turbine T3

The proposed turbines are visually enclosed by topographical features, with the surrounding landscape characterised by its elevated, hilly terrain. Notable landmarks such as Coningar Mountain, Doughill, and Douce

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Mountains provide topographical screening from sensitive landscape receptors, including Gougane Barra (the lake and oratory), which is located approximately 1.6km from the Site. Additionally, the Shehy Mountain range on the Cork and Kerry border provides topographical screening from Killarney National Park, situated over 25 km away from the nearest proposed turbine (T1).

The R584 regional road, is one of the main transport routes that runs to the east of the proposed turbines connecting settlements such as Ballingeary and Kealkill. The road networks branching out from these settlements form linear patterns, with numerous standalone residential houses dispersed throughout the landscape.

Although the broader landscape remains predominantly rural, it is well-connected by the R584 and R585 regional roads, which links the village of Kealkill to settlements such as Ballylickey and Bantry. These towns are notable tourist destinations in County Cork, known for their picturesque coastal locations and rugged landscapes of the West Cork Peninsulas. This region, identified as a High Value Landscape in Section 13.4.1.1.3, features low-lying terrains with localised undulations. Bantry Bay Harbour, situated within 15km of the nearest proposed turbine (T3), opens to the west, with Whiddy Island lying roughly 16km south-west from the nearest proposed turbine (T03). The Wild Atlantic Way, a renowned scenic route, follows the coastline along the west coast. The impact assessments detailed later in this chapter (Section 13.7.3.5) evaluate the likely significant landscape and visual effects from key receptors where theoretical visibility on the ZTV is present, including Bantry town and the rugged West Cork Peninsula.

As discussed in Section 13.6, wind energy development is a notably established feature of the wider landscape. A comprehensive assessment of cumulative landscape effects is presented in Section 13.7.3.2, while cumulative visual effects are addressed in Section 13.7.3.8.

## 13.4.5.1 Preliminary Analysis: Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)

### 13.4.5.1.1 Maps: LCAs and ZTV

This section provides an initial analysis of designated LCAs from the county-level policy Landscape Character Assessments outlined previously (see Section 13.4.1 Landscape Designations and Policy Context). A map showing all LCTs within the LCA Study Area (15km from the proposed turbines) and the distribution of theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines occurring in each LCT is shown in Figure 13-9 below.

Each LCT is listed below in Table 13-3, as well as a description of theoretical visibility within each LCT, as indicated by the ZTV in Figure 13-10 below. Several LCTs identified in the LCA Study Area have very small areas of theoretical visibility indicated by the ZTV map. The potential visibility of the proposed turbines was appraised during site surveys from all LCTs with very limited or partial theoretical visibility. The ZTV and on-site visibility appraisals determine which LCTs are screened in for full assessment later in this chapter (See also Appendix 13-2), the screening results are noted in Table 13-3 below.

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Table 13-3 LCA's within 15km of the Proposed Development

Map Ref	LCA	Theoretical Visibility (TV) as indicated by ZTV	Actual Visibility	Scoped in for Assessment
<b>Up to 5km</b>				
LCT 15a	Ridged and Peaked Upland (Mullaghanish to Millstreet)	Large sections of full TV within 5km of the Site. Patches of TV extent to the west, with limited TV to the east due to topographical screening.	Visibility will be greatest within 5km of the Site. Beyond 5km, visibility will be limited to elevated vantage points within the landscape.	Yes
LCT 16a (HVL)	Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Gougane Barra)	Primarily no TV with a small pocket of full TV within 5km of the Site. Patches of partial TV evident beyond 5km of the Site.	Visibility will be greatest within 5km of the Site.	Yes
<b>Up to 10km</b>				
LCT 4 (HVL)	Rugged Ridge Peninsulas (Castletownbere-Bantry-Schull)	Large sections of no TV with patches of full TV extending to 15km from the Site.	Visibility may occur at elevated vantage points within the landscape.	Yes
LCT 16b	Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Cullenagh Lake)	Primarily no TV within the entirety of this LCT with small pockets of either partial or full TV.	This LCT will primarily have no visibility of the proposed turbines. Where visibility of the proposed turbines may occur; the turbines will appear in the distant background. Significant effects are not likely to occur.	No
LCT 12b	Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground	Primarily no TV within the entirety of this LCT with small pockets of either partial or full TV.	This LCT will primarily have no visibility of the proposed turbines. Where visibility of the proposed turbines may occur; the turbines will appear in the distant background. Significant effects are not likely to occur.	No
LCT 16c	Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Foilanumera)	Primarily no TV, with small pockets of partial TV.	Visibility is not likely to occur with this LCT. Where visibility may occur, the turbines will appear as small features in the background of the view. Significant effects are not likely to occur.	No

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Up to 15km				
LCT 15b	Ridged and Peaked Upland (Millstreet)	No TV within the entirety of this LCT.	Visibility will not occur within this LCT.	No
LCT 12a	Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground (Ballyvourney Gaeltacht)	Primarily no TV, with small pockets of full TV.	Visibility is not likely to occur with this flat LCT. Where visibility may occur, the turbines will appear as small features in the background of the view, screened by vegetation within the landscape.	No
LCT 6a	Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys (Blarney – Ballincollig – Carrigaline – West Dunmanway)	Primarily no TV within the entirety of this LCT.	Visibility will not occur within the LCT within the LCA Study Area. Where visibility is indicated, visibility of the turbines will be limited by intervening landscape features.	No
LCT 9	Broad Marginal Middleground and Lowland Basin	Primarily no TV within the entirety of this LCT.	Visibility will not occur within the LCT within the LCA Study Area. Where visibility is indicated, visibility of the turbines will be limited by intervening landscape features.	No

LCTs in Table 13-4 below are scoped out from further assessment in this LVIA as views towards the turbines were either entirely screened or substantially screened. In some cases, slivers of much larger LCT's may be present within the LCA Study Area. However, given the distance and scale, there is no potential for Significant landscape effects on those LCTs. Therefore, they have been scoped out from further assessment.

Table 13-4 LCAs Scoped Out from further assessment.

Map Ref.	LCA
LCT 16b	Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Cullenagh Lake)
LCT 12b	Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground
LCT 16c	Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Foianumera)
LCT 15b	Ridged and Peaked Upland (Millstreet)
LCT 12a	Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground (Ballyvourney Gaeltacht)
LCT 6a	Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys (Blarney – Ballincollig – Carrigaline – West Dunmanway)
LCT 9	Broad Marginal Middleground and Lowland Basin

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Following the pre-assessment exercise, the LCTs shown in Table 13-5 below have been selected for assessment. As some of the proposed turbines are likely to be visible from some areas within these LCAs, potential landscape effects may arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

Table 13-5 Scoped In for further assessment

Map Ref.	LCA
LCT 15a	Ridged and Peaked Upland (Mullaghanish to Millstreet)
LCT 16a (HVL)	Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Gougane Barra)
LCT 4 (HVL)	Rugged Ridge Peninsulas (Castletownbere-Bantry-Schull)

A detailed description of the three LCTs scoped in for further assessment (Table 13-5) and the likely effects on landscape character as a result of the Proposed Development are presented in the Landscape Character Assessment Tables that form Appendix 13-2. A summary of landscape effects on these LCTs are reported in Section 13.7.3 of this chapter - *Operational Phase Effects*.

### 13.4.5.2 Preliminary Assessment – Other Landscape Receptors

Apart from the LCAs identified above, a number of additional landscape receptors have been identified in the preceding sections. These are mapped in Figure 13-5 above and listed in Table 13-6 below, along with a description of theoretical visibility from each receptor, as indicated by the ZTV in Figure 13-6. Potential visibility of the proposed turbines was appraised during site surveys (conducted in the years 2024 and 2025) from all receptors with very limited or partial theoretical visibility. The ZTV and on-site visibility appraisals determine which landscape receptors are scoped in for full assessment later in this chapter, the results are noted in Table 13-7.

Table 13-6 Landscape Receptors within 25km of the Proposed Development

Name	Theoretical Visibility (TV) as indicated by the ZTV	Actual Visibility	Scoped in for Assessment
LCT 4 – Rugged Ridge Peninsulas (Castletownbere-Bantry-Schull)	Within 5km of the Site, there is primarily partial TV within this LCT. A patch of full TV is located in the northern section of the LCT within 5km, extending westward beyond 5km. Patches of full TV are evident beyond 5km to the west.	Visibility likely to occur within 5km of the Site. Beyond 5km, visibility is likely to be limited by screening from vegetation and built infrastructure within the landscape.	Yes
LCT 16a – Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Gougane Barra)	Primarily no TV with small pockets of partial TV. Area of full TV indicated to the west of this LCT.	Visibility may occur from elevated vantage points within this LCT.	Yes
LCT 8 – Hilly River and Reservoir Valley	Small pockets of partial theoretical visibility.	In reality, at this distance 25km away, the turbines, if visible,	No

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		<p>will appear as small elements in the distant background. Significant effects on landscape character of this LCT and visual effects not likely to occur.</p>	
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Following the pre-assessment exercise, the landscape receptors listed in Table 13-7 below have been selected for assessment. As some of the proposed turbines are likely to be visible from these receptors, potential landscape effects may arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

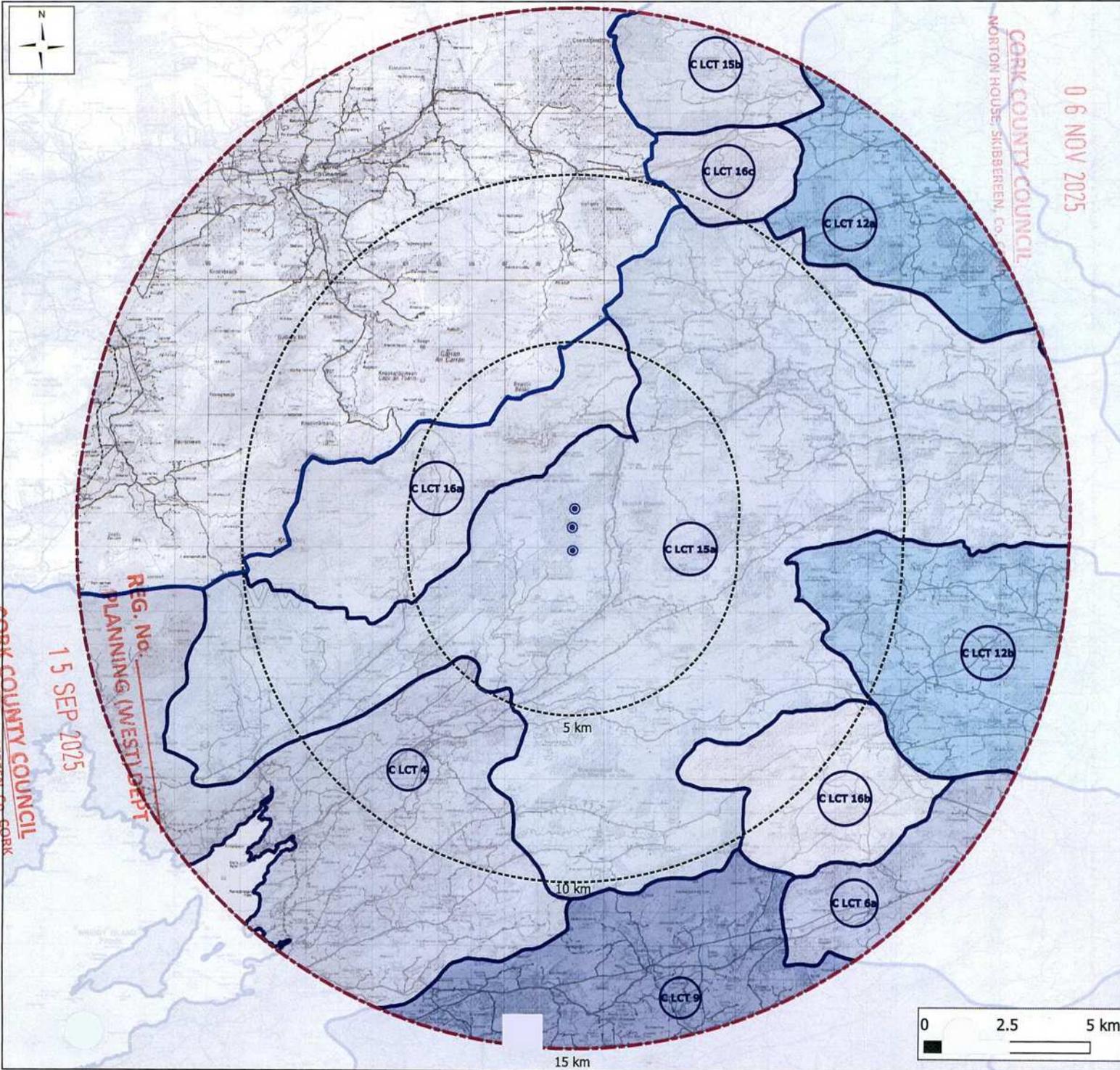
*Table 13-7 Landscape Receptors Scoped In for further assessment*

County	Landscape Receptor
LCT 4	Rugged Ridge Peninsulas (Castletownbere-Bantry-Schull)
LCT 16a	Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley (Gougane Barra)

A detailed description of the landscape receptors scoped in for assessment and the likely landscape effects as a result of the Proposed Development as reported in *Section 13.7.3 – Operational Phase Effects*.

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### Map Legend

- LCA Study Area (15km for Assessment of LCAs)
  - Proposed Turbine Locations
  - County Border
- Landscape Character Types (CCDP)**
- C LCT 4 - Rugged Ridge Peninsulas
  - C LCT 6a - Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys
  - C LCT 9 - Broad Marginal Middleground and Lowland Basin
  - C LCT 12a - Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground
  - C LCT 12b - Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground
  - C LCT 15a - Ridged and Peaked Upland
  - C LCT 15b - Ridged and Peaked Upland
  - C LCT 16a - Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley
  - C LCT 16b - Glaciated Cradle Valleys
  - C LCT 16c - Glaciated Cradle Valleys

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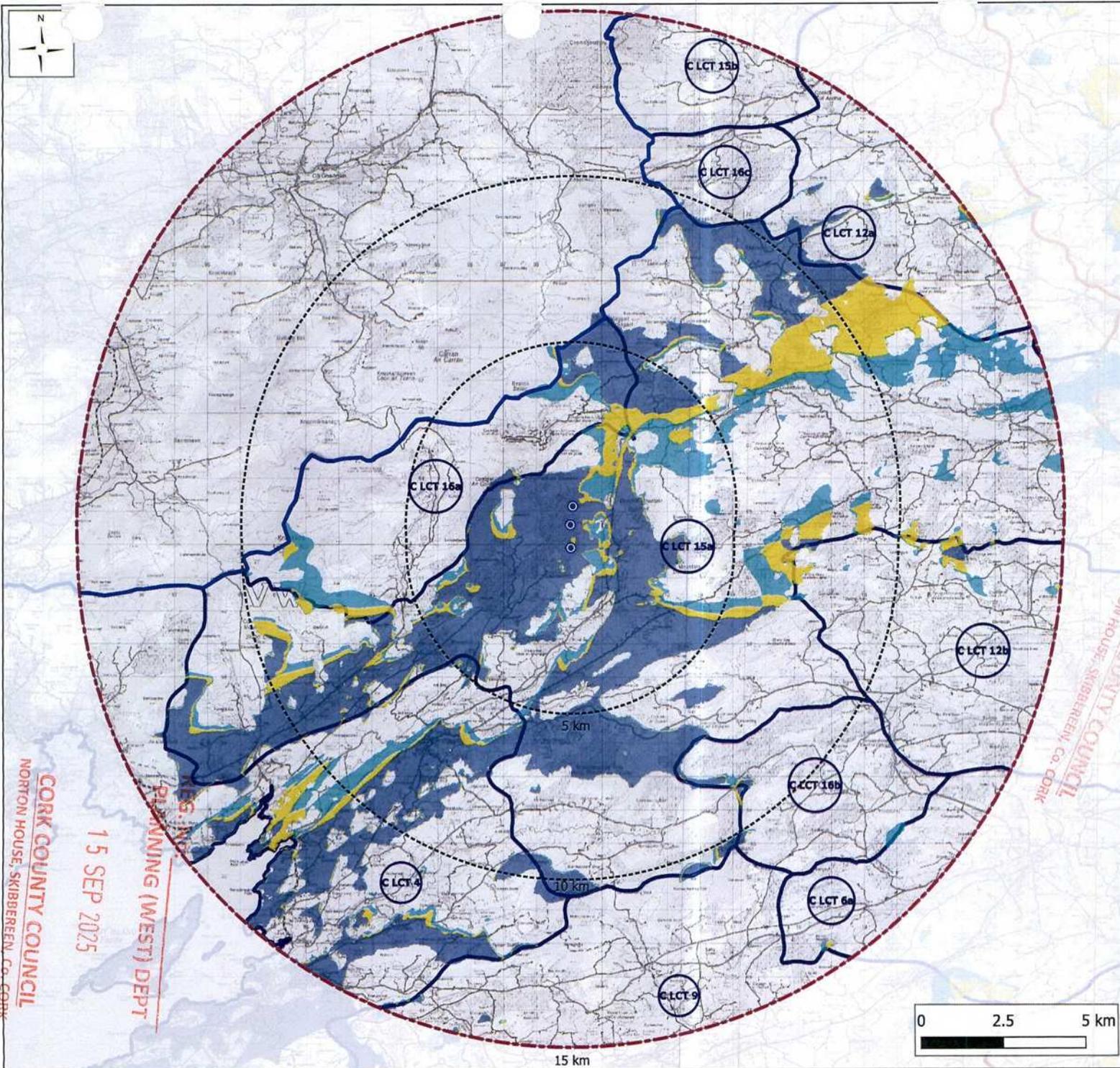
Figure 13-9

Drawing Title  
Landscape Character Area Map

Project Title  
Curraglass Wind Farm

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
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**Map Legend**

- LCA Study Area (15km for Assessment for LCAs)
- Proposed Turbine Locations
- County Border
- Landscape Character Types (CCDP)**
- C LCT 4 - Rugged Ridge Peninsulas
- C LCT 6a - Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys
- C LCT 9 - Broad Marginal Middleground and Lowland Valleys
- C LCT 12a - Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground
- C LCT 12b - Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground
- C LCT 15a - Ridged and Peaked Upland
- C LCT 15b - Ridged and Peaked Upland
- C LCT 16a - Glaciated and Forested Cradle Valley
- C LCT 16b - Glaciated Cradle Valley
- C LCT 16c - Glaciated Cradle Valley
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility**
- 1 Turbine Theoretically Visible
- 2 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- 3 Turbines Theoretically Visible

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Drawing No.				
<b>Figure 13-10</b>				
Drawing Title				
<b>Landscape Character Areas with ZTV</b>				
Project Title				
<b>Curraglass Wind Farm</b>				
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## Visual Baseline

The main purpose of establishing the 'Visual Baseline' is to identify the key visual receptors that should be considered for assessment within the LVIA Study Area. The visual baseline exercise uses ZTV mapping and on-site visibility appraisals to scope out receptors from further assessment.

The key visual receptors identified for assessment in the visual baseline exercise are represented by 'Viewpoints'. Viewpoints are locations from which visual effects are assessed using photomontages (see *Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology*, Section 1.6: Photomontage Visualisations). To this end, the following visual receptors have been identified within the study area and are presented in this section in order of priority:

- > Designated Scenic Routes and Views;
- > OSi Viewing Areas;
- > Settlements;
- > Recreational Routes and Trails, including:
  - Waymarked Walking Routes;
  - Cycle Routes;
  - Scenic Drives and Tourist Routes;
- > Recreational, Cultural Heritage & Tourist Destinations;
- > Transport Routes;
- > Residential Receptors:
  - See below Section 13.5.3: Residential Receptors and Visual Amenity.

Below, Figure 13-11 presents the 'Visual Baseline' map of all identified visual receptors within the Study Area and the subsequent Figure 13-12 is the same visual baseline map overlain with the Half-Blade ZTV. All receptors are listed in the tables in the following sections along with theoretical visibility at those locations indicated by the ZTV. During site visits conducted in 2024, the likely visibility of the proposed turbines was appraised from receptors where the ZTV indicated theoretical visibility. In the case of there being either no theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines, or where on-site appraisal determined visibility of the proposed turbines to be very unlikely or very limited, visual receptors were scoped out from further assessment. Where appropriate, the specific reasons for scoping out a receptor are included in the tables below.

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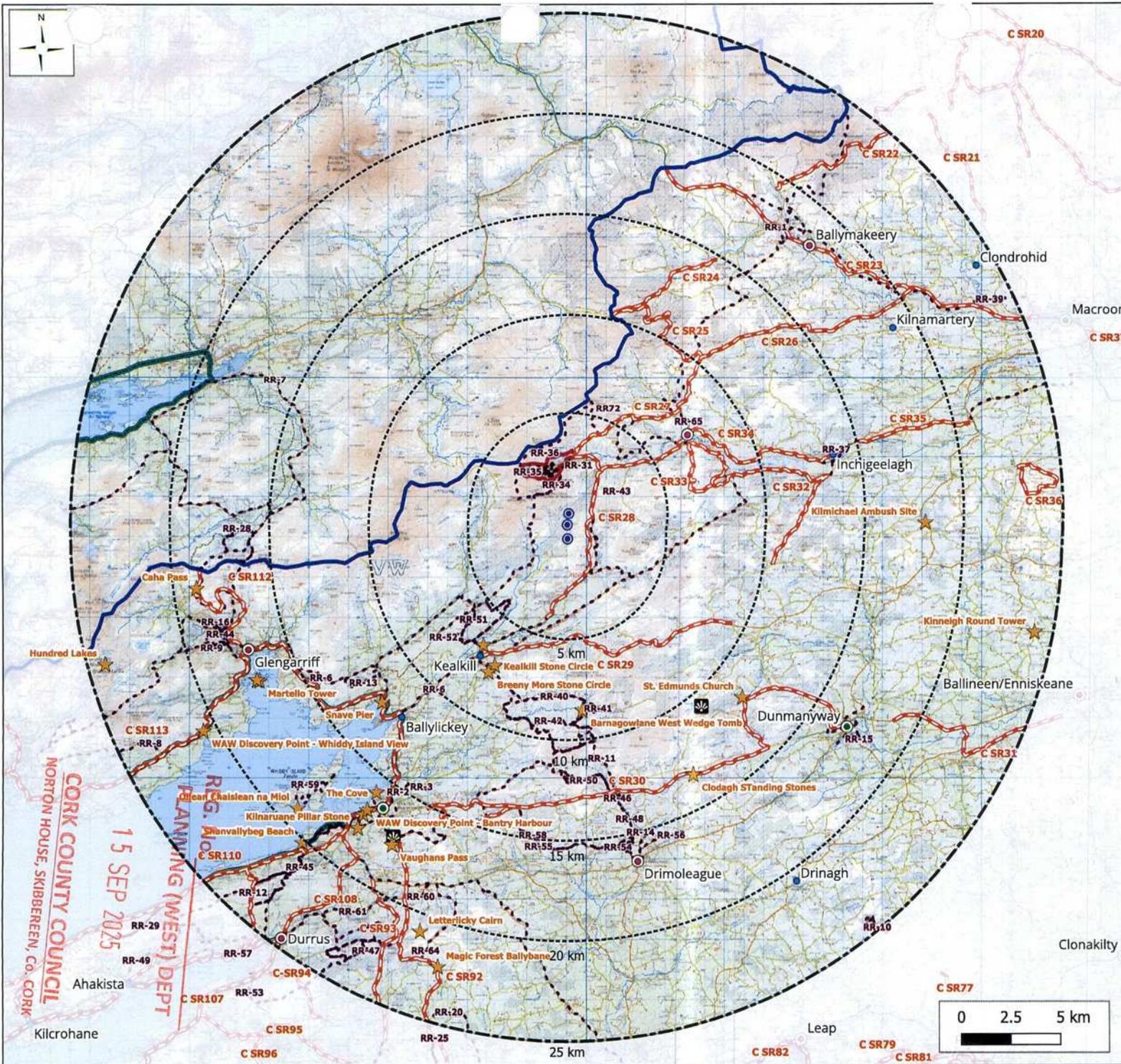
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### Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- ⊗ Proposed Turbine Locations
- ▭ County Border

#### Cork Settlement Hierarchy

- ⊙ Main Town
- ⊙ Key Village
- Village

#### Visual Receptors

- Cork Scenic Routes
- ★ Recreational Destinations
- Recreational Routes
- The Wild Atlantic Way
- ▭ Gougane Barra
- ⊙ OSI Viewing Points

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Drawing No. **Figure 13-11**

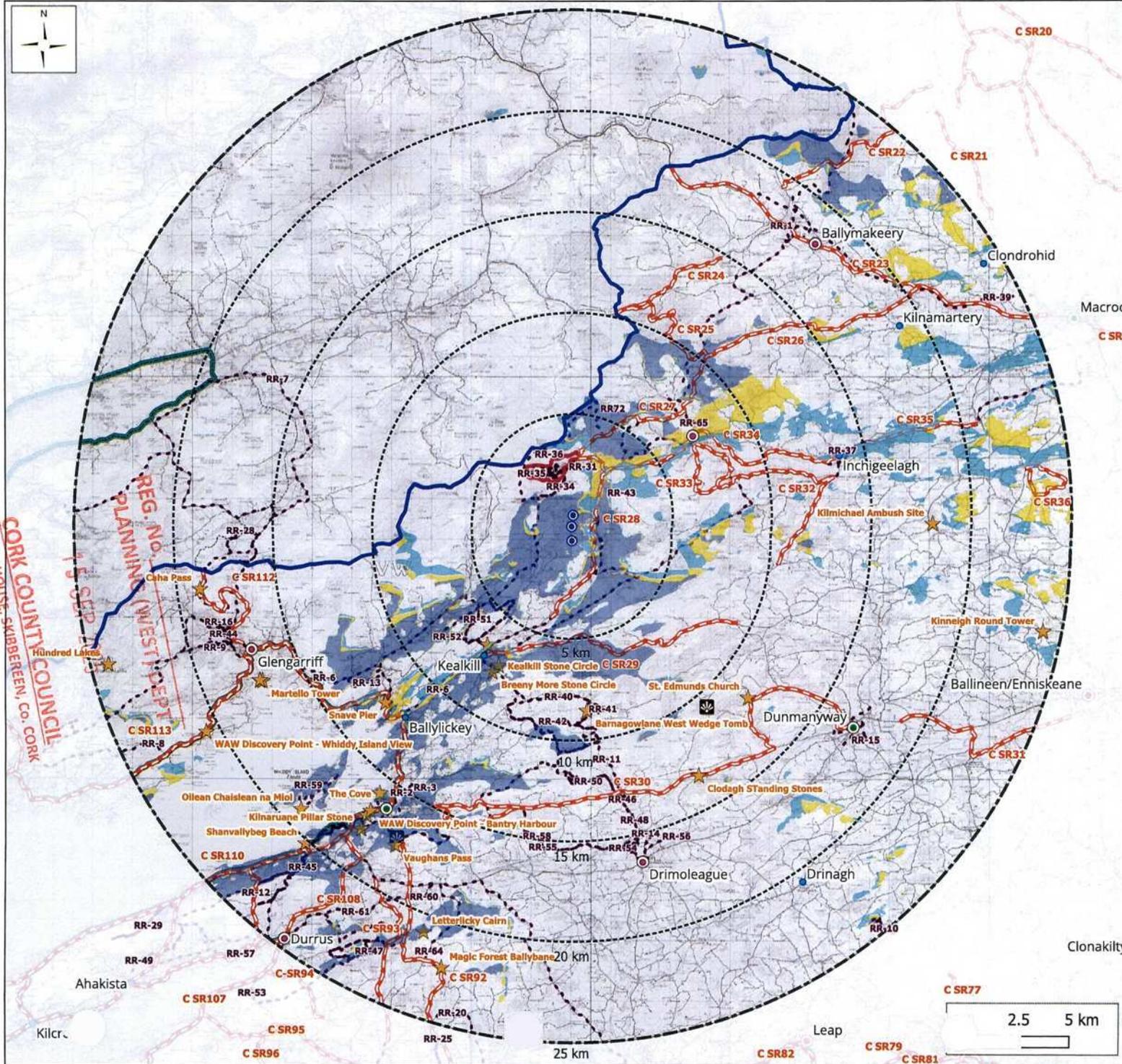
Drawing Title **Visual Baseline**

Project Title **Curraglass Wind Farm**

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:180,000	240614	11.08.2025	DM	JW

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Logo: MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants



### Map Legend

- LVIA Study Area
- ⊙ Proposed Turbine Locations
- ▭ County Border

#### Cork Settlement Hierarchy

- Main Town
- ⊙ Key Village
- Village

#### Visual Receptors

- Cork Scenic Routes
- ★ Recreational Destinations
- Recreational Routes
- The Wild Atlantic Way
- ▭ Gougane Barra
- ⊙ OS Viewing Points

#### Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- Light Blue: 1 Turbine Theoretically Visible
- Yellow: 2 Turbines Theoretically Visible
- Dark Blue: 3 Turbines Theoretically Visible

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 Drawing No.

### Figure 13-12

Visual Baseline with ZTV

Project Title: Curraglass Wind Farm

Scale	Project No.	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:180,000	240614	11.08.2025	DM	JW

Planning & Environmental Consultants

## 13.5.1 Visual Receptors

The following subsections present the scoping tables for all visual receptors, including designated Scenic Routes and Views; OSi Viewing Areas; Settlements; Recreational Routes; Cultural Heritage, Recreational & Tourist Destinations; prominent Transport Routes.

### 13.5.1.1 Designated Scenic Routes and Views

According to the CCDP, a total of 22 no. designated Scenic Routes and/or Views are existent within the LVIA Study Area; these were previously identified in the above Section 13.4.1 Landscape Designations and Policy Context and previously mapped above in the Landscape Policy Context Map (see previous Figure 13-5), and mapped as well in Figure 13-11.

Below, Table 13-8 displays the scoping of all identified receptors (scoped in or out for assessment), along with a description of each item, the direction of view indicated by the policy documents and whether it is directed towards the proposed turbines, the nature of theoretical visibility, and whether the receptor was scoped in for assessment.

Table 13-8: Scoping of Designated Scenic Routes and Views in the LVIA Study Area

Map Ref.	Description (CCDP Volume 2)	Direction of View	Directed to Turbines?	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
<b>Up to 5km</b>					
C-SR-28	<i>“Scenic road at the Pass of Keimaneigh to Guagán Barra. Views of the surrounding remote rural landscape &amp; rugged mountains”</i>	N/A	N/A	Large section of full theoretical visibility, with a stretch of no theoretical visibility	Yes
C-SR-27	<i>“Road between Guagán Barra and the Mouth of the Glen. Views of Coomatagart Mountain, hills, valleys &amp; Guagán Barra”</i>	N/A	N/A	Primarily full theoretical visibility within 5km, with small section of full theoretical visibility beyond 5km	Yes
C-SR-34	<i>“Road between Inchigeela and Ballingeary to Keimaneigh. Views of Lough Allua, Lee River Valley, Shehy Mountains, hills &amp; surrounding rugged landscape”</i>	N/A	N/A	Partial Theoretical Visibility within 5km, with intermittent patches of theoretical visibility beyond 5km, as it stretches to 15km	Yes
<b>5–10km</b>					

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Map Ref.	Description (CCDP Volume 2)	Direction of View	Directed to Turbines?	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
C-SR-26	"Road between Lissacresig and the Mouth of the Glen. Views of rugged landscape & valleys"	N/A	N/A	Small section of full theoretical visibility within 10km of the nearest proposed turbine, with small pockets of theoretical visibility beyond 10km	Yes
C-SR-32	"South Lake Road - Inchigeela and Ballygeary to Keimaneigh. Views of Lough Allua & the surrounding mountains"	N/A	N/A	Primarily no theoretical visibility with a small pocket of partial theoretical visibility	No
C-SR-33	"Road between Ballygeary - branch off S. Lake Road - and Kealvaugh. Views of Lough Allua, surrounding lakes, hills & remote rural landscape"	N/A	N/A	Primarily no theoretical visibility with a small pocket of partial theoretical visibility	No
C-SR-29	"Road to Kealkill via Cousane Gap to Togher. Views of remote mountainous landscape."	N/A	N/A	Large stretch of the scenic route has theoretical visibility	Yes
C-SR-25	"Winding road joining Coolea - Coom Road to Lissacresig road. Views of Foilanumera, Mweelin & Carrigalougha Mountains."	N/A	N/A	Small section of theoretical visibility within 10km of the nearest proposed turbine, with primarily no theoretical visibility beyond 10km	Yes
<b>10-15km</b>					
C-SR-111	"Road from Bantry, Snave, Ballylickey and Glengariff. Views of Bantry Bay, Whiddy Island, Glengariff Harbour & Mullaghmesha,	N/A	N/A	Pockets of full theoretical visibility within 15km, with primarily no theoretical visibility beyond 15km	No, due to the distance and dense screening form the built infrastructure within the settlements. Views

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Map Ref.	Description (CCDP Volume 2)	Direction of View	Directed to Turbines?	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
	<i>Sheehy, Coomhola &amp; Cobduff Mountains</i>				towards the turbines will be highly screened. Furthermore, views are primarily focused westwards, towards the coastline and topographical features to the west, away from the proposed turbines.
C-SR-30	<i>“Road between Dunmanway and Coolkellure, Castledonovan and Bantry. Views of hills, mountains, the Rivers Clodagh, Ilen &amp; Owennashingaun, Lough Bofinna &amp; the surrounding rugged remote rural landscape”</i>	N/A	N/A	Primarily no theoretical visibility along the entirety of the route, with very small pockets of partial theoretical visibility	No
<b>15-20km</b>					
C-SR-24	<i>“Road between Coolea and Coom. Views of the foothills of the Derrynasaggart Mountains, surrounding hills &amp; the Sullane River”</i>	N/A	N/A	Small pocket of full theoretical visibility beyond 20km of the nearest proposed turbined	No, in reality, where visibility may occur at this distance, the turbines will appear as small miniature elements in the distant background. Significant effects are not likely to occur.
C-SR-22	<i>“Road from Ballyvourney to Mullaghanish to Caherdowney. Views of Derrynasaggart Mountains, rockscape,</i>	N/A	N/A	No theoretical visibility	No

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Map Ref.	Description (CCDP Volume 2)	Direction of View	Directed to Turbines?	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
	<i>river valleys &amp; remote rural landscape”</i>				
C-SR-23	<i>“Road between Macroom and Derrynasaggart Mountains. Views of Derrynasaggart Mountains, surrounding hills, the Sullane River Valley &amp; rugged landscape”</i>	N/A	N/A	Primarily no theoretical visibility along the extent of the route apart from a small pocket of partial theoretical visibility at 20km	No
C-SR-35	<i>“Road Between Dromcarra and Rossmore. Views of rolling hills, open countryside, valley, the River Lee &amp; distant mountain views”</i>	N/A	N/A	No theoretical visibility	No
C-SR-31	<i>“Road between Ballineen and Ballincarriga to Dunmanway. Views of mature woodland, rolling hills &amp; remote rural landscape”</i>	N/A	N/A	No theoretical visibility	No
C-SR-92	<i>“Road Between Kissaclarig and Ballybane to Barnaghegeeha and Ardrah. Views of Mount Kid, Coomnaggragh &amp; Knocknaveagh Mountains, Sprat Hill &amp; surrounding remote rural landscape.”</i>	N/A	N/A	Small pocket of partial theoretical visibility.	No, in reality, where visibility may occur at this distance, the turbines will appear as small miniature elements in the distant background. Significant effects are not likely to occur.
C-SR-93	<i>“Road between Ballydehob and Parkana. Views of Bawnaknockane &amp; Durrus Rivers, Mount Kid, Coomnaggragh Mountain &amp; hills”</i>	N/A	N/A	Small pocket of partial theoretical visibility.	No, in reality, where visibility may occur at this distance, the turbines will appear as small miniature elements in the

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Map Ref.	Description (CCDP Volume 2)	Direction of View	Directed to Turbines?	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
					distant background. Significant effects are not likely to occur.
C-SR-108	<i>"Road from Bantry via Durrus and Ahakista to Kilcrohane. Views of Dunmanus Bay &amp; Islands, the Mizen Peninsula, &amp; the Cahir, Seefin, Rosskerrig &amp; Knockboolteenagh Mountains"</i>	N/A	N/A	Pocket of full theoretical visibility of the small section of the route within the LVIA Study Area	Yes
C-SR-110	<i>"Roads from Bantry via Gerahies to Kilcrohane. Views of Dunmanus Bay &amp; Bantry Bay, Whiddy Island, Caher, Seefin, Gouladane, Knockboolteenagh, Adrigole, Glenlough &amp; Sugarloaf Mountains, Hungry Hill, Bear Island &amp; the Beara Peninsula"</i>	N/A	N/A	Large pockets of full theoretical visibility along the extent of the route within the LVIA Study Area	Yes
C-SR-112	<i>"Road from Glengarriff to Kenmare (County Bounds). Views of Glengarriff Harbour &amp; Barraboy, Esk &amp; Caha Mountains"</i>	N/A	N/A	No Theoretical Visibility	No
C-SR-113	<i>"Road between Glengarriff, Trafresk, Ardrigole and Castletownbere. Views of Glengarriff Harbour, Bantry Bay, Whiddy &amp; Bear Islands, Bear Haven, Shrone &amp; Hungry Hills, &amp; the Gowlbeg, Sugarloaf, Caha, Adrigole &amp; Slieve Miskish Mountains"</i>	N/A	N/A	No Theoretical Visibility	No

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Map Ref.	Description (CCDP Volume 2)	Direction of View	Directed to Turbines?	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
C-SR-36	<i>"Views of valleys &amp; rugged mountainous landscape"</i>	N/A	N/A	Small pockets of full theoretical visibility	No, in reality, where visibility may occur at this distance, the turbines will appear as small miniature elements in the distant background. Significant effects are not likely to occur.

### 13.5.1.2 OSi Viewing Areas

According to the Ordinance Survey of Ireland (OSi) maps, 2 no. OSi Viewing Areas were identified within the LVIA Study Area; these are described in the table.

Below, Table 13-9 displays the scoping of all identified views, along with a description of the view, the direction of view indicated by the OSi data and whether it is directed towards the proposed turbines, the nature of theoretical visibility, and whether the receptor was scoped in for assessment.

Table 13-9: Scoping of OSi Viewing Areas in the LVIA Study Area

Map Ref.	Description	Direction and Range of View	Directed to Turbines?	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
<b>10-15km</b>					
#28	Cullenagh Lake Viewing Point	West	No	None	No
<b>15-20km</b>					
#69	Wild Atlantic View	North	Partially	Full	Yes

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### 13.5.1.3 Settlements

In order to identify which settlements within the LVIA Study Area should be considered for photomontage viewpoint (VP) selection, the settlement strategy and hierarchy set out in the CCDP was consulted.

Appendix I of Volume 1 of the CCDP identifies a number of settlements, including various village nuclei that are no longer part of the settlement network for County Cork. Accordingly, these have been scoped out for further consideration, unless they were identified as potentially sensitive receptors through the LVIA process and site appraisals.

Below, Table 13-10 lists the settlements identified from the CCDP within the LVIA Study Area, noting the county hierarchy status, whether there is theoretical visibility indicated by ZTV mapping, and whether the receptor was scoped in for assessment. Following this, Figure 13-11 maps all settlements within the LVIA Study Area and shows the ZTV determining theoretical visibility.

Table 13-10 Scoping of Settlements in the LVIA Study Area

Settlement	County Hierarchy	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
<b>5-10km</b>			
Kealkill	Village	Full	Yes
Ballingeary	Key Village	Partial	Yes
<b>10-15km</b>			
Ballylickey	Village	Full	No, at this distance, and due to the built environment of the village, views towards the turbines will be highly screened. Where visibility may occur, the proposed turbines will appear as miniature features in the distant background. Significant effects are not likely to occur.
Inchigeelagh	Village	Partial	No, at this distance, and due to the built environment of the village, views towards the turbines will be highly screened. Where visibility may occur, the proposed turbines will appear as miniature features in the distant background. Significant effects are not likely to occur.

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Settlement	County Hierarchy	Theoretical Visibility	Scoped In
<b>15-20km</b>			
Bantry	Main Town	Full	Yes, despite the distance, given the sensitivity of this settlement as a tourist town, and the concerns in relation to this settlement in the previous 7-turbine application, it has been scoped in for further assessment.
Whiddy Island	Island	Yes	Yes
Glengarriff	Key Village	No	No
Drimoleague	Key Village	No	No
Dunmanway	Main Town	No	No
Kilnamartyra	Village	Partial	No, at this distance, where visibility may occur, the turbines will appear as small vertical elements in the distant landscape. Within the settlement itself, additional screening will occur from the vegetation and the built infrastructure within the village. Significant effects are not likely to occur
Ballynakeery	Key Village	No	No
<b>20-25km</b>			
Clondrohid	Village	No	No
Drinagh	Village	No	No
Durrus	Key Village	No	No

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