Technical Appendix 1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

GORTNALUG 110KV SUBSTATION AND GRID CONNECTION

25/03/2026

Disclaimer

Neo Environmental Limited shall have no liability for any loss, damage, injury, claim, expense, cost or other consequence arising as a result of use or reliance upon any information contained in or omitted from this document.

Neo Environmental Ltd	
Head Office - Glasgow: Wright Business Centre, 1 Lonmay Road, Glasgow G33 4EL T 0141 846 8975 **E: info@neo-env.com**	
Warrington Office: Lakeview, 600 Lakeside Drive, Centre Park Square, Warrington WA1 1RW **T:** 01925 984682 **E:** info@neo-env.com	**Bristol Office** Spaces 8th Floor The Programme Building Bristol BS1 2NB T: 01174 571 610 E: info@neo-env.com
Ireland Office: C/O Origin Enterprises PLC, 4-6 Riverwalk, Citywest Business Campus Dublin 24, D24 DCWO. **T:** 00 353 (0)45 844250 **E:** info@neo-env.com	**Northern Ireland Office:** 83-85 Bridge Street Ballymena, Co. Antrim BT43 5EN **T:** 0282 565 04 13 **E:** info@neo-env.com

Prepared For:

Ballydonagh Solar Limited.

Prepared By:

Trisha Lynam BSc. (Hons)

Kathryn Blade BSc. (Hons) MSc. MILI

	Name	Date
Edited By:	Trisha Lynam	14/01/2026
Checked By:	Conor Cochrane	25/03/2026
	Name	**Signature**
Approved By	Paul Neary	

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to assess the effects of a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) comprising a 110kV air-insulated substation (AIS) and associated grid connection infrastructure (the "Proposed Development") within the consented Ballydonagh Solar Farm (Planning Reference 2361049, as amended under Planning Reference 2561903) on lands at Ballydonagh, Kiltormer, Co. Galway, Ireland (the "Application Site"). The LVIA considers the potential direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape resources, views and visual amenity receptors within the existing landscape and visual baseline across a 5km study zone.

1.2. The highest visual effects will be experienced within an approximate 300m radius of the Application Site boundary, particularly along local roads to the northwest of the Proposed Development. There will also be views of the substation and associated infrastructure, including lighting masts and sections of the grid connection infrastructure (replacement lattice towers), from the Skenageehy Road to the east.

1.3. Beyond this, areas experiencing visibility are extremely limited due to the presence of existing vegetation, including mature hedgerows and field boundaries, which provide a high degree of screening. As such, views from many locations are likely to be glimpsed and transient in nature.

Landscape Effects

1.4. The following likely direct and indirect landscape effects have been identified (along with their duration and nature) arising from the Proposed Development. Direct or indirect landscape effects on the fabric of the landscape and its receptors are closely related to the nature and extent of visibility.

1.5. The application site is entirely located within the Central Galway Complex Landscape Type and the Kilcrow Basin Landscape Character Unit LCU 6d in Co. Galway. The Landscape Character Types have been indicated in Figure 1.1; Appendix 1A.

1.6. The main landscape effects of the Proposed Development will be associated with the introduction of a 110kV loop-in-loop-out substation, introducing new built elements within fields currently used for agricultural purposes. Ancillary infrastructure, including site fencing, control buildings, lighting masts, telecom poles, CCTV, will be limited in scale and will not materially alter the overall character of the receiving landscape.

1.7. The Proposed Development also includes grid connection infrastructure comprising the removal of two existing wooden poles and their replacement with steel lattice towers. While these structures introduce slightly more pronounced vertical elements, they will be viewed in the context of existing overhead line infrastructure within and adjacent to the Application Site.

1.8. Overall, the Proposed Development will result in a localised alteration to landscape character within the confines of the site, introducing a more engineered and utilitarian character to the immediate area. The inclusion of lattice towers marginally increases the vertical emphasis of built form; however, this is consistent with the established pattern of electrical infrastructure in the surrounding landscape.

1.9. While the receiving landscape is of low sensitivity and has an established capacity to accommodate infrastructure of this nature, the change from agricultural use to a substation and associated infrastructure will represent a discernible but localised change in landscape character. The addition of lattice towers does not materially alter the overall assessment, as these elements replace existing poles and are integrated within an existing infrastructure context

1.10. The proposed mitigation planting will, over time, assist in softening and screening views of the development. However, within the confines of the Application Site, the magnitude of landscape change is considered to be **High to Medium**, resulting in effects of **Moderate** significance overall.

1.11. Indirect change will occur outside of the Application Site boundary, where the visibility of the Proposed Development has an influence on the perception of the character of the landscape. The indirect change in landscape character is greatest in its immediate and close surroundings where open and partial views are possible within approximately 300m radius from the Application Site boundary. The magnitude of change in these areas is considered **Medium to Low**. The significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Slight reducing to Not Significant** as mitigation planting matures.

1.12. Indirect change and the significance of landscape effects will reduce with increasing distance from the Application Site in the remaining study area (between approximately 300m and 2km from the Site boundary). Given the nature, scale and setting of the Proposed Development, the change in character will not be recognised over long distances throughout the wider study area in accessible views. Therefore, the significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Not Significant**.

Visual Effects

1.13. The majority of residential dwellings in the immediate environment of the Proposed Development are located mainly to the southwest, in Kiltormer Village.

1.14. The main visual receptor groups are local residents, road users and pedestrians. Residents and pedestrians will have a higher sensitivity to change than the road users. Vehicle travellers will focus primarily on traffic and not on available views, however, if looked upon, the Proposed Development will be seen in transit making the views fleeting in nature.

1.15. The highest visual effects will be experienced within an approximate 300m radius of the Application Site boundary, particularly along the unnamed road to the northwest of the Proposed Development. There will also be views of the lighting masts and sections of the grid

connection infrastructure, including replacement lattice towers, from the Skenageehy Road to the east.

1.16. Beyond this, areas experiencing visibility are extremely limited due to the extent of existing vegetation, including mature hedgerows and field boundaries, which provide a high degree of screening. As such, views from many locations will be glimpsed and transient in nature

1.17. The magnitude of visual effects on local residents and residential areas with views of the Proposed Development within approximately 300m are considered to range from **Low / Negligible** to **None** depending on the openness of views and intervening screening by vegetation, topography or built structures.

1.18. Where visible, the Proposed Development, including the more visual elements of the Proposed development, particularly the lighting masts and replacement lattice towers, will result in **Slight** visual effects, reducing to **Not Significant** as mitigation planting establishes. In areas where the Proposed Development is screened, a **'No Change'** scenario will occur.

1.19. The Proposed Development will intensify the presence of built infrastructure within the receiving landscape of available views at close range. However, this will be experienced within the context of the existing landscape and surrounding infrastructure, with distance and intervening vegetation acting as key mitigating factors.

1.20. In longer-distance views, ranging between approximately 1km and 2km, visual effects will be Negligible. While elements of the Proposed Development may be visible, these will be perceived within the wider landscape context and will not materially alter the overall composition or character of the view. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Negligible** and the resulting significance **Not Significant**.

INTRODUCTION

Background

1.21. Neo Environmental Ltd has been appointed by Renewable Energy Systems on behalf of Ballydonagh Solar Limited (the "Applicant") to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a new 110k V Air insulated substation (AIS) and grid connection with associated infrastructure (the "Development on lands at Ballydonagh, Kiltormer, Co. Galway, Ireland (the "Application Site").

1.22. The method of connection to the national grid will be a new 110 kV AIS Loop-in station (Gortnalug) with a 'Loop-in/Loop out' connection into the existing Ennis-Agannygal-Shannonbridge 110kV circuit. Ballydonagh Solar Limited accepted the Eirgrid Connection Offer (P602-CA-OL) in December 2025.

1.23. The Proposed Development comprises a 110kV AIS and associated grid connection infrastructure to facilitate the connection of the permitted Ballydonagh Solar Farm under Ref 2361049, as amended under Ref 25/61903 and Ballydonagh Solar Farm Extension under Ref 2461749, as amended under 26/60009, to the national grid. The applicant is seeking a ten-year permission from the date of consent of the 110kV Substation.

1.24. Please see **Figure 300101338-DR-100 Overall Site Layout** for the layout of the Proposed Development.

Development Description

1.25. The Proposed Development comprises a 110kV Air Insulated loop in/ loop out electricity substation (11,300m2) consisting of EirGrid control building (25m x 18m), customer control building (23.1m x 10.8m),110kV bay arrangement, busbar infrastructure foundations, transformer, lightening masts, telecoms pole, CCTV, lighting columns, capacitor bank, reactor bank, harmonic filter, rural supply kiosk, house transformer, neutral earth resistor, resistor, stand by generator, compound roads, drainage, parking and hardstanding, palisade fence and gates.

1.26. The grid connection will consist of the removal of c.248m of the existing overhead line and poles from Ennis-Agannygal-Shannonbridge 110kV circuit and the erection of two new towers (16m height) and c.975m of double 110kV underground circuit and tracks into the proposed substation.

1.27. Remaining associated infrastructure consists of entrance; perimeter fencing, access tracks (1907m) (upgraded and localised widening) with water crossings; deposition areas (4300m3); temporary construction compound; and all associated and ancillary site development, excavation, construction, landscaping and reinstatement works and the provision of site drainage.

Site Description

1.28. The area of the proposed Development (the "Application Site") lies at an elevation of approximately 76.51 – 96.56m AOD and covers a total area of c. 34.8 hectares. It is centred at approximate Irish National Grid Reference (NGR) E 183907 N 220547 and is located in lands north of the L4301.

1.29. Comprising of a 13 field parcels of agricultural land, the site is currently being used for pastural farming. The Application Site is bound by a mixture of trees, hedgerows and post-and-wire fencing. Access will be gained from the south gate entrance from a private lane to an unnamed local road off the L4301 to the southeast of the site.

1.30. The surrounding context is predominately agriculture with pockets of forestry and peatland and punctuated by individual properties, farmsteads and ribbon development associated with the minor and regional road network. Fields are typically small to medium in scale and similar in character to the Application Site lands.

Scope of the Assessment

1.31. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment identifies and assesses the potential effects of a proposed substation and grid connection on the landscape and visual resources of the study area. This report identifies the mitigation and compensation measures that will be implemented to prevent, reduce or offset potential adverse landscape and visual effects or enhance potential beneficial effects, where possible.

1.32. This report considers how:

- Landscape effects associated with a development relate to changes to the fabric, character and quality of the landscape resource and how it is experienced; and
- Visual effects relate closely to landscape effects but also concerns changes in views as visual assessment is also concerned with people's perception and response to changes in visual amenity.

1.33. Landscape and visual effects are interrelated with other environmental effects but are assessed separately. Whilst elements of cultural heritage such as heritage landscapes are important elements of the landscape and contribute to its character and influence its quality and value, effects on the significance of these designated features and their setting do not form part of this assessment.

1.34. This report is supported by the following Figures included within Appendix 1A:

- Figure 1.1 – Landscape Character Types

METHODOLOGY

Guidance and other Information used in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

1.35. The following sources and guidelines were used in the assessment:

- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA), 3rd Edition, 2013, Landscape Institute (UK) & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)[1];
- *'Visual Representation of Development Proposals'*, Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note 06/19, 17 September 2019[2];
- *"Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*", Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Draft, August 2017[3];
- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028[4];
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) [5]
- Irishtrails[6]
- Descriptions and drawings of the Proposed Development (refer to Volume 1 & Volume 2 of this Planning Application).

[1] https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technical/glvia3-panel/

[2] https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/visualisation/

[3]https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/guidelines-on-the-information-to-be-contained-in-environmental-impact-assessment-reports-eiar.php

[4] Adopted Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 | Galway County Council Online Consultation Portal

[5] https://www.npws.ie/

[6] https://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/find-your-trails

Project Scope

1.37. The type and duration of the landscape and visual effects fall within three main stages, those being the construction and operational phases.

1.38. The potential construction phase (temporary and of a short duration) effects include:

- Physical effects arising from construction of the Proposed Development on the landscape resource within the Application Site;
- Effects to landscape character and visual amenity within the wider study area of 5km as a result of changes to elements present within the landscape and/ or visual amenity as a result of construction activities;
- Effects of temporary site infrastructure such as site traffic and construction compounds;
- Effects of partially built Proposed Development in various stages of construction; and
- Cumulative effects of the Proposed Development with other permitted developments of a similar type and scale upon the landscape and visual resource of the study area.

1.39. The potential operational phase effects include:

- Effects of the Proposed Development on landscape resources and landscape character, including the perceptual qualities of the landscape;
- Effects of the Proposed Development on views and visual amenities; and
- Cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in combination with other permitted developments of a similar type and scale upon the landscape and visual resource of the study area.

1.40. Following the completion of construction works, elements of the Proposed Development will become a permanent feature in the visual amenity of parts of the study area. The assessment takes this into account in determining residual visual effects.

1.41. Galway County landscape designations have been reviewed as part of this assessment. However, given the nature of the development, its location, scale and setting, it is considered that likely significant effects will occur within the locality of the Application Site that will not affect the wider landscape character or visual amenity.

1.42. The Proposed Development is proposed as a permanent development and does not include a defined decommissioning phase. Landscape effects have therefore been assessed on the basis of construction and long-term operation. Routine maintenance, refurbishment and component replacement will be undertaken in line with prevailing best practice to ensure that no significant adverse environmental effects arise during the operational life of the development.

1.43. This report considers how:

- Landscape effects associated with a development relate to changes to the fabric, character and quality of the townscape resource and how it is experienced; and
- Visual effects relate closely to landscape effects but also concern changes in views as visual assessment is also concerned with people's perception and response to changes in visual amenities.

1.44. A full description of the Proposed Development can be found in the Planning Statement **(Volume 1)** submitted with this planning application. The type and duration of the landscape and visual effects fall within three main stages, those being the construction and operational phases.

Assessment Process

1.45. The assessment is undertaken based on the following key tasks and structure:

- Establishment of the Baseline or receiving environment;
- Appreciation of the Proposed Development; and
- Assessment of effects.

Establishment of the Receiving Environment

1.46. A baseline study was undertaken through a combination of desk-based research and site appraisal in order to establish the existing conditions including landscape value, susceptibility and sensitivity of the landscape and visual resources of the study area. Desk based research involved a review of mapping and aerial photography, relevant planning and other policy documents, existing Landscape Character Assessments and other relevant documents and publications.

1.47. This LVIA seeks to identify, predict and evaluate the significance of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape characteristics and established views. The assessments conducted as part of this LVIA are based on an evaluation of the value and susceptibility, and therefore sensitivity to change and the magnitude of change for each landscape or visual receptor.

1.48. This assessment acknowledges that landscape and visual effects change over time as the existing landscape evolves and proposed planting establishes and matures. Therefore, the assessment reports on likely effects during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. The visibility of the Proposed Development in the landscape or view will vary according to the existing screening effects of local topography, structures and buildings, intervening existing vegetation and the type and height of the proposed structures.

Study Area

1.49. A core study area of 5km radius has been set from the Application Site boundary for the assessment. The core study area has been selected to identify potential significant landscape and visual impacts within County Galway (refer to Figure 1.1 of Appendix 1A). The extent of the study area has been identified through the production of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping (refer to Figure 1.2 of Appendix 1A), a review of maps and aerial photographs and site survey data. The ZTV will include the incorporation of infrastructure and lighting ZTV. It is acknowledged that the Proposed Development may be visible from locations beyond the core study area of a 5km radius, and as such, it is important to note that the core study area defines the area within which potential effects could be significant, rather than defining the extent of visibility.

Effects Scoped

1.50. It is envisaged that the Proposed Development will be a permanent feature in the landscape following the completion of construction works. The assessment takes account of this in the determination of residual landscape and visual effects.

1.51. While the Proposed Development is intended as a permanent installation, a decommissioning phase has been considered as part of this assessment. Decommissioning would involve the removal of above-ground infrastructure and the restoration of the site. Effects arising during this phase are anticipated to be temporary and similar in nature to construction effects. Accordingly, no separate detailed assessment of decommissioning effects has been undertaken, and the assessment focuses on the construction and operational phases of the development.

Landscape Effects

1.52. Landscape effects describe the impact on the fabric or structure of a landscape or its landscape character.

1.53. Assessing the potential effects of a development on the landscape firstly requires the identification of the components of the landscape. The landscape components are also described as landscape receptors and comprise the following:

- Individual landscape elements or features;
- Specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects; and
- Landscape character, or the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements (natural and man-made) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another.

1.54. This LVIA report identifies the interaction between these components and the Proposed Development during the construction and operational phases. The condition of the landscape and any evidence of current pressures causing change in the landscape will also be documented and described.

Landscape Value

1.55. Landscape value is frequently addressed by reference to international, national, regional and local designations, determined by statutory and planning agencies. However, absence of such a designation does not necessarily imply a lack of quality or value. Factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality as a highly valuable local resource. The quality and condition are also considered in the determination of the value of a landscape. The evaluation of landscape value is undertaken with reference to the definitions stated in the Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Landscape Value

LANDSCAPE VALUE	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
High	Nationally designated or iconic, unspoilt landscape with few, if any, degrading elements.
Medium	Regionally or locally designated landscape, or an undesignated landscape with locally important landmark features and some detracting elements.
Low	Undesignated landscape with few if any distinct features or with several degrading elements.

Landscape Susceptibility

1.56. Landscape susceptibility relates to the ability of a particular landscape to accommodate the Proposed Development. Landscape susceptibility is appraised through consideration of the baseline characteristics of the landscape, and in particular the scale or complexity of a given landscape.

1.57. The evaluation of landscape susceptibility is undertaken with reference to a three-point scale, as outlined in the Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Landscape Susceptibility Criteria

LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
High	Small scale, intimate or complex landscape considered to be intolerant of even minor change.
Medium	Medium scale, more open or less complex landscape considered tolerant to some degree of change.
Low	Large scale, simple landscape considered tolerant of a large degree of change.

Landscape Sensitivity

1.58. Landscape sensitivity to change is determined by employing professional judgment to combine value and susceptibility in order to determine landscape sensitivity, with reference to the Table 1:3 outlined below.

Table 1.3: Landscape Sensitivity to Change Criteria

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
High	Landscape characteristics or features with little or no capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering their present character. Landscape designated for its international or national landscape value or with highly valued features. Outstanding example in the area of well cared for landscape or set of features that combine to give a particularly distinctive sense of place. Few detracting or incongruous elements.

Medium-High	Landscape characteristics or features with a low capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering their present character. Landscape designated for regional or county-wide landscape value where the characteristics or qualities that provided the basis for their designation are apparent or a landscape with highly valued features locally. Good example in the area of a well-cared for landscape or set of features that combine to give a clearly defined sense of place.
Medium	Landscape characteristics or features with moderate capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering their present character. Landscape designated for its local landscape value or a regional designated landscape where the characteristics and qualities that led to the designation of the area are less apparent or are partially eroded or an undesignated landscape which may be valued locally – for example an important open space. An example of a landscape or a set of features which is relatively coherent, with a good but not exceptional sense of place - occasional buildings and spaces may lack quality and cohesion.
Medium-Low	Landscape characteristics or features which are reasonably tolerant of change without determent to their present character. No designation present or of little local value. An example of an un-stimulating landscape or set of features; with some areas lacking a sense of place and identity.
Low	Landscape characteristics or features which are tolerant of change without determent to their present character. An area with a weak sense of place and/ or poorly defined character/ identity. No designation present or of low local value or in poor condition. An example of monotonous unattractive visually conflicting or degraded landscape or set of features.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

1.59. Magnitude of change is an expression of the size or scale of change in the landscape, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and reversibility of the resultant

effect. The variables involved are described below (from Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013)[7]:

- The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape;
- The extent to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones;
- Whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are integral to its distinctive character;
- The geographic area over which the landscape effects will be felt (within the site itself; the immediate setting of the site; at the scale of the landscape type or character area; on a larger scale influencing several landscape types or character areas); and
- The duration of the effects (short term, medium term or long term) and the reversibility of the effect (whether it is permanent, temporary or partially reversible).

1.60. Changes to landscape characteristics can be both direct and indirect. **Direct change** occurs where the Proposed Development will result in a physical change to the landscape within or adjacent to the site. **Indirect changes** are a consequence of the direct changes resulting from the Proposed Development. They can often occur away from the site (for example, off-site construction staff parking) and may be a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway (for example, a new road or footpath construction may increase public access and associated problems e.g. littering). They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects. The magnitude of change affecting the baseline landscape resource is based on an interpretation of a combination of the criteria set out in **Table 1.4.**

Table 1.4: Magnitude of Landscape Change Criteria (Landscape Effects)

MAGNITUDE OF LANDSCAPE CHANGE	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
None	No change.

[7] https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203436295/guidelines-landscape-visual-impact-assessment-landscape-institute

Negligible	Little perceptible change.
Low	Minor change, affecting some characteristics and the experience of the landscape to an extent; and Introduction of elements that is not uncharacteristic.
Medium	Noticeable change, affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape; and Introduction of some uncharacteristic elements.
High	Noticeable change, affecting many key characteristics and the experience of the landscape; and Introduction of many incongruous developments.
Very High	Highly noticeable change, affecting most key characteristics and dominating the experience of the landscape; and Introduction of highly incongruous development.

Visual Effects

1.61. Visual effects are determined by the extent of visibility and the nature of the visibility (i.e. how a development is seen within the landscape); for example, whether it appears integrated and balanced within the visual composition of a view or whether it creates a focal point.

1.62. Adverse visual effects may occur through the intrusion of new elements into established views, which are out of keeping with the existing structure, scale and composition of the view. Visual effects may also be beneficial, where an attractive focus is created in a previously unremarkable view, or the influence of previously detracting features is reduced. The significance of effects will vary, depending on the nature and degree of change experienced and the perceived value and composition of the existing view.

Receptors

1.63. For there to be a visual impact, there is a need for someone to perceive the view, and in turn, have an effect on the individual's view. Views experienced from locations such as settlements, recognised routes and popular vantage points used by the public have been included in the assessment. Receptors are the viewers at these locations. The degree to which receptors, i.e. people, will be affected by changes as a result of the Proposed Development depends on a number of factors, including:

- Receptor activities, such as taking part in leisure, recreational and sporting activities, travelling or working;

- Whether receptors are likely to be stationary or moving and how long they will be exposed to the change at any one time;
- The importance of the location, as reflected by designations, inclusion in guidebooks or other travel literature, or the facilities provided for visitors;
- The extent of the route or area over which the changes will be visible;
- Whether receptors will be exposed to the change daily, frequently, occasionally or rarely;
- The orientation of receptors in relation to the site and whether views are open or intermittent;
- Proportion of the developments that will be visible (full, sections or none);
- Viewing direction, distance (i.e. short-, medium- and long-distance views) and elevation;
- Nature of the viewing experience (for example, static views, views from settlements and views from sequential points along routes);
- Accessibility of viewpoint (public or private, ease of access);
- Nature of changes (for example, changes in the existing skyline profile, creation of a new visual focus in the view, introduction of new man-made objects, changes in visual simplicity or complexity, alteration of visual scale, landform and change to the degree of visual enclosure); and
- Nature of visual receptors (type, potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected).

Value of the View

1.64. Value of the view is an appraisal of the value attached to views and is often informed by the appearance on Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi) tourist maps and in guidebooks, literature or art. Value can also be indicated by the provision of parking or services and signage and interpretation. The nature and composition of the view is also an indicator. The value of the view is determined with reference to the definitions outlined in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Value of the View

VALUE	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
High	Nationally recognised view of the landscape, with no detracting elements.
Medium	Regionally or locally recognised view, or unrecognised but pleasing and well composed view, with few detracting elements.
Low	Typical or poorly composed view often with numerous detracting elements.

Visual Susceptibility

1.65. GLVIA3 identify that the susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is a function of:

- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at a particular location; and
- The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

1.66. For example, residents in their home, walkers whose interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or a particular view, or visitors at an attraction where views are an important part of the experience often indicate a higher level of susceptibility. Whereas receptors occupied in outdoor sport, where views are not important, or at their place of work, are often considered less susceptible to change. Visual susceptibility is determined with reference to the three-point scale and criteria outlined in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6: Visual Susceptibility

SUSCEPTIBILITY	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
High	Receptors for which the view is of primary importance and are likely to notice even minor change.
Medium	Receptors for which the view is important but not the primary focus and are tolerant of some change.
Low	Receptors for which the view is incidental or unimportant and are tolerant of a high degree of change.

Visual Sensitivity

1.67. Sensitivity to change considers the nature of the receptor; for example, a person occupying a residential dwelling is generally more sensitive to change than someone working in a factory unit. The importance of the view experienced by the receptor also contributes to an understanding of the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change as well as the value attached to the view.

1.68. A judgment is also made on the value attached to the views experienced. This takes account of:

- Recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations;
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearance in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment (sign boards, interpretive material) and references to them in literature or art; and
- Possible local value; it is important to note that the absence of view recognition does not preclude local value, as a view may be important as a resource in the local or immediate environment due to its relative rarity or local importance.

1.69. The visual sensitivity to change is based on interpretation of a combination of all or some of the criteria outlined in Table 1.7.

Table 1.7: Sensitivity to Change Criteria

Visual sensitivity	Classification criteria
High	Users of outdoor recreational facilities, on recognised national cycling or walking routes or in nationally designated landscapes. Residential buildings.
Medium-High	Users of outdoor recreational facilities, in highly valued landscapes or locally designated. Landscapes or on local recreational routes that are well publicised in guidebooks. Road and rail users in nationally designated landscapes or on recognised scenic routes, likely to be travelling to enjoy the view.
Medium	Users of outdoor recreational facilities including public open space in moderately valued landscapes.

	Users of primary transport road network, orientated towards the site, likely to be travelling for other purposes than just the view.
Medium-Low	People engaged in active outdoor sports or recreation and less likely to focus on the view. Primary transport road network and rail users likely to be travelling to work with oblique views of the Proposed Development or users of minor road network.
Low	People engaged in work activities indoors, with limited opportunity for views of the Proposed Development.

Magnitude of Visual Change

1.70. Visual effects are direct effects as the magnitude of change within an existing view will be determined by the extent of visibility of the Proposed Development. The magnitude of the visual effect resulting from the Proposed Development at any particular viewpoint or receptor is based on the size or scale of change in the view, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The variables involved, as per *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute, IEMA, 2013,* are described below:

- The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the development;
- The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape form, scale, mass, line, height, sky lining, back-grounding, visual clues, focal points, colour and texture;
- The nature of the view of the Proposed Development, in relation to the amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses;
- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor, distance of the viewpoint from the development and the extent of the area over which the changes will be visible; and
- The duration of the effects (short term, medium term or long term) and the reversibility of the effect (whether it is permanent, temporary or partially reversible).

1.71. The magnitude of visual effect resulting from the Proposed Development at any particular viewpoint or receptor is based on the interpretation of the above range of factors and is set out in Table 1.8.

Table 1.8: Magnitude of Visual Change Criteria (Visual effects)

MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL CHANGE	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
None	No change in the existing view
Negligible	The Proposed Development will cause a barely discernible change in the existing view.
Low	The Proposed Development will cause very minor changes to the view over a wide area or minor changes over a limited area.
Medium	The Proposed Development will cause modest changes to the existing view over a wide area or noticeable change over a limited area
High	The Proposed Development will cause a considerable change in the existing view over a wide area or a significant change over a limited area.
Very High	The Proposed Development will cause significant changes in the existing view over a wide area or a change which will dominate over a limited area.

Duration and Quality of Effects

1.72. Table 1.9 provides the definition of the duration of landscape and visual effects.

Table 1.9: Definition of Duration of Effects

DURATION	DESCRIPTION
Temporary	Effects lasting one year or less.
Short Term	Effects lasting one to seven years.
Medium Term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years.
Long Term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years.
Permanent	Effects lasting over sixty years.

1.73. Both, landscape and visual effects, can be beneficial (positive), adverse (negative) or Neutral according to the definitions set out in the Table 1.10.

Table 1.10: Definition of Quality of Effects

QUALITY OF EFFECTS	DESCRIPTION
Neutral	This will neither enhance nor detract from the landscape character or view.
Beneficial (positive)	This will improve or enhance the landscape character or view.
Adverse (negative)	This will reduce the quality of the existing landscape character or view.

Significance Criteria

1.74. The objective of the LVIA is to identify and evaluate the potentially significant effects arising from the Proposed Development. It will identify the residual effects likely to arise from the finalised design considering mitigation measures and the change over time.

1.75. The significance of effects is assessed by considering the sensitivity of the receptor and the predicted magnitude of effect in relation to the baseline conditions. In order to provide a level of consistency and transparency to the assessment and allow comparisons to be made between the various landscape and visual receptors subject to assessment, the assessment of significance is informed by pre-defined criteria as outlined in Table 1.11. When assessing significance, individual effects may fall across several different categories of significance and professional judgment is therefore used to determine which category of significance best fits the overall effect to a landscape or visual receptor.

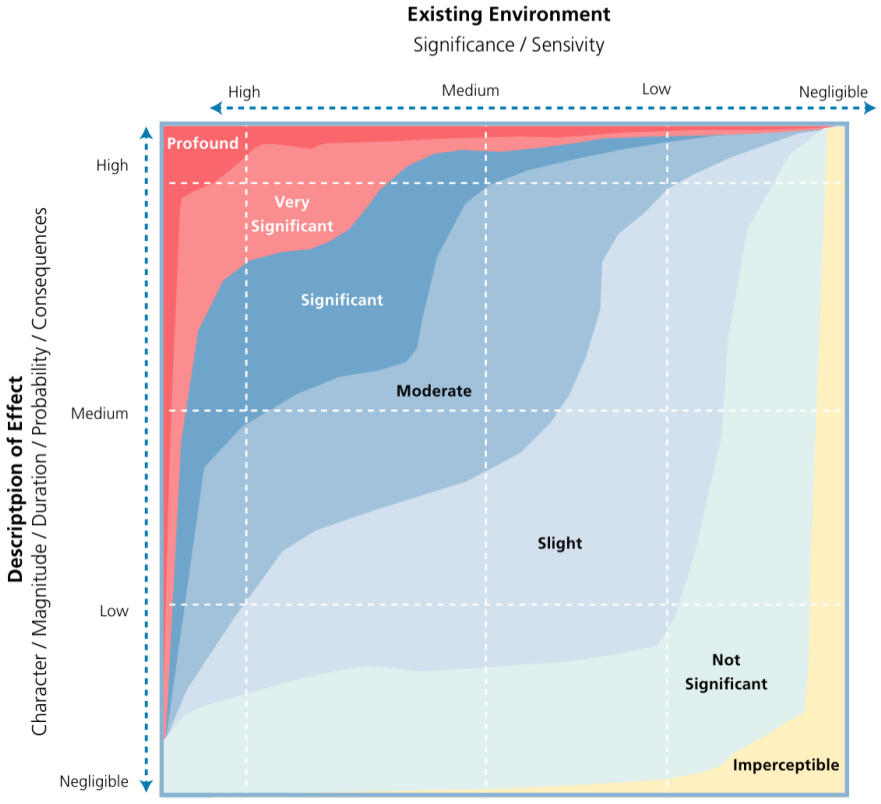
Table 1.7: Categories of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

SIGNIFICANCE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT
Profound	An effect that obliterates sensitive characteristics within the landscape and/ or visual environment.
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the landscape and/ or visual environment.
Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the landscape and/ or visual environment.
Moderate	An effect that alters the landscape in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the landscape and/ or visual environment without affecting its sensitivities.

Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the landscape and/ or visual environment but without significant landscape and/ or visual consequences.
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant landscape and/ or visual consequences.

1.76. The significance of the effect is determined by considering the magnitude of the effect and the quality of the baseline environment affected by the Proposed Development. The basis for consideration of the significance of effects is included in Plate 1.1, below.

Plate 1.1 Basis for consideration of significance of effects



1.77. Effects will be assessed for all phases of the Proposed Development. Construction effects are considered to be temporary, short-term effects which occur during the construction phases only. Operational/ residual effects are those long-term effects, which will occur as a result of the presence or operation of the Proposed Development.

1.78. The matrix outlines a structured scale of seven effect levels: Imperceptible, Not Significant, Slight, Moderate, Significant, Very Significant, and Profound. For the purposes of this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, effects assessed as Significant, Very Significant, or Profound are considered to be significant effects. Effects assessed as Moderate, Slight, Not Significant, or Imperceptible are considered not significant in EIA terms.

1.79. The quality of each effect is based on the ability of the landscape character or visual receptor to accommodate the Proposed Development, and the impact of the development within the

receiving context. Once this is done, the quality of the effect is then assessed as being neutral, beneficial or adverse. A change to the landscape or visual resource is not considered to be adverse simply because it constitutes an alteration to the existing situation.

Cumulative Effects

1.80. The approach used to determine cumulative effects has drawn on guidance on cumulative impact assessment, documented in the GLVIA3. Cumulative landscape and visual effects may result from additional changes to the baseline landscape or views as a result of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other developments of a similar type and scale.

1.81. As stated within the Planning Statement within **Volume 1** of this planning application, cumulative effects are those that accrue over time and space from a number of development activities – the impact of the Proposed Development is considered in conjunction with the potential impacts from other projects or activities which are both reasonably foreseeable in terms of delivery (i.e. have planning consent or relevant applications which have been submitted and are in the planning system) and are located within a realistic geographical scope where environmental impacts could act together with the Proposed Development to create a more significant overall effect.

1.82. Combined effects are those resulting from a single development (the Proposed Development) on any one receptor that may collectively cause a greater effect.

Magnitude of Cumulative Effects

1.83. The principle of magnitude of cumulative effects makes it possible for the Proposed Development to have a major impact on a particular receptor, while having only a minor cumulative impact in conjunction with permitted developments of similar scale and nature as the Proposed Development.

1.84. The evaluation of the magnitude of cumulative change is based on the criteria outlined in the assessment methodology for landscape and visual effects as stated above as well as on the interpretation of the following parameters:

- The additional extent, direction and distribution of existing and other developments in conjunction with the Proposed Development;
- The distance between the viewpoint, the Proposed Development and the cumulative developments; and
- The landscape setting, context and degree of visual coalescence of the Proposed Development and cumulative developments.

Significance of Cumulative Effects

1.85. As for the assessment of landscape and visual effects, the significance of any cumulative effects follows a similar classification. Basis for consideration of significance of effects, as listed in **Table 1.11**, and will be assessed as Profound, Very Significant, Moderate, Slight, Not Significant, Imperceptible.

1.86. The cumulative assessment focuses on potential cumulative effects relating to the main permanent structure of other solar, wind and BESS developments within the 5km area. This is due to the uncertainty of the timing of construction activities for identified developments. As a result, temporary structures and activity relating to construction have not been considered within the cumulative assessment.

Fieldwork

1.87. Site surveys of the study area were carried out on the 23rd[st] of March 2026identifying the potential visibility of the Proposed Development and key viewpoints (**Figure 1.2 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)** within the study area. The extent of the study area has been identified through the production of a ZTV mapping, refer to **Figure 1.2 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)** within **Appendix 1A**, a review of maps and aerial photographs and site survey data. Photomontages showing the existing view and the superimposed development have been produced from key representative viewpoints, considering topography, existing buildings, screening vegetation and other localised factors. The viewpoints included in **Appendix 1A (refer to Figure 1.5 – Figure 1.10)** provide details on viewpoint locations.

Interaction of landscape and visual effects with other environmental factors including historic landscapes

1.88. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment examines the existing physical and visual characteristics, as well as the overall character of the landscape as it is experienced today. It also evaluates the potential future changes and impacts that may arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

1.89. The Landscape is also considered in other environmental aspects and assessments, e.g., the natural landscape (biodiversity), the geological landscape (soil and geology), the cultural/ historical landscape (cultural heritage), and the human landscape (human health).

1.90. While interactions between these sectors with the landscape and visual environment are acknowledged, particularly in terms of combined or cumulative effects, these are typically assessed separately by relevant technical specialists within their respective appendices. Nevertheless, the presence or absence of these factors can inform professional judgments on landscape quality and sensitivity.

Selection of Viewpoints

1.91. It is not feasible to take photography from every possible viewpoint located in the study area. Photography has been taken from viewpoints, which are representative of the nature of visibility at various distances and in various contexts. Viewpoint photography is used as a tool to come to understand the nature of likely significant effects. The selection process of viewpoint locations is consistent with the Guidance Note; 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals', Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note 06/19, 17 September 2019 8 and is as follows:

- The location of viewpoints within the study area is informed by desktop and site surveys;
- 5km radius ZTV mapping from the Proposed Development, based on a maximum height of approximately 18m to account for the tallest elements of the infrastructure, with substation structures typically reaching up to approximately 6m.
- Identification and selection of representative viewpoints showing typical open or intermittent views within a local area, which will be frequently experienced by a range of viewers; and
- Identification and selection of specific viewpoints from key viewpoints in the landscape such as protected focal points and views.

Photomontages

1.92. Photomontages are photorealistic visualisations produced using specialist software. They illustrate the likely future appearance of the Proposed Development from a specific viewing point. They are useful tools for examining the impact of the Proposed Development from a number of critical viewpoint positions along the public road network within the study area.

1.93. However, photomontages in themself can never provide the full picture in terms of potential effects, they can only inform the assessment process by which judgments are made. A visualisation can never show exactly what the Proposed Development will look like in reality due to factors such as different lighting, weather and seasonal conditions which vary through time and the resolution of the image. As the photomontages are representative of viewing conditions encountered, some of them may show existing buildings or vegetation screening in some or all parts of the developments. Such conditions are normal and representative.

[8] https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203436295/guidelines-landscape-visual-impact-assessment-landscape-institute

1.94. The viewpoints provided give a reasonable impression of the scale of the development and the distance to the development, but it is recognised and understood within the industry that they can never be 100% accurate. It is recommended that decision-makers and any interested parties or members of the public should ideally visit the viewpoints, where visualisations can be compared to the 'real life' view, and the full impact of the Proposed Development can be understood.

1.95. The LVIA identified a range of viewpoints (**Figures 1.5 – 1.10, Appendix 1A**) located within the study area at varying distances from the Application Site to illustrate the effects of the Proposed Development in key close, middle and distant views. Photomontages were prepared for a selection of these viewpoints (**Figures 1.11 – 1.17, Appendix 1A**), including VP1, VP3, VP6 (Year 0 and Year 5), VP7 (Year 0 and Year 5), VP8 (Year 0 and Year 5), VP9 and VP10, to illustrate the anticipated appearance of the Proposed Development at completion and following five years of mitigation planting growth.

1.96. Photomontage images have been produced according to the following industry guidelines:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, IEMA, 20139; and
- 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals', Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note[10].

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

1.97. Mapping the extent of the area from which a development is likely to be visible is commonly referred to as a Zone of Theoretical Visibility.

1.98. ZTV mapping has been produced for a 5km radius from the centre of the Proposed Development to illustrate the theoretical visual extent of the highest point of the Proposed Development. The ZTV has been assessed based on based on a maximum height of approximately 18m to account for the tallest elements of the infrastructure, with substation structures typically reaching up to approximately 6m.

1.99. It should be noted that ZTV mapping does not consider the effects of seasons, lighting, weather conditions or visibility over distance. Moreover, a ZTV does not consider the screening effects of existing vegetation or built structures and indicates therefore a *'worst case scenario'*. Therefore, ZTV mappings' principal use was to assist in identifying viewpoints for further analysis on site during the desktop viewpoint selection process.

[9] https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technical/glvia3-panel/

[10] https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/visualisation/

REGULATORY / POLICY FRAMEWORK

European

1.100. The European Landscape Convention provides guidelines for managing landscape/ landscapes. The Convention is not an EU Directive. Countries that sign and ratify the Convention make a commitment to upholding the principles it contains within the context of their own domestic legal and policy frameworks. The convention was ratified by Ireland in March 2002 and came into effects in Ireland in 2004. The European Landscape Convention requires *"landscape to be integrated into regional and town planning policies and in cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as any other policies with possible direct or indirect impacts on Landscape".*

National

1.101. The National Landscape Strategy (NLS) for Ireland 2015-2025[11] was launched in May 2015 and is to be implemented by the Government in the future. The NLS promotes the sustainable protection, management and planning for the landscape/landscapes. The NLS states that the *"National Landscape Strategy will be used to ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention and to establish* principles *for protecting and enhancing the landscape (landscape) while positively managing its change. It will provide a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions."* It also states that *"The Strategy sets out Ireland's high-level objectives and actions with regard to landscape (landscape)."* It also positions landscape in the context of existing Irish and European strategies, policies and objectives, and outlines methods of ensuring co-operation at a sectoral and at a European level by the State.

Local

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

1.102. The Galway County Development Plan (CDP) was adopted on the 9th May 2022 and came into effect on the 20th June 2022 and was prepared in accordance with Section 12 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. It sets out the council's policies and objectives and the overall strategy for the development of the County over the period 2022-2028.

[11] https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/The-National-Landscape-Strategy-for-Ireland-2015-2025.pdf

1.103. The following policies and objectives within the CDP are relevant to landscape resources and visual amenity:

Section 8.13 Landscape:

"Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape elements and the processes that may alter landscape character into the future. The LCA will assist in the identification of the most appropriate locations for development."

The Policy objectives include:

LCM 1-Preservation of Landscape Character:

"Preserve and enhance the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation and enhancement, where possible of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest."

LCM 2-Landscape Sensitivity Classification:

"The Planning Authority shall have regard to the landscape sensitivity classification of sites in the consideration of any significant development proposals and, where necessary, require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany such proposals. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key strategic infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan."

LCM 3-Landscape Sensitivity Ratings:

"Consideration of landscape sensitivity ratings shall be an important factor in determining development uses in areas of the County. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations."

1.104. Section 8.13.3 Protected Views and Scenic Routes

The landscape attributes, including sensitivity and significance, of the wider environment have been previously addressed within description of the Landscape Character and related policies within the County Development Plan.

The Policy objectives include:

PVSR 1 – Protected Views and Scenic Routes

"Preserve the protected views and scenic routes as detailed in Maps 8.3 and 8.4 from development that in the view of the Planning Authority would negatively impact on said protected views and scenic routes. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan."

1.105. Section 10.12: Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows and Stone Walls

Trees, woodlands and hedgerows make a valuable contribution to biodiversity and to the landscape and local visual amenity across County Galway. Particular trees, or more often groups of trees, can be important components of the local landscape/townscape, the setting of buildings, or to the successful integration of new development into the landscape.

The Councils Policy objectives:

TWHS 1 – Trees, Hedgerows, Natural Boundaries and Stone Walls

"Protect and seek to retain important trees, tree clusters and tree boundaries, ancient woodland, natural boundaries including stonewalls, existing hedgerows particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows, where possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary. Ensure that new development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands and that all planting schemes developed are suitable for the specific site and use suitable native variety of trees of Irish provenance and hedgerows of native species. Seek Tree Management Plans to ensure that trees are adequately protected during development and incorporated into the design of new developments."

1.106. Section 10.15: Green and Blue Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure (GI) is a generic term that includes the protection, management and enhancement of urban, peri-urban and rural environmental resources (natural and managed) through the provision of multifunctional and interconnected green spaces. Green and blue infrastructure is essentially the green spaces and the water environment.

The Councils Policy objectives:

GBI 1 – New Developments

"Require all proposals for large scale development to contribute to the protection, management and enhancement of the existing green/blue infrastructure of the County and the delivery of new green/blue infrastructure, where appropriate by including a green/ blue infrastructure plan as an integral part of any planning application. This plan should identify environmental and ecological assets, constraints and opportunities and shall include proposals which protect, manage, and enhance the development of green infrastructure resources in a sustainable manner."

1.107. Section 14: Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource

Climate Action includes the two approaches necessary to tackle climate change – Mitigation and Adaptation. This plan seeks to protect, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Council is committed to addressing climate change in a proactive manner through the careful consideration of growth and development.

The Councils Policy objectives:

CC 1 - Climate Change

''Support and facilitate the implementation of European, National and Regional objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage) and having regard to the Climate mitigation and adaptation measures.''

Section 14.5 Integrating Climate Action into the Plan

The Councils Policy objectives:

CC 2 – Transition to a low carbon, climate-resilient society

"It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency."

CC 5 – Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

"It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency."

CC 10 – Green Infrastructure

"Galway County Council shall promote the benefit of open spaces and implement the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g. interconnected network of green spaces (including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development and regeneration proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change."

1.108. Section 14.8 Renewable Energy Generation

Renewable energy comes from natural sources that are continuously replenished by nature and is, therefore, a more sustainable alternative to our dependency on fossil fuels.

The Councils Policy objectives:

RE 5 – Renewable Energy Strategy

"Support and facilitate the sustainable development and the use of appropriate renewable energy resources and associated infrastructure within the County having due regard to the Habitats Directive and to the detailed policy objectives and Development Standards set out in the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy."

1.109. Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy

Within the Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028), its states that;

"To facilitate and encourage renewable energy generation and a low carbon energy transition across County Galway, in the interests of future generations, through the application of energy

efficient technology and the harnessing of indigenous renewable energy resources, whilst respecting the need to conserve areas of environmental, cultural and economic value."

Strategic Aims of Renewable Energy Strategy & Vision

The main high-level objectives in preparing the LARES thus include the following:

- *Align the County Development Plan (LARES) strategy with national targets and policies.*
- *Facilitate a consistent approach to renewable energy.*
- *Ensure alignment with the Northern & Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.*
- *Ensure all available resources, constraints and opportunities, are considered.*
- *Provide an appropriate development management framework for potential renewable projects and renewable energy project developers.*
- *Facilitate planning and development of electricity infrastructure for renewable energy projects.*
- *Facilitate greater economic opportunities by harnessing the renewable energy potential of County Galway.*

1.110. Landscape Sensitivity

''Renewable Energy developments are generally sited and designed sympathetically to reduce any potential impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area. During a LCA of a county, sensitivity ratings are assigned to the county's landscapes. A landscapes sensitivity can be described as "A landscape's capacity to absorb new development, without exhibiting a significant alteration of character or change of appearance." As such, landscape sensitivity categories can be used as an indicator to validate deployment zones within a county or maybe influence the final deployment zones. Landscape sensitivities of landscapes bordering counties need also be taken into account to ensure consistency of decision making on county bounds.''

BASELINE ENVIRONMENT CONDITION & CONSTRAINTS

Outline Methodology

1.111. A baseline study has been undertaken through a combination of desk-based research and site appraisal in order to establish the existing conditions of the landscape and visual resources of the study area. Desk based research involved a review of mapping and aerial photography, relevant planning, and policy documents, the relevant Galway County Landscape Character Assessments and other relevant documents and publications. A study area radius of 5km from the Application Site boundary has been selected to identify potential significant landscape and visual effects (refer to **Figure 1.1, Appendix 1A**). The extent of the study area has been defined via a combination of a desktop survey, including a review of maps and aerial photographs of the Application Site and site survey data.

1.112. The study area was defined to an area where landscape and visual effects could potentially be significant rather than defining the extent of the visibility of the Proposed Development. The extent of the study area has been identified through the production of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping (refer to **Figure 1.2, Appendix 1A**), a review of maps and aerial photographs and site surveys. Given the nature of the Proposed Development works and existing site context, the visual extent, in reality, is often far less than 5km, and significant effects are mainly confined to immediately adjacent locations.

1.113. Planning permission has been granted for the Ballydonagh Solar Farm and the Ballydonagh Extension Solar Farm, as amended under Ref. 25/61903 in close proximity to the proposed Gortnalug substation and associated grid connection infrastructure.

1.114. The grant of planning permission for these developments materially changes the planning context and cumulative landscape baseline of the receiving environment. While the physical baseline at the time of this assessment may remain agricultural in character pending construction of the permitted solar farms, the planning baseline has changed to reflect the established principle of large-scale renewable energy development at this location. The landscape cannot therefore be considered solely as an undeveloped rural agricultural setting when assessing the Proposed Development. Rather, it forms part of a wider renewable energy-led landscape where solar arrays and associated infrastructure have been accepted in land use and character terms.

1.115. The proposed Substation and grid connection infrastructure are directly ancillary to, and functionally interdependent with, the permitted solar farm development. The substation and grid connection is required to facilitate connection of the consented schemes to the national grid and has been incorporated within the amended solar layout. As such, it does not represent a separate or unrelated form of industrial development, but forms part of an integrated renewable energy development framework. In planning terms, the visual baseline

should reflect the planning context of the site having regard to the Proposed Substation development and grid connection.

Landscape Character Assessment

1.116. A landscape character assessment has been undertaken by Galway County Council to help gain a better understanding of the existing landscape and to help identify elements in need of preserving, conserving, or enhancing. The *Landscape Character Assessment of County Galway* is included within the supporting documentation of the Council's County Development Plan.

1.117. Within the Galway County Development Plan's Landscape Character Assessment[12] the landscape is classified into general Landscape Character Regions, Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and more geographically specific Landscape Character Units (LCUs).

1.118. The Landscape Character Assessment for the county has outlined four separate Landscape Character Regions characterising the Landscape Sensitivity of the area. These are then assigned and Landscape Sensitivity value between 'Iconic' (Unique Landscape with high sensitivity to change) and 'Low' (Unlikely to be adversely affected by change). The Landscape Character Region sensitivity is evaluated from 'High' to 'Low', which a highly sensitive Landscape Character Region (LCR) being judged to being susceptible to change whereas low sensitivity would indicate a more robust LCR.

1.119. The landscape across the County of Galway has been subdivided into three landscape regions. These landscape regions have been further broken down into ten separate landscape types which is then further broken down into twenty-nine Landscape Character Units.

1.120. The Application site is located in the **Eastern Plains** Landscape Region.

'*The Eastern Plains Region is underlain by younger, softer rocks. This derives most of its character from the covering blanket of glacial soils that give rise to extensive, level plains of grasslands, with many areas of bog in the north.'*

1.121. Within the 5km Radius Zone, there are two Landscape Character Types (LCT). These are Central Galway Complex LCT 6 and Shannon Environs LCT 8. This can be seen in **Figure 1.1 Appendix 1A**.

1.122. The Central Galway Complex LCT incorporates over 80% of the 5km study area with a further 20% of the study area lying within the Shannon Environs Landscape and The Shannon Environs 8a Landscape Character Unit are mapped in **Figure 1.1 Appendix 1A.**

[12] https://consult.galway.ie/en/consultation/draft-galway-county-development-plan-2022-2028/chapter/appendix-4-landscape-character-assessment

1.123. The application site is entirely located within the **Central Galway Complex Landscape Type** and the **Kilcrow Basin Landscape Character Unit LCU 6d**.

1.124. Key characteristics of the landscape of the **Central Galway Complex LCT 06** are:

Landscape Value: Medium **Landscape Sensitivity**: Low **Landscape Importance**: Local

- An extensive plain of grasslands comprising of medium-to-large fields with low enclosures and many areas of low stone walls used for field boundaries.
- The appearance and character of the majority of this landscape type remains dominated by grass-based agriculture. Fields generally have low enclosure, with limestone walls evident in many areas. The wider landscape is punctuated by stands of large mature trees – often remains of parkland landscapes that surrounded large 17th – 19th estate residences.
- In some areas there are large blocks of commercial forestry that further subdivide these grasslands. Though largely level, roads along occasional low ridges provide long-distance vistas that extend to distant horizons in other counties.
- It also includes distinctive features, including locally elevated features, such as Knockma, south-west of Tuam as well as areas that overlook Lough Corrib in the west and the complex of lakes and foothills between Gort and Loughrea in the south.
- This area contains the majority of the county's population with associated high levels of urban generated rural housing, roads and settlements. These range from large to small settlements with associated infrastructure, services and commercial activity.
- The western and southern parts of these landscapes are underlain by karst limestone which results in many unusual hydrological features - such as turloughs and large springs. The more productive soils of this area have resulted in long histories of more intensive historic settlement and associated higher concentrations of remains from major periods of land-management, including early Christian, medieval and 16th - 19th century estates
- Ringforts, tower-houses, field walls and parklands occur throughout this area, as evidence of these past uses.

- Protected Views within this area include; (46 & 50). The nearest protected views are situated c.1.20km southeast of the proposed development, Newgate Gateway, (L4301 Crossroads) (Protected View 46). The Gothic Folly Gateway (Protected View 50), c.2.75km east of the proposed development (off the L8716 Southwest of Laurencetown). These protected views can be seen in Figure 1.3 Appendix 1A.

Table 1.12: Ratings as defined within Galway Landscape Character Assessment Effects of Central Galway Complex LCT 06:

Landscape Value	Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Importance
Medium	Low	Local

1.125. The Landscape Character Unit Kilcrow Basin 6d is noted as;

''Working landscape, locally elevated. Larger areas of bog and forestry. Elevated concentrations of settlements and infrastructure.''

Designations

1.126. Landscape designations are landscapes which are attributed special protection at national (legislative) to local (County Development Plan) level, to protect against inappropriate development. Historic and ecological designations also contribute to the overall landscape character and quality.

1.127. There are three National Heritage Area's within the 5km study Area: Moorfield Bog NHA, Cloonoolish Bog NHA and Eskerboy Bog NHA.

1.128. There is a total of 70 archaeological sites in the RMP (Recorded National Monuments) that are within the 2km study zone. Indirect effects upon RMP sites such as the above, or those that are well-screened by vegetation or buildings, are anticipated to be Negligible.

1.129. There are two Protected Views located within the 5km Study Area, namely Viewpoints 46 and 50 (refer to Figure 1.3, Appendix 1A). These views are oriented away from the Proposed Development and, as such, will not be affected.

Landform

1.130. As outlined within the Galway Landscape Character Assessment[13] and from fieldwork undertaken on-site and within the surrounding study area, the immediate study area lies in a generally flat agricultural landscape with some areas of elevated land. The landscape is dominated by the field patterns, formed by thick and high mature hedgerows.

1.131. The result of the low-lying terrain, thick field boundary vegetation and hedgerows means views are sporadic and limited by local features. There are some long panoramic views associated with more elevated areas of landscape.

Future Baseline

1.132. In landscape terms, if the Proposed Development did not go ahead, the site and agricultural character will remain unchanged.

1.133. In visual terms, the content in available views will remain the same, although changes will occur to existing vegetation due to maturing, pruning or natural decay.

13 https://consult.galway.ie/en/system/files/materials/6962/Appendix%204%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment.pdf

IMPACT ASSESSMENT (CONSTRUCTION, OPERATIONAL & DECOMMISSIONING PHASES)

Construction Phase

1.134. Areas experiencing landscape and visual effects during the construction stage will vary, depending on active construction works. The Proposed Development is located within agricultural fields, bound by hedgerows and mature trees. Vegetation located to the immediate site boundary of the Proposed Development and within the intervening fields will screen the majority of groundworks.

1.135. The total ground disturbance area resulting from the Proposed Development is therefore **29,090.8 m²** or c. **8.36%** of the Application Site area.

1.136. The main direct effects during the construction phase will result from groundworks and ground disturbance required by the proposal, including:

Substation Area

- Total hardstanding area: (12,183.6m2)
- Total cut and fill area (which includes the total substation hardstanding area): 14,091m2
- Deposition/compound areas: 4,300m2

Access Tracks

- Proposed access tracks are c. 5m in width and will involve an average of 300mm depth of soil removed. Local widening at turns for access reasons. Occasionally they will use a geosynthetic reinforcement or soil stability to reduce depth. Total length is approximately 1907 (9,535m2 in total)

Cable Trenches (Outside Substation Compound)

- Cable trenches are circa 1.3m deep and up to 1m wide, proposed to run alongside the proposed access tracks. These are estimated at 975m in length and a ground disturbance of 975m2

Perimeter Fencing (Outside Substation Compound)

- Property Boundary Fence is a deer fence style with posts. Total length is c.93m with a total of 152 posts. Total Area: 4.6m2

Tower Foundations

- There are two towers, each with a footprint of 6.7m x 6.7m = c.90m2 with a foundation depth of up to 1m (subject to detailed design). Total Area 180m2

1.137. The main direct effects during the construction phase will result from groundworks and ground disturbance required by the proposal, including:

- excavation works for the foundations substation, and for cable trenches;
- topsoil stripping requiring for on-site access tracks and assembly areas/compounds; and
- Driving of piles to support perimeter fencing.

1.138. Quantitative details on these elements are provided below. All technical details are based on the best information available and are indicative only. They may change due to situations such as ground conditions, micro-siting or changes in technology. Construction involving topsoil stripping has, in general, a lower potential for impacting upon sub-surface remains below the archaeological horizon but retains a similar potential for encountering archaeological remains as construction involving deeper excavation work.

1.139. Landscape and visual effects and their significance at construction stage will be temporary adverse and will result in:

- Likely effects to landscape character or visual amenity within the locality or the wider study area as a result of the visibility of construction activities such as, cranes, the movement of construction vehicles along local roads, and other tall equipment such as machinery on site;
- Effects of temporary site infrastructure such as site traffic and a temporary site construction compound; and
- Likely direct effects arising from construction of the Proposed Development will be confined to the Application Site.

1.140. The highest landscape and visual effects during the construction stage will be experienced in the vicinity of the Application Site from locations with open or partial views of the site, particularly along the unnamed road to the northwest of the Proposed Development. There will also be views of construction activity associated with the substation, lighting masts and replacement lattice towers from the Skenageehy Road to the east.

1.141. More distant views at the construction works, beyond 300m will be unlikely, given the amount of screening provided by the vegetation within the immediate context of the site. Views may be possible through gaps of vegetation or from elevated locations within the study area. Considering the distance of these views, 300m and beyond, visibility is considered not significant due to the effects of distance, the scale of the project and a high dependency on clear weather conditions. While discernible, the construction effects in long distance views are not considered significant as they form part of a wide panoramic view in which they form one visible component of many.

1.142. The landscape and visual effects at construction stage will be temporary, adverse and range from Low to Very Low in the wider study area and Medium to Low for areas in close proximity to the boundary of the Application Site, where intervening existing vegetation and built structures do not screen views of the Proposed Development. Therefore, the resulting significance during construction effects will range from Moderate/ Slight to Not Significant and temporary in duration.

Decommissioning Phase

1.143. The decommissioning phase (while unlikely) of the Proposed Development would involve the removal of the substation and associated infrastructure, including lighting masts and the reinstatement of the site. The nature of works during this phase would be similar to those undertaken during construction, including the use of plant, machinery and temporary construction compounds. As such, landscape and visual effects arising during decommissioning are expected to be temporary and comparable to those identified for the construction phase. No additional or significant effects beyond those already assessed for construction are anticipated.

1.144. Following decommissioning, the site would be restored to a condition similar to its current agricultural use, thereby removing built elements from the landscape and reinstating the baseline character of the receiving environment.

Operational Phase

1.145. Figure 1.4: Appendix 1A illustrates viewpoints from locations selected as 'Representative Viewpoints' for the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.

1.146. Operational effects will result in:

- Likely effects of the development on views and visual amenity such as the potential for the development to alter (beneficial or adverse) the composition of the view from a viewpoint; and
- Likely cumulative effects of the development in conjunction with other committed developments of similar type and scale upon the landscape and visual resource of the study area.

Landscape Effects

1.147. The following likely direct and indirect landscape effects have been identified (along with their duration and nature) arising from the Proposed Development. Direct or indirect landscape effects on the fabric of the landscape and its receptors are closely related to the nature and extent of visibility.

1.148. The application site is entirely located within the Central Galway Complex Landscape Type and the Kilcrow Basin Landscape Character Unit LCU 6d in Co. Galway. The Landscape Character Types have been indicated in **Figure 1.1; Appendix 1A**..

1.149. The main landscape effects of the Proposed Development will be associated with the introduction of the substation, which introduces new built and vertical elements into fields currently used for agricultural practices. Ancillary infrastructure, including site fencing, control buildings, lighting masts, telecom poles and CCTV, will be limited in scale and will contribute little additional influence on landscape character.

1.150. The Proposed Development also includes associated grid connection infrastructure, comprising the removal of existing wooden poles and their replacement with lattice towers. These elements will be perceived in the context of existing overhead line infrastructure within and adjacent to the Application Site.

1.151. The Proposed Development also includes associated grid connection infrastructure, comprising the removal of existing wooden poles and their replacement with lattice towers. These elements will be perceived in the context of existing overhead line infrastructure within and adjacent to the Application Site.

1.152. Although the receiving landscape is of low sensitivity and is capable of accommodating development of this nature, the introduction of the substation will result in a localised change in landscape character within the Application Site and its immediate surroundings where visibility is available.

1.153. The proposed mitigation planting will, over time, assist in softening and screening views of the development. However, within the confines of the Application Site, the magnitude of landscape change is considered to be **High to Medium**, resulting in effects of **Moderate** significance overall.

1.154. Indirect change will occur outside of the Application Site boundary, where the visibility of the Proposed Development has an influence on the perception of the character of the landscape. The indirect change in landscape character is greatest in its immediate and close surroundings where open and partial views are possible within approximately 500m radius from the Application Site boundary. The magnitude of change in these areas is considered **Medium to Low**. The significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Slight reducing to Not Significant** as mitigation planting matures.

1.155. Indirect change and the significance of landscape effects will reduce with increasing distance from the Application Site in the remaining study area (between approximately 300m and 2km from the Site boundary). Given the nature, scale and setting of the Proposed Development, the change in character will not be recognised over long distances throughout the wider study area in accessible views. Therefore, the significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Not Significant**.

Visual Effects

1.156. The majority of residential dwellings in the immediate environment of the Proposed Development are located mainly to the southwest, in Kiltormer Village.

1.157. The main visual receptor groups are local residents, road users and pedestrians. Residents and pedestrians will have a higher sensitivity to change than the road users. Vehicle travellers will focus primarily on traffic and not on available views, however, if looked upon, the Proposed Development will be seen in transit making the views fleeting in nature.

1.158. The highest visual effects will be experienced within an approximate 300m radius of the Application Site boundary, particularly along the unnamed road to the northwest of the Proposed Development. There will also be views of the lighting masts and sections of the associated grid connection infrastructure, including replacement lattice towers, from the Skenageehy Road to the east.

1.159. Beyond this, areas experiencing visibility are extremely limited due to the level of existing vegetation, including mature hedgerows and field boundaries, which provide a high degree of screening. As such, views from many locations will be glimpsed and fleeting in nature.

1.160. The magnitude of visual effects on local residents and residential areas with views of the Proposed Development within approximately 500m are considered to range from **Low / Negligible** to **None** depending on the openness of views and intervening screening by vegetation, topography or built structures.

1.161. In areas where the Proposed Development will be visible, including associated infrastructure such as lighting masts and replacement lattice towers the significance ranges from **Slight** reducing to **Not Significant** as the mitigation planting matures. In other areas, where the Proposed Development is screened by vegetation, there will be a **'No Change**' scenario.

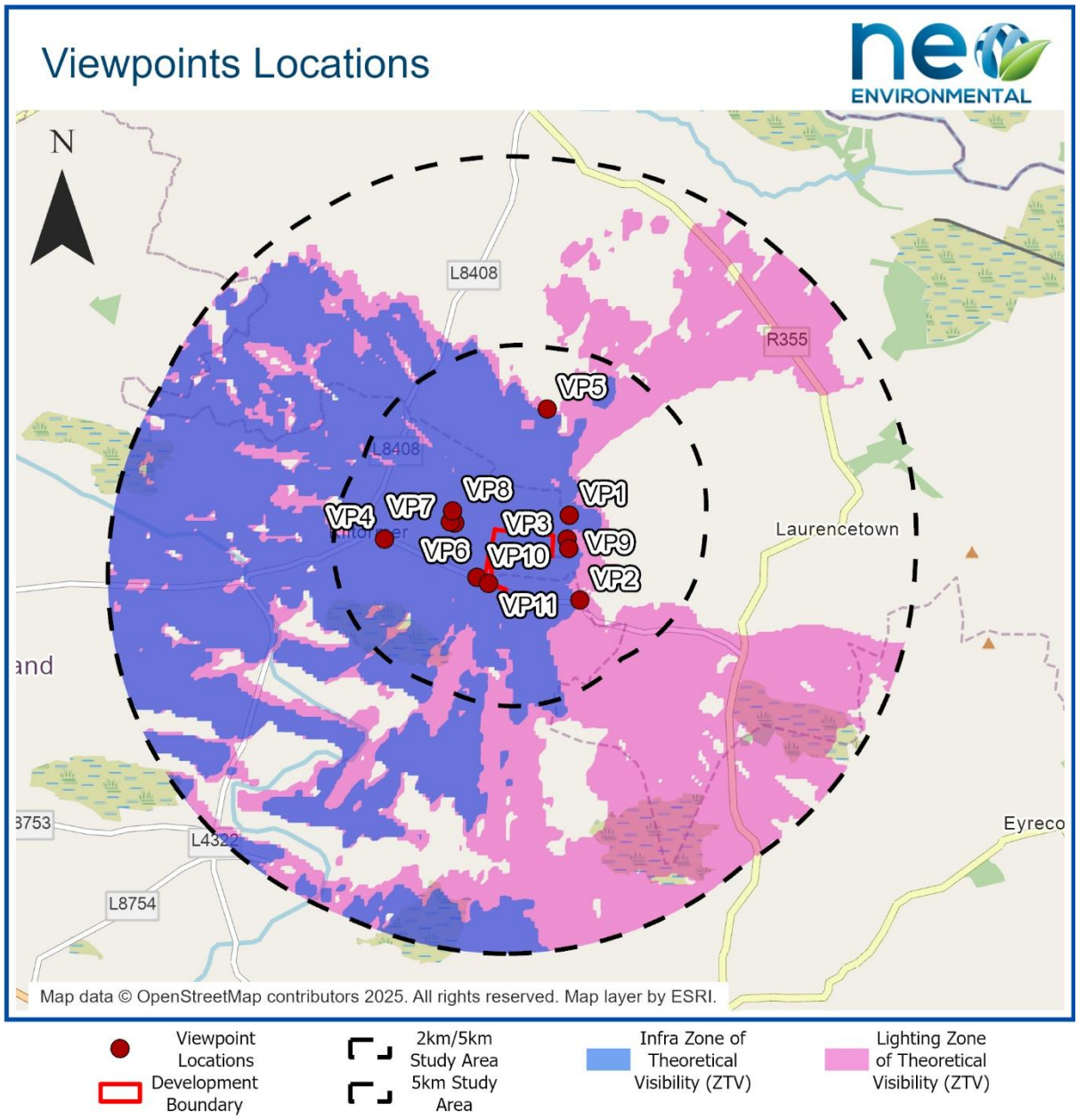
1.162. The Proposed Development will add an industrial character to accessible views. Distance will become a mitigating factor, and the Proposed Development will be seen in the context of the wider landscape.

1.163. In long-distance views ranging between approximately 1km and 2km, the effects will be Negligible. While the Proposed Development will add an industrial element to the view when seen, the change will be seen in the context of the wider landscape, where mitigation measures will help integrate the Proposed Development into its setting. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Negligible** and the significance **Not Significant.**

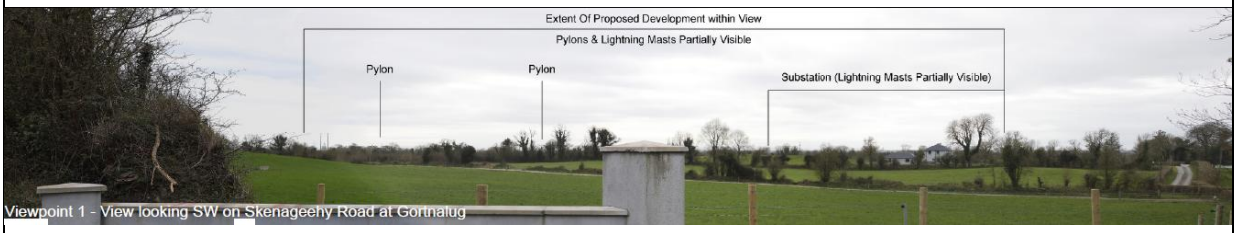
Representative Viewpoint Analysis

1.164. Viewpoints 01–11 are discussed below (refer to Figures 1.5 – 1.10, Appendix 1A), which illustrate the baseline views from each location. In addition, photomontages have been prepared for selected viewpoints to illustrate the anticipated appearance of the Proposed Development at both Year 0 and Year 5, including Figure 1.11 (VP1), Figure 1.12 (VP3), Figure 1.13 (VP6, Year 0 and Year 5), Figure 1.14 (VP7, Year 0 and Year 5), Figure 1.15 (VP8, Year 0 and Year 5), Figure 1.16 (VP9), and Figure 1.17 (VP10). All figures are included within Appendix 1A.

Figure 01 : Viewpoint Locations and ZTV



Viewpoint 1 - View looking southwest on Skenageehy Road at Gortnalug

Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP1	View looking southwest on Skenageehy Road at Gortnalug	0.34km	235°
			
Copy of Viewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.			
Representative of:	• Rural/ Agricultural • Road Users • Residential Receptors		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium		
Existing View	The image is taken from a height (51m AOD), overlooking the landscape. In the central foreground, a large H frame pole with electricity wires is visible. To the left of the image is dense vegetation, while to the right, is an open view of the countryside. There are fields with trees and vegetation interspersed throughout. The land rises slightly in the background, with a block of forestry visible in the distance, to the right. Visual receptors are primarily road users or residential receptors in the area. The value of the view is considered to be Medium and its sensitivity and susceptibility to change are considered Medium.		
Visual Impact of Proposed Development	The Proposed Development will comprise the substation and associated infrastructure, including replacement lattice towers, which will be visible within the mid to far distance of the view. The towers will appear as vertical elements within the landscape, generally seen in the context of existing overhead line infrastructure already present within the view. Due to distance and intervening vegetation, views of the substation and associated elements, including lighting masts, will be partial and limited. The Proposed Development will not materially alter the overall composition or character of the view and will be perceived as consistent with the existing pattern of infrastructure within the landscape.		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarized below.		

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Low	Slight

Viewpoint 2 - View looking northwest on Junction of L4301 & L8716 Lissareaghaun Road

Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP2	View looking northwest on Junction of L4301 & L8716 Lissareaghaun Road	0.72km	320°

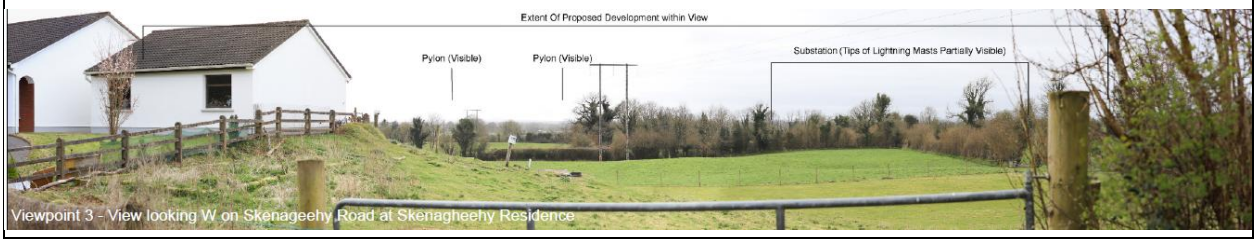
Copy of Viewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.

Representative of:	• Rural/ Agricultural • Road Users • Residential Receptors
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium
Existing View	The view is taken from roadside level at the junction of the L4301 and L8716, looking northwest across open agricultural fields. The foreground is defined by a trimmed hedgerow, with a local road extending to the left. The landscape comprises gently undulating pastureland enclosed by hedgerows, with scattered mature trees and farmsteads visible in the middle to far distance. Vegetation along field boundaries provides a sense of enclosure, particularly at lower levels. Visual receptors are primarily road users, with some nearby residential receptors. The value of the view is considered to be Medium, and its sensitivity and susceptibility to change are also assessed as Medium.
Visual Impact of Proposed Development	The Proposed Development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to intervening topography and vegetation, which provide effective screening. As such, there will be no change to the existing view. The magnitude of visual change is considered to be None, resulting in a Not Significant visual effect.

Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	None	No Change

Viewpoint 3 - View looking west on Skenageehy Road at Skenagheehy Residence

Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP3	View looking west on Skenageehy Road at Skenagheehy Residence	0.2km	260°



Copy of Viewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.

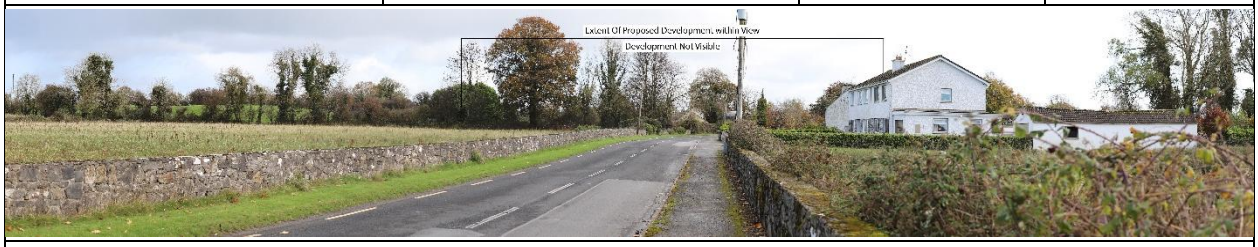
Representative of:	• Rural/ Agricultural • Road Users • Residential Receptors
Receptor Sensitivity	High
Existing View	The view is taken from a residential property, looking across gently sloping agricultural land enclosed by hedgerows and scattered trees. The immediate foreground includes a dwelling and garden boundary features, including fencing and a gated entrance. The wider landscape comprises pasture fields with intermittent vegetation, creating a partially enclosed rural setting. Existing overhead line infrastructure is evident within the view, including wooden poles. Vegetation along field boundaries and around the site provides a degree of screening, particularly at lower levels. Visual receptors at this location are residential and therefore of High sensitivity. The value of the view is considered to be Medium to High.

<table>
<tr><td>Visual Impact of Proposed Development</td><td>The Proposed Development will be partially visible from this viewpoint. The substation will be largely screened by intervening vegetation, with only the upper elements, such as the tips of lighting masts, potentially visible above the hedgerow in the mid-distance.

Replacement lattice towers will be visible within the context of existing overhead line infrastructure and will be perceived as part of the established pattern of electrical infrastructure in the landscape. Due to the extent of screening and the limited visibility of the substation itself, the Proposed Development will not appear prominent within the view.

The magnitude of visual change is considered to be Low, resulting in a Slight visual effect.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>The assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarized below.
<table><tr><th>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</th><th>Visual Impact Magnitude</th><th>Significance of Visual Impact</th></tr><tr><td>High</td><td>Low</td><td>Slight</td></tr></table></td></tr>
</table>

Viewpoint 4 - View looking East from L4301 Kiltormer East, Mount Prospect

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Reference Point</th><th>Viewing distance</th><th>Direction of View</th></tr>
<tr><td>VP4</td><td>View looking East from L4301 Kiltormer East, Mount Prospect</td><td>1.28km</td><td>95°</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Copy of Viewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Representative of:</td><td colspan="3">• Rural Village
• Road Users
• Residential Receptors</td></tr>
<tr><td>Receptor Sensitivity</td><td colspan="3">High</td></tr>
<tr><td>Existing View</td><td colspan="3">This view is taken from just outside the village of Kiltormer. There is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling visible to the right of the image, with the gable of another just beyond. The gable and roof of a bungalow is</td></tr>
</table>

	visible further down the road. To the left of the road is a stone wall with agricultural fields and mature vegetation beyond. Visual receptors are primarily road users travelling along the L4301 and residents of the village. The value of the view is Low and its sensitivity and susceptibility to change are considered High.
Visual Impact of Proposed Development	There are views towards the site from this viewpoint, however, the Proposed Development will not be visible. Therefore, no expected impacts are anticipated from this viewpoint.
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarized below.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
High	None	No Change

Viewpoint 5 - View looking South from Gortnamona, North of the Proposed Development

Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP5	View looking South from Gortnamona, North of the Proposed Development	1.7km	185°

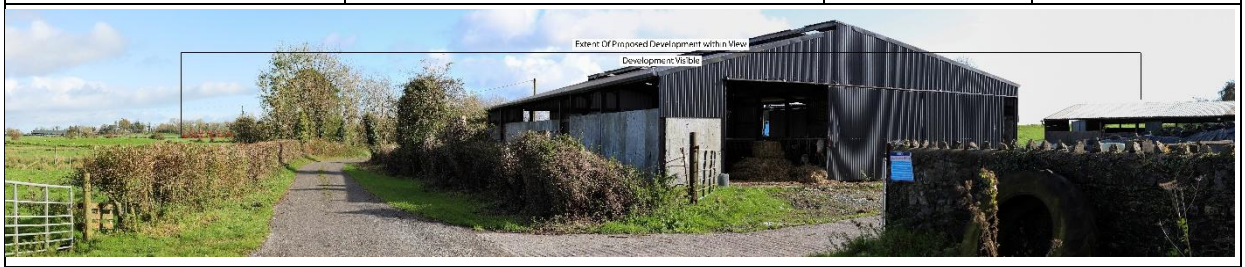
ewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.

Representative of:	• Rural • Road Users • Residential Receptors
Receptor Sensitivity	High
Existing View	This view is taken from the Gortnamona road, North of the Proposed Development. In the foreground is a hedgerow and beyond this one can see

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>an agricultural field, gradually sloping upwards away from the road. There is a two-storey dwelling on the left middle ground and the site is bound by a hedge. Beyond this, a hill rises up into the background. There are mature trees visible along the horizon line in the background of the image.

Visual receptors are primarily road users travelling along the Gortnamona road and residential receptors living along the roadside. The value of the view is Low and its sensitivity and susceptibility to change are considered High.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Visual Impact of Proposed Development</td><td>There are views towards the site from this viewpoint, however, the Proposed Development will not be visible. Therefore, no expected impacts are anticipated from this viewpoint.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Summary</td><td>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarized below.
<table>
<tr><th>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</th><th>Visual Impact Magnitude</th><th>Significance of Visual Impact</th></tr>
<tr><td>High</td><td>None</td><td>No Change</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
</table>

Viewpoint 6 - View looking Southeast from Unknown Track, Kiltormer East, Northwest of the Proposed Development

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Reference Point</th><th>Viewing distance</th><th>Direction of View</th></tr>
<tr><td>VP6</td><td>View looking Southeast from Unknown Track, Kiltormer East, Northwest of the Proposed Development</td><td>0.56km</td><td>100°</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Copy of Viewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Representative of:</td><td colspan="3">• Rural
• Road Users
• Farmstead</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>Receptor Sensitivity</td><td>Low</td></tr>
<tr><td>Existing View</td><td>This viewpoint is taken next to a farmyard. The majority of the image is taken up with farm sheds. A laneway cuts through just left of centre. There is a farm gate and a mature hedge running along the edge of the lane with an agricultural field beyond this. Another farmyard and house is visible in the distance with lots of mature trees along field boundaries.

Visual receptors are primarily road users and residential receptors living along the roadside. The value of the view is Low and its sensitivity and susceptibility to change are considered Medium.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Visual Impact of Proposed Development</td><td>The Proposed Development will be partially visible from this viewpoint. The intervening mature vegetation will help to screen the views from this location. There will also be mitigation planting along the boundary of the Proposed Development site which will further mitigate against visual effects.

The magnitude of change will be Low reducing to Negligible after the mitigation planting matures with a resulting significance of Slight reducing to Not Significant.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Summary</td><td>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarized below.

<table>
<tr><th>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</th><th>Visual Impact Magnitude</th><th>Significance of Visual Impact</th></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Low reducing to Negligible</td><td>Slight reducing to Not Significant.</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

Viewpoint 7 - View looking southeast from Unknown Track, Kiltormer East, West of the Proposed Development

Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP7	View looking southeast from Unknown Track, Kiltormer East, West of the Proposed Development	0.62km	100°

Copy of Viewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.

Representative of:	• Rural • Road Users • Residential Receptors
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium
Existing View	This viewpoint is taken from a roadway to the west of the proposed Development. There is a small copse of trees in the centre and to the right of the image, with the roadway cutting through the centre. To the left, there is an agricultural field with some rushes growing amongst the grass. In the middle ground, there is a drain with fencing on the boundary of the field, with another field beyond it. Farm sheds can be seen in the background and there are mature trees and vegetation all along the horizon line. There is also a wooden pole from a low voltage electricity connection. Visual receptors are primarily road users travelling along the roadway and residential receptors living along the roadside. The value of the view is Low and its sensitivity and susceptibility to change are considered Medium.
Visual Impact of Proposed Development	The Proposed Development will be visible from this viewpoint as the proposed infrastructure will be in view. The intervening mature vegetation will help to screen the views from this location. There will be mitigation planting along the boundary of the Proposed Development site which will help to mitigate against visual effects. The magnitude of change will be **Low** reducing to **Negligible** after the mitigation planting matures with a resulting significance of **Slight** reducing to **Not Significant**.
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.

Visual Receptor	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual

	Sensitivity		Impact
	Medium	Low reducing to Negligible	Slight reducing to Not Significant.

Viewpoint 8 - View looking Southeast from Unknown Track, Kiltormer East, Northwest of the Proposed Development

Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP8	View looking Southeast from Unknown Track, Kiltormer East, Northwest of the Proposed Development	0.8km	110°
			
Copy of Viewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.			
Representative of:	• Rural • Road Users • Residential Receptors		
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium		
Existing View	This view is of an agricultural landscape. In the foreground is an agricultural field with some rushes interspersed among the grass. There is a farmyard and dwelling house to the right of the image. The fields are divided by post and wire fencing. In the distance, there is a farmyard and farmhouse. There is mature vegetation and trees dotted throughout the landscape and making up the background of the image. There are several wooden poles with low voltage overhead electricity cables running in a easterly and southerly direction. Visual receptors are primarily road users travelling along the roadway and residential receptors living along the roadside. The value of the view is Low and its sensitivity and susceptibility to change are considered Medium.		

<table>
<tr><td>Visual Impact of Proposed Development</td><td>The Proposed Development will be visible from this viewpoint as the proposed infrastructure will be in view. The intervening mature vegetation will help to screen the views from this location. There will be mitigation planting along the boundary of the Proposed Development site which will help to mitigate against visual effects.

The magnitude of change will be Low reducing to Negligible after the mitigation planting matures with a resulting significance of Slight reducing to Not Significant.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Summary</td><td>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarized below.
<table>
<tr><th>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</th><th>Visual Impact Magnitude</th><th>Significance of Visual Impact</th></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>Low reducing to Negligible</td><td>Slight reducing to Not Significant.</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
</table>

Viewpoint 9 - View looking W on Skenageehy Road at Skenagheehy Residence

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Reference Point</th><th>Viewing distance</th><th>Direction of View</th></tr>
<tr><td>VP9</td><td>View looking W on Skenageehy Road at Skenagheehy Residence</td><td>0.24km</td><td>280°</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Copy of Viewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Representative of:</td><td colspan="3">• Rural
• Road Users
• Residential Receptors</td></tr>
<tr><td>Receptor Sensitivity</td><td colspan="3">High</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>Existing View</td><td>The view is taken from a residential property, looking across a garden boundary and adjoining agricultural land. The immediate foreground includes garden planting, boundary fencing and ornamental vegetation, creating a well-defined and enclosed private setting.

Beyond the garden, the landscape comprises gently sloping pasture fields enclosed by mature hedgerows and trees. Dense vegetation along field boundaries and adjacent to the property provides a strong degree of enclosure, particularly at lower levels, with only limited filtered views available beyond.

Visual receptors are residential and therefore of High sensitivity. The value of the view is considered to be Medium to High.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Visual Impact of Proposed Development</td><td>The Proposed Development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to the presence of intervening vegetation, boundary planting and localised topography, which provide effective screening.

A very distant and limited glimpse of a pylon may be perceptible within the far background; however, this will be barely discernible and seen within the context of existing overhead line infrastructure in the wider landscape.

As such, there will be no material change to the existing view. The magnitude of visual change is considered to be Negligible, resulting in a Not Significant visual effect.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Summary</td><td>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.
<table>
<tr><th>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</th><th>Visual Impact Magnitude</th><th>Significance of Visual Impact</th></tr>
<tr><td>High</td><td>Negligible</td><td>Not Significant.</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

Viewpoint 10 - View looking northeast from L4301 Kiltormer East

Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP10	Viewpoint 10 - View looking northeast from L4301 Kiltormer East	0.1km	65°

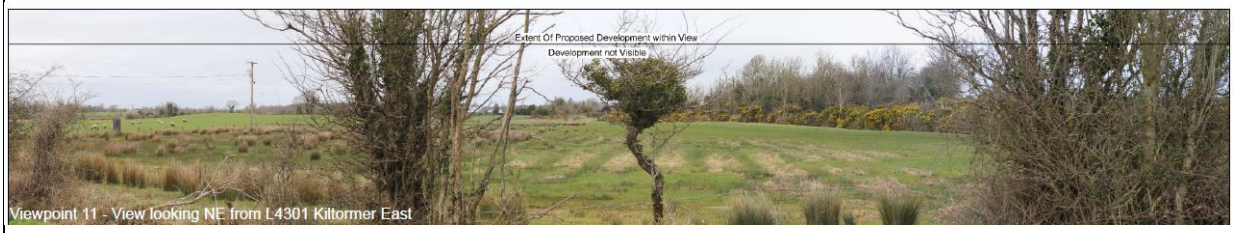
Copy of Viewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.

Representative of:	• Rural • Road Users • Residential Receptors
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium
Existing View	The view is taken from the L4301, looking northeast across open agricultural pasture. The foreground is defined by a trimmed roadside hedgerow, with expansive fields extending into the middle distance. The landscape is relatively open, with scattered trees, hedgerows and occasional farm structures providing structure and enclosure at field boundaries. Existing overhead line infrastructure is present within the view, including wooden poles and distant lattice towers, which form part of the established rural landscape context. Visual receptors are primarily road users, with some nearby residential receptors. The value of the view is considered to be Medium, and its sensitivity and susceptibility to change are also assessed as Medium.
Visual Impact of Proposed Development	The Proposed Development will be partially visible from this viewpoint. The substation will be perceptible within the mid-distance, although partially filtered by intervening hedgerows and vegetation. Replacement lattice towers will be largely screened by vegetation, with only limited or intermittent visibility possible. The Proposed Development will introduce additional built elements into the view; however, these will be seen in the context of existing overhead line infrastructure and will not appear visually prominent. The overall composition and character of the view will remain largely unchanged. The magnitude of visual change is considered to be **Low**, resulting in a **Slight** visual effect.

Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarized below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Low	Slight

Viewpoint 11 - View looking northeast from L4301 Kiltormer East

Reference Point		Viewing distance	Direction of View
VP11	View looking northeast from L4301 Kiltormer East	0.1km	35°



Copy of Viewpoint shown in Appendix 1A. Image for reference only.

Representative of:	• Rural • Road Users • Residential Receptors
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium
Existing View	The view is taken from the L4301, looking northeast across a rural landscape comprising pasture fields with areas of rough grassland and wet ground. The foreground includes roadside vegetation and scattered trees, which partially filter views across the landscape. The middle distance is characterised by open fields interspersed with hedgerows, gorse and tree belts, providing a varied and semi-enclosed rural character. Existing overhead line infrastructure, including wooden poles, is visible within the wider landscape.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Visual receptors are primarily road users, with some nearby residential receptors. The value of the view is considered to be Medium, and its sensitivity and susceptibility to change are also assessed as Medium.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Visual Impact of Proposed Development</td><td>The Proposed Development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to intervening vegetation, field boundary hedgerows and localised topography, which provide effective screening.

As such, there will be no change to the existing view. The magnitude of visual change is considered to be None, resulting in a Not Significant visual effect.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Summary</td><td>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined within the Methodology, the significance of residual visual impact is summarised below.
<table>
<tr><th>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</th><th>Visual Impact Magnitude</th><th>Significance of Visual Impact</th></tr>
<tr><td>Medium</td><td>None</td><td>Not Significant.</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
</table>

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

1.165. Cumulative effects are defined in GLVIA3 as:

"Result from additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the Development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it), actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future".

1.166. Cumulative landscape effects may occur to the landscape components e.g., loss of hedgerows or landscape characteristics by introducing new features.

1.167. Cumulative visual effects may occur where one development is viewed in combination (static views of up to 90-degree arc), successively (turning around on the spot) or sequentially where the user moves along routes, roads or paths with one or more development evident.

1.168. Developments that are subject to a valid planning application are included within such an assessment, where specific circumstances indicate there is potential for cumulative effects to occur, with progressively decreasing emphasis placed on those which are less certain to proceed.

1.169. Typically, operational and consented developments are treated as being part of the landscape and visual baseline. i.e., it is assumed that consented schemes will be built except for occasional exceptions where there is good reason to assume that they will not be constructed. Schemes that are at earlier stages such as scoping are not usually considered within such an assessment unless specifically requested by the planning authority.

1.170. A search of Galway County Council planning portal was undertaken, as well as An Coimisiún Pleanála's planning search, to identify any existing, approved or proposed similar developments within the 5km study area, as of March 2026, which could have potential notable cumulative landscape or visual effects with the Proposed Development.

Cumulative Effects

1.171. Cumulative landscape and visual effects may result from additional changes to the baseline landscape or views as a result of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other developments of a similar type and scale.

1.172. A search was conducted of relevant planning applications within the vicinity of the Application Site, using the An Coimisiún Pleanála and Galway County Council (GCC). Refer to Table 1.15 below:

Table 1.15 Cumulative Projects

Application Number	Type of Development	Development Description	Stage of App.	Decision Type	Decision	Distance	Direction
Galway Council Planning Apps 2015 Onwards							
2360827	BESS	To include development of a 240MWh battery energy storage systems facility within a total site area of up to 3.02 hectares, the site will include 1no. 38KV substation compound including 1no. single storey electrical substation building with an area of 69m2 & associated switchgear, 12no. electrical inverters & 6no. electrical transformer, 31no. containerised battery storage modules on concrete plinths, access tracks & new site entrance, associated electrical cabling & ducting, security gates, perimeter security fencing, CCTV security monitoring & lighting system, landscaping works & all associated ancillary infrastructure	Finalised	Permission	Conditional	3.120km	North
2361049	Solar	For the development that will consist of a planning permission for a period of 10 years to construct & complete a Solar PV Energy development with a total site area of circa 81.9 hectares, to include, solar PV panels ground mounted on support structures, electrical transformer & inverter station modules, a substation, temporary construction compounds, internal access tracks, watercourse crossing infrastructure, security fencing, electrical cabling	Finalised	Permission	Conditional	0.000km	N/A

		& ducting, interconnection cabling, CCTV & other ancillary infrastructure, drainage, additional landscaping & habitat enhancement as required & associated site development works. The solar farm would be operational for 35 years.					
2461749	Solar	to construct and complete a Solar PV Energy development with a total site area of circa 56.2 hectares across four sections of land to include, solar PV panels ground mounted on metal support structures, electrical transformer and inverter substation modules, temporary construction compounds, internal access tracks (existing, upgrading and new), site accesses, watercourse crossing infrastructure, security fencing, electrical cabling and ducting, interconnection cabling, CCTV and other ancillary infrastructure, drainage, additional landscaping and habitat enhancement as required and associated site development works. The solar farm would be operational for 35 years.	Finalised	Permission	Conditional	0.000km	South
2561903	Solar	For several minor amendments to the previously consented development under Planning Reference 2361049.	Finalised	Permission	Conditional	0.00km	South
2660009	Solar	For several minor amendments to the previously consented development under Planning Reference 2461749 (by Galway County Council).		Permission	Conditional	0.00km	South

Galway Council Planning Apps Before 2015							
74030	Substation	to build a 38kvline from existing Somerset 110kv Station to a point on the existing 38 kv line at Glenloughaun passing through or in the vicinity of the following townlands: somerset, Barnpark, Lakefield, Chapelpark, Glenaun, Gortnahorna (Clanricarde)	Finalised	Permission	Conditional	3.250km	North
932	Substation	for ESB Somerset 110KV station which consists of alterations to the existing 110 KV station comprising of one no. sealing end structure, 4.59m high and associated site works	Finalised	Permission	Conditional	3.240km	North
151571	Wind	for a ten-year permission to construct a wind farm. The proposed underground cable connection to the national grid will run under the existing road network through the townlands of Coolcarta West, Caltragh, Fynagh, Moneenaheeltia, Killevny, Ballyhoose, Oghil More, Laurencetown, Oghil Beg, Belview/Lissareaghaun, Crowsnest, Graveshill, Barnaboy, Somerset and Coolbeg. The proposed wind farm will comprise the provision of a total of up to 5 no. wind turbines with a maximum overall blade tip height of up to 169m, new internal access roads and upgrading of existing roads to facilitate delivery of abnormal loads, wind anemometry mast (up to 100m in height), 1 no. borrow pit, 1 no. electricity sub-station with control buildings and associated equipment, underground electricity	Finalised	Permission	Conditional	1.220km	North

		connection cabling, 1 no. temporary construction compound, upgrading of the existing site access junction and all ancillary site works.					

Cumulative Landscape

1.173. The Proposed Development and the consented developments above have been largely designed to consider the existing field hedgerow boundaries. Mitigation planting has been proposed for most developments and will help enhance their boundaries and help to further enclose the developments.

1.174. The addition of the Proposed Development, together with the noted developments in the study area, will collectively have a cumulative **Moderate** effect upon the landscape character of the **Central Galway Complex Landscape Type** during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases.

1.175. Overall, the magnitude of change to the landscape would be **Medium.**

1.176. Given the sensitivity of the receiving LCA the cumulative landscape effect will be **Moderate Change**.

Cumulative Visual

1.177. The potential for cumulative views of the Proposed Development with the approved developments as noted above from viewpoints and local area was found to be limited, as many potential views are hindered by distance, localised variations in the topography and screening by natural and built elements across the local landscape. However, as this is adjacent to the solar farm consented under Planning Reference **2361049**, there will be a cumulative impact from the combined Developments. There would also be a cumulative impact on 2561903 and 2660009 and the associated amendments to applications.

1.178. Due to the close proximity of the Proposed Development to the consented solar farm, there will be localised views where elements of both developments may be experienced together. In these instances, the Proposed Development will be seen as an extension of existing infrastructure within the site and its immediate surroundings.

1.179. Overall, the Proposed Development is largely screened from the surrounding area by mature vegetation and intervening landform. Sequential cumulative views are limited, primarily occurring along the track to the northwest of the site, where both developments may be visible in succession.

1.180. In these views, elements of the Proposed Development, including the substation and associated infrastructure such as replacement lattice towers and lighting masts, may be partially visible; however, these will be experienced within the context of existing infrastructure and will not give rise to notable cumulative visual effects.

1.181. Here, the addition of the Proposed Development will result in Moderate Change cumulative views which should reduce further when mitigation planting has been implemented.

MITIGATION MEASURES

1.182. Mitigation is a term used to describe the measures or actions that may be taken to minimise environmental effects. The purpose of mitigation is to avoid, reduce and where possible remedy or offset, any significant adverse direct and indirect effects on the environment arising from the Proposed Development.

1.183. A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan outlining the mitigation planting proposals has been included within **Figure 1.18a – Figure 1.18b**: **Appendix 1A**. The following main landscape and visual mitigation categories have been outlined below:

1.184. Mitigation planting will broadly include;

- Proposed Infill Hedgerow Planting: 350.2m

1.185. Proposed Ecological measures will include;

- Proposed Bird Box – 4 no.
- Proposed Bat Box – 5 no.
- Proposed Herptile Hibernacula – 1 no.
- Proposed Invertebrate Hotel – 1 no.

1.186. Vegetation Removal will broadly include;

- Existing Hedgerow to be Removed: 481.3m²
- Trees to be removed: 14 no.
- Vegetation and Hedgerow to be trimmed to achieve vision lines: 230.0m

RESIDUAL EFFECTS

1.187. Given the scale and location of the Proposed Development, the main landscape and visual mitigation measures focus on infill hedgerow planting to help further screen views towards the Proposed Development. The mature trees, which currently provide screening to the development will not change from the baseline conditions through the introduction of the Proposed Development.

1.188. Considering the possible often localised nature of available views, landscape mitigation will further reduce landscape and visual effects.

CONCLUSION

Construction Effects

1.189. Landscape and visual effects and their significance at construction stage will be temporary adverse and will result in:

- Likely effects to landscape character or visual amenity within the locality or the wider study area as a result of the visibility of construction activities such as, cranes, the movement of construction vehicles along local roads, and other tall equipment such as machinery on site;
- Effects of temporary site infrastructure such as site traffic and a temporary site construction compound; and
- Likely direct effects arising from construction of the Proposed Development will be confined to the Application Site.

1.190. The highest landscape and visual effects during the construction stage will be experienced in the vicinity of the Application Site from locations with open or partial views of the site, particularly along the Unnamed road, Northwest of the Proposed Development. There will also be views of the construction of the taller elements such as the lighting masts and lattice towers from the Skenageehy Road. The principal views of construction works will likely be experienced within a radius of up to approximately 300m from the boundary of the Proposed Development.

1.191. More distant views at the construction works, beyond 300m will be unlikely, given the amount of screening provided by the vegetation within the immediate context of the site. Views may be possible through gaps of vegetation or from elevated locations within the study area. Considering the distance of these views, 500m and beyond, visibility is considered not significant due to the effects of distance, the scale of the project and a high dependency on clear weather conditions. While discernible, the construction effects in long distance views are not considered significant as they form part of a wide panoramic view in which they form one visible component of many.

1.192. The landscape and visual effects at construction stage will be temporary, adverse and range from Low to Very Low in the wider study area and Medium to Low for areas in close proximity to the boundary of the Application Site, where intervening existing vegetation and built structures do not screen views of the Proposed Development. Therefore, the resulting significance during construction effects will range from Moderate/ Slight to Not Significant and temporary in duration.

Operational Phase

1.193. Figure 1.4: Appendix 1A illustrates viewpoints from locations selected as 'Representative Viewpoints' for the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.

1.194. Operational effects will result in:

- Likely effects of the development on views and visual amenity such as the potential for the development to alter (beneficial or adverse) the composition of the view from a viewpoint; and
- Likely cumulative effects of the development in conjunction with other committed developments of similar type and scale upon the landscape and visual resource of the study area.

Landscape Effects

1.195. The following likely direct and indirect landscape effects have been identified (along with their duration and nature) arising from the Proposed Development. Direct or indirect landscape effects on the fabric of the landscape and its receptors are closely related to the nature and extent of visibility.

1.196. The application site is entirely located within the Central Galway Complex Landscape Type and the Kilcrow Basin Landscape Character Unit LCU 6d in Co. Galway. The Landscape Character Types have been indicated in Figure 1.1; Appendix 1A.

1.197. The main landscape effects of the Proposed Development will be associated with the introduction of the substation, which introduces new built and vertical elements into fields previously used for agricultural practices. Ancillary infrastructure, such as site fencing, will be limited in scale and will contribute little additional influence on landscape character.

1.198. The Proposed Development also includes associated grid connection infrastructure, comprising the removal of existing wooden poles and their replacement with lattice towers. These elements will be perceived in the context of existing overhead line infrastructure within and adjacent to the Application Site.

1.199. The proposed mitigation planting will, over time, assist in softening and screening views of the development. However, within the confines of the Application Site, the magnitude of landscape change is considered to be High to Medium, resulting in effects of Moderate significance overall.

1.200. Indirect change will occur outside of the Application Site boundary, where the visibility of the Proposed Development has an influence on the perception of the character of the landscape. The indirect change in landscape character is greatest in its immediate and close surroundings where open and partial views are possible within approximately 300m radius from the

Application Site boundary. The magnitude of change in these areas is considered **Medium to Low**. The significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Slight reducing to Not Significant** as mitigation planting matures.

1.201. Indirect change and the significance of landscape effects will reduce with increasing distance from the Application Site in the remaining study area (between approximately 300m and 2km from the Site boundary). Given the nature, scale and setting of the Proposed Development, the change in character will not be recognised over long distances throughout the wider study area in accessible views. Therefore, the significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Not Significant**.

Visual Effects

1.202. The majority of residential dwellings in the immediate environment of the Proposed Development are located mainly to the southwest, in Kiltormer Village.

1.203. The main visual receptor groups are local residents, road users and pedestrians. Residents and pedestrians will have a higher sensitivity to change than the road users. Vehicle travellers will focus primarily on traffic and not on available views, however, if looked upon, the Proposed Development will be seen in transit making the views fleeting in nature.

1.204. The highest visual effects will be experienced within an approximate 300m radius of the Application Site boundary, particularly along the unnamed road to the northwest of the Proposed Development. There will also be views of the lighting masts and sections of the associated grid connection infrastructure, including replacement lattice towers, from the Skenageehy Road to the east.

1.205. Beyond this, areas experiencing visibility are extremely limited due to the level of existing vegetation, including mature hedgerows and field boundaries, which provide a high degree of screening. As such, views from many locations will be glimpsed and fleeting in nature.

1.206. The magnitude of visual effects on local residents and residential areas with views of the Proposed Development within approximately 300m are considered to range from **Low / Negligible** to **None** depending on the openness of views and intervening screening by vegetation, topography or built structures. In areas where the Proposed Development will be visible, the significance ranges from **Slight** reducing to **Not Significant** .as the mitigation planting matures. In other areas, where the Proposed Development is screened by vegetation, there will be a **'No Change**' scenario.

1.207. The Proposed Development will add an industrial character to accessible views. Distance will become a mitigating factor, and the Proposed Development will be seen in the context of the wider landscape.

1.208. In long-distance views ranging between approximately 1km and 2km, the effects will be Negligible. While the Proposed Development will add an industrial element to the view when seen, the change will be seen in the context of the wider landscape, where mitigation

measures will help integrate the Proposed Development into its setting. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Negligible** and the significance **Not Significant.**

APPENDICES

Appendix 1A: Figures

1.209. This report is supported by the following Figures included within **Appendix 1A**:

- Figure 1.1 – Landscape Character Types
- Figure 1.2 – Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)
- Figure 1.3 – Surrounding Designations
- Figure 1.4 – Viewpoint Location with Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)
- Figure 1.5 – VP1 & 2
- Figure 1.6 – VP3 & 4
- Figure 1.7 – VP5 & 6
- Figure 1.8 – VP7 & 8
- Figure 1.9 – VP9 & 10
- Figure 1.10 – VP11
- Figure 1.11 – VP1 Photomontage
- Figure 1.12 – VP3 Photomontage
- Figure 1.13 – VP6 Photomontage (Year 0 and 5)
- Figure 1.14 – VP7 Photomontage (Year 0 and 5)
- Figure 1.15 – VP8 Photomontage (Year 0 and 5)
- Figure 1.16 – VP9 Photomontage
- Figure 1.17 – VP10 Photomontage
- Figure 1.18 – Landscape and Ecological Management Plan Overall

An **Origin Enterprises** Company

GLASGOW - HEAD OFFICE

Wright Business Centre, 1 Lonmay Road,
Glasgow, G33 4EL
T: 0141 773 6262

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

83-85 Bridge Street, Ballymena, Co. Antrim,
Northern Ireland, BT43 5EN
T: 0282 565 04 13

BRISTOL OFFICE

Spaces 8th Floor
The Programme Building
The Pithay
Bristol, BS1 2NB
T: 0282 565 04 13

DUBLIN OFFICE

C/O Origin Enterprises PLC
4-6 Riverwalk,
Citywest Business Campus
Dublin 24, D24 DCW0
T: 00 353 (1) 5634900

RUGBY OFFICE

Valiant Office Suites
Lumonics House, Valley Drive,
Swift Valley, Rugby,
Warwickshire, CV21 1TQ
T: 01788 297012

WARRINGTON OFFICE

Lakeview 600, Lakeside Drive
Centre Park Square
Warrington
WA1 1RW
T: 01925 984 682