

Appendix 13.1

Castlebanny Wind Farm: Visual Impact Assessment at all Viewpoints

13.1 (a) – Appraisal of Visual Receptor Sensitivity

13.1 (b) – Appraisal of Visual Impact Magnitude



Appendix 13.1(a)

Appraisal of Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Degree of Association within each Criterion

Strong association	Moderate association	Mild association	Negligible association

Receptor Sensitivity Criterion and Analysis at each Viewshed Reference Point (VRP)

Susceptibility / Values associated with the view	VP1	VP2	VP3	VP4	VP5	VP6	VP7	VP8	VP9	VP10
Susceptibility of receptor group to changes in view										
Recognised scenic value of the view										
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas										
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)										
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										
Visual Receptor Sensitivity	ML	ML	M	HM	HM	ML	ML	M	ML	ML

N = Negligible; L = low sensitivity; ML = medium-low sensitivity M = medium sensitivity; HM = High-medium sensitivity; H = high sensitivity; VH = very high sensitivity.

Degree of Association within each Criterion

Strong association	Moderate association	Mild association	Negligible association

Receptor Sensitivity Criterion and Analysis at each Viewshed Reference Point (VRP)

Susceptibility / Values associated with the view	VP11	VP12	VP13	VP14	VP15	VP16	VP17	VP18	VP19	VP20
Susceptibility of receptor group to changes in view										
Recognised scenic value of the view										
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas										
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)										
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										
Visual Receptor Sensitivity	ML	L	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	L	M	ML

N = Negligible; L = low sensitivity; ML = medium-low sensitivity M = medium sensitivity; HM = High-medium sensitivity; H = high sensitivity; VH = very high sensitivity.

Degree of Association within each Criterion

Strong association	Moderate association	Mild association	Negligible association

Receptor Sensitivity Criterion and Analysis at each Viewshed Reference Point (VRP)

Susceptibility / Values associated with the view	VP21	VP22	VP23	VP24	VP25	VP26	VP27	VP28	VP29	VP30
Susceptibility of receptor group to changes in view										
Recognised scenic value of the view										
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas										
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)										
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										
Visual Receptor Sensitivity	M	ML	HM	ML	M	HM	M	M	HM	ML

N = Negligible; L = low sensitivity; ML = medium-low sensitivity M = medium sensitivity; HM = High-medium sensitivity; H = high sensitivity; VH = very high sensitivity.

Degree of Association within each Criterion

Strong association	Moderate association	Mild association	Negligible association

Receptor Sensitivity Criterion and Analysis at each Viewshed Reference Point (VRP)

Susceptibility / Values associated with the view	VP31	VP32	VP33	VP34	VP35	VP36	VP37	VP38
Susceptibility of receptor group to changes in view								
Recognised scenic value of the view								
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas								
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)								
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								
Visual Receptor Sensitivity	HM	ML	M	M	HM	ML	ML	ML

N = Negligible; L = low sensitivity; ML = medium-low sensitivity M = medium sensitivity; HM = High-medium sensitivity; H = high sensitivity; VH = very high sensitivity.

Appendix 13.1(b)

Appraisal of Visual Impact Magnitude

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP1	N10 National Route	SE	14.7km	16
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major route • Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>By way of context, the N10 connects the southern ring road surrounding Kilkenny City with the M9 Junction 9 exit and overpass. This location along the N10 is adjacent to numerous residences, and is located approx. 6km south of the southern suburbs of Kilkenny City. It is also located adjacent to the roadside grounds of the Danesfort GAA Club.</p> <p>This view is centred southeast along a straight, long stretch of the N10. Aside from the wide national road, well maintained grass verges and other vegetation are apparent in the foreground, as is a large three-storey building to the east of the road, and fencing for Danesfort GAA ground to the west of the road. In the distance, the low, even profile of Castlebanny hill can be discerned.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>In terms of visual presence, up to 19 of the proposed turbines will be partially or fully visible, at distance of more than 14km, and as a cohesive cluster upon a low, distant hill. Because the proposed development will be along/above the road alignment for southbound road users, and because views are further funnelled by mature roadside trees, the proposed development will be more noticeable than it might otherwise be at this distance. In light of their low contrast against the sky, and the atmospheric perspective over such a considerable distance, the visibility of the scheme from this location will not be conspicuous. Thus, the visual presence is deemed to be in the region of sub-dominant to minimal.</p> <p>There will be a number of instances of turbine overlap, but any clutter or distraction associated with these effects will be heavily diluted by the viewing distance. The proposed wind farm will be seen in a legible manner on a distant rural ridge and will not appear out of context in that context, and in a study area where wind energy is familiar form of development.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium-low	Low	Slight	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP2	Bennettsbridge	S	15.1km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre of population Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	This location is from within the Bennettsbridge GAA Club grounds, on the north side of the town, and offers the most unimpeded view in the direction of the site that could be attained from the town. The grounds are also within 300m of the River Nore, the Dublin-Waterford InterCity rail line and the East End Football Club.			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Owing to intervening buildings and vegetation over the course of approx. 15km, no aspect or element of the proposed development will be attained from this location.</p> <p>As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium-low	Negligible	Imperceptible	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP3	Kilkenny County protected view (V20)	SE	10.5km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated scenic view 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium			
Existing View	<p>This designated scenic view is along a local road on the northern side of the Kings River, approx. 500m west of the numerous residences at Rivergrove townland. Near and adjacent to this location, there are further residences. Of the 32 designated protected views listed in Appendix H of the Kilkenny CDP, this is: “V20: Views south over King’s river valley on Road no. LS5067 between Kells and the R713 (Waterford Road).”</p> <p>The visual amenity inherent in this scene is that of the wooded and picturesque King’s River valley, in the fore-mid ground. However, owing to mature trees on the steep, southern bank of the river, it is challenging to discern elements in the</p>			

	landscape beyond approx. 1km distance, if not 500m.		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Owing to the aforementioned intervening mature vegetation, the only aspect of the proposed development that is likely to be discernible from this location is the blade tips of several of the proposed turbines rotating amongst the intervening tree tops. However, in light of the low degree of contrast against the sky and the more compelling fore-mid-ground, it is unlikely that these blade tips, at over 10km from this location, will be discerned. Even if discerned, they will have no material bearing on the inherent visual amenity.</p> <p>Consequently, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP4 North	Mount Juliet	SE	7.6km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium			
Existing View	<p>This view is from in front of the Mount Juliet hotel and golf club, and is the main, marginally-elevated view enjoyed from these buildings. The fore-middle ground of the pristine golf course, and its attendant specimen trees, provide most of the visual amenity in this scene, along with, to a lesser degree, views of the distant agricultural landscape. To the south and southeast, a line of mature Copper Beech obscure views in the direction of the site, and instead funnel views in a more easterly direction.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Owing to the aforementioned line of mature Copper Beech, no views of the proposed development will be attained from this location.</p> <p>Consequently, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	High-medium	Negligible	Imperceptible	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP4 Centre	Mount Juliet	SE	7.4km	0-3
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium			
Existing View	<p>This location upon an elevated berm is alongside the Mount Juliet entrance drive and is within 250m of the car park, hotel and clubhouse. Almost all visitors to the estate access this road, while some guests enjoy a nearby tree-lined walkway near this entrance drive. The fore-middle ground of the pristine golf course, and its attendant specimen trees, provide almost all of the visual amenity in this scene. The specimen trees largely preclude more distant views outside the estate. However, between some trees the low, distant landform of the Castlebanny hill range can be discerned.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>At this precise location, the blade tips of 2-3 proposed turbines are likely to be discerned between some of the mid-ground specimen trees, albeit at a distance of over 7km. It is likely to be the case that as one moves outwards from this location (e.g. towards and around the foreground gold course), the number of visible proposed turbines will vary between 0-3, at most, owing to the effective screen the aforementioned specimen trees will form. As a result, it's visual presence is deemed to be minimal.</p> <p>While the partially-obscured blade sets will not aid in lending clarity or cohesion to the proposed scheme, the distance of these rotating blade tips, combined with their relatively vertical imprint to the foreground trees and the tight lateral envelope is which they will be visible (i.e. in the relatively small gaps between the specimen trees), considerably reduces their potential to affect the visual amenity of this view.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	High-medium	Low-negligible	Slight	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP4 South	Mount Juliet	SE	7.1km	0

Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity & Heritage feature 		
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium		
Existing View	<p>This location upon an elevated berm is alongside the Mount Juliet entrance drive. It is within 130m of the Mount Juliet main entrance (i.e. the location of the three flags) and approx. 500m south of the main park. The fore-middle ground of the pristine golf course, and its attendant specimen trees, again provide most of the visual amenity in this scene, followed by views of the more distant agricultural fields. Owing to the foreground specimen trees, the Castlebanny hill range is almost exclusively screened.</p>		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Between and behind the foreground trees, small fragments of the proposed turbines (i.e. nacelles and/or blade sets) will have the potential to be seen from at and near this location. However, even if such fragments are discerned among the trees' foliage, they will not penetrate the skyline and will have no affect the visual amenity of this scene.</p> <p>Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.</p>		
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.</p>		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	High-medium	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP5 north	Jerpoint Abbey	S	5.6km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key view • Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium			
Existing View	<p>This location is near the public entrance, within the car park for Jerpoint Abbey. As all visitors to this nationally renowned heritage site arrive by road, all first enter through the car park, before parking and proceeding. A small visitor centre and toilet block are apparent in the foreground, as are multiple layers of mature trees, in the foreground and distance.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Owing to the aforementioned building and vegetation, there is no potential for views of the proposed development from this location.</p> <p>Consequently, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.</p>			
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.</p>			

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	High-medium	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP5 centre	Jerpoint Abbey	S	5.5km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key view • Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium			
Existing View	<p>This location is from within the ruined abbey itself, and is 'mezzanine' type area of the abbey, known as the 'dormitory.' It is an elevated, first-floor view that relates the worst-case scenario towards the proposed site from within the abbey grounds, from which commanding views out of the surrounding grounds and countryside can be attained. In the direction of the site, a particularly low hill range is apparent, cloaked in mature conifer plantations.</p> <p>Please note, there is only partial potential for theoretical visibility of the proposed development from the Jerpoint Abbey site, and as one moves from north to south through the grounds, such theoretical visibility drastically reduces from 6-10 turbines theoretically visible (in the north of the site) to 0 turbines theoretically visible in (the southern half of the site, including most of the abbey ruins. Please refer to Section 13.2.1 of the LVIA chapter for more information on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility for the proposed development).</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Owing to the aforementioned conifer plantation across the low hillside, the only aspect or element of the proposed development that will be available from this location is two rotating blade tips of two turbines amongst intervening conifer tree tops. However, these rotating blade tips are very unlikely to be noticed by even the stationary, studied visitor to Jerpoint Abbey, and their visual presence is deemed to be minimal.</p> <p>At over 5km distance, even if noticed, these distant blade tips will be unlikely to affect the visual amenity of the scene and setting. It should be noted that while this conifer plantation has the capacity to further mature, and therefore potentially screen all views of the aforementioned blade tips, like all commercial conifer plantations, the plantation is likely to be clear-felled upon maturation of the crop. According to the aforementioned Zone of Theoretical Visibility, this will likely lead to the partial visibility of up to five proposed turbines.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor	Visual Impact	Significance of Visual Impact	

	Sensitivity	Magnitude	
	High-medium	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP5 east	Jerpoint Abbey	S	5.5km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key view • Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium			
Existing View	The eastern side of the Jerpoint Abbey grounds are accessed by all visitors, on their way between the car park/visitor centre, and the central courtyard of the ruins (e.g. where the decorated cloister arcades and cross tower is located). During that walk to the centre of the abbey, their line of sight along this path is in the broader direction of the site of the proposed development.			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Owing to the tall abbey walls, as well as multiple layers of mature trees in the foreground and mid-ground, no views of the proposed development are attainable from the eastern side of the site. However, it should also be noted that even in a 'bare ground' scenario, there is a negligible degree of turbine tips that will be visible from this location (Please refer to Section 13.2.1 of the LVIA chapter for more information on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility for the proposed development).</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	High-medium	Negligible	Imperceptible	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP6 north	Thomastown	S	8.1km	10
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of population • Major route 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			

<p>Existing View</p>	<p>This location is along the R448, near the northern approach of Thomastown, when coming from Gorwan. It is adjacent to a large graveyard, and some commercial premises, although the broader area is mostly residential. By far the most elevated section of Thomastown, views stretch southwards for up to 10km from this location, and is in the line of sight of road users travelling towards the town centre.</p> <p>In this view, little of wider Thomastown can be seen from this location, as most of the town is located on lower elevations. In the foreground, to the east (i.e. left) of the regional road is a large cemetery, while residences are more common to the west of the road. South of the cemetery, a large commercial building obscures some views toward the town centre. Along the skyline to the south, the low rise of the Castlebanny hill range, with its near-horizontal, plateau-like profile draws the eye, and provides a pleasant rural backdrop to the scene.</p>		
<p>Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm</p>	<p>Along the skyline to the south, up to 14 of the proposed turbines will be visible from this location; out of which, up to 10 turbine nacelles will be visible over 8km away. The turbines will be evident and eye-catching as several stand clear and clean of the near-even ridgeline, and will represent a scale, material, form and function that was heretofore absent in this view. The proposed turbines will be made more evident by being along the sightline of road users, as well as the lack of other tall structures visible along the Castlebanny ridgeline. However, the presence of mature forestry at the turbine bases, as well as multiple vertical structures in the foreground, will marginally soften the scale of visibility. On balance, the visual presence of the proposed development is deemed to be co-dominant.</p> <p>This is a relatively cluttered view of the wind farm, even if less than half of the proposed nacelles can be clearly seen from this locale. This is due to the view along the elongated ridge that hosts the wind farm, which tends to condense the lateral extent, but at the cost of visual intensity and turbine overlap. There is some sense of the turbine layout trailing away from the viewer along the ridge due to the diminishing scale and exposure of the turbines along the length of the scheme, but at first glance the varied scale and exposure above of turbines above the skyline might also appear ambiguous. Although the arrangement of the turbines is not particularly ordered from here, it is a broad view where the vast majority of the visible skyline remains unaffected by the development.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium.</p>		
<p>Summary</p>	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.</p>		
	<p>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</p>	<p>Visual Impact Magnitude</p>	<p>Significance of Visual Impact</p>
	<p>Medium-low</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Moderate</p>

Viewshed Reference Point	Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
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VP6 centre	Thomastown	S	7.4km	3
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre of population 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>By way of context, this location is within the grounds of the Church of the Assumption and by the 'Thomastown Old Graveyard' within the heart of The town. It is a marginally elevated location overlooking the Nore valley, less than 150m below it. In this view, beyond a foreground utility pole and electricity lines, a rather verdant river valley sits below the churchyard and graveyard, with the roofs and/or upper storey of the town centre buildings evident among the vegetation. The town bridge over the Nore is also apparent, as is the low rise in the direction of the site, where pasture, woodland and a distant conifer plantation can be discerned several kilometres south of this location. Near the eastwards (i.e. left) expanse of that low hill, a telecommunications mast can also be made out against the sky.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>The blade sets of five of the proposed turbines will be partially visible from this location, though none of these will rotate clearly above the skyline. In light of the broad lateral extent of the plateau-like Castlebanny hill range, the proposed, visible turbines occupy a very narrow lateral window. Coupled with that is how busy a scene this view entails, with a number of competing visual elements, almost all of which are considerably closer than the proposed development. As a result of this, the visual presence of the proposed development is deemed to be subdominant.</p> <p>Aesthetically, the turbines will appear relatively evenly spaced, and adhere to a single cluster. While the blade sets will not raise fully above the treeline, their layout will be legible and without any turbine overlap. At over 7km distance, these background blade sets will not markedly affect the visual amenity of the view, owing to so many competing foreground and mid-distance elements. It should be noted that while this conifer plantation has the capacity to further mature, and therefore (partially) screen views of the blade tips, it is likely to be clear-felled upon maturation. According to the aforementioned Zone of Theoretical Visibility, this will likely lead to the partial visibility of up to five proposed turbines, in a bare ground scenario.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium-low	Low	Slight	

Viewshed Reference Point	Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
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VP6 South	Thomastown	S	7.1km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of population • Major route 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	The Thomastown bridge over the Nore, along the R448, is a setting of rich visual amenity, owing to the wide scenic river, riparian vegetation and old stone buildings located near the river banks. It should be noted that such scenic depth is almost exclusively derived from such elements within 200-300m of the bridge, and not further beyond. Mature trees near the river banks, and upwards of 50m beyond the banks, screen more distant views in the direction of the site.			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Owing to the aforementioned riparian vegetation, the only aspect or element of the proposed development that will be available from this location will be the rotating blade tips of two turbines marginally above and between the mid-distance treeline. In contrast to a more visually appealing and arresting and busy foreground/mid-distance, their visual presence is deemed to be minimal.</p> <p>Owing to their distance of over 7km, combined with such a busy and more appealing fore-to-mid ground, these rotating blade tips are unlikely to be noticed by the onlooker and even if noticed will not have palpable effect on the visual amenity of the scene.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium-low	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP7	Callan	SE	18.0km	6
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of population • Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	The setting of this location is by John Lockes GAA Club, alongside the playing pitches of Callan United AFC, in the centre of Callan town, in the far west of the study area. The playing pitches of both sporting clubs occupy the lions share of the view, with a housing development to its south (i.e. right). Beyond the grounds of John Lockes GAA Club, low distant hills can be discerned. However,			

	these are challenging to locate in light of the much busier and complex foreground.		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>At a distance of 18km, six of the proposed turbines can be faintly discerned upon the horizon of the distant Castlebanny range.</p> <p>The turbines will mostly stand clear and clean of the near-even ridgeline, and will represent a scale, material, form and function that was heretofore absent in this view. However, because of the broad lateral composition of this scene, as well as the range of competing foreground elements with a more considerable vertical imprint, the proposed turbines will not be strongly apparent from Callan, and their visual presence is deemed to be minimal.</p> <p>While the proposed turbines transcend the skyline, and sit astride of the far-off ridgeline, they will be a distant background feature in a discrete rural upland setting. Aside from atmospheric perspective (fading of distant objects), there will be too many competing elements in the fore-to-mid distance, and about the town itself, to detract from this typical townscape scene.</p> <p>Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be negligible.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP8	Knocktopher Abbey	SE	4.5km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity & Heritage feature • Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium			
Existing View	<p>By way of context, Knocktopher Abbey was established in the 13th century and remained in operation until the 17th Century. Adjacent to this roadside graveyard is a private, walled property and self-catering suites, located on 17 acres of mature gardens.</p> <p>In this view, a time-worn graveyard occupies the foreground, while the graveyard boundary wall and hedge, as well as mature trees and a nearby residence, preclude any further distant views in the direction of the site.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Owing to the aforementioned foreground elements, no aspect or element of the proposed development will be attainable from this location.</p> <p>Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the			

	significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP9	Ballyhale	SE	3.0km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of population • Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>The context of this view is from a small housing development at the northern end of Ballyhale (the closest settlement to the site of the proposed development) and represents the most accessible view from the village in the direction of the site.</p> <p>Alongside a community green space/play area that marks the terminal for the small housing development, a wooden fence is set beneath the northern extents of the low Castlebanny hill range. The low hillscape is a mix of pastoral fields with mature field boundaries; a deciduous woodland plantation and some rural housing.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Edging over the skyline of the nearby range, three blade sets of the proposed development will be partially visible, with a further three blade tips also visible. Their noticeability principally relates not to scale but to their blade tips rotating over the horizon 3km away, without any broader visible context of the siting, layout or spacing of the development; the manner in which the proposed turbines - with no nacelles evident - will breach the skyline will be apparent. Thus, their visual presence is deemed to be co-dominant.</p> <p>The lack of visual clarity created by the siting, layout and spacing of the turbines will lead to a degree of visual ambiguity when viewed from Ballyhale and blades sets rotating against a skyline ridge can cause distraction. There is also considerable scale disparity between two nearer skyline dwellings and the turbines blade sets beyond. Nonetheless, given the relatively close proximity of this nearest settlement to the site, the modest degree of visual exposure of the turbines above the skyline ridge tends to balance the less desirable aesthetic effects.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor	Visual Impact	Significance of Visual Impact	

	Sensitivity	Magnitude	
	Medium-low	Medium	Moderate-slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP10	Residences at Ballytarsna townland	NE/E/SE	1.8km	10
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>The context of this location is upward of 5-6 residences, with several large farm yards, located along an approx. 500m-long, dead-end local road, along the lower western slopes of the Castlebanny range. Rather than views out over lower land in the east of central study area, owing to a highly localised play on landform, the distinct visual setting - and primary visual amenity - for these residences, is that of the Castlebanny hill range.</p> <p>The fore-to-mid distance of this scene is occupied by farm houses, large farm yard buildings and farm yards, and several non-native, mature conifers. The near-horizontal, plateau-like profile of Castlebanny hill range is situated less than 2km beyond, with its mix of commercial conifer forestry and pastoral farmland.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Laid out across the ridgeline at the centre of the scene, up to 12 proposed turbines will be visible from this location. The turbines will be evident and eye-catching as they stand clear and clean of the near-even ridgeline, and will represent a scale, material, form and function that was heretofore absent in this view. However, there will be some tall, foreground vegetation to partially screen the broader proposed development from this location, or provide visual absorption. The proposed development is prominent within this view without being spatially overbearing and overall, the visual presence of the wind farm is deemed to be dominant.</p> <p>From this location the proposed turbines will be highly conspicuous, yet their layout will respond to the topographic profile of the underlying landform. That layout will also be uniform, coherent and legible, engendering an appreciable sense of depth and regular spacing created by the turbines with few cases of turbine overlap. The proposed development will affect the landscape character of the central study area and will greatly expand the scale and intensity of built development within this view.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be High-medium.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	

	Medium-low	High-medium	Moderate
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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP11 north	Mountain View Golf Course	E/SE	1.2km	21
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity & Heritage feature • Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>The context of this setting is third class road running along the western slopes of the Castlebanny hill range. There are approx. 10 residences located within 500m of this location, along this local road, and it is within 1.3km from the nearest proposed turbine (i.e. T21). This location is also within 100m of the 120-acre Mountain View golf course, which lies downslope to the west.</p> <p>Along much of the eastern side of this road (i.e. in the direction of the site) there is a dearth of tall or mature roadside planting, allowing for relatively open views, in the direction of the site. Tillage is practised in the large roadside fields, with numerous utility poles (supporting a 38kV power line) transcending the skyline. At a marginally higher elevation more than 500m away, smaller fields of pasture are present (demarcated with field boundaries with an inconsistent degree of mature trees), as well as large blocks of relatively mature conifers.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Along the skyline to the east and southeast, and within 1.3km in places, the proposed windfarm will be conspicuous and highly apparent from this roadside location, owing to their scale, their relative proximity and lack of foreground screening. The turbines will not be spatially overbearing in relation to the viewer, but they are by far the most distinctive feature within this otherwise typical rural scene and the lateral extent of the array is considerable covering the south-eastern quarter. Consequently, the visual presence of the development is deemed to be Dominant.</p> <p>The layout of the proposed turbines will instil a strong degree of aesthetic order and clarity to the development, with very limited potential for visual stacking, confusion or tension. The spatial extent of this wind energy development will be balanced and in scale with its topography and broad landscape pattern and there is a strong sense of diminishing perspective as the turbines trail away from the viewer along the ridgeline. The staggered linear layout complements this elongated ridgeline setting and the spacing will be relatively even and coherent, aiding legibility of the scheme layout. While the landscape character of the central study area had previously been informed by wind energy development, the proposed turbines will generate a more abrupt transition of that character, while reducing its more traditional, bucolic visual amenity.</p> <p>Consequently, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be High-medium.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	High-medium	Moderate

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP11 south	Mountain View Golf Course	E/SE	1.5km	1
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity & Heritage feature • Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>This location is at the entrance to the aforementioned Mount View Golf Course, located near a T-junction of local roads. There are approx. 8 residences located within approx. 250m of this location. In this view, the golf course/club entrance occupies much of the north of the road, while rural residences can be seen in close proximity. At the top of road, there are multiple layers of mature trees to the rear of these roadside properties, which tend to screen most views in the direction of the site.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Owing primarily to the aforementioned vegetation, only the blade sets of two of the proposed turbines will be visible above the treeline; a segment of two other blades set will be visible between branches, with the blade tip of a fifth turbine partially visible above the skyline. Their noticeability principally relates not to scale but to their blade sets/tips rotating over a near or mid-distance horizon, without any broader visible context of the siting, layout or spacing of the development. As the proposed turbines will also be along a similar sightline of road users travelling east (e.g. from Ballyhale to Mountain View) - and at a distance of less than 2km - the proposed development will be more apparent than it might otherwise be. Thus, it's visual presence is deemed to be subdominant.</p> <p>Aesthetically, the lack of visual clarity regarding the context of the turbines will lead to a degree of visual confusion and tension when viewed from this location as partial blade sets rotate between and beyond different foreground elements of the scene. However, owing to the lack of visibility of the broader proposed development, there will not be a marked effect on the visual amenity of the scene.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium-low.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	

	Medium-low	Medium-low	Slight
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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP12	M9 overpass west of site	NE/E/SE	5.5km	21
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major route 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Low			
Existing View	<p>Please note: owing to the severe and punitive health & safety risks associated with stopping on a motorway, no representative viewpoints were or will be captured from the M9 itself. As is common practise, alternative viewpoints were, instead, captured from overpasses over this important and busy motorway. However, the marginally elevated view attributed to such overpasses is not necessarily reflective of the motorways beneath them, which can be within cuttings/embankments to either side, and/or mature/semi-mature tree aligning such motorways, both of which tend to preclude views outside the motorway corridor.</p> <p>On this M9 overpass, aside from extensive views north and south up/down the M9 motorway channel, there are views to the east to the low Castlebanny hill range. Between the motorway and the hill, there is a mix of forestry and pastoral farmland, as well as some scrub, while the near-horizontal ridgeline of the hill is populated with forestry and pasture. More than 10km southeast of this view, the seven turbines of the Ballymartin Wind Farm can be faintly discerned, owing to the effects of atmospheric perspective.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>At over 5km distance, and laid out across the ridgeline at the centre of the scene, all 21 proposed turbines and 100m-high met mast will be visible from this location with a broad lateral extent. The turbines will be evident and eye-catching as they stand clear and clean of the near-even ridgeline, and will serve to escalate a scale, material and form that had been formerly present in this view. In addition, there will be no tall, foreground vegetation to partially screen the proposed development from this location, or provide visual absorption. For these reasons, the proposed development is deemed to have a visual presence of co-dominant in the overall context of this broad vista.</p> <p>Aesthetically, in spite of four cases of visual stacking of the proposed blade sets, a strong degree of compositional balance and harmony will be achieved by the proposed siting and layout of the turbines, which will be in scale with its setting. In all instances, the proposed blade sets will rotate clear of the ridgeline, thereby facilitating legibility of the scheme. The spatial extent of this wind energy development will be balanced and in scale with its topography and broader landscape context, while its staggered linear layout complements its elongated ridgeline setting. While it will be just one of a couple of wind energy developments in view, there will be little visual crossover between the two developments, when viewed from this angle and distance.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium low.</p>			

Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Low	Medium low	Slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP13	Bearna Breac Loop	E	17.4km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	This location in the far west of the study area is near the small village of Windgap and is located more than 17km from the nearest proposed turbine (T21). It is the upland setting of the Bearna Breac Loop walk, which starts and ends in Windgap. This view is one of pastoral agriculture in a scenic hillside setting. In the distant east of the view, a small segment of the hillscape of Castlebanny can be faintly discerned, albeit with some difficulty, owing to atmospheric perspective.			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	Primarily owing to landform, as well as intervening mature trees, the only aspect of the proposed development that will be seen from this location is the blade tips of two turbines, emerging over the distant skyline. However, at such a distance, even if these two rotating turbine tips were faintly discerned, they will have no bearing on the inherent visual amenity of this scene and setting. Consequently, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible .			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium-low	Negligible	Imperceptible	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP14	Knockmoylan townland	NE	3.7km	21
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			

Existing View	<p>Located less than 4km from the site of the proposed development, the setting of this location is that of a quiet third class road in a strongly agricultural domain in the west of the study area. The view enjoyed at this location is representative of numerous rural residences located along the west of this local road. Owing to the low height of roadside vegetation, open views of the low Castlebanny landform are attained from this location. The near-horizontal, plateau-like profile of this range, combined with a considerable spread of commercial forestry across it, are particularly evident. Along the south of the range (i.e. towards the right), the seven turbines of the Ballymartin Wind Farm can be discerned.</p>		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>All of the proposed turbines will be prominent along this stretch of the road, with all blade sets rotating clear of any intervening vegetation. Owing to their scale, their relative proximity and lack of foreground screening, the turbines and proposed met mast will be conspicuous and will have a broad lateral extent. However, they will not spatially dominate the vista or present as overbearing features from this location. For these reasons, their visual presence is deemed to be in the order of dominant to co-dominant.</p> <p>From this location, the layout of the proposed turbines will infuse an aesthetic order and clarity to the development, with very limited potential for visual stacking (i.e. just two cases visible), confusion or tension. The spatial extent of the proposed turbines will be balanced with its topography and broad landscape pattern. Its staggered linear layout will be suitable to its elongated ridgeline setting, while its positioning of turbines within, between and in the direct vicinity to existing mature forestry prevents a sense of the turbines being over-scaled for this land use context. While the landscape character of this scene had previously been informed by wind energy development, the proposed turbines will generate a more abrupt and overt contribution to that character, while reducing its more traditional, rural visual amenity. Aesthetically, owing to the size and number of turbines in the two respective wind energy schemes, albeit in the one broader setting, the proposed development will not be read as an extension of the pre-existing Ballymartin Wind Farm, but will be viewed as two distinct developments.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be High-medium.</p>		
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.</p>		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	High-Medium	Moderate

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP15	Redacres townland	NE	4.8km	20
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 			

Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low		
Existing View	Redacres townland is in a richly agricultural domain, about 3.5km northwest of Mullinavat. Owing to the low height of roadside vegetation, open views of the low Castlebanny landform are attained from this location; notably its near-horizontal, plateau-like profile, combined with a considerable spread of commercial forestry across it. Along the south of the range (i.e. towards the right), five of the seven turbines of the Ballymartin Wind Farm can be faintly discerned, approx. 6.5km east of this viewpoint.		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>All of the proposed turbines will be apparent along this stretch of the road, with all but one blade set rotating clear of any intervening vegetation. Owing to their scale, and lack of foreground screening, the turbines will be very evident at this location with a broad lateral extent. However, they will not spatially dominate the vista or appear overbearing in terms of scale. For these reasons, their visual presence is deemed to be in the order of dominant to co-dominant.</p> <p>At almost 5km distance, the layout of the proposed turbines will permeate an aesthetic lucidity to the development, with very limited visual stacking (i.e. four cases visible) or disharmony. The spatial extent of the proposed turbines will be appropriate to the terrain beneath them, and the extensive landscape context, as will be its staggered linear layout. While the landscape character of this scene had previously been informed by wind energy development, the proposed turbines will instil a more immediate and manifest transition of that character, while reducing its more established visual amenity. Owing to the size and number of turbines in the two respective wind energy schemes, albeit across one broader ridgeline, the proposed development will not be read as an extension of the pre-existing Ballymartin Wind, but distinct developments.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Medium	Moderate-slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP16	R704 south of site	N	1.7km	4
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major route • Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	The R704 connects the M9 and Mullinavat with New Ross, and, in one location, passes within 1.7km south of the nearest proposed turbine (i.e. T1). At this			

	location, it dissects, in a general east-west fashion, the most southern slopes of the Castlebanny hill range; a location where commercial forestry blocks are almost as prevalent as pastoral fields. At this position along the regional road, roadside vegetation is relatively low, allowing for partially-open views in the direction of the proposed development. However, wind energy informs the landscape character of this area, owing to the presence of the Ballymartin wind farm approx. 3km east of this location.		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Located from 1.7km north of this location, eight blade sets will be discerned above and between roadside vegetation; of which, only one will be likely to rotate clearly above intervening vegetation. Their lateral scale will be relatively contained within the broader terrain, and their noticeability principally relates not to scale but to their blade tips rotating over the horizon less than 2km away. Thus, their visual presence is deemed to be in the order of co-dominant to subdominant.</p> <p>Aesthetically, although most of the turbines are partially obscured by either vegetation or landform, their layout and spacing is broadly coherent, with a legible sense of depth as the proposed development ‘recedes’ in a northerly direction. While the proposal will be a noticeable element in the landscape, they are not at odds with this productive rural setting. Although the proposed development will mark a marginal intensification in landscape character within the view, the proposed layout will also be well-balanced with its topographic profile and scale, and at no point along the R704 have the proposed turbines the capacity to become visually or spatially dominating.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium-low.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Medium-low	Slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP17	Mullinavat	NE	5.0km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of population • Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>Mullinavat is the most sizeable settlement in the study area, albeit a location fringing the boundaries of the central study, and this location is within 200m of the Mullinavat GAA Club, Mullinavat Community Centre and St. Beacons School, and less than 50m from the River Blackwater.</p> <p>To the south of the view (i.e. right), the access drive to Mullinavat Community</p>			

	Centre and St. Beacons School is visible, but the scene largely constitutes one of relatively small pastoral, lowland fields with inconsistent vegetation in the field boundaries and multiple utility poles/energy infrastructure; an aesthetic that characterises this highly localised sense of place. To the northeast, the marginal lift in landform in the direction of the site can be seen, with numerous stacked hedgerows/trees ascending toward the skyline, as well as building rears along the more northern approach of Mullinavat's main street.		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Two blade sets will be partially visible above and through the skyline vegetation, while the blade tips of a further six turbines will be discerned. Although 5km away, any noticeability of the proposed development will be mostly derived from rotating blades above the skyline, without any broader visible context of the siting, layout or spacing of the development. For these reasons, the visual presence is deemed to be sub-dominant.</p> <p>The lack of visual clarity created by the layout and siting of the turbines will lead to a minor degree of visual confusion and disharmony when viewed from this location. The rotating blade sets and tips above a hillside will not assist the viewer in reading the wind farm within the context of the landscape. However, owing to the lack of visibility of the considerably more proposed turbines, there will not be a marked effect on the visual amenity of the scene.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Low	Slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP18	M9 overpass south of site	NE	6.5km	19
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major route 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Low			
Existing View	<p>Please note: owing to the severe and punitive health & safety risks associated with stopping on a motorway, no representative viewpoints were or will be captured from the M9 itself. As is common practise, alternative viewpoints were, instead, captured from overpasses over this important and busy motorway. However, the marginally elevated view attributed to such overpasses is not necessarily reflective of the motorways beneath them, which can be within cuttings/embankments to either side, and/or mature/semi-mature tree aligning such motorways, both of which tend to preclude views outside the motorway corridor.</p> <p>On this M9 overpass, there are extensive views north and south up/down the</p>			

	M9 motorway channel, including views to the northeast to the low Castlebanny hill range. In the busy and detailed, fore-to-middle ground, the scale of the vast cutting and embankment created to facilitate the motorway are apparent, as are utility poles supporting energy infrastructure, as well as distant pastoral fields.		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>In this view, the 'visual channel' of the M9, as it turns to the northeast, is also in the line of site of the proposed development. In that regard, the view from this overpass appears to be broadly similar to road users along the M9, as they travel northwards. Upon the skyline, over 6km away, all of the proposed turbines will be visible, with the vast majority of blade sets rotating above the skyline. The turbines will be evident and eye-catching as they mostly stand clear and clean of the near-even ridgeline. For these reasons, the proposed development is deemed to have a visual presence of co-dominant to subdominant, in the overall context of this broad vista.</p> <p>Although there are six cases of turbine overlap, a reasonable degree of compositional balance and harmony will be achieved by the proposed siting and layout of the turbines. The spatial extent of this wind energy development will be balanced and broadly in scale with its topography and underlying land cover. However, as the proposed turbines will be viewed from the southwest, the staggered linear layout across this elongated ridgeline will not read as aesthetically or lucidly as it will when viewed from due west, which will consequently generate a modest degree of visual disorder or disharmony.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium-low.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Low	Medium-low	Sight

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP19	Tory Hill	N	6.5km	20
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium			
Existing View	<p>Less than 7km south of the nearest proposed turbine (i.e. T1) is Tory Hill/Sliabh Greine (293m AOD) loop (National Loop Walk): a stand-alone, conical-type hill under commercial conifer plantations. However, as much of the forestry has been recently felled, it allows for extensive, elevated views in the direction of the site. It should be noted that there are no residences, or other buildings, located upon this hill, and the view recorded from it is not representative of any residences, all of which are located at considerably lower elevations.</p> <p>From this advantageous viewpoint, the broad patchwork of pasture and tillage fields, as well as woodland scrub, commercial conifer plantations and wind</p>			

	energy development inform the landscape character of the southern slopes of the Castlebanny range. To the northeast, the seven turbines of the Ballymartin Wind Farm can be clearly seen, which are part of the landscape fabric of this lowland, highly modified rural scene. Along the skyline to the north, the low rise of the Castlebanny hill range, with its near-horizontal, plateau-like profile, is evident, contributing to the visual amenity of this scene.		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>All of the proposed turbines will be visible from this location, and all but one blade set will rotate clearly above the ridgeline. The array is tightly clustered in this view along the Castlebanny ridge, but what it loses in spatial extent it gains in turbine density and overall development intensity. It should also be noted that the most northern turbine, and therefore most distant from this location (i.e. T20), is more than 12km from this location; such is the length of the proposed layout. For these reasons, the proposed development is deemed to have a visual presence of co-dominant or subdominant, in the overall context of this broad vista.</p> <p>Most of the blade sets in this view experience turbine overlap, resulting in little compositional balance and harmony achieved by the proposed siting and layout of the turbines. As the proposed turbines will be viewed from the south, the staggered linear layout across this elongated ridgeline will be neither lucid nor aesthetic, which will consequently generate a distinct degree of visual clutter reducing the visual amenity of the scene. However, wind energy development is already a characteristic feature of this view and the proposed development is well integrated in terms of form and function within this broad and productive rural landscape.</p> <p>Consequently, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Medium	Moderate-slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP20	Waterford City	N	15.9km	10
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre of population 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	This location is from an elevated road within Waterford City. Over a stone wall in the foreground, the distant lowland expanse of the lower study area can be discerned. Aside from the city's periphery, little else can be determined until the lift of landform on the skyline, the most abrupt of which signals Tory Hill (i.e. as per VP19).			

Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Almost 16km distance away, the partial blade sets and blade tips of up to 15 proposed turbines will have the potential to be discerned from this location. However, owing to distance, atmospheric perspective and the compact or huddled lateral spread of the proposed turbines, the proposed development will appear as a faint and distant background feature from Waterford City and is deemed to have a minimal visual presence.</p> <p>Aesthetically, this view of the turbines is not ideal as there are numerous instances of turbine overlap and blade sets rotating against the intervening slopes of the Tory Hill ridgeline. However, such effects are strongly diluted by viewing distance and the overall magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP21	Faithlegg townland	NW	18.8km	3
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated scenic route • Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium			
Existing View	<p>This located is taken from the roadside, and marginally elevated, graveyard at Faithlegg townland. This location is along a Country Waterford designated scenic route, and is opposite the ground of Faithlegg Country House Hotel and golf course.</p> <p>In this view, above the roofs of foreground houses within the Faithlegg estate, the distant land profile of the central study is faintly discernible. However, it should be noted that this view in the direction of the site is not available from the scenic route itself, owing to the roadside wall.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>At over 18km distance away, the partial blade sets and blade tips of up to 11 proposed turbines will have the potential to be faintly discerned from this location. However, owing to distance, atmospheric perspective and a distant, intervening ridgeline, the proposed development is unlikely to be noticed by a casual observer from Faithlegg or this designated scenic route and it will not materially detract from visual amenity in any event.</p> <p>Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP22	N25	NW	9.8km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major route 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	The busy N25 links Waterford City with New Ross. At this location, almost 10km southeast of the site, a clearing in roadside vegetation allows for the potential of more distant views in the direction of the site. In this view, pastoral fields and mature hedgerows can be seen.			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	Owing to intervening layers of vegetation over the course of 9.8km, the proposed development will not be visible from this location. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible .			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium-low	Negligible	Imperceptible	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP23	Slieve Coiltia	NW	15.7km	18
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium			
Existing View	In the far southeast of the study area, in Co. Wexford, is Sliabh Coiltia (270m AOD), a low conical-type hill with public car park, trails and lookout points at its summit. In this view from the summit, the lowland Barrow valley can be seen. Aside from the N25/New Ross by-pass bridge and the verdant, agricultural lands of southwest Wexford and southeast Kilkenny can be seen. Upon a low, subtle rise on the skyline is the central study area.			

Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>In terms of visual presence, the proposed turbines will be seen as small-scale features from this distance, but the overall scheme has a broad lateral extent. Nonetheless, in the context of this wide panorama the wind farm only occupies around 15 degrees of the overall panorama and the turbines will be seen with a low degree of contrast against a backdrop of sky.</p> <p>Aesthetically, there is some visual clutter generated by the occasional overlapping of turbines and the profile of fully and partially revealed turbines is slightly more undulating than the flat underlying ridge. However, this effects is counteracted somewhat by the broad horizon arrangement of the overall scheme. As a distant background feature of a productive rural landscape, the proposed wind farm will not noticeably draw from visually amenity at this hilltop location.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible</p>		
Summary	<p>Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.</p>		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	High-medium	Low-negligible	Slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP24	New Ross/N30	NW	12.9km	8
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major route • Centre of population 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>This location is from the side of the N30 (national road), as it passes north-south through the relatively elevated, northern outskirts of New Ross. In the foreground, an extensive two-storey housing development anchors this busy scene, beyond which comparatively lower, agricultural rural land, with rich, tree-lined field boundaries, can be seen. More than 10km to the west and northwest, low hills located within or near the central study area can be seen. Although the effects of atmospheric perspective dilute the clarity of such longer-distance views, the five turbines of the Rahora Wind Farm can be faintly discerned upon a distant ridgeline to the west.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Although from an advantageous, relatively elevated position, at a distance of over 12km, the proposed turbines will be noticeable, but not prominent from this location. Elements of 19 proposed turbines will rise above the distant skyline ridge, although this mostly will entail blade tips and incomplete blade sets. Only 6 blade sets will rotate clear of the intervening ridgeline, while the profile of all blade tips remains lower, and less apparent, than the five turbines of the Rahora Wind Farm. The visual presence of the proposed development is</p>			

	<p>deemed to be sub-dominant to minimal in this broad and diverse vista.</p> <p>Aesthetically, the proposed development will reveal evenly-spaced turbines that follow the flow of the terrain, over several kilometres, and complement the landform underneath. The turbine layout, spacing and location will be broadly compatible with the Rahora Wind Farm turbines further to the west. The proposal intrudes to a minor extent into the available vista, but will not have a patent effect on the visual amenity of the multifaceted anthropogenic scene.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	Low	Slight

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP25	South Leinster Way – Southeast of site	NW	3.0km	13
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium			
Existing View	<p>This location is along a roadside (and route of the South Leinster way) on the eastern elevations of the Arrigle River valley. The roadside embankment along this road tends to preclude open views in the direction of the site, although occasionally gaps in vegetation, or a lowering of the embankment, allow for views such as this. It is a scene of layered agricultural land use, with an abundant degree of pasture and 'one off' rural housing about the valley. On the west side of the valley, the Castlebanny hill range is, from this perspective, mostly cloaked in mature forestry.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Laid out across the ridgeline at the centre of the scene, elements of 18 proposed turbines will be visible from this location at a relatively prominent scale; in some cases merely blade tips, but, in other cases, 13 full blade sets will be visible. The turbines will be both patent and eye-catching across ridgeline, and will represent a scale, material, form and function that was heretofore absent in this view, although is present in the broader landscape setting. For these reasons, the proposed development is deemed to have a visual presence in the order of dominant to co-dominant in the overall context of this broad vista.</p> <p>In spite of three cases of turbine overlap, a strong degree of compositional balance and harmony will be achieved by the proposed siting and layout of the turbines, which will be, for the most part, in scale with its landscape setting.</p>			

	<p>While introducing a distinct visual change into the visible landscape, the proposed turbines will not spatially dominate the broad underlying landform and land use pattern. Furthermore, there is a sense of legibility and appropriateness in the transition from a more managed, settled and intricate landscape within the base of the valley to the broader-scale forested ridge that will host the turbines.</p> <p>On balance of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be Medium.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Medium	Moderate

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP26	Kilkenny County protected view (V6)	SW	7.9km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated scenic view • Major route 			
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium			
Existing View	The R700 connects Inistioge with New Ross, and along this stretch of the road, southeast of Inistioge, is a Co. Kilkenny designated scenic route "V6: View southwest over the Nore Valley on the Thomastown/Inistioge Road, R700 between Inistioge and the junction at Coolnamuck (LS8289)." However, for much of this section of road, a medium-high roadside hedge largely precludes views of the Nore Valley. However, the hills in the direction of the site are visible above this roadside hedge.			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Only the partial blade set of one of the proposed turbines will be visible from here in a brief depression in the skyline ridge to the southwest. It is seen at a small scale and with a low degree of contrast against a backdrop of sky, but it will be a distinctive form on the skyline that may draw a viewer's attention. Nonetheless, in the context of this broad vista over the wooded Nore valley the visual presence is deemed to be Minimal.</p> <p>Aesthetically, the view of a single turbine blade set rotating on a skyline ridge lacks context and is slightly ambiguous. However, this is counteracted considerably by the minimal degree of visual presence.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	High-medium	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP27	South Leinster Way – Northeast of site	SW	8.3km	11
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium			
Existing View	<p>This location is along the South Leinster Way, on the lower, southern foothills of what becomes Brandon Hill. There are numerous residences within 500m of this location, which enjoy views out across the Nore valley to the west and southwest. In this view, the broad lift in landform in the central study area is noticeable. The wider landscape is mostly agricultural, with conifer plantations on higher elevations.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Just over half of the proposed turbines are visible from here at a modest, but noticeable scale rising in silhouette above the skyline ridge. They will have a low degree of contrast against the sky and in the context of this broad vista their visual presence is deemed to be sub-dominant.</p> <p>Aesthetically, the turbines are seen in a clear and legible manner with relatively even spacing and a profile that matches the underlying topography. There are a couple of minor instances of turbine overlap and blade sets rotating on the skyline, but overall there is a stronger sense of order than disorder. In the context of the broad and productive landscape in view it is not considered that the proposed wind farm appears out of place or will unduly draw from the visual amenity of surrounding residents or walkers on the South Leinster Way.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium	Low	Slight	

Viewshed Reference Point	Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
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VP28	Kilkenny County protected view (V5)	SW	6.9km	3
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated scenic view 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium			
Existing View	<p>The context of this location is along a local road connecting Inistioge and Graiguenamanagh. Sections of this road is a Co. Kilkenny designated scenic route "V5: View to the southwest over Inistioge and the Nore Valley on the Inistioge/Graiguenamanagh Road (LP4210) overlooking the LS8237 (between its junctions with road numbers LS8238 and the R700)." However, for much of this section of road, a medium-high roadside hedge largely precludes views over Inistioge and the Nore Valley. However, the hills in the direction of the site are visible above this roadside hedge.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Around five of the proposed turbines are likely to be visible from here rising to varying degrees above the skyline ridge to the southwest, but partially screening by foreground vegetation. They are relatively small scale features at this distance and because their towers tend to be partially screened. Nonetheless, they are on relatively close alignment with the road and are likely to be noticed by a casual observer. Their visual presence in this scene is deemed to be subdominant.</p> <p>Aesthetically, the layout of the turbines is legible with relatively even spacing that avoids turbines overlapping with each other. There is some visual clutter generated in conjunction with foreground vegetation, but this same vegetation also partially screens the turbines. Contextually, the turbines do not appear ambiguous in this working rural landscape setting.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium	Low	Slight	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP29	Inistioge	SW	6.5km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre of Population Major route Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium			
Existing View	This location at Inistioge, by the banks of the Nore, also takes in representative			

	views of the South Leinster Way and the R700. It is an idyllic and enclosed setting that is popular for tourists and visitors in this region.		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	This location has been included for illustrative purposes only – to illustrate the absence of scheme visibility at a sensitive receptor location. Owing to intervening landform, no aspect or element of the proposed development will be visible from Inistioge and the visual impact is Negligible by default.		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	High medium	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP30	Local road near Bawnskeha townland	S	1.3km	5
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>The context of this view is that of a quiet, narrow, local road along the northern end of the Castlebanny hill range. While there is very irregular occurrence of residences in this hillscape setting, there is one residence less than 200m from this location. In the foreground of this uncomplicated rural scene, roadside cattle yards can be seen, with relatively small pastoral fields apparent, beyond which large swathes of commercial conifer plantations appear to cloak the range.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Elements of up to nine proposed turbines will be visible from this location, with five turbine nacelles apparent, and only the blade tips of four further turbines visible. At 1.3km from the nearest proposed turbine (i.e. T20), the proposed development will be an overt and conspicuous presence in this elevated terrain. The proposed development will represent a scale, material, form and function that was heretofore absent in this view, and will substantially increase the intensity of built development. The proposed turbines will be made more evident by being along the general sightline of road users, as well as the lack of other tall structures visible along the Castlebanny ridgeline. However, the presence of mature forestry at the turbine bases will fractionally soften the scale of visibility. Overall, the visual presence of the proposed development is deemed to be dominant.</p> <p>This is a relatively up-close and unambiguous view of a wind farm, even if less than half of the proposed turbines can be seen from this locale. The proposal will intrude into a reasonable proportion of the available vista and will be one of the most noticeable elements in it, but this end-on view of the northern portion of the array is also relatively consolidated. For the most part, the proposed turbines will appear evenly spaced from one another, and the receding nature</p>			

	<p>of their layout will be legible to the viewer, and faithful to the underlying landform. In terms of scale, function and context, the proposed turbines are well assimilated into this productive upland rural landscape setting and do not appear ambiguous.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be High-medium.</p>		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium-low	High-medium	Moderate

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP31	Graiguenamanagh	SW	16.0km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of Population • Amenity & Heritage 			
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium			
Existing View	This highly picturesque scene is located alongside the Barrow River, on its western bank at Graiguenamanagh. The river setting, the broad, stone arched bridge and the woodland and hills beyond serve to create a highly aesthetic setting. Like Inistioge (VP29) this is an idyllic and enclosed setting that is popular for tourists and visitors in this region.			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	This location has been included for illustrative purposes only – to illustrate the absence of scheme visibility at a sensitive receptor. Owing to intervening landform, no aspect or element of the proposed development will be visible from Graiguenamanagh and the visual impact is Negligible by default.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	High-medium	Negligible	Imperceptible	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
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VP32	The Rower	W	11.6km	10
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of Population • Major route 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>This location is at the southern approach of the R705 to the small settlement of The Rower. Broad fields of pasture occupy the foreground, while in the distance the Castlebanny hill range can be seen, approx. 11km away. While the effects of atmospheric perspective obscure much detail being revealed from the range, it is clearly a long, elongated and relatively even/horizontal hill range. In addition, along the most southern extents of this skyline, almost 3km south of the proposed turbines, all 12 turbines of the Rahora (five turbines) and Ballymartin (seven turbines) wind farms are discernible.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Set across this elongated ridgeline, elements of up to 17 proposed turbines will be discerned from this location. Seven of the blade sets will rotate freely above the skyline, while the partial blade sets or blade tips of 10 more turbines will also be visible. The turbines are seen at a modest but noticeable scale from this distance and will have a low degree of contrast against the sky. Overall, the visual presence is deemed to be subdominant in this scene.</p> <p>Aesthetically, a strong degree of clarity and rhythm will be apparent in the layout and spacing of the turbines. The proposed development will reveal evenly-spaced turbines that follow the flow of the terrain over several kilometres. Their spacing and location will be broadly compatible with the Rahora and Ballymartin Wind Farm turbines even if their scale is noticeably larger. The proposal intrudes to a minor extent into the available vista and will not have a patent effect on the visual amenity of this productive rural scene.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium-low	Low	Slight	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP33	St. Mullins	SW	14.9km	0
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of Population • Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium			

Existing View	This location within St. Mullins, near the banks of the Barrow, is from alongside the Motte & Bailey, and is within 60m of the historic cemetery at St Mullins.		
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	This location has been included for illustrative purposes only. Owing to intervening landform, no aspect or element of the proposed development will be visible from St. Mullins and the magnitude of visual impact is Negligible by default.		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP34	Foothills of Blackstairs Mountains	SW	17.9km	10
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenity & Heritage feature 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium			
Existing View	<p>The context of this view is that of the most accessible location within the public sphere that is both within the Blackstairs mountains and the study area. However, only the south-western foothills of the Blackstairs are within the study area; the more elevated ridgeline of the mountains, which runs for several kilometres in a northeast-southwest direction, is outside the study area.</p> <p>In this view, a pastoral kingdom sweeps westwards from these foothills, in this much-modified and ever evolving scene. The richness of mature tree-lined hedgerows is apparent in this scene. In addition, a number of low hills can be seen more than 10km to the west and southwest.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>At almost 18km distance from this location, the proposed development will be challenging to discern, primarily owing to atmospheric perspective and the low degree of contrast of the small scale turbines against a backdrop of sky. Upwards of 19 turbines may be faintly discerned to the southwest, although there will be no more than five blade sets rotating above the ridgeline. Overall, the visual presence is deemed to be minimal.</p> <p>Whilst the layout of the turbines is legible with a relatively even spacing and profile that reflects the underlying landform, the turbines are unlikely to be noticed by a casual observer. Even if visible, the proposed development, as a distant background feature, will not materially detract from the visual amenity of the scene.</p> <p>Consequently, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low negligible.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact
	Medium	Low-negligible	Slight-imperceptible

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP35	South Leinster Way on Brandon Hill	SW	11.1km	19
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity & Heritage feature • Designated protected view. 			
Receptor Sensitivity	High-medium			
Existing View	<p>The context of this location is from the South Leinster Way, on Brandon Hill. It is also broadly representative of designated protected viewpoint V23 from Appendix H of the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020.</p> <p>From the upland context of Brandon Hill, views of the verdant lowland sweep west and southwest in this scene. In the foreground, the conifer plantations that cloak much of Brandon Hill is evident. As the terrain lowers, pastoral farming becomes more prevalent. In the distant west and southwest, a series of low hills and ridgelines can be seen, while to the southwest the seven turbines of the Ballymartin Wind Farm can be faintly made out.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Set across this elongated ridgeline, all 21 proposed turbines will be discerned from this location. However, at over 11km, atmospheric perspective will also determine to what extent each of these turbines will or will not be visible from this location. Most of the blade sets will rotate free above the ridgeline, although several of them will be 'backdropped' by other hills further to the southwest, thereby reducing the likely visibility even further. Overall, the visual presence is deemed to be in the order of subdominant to minimal.</p> <p>If the layout will be discerned by walkers along this upland section of the waymarked trail, the staggered liner layout will be apparent, as will the even and coherent spacing down along the elongated ridgeline setting. If noticed by the observer, the proposed development will be broadly compatible with the Ballymartin Wind Farm turbines further south. The proposal intrudes to a minor extent into the available vista and will not have a marked effect on the visual amenity of the scene. In addition, the inherent landscape character of the scene has not been modified, in light of a visible, pre-existing windfarm upon the horizon.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	

	High-medium	Low	Slight
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Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP36	Arrigle Valley at Ballyvool townland	W/SW	2.4km	15
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>This location is along a roadside on the north-eastern end of the Arrigle River valley. The roadside embankment along this road often tends to preclude open views in the direction of the site, although occasionally gaps in vegetation, or a lowering of the embankment, allow for views such as this. It is a highly-modified agricultural setting, with an abundance of pasture with rich, tree-lined field boundaries, as well as some rural housing about the valley. On the west side of the valley, the Castlebanny hill range is, from this perspective, mostly cloaked in mature forestry.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Along the skyline to the west and southwest, and within 2.4km in places, the proposed windfarm will be conspicuous and highly apparent from this roadside location, owing to their scale, their relative proximity and lack of foreground screening. However, they will not spatially dominate the vista or generate a sense of overbearing. For these reasons, their visual presence is deemed to be in the order of dominant to co-dominant.</p> <p>The layout of the proposed turbines will implant a robust degree of aesthetic order and clarity as the turbines are seen in a regular, staggered linear arrangement with few instances of overlapping. The lateral extent of this wind energy development is considerable, but is balanced and in scale with its topography and broad landscape pattern. Its layout complements its elongated ridgeline setting while its positioning of turbines within, between and in the direct vicinity to existing mature forestry will also be welcome in appearing to shorten the vertical imprint of the turbines. The spacing will be relatively even and coherent, aiding legibility of the scheme for viewers. While the landscape character of the central study area had previously been informed by wind energy development, the proposed turbines will generate a more abrupt transition of that character, while reducing its more traditional, bucolic visual amenity.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be High-medium.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium-low	High-medium	Moderate	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP37	Arrigle Valley at Garrandarragh townland	NW/W/SW	2.0km	9
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>This roadside location is from within the lower elevations of the south-eastern end of the Arrigle River valley. It is a much-modified agricultural setting that has been evolving for centuries, with an abundance of pasture, with rich, tree-lined field boundaries, as well as some rural housing visible. On the west side of the valley, the Castlebanny hill range is, from this perspective, mostly cloaked in mature commercial conifer forestry. As this viewpoint is from close to the Arrigle valley floor, near an abundance of self-seeded riparian native trees, the ridgeline of the Castlebanny range is a more noticeable, eye-catching element in the landscape than it might otherwise be.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Above this verdant landscape setting 17 turbines will be visible across the Castlebanny ridgeline, though only seven of the visible proposed turbines will have blade sets rotating clear of the skyline. While the scale of the ridge top turbines will be more attention-grabbing from this low-lying elevation, the staggered layout will result in numerous turbines on the western slopes of the range being not visible, or less visible (i.e. in the case of blade tips rotating above the ridgeline). The extensive 'length' of the layout – set out over many kilometres from north to south – will also be apparent in this view. For these reasons, the visual presence is deemed to be in the order of dominant to co-dominant.</p> <p>The layout of the proposed turbines will infuse an aesthetic order and clarity to the development, with negligible visual stacking, tension or disharmony. The spatial extent of this wind energy development will be balanced and in scale with its terrain and broader landscape context. Its staggered linear layout will complement its elongated ridgeline setting while its positioning of turbines within, between and in the direct vicinity to existing mature forestry will also be welcome in appearing to reduce the vertical imprint of the turbines. The development will result in an increased intensity of built development in a rural landscape currently characterised by low levels of such development. Nonetheless, it is a productive rural scene and the turbines do not appear out of scale or context with the landscape in view.</p> <p>On balance, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be High-medium.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium-low	High-medium	Moderate	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP38	Arrigle Valley at Colnahau townland	NW/W/SW	914m	5
Representative of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community views 			
Receptor Sensitivity	Medium-low			
Existing View	<p>The context of this location is a handful of residences along a quite local road aligning segments of the eastern boundary of the site, in the elevated western reaches of the Arrigle Valley. While small pastoral fields are located near this location, large-scale blocks of commercial forestry begin within 300m, and continue to cloak much of the Castlebanny hill range. Residences in this scene, as well as further north and south along this road, tend to be orientated to avail of easterly views across the Arrigle valley and, in that regard, tend not to face towards the site of the proposed development.</p>			
Visual Impact of Castlebanny Wind Farm	<p>Of the seven proposed turbines that will be partially visible from this location, the nearest proposed turbine (i.e. T10) will be located less than 1km away and the most that can be seen of any of the turbines is a near-full blade set. Mature trees in this view will help to visually absorb the vertical scale of the proposed turbines. Nonetheless the blade sets of the visible turbines are seen at a considerable scale accentuated by the short uphill nature of the view. Though the turbines are not contained in the principle viewing direction (across the valley to the east) they will still have a dominant visual presence.</p> <p>Owing to the proximity of the proposed turbines from this location, a sense of a clear layout and spacing will be less discernible than a more distant view of the proposed scheme. However, although fragmented by mature foreground vegetation, the regular spacing of the turbines can be surmised from this roadside location. However, it will not be apparent that a staggered linear layout stretching several kilometres in length, for example, has been employed. And while only one third of the proposed turbines will be partially visible from this location, the scale of the turbines themselves are likely to negate any benefits of the remaining turbines not being visible. The proposed turbines do not appear out of place in this upland rural setting and are essentially uphill to the rear of the dwellings that line this road and not present in the principle cross-valley views to the east.</p> <p>On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be High-medium.</p>			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in Section 13.2, the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual Impact Magnitude	Significance of Visual Impact	
	Medium-low	High-medium	Moderate	

