



## **APPENDIX 14-2**

*Landscape Character  
Assessment Tables*

# 1. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT TABLES

## 1.1 Tipperary Landscape Character Areas

Tipperary LCA 5 – Templemore Plains	
<b>Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	The Proposed Project is located within this LCA. At its furthest point, the LCA extends approximately 15.56km north of turbine T01.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b>  <i>(TCDP Volume Three, Appendix 3; Landscape Character Assessment &amp; Schedule of Views and Routes)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Undulating pastoral limestone plain framed to the west by the Devilsbit range.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Long settlement history evidenced by castles and nucleated settlements.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Roscrea and Templemore are the key towns.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Communication centre for the eastern part of the county with number of communication routes such as the N7 and the railway corridor.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	<p>It is noted in the LCAT (Tipperary Landscape Character Assessment) that this LCA is given a “<i>Dominant Sensitivity Rating</i>” of Class 1 – Normal Sensitivity in the LCAT, the second lowest of six sensitivity classes assigned to LCAs within County Tipperary. This sensitivity is described as “<i>low sensitivity to change</i>” and the objective for this type of sensitivity in the LCAT is as follows: “<i>Facilitate development that continues established patterns of use and settlement</i>”.</p> <p>In relation to land-use compatibility, <i>Table 6.2</i> of the LCAT notes that this LCA has a Low compatibility to windfarm land use, which is the second lowest out of four compatibility classifications assigned to an LCA in the LCAT. However, in relation to land use types, the Proposed Project is primarily located on agricultural land, which is assigned the following compatibility rating in <i>Table 6.3</i> of the LCAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Agricultural Land with Natural Vegetation – 2<sup>nd</sup> highest compatibility out of 6 classes – “likely to be compatible with reasonable care.”</i></li> </ul> <p>The Proposed Project is also sited within an area designated as <i>Areas ‘Open for Consideration’</i>. <i>Section 5.2</i> of <i>Appendix 1</i> of the Tipperary Renewable Energy Strategy (TRES) outlines the incorporation of landscape sensitivity as within the wind energy strategy map and notes that areas identified as ‘vulnerable’, ‘transitional vulnerable’ and ‘least compatible’ in the Landscape Character Assessment are automatically considered unsuitable for new wind energy development. No areas classified as ‘vulnerable’, ‘transitional vulnerable’ are located within the Site, and this LCA is not classed as ‘Least Compatible’ in the LCAT (<i>Table 6.2</i>).</p> <p>In consideration of the above classifications and designations, sensitivity to wind farm development is deemed to be <b>Low</b>.</p>

Tipperary LCA 5 – Templemore Plains	
<b>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCA</b>	<p>There is primarily full theoretical visibility within 5km of the proposed turbines. Beyond 5km, theoretical visibility extends 15km south of the proposed turbines with patches of no theoretical visibility. The northwest and northeast sections of this LCA have little to no theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines.</p> <p>Actual on ground visibility determined that there would be more limited visibility in parts of this LCA beyond 5km from the proposed turbines than indicated by the ZTV, where the relatively flat topography, particularly to the south, takes advantage of the screening in the landscape to limit views of the proposed turbines. Viewpoints 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 are located within this LCA.</p>
<b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b>	<p>The majority of the existing Lisheen I and II turbines are located within this LCA, approximately 8km southeast of the nearest proposed turbine, T09. Additionally, 4 no. of the Bruckana turbines are located within this LCA approximately 8km southeast of the proposed turbines, with the remainder likely visible from locations within this LCA. The existing Monaincha Bog turbines are also located within this LCA, located approximately 10km northeast of the nearest proposed turbine, T01. The existing Lisheen III turbines are also located close to the border of this LCA and will be visible from locations in this LCA in the southeastern part of the LCA Study Area.</p> <p>There is widespread theoretical visibility of the Lisheen I &amp; II, Lisheen III, and Bruckana turbines within this LCA as shown of the Cumulative Comparative ZTV maps discussed in Section 14.7.3.4 of the EIAR.</p> <p>There is also widespread theoretical visibility of the existing Monaincha Bog turbines in areas to the north of the LCA.</p> <p>The landscape within this LCA is flat and heavily vegetated resulting in intermittent views of the existing Monaincha Bog, Bruckana, Lisheen I and II and Lisheen III windfarms. In addition, this flat plain extends over a relatively large area with no turbines visible from large areas of land. Therefore, there is the capacity to absorb another wind energy development within this LCA without Significant detrimental effects on the character of the landscape. The addition of the Proposed Project in combination with the existing turbines will add to the number of turbines within this LCA but will not amount to Significant cumulative effects on landscape character. Considering the scale of the LCA and the low level of visibility of turbines (existing and proposed) demonstrated in the photomontage viewpoints located within this LCA, it is evident that wind turbines will not be a dominant feature of this LCA.</p>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b> <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 14-1)</i>	<p><b>Moderate:</b> <i>“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.”</i></p>

Tipperary LCA 5 – Templemore Plains	
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Low x Moderate = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.”</i>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are large parts within this LCA where there will be no visibility of the Proposed Project due to vegetative screening, or where the Proposed Project will be seen as small background features, and so the greatest effects on the landscape character will be localised to parts of this LCA in close proximity to the site (i.e. within 5km of the site).</li> <li>➤ Cumulative effects on landscape character will be limited as a result of the limited intervisibility of the proposed turbines and cumulative turbines (see Section 14.7.3.4 for a full discussion cumulative visibility).</li> </ul>
<b>Residual Landscape Effect (incl. mitigating factors)</b>	<b>Slight (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.”</i>

Tipperary LCA 22 – Devil’s Bit Uplands	
<b>Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	At its closest point, this LCA is located approximately 3km west of the nearest proposed turbine, T02.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b> <i>(TCDP Volume Three, Appendix 3; Landscape Character Assessment &amp; Schedule of Views and Routes)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Upland zone punctuating the surrounding low lying landscape.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Extension of Silvermines to Slieve Bloom upland range</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Distinctive ridgeline of Devilsbit with associated folk mythology</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Rural in character with limited settlements on lower slopes.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	<p>This LCA is given a “Dominant Sensitivity Rating” of Class 5 – Unique in the LCAT, the highest of six sensitivity classes in assigned to LCAs within County Tipperary. This sensitivity is described as <i>“Change would alter the character of the landscape”</i> and the objective for this type of sensitivity in the LCAT is as follows: <i>“Control unavoidable new developments or uses, or the intensification of expansions of established patterns of use and settlement – unless they can demonstrate capacity to sustain existing appearance and character”</i>.</p> <p>In relation to land-use compatibility outlined in <i>Table 6.2</i> of the LCAT, this LCA is classified as having Least compatibility with windfarm land use, which is the lowest out of four compatibility classifications assigned to an LCA in the LCAT.</p> <p>The sensitivity of this landscape is based on the <i>“unique characteristics of Devil’s Bit Mountain”</i> and <i>“the relatively undeveloped nature of the area thereby preserving scenic quality. The principal intervention that impacts on scenic quality is the presence of large tracts of coniferous forestry</i></p>

Tipperary LCA 22 – Devil’s Bit Uplands	
	<p><i>particularly on Borrisnoe Mountain</i>”. This LCA is a designated Secondary Amenity Area within the TCDP.</p> <p>In consideration of the above noted classifications and designations, sensitivity to wind farm development is deemed to be <b>High</b>.</p>
<b>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCA</b>	<p>As indicated by the ZTV, theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines within this LCA is limited to the eastern extent of the LCA, on the eastern side of the Devil’s Bit Ridgeline. There is no theoretical visibility within the remainder of the LCA, due to topographical screening. VP7 is located within this LCA, which shows that even at the highest elevation point of this LCA, views towards the turbines are limited given the screening from the rock formation. In general, there will be views of the proposed turbines from locations where theoretical visibility is indicated in this LCA, given the elevated nature of the landform here. However, there are large tracts of commercial forestry within the uplands here that will provide screening from some parts of the LCA with theoretical visibility. The turbines will have a similar appearance, where visible, as those seen in VP7.</p>
<b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b>	<p>The existing Ballinaveny turbines are located within this LCA, approximately 9km west from the nearest proposed turbine, T06. Additionally, the existing Ballinlough-Ikerrin turbines are also located within this LCA, located approximately 13km west from the nearest proposed turbine, T06.</p> <p>As shown on the Cumulative Comparative ZTV (see Section 14.7.3.4), the majority of the area within this LCA has theoretical visibility of only the existing cumulative turbines, with very small section along the ridgelines of the Devil’s Bit and Kilduff Mountains having theoretical visibility of both cumulative and proposed turbines. Given that the proposed turbines are only seen in combination with the existing cumulative turbines visible within this LCA along the ridgelines of the Devil’s Bit and Kilduff Mountains, with large separation distances between them, there are no Significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of this LCA. The cumulative effects on landscape character that do arise have been incorporated into the determination of the magnitude of change made below.</p>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b> <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 14-1)</i>	<p><b>Slight:</b> <i>“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.”</i></p>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<p><b>High x Slight = Moderate/Minor = Moderate (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.”</i></p>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<p>➤ There is a large area within this LCA where there is no theoretical visibility of the turbines of the Proposed Project. This area of no theoretical visibility contains the majority of Tipperary’s Secondary Amenity Area – Devil’s Bit Mountains.</p>

Tipperary LCA 22 – Devil’s Bit Uplands	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Visibility of the proposed turbines will be limited to elevated vantage points within this LCA, where the turbines will be seen as small background features.</li> <li>➤ Wind turbines are already seen both within this LCA and within other LCAs in view from this LCA, as seen in VP7. Therefore, the addition of the Proposed Project will not introduce novel elements into views from within this LCA.</li> <li>➤ VP7 also shows that even from elevated vantage points, visibility of the turbines will be partially screened by existing vegetation and intervening topography.</li> </ul>
<b>Residual Landscape Effect (incl. mitigating factors)</b>	<p><b>Moderate (EPA, 2022)</b></p> <p><i>“An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.”</i></p>

Tipperary LCA 17 – Upperchurch Kilcomcommon and Hollyford Hills Mosaic	
<b>Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	At its closest point, this LCA is located approximately 12 km southwest of the nearest proposed turbine, T07.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b>  <i>(TCDP Volume Three, Appendix 3; Landscape Character Assessment &amp; Schedule of Views and Routes)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>“Complex arrangement of rounded hills and steep sided valleys becoming less pronounced and enclosed towards the south and east</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Mountain marginal mosaic, in the north</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Linear uplands to the south</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Sparsely populated particularly in central area with remote character</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Extensive views eastwards from elevated points across to Kilkenny and the south of the county</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Cluster of prehistoric graves around Rearcross-Kilcomcommon creating a distinct archaeological landscape of significant value.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Principal settlements on perimeter of LCA at Templeberry and Borrisoleigh”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	<p>This LCA is given a “Dominant Sensitivity Rating” of Class 3 – Sensitive in the LCAT, the third highest of six sensitivity classes in assigned to LCAs within County Tipperary. This sensitivity is described as <i>“high sensitivity to change”</i> and the objective for this type of sensitivity in the LCAT is as follows: <i>“Facilitate development that conclusively demonstrates wise use and best choices to continue and enhance established patterns of use and settlement without significant change to, or loss of, appearance or character.”</i></p> <p>In relation to land-use compatibility outlined in <i>Table 6.2</i> of the LCAT, this LCA has a High compatibility with windfarm land use, which is the highest out of four compatibility classifications assigned to an LCA in the LCAT. The LCAT states that this land use has a <i>“low potential to significant visual effects on the landscape”</i>. Appendix I of the LCAT states that within this LCA, <i>“Development is generally acceptable as it may beneficially alter, enhance or reinforce landscape character and value”</i>.</p>

Tipperary LCA 17 – Upperchurch Kilcomommon and Hollyford Hills Mosaic	
	In consideration of the above classifications and designations, sensitivity to wind farm development is deemed to be <b>Low</b> .
<b>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCA</b>	There are areas of full theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines from the parts of this LCA within the LCA Study Area for effects on landscape character, with theoretical visibility becoming patchier beyond 15km from the nearest proposed turbines. PWVP L is located adjacent to the border of this LCA, in an area of full theoretical visibility. In addition, VP6 is located a similar distance from the proposed turbines as this LCA at a similar geographic orientation. On-site appraisals determined that there will be limited visibility of the turbines due to the distance of this LCA from the proposed turbines. Where the turbines will be visible, they will be seen as small elements in the background of the view.
<b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b>	<p>The existing Gortnahalla turbine (approx. 16.7km southwest from the nearest proposed turbine), the existing Curraghgraique turbines (approx. 19.4km west of the nearest proposed turbine) and the permitted Upperchurch windfarm (approx. 19km southwest from the nearest proposed turbine) are located within this LCA.</p> <p>As shown on the Cumulative Comparative ZTVs in Section 14.7.3.4, given the topographical nature within this LCA, the majority of the area within this LCA has theoretical visibility of only the existing cumulative turbines, with small patches of both combined theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines and cumulative turbines. Given the separation distances involved and the limited occasions where, as a result of screening elements in the landscape, there will actually be combined views of cumulative and proposed turbines from within the LCA, there are no Significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of this LCA. The cumulative effects on landscape character that do arise have been incorporated into the determination of the magnitude of change made below.</p>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b> <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 14-1)</i>	<b>Slight:</b> <i>“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.”</i>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Low x Slight = Minor/Negligible = Not Significant (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.”</i>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Given the distance of the LCA from the proposed turbines, there will only be views of the proposed turbines from isolated elevated vantage points within this LCA. Where turbines of the Proposed Project will be viewed as small background elements, with additional screening from existing vegetation in this LCA.</li> <li>➤ Large parts of the LCA are located outside of the LCA Study Area for effects on landscape character.</li> </ul>

Tipperary LCA 17 – Upperchurch Kilcomcommon and Hollyford Hills Mosaic	
Residual Landscape Effect (incl. mitigating factors)	Not Significant (EPA, 2022) “An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.”

1.2

## Kilkenny Landscape Character Areas

Kilkenny LCA A1 – Slieveardagh Western Transitional Zone	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	At its closest point, this LCA is located approximately 9.57km southeast of the nearest proposed turbine, T08.
LCA Key Characteristics  (Landscape Appraisal of County Kilkenny – Appendix C, KCDP 2008-2014))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ “The western transition area is an expansive area at the boundary of Tipperary and Kilkenny, encompassing the towns of Crosspatrick and Cullahill.</li> <li>➤ Mildly undulating topography is presented in the western subunit and provides the ability to both shelter and absorb the visual impact of development where it does not break the skyline, rendering it visually unobtrusive and reflective of the overall landscape scale.”</li> </ul>
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	<p>The KCDP notes that “The transitional areas of the Slieveardagh uplands are not perceived as being of a special or sensitive nature”. The part of the LCA located within the LCA Study Area is an area designated “Acceptable in Principle” for wind farm developments according to the Wind Energy Strategy outlined in the KCDP.</p> <p>In relation to the above designations and considerations, sensitivity to wind farm development is deemed to be <b>Low</b>.</p>
Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCA	As indicated by the ZTV, a large part of this LCA has full theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines. Onsite appraisals determined that given the distance and the relatively flat topography of the surrounding landscape, views of the turbines will be restricted by existing vegetation. VP2 is located within this LCA and shows a view from an elevated location, where the turbines are viewed as background features in conjunction with existing turbines in the landscape.
Cumulative Landscape Effects	<p>6 no. of the existing Lisheen III turbines are located within this LCA, located approximately 10.8km southeast of the nearest proposed turbine, T08. The majority of the LCA has theoretical visibility of both the proposed turbines and the cumulative turbines as shown on the Cumulative Comparative ZTV map (see Section 14.7.3.4). There are also potential views of the existing Bruckana, Lisheen I &amp; II, and the other turbines in Lisheen III from within this LCA.</p> <p>The proposed turbines are located a substantial distance from this LCA and as a result there will be little visibility of the proposed turbines from the</p>



Kilkenny LCA A1 – Slieveardagh Western Transitional Zone	
	lower elevated and flatter areas to the west of the LCA, locations that are closer to the existing cumulative turbines. As seen from VP2, there are views of the proposed turbines from elevated locations within this LCA. Given that the proposed turbines will only be seen in the background of views from within this LCA, there are no Significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of this LCA. The cumulative effects on landscape character that do arise have been incorporated into the determination of the magnitude of change made below.
<b>Magnitude of Change</b> <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 14-1)</i>	<b>Slight:</b> <i>“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.”</i>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Low x Slight = Minor/Negligible = Not Significant (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.”</i>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Given the distance of the LCA from the proposed turbines, there will only be views of the proposed turbines from isolated elevated locations within this LCA. Where turbines of the Proposed Project will be viewed as small background elements in any case, with consequently a low level of change to landscape character.</li> <li>➤ Large parts of the LCA are located outside of the LCA Study Area for effects on landscape character.</li> </ul>
<b>Residual Landscape Effect (incl. mitigating factors)</b>	<b>Not Significant (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.”</i>

1.3

## Laois Landscape Character Areas

Laois LCA 2 – Lowland Agricultural Areas	
<b>Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	This LCA is located approximately 8.9km east from the nearest proposed turbine, T01.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b> <i>(LCDP Appendix 6; Landscape Character Assessment)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>“It is generally a flat open landscape [around Ballylynan, Barrowhouse and the environs of Graiguecullen especially] with long range views towards the upland areas. Field patterns tend to be of large scale and are generally bounded by deciduous hedgerows containing mature trees. Farm sizes are larger than average. Throughout the county there is an abundance of 18th and 19th century demesnes with extensive areas of mixed woodland and parkland bounded by original stonewalls, creating an attractive landscape setting for the numerous estate houses.</i></li> </ul>

Laois LCA 2 – Lowland Agricultural Areas	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>The Lowland LCT has been developed more extensively than other the LCT's, particularly in the north and east where there is development pressure from the large towns as well as the Dublin metropolitan area. This has resulted in significant changes to the landscape character and it is crucial that future development of this LCT is carried out sensitively and with particular reference to the rural nature of the landscape.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>The significant growth of towns and villages over the past decade has led to myriad of architectural styles that are not in keeping with the historic built vernacular. It is equally important that future development relates to the existing structure of towns and villages and reflects characteristic building scales and materials.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Much of the lowlands have an enclosed character with well-treed road corridors, dense hedgerows, parkland and areas of woodland. Views of landmarks within the landscape and of the surrounding upland areas are a characteristic of this area and must be retained because the interaction between the lowlands and hills/uplands is an important feature of this LCT."</i></li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	<p>This LCA has been classified as ‘<i>Low Sensitivity</i>’ in the LCDP, which is described as follows: “<i>Areas with the capacity to generally accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area</i>”.</p> <p>In consideration of the above classifications the sensitivity to wind farm development is deemed to be <b>Low</b>.</p>
<b>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCA</b>	<p>The section of this LCA northeast of the proposed turbines has no theoretical visibility, while the section of this LCA to the east of the proposed turbines has primarily full theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines, with patches of no theoretical visibility due to gentle undulations. At its closest point, this LCA has very limited theoretical visibility with the majority of the theoretical visibility being concentrated in areas beyond 10km from the nearest proposed turbine. Viewpoint 8 is representative of views from a similar distance as the closest point in this LCA, with PWVP S also located close to the border of this LCA. On-site appraisals have determined that given the distance of this LCA (approx. 8.9km at its closest point), the flat topography and vegetation, there will be limited or no actual views of the proposed turbines from large parts of this LCA</p>
<b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b>	<p>There are views of the existing Monaincha Bog turbines from within this LCA.</p> <p>In locations where there is theoretical visibility of the Proposed Project from within this LCA, there is combined visibility of the Proposed Project and cumulative turbines indicated. Given the distance and screening occurring from existing vegetation within this relatively flat LCA, views of the proposed turbines in combination with other turbines will be limited considering the distances involved. There are no Significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of this LCA. The cumulative effects on landscape character that do arise have been incorporated into the determination of the magnitude of change made below.</p>

Laois LCA 2 – Lowland Agricultural Areas	
<b>Magnitude of Change</b> <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 14-1)</i>	<b>Slight:</b> <i>“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.”</i>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Low x Slight = Minor/Negligible = Not Significant (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.”</i>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Effects on the landscape character of this LCA as a result of the Proposed Project is substantially mitigated by distance, with the proposed turbines only ever seen as small elements in the background of views.</li> <li>➤ Visibility is limited due to the flat terrain and the intervening vegetation bordering the agricultural fields that dominate the landcover in this LCA.</li> <li>➤ Large parts of this LCA (northeast) have no theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines.</li> </ul>
<b>Residual Landscape Effect (incl. mitigating factors)</b>	<b>Not Significant (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.”</i>

Laois LCA 3 – Rolling Hill Areas	
<b>Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	At its closest point, this LCA is located approximately 4.9km east from the nearest proposed turbine, T01.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b> <i>(LCDP Appendix 6; Landscape Character Assessment)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>“Undulating with variable topography usually ranging from 70 metres to 90 metres. Geology comprises Silurian greywackes and slates with Old Red Sandstone at lower elevations.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>This is a complex landscape incorporating several elements within a rolling landform. Land cover reflects this complexity with tillage and pasture agriculture, pockets of wetlands and raised bog, small coniferous plantations and occasional deciduous copses.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Varied enclosures include hedgerows with significant amounts of trees and some post and wire fencing. Settlement is quite frequent though commonly dispersed. Considerable evidence of new one-off house building in the vicinity of settlements”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	This LCA has been classified as ‘ <i>Medium Sensitivity</i> ’ in the LCDP, which is given the following description: <i>“Areas with the capacity to accommodate a range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to localised sensitivity factors”.</i>

Laois LCA 3 – Rolling Hill Areas	
	<p>The following policy objectives are assigned to this LCA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>“Maintain the visual integrity of rolling hill areas which have retained an upland character</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Continue to facilitate appropriate development, in an incremental and clustered manner, where feasible, that respects the scale, character and sensitivities of the local landscape, recognising the need for sustainable settlement patterns and economic activity within the county</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Continue to permit development that can utilise existing infrastructure, whilst taking account of local absorption opportunities provided by the landscape, landform and prevailing vegetation”</i></li> </ul> <p>Part of the area of this LCA that is within the LCA Study Area is located within an area designated as an area <i>“Open for Consideration”</i> for new wind energy development in the LCDP.</p> <p>In consideration of the above classifications and designations, the sensitivity to wind farm development is deemed to be <b>Medium</b>.</p>
<b>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCA</b>	<p>There are large patches of full theoretical visibility within this LCA, particularly to the north and to the south of the LCA located within the LCA Study Area. Viewpoint 8 and PWVP S are located within this LCA. Site visits, as well as photomontages and photowires have determined that views towards the proposed turbines will be limited by topographical screening from the rolling nature of the landscape, with the proposed turbines appearing as small background features in views from a limited number of elevated locations.</p>
<b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b>	<p>2 no. of the existing Lisheen III turbines are located within this LCA. There are also views of the existing Bruckana, Lisheen I &amp; II, and the other turbines in Lisheen III from within this LCA. There are also views of the existing Monaincha Bog turbines from within this LCA. All of these wind farms are located closer to this LCA than the proposed turbines.</p> <p>The majority of the LCA within the study area has theoretical visibility of both the proposed turbines and the cumulative turbines as shown on the Cumulative Comparative ZTV map (see Section 14.7.3.4). There are also small patches of theoretical visibility of cumulative turbines only within the LCA.</p> <p>Where theoretical visibility is indicated of both proposed turbines and cumulative turbines, it is noted that further screening will occur due to distance and localised undulations in topography. There are views of the existing cumulative turbines (Lisheen I &amp; II, Lisheen III, and Bruckana) within the south-western part of the LCA. Given that the majority of this LCA is located outside of 5km from the proposed turbines there will likely be limited views of the turbines from within this LCA. This means that in combination views of the proposed turbines and cumulative turbines will only arise at certain limited locations. Therefore, there are no Significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of this LCA. The cumulative effects on landscape character that do arise have been incorporated into the determination of the magnitude of change made below.</p>

Laois LCA 3 – Rolling Hill Areas	
<b>Magnitude of Change</b> <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 14-1)</i>	<b>Slight:</b> <i>“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.”</i>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Medium x Slight = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.”</i>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are large parts of this LCA where there will be no visibility of the Proposed Project due to screening occurring from existing vegetation, or where the Proposed Project will be seen as a small background feature.</li> <li>➤ Large parts of the LCA are located outside of the LCA Study Area for effects on landscape character.</li> </ul>
<b>Residual Landscape Effect (incl. mitigating factors)</b>	<b>Slight (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.”</i>

Laois LCA 4 – Peatland Areas	
<b>Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	There are seven designated Laois LCA 4 Peatland Areas located within the LCA Study Area, along the county borders with Co. Tipperary. The closest peatland area is located approximately 5km east from the nearest proposed turbine, T01. The furthest peatland area within the study area, is dissected by the 10km boundary, however, is located approximately 8.8km east at the closest point of its extent of the nearest proposed turbine, T08.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b> <i>(LCDP Appendix 6; Landscape Character Assessment)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>“Topography is strikingly flat, geology is generally Carboniferous Limestone (type varies according to specific location) and landcover is raised bog much of which is now exhausted and being considered for alternatives uses including afforestation, amenity and wind energy.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>This landscape type could be more accurately described as a specific habitat rather than a landscape type per se. In its original state, the undisturbed raised bog is peat based and supports a dense growth of birch scrub with gorse and heather as an understorey. Manual turf cutting in some areas will have left a somewhat untidy exposed peat surface, with scarce vegetation. Commercially harvested peatland areas are generally devoid of vegetation and present as an evenly exposed surface of peat. Such a man made landscape has a sterile and indeed industrial character. Pockets of rough grazing and scrubland also exist in this landscape character area.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>In terms of location, some of the larger peatland areas are in close proximity to the larger urban settlements such as Cul na Mona</i></li> </ul>

Laois LCA 4 – Peatland Areas	
	<p><i>between Portlaoise and Mountrath. Others are in more remote, sparsely populated place, for example in the southwest of the county.”</i></p>
<p><b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b></p>	<p>This LCA has been classified as ‘High Sensitivity’ in the LCDP, which is given the following description: <i>“Areas with reduced capacity to accommodate uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the landscape having regard to prevalent sensitivity factors or special sensitivity factors”.</i></p> <p>The following policy objectives relative to landscape assigned to this LCA are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>“Support the identification of projects that have the potential to achieve commercial value such as industrial developments, renewable energy, tourism developments etc. while at the same time Policy Objectives for Peatland Areas promoting high environmental standards and supporting biodiversity objectives</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Support the restoration of peatlands on suitable sites Recognise that intact boglands are critical natural resources for ecological and environmental reasons and recognise that cutaway and cut-over boglands represent degraded landscapes and/or brownfield sites and thus are potentially robust to absorb a variety of appropriate developments”</i></li> </ul> <p>Despite the High sensitivity rating, all of the peatland areas within the LCA Study Area are either located within an area considered as <i>“Open for Consideration”</i> or <i>“Preferred Area”</i> for wind energy development. This is in addition to the policy objectives quoted above specifically mentioning the need to support industrial developments and renewable energy within these LCAs.</p> <p>In consideration of the above classifications and designations, sensitivity to wind farm development is deemed to be <b>Low</b>.</p>
<p><b>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCA</b></p>	<p>All of the peatland areas located within the LCA Study Area have full theoretical visibility. However, in reality, on site appraisals have determined that visibility will be limited by the screening occurring as a result of the commercial forestry surrounding the majority of these peatland areas. VP8 is located at a similar geographic orientation and distance to these LCAs and any views of the proposed turbines from within these LCAs will be similar in terms of horizontal and spatial extent. Although it is noted that in the case of all the peatland areas, there are large conifer plantation surrounding the area of cutover peat, with limited external views as a result. There are limited views of the proposed turbines that will arise from within these areas.</p>
<p><b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b></p>	<p>3 no. of the Bruckana turbines are sited within a peatland area located at the southwestern edge of the Laois county border. No existing or under construction turbines are located within the other peatland areas. There is limited visibility of other existing cumulative turbines from the other Peatland Areas (LCA 4) in County Laois, within the LCA Study Area. All the peatland areas have full combined theoretical visibility of both cumulative and proposed turbines. However, in the case of all the peatland areas, there are large conifer plantation surrounding the area of cutover</p>

Laois LCA 4 – Peatland Areas	
	peat, with limited external views of the proposed turbines as a result. Therefore, there are no Significant cumulative effects on the landscape character of this LCA. The cumulative effects on landscape character that do arise have been incorporated into the determination of the magnitude of change made below.
<b>Magnitude of Change</b> <i>(Definition – from Section 1.5.2.2 of Appendix 14-1)</i>	<b>Slight:</b> <i>“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.”</i>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Low x Slight = Minor / Negligible = Not Significant (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.”</i>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	➤ All of the peatland areas within the LCA Study Area are either located within an area considered as <i>“Open for Consideration”</i> or <i>“Preferred Area”</i> for wind energy development in the LCDP. This is in addition to the policy objectives quoted above specifically mentioning the need to support industrial developments and renewable energy within these LCAs.
<b>Residual Landscape Effect (incl. mitigating factors)</b>	<b>Not Significant (EPA, 2022)</b> <i>“An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.”</i>