



## **APPENDIX 12-2**

### **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

1.

# LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT TABLES

1.1

## County Donegal

LCA 5 Slieve Sneacht	
<b>Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	The closest proposed turbine (T5) is approximately 0.8 kilometres away from the closest point of the LCA, and approximately 13.2 kilometres away from the furthest point of the LCA.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b>	<p>The 2016 <i>Landscape Character Assessment of County Donegal</i> summarises this LCA as follows:</p> <p>Slieve Sneacht LCA is primarily a mountainous upland area covered in heath and defined by Slieve Sneacht – a high bog mountain with a rocky summit. Lough Fad and Lough Namina are either side of the R244 in the north of this LCA and the smaller Mintiagh Lough is located nearby to the south of these. The river Pollan was dammed in 1991 creating a large freshwater reservoir within the southeast of this LCA. Slieve Sneacht dominates this LCA and indeed the wider landscape of Inishowen and Donegal being visible as far away as Northern Ireland. The LCA is sparsely populated with clusters of dwellings and isolated rural dwellings scattered throughout lower agricultural lands.</p>
<b>Visibility within LCA</b>	Of the parts of this LCA within the study area there is no visibility indicated by ZTV mapping in the north and intermittent full theoretical visibility indicated in the southern part of this LCA. Viewpoints 03 and 09 are located within this LCA. At these viewpoints, the residual visual effects are considered ‘Not Significant’ and ‘Moderate’, respectively.
<b>Cumulative Baseline</b>	There are no existing or permitted wind farms within this LCA, however, wind farms located in neighbouring LCAs are visible within this LCA.
<b>Cumulative Landscape Status</b>	1 - LCA with occasional wind turbines in it and/or intervisible in another landscape character area/s
<b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b>	The proposed development will slightly add to the cumulative landscape effects but not change the status identified above. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered <b>Low</b> .
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	Although there is no currently valid wind energy strategy map, in Map 8.2.1 - <i>Wind Energy Map</i> (WEM) included in the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (although subsequently removed from the CDP due to court proceedings) wind energy development in this LCA was designated as ‘open to consideration’ nearest to the proposed development in this LCA as well as other areas in the same classification making up approximately half the LCA. Other areas particularly on Slieve Sneacht and other upland areas surrounding it have been designated as ‘not acceptable’. However, this designation was meant to apply to wind energy development within the LCA and does not directly apply to wind turbines seen beyond the boundaries of this LCA.

	As the proposed Glenard turbines will be seen at a distance of at least 0.8 km and as much as 13.2 km and furthermore as areas within this LCA have been designated as ‘open to consideration’, the residual sensitivity of wind energy developments being visible in this LCA is considered <b>Low to Medium</b> .
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	Due to full theoretical visibility indicated for approximately one third of this LCA coupled with distances from the proposed turbines in excess of 0.8 km the magnitude of change is considered <b>Low</b> .
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Low to Medium x Low = Slight (EPA, 2017)</b> An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In most areas of this LCA the primary focus of views will be towards Slieve Sneacht Mountain rather than towards the proposed development.</li> <li>➤ Although the nearest turbines is less than one kilometres from this LCA this LCA covers a large area and the turbines will be over 13 kilometres from the furthest part of the LCA. Therefore, the landscape effects on the LCA as a whole are considerably reduced.</li> <li>➤ Despite the proximity of the viewpoints within this LCA to the proposed development the residual visual effects at these locations are considered ‘Not Significant’ and ‘Moderate’.</li> <li>➤ More than half of this LCA will have no visibility of the proposed turbines.</li> <li>➤ Siting and design are in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) with the ‘Transitional Marginal’ landscape character type.</li> </ul>

LCA 8 Buncrana Coast	
<b>Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	The closest proposed turbine is approximately 3.9 kilometres away from the closest point of the LCA, and approximately 15.6 kilometres away from the furthest point of the LCA.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b>	<p>The 2016 <i>Landscape Character Assessment of County Donegal</i> summarises this LCA as follows:</p> <p>Buncrana Coast LCA is located on the west of the Inishowen peninsula and is defined by Buncrana Town, a long stretch of sandy coastline along the Swilly and the surrounding mountains that encircle this fertile agricultural landscape. This is a historic landscape intrinsically associated with Lough Swilly as evident from the plethora of recorded monuments and protected structures in the landscape including enclosures, middens, cairns, promontory forts, Napoleonic forts, a castle and seaside Victorian architecture. Buncrana LCA is an interesting and active landscape with a synergy of land uses that contribute to the unique character of this area.</p>
<b>Visibility within LCA</b>	Full theoretical visibility is indicated for approximately a third of the areas of this LCA within the study area. Viewpoint 08 is located within this LCA, where the residual visual effects was found to be ‘Slight’.

<b>Cumulative Baseline</b>	There are a number of existing and permitted wind farms in the north-east of this LCA. Additionally, some of the turbines in the neighbouring LCA to the east are be visible within this LCA.
<b>Cumulative Landscape Status</b>	2 - LCA with occasional wind turbines in it and/or intervisible in another landscape character area/s
<b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b>	The proposed development will slightly add to the cumulative landscape effects but not change the status identified above. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered <b>Low</b> .
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	<p>According to the WEM, wind energy development in this LCA was designated as ‘not acceptable’ along the coastline, furthest from the proposed turbines, and as ‘open to consideration’ in the areas of the LCA nearest to the proposed Glenard wind farm. However, this designation was meant to apply to wind energy development within the LCA and does not directly apply to wind turbines seen beyond the boundaries of this LCA.</p> <p>As the proposed Glenard turbines will be seen at a distance of at least 3.9 km and as much as 15.6 km from this LCA and, furthermore, as areas within this LCA have been designated as ‘open to consideration’, the residual sensitivity of wind energy developments being visible in this LCA is considered <b>Negligible to Low</b>.</p>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	Due to full theoretical visibility indicated for approximately one third of this LCA coupled with distances from the proposed turbines in excess of 3.9 km the magnitude of change is considered <b>Low</b> .
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Negligible to Low x Low= Not Significant (EPA, 2017)</b> An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In most areas of this LCA the primary focus of views will be towards the sea rather than inland.</li> <li>➤ Residual visual effects for the one viewpoints within this LCA is considered ‘Slight’.</li> <li>➤ Siting and design are in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) with the ‘Transitional Marginal’ landscape character type.</li> </ul>

LCA 9 Scalp Mountain	
<b>Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	The proposed turbines are situated within this Landscape Character Area within County Donegal.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b>	<p>The 2016 <i>Landscape Character Assessment of County Donegal</i> summarises this LCA as follows:</p> <p>Scalp Mountain LCA is characterised by widespread upland blanket bog and dominated by the imposing Scalp and Iskaheen mountains. Substantial areas of commercial forestry extend throughout the area and 22 wind turbines are located in 2 groupings of 10 and 12 in the west of this LCA.</p>

	There are pockets of agricultural land and dispersed rural dwellings on the periphery of this area and alongside the Owenkillev and Barnahone Rivers.
<b>Visibility within LCA</b>	ZTV mapping shows full theoretical visibility for approximately half of this LCA and partial theoretical visibility or no visibility is indicated for the other parts. Viewpoints 01 and 12 are located within this LCA. For these viewpoints, the residual visual effects are considered ‘Not significant’ and ‘Slight’, respectively.
<b>Cumulative Baseline</b>	Many existing and permitted turbines are located in this LCA.
<b>Cumulative Landscape Status</b>	3 - LCA with wind turbines
<b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b>	The proposed development will slightly add to the cumulative landscape effects but not change the status identified above. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered <b>Low</b> .
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	According to the WEM the majority of this this LCA was designated as ‘open to consideration’, including the area where the proposed turbines are to be located. An area constituting approximately a third of this LCA to the south was designated as ‘not acceptable’ Therefore, the residual sensitivity of wind energy developments being visible in this LCA is considered <b>Low</b> .
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	Due to full theoretical visibility indicated for approximately half of this LCA coupled with the turbines being located in this LCA the magnitude of change is considered <b>Medium</b> .
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Low x Medium = Slight (EPA, 2017)</b> An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Residual visual effects for the two viewpoints within this LCA are considered ‘Slight’ and ‘Not significant’.</li> <li>➤ Siting and design are in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) with the ‘Transitional Marginal’ landscape character type.</li> </ul>

LCA 20 South Fanad Uplands & Coast	
<b>Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	The closest proposed turbine is approximately 11.0 kilometres away from the closest point of the LCA, and approximately 22.0 kilometres away from the furthest point of the LCA.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b>	<p>The 2016 <i>Landscape Character Assessment of County Donegal</i> summarises this LCA as follows:</p> <p>South Fanad Uplands, Coast and Gaeltacht LCA is located within the Gaeltacht in the south east of the ‘Fanad Peninsula’. It is a rural area with a long coastal edge extending north along Lough Swilly. This area shares geology with areas across both Mulroy Bay to the west and Lough Swilly to the east. There is a high degree of intervisibility from the LCA out over the surrounding landscape and seascape and also as an end view particularly from the eastern shores of Lough Swilly along the western Inishowen coast. Most of this area consists of rolling agricultural lands of predominantly</p>

	<p>pasture but also arable use made up of a patchwork of hedge and stonewall bound fields of varying shapes and sizes. In contrast, the higher mountain areas are covered in blanket bog and have an open aspect whilst there is a heavy dispersal of deciduous and ancient woodland along the south and east. Rathmullan sits on the coast, an historic town with many fine buildings and structures including Rathmullen Abbey and Coastguard cottages. It is the location of ‘Flight of the Earls’, a defining point in Irish history.</p>
<b>Visibility within LCA</b>	<p>Full theoretical visibility is indicated for approximately half of the parts of the LCA within the study area. Viewpoints 04, 05 and 11 are located within this LCA , albeit Viewpoint 05 and 11 is not within the landscape character 15-kilometre study area .At these viewpoints, the residual visual effects are considered ‘Slight’ in each case.</p>
<b>Cumulative Baseline</b>	<p>There is one wind farm located within this LCA, but wind farms outside the LCA will be seen in parts of the LCA at a considerable distance.</p>
<b>Cumulative Landscape Status</b>	<p>2 - LCA with occasional wind turbines in it and/or intervisible in another landscape character area/s</p>
<b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b>	<p>The proposed development will slightly add to the cumulative landscape effects but not change the status identified above. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered <b>Low</b>.</p>
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	<p>According to the WEM wind energy development in this LCA was designated as ‘not acceptable’. However, this designation was meant to apply to wind energy development within the LCA and does not directly apply to wind turbines seen beyond the boundaries of this LCA.</p> <p>As the proposed Glenard turbines will be seen at a distance of at least 11 km and as much as 22 km, the residual sensitivity of wind energy developments being visible in this LCA is considered <b>Medium</b>.</p>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<p>Due to full theoretical visibility indicated for approximately half of this LCA coupled with distances from the proposed turbines in excess of 11 km the magnitude of change is considered <b>Low</b>.</p>
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<p><b>Medium x Low = Slight (EPA, 2017)</b> An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.</p>
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ZTV mapping shows approximately half the LCA will have no visibility.</li> <li>➤ Despite the nearest turbines being located 11 kilometres from this LCA this LCA covers a large area and the turbines will be 22 kilometres from the furthest part of the LCA. Therefore, the landscape effects on the LCA as a whole are considerably reduced.</li> <li>➤ Residual visual effects for the three viewpoints within this LCA are considered ‘Slight’.</li> <li>➤ Siting and design are in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) with the ‘Transitional Marginal’ landscape character type.</li> </ul>

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## County Derry

LCA 31 Burngibbagh and Drumahoe	
<b>Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b>	The closest proposed turbine is approximately 12.3 kilometres away from the closest point of the LCA, and approximately 25.1 kilometres away from the furthest point of the LCA.
<b>LCA Key Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Linear valley system with a strong NE-SW alignment</li> <li>➤ Valley has a flat floor and is enclosed by broad, rounded ridges</li> <li>➤ Hedgerows enclosing pastures form a strong, geometric pattern on the valley sides, with small areas of open moorland capping some summits</li> <li>➤ Pylons lines are a dominant landscape element, particularly to the north</li> <li>➤ Built development concentrated in centre of valley, near Drumahoe</li> </ul>
<b>Visibility within LCA</b>	Most areas in this LCA within the landscape character study area will have partial theoretical visibility of 1 to 4 turbines, but there are also some areas of no visibility. Viewpoint 13 is located within this LCA. For this viewpoint the residual visual effects is considered 'Imperceptible'.
<b>Cumulative Baseline</b>	There is an existing wind farm located within this LCA, but is outside the landscape character study area, however, other turbines outside this will be visible in the distance from parts of this LCA.
<b>Cumulative Landscape Status</b>	2 - LCA with occasional wind turbines in it and/or intervisible in another landscape character area/s
<b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b>	The proposed development will slightly add to the cumulative landscape effects but not change the status identified above. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered <b>Low</b> .
<b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b>	<p>While the 2010 <i>Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes</i> gives this LCA an overall sensitivity of this 'high to medium' for siting wind energy development within the LCA it considers the part of this LCA closest to the proposed development as '<i>more degraded with pylons and former mineral workings so is somewhat less sensitive in that respect, although also more heavily settled</i>' and goes on to say '<i>the northern part of this LCA, which has more rounded landform and a more degraded character, is more suitable for wind energy development than other locations in this LCA</i>'.</p> <p>Given that these guidelines see potential for wind energy development within these areas and the proposed Glenard turbines will be seen at distances in excess of 12.3 km, it is considered that the sensitivity to wind turbines being visible outside the LCA is <b>Negligible</b>.</p>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	Due to partial theoretical visibility in only approx. half of this LCA coupled with distances in excess of 12.3 km from the proposed turbines the magnitude of change is considered <b>Negligible</b> .
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Negligible x Negligible = Imperceptible (EPA, 2017)</b> An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.

<p><b>Mitigation Factors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ZTV mapping shows partial theoretical visibility of up to half the proposed turbines</li> <li>➤ Residual visual effects from the viewpoint within this LCA is considered ‘Imperceptible’.</li> <li>➤ Siting and design are in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) with the ‘Transitional Marginal’ landscape character type.</li> </ul>
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<p style="background-color: #00a68f; color: white; padding: 5px;">LCA 33 Lough Foyle Alluvial Plain</p>	
<p><b>Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA</b></p>	<p>The closest proposed turbine is approximately 9.2 kilometres away from the closest point of the LCA, and approximately 23.5 kilometres away from the furthest point of the LCA.</p>
<p><b>LCA Key Characteristics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Flat, alluvial plain backed by a low bench of more resistant rocks</li> <li>➤ Parts of coastal plain are reclaimed land, drained by straight drainage channels and enclosed by coastal embankments</li> <li>➤ Farmland patchwork with geometric, structured character</li> <li>➤ Large arable fields on coastal margins of reclaimed land; elsewhere smaller pastures enclosed by low hedgerows</li> <li>➤ Few scattered hedgerow trees; most mature trees are clustered around farms for shelter</li> <li>➤ Narrow straight roads on alluvial plain; principal routes are on the elevated bench backing the alluvial plain</li> <li>➤ Evenly spaced farms and linear suburban development; extensive industrial development on the eastern fringes of Londonderry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Visibility within LCA</b></p>	<p>The majority of this LCA within the landscape character study area will have partial theoretical visibility of 1 to 4 turbines. Viewpoint 06 is located within this LCA and Viewpoint 07, just 100 m to the south of this LCA (both are outside the 15-kilometre landscape character study area). For these viewpoints the residual visual effects are considered ‘Imperceptible’.</p>
<p><b>Cumulative Baseline</b></p>	<p>There are no permitted or existing turbines located in this LCA, but there may be areas in this LCA where wind turbines are seen at a considerable distance.</p>
<p><b>Cumulative Landscape Status</b></p>	<p>1 - LCA with no wind turbines</p>
<p><b>Cumulative Landscape Effects</b></p>	<p>The proposed development will slightly add to the cumulative landscape effects but not change the status identified above. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered <b>Low</b>.</p>
<p><b>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development</b></p>	<p>Although the 2010 <i>Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes</i> gives this LCA an overall sensitivity of this ‘high to medium’ for siting wind energy development within the LCA it goes on to state that in the part of this LCA closest to the proposed development ‘<i>the strongly industrial character with many large industrial structures suggests lower than average levels of sensitivity, especially given the presence of existing screening woodland along the A2</i>’ and further explains that ‘<i>the part of the LCA with most potential for some form of wind energy development is the industrial area north of Derry at the western end of the LCA</i>’. The other areas within the landscape character study area, the ‘<i>very open, exposed</i></p>

	<p><i>and low-lying coastal plain might also be able to accommodate some turbine development’.</i></p> <p>Given that these guidelines see potential for wind energy development within these areas, it is considered that the sensitivity of the LCA to wind turbines being visible outside the LCA is <b>Low</b>.</p> <p>Given that these guidelines see potential for wind energy development within these areas and the proposed Glenard turbines will be seen at distances in excess of 9.2 km, it is considered that the sensitivity to wind turbines being visible outside the LCA is <b>Negligible</b>.</p>
<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	Due to partial theoretical visibility in all of this LCA coupled with distances from the proposed turbines in excess of 9 km the magnitude of change is considered <b>Low to Negligible</b> .
<b>Significance of Effect</b>	<b>Negligible x Low to Negligible = Not Significant (EPA, 2017)</b> An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
<b>Mitigation Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ZTV mapping shows large areas with no visibility and some partial theoretical visibility of up to 4 proposed turbines</li> <li>➤ Large scale screening by buildings within Derry City and outskirts</li> <li>➤ Siting and design are in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) with the ‘Transitional Marginal’ landscape character type.</li> </ul>