



Cush Wind Farm
Phase II

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Annex 10.1: Visual Impact Assessment

Cush Wind Limited

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1.1 Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity is a two-sided analysis of receptor susceptibility (people or groups of people) versus the value of the view on offer at a particular location. To assess the susceptibility of viewers and the amenity value of views, the assessor uses a range of criteria and provides a four-point weighting scale (**Table A10.1**, below) to indicate how strongly the viewer/view is associated with each of the criterion identified in **Section 10.2** of **Chapter 10**.

The visual receptor sensitivity rating is provided at **Tables A10.2-A10.4** below.

Strong Association	Moderate association	Mild association	Negligible association
N = Negligible; L = low sensitivity; ML = medium-low sensitivity M = medium sensitivity; HM = High-medium sensitivity; H = high sensitivity; VH = very high sensitivity			

Table A10.1: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Values associated with the view	VP 1	VP 2	VP 3	VP 4	VP 5	VP 6	VP 7	VP 8	VP 9
Susceptibility of viewers to changes in views									
Recognised scenic value of the view									
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas									
Primary views from residences									
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)									
Viewer connection with the landscape									
Provision of vast, elevated panoramic views									
Sense of remoteness / tranquillity at the viewing location									
Degree of perceived naturalness									
Presence of striking or noteworthy features									
Sense of Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance									
Rarity or uniqueness of the view									

Integrity of the landscape character within the view									
Sense of place at the viewing location									
Sense of awe									
Overall sensitivity assessment	H	HM	M	ML	ML	ML	HM	ML	M

Table A10.2: Visual Receptor Sensitivity – Viewpoint Sensitivity VP1 – VP9

Values associated with the view	VP 10	VP 11	VP 12	VP 13	VP 14	VP 15	VP 16	VP 17	VP 18	VP 19
Susceptibility of viewers to changes in views										
Recognised scenic value of the view										
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas										
Primary views from residences										
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)										
Viewer connection with the landscape										
Provision of vast, elevated panoramic views										
Sense of remoteness / tranquillity at the viewing location										
Degree of perceived naturalness										
Presence of striking or noteworthy features										
Sense of Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance										
Rarity or uniqueness of the view										
Integrity of the landscape character within the view										
Sense of place at the viewing location										
Sense of awe										

Overall sensitivity assessment	ML	ML	M	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	M
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Table A10.3: Visual Receptor Sensitivity – Viewpoint Sensitivity VP10 – VP19

Values associated with the view	VP20	VP 21	VP 22	VP 23	VP 24	VP 25	VP 26	VP 27
Susceptibility of viewers to changes in views								
Recognised scenic value of the view								
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas								
Primary views from residences								
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)								
Viewer connection with the landscape								
Provision of vast, elevated panoramic views								
Sense of remoteness / tranquillity at the viewing location								
Degree of perceived naturalness								
Presence of striking or noteworthy features								
Sense of Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance								
Rarity or uniqueness of the view								
Integrity of the landscape character within the view								
Sense of place at the viewing location								
Sense of awe								
Overall sensitivity assessment	ML	VH	ML	HM	ML	ML	M	M

Table A10.4: Visual Receptor Sensitivity – Viewpoint Sensitivity VP20 – VP27

1.2 Magnitude of Visual Effects at Viewshed Reference Points

The assessment of visual effects at each of the selected viewpoints, as presented at **Table A10.5** below, is aided by spatially accurate wireframe images and photomontages that have been produced in accordance with Scottish Natural

Heritage (SNH) Visual representation of wind farms: *Best Practice Guidelines* (version 2.2 - 2017). The presented images for each viewpoint include;

- Existing View (Contextual 90° included angle)
- Wireframe view - proposed and cumulative turbines (Contextual 90° included angle)
- Wireframe view - proposed and cumulative turbines (53.5° included angle)
- Montage View - proposed and cumulative turbines (53.5° included angle)

VP No.	Existing View and Permitted Baseline View	VP Sensitivity	Magnitude of Visual	Significance / Quality / Duration of Effect
VP1	<p>Clonmacnoise</p> <p>This view is representative of the immediate surrounds of Clonmacnoise, as the historic site itself is fully screened by landform. Located on the R444 regional road on the eastern side of the Esker Riada. This slightly elevated view faces away from the sensitive Shannon/ Clonmacnoise/ Esker Riada context, and towards the expansive area of cutaway bog over the midground. The southern edge of the Slieve Bloom mountains is visible along the horizon but generally screened by foreground vegetation.</p> <p>The key difference with regards to the existing photography and permitted baseline for this view is the introduction of permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I. This development is viewed in clusters between Meenwaun and Derrinlough existing wind developments, which results in a distribution of wind turbines, low across the horizon. However, this is only partially visible through the foreground vegetation.</p>	High	<p>The project is visible over the cutaway across the foreground by a low area of vegetation, forming a background feature to the view, separated from the viewer by different land uses and a clear sense of perspective provided by the scale of open bog in the midground. This serves to perceptually distance the viewer and the surrounding sensitive landscape from the project site, partially mitigating visual effect.</p> <p>As such, the magnitude of visual effect is considered to be Low-negligible and of a Negative Quality</p>	Slight-imperceptible/ Negative/ Long-term
VP2	<p>Shannonbridge</p> <p>This is a relatively scenic view, representative of Shannonbridge, the R357, and the Roscommon scenic view located to the west. All of these receptors are focused on the higher sensitivity landscape of the Shannon Corridor, where it is joined by the River Suck. This view has a high level of natural/rural amenity, with no visual access to the built form at Shannon Bridge, likely due to the risk of flooding as shown in the site photography. The view itself is located on the regional road, where a low wall allows views through vegetation over the river. The midground is generally pasture</p>	High-medium	<p>The proposed turbines will be visible between the existing Derrinlough turbines, rising above the vegetated river corridor, set against the upland horizon. The proposed turbines are clearly separated beyond the context of the more sensitive river corridor. The proposed turbines will be seen in the context primarily of the existing Derrinlough turbines, although there is partial visibility of Meenwaun Wind Farm. Whilst together these turbines are slightly cluttered, they are a cohesive group. Overall, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed to be Low-negligible.</p>	Slight-imperceptible/ Negative / Long-term

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	down low sloping landform to the main river corridor and flats. The horizon is defined by woodland over the bog to the south of the Suck/Shannon, and to the east by the southern end of the Slieve Blooms. Within the permitted baseline there will be the partially visible addition of permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I turbines to the west of the existing Derrinlough turbines, intermittently visible against the upland horizon.			
VP3	<p>Moyclare</p> <p>This view is a designated scenic view within the Offaly County Development Plan, of which the description is 'Southwards towards the Slieve Blooms'. The viewer context is the rural periphery of Ferbane, along a local road scattered with residences. The foreground view is gently sloping pasture away from the viewer, with an increase in vegetation over the lower elevations, which trace the River Brosna and Grand Canal (neither of which are visible through the vegetation). The level landform across the midground into the distance is generally screened by vegetation to the base of the Slieve Bloom Mountains, over a wide-open view (to the south/southeast). This contrasts slightly with the landform in closer proximity to the viewer (to the south/southwest) where views are contained by a slight increase in landform/elevation, with more visible ground surface/pasture. On the far side of the south/southwest hill is the existing Cloghan Wind Farm. Combined with Cloghan is Derrinlough Wind Farm, which frames the forementioned hill. In the background of these are the permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I and Carrig turbines, and the proposed Ballincor turbines. None of these overlap with the Slieve Blooms when viewed from this location.</p>	Medium	<p>Most important to this location is the contextual separation between the left and the right of the depicted view. The foreshortened section of the view by rolling topography is dominated by wind energy, while the more scenic and distant view is clear of turbines and features clear views to the Slieve Bloom Mountains over level topography with a high degree of vegetation. The proposed development represents a subtle intensification of wind energy development as the proposal is located within the lateral extents of the existing development, maintaining the relationship between this concentrated area of wind development and the wider context of the view.</p> <p>Therefore, the magnitude of visual effect is Low-negligible and of a Negative quality.</p>	Slight-imperceptible / Negative / Long-term

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VP4	<p>Lough Boora</p> <p>This view is located on the R357 regional road north of Lough Boora, surrounded by walkways which connect to the recreation park. The context is surrounded by cutaway bog and woodland, including large areas of conifer forestry, which when combined with the flat topography, serve to substantially screen visibility. The immediate surroundings of the view are short fields set below the road corridor which transition into the forementioned woodland and particularly conifer forestry. To the north of the road is the existing Leabeg Wind Farm, located in close proximity to the viewer and is a key part of the viewer experience. There are also existing Cloghan and Derrinlough turbines visible over trees in the distance.</p>	Medium-Low	The proposal is screened by vegetation resulting in little to no visibility. Therefore, the magnitude of visual Effect is considered to be Negligible and of a Neutral Quality	Imperceptible / Neutral / Long-term
VP5	<p>Stonestown</p> <p>This view is representative of scenic view 'V12' within the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, with the description of 'Over bog lands and Slieve Bloom Mountains'. There is a framed view towards boglands (partially occupied by Cloghan wind farm), however views to the Slieve Blooms are partially screened and located out to the eastern (left) periphery of the view. There is a scattering of residences along this road that generally enjoy the broad views to the south. This view is through a field gate over pasture and sloping landform to the open bog, and across the level landform with scrubby vegetation. The existing Derrinlough Development is located on either side of the Cloghan Wind Farm, which serves to create an expanse of turbines across the visible horizon, backed by the smaller schemes further south.</p>	Medium-Low	Generally, the visual impact of the proposal is secondary to the proximity and number of existing development through the midground of the view. The proposal adds a strong sense of perspective in the middle of the view, where it is visible between the Cloghan and Derrinlough turbines, at a (visually) smaller scale due to the distance. This distance and perceptual scale difference serves to reduce opportunities for clutter and overlap. While there is a small channel/break in all turbines in the centre of the view, there is a large, relatively continuous expanse of wind energy development across the view. However, the proposal presents in a well-spaced manner, as an evenly spaced trio. A mitigating factor is the separation from views towards the Slieve Blooms to the left of the depicted view. The proposed turbines represent a modest intensification of turbines within a visual context that is characterised by wind energy development, but in a legible and supplementary manner. They serve to emphasise the broad	Slight / Negative / Long-term

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			context of the underlying landscape through the sense of depth perspective they bring. The magnitude of visual effect is deemed to be Low , and of a Negative quality.	
VP6	<p>Taylor's Cross</p> <p>This view is from the wide agricultural fields and flat landform located to the northwest of the site. The midground is contained by vegetation, slightly more open to the north and dissected by a larger overhead line. The view is taken from along the R439 regional road and views the project site against the backdrop of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. The existing Meenwaun and Derrinlough turbines are visible to the northeast, as is the permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I, which extends south. The left/north of the depicted view is more open than the right/south where vegetation and the vertical structures of power infrastructure screen distant views.</p>	Medium-Low	The full extent of the proposed development is visible, shortened somewhat by foreground vegetation. The proposal extends the area of wind energy development laterally across the view, separated from the existing turbines by a clear sense of perspective. The proposed turbines are seen in a clear and legible manner, while dense vegetation over the midground perceptually separates the viewer from the area of development. Overall, the magnitude of effect is deemed Low , and of Negative quality.	Slight / Negative / Long-term
VP7	<p>Meelick Quay</p> <p>This is a pleasant view located on the banks of the Shannon, just north of the Meelick Weir. The river surface and banks dominate the foreground. The far bank features a disused cottage and Keeloge Battery, both partially enclosed by vegetation. There is a variety of vegetation characteristics, with the individual trees, woodlands, scrub, and trimmed hedgerows layered over the view. The viewer side of the river features a higher degree of development and activity, making the depicted view representative of the likely viewer experience. There is partial visibility of the Meenwaun, Derrinlough, and permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I visible along the vegetation over the horizon, however these become screened by the battery and associated vegetation.</p>	High-medium	All three of the proposed turbines are partially visible as blades above the vegetation along the horizon. While these are well separated from the viewer both with regards to distance and screening, there will be some impact on the scenic amenity of the view as they combine with the existing development across an increased proportion of the horizon. As such, the magnitude of effect is rated Low-negligible and of a Negative quality.	Slight-imperceptible / Negative / Long-term

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<p>VP8</p>	<p>L1092 at Whigsborough</p> <p>This is a partially enclosed, rolling rural view, located 850m to the north of the proposed development. Located along the L1092, the primary receptors are the local community and road users. The terrain and hedgerow vegetation fall away to the south, allowing longer distance views over stacked vegetation. The permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I turbines are located in the foreground of the permitted baseline scenario, while the permitted Carrig Renewables and proposed Ballincor turbines are offset by distance, and subject to dense vegetation screening.</p>	<p>Medium-low</p>	<p>The proposed development is clearly visible at close proximity. However, due to this specific location relative to the nearby hedgerow, only one turbine is visible in the photomontage. The scale and proximity of the proposed development increase the land use intensity within the view. The distant field boundary offsets the proposed development from the local road corridor. The visual effect of the proximity of the proposed development to the viewer is partially mitigated by the limited lateral extent and vegetation screening. Overall, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed High-medium.</p>	<p>Substantial-moderate / Negative / Long-term</p>
<p>VP9</p>	<p>L1092 near Whigsborough House</p> <p>This view is located 1.7km to the northeast of the proposed development, to the east of VP8 along the L1092. This viewpoint is primarily representative of the higher value landscape surrounding Whigsborough House, identified by the county council as a heritage feature. Due to the location along the local road corridor, this viewpoint is also representative of the local community. The roadside vegetation is trimmed low and allows views over rolling fields and mature woodland.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>All three of the proposed turbines are visible, with T10 and T11 rising unobstructed over existing farm structures, while T9 is partially screened by woodland. Overall, there is an intensification of land use within this otherwise rural setting. However, the scale and character of the proposed wind turbine are not unfamiliar in the existing wind energy context to the north, nor does the proposed development obscure views of higher sensitivity features. As such, the magnitude of effect is deemed Medium.</p> <p>This viewpoint was also used to examine the difference in effect between the proposed dimension range. As can be seen in the comparative photomontage, the visual effect of the change in dimension is limited to subtle changes in hub height relative to underlying vegetation and terrain. This is unlikely to be readily noted without the direct comparison enabled by the comparative photomontages. Therefore, the visual effect assessment remains as above.</p>	<p>Moderate / Negative / Long-term</p>

VP10	<p>N62 at Galros Cross Roads</p> <p>This is a broad view along the N62 national road, with long range views along the road which draw the eye to the rolling horizon. The visibility is open to esker landforms and the Slieve blooms to the east. These higher sensitivity features are separated from the immediate viewer context by a highly disturbed exposed bog landscape. In contrast, the view is enclosed by scrubby hedgerow vegetation to the west. However, this view is representative of the road corridor experience, including the residence immediately to the north, which are not dependant on individual trees, and vary greatly in terms of enclosure along the N62 at this location. The permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I is clearly visible across both sides of the road corridor.</p>	Medium-Low	<p>The introduction of the project at this location will increase the proportion of the view occupied by wind energy, forming a thematic link between the harvesting of peat for energy and the introduction of wind energy infrastructure. The scale of the turbines is unavoidable at this close location. However, the clear views and legibility also serve to introduce a level of interest to the section of the road which passes closest to the proposal. The turbines are well spaced when viewed from the road, with some potential overlap between T10 and T9. With the above considered, the scale of the array and change to the character of the view is deemed to be High-Medium and of Negative quality.</p> <p>This viewpoint was also used to examine the difference in effect between the proposed dimension range. From this near distance to the turbines of under 1km, the varied dimensions are only discernible through inspection of the downwards sweep of the turbine blades, which present with marginal changes in height from underlying vegetation and terrain.. This is unlikely to be readily noted without the direct comparison enabled by the comparative photomontages. Therefore, the visual effect assessment remains as above.</p>	Substantial-moderate/ Negative/ Long-term
VP11	<p>Fivealley</p> <p>Located at the layby at Fivealley, where there is a cluster of local buildings and services, offset slightly from the N52, which is on the far side of the hedge to the left/east of the viewer. The foreground features a post and rail fence, backed by a field and low hedgerow. The landform is generally down towards the national road, with a slight rise in landform forming the horizon to the west. In the permitted baseline scenario, permitted Cush Wind</p>	Medium-Low	<p>There will be partial visibility of all three proposed turbines above the hedgerow within the middle of the view. There is one instance of overlap between T10 and T11, which combined with the intervening hedgerow, will create a degree of visual clutter. Such effects are mitigated by the high degree of screening and therefore the effect is deemed Low and of a Negative quality.</p>	Slight/ Negative/ Long-term

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	Farm Phase I is partially visible over the midground hedgerow.			
VP12	<p>Local Road at Knockhill and Drinagh</p> <p>This is a locally elevated location, which affords expansive view over surroundings. The foreground is open pasture with landform sloping away from the viewer. The midground features vertical elements in the form of a tree and existing power lines. However, these features do not form any significant interruption to the broad view over the surrounding landscape. The view over the lowlands is highly vegetated with scattered built form. The permitted baseline of permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I, when combined with the existing development forms a broad band of wind energy, albeit visually separated from Derrinlough.</p>	Medium	The proposed development is smaller than the majority of the surrounding developments in terms of in scale when viewed in isolation. The offset from the existing wind energy development within the view emphasises the smaller number of proposed turbines. The proposal will increase the intensity of wind energy development across the horizon, however, is a relatively minor inclusion within the wider context at this distance. As such, the magnitude of effect is deemed Low-negligible , of a Negative quality.	Slight-imperceptible/ Negative/ Long-term
VP13	<p>N52 at Shanacloon</p> <p>This is a relatively open view along the N52 national road, located 1.5km to the east of the proposed development, with westward views towards a rolling Esker ridgeline running generally parallel with the road corridor. Views of the wider landscape are screened by the Esker and well-treed hedgerows which line the overlay of pasture. This view is representative of the road corridor experience, which is features a mix of rural land uses and scattered built form, such as the yard partially visible to the north of the view. The permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I is visible in the midground, partially screened by vegetation.</p>	Medium-low	The proposed development is visible in a partially screened manner, shortened in the foreground by the rolling terrain. This serves to separate the viewer and road corridor from the area of wind energy presented by the combined developments. The proposed turbines are well spaced from one another, with a clear sense of scale. There is some visual conflict in the downwards sweep of the blades crossing behind the foreground landform and vegetation. Overall, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Medium-low magnitude, of a Negative quality.	Moderate/ Negative/ Long-term
VP14	<p>R438 at Deerpark</p> <p>This is a generic, but pleasant, rural view over fields, contained by vegetation over a subtle rolling ridge. Over the wider view, the landform falls to the north/left of the view offering fleeting views of the</p>	Medium-Low	The development is clearly visible over the horizon of this view, with T9 set apart from T10 and T11, which overlap. There is a subtle shortening of the proposed turbines by foreground vegetation, but the height and scale of the proposed development is contextualised by the wider wind	Slight/ Negative/ Long-term

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	surrounding landscape. The existing wind developments of Cloghan, Meenwaun, and Derrinlough are visible in this direction, clustered together and partially screened by the midground vegetation. The permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I is offset somewhat from the larger group.		farm context. The visual effect of the proposal is deemed to be Low magnitude, of Negative quality.	
VP15	<p>Local Road at Birr Golf Club</p> <p>This is a pleasant slightly elevated view over the rolling landform to the south of the site, located along the local road which borders Birr Golf Club. The foreground allows views over open treelined fields, which continue to the horizon to the east. There is a high voltage line which marches across the view along this more open, pastoral land use. In contrast, over the midground to the west, the ground surface is concealed by scrubby vegetation and blocks of conifer forestry. The horizon is generally level, with an even covering of vegetation. To the right/west of the view, the existing Cloghan and Derrinlough developments line the horizon, while the permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I is located at a closer proximity and higher prominence.</p>	Medium-Low	<p>The project is seen in the midground, offset from the viewer by a distance of 2.9km, and separated from the viewer by the alignment of landcover transition into scrub and is located on the far side of the high voltage line. This leaves the eastern side of the view (where the northern end of the Slieve Blooms are visible) generally free of vertical energy structures. The proposal appears well spaced and provides a clear sense of perspective relative to the surrounding developments, which are distributed across the horizon. Overall, the magnitude of visual effect of the project is deemed Low, of Negative quality</p> <p>This viewpoint was also used to examine the difference in effect between the proposed dimension range. As all turbines rotate clear of the underlying landform and vegetation, the difference in rotor diameter and hub height is difficult to discern. This is unlikely to be readily noted. Therefore, the visual effect assessment remains as above.</p>	Slight / Negative/ Long-term
VP16	<p>N62 at Cooleeny</p> <p>This is robust rural landscape with a high degree of anthropogenic influence and built features. The viewer is set in a slight depression in the surrounding esker landform, with views directed upwards along the N62 towards a cluttered skyline of overhead lines and scrub and one residence. There are a couple of buildings to the west of the view, with the gateway in the foreground access to an area of gravel extraction of unknown age or use but</p>	Medium-Low	<p>The project is fully visible from here, with the proposed development shortened by foreground screening. All three turbines are set behind existing structures and vegetation along the low ridgeline that form the horizon. The proposed development is contained to the east of the road corridor as the viewer/road user travels across the landform. While this is a robust landscape, the location of the turbines in close (visual) proximity to familiar features such as houses emphasises the scale of the turbines and generates a degree of scale</p>	Moderate / Negative/ Long-term

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	marked by the access gates and pull-off area for heavy vehicles.		<p>conflict. On balance, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Medium, and of Negative quality.</p> <p>This viewpoint was also used to examine the difference in effect between the proposed dimension range. The dimension change is only discernible through inspection of the downwards sweep of the turbine blades, which present with marginally varied overlap behind the foreground vegetation, buildings and terrain. Even at this close distance, this difference is only discernible through direct comparison. This is unlikely to be readily noted. Therefore, the visual effect assessment remains as above.</p>	
VP17	<p>R489 at Lisinisky</p> <p>This is a slightly elevated view, located along the R489, with views afforded of the lowlands towards the Slieve Blooms. These views are facilitated in this case by the trimming of hedgerows along the southeast. The viewer context is open rural, with larger fields and low vegetation. There are a number of residences in either direction along the road corridor. Further east (midground of the view) there is an increase in vegetation, generally screening the landform and covering the horizon before the Slieve Blooms rise to line much of the view at a reasonable distance. The permitted and existing developments over the study area are generally screened by vegetation to the north of the road corridor, although the exception to this is the permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I which will be visible across the horizon at a distance of c. 16km.</p>	Medium-Low	<p>The project is visible as a localised trio of turbines, rising over the cohesive blanket of vegetation, slightly offset from the road corridor. The development does not overlay the visible ridge of the Slieve Blooms. The proposal will generally present with a low visual contrast, due to distance (over 16km) and placement along the skyline. While the development will marginally increase the intensity of built development in this aspect of the view, this is mitigated by the distance. Thus, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Low-negligible and of a Negative quality.</p>	Slight-imperceptible/ Negative/ Long-term
VP18	<p>R489 at Pike</p> <p>This is a partially enclosed view at a sweeping bend along the R489, with pasture in the immediate surrounds and a mix of hedgerow vegetation providing screening along the road.</p>	Medium-Low	<p>The project is screened by vegetation resulting in little to no visibility. Therefore, the magnitude of visual effect is considered to be Negligible and of a Neutral Quality.</p>	Imperceptible/ Neutral/ Long-term

VP19	<p>R439 near Tullynisk House</p> <p>This viewpoint is selected primarily to represent the amenity and heritage feature of Tullynisk House. Secondly, this viewpoint also represents the higher viewer numbers expected along the R439. Located 4.5km to the southwest of the proposed development, the viewpoint looks over the historic walls and established vegetation surrounding Tullynisk House, as well as more modern structures and influence of the higher use road corridor. The established vegetation along the horizon serve to screen much of the wider landscape.</p>	Medium	<p>The existing vegetation serves to screen the proposed blades. The proposed turbines are screened by existing vegetation. The wireframe illustrates the separation of the project from the viewer and the heritage setting of Tullynisk House. The magnitude of visual effect is therefore assessed as Negligible and of a Neutral quality.</p>	Imperceptible/ Neutral/ / Long-term
VP20	<p>N52 north of Birr</p> <p>This is a northwards view along the N52 to the north of Birr, looking towards the surrounding rural context. There is a mix of land uses along the road corridor, typical of the periphery of a key population centre. The foreground is somewhat cluttered by power and lighting poles, a mix of roadside treatment and vegetation. This viewpoint is representative of a high number of viewers, associated with both the major route and centre of population. The existing Derrinlough turbines are screened by skyline vegetation, with partial visibility of the permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I turbines over the road corridor.</p>	Medium-low	<p>The project is generally screened by vegetation and built form, at a distance of 5.4km. Only T11 is visible to the hub, with T9 and T10 screened except for blade tips rotating over vegetation. The development is separated by the band of vegetation on the skyline, which removes the turbines from being perceived 'within' the built-up area. Where noted, they will be perceived as a part of the rural hinterland of the settlement. On balance, the magnitude of visual effect is considered to be Low-negligible and of a Negative quality.</p> <p>This viewpoint was also used to examine the difference in effect between the proposed dimension range. As can be seen in the comparative photomontage, the visual effect of the change in dimension is limited to subtle variation in hub height over distant vegetation. This is unlikely to be readily noted. Therefore, the visual effect assessment remains as above.</p>	Slight-imperceptible/ Negative/ Long-term
VP21	<p>'The Leviathan' telescope within Birr Castle and Demesne</p> <p>Located within the open lawns surrounding the castle with the historic telescope behind the viewer, this is a popular recreation and high</p>	Very High	<p>The project is screened by vegetation resulting in little to no visibility. Therefore, the magnitude of visual effect is considered to be Negligible and of a Neutral Quality</p>	Imperceptible/ Neutral/ Long-term

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	amenity value location, surrounded by mature vegetation.			
VP22	<p>R440 at Ballygowan</p> <p>This is a partially enclosed rural view over a low hedgerow, from the R440. The foreground is over open pasture, which leads across to an internal track with farm buildings and a residence screened by further hedgerows. The existing Derrinlough turbines are visible in the distance, and the permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I will be partially visible over the mix of buildings and vegetation in the midground.</p>	Medium-Low	The project is partially visible, with T9 and T11 visible over intervening vegetation, while T10 is generally screened. This will be a fleeting view through roadside vegetation, presenting the proposed development among existing wind energy development. On balance, the effect is deemed to be Low , of Negative quality	Slight/ Negative/ Long-term
VP23	<p>R440 at Slieve Blooms</p> <p>This is an elevated view along the R440 regional road as it crosses the Slieve Blooms, located at a point where wide views of the lowland landscape become apparent. The viewer is located within upland bog vegetation, however there are areas transitioning around the periphery of the view into conifer forestry, in particular over the lower slopes to the south. The permitted baseline of permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I and the other existing development included in this assessment are visible in the distance within the level landscape.</p>	High-Medium	The project and other existing wind energy development are separated from the viewer by landscape context and substantial distance. The proposal is integrated with the existing development, which extends across the left/south of the distant landscape at the periphery of the viewer focus (which is along the line of the road to the open horizon). It does not appear out of place in this context, but it consolidates the lateral extent of wind energy development across the distant lowland landscape. As such, the magnitude of effect is deemed Low-negligible , and of a Negative quality.	Slight-imperceptible/ Negative/ Long-term
VP24	<p>N62 at Rathbeg Lane</p> <p>This is a locally elevated view afforded from the busy N62 national secondary route in the townland of Rathbeg Lane. The depicted view is oriented in a general northerly direction along the N62 corridor and extends across a typical pastoral scene comprising agricultural fields and stacked hedgerow vegetation. To the west, the view is partially contained by dense mature vegetation immediately west of the national route corridor. Several existing turbines are visible in the distant background, including Derrinlough and Cloghan.</p>	Medium-Low	The proposed turbines are visible, rising above the vegetated skyline in the view's background at a distance of over 11km. The three proposed turbines add to the complexity and clutter of the existing and permitted baseline scenario with regards to overlap between turbines. However, they do not change the overall character of the view due to the viewing distance involved and the existing turbine presence. On balance, and for the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Low-negligible and the quality of effect is Negative .	Slight-imperceptible / Negative / Long-term

Cush Wind Farm – Phase II

	The Derrinlough turbines will be visible in two clusters in the view's background. The permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I is located in the foreground of the existing wind energy development in the permitted baseline scenario.			
VP25	<p>Local Road at Leap Castle</p> <p>This is a pleasant and partially contained view afforded across rolling farmland from a gap in a roadside hedgerow along a local road a short distance to the west of Leap Castle. The depicted view is oriented to the north and is contained by the middle distant rolling terrain and intervening mature vegetation. Existing turbines are briefly visible in the distant background, with the permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I development also represented in the permitted baseline scenario..</p>	Medium-Low	A partial and fleeting view of the proposed turbines is afforded in the distant background and is highly screened by the rolling terrain and area of mature vegetation in the distance. If briefly viewed from here, the proposed turbines are easily absorbed into the existing context, well spaced between the existing developments. Thus, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Low-negligible and of a Negative quality.	Slight-imperceptible / Negative / Long-term
VP26	<p>Local Road at Clonlee</p> <p>This is a pleasant elevated view afforded from a local road in the townland of Clonlee that extends across a broad flat landscape cloaked in pastoral farmland and stacked vegetation. The existing Cloghan, Derrinlough and Carrig turbines are visible as small-scale distant features in the view's background. The permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I is marginally located closer to the viewer than the existing developments, and extends the cluster of turbines to the south.</p>	Medium	The proposed turbines will be visible in the distant background some c. 12km from this local road context. The proposed development is located within the existing lateral extent of turbines within the view; however, the proposed development will present at a marginally larger scale than the existing turbines. Due to the considerable viewing distance, the proposed turbines will not present with any sense of scale conflict with the other existing or permitted turbines. Indeed, whilst the proposed turbines will generate some additional sense of visual clutter, they do not present as ambiguous features in this landscape context as they are viewed in combination with numerous other existing wind turbines. Thus, the visual effect magnitude is deemed Low-negligible and of a Negative quality.	Slight-imperceptible / Negative / Long-term
VP27	Westgate, Birr	Medium	The proposed development is set between the existing background turbines and the tree cover	Slight / Negative / Long-term

	<p>This viewpoint is located at the southern extent of Birr, and was requested in the pre-planning process due to the views of heritage structures along the skyline. The key receptors are the residents of the surrounding housing areas, and recreational walkers. This view presents a pleasant horizon defined by established vegetation and punctuated by the spire and tower of the heritage structures which stand above the vegetation, as well as the visible extents of Birr Castle, off-centre to the northern view. There are utilitarian features of any population centre within the view, including communication towers, power and phone lines, and signage. There are partially visible existing turbines seen rotating in the background, while the permitted Cush Wind Farm Phase I will also be visible, between the existing turbines and the viewer.</p>		<p>within Birr. The proposed development does contribute to the overall intensity of land use within the wider context of Birr. The proposed development is offset from visually aligning with any of the key heritage structures or features within the view. As such, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Low and of a Negative quality.</p> <p>This viewpoint was also used to examine the difference in effect between the proposed dimension range. It is difficult to discern the difference between the turbine dimensions across the three scenarios, with only the marginal increase in hub height relative to underlying vegetation providing reference for comparison. This is unlikely to be readily noted. Therefore, the visual effect assessment remains as above.</p>	
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Table A10.5: Magnitude of Visual Effects at Viewshed Reference Points