

1.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT TABLES

1.1

County Offaly

Provisional LCA - Central Wetlands	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	The proposed turbines are located within this LCA.
LCA Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Previously cutaway bogs in the process of transition from industrial uses to after-use revegetation and wetland areas › Currently exposed cutaway bogs and associated drainage systems › Flat landscape characterised by mature tree lines and hedgerows › Landscape pattern not clearly distinct › Generally characterised by open, expansive vistas where these are available › Largely free of buildings and associated installations although national electricity transmission infrastructure is present
Visibility within LCA	The ZTV indicates that there is full theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines in the majority of this LCA. Viewpoints 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 are located within this LCA.
Cumulative Baseline	There are the existing four Meenwaun and two Leabeg turbines, the permitted one Meenwaun and nine Cloghan turbines within this LCA. However, other wind farms are not visible from adjacent LCAs within this LCA.
Cumulative Landscape Status	3. Landscape character area with wind turbines
Cumulative Landscape Effects	The proposed development will change the status identified above to '4. Wind turbine landscape' Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered Moderate .
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	Despite this Provisional LCA containing the Lough Boora Parklands Area of High Amenity, which are classed as High Sensitivity it is classed as of Moderate landscape sensitivity.
Magnitude of Change	Moderate A more limited loss of or change to landscape features over a medium extent which will result in some change to landscape features and aesthetics. Could include the addition of some new uncharacteristic features or elements that would lead to the potential for change in landscape character in a localised area or part of a landscape character area. Would include moderate effects on the overall landscape character that do not affect key characteristics. The effects could be long to medium term and/or partially reversible.

Significance of Effect	Moderate x Moderate = Moderate/Minor = Moderate (EPA, 2017) An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends
Mitigation Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Siting and design were developed for peatland landscape character types. › The flat nature of the site and surrounds (and the LCA generally) means that perception of the scale of the turbines will reduce significantly with distance. › The effect of the flat LCA is compounded by the presence of mature hedgerows, mature tree lines and stands of commercial forestry which are a feature of this LCA. This screening, located between visual receptors and the proposed turbines has the effect of either removing views altogether, removing large numbers of turbines (including the existing and permitted turbines) or making those views of the turbines intermittent in nature. The effect of this screening is amplified in terms of impeding views of the turbines for such a flat site.

Provisional LCA - North-western Lowland Farmland and Marginal Peatland	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	This LCA is approximately 4.5 kilometres away from the nearest turbine at its closest point, and 33.0 kilometres at its furthest.
LCA Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Lowland area with minor changes in level › Contrast of large areas of degraded cutover bog and agricultural fields › Area of eskers to the north
Visibility within LCA	Predominantly widespread visibility, except for some areas with no visibility around and to the north of Ferbane. Viewpoints 3 and 16 are located within this LCA.
Cumulative Baseline	There are no existing wind farms within this LCA. However, other wind farms in the Provisional Central Wetlands LCA are visible in parts of this LCA.
Cumulative Landscape Status	2. Landscape character area with occasional wind turbines in it and/or intervisible in another landscape character area/s
Cumulative Landscape Effects	The proposed development will add to the cumulative landscape effects but not change the status identified above. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered Low .
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	Overall the landscape sensitivity assigned in the county Offaly CDP to this area is low, therefore a Low landscape sensitivity.
Magnitude of Change	Slight - The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium to short term and/or reversible.
Significance of Effect	Low x Slight = Minor/Negligible = Not Significant (EPA, 2017) An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
Mitigation Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Siting and design were developed for peatland landscape character types › Generally dense roadside vegetation prevents views towards the proposed development

Provisional LCA - Slieve Bloom Mountains Upland Area	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	This LCA is approximately 9.24 kilometres away from the nearest turbine at its closest point, and 25.04 kilometres at its furthest.
LCA Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Extensive, mountainous uplands (only substantial uplands in County Offaly) › Dramatic contrast to the county’s otherwise flat landscape › Spectacular views, forest and riverside walks › Unbroken area of upland blanket peat (largest in Ireland) retains sense of isolation › Extensive areas of coniferous forestry on lower slopes › Includes Knockbarron to the west › Very sparsely populated
Visibility within LCA	Full theoretical visibility slopes facing the proposed turbines, otherwise patches of full visibility interspersed by large areas of no visibility. Viewpoints 7 and 9 are located within this LCA.
Cumulative Baseline	There are no existing wind farms within this LCA and wind turbines outside this LCA, if visible will be at considerable distances.
Cumulative Landscape Status	1. Landscape character area with no wind turbines
Cumulative Landscape Effects	The proposed development will slightly add to the cumulative landscape effects, but not change the status identified above. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered Low .
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	The sensitivity of this landscape is classed as Very High as is designated as an Areas of High Amenity and in addition to this the Slieve Bloom Mountains are distinctive within the landscape of County Offaly.
Magnitude of Change	Negligible - a change affecting smaller areas of landscape character including the loss of some landscape elements or the addition of features or elements which are either of low value or hardly noticeable. The effects could be short term and/or reversible.
Significance of Effect	Very High x Negligible = Moderate/Minor = Moderate (EPA, 2017) An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends
Mitigation Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Siting and design were developed in accordance with the guidelines for the peatland landscape character type › Limited theoretical visibility › Vegetation, such as coniferous plantation limits visibility in many places › Intervening distance

1.2

County Galway

LCA 3 - East Central Galway	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	This LCA is approximately 7.2 kilometres away from the nearest turbine at its closest point, and 73.3 kilometres at its furthest.
LCA Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Flat to undulating lowland › Pastoral landscape of fields bounded by stone walls. › Scattered patches of bogland containing scrub and scattered mature trees. › Generally, not noteworthy in terms of scenic value. › Scenic route – R359 between Castleblakeney and Killaan cross. › Minor route between Mountbellewbridge and Ballyforan is scenic. › 15 National monuments are located in this area. Many of these cannot be viewed from a distance and therefore contribute little in terms of wider scenic value. They are of interest at a very local level historically. › Low Landscape Value assigned in Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway (2002)
Visibility within LCA	The eastern part of the LCA within the study area has full visibility with patches of non-visibility increasing in size towards the west. Viewpoint 14 is located within this LCA.
Cumulative Baseline	There are no existing wind farms within this LCA and wind turbines outside this LCA, if visible will be at considerable distances.
Cumulative Landscape Status	1. Landscape character area with no wind turbines
Cumulative Landscape Effects	The proposed development will slightly add to the cumulative landscape effects but not change the status identified above. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered Low .
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	The Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway (2002) assigned a landscape sensitivity of ‘Low with pockets of Moderate’ hence, the landscape sensitivity to wind farm development for this LCA would be considered Low .
Magnitude of Change	Negligible - a change affecting smaller areas of landscape character including the loss of some landscape elements or the addition of features or elements which are either of low value or hardly noticeable. The effects could be short term and/or reversible.
Significance of Effect	Low x Negligible –Negligible = Imperceptible (EPA, 2017) An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.
Mitigation Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Siting and design were developed in accordance with the guidelines for the peatland landscape character type › Intervening distance