

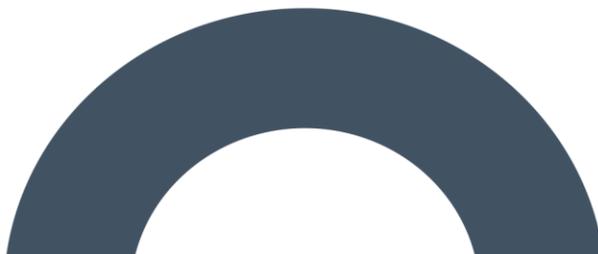


APPENDIX 13-3

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA
(LCA) ASSESSMENT TABLES**

Landscape Character Assessment Tables

Proposed Cahermurphy
Two Wind Farm



1.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

LCA 17 – Slieve Callan Uplands	
Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	Eight of the ten proposed turbines are located within this LCA. The site is located in the very southwest of this LCA and the LCA extends a further 17 kilometres to the north and 18 kilometres to the east.
LCA Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Land rises to moorland hills of Sliabh Callan and Ben Dash. ➤ Mix of pasture, silage and coniferous habitats. ➤ Very little settlement, concentrated along communication routes and in outer parts of the area. ➤ Areas become increasingly rural as one travels eastwards, away from the coast. ➤ Communications is aligned along valleys. ➤ Uplands very exposed, valleys contained but unenclosed. Long views south from Ben Dash towards Shannon Estuary.
Visibility within LCA	There is theoretical visibility of 7-10 of the proposed turbines from approximately 40% of this LCA. The higher topography of Ben Dash to the east and Slievecallan to the north, and the ridgeline of high ground between those two peaks, limits visibility from areas further to the east and north. Viewpoints PL1 and PL2 are located within this LCA.
Cumulative Baseline	<p>This LCA contains all the ‘Strategic Areas’ for wind energy development in West Clare designated by the Clare Wind Energy Strategy in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023, as a result, there are 12 No. existing, permitted and proposed wind farms located within this LCA.</p> <p>There are a number of operational and one other proposed wind farms within this LCA, amounting to 203.26MW of capacity. These are: the operational and permitted Cahermurphy projects, Slieve Callan, Letteragh, Boolynagleragh + Extension, Glenmore, Booltiagh + Extension and Kiltumper. Coor West is the other proposed wind farm in the LCA. Other wind farms in adjacent LCAs are also visible in parts of this LCA.</p>
Cumulative Landscape Status	The LCA is classified as a “3. Landscape character area with wind turbines” according to the definitions in Table 1.8 of Appendix 13-1 of the EIAR.
Cumulative Landscape Effects	The proposed development will add to the overall number of turbines visible in the LCA but not change the status identified above as a result of the number of turbines already in existence and permitted within this LCA, and the policy context directing wind energy developments towards this LCA. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered Slight .
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	Medium to Low. The proposed development site and a large extent of the Slieve Callan Upland LCA has been designated as a ‘Strategic Area’ for wind energy development in the County Clare Wind Energy Strategy. Almost the entirety of other areas in the LCA are designated as ‘Acceptable in Principle’ for wind farm development.
Magnitude of Change	Moderate - A more limited loss of or change to landscape features over a medium extent which will result in some change to landscape features and

	aesthetics. Could include the addition of some new uncharacteristic features or elements that would lead to the potential for change in landscape character in a localised area or part of a landscape character area. Would include moderate effects on the overall landscape character that do not affect key characteristics. The effects could be long to medium term and/or partially reversible.
Significance of Effect	Low - Medium x Moderate = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2017) An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Mitigation Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposed development is located in a landscape designated as a 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development. ➤ The primary landforms of this LCA comprise elevated ridges of mountain moorland, which are landscape units with a strong capacity for absorbing winds energy developments of this scale. ➤ Irregular localised topography and the highly vegetated nature of the surrounding farmland and forestry plantations provide considerable screening of the proposed development, limiting the number and extent of turbines seen within the landscape from any given point. ➤ Siting and design were developed in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) for Transitional Marginal Land landscape character types.

LCA 20 – Malbay Coastal Farmlands	
Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	Two of the ten proposed turbines are located within this LCA.
LCA Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gently undulating pastoral farmland. ➤ Indented coastline, with some wide sandy bays. ➤ Strong Atlantic influence through the open and windswept character, reinforced by minimal tree cover and hedgerows. ➤ Views to Sliabh Callan, often framed by shallow valleys and along the coastline. ➤ Scattered but frequent settlement. Often individual houses but several small villages and larger settlements including Spanish Point and Milltown Malbay.
Visibility within LCA	There is theoretical visibility of 7-10 of the proposed turbines from approximately 90% of this LCA, but visibility is more intermittent in reality as confirmed by the route screening analysis described in Section 13.7.4.4 of the EIAR. Isolated depressions in the landscape or areas in the immediate shadow of more elevated ground have no theoretical visibility of the proposed development. Viewpoints 9, 10, 11 and 13 are located within this LCA.
Cumulative Baseline	There are no existing wind farms within this LCA. Most of the wind farms in the Slieve Callan Upland LCA are visible from areas within this LCA.

Cumulative Landscape Status	The LCA is classified as a “2. Landscape character area with occasional wind turbines in it and/or intervisible in another landscape character area/s” according to the definitions in Table 1.8 of Appendix 13-1 of the EIAR.
Cumulative Landscape Effects	The proposed development will add to the overall number of turbines visible from the LCA but not change the status identified above as a result of the number of turbines already in existence and permitted in adjacent LCAs but still visible from this LCA. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered Slight .
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	The landscape value of the inland area of this LCA (where two of the proposed turbines are located) is relatively low due to the degraded nature and strong human influence, however, the coastal region is a high value and highly sensitive landscape receptor and is designated as County Clare Heritage landscape. The Wind Energy Strategy is primarily designated as ‘Open to Consideration’ with areas of ‘Not Normally Permissible’ along the coastal strip. Considering the LCA as a whole, landscape sensitivity to wind farm development for this LCA would be considered High .
Magnitude of Change	Slight - The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium to short term and/or reversible.
Significance of Effect	High x Slight = Moderate/Minor = Moderate (EPA, 2017) An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends
Mitigation Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The landscape receptors of high sensitivity are located at the coast where visual amenity value is afforded by the coastline, scenic landscape views are focussed north or south along the coast or westerly in an offshore direction. Views inland towards the proposed development, are not of high amenity value and are of a landscape designated for wind energy development by Clare County Council. ➤ Siting and design were developed in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) for Transitional Marginal Land landscape character types. ➤ Due to forestry, roadside vegetation and localised undulations in topography, actual visibility will be significantly reduced in comparison to the theoretical visibility indicated on ZTV mapping.

LCA 19 – Kilmihil Farmlands	
Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	The proposed turbines are located just north of this LCA.
LCA Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Undulating to rolling hills, medium-high elevation. Some drumlin-type landforms but these do not dominate. ➤ Complex mix of moorland and farmland.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Occasional flatter areas within hills, such as Creegh River Valley ➤ Scattered settlement across the area with Kilmihil, Creegh and Curraclare the only villages. ➤ Kilmihil town is a designated ACA.
Visibility within LCA	There is theoretical visibility of 7-10 of the proposed turbines from approximately 65% of this LCA, but visibility is more intermittent in reality as confirmed by the route screening analysis described in Section 13.7.4.4 of the EIAR. Isolated depressions in the landscape or areas in the immediate shadow of more elevated ground have no theoretical visibility of the proposed development. Viewpoints 3, 4, 5 and 6 are located within this LCA.
Cumulative Baseline	There is one permitted wind farm within this LCA, that being the seven-turbine Crossmore development. This LCA, being located immediately south of the Slieve Callan Upland LCA means most other wind farms in that adjacent Slieve Callan Upland LCAs are also visible from large parts of this LCA.
Cumulative Landscape Status	The LCA is classified as a “2. Landscape character area with occasional wind turbines in it and/or intervisible in another landscape character area/s” according to the definitions in Table 1.8 of Appendix 13-1 of the EIAR.
Cumulative Landscape Effects	The proposed development will add to the overall number of turbines visible from the LCA but not change the status identified above as a result of the number of turbines already in existence and permitted in adjacent LCA but still visible from this LCA. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered Slight .
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	Medium. The rolling hills and drumlins in this sparsely settled areas offer capacity to accommodate wind farm development. The lands south of the N68 are generally classified as being Acceptable In Principle for wind energy development.
Magnitude of Change	Slight - The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium to short term and/or reversible.
Significance of Effect	Medium x Slight = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2017) An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Mitigation Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposed development is located in a landscape designated as a ‘Strategic Area’ for wind energy development. ➤ Siting and design were developed in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) for Transitional Marginal Land landscape character types. ➤ A large portion of this LCA is classified as ‘Acceptable in Principle’ for wind farm development.

LCA 21 – Loop Head	
Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	The proposed development is located approximately 8 km northeast of this LCA.
LCA Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Flat peninsular farmland – very distinctive ladder fields, estuaries, salt marsh and mudflats, sand and boulder coves, shelving coastal rocks, vertical cliffs. ➤ Coast becomes increasingly dramatic towards Loop Head with high cliffs, arches, stacks and rocky inlets. More sheltered bays are typically on the southern side of the peninsula. ➤ The presence of the sea is always apparent and the character of the land reflects the mood of the weather and the storminess of the seas. ➤ The area is remote and feels remote and detached, with peaceful rural unspoilt qualities. ➤ Settlement is more concentrated along the southern peninsula, increasing again towards Kilkee. ➤ Kilkee is a designated ACA (Architectural Area).
Visibility within LCA	Only a portion of this LCA falls within the LVIA study area, with the 20km buffer from the outermost turbines (and ZTV analysis) not even extending as far as the town of Kilkee. In the portion of the LCA that is within the 20km LVIA study area, there is close to full theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines, except for on the immediate outskirts of Kilkee. Viewpoints PL7 and PL8 17 are located within this LCA.
Cumulative Baseline	There are two existing wind farms within this LCA. Other wind farms in adjacent LCAs are also visible in parts of this LCA.
Cumulative Landscape Status	The LCA is classified as a “2. Landscape character area with occasional wind turbines in it and/or intervisible in another landscape character area/s” according to the definitions in Table 1.8 of Appendix 13-1 of the EIAR.
Cumulative Landscape Effects	The proposed development will add to the overall number of turbines visible from the LCA but not change the status identified above as a result of the number of turbines already in existence and permitted in adjacent LCAs but still visible from this LCA. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered Slight .
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	Although the overall sensitivity of this LCA to wind farm development is deemed to be “High”, the fact that the proposed development is two LCAs removed from this LCA, is considered to lessen the sensitivity of the LCA to this particular development. Therefore, the sensitivity is considered Medium .
Magnitude of Change	Slight . - The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium to short term and/or reversible.

Significance of Effect	Medium x Slight = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2017) An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Mitigation Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The landscape receptors of high sensitivity are located at the coast where visual amenity value is afforded by the coastline, scenic landscape views are focussed north or south along the coast or westerly in an offshore direction. Views inland towards the proposed development, are not of high amenity value and are of a landscape designated for wind energy development by Clare County Council. ➤ Siting and design were developed in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) for Transitional Marginal Land landscape character types.

LCA 3 – Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch	
Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	The proposed turbines are located approximately 14 km away from the closest part of this LCA.
LCA Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An area of coastal plateau and farmland gently sloping inwards towards the coast and rivers. ➤ Liscannor stone walls with slatey appearance are highly distinctive and widely used throughout the area. ➤ Popular tourist centres at Cliffs of Moher, Lahinch and Liscannor. ➤ Extensive coastal views are afforded from bays and plateau. ➤ Away from the coastal road, it is increasingly remote and an isolated sense is retained. ➤ Character of sea strongly affects the area.
Visibility within LCA	Only the southern-most portion of this LCA falls within the LVIA study area, within the 20km buffer from the outermost turbines (and ZTV analysis). In the portion of the LCA that is within the 20km LVIA study area, there is only theoretical visibility west of Liscannor northwest of Liscannor Bay. Viewpoint PL12 is located within this LCA.
Cumulative Baseline	There are no existing wind farms within this LCA. Wind farms in the Slieve Callan Upland LCA are visible from areas within this LCA.
Cumulative Landscape Status	The LCA is classified as a “2. Landscape character area with occasional wind turbines in it and/or intervisible in another landscape character area/s” according to the definitions in Table 1.8 of Appendix 13-1 of the EIAR.
Cumulative Landscape Effects	The proposed development will add to the cumulative landscape effects but not change the status identified above. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered Low .
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	Although the overall sensitivity of this LCA to wind farm development is deemed to be “ High ”, the fact that the proposed development is two LCAs and 14+km removed from this LCA, is considered to lessen the sensitivity of the LCA to this particular development.

Magnitude of Change	Negligible - A change affecting smaller areas of landscape character including the loss of some landscape elements or the addition of features or elements which are either of low value or hardly noticeable. The effects could be short term and/or reversible.
Significance of Effect	High x Negligible = Minor/Negligible = Not Significant (EPA, 2017) An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
Mitigation Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Landscape effects are indirect, turbines of the proposed development are only visible from this LCA as a distance greater than 18 km and will only be seen as a background landscape element from within this LCA. ➤ The sea and coastline are strong defining characteristics of this LCA, therefore, landscape views are directed along the coast or in an offshore direction and not focussed inland towards the proposed development. The proposed development will not impact the coastal character of this landscape. ➤ All proposed turbines are located in a landscape designated for wind energy development by the Clare Wind Energy Strategy in the CCDP. ➤ Siting and design were developed in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) for Transitional Marginal Land landscape character types.

LCA 18 – Shannon Estuary Farmlands	
Distance from Site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	The proposed turbines are located approximately 10 km away from the closest part of this LCA.
LCA Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prominently ridged landscape, with linear hills aligned south-west to north-east. ➤ Secluded areas interspersed with more open views. Views are afforded across the Shannon estuary and across to Limerick from elevated areas and on the estuary shores. ➤ Coastal fringe is flatter and slopes down towards the sea. ➤ Diverse habitat and land cover. ➤ Scatterry Island is an important historical and focal feature. ➤ Complex patterns of pasture, woodland and scrub habitats. ➤ Old Vandeleur Estate plantations, gardens and restored woodland recreation area.
Visibility within LCA	There is theoretical visibility of 7-10 of the proposed turbines from approximately 35% of this LCA but is likely to be less in reality.
Cumulative Baseline	There is one permitted wind farm within this LCA, that being the five-turbine Moneypoint development.
Cumulative Landscape Status	The LCA is classified as a “2. Landscape character area with occasional wind turbines in it and/or intervisible in another landscape character area/s” according to the definitions in Table 1.8 of Appendix 13-1 of the EIAR.

Cumulative Landscape Effects	<p>The proposed development will add to the overall number of turbines visible from the LCA but not change the status identified above as a result of the number of turbines already in existence and permitted in adjacent LCA but still visible from this LCA. Therefore, cumulative landscape effects are considered Slight.</p>
Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Farm Development	<p>Medium. Wind farm development is considered as Acceptable in Principle in a large portion of this LCA. The Shannon Estuary is the key landscape feature, and the proposed development will not form part of the same view as the Estuary from any part of this LCA.</p>
Magnitude of Change	<p>Slight - The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium to short term and/or reversible.</p>
Significance of Effect	<p>Medium x Slight = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2017) An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.</p>
Mitigation Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The landscape receptors of high sensitivity are located at the Shannon Estuary where visual amenity value is afforded by the coastline. Scenic landscape views are focussed south towards the Estuary. Views inland (north) towards the proposed development, are not of high amenity value and are of a landscape designated for as Acceptable In Principle wind energy development by Clare County Council. ➤ Siting and design were developed in accordance with the DoEHLG guidelines (2006) for Transitional Marginal Land landscape character types.