Technical Appendix 11.1: Visual Impact Assessments at VPs

11.1a Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity is a two-sided analysis of receptor susceptibility (people or groups of people) versus the value of the view on offer at a particular location. To assess the susceptibility of viewers and the amenity value of views, the assessor uses a range of criteria and provides a four-point weighting scale to indicate how strongly the viewer/view is associated with each of the criterion identified in **Section 11.2.5** above.

Table A11.1: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Scale of Value for each criterion

Strong association	Moderate association	Mild association	Negligible association

Values associated with the view	VP1	VP2	VP3	VP4	VP5	VP6	VP7	VP8	VP9	VP10	VP11	VP12	VP13	VP14	VP15
Susceptibility of viewers to changes in views															
Recognised scenic value of the view															
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas															
Primary views from residences															
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)															
Viewer connection with the landscape															
Provision of vast, elevated panoramic views															
Sense of remoteness / tranquillity at the viewing location															
Degree of perceived naturalness															
Presence of striking or noteworthy features															
Sense of Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance															
Rarity or uniqueness of the view															

Values associated with the view	VP1	VP2	VP3	VP4	VP5	VP6	VP7	VP8	VP9	VP10	VP11	VP12	VP13	VP14	VP15
Integrity of the landscape character within the view															
Sense of place at the viewing location															
Sense of awe															
Overall sensitivity assessment	HM	H	ML	M	H	ML	H	M	H	M	M	M	ML	HM	M

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

Values associated with the view	VP16	VP17	VP18	VP19	VP20	VP21	VP22	VP23	VP24	VP25	VP26	VP26a	VP27	VP28	VP29
Susceptibility of viewers to changes in views															
Recognised scenic value of the view															
Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas															
Primary views from residences															
Intensity of use, popularity (number of viewers)															
Viewer connection with the landscape															
Provision of vast, elevated panoramic views															
Sense of remoteness / tranquillity at the viewing location															
Degree of perceived naturalness															
Presence of striking or noteworthy features															
Sense of Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance															
Rarity or uniqueness of the view															
Integrity of the landscape character within the view															
Sense of place at the viewing location															

Values associated with the view	VP16	VP17	VP18	VP19	VP20	VP21	VP22	VP23	VP24	VP25	VP26	VP26a	VP27	VP28	VP29
Sense of awe															
Overall sensitivity assessment	**ML**	**ML**	**L**	**ML**	**ML**	**ML**	**L**	**ML**	**ML**	**ML**	**VH**	**H**	**L**	**M**	**ML**

11.1b Magnitude of Visual Effects at Viewshed Reference Points

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine:	Number of turbine nacelles visible:
VP1	Local Road at Meenagrauv	SSW	17.4 km	13

Representative of:	• Cumulative views		
Receptor Sensitivity	**High medium**		
Existing View	This is a vast and elevated panoramic view to the southwest from adjacent to the Meenanilta Windfarm, which lies to the rear of the viewer at this location. The view takes in a large area of marginal grazing in the descending foreground slopes, which soon gives way to extensive commercial conifer plantations with some improved grassland between. A settled agricultural valley lies to the east, whilst the rugged profile of the Bluestacks range dominates the southward view. The existing Barnesmore turbines can just be made out on the skyline ridge at a point where steeply undulating peaks give way to a section of flatter skyline further south i.e. to the left of the Barnesmore Gap.		
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	The proposed repower turbines will rise to a noticeably greater height above the skyline than their existing counterparts. The proposed turbines will also be seen with a relatively low degree of contrast against the sky but the larger and thicker components will be more discernible. Though there are fewer proposed turbines than existing ones the visual presence of the development is increased and it is more likely to draw the eye, albeit as a distant background feature of a vast panorama. Whereas the existing turbines are deemed to have a minimal visual presence in this view, the proposed turbines have a visual presence in the order of sub-dominant to minimal. Aesthetically there is a minor degree of visual clutter from several instances of overlapping turbines, but the array is generally evenly spaced and the profile mimic that of the underlying section of ridge. Any intricacies of turbine spacing tend to be strongly diluted by the considerable viewing distance. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact for the proposed development is considered to be Low-negligible.		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP2	Donegal Way - Slí na Finne at Kilrean	S	14.6 km	0

Representative of:	• An area of Especially High Scenic Amenity in the CDP • An Amenity feature (Donegal Way)		
Receptor Sensitivity	**High**		
Existing View	This is a striking view of the Bluestacks range looking into the steeper and naturalistic heart of the mountains from its more moderate farmed slopes to the northeast. The fore-to-middle ground of this view consists of an upland valley of good and marginal grazing loosely defined by a scrubby tree-lined hedgerow pattern. Some forestry occurs on steeper transitional slopes and mountain moorland takes over on upper slopes and ridges.		
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	Only minute blade tips from around 2-3 of the proposed repowered Windfarm are potentially visible from here above the undulating skyline ridge. These are very unlikely to be noticed by a casual observer and will consequently have no material impact on the visual amenity enjoyed from within this valley and particularly from the Donegal Way. The magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be negligible.		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**
	High	**Negligible**	**Imperceptible**

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP3	N15 at Ballybofey	SW	15.8 km	7

Representative of:	• Centre of Population • Major route	
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium low**	
Existing View	This is a relatively channelled and contained view from an elevated section of the N15 on its southward approach into the settlement of Ballybofey, which generally occupies the lower portions of the valley downhill to south. The view is contained on the left hand side of the road by mature broadleaf trees and by slightly uphill dwellings to the right hand side.	

Viewshed Reference Point			Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	Above and between the tops of further mature trees on alignment with the road, sections of distant skyline ridge can be glimpsed to the southwest.				
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	This is an 'illustrative view' where even the wireframe image is indicating limited potential visibility (partial blade sets) of the proposed turbines above the distant skyline ridge. In reality (photomontage view), these turbines are fully screened by foreground vegetation and will have even less potential for visibility further downslope towards the centre of the village. Thus, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be negligible from here.				
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP4	Local road junction with N15 Northwest of Site	SE	2.2 km	4
Representative of:	• Local Community views • Major route			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium**			
Existing View	This is a cross-valley, uphill view from just south of the Barnesmore Gap. This is one of several local access roads that spur from the N15 national road between Barnesmore Gap and Donegal Town and there is a modest number of dwellings (around 30) that enjoy similar easterly views across the valley. Beyond the N15 carriageway in the foreground is a band of mature riparian vegetation tracking the watercourse at the base of the valley. Rising above this vegetation is a combination of conifer plantation to the right and rugged mountain moorland to the left. The view is contained by the near skyline of the Croaghnameal uplands, whereupon around 8 of the existing Barnesmore wind turbines rise to varying degrees and at a modest scale in silhouette against the sky.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	A similar number of the proposed turbines (7) will also rise to varying degrees above the same section of skyline as their existing counterparts, albeit only one full blade set is revealed compared to three blade sets from the existing Windfarm. The proposed repowering turbines are noticeably larger in scale, however, due to their further setback from the brow of the ridge compared to the nearest existing turbines, the overall visual envelope is not drastically increased. Whereas the existing turbines are considered to			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	have a visual presence in the order of sub-dominant, the proposed turbines will be co-dominant within this view. Aesthetically, the existing turbines are marginally preferable because the clear visibility of three blade sets lends more legibility to the array and draws attention from the blades of other turbines rotating against the skyline. By comparison, all but one of the visible proposed turbines will rotate against the skyline ridge. It is not considered that the increased size of the proposed turbines appears over-scaled in this broad landscape context – certainly no more than the existing turbines appear under-scaled in the same context. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact of the proposed turbines relative to the existing turbines is only considered to be Low.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP5	N15 Scenic View at Lough Mourne	SSW	6.8 km	9
Representative of:	• A designated scenic view • Major route			
Receptor Sensitivity	**High**			
Existing View	This is a view from the N15 between sections of roadside vegetation across the nearby Lough Mourne which occupies the lion's share of the fore-to-middle ground context. Also noteworthy in the middle distance beyond the Lough is the distinctive Barnesmore Gap, which presents as a noticeable void in the undulating skyline. Also beyond the Lough to the south are mixed slopes of commercial conifer plantation and rugged mountain moorland topped by the partial blade sets of around 8 of the Barnesmore Windfarm turbines. These turbines sit on a comparatively flat section of the ridge to the left of a domed peak that marks the left flank of Barnesmore Gap - the other side being flanked by the steeply ascending slopes of the Bluestacks range.			
Visual Impact of Repowered	The proposed turbines will be considerably more prominent than the existing turbines on the basis that more of them are visible (12), they have a considerably increased vertical and horizontal visual envelope and the larger turbine components have a generally more muscular form in silhouette against the sky. Thus, the existing turbines, which have a			

Viewshed Reference Point			Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
Barnesmore Windfarm	visual presence in the order of sub-dominant will be replaced by turbines that have a co-dominant visual presence within this scene. Aesthetically, although the larger proposed turbines have a stronger visual imprint, they also have improved legibility with the majority of the blade sets rotating freely above the skyline and a profile that broadly matches that of the subtly undulating ridgeline. There is a minor degree of visual clutter associated with the overlapping of some turbines. In a thematic sense, the proposed turbines increase the scale and intensity of built development within a scene that is otherwise characterised by little such development other than the contribution of the existing Barnesmore turbines. That is not to say that the turbines appear over-scaled within the context of this broad upland landscape. In terms of the integrity of Barnesmore Gap, it is important to note that the nearest proposed turbine lies just to the left of the base of the distinctive dome shaped peak that serves as the marker and sentry to the Gap. The profile of the windfarm also remains subservient to the same domed peak. For these reasons, it is not considered that the proposed windfarm unduly imposes on, or compromises, the integrity of this iconic landscape feature. Overall, the increase in visual impact from the proposed repowering turbines is deemed to be Medium low.				
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.				
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**		
	High	**Medium low**	**Moderate**		

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP6	Local road at Meenbog	SW	6.9 km	10
Representative of:	• Local Community Views			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium low**			
Existing View	This is a south-westerly view across a relatively homogenous upland plateau landscape that comprises of a mix of marshy scrub in the lower reaches surrounded by moderate slopes of marginal farmland, forestry and blanket bog. Several undulating peaks can be seen on the middle distance skyline. The existing Barnesmore turbines are not visible from here.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	Around 7 of the proposed turbines blade sets will be visible above the forested skyline ridge in the middle distance along with the blades of a further 2-3 turbines. They are seen in a consolidated group at a relatively modest scale from this distance and in this broad upland plateau context. The turbines will be a distinctive built feature in this otherwise relatively undeveloped scene and overall, they are considered to have a visual presence in the order of co-dominant to sub-dominant. Aesthetically, there are some minor instances of turbine overlap and blades rotating on the skyline ridge, but these attributes tend to be diluted by the consolidated grouping and relatively even spacing of turbines, which also have a profile that is consistent with the underlying ridge. Although the turbines will increase the intensity of built development in this view, wind turbines are a familiar feature of the upland landscapes in this part of Donegal and they do not appear out of place in this scene. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP7	Bluestacks Way at Sallows	ESE	17.3 km	0
Representative of:	• An area of Especially High Scenic Amenity in the CDP • An Amenity feature (Donegal Way)			
Receptor Sensitivity	**High**			
Existing View	This is a vast panoramic view from the south-western extents of the Bluestacks range, which shares many similarities with VP2, which is from the opposite end of the Bluestacks. The lower fore-to-middle ground consists of marginal upland grazing on steep slopes with extensive conifer plantations taking over on flatter and likely poorly drained ground in the base of the valley. Beyond is a series of south-westerly declining ridges with a similar combination of extensive land use and very light settlement pattern. In the far distance can be seen the turbines from the Meenadreen Windfarm straddling the skyline ridge.			
Visual Impact of Repowered	The full blade of one turbine and blade tips of two others can be seen rising just above the skyline ridge to the left of the Meenadreen turbines. At this distance, with this degree of screening and in the context of this vast vista, the proposed turbines are unlikely to be noticed by a casual observer. If they are noticed, they will appear at first glance to form a			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
Barnesmore Windfarm	small part of the distant Meenadreen Windfarm development. Only on close inspection might there be any sense of scale / context confusion with the smaller and more distant Meenadreen turbines – i.e. that they are separate developments. Nonetheless, visual presence or the lack of it is the key consideration here and consequently, the magnitude of visual impact is judged to be negligible.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**	
	High	**Negligible**	**Imperceptible**	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP8	Local Road at Toughboy	SW	8.6 km	9
Representative of:	• Local Community Views			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium**			
Existing View	This is a sweeping panoramic view across a broad and shallow upland valley that is contained in a matrix of natural grassland in the foreground and forestry and improved grazing in regular geometric fields across the middle ground. Beyond a forested ridge that substantially contains the westerly view can be seen the tallest peaks of the Bluestacks range in the distance. The existing Barnesmore Windfarm is not visible from here due to screening by the middle distance forested ridge.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	Seven of the proposed repowering turbines will be partially visible above the forested middle distance skyline. These reveal partial blade sets in silhouette above the skyline at a modest scale from this viewing distance. The turbines are a distinctive built feature in this landscape where only a few isolated farmsteads appear among the farmed and forested landscape. However they are considerably screened and only a modest scale feature of a broad view. On balance their visual presence is deemed to be sub-dominant. Aesthetically, the view of partial turbine blade sets rotating on the forested skyline is not as legible as a more open view of full blade sets might be, this is balanced by their modest scale contribution to the overall view. The section of skyline in question is not particularly distinctive and the view of the Bluestacks peaks remains unimpeded. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	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**
VP9	Bluestack Way at Greenan	ESE	8.3 km	13
Representative of:	• Designated scenic view • Amenity and Heritage Feature			
Receptor Sensitivity	**High**			
Existing View	This is a broad and picturesque view over Lough Eske from the eastern extents of the Bluestacks range on the Bluestacks Way national way-marked route. The descending slopes in the foreground consist of marginal grazing forestry and woodland with only occasional dwellings. Lough Eske in the lower middle ground is the focus of this view and on the hummocky opposing slopes can be seen an intricate network of fields, treelines and rural residences concentrated around the lough. A separate moorland ridge rises further beyond and the turbines of the Barnesmore Windfarm are tightly stacked above it to the left of the slightly larger, but more substantially screened turbines from the Meenadreen Windfarm further along the same ridge.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	The proposed repowering turbines are all substantially visible from here with full blade sets generally rising above the skyline ridge. They are seen at a considerably larger scale than their existing counterparts and indeed, the Meenadreen turbines further to the south. The turbines present at a scale that commands attention, but does not dominate in such a broad view and in the context of Lough Eske, which remains the focus of the view. Thus, the visual presence of the proposed turbines is deemed to be co-dominant to sub-dominant. Aside from several instances of turbine overlap that generate a small degree of visual clutter. The proposed windfarm has a strong degree of legibility with its turbines rising and rotating freely above the skyline with a gently undulating profile that mimics the underlying ridge. From this distance, the three-dimensional layout is lost to the viewer and the arrangement appears linear. However, this is acceptable because the depth of the plateau site is also less apparent than the strong linear ridge that hosts the turbines. The repowered windfarm will replace a smaller, but more intensive stacking of twice as many existing turbines and will form a visually and thematically legible backdrop to this complex vista across a landscape that is settled, managed and naturalistic in equal measure. The most important features of the view, being the peaks of the Bluestacks range to the north and Lough Eske in the lower middle distance are not impeded or unduly			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	intruded upon by the proposed turbines, which lie in a section of the view where wind energy development is already and established feature. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium-low.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**	
	High	**Medium low**	**Moderate**	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP10	Local road at Tawnaghlahan	E	3.9 km	11
Representative of:	• Local Community Views			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium**			
Existing View	This is an elevated vista from a very quiet local access road to the north of Lough Eske. Unlike most of the dwellings that line local roads in the vicinity, the small number of dwellings served by this road are not arranged to take in views across the Lough. Instead they avail of cross-valley views to the southeast and down-valley views to the southwest. The foreground context consists of early stage mixed species woodland with rugged mountain moorland emerging on the opposing slopes of the valley. On the higher and more undulating sections of the opposing ridgeline, above and between foreground treetops, can be seen around 8 of the turbines of the Barnesmore Windfarm.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	The proposed repowering turbines will be considerably more noticeable than their existing counterparts when viewed from here as there is more of them visible (all 13) and the development has a taller vertical visual envelope and longer lateral extent to the south. Nonetheless, the proposed turbines still remain peripheral to the main cross-valley and down-valley viewing directions to the south. Whereas the existing Barnesmore Windfarm is considered to have a subdominant to minimal visual presence within this broad vista, the proposed repower windfarm increases visual presence to between co-dominant and sub-dominant. Aesthetically, the proposed windfarm is seen in an unambiguous manner with the nearest 4-5 blade sets rotating freely above the skyline and thereby improving the legibility of those beyond, which rotate on the skyline. The turbines are not dominating in terms of scale in their broad upland context and the profile of the scheme matches that of the undulating underlying ridge. These attributes are balanced against a noticeable increase in the scale			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	and intensity of built development within this quiet upland scene, albeit of a familiar form for such landscapes in this part of Donegal. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium low.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**	
	Medium	**Medium low**	**Moderate slight**	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP11	Biddy O'Barnes Public House	SE	2.1 km	3
Representative of:	• Local Community Views			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium**			
Existing View	This is a relatively enclosed setting deep within the Lowerymore River valley at the southern end of Barnesmore Gap. It is immediately outside Biddy O'Banes pub, which is something of a local landmark having served as an Inn and refuge for those travelling through the Gap for hundreds of years. In the immediate foreground is mature riparian vegetation lining the Lowerymore River the base of the valley with conifer planting just above. The uphill view to the southeast takes in steep and rugged mountain moorland topped by around 6 of the existing Barnesmore turbines, which rise above the skyline ridge to varying degrees.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	One full blade set, two partial blade sets and two blade tips from the proposed repower turbines can be seen rising above the skyline ridge at a more prominent scale than their existing counterparts. The lateral extent of the existing and proposed schemes is comparable as is the partial degree to which turbines are visible. However, the proposed turbines are of a considerably larger scale and thus, the vertical envelope of development is noticeably increased. The intensity of development is somewhat balanced by the fact that fewer turbines from the proposed development can be seen above the ridge compared to the existing windfarm, but the visual presence is still considered to be increased from sub-dominant co-dominant. Aesthetically, it is considered that the simple view of three larger blade sets above the skyline ridge is marginally preferable to the less cohesive view of the existing turbines rising sporadically and to differing degrees above the ridgeline. However, there is a noticeable increase in the scale of built development in this relatively quiet upland valley setting.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	On balance, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to increase from the baseline situation, but only to a Low degree.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP12	R262 at Meenagran	E	19.3 km	9
Representative of:	• Major route			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium**			
Existing View	This is a vast panoramic view for those travelling south on the R262 as it crosses the western end of the Bluestacks range. This viewpoint is also slightly to the south of where the Bluestacks Way enters briefly onto this relatively busy regional road. The downhill view to the southeast consists of a broad and gently undulating tapestry of marginal grazing in the foreground with forest plantations and more regular farmed fields emerging on lower ground. A series of long southwest declining ridgelines cloaked in forestry and mountain moorland stack together in perspective and on the furthest of these can be seen numerous turbines from the extensive Meenadreen Windfarm. The existing Barnesmore Windfarm in not discernible from here.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	All of the proposed turbines will be potentially visible in the far distance, rising above a nearer skyline ridge than the one hosting the Meenadreen Windfarm, which emerges slightly further to the right. It should be noted that the turbines do not actually occupy the skyline ridge they appear above – they occupy the one beyond, which is otherwise screened. The proposed turbines present partial blade sets at a small scale, against a backdrop of sky which will offer a low degree of visual contrast. In the context of this vast vista, which includes the main Bluestacks peaks to the north and seaward views to the south, the proposed windfarm has a minimal visual presence. The view of multiple turbine blade sets overlapping with each other whilst also rotating on a skyline ridge is not ideal in an aesthetic sense, however, such effects are strongly diluted by viewing distance and the low degree of contrast against the sky. Furthermore, wind turbines are already an established feature of this section of the distant view, which lies between the key aspects of the view, being the mountains and the sea. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP13	B72 at Killen	W	19.6 km	13
Representative of:	• Major route • Centre of Population (Killen)			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium Low**			
Existing View	This is a broad lowland vista to the southwest across rolling farmland. There is a pleasant pastoral character within the fore-to-middle ground context due to the tapestry of fields and hedgerows and the subtle containment by a nearby hilltop. In the far distance can be seen a rolling ridge of predominantly commercial forestry with the peaks of the Bluestacks range visible even further beyond. Some of the turbines from both the Meenadreen and Barnesmore Windfarms are faintly discernible above the forested section of skyline ridge.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	All of the proposed turbines are visible from here to varying degrees above the distant forested ridgeline just to the right of the visible Meenadreen turbines. Like the existing and barely discernible turbines, they will have a low degree of visual contrast against the backdrop of sky. The proposed turbines are seen at a modest, but noticeable scale from this distance and with a reasonable lateral extent. They appear marginally taller than the Meenadreen turbines due to their relative elevation and height and despite being slightly further away. In the context of this broad scene, the proposed turbines are considered to have a sub-dominant visual impact where their existing counterparts have only a minimal visual presence. This is a relatively clear and comprehensible view of the proposed turbines lining the ridge in series of loosely spaced linear clusters, albeit with some overlap between individual turbines contributing to a minor degree of visual clutter. They are more noticeable than the Meenadreen turbines and if the latter are even noticed, the perception will be that they all form part of a singular development. The proposed turbines do not appear at all inconsistent with the nature of this productive rural scene which already contains a distant backdrop of wind turbines. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP14	Bluestacks Way at Lough Eske	E	7.1 km	12
Representative of:	• Amenity and Heritage feature			
Receptor Sensitivity	**High medium**			
Existing View	This is a broad vista directly across Lough Eske from its western bank looking east. Beyond the substantial waterbody that dominates the fore-to-middle ground of the scene is a low hummocky hillside and ridge that hosts a dense scattering of rural residential dwellings that take advantage of opposing views across the Lough. These slopes also contain small agricultural fields patches of woodland and coniferous tree lines that serve as amenity and shelter for the numerous residences. Further beyond are the higher moorland slopes and undulating ridge of the Croaghnameal uplands. Upon this ridgeline can be seen around half of the turbines from the Barnesmore Windfarm with varying degrees of exposure from full turbines to blade tips. Several of the turbines from the Meenadreen also rise just above the skyline ridge further to the south (left).			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	All of the proposed repowering turbines will be visible from here and like their existing counterparts, some will be fully visible whilst others reveal only blade tips. The proposed turbines will occupy a broader lateral extent as well as a considerably higher vertical envelope than the existing windfarm. Despite having a stronger visual presence than the existing windfarm it is not proportionally dominant on the skyline ridge and forms part of the backdrop to the main focus of this view which is Lough Eske. Overall the visual presence of the proposed windfarm is considered to be co-dominant within this view, whereas the existing turbines are in the order of sub-dominant. Aside from two overlapping clusters of turbines, the layout of the windfarm is linear and reasonably rhythmic when viewed from here and the undulating profile matches the form of the underlying ridge. The intensity of wind energy development is noticeably increased, but it is not a new element within this scene and does not unduly detract from the fore-to-middle ground context of Lough Eske and its surrounding slopes of settled farmland. Contextually, the proposed turbines do not appear out of place or out of scale in this landscape setting, however, there is a slightly stronger sense of enclosure and the skyline ridge feels slightly closer with its larger turbines than it does with the smaller existing turbines.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium low.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**	
	High medium	**Medium low**	**Moderate**	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP15	N15 South-west of Site	ENE	5.5 km	10
Representative of:	• A Designated Scenic Route • A major route			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium**			
Existing View	This is a relatively channelled view along the corridor of the N15 for northbound road users just short of the Lough Eske turnoff, the signs for which can be seen on the left hand side of the road around 100 m away. The road is enclosed on both sides by a linear band of mature woodland, however this elevated section of the road affords partial views of a more extensive landscape of first settled farmland and then mountain moorland beyond to the east. On the undulating skyline ridge can be seen around 16 of the Barnesmore turbines at a modest scale. Aside from the nearest 2-3 turbines, which are fully revealed, the remainder tend to expose only blade sets and partial blade sets.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	Most of the proposed turbines are visible from here rising to a noticeably greater height than the existing turbines and with a slightly wider lateral extent along the ridge. The full blade sets of around half of the turbines will rotate freely above the skyline, whilst only partial blade sets of the others can be seen. The proposed turbines are more likely to draw the attention of viewers than their existing counterparts. The visual presence of the proposed turbines is deemed to be co-dominant within this visual setting compared to the sub-dominant visual presence of the existing turbines. Aesthetically, the proposed turbines generate some visual clutter and disharmony due to several instances of turbines overlapping and blades rotating on the skyline ridge. However these attributes are balanced by a layout that is reasonably rhythmic and cohesive and a profile that is consistent with the underlying ridge. The intensity of wind energy development is increased, but in the context of a busy national road corridor and a skyline ridge that has hosted wind turbines for the past two decades.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium low.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**	
	Medium	**Medium low**	**Moderate slight**	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP16	Local Road at Barnesmore	E	3.5 km	9
Representative of:	• Local Community Views			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium low**			
Existing View	This view represents a cluster of dwellings that back into a rock outcrop to the west of the steep slopes that lead up to the Barnesmore Windfarm site and wider Croaghnameal uplands. The principle view for which they are oriented is to the north across a farmed and wooded valley that is framed by the distinctive Barnesmore Gap to the northeast. Further east of the Gap along the rugged and undulating ridge can be seen around 6 of the turbines from the Barnesmore Windfarm in silhouette against the sky. More prominent within this section of the view is a 110kV overhead line that crosses the foreground slope.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	Most of the proposed turbines will be visible from here, rising above the same section of ridgeline as the existing Barnesmore turbines. However they are seen at a more prominent scale due to their considerably greater height. Whilst the turbines are close to the alignment of the road they are peripheral to the principle view from surrounding dwellings. The proposed windfarm is considered to increase the visual presence of wind energy development at the Barnesmore site from sub-dominant to co-dominant within this setting. There is a minor degree of visual clutter generated by the proposed turbines due to a couple of instances of turbines overlapping with each other and also with the foreground electricity pylon. There are also several instances of blades rotating on the skyline. Otherwise, the turbines are seen in a cohesive linear group with a profile that is consistent with the topography below them. Importantly, it is considered that the turbines are a framing element to the principle viewing direction and not one that unduly detracts from the visually amenity enjoyed at this location. Furthermore, the proposed repowering development is an intensification of such development within this scene – not the introduction of it. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is judged to be Medium low.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**	
	Medium low	**Medium low**	**Moderate slight**	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP17	Causeway Walking route at Killeter	W	15.9 km	13
Representative of:	• A recreational amenity feature • A centre of population			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium low**			
Existing View	This is a broad view across the flat base of a farmed valley just outside the village of Killeter. In the immediate foreground is a detached dwelling that is afforded the same view as from the road across pastoral fields defined by predominantly post and wire fencing in the valley floor and hedgerows on the modest slopes that rise in the middle distance to throughout the north-western quarters. Forestry is more prevalent on the higher slopes and ridges further to the west. Turbines from the nearby Church Hill Windfarm can be seen rising above the farmed ridge to the northwest.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	Most of the proposed turbines will be seen rising in silhouette beyond a middle distance forested ridgeline to varying degrees. They are seen at a modest scale from this distance and will present with a low degree of contrast against the sky even in clear viewing conditions. Consequently, the visual presence of the Development is deemed to be sub-dominant. Aesthetically, there is some visual clutter generated by a series of overlapping turbines. However, such effects are strongly diluted by the considerable viewing distance and the profile of the development follows that of the underlying ridge even though it is not the ridge upon which they actually sit. This is a varied view across settled and productive farmland that also includes other wind farms and forestry and thus, the distant proposed turbines do not appear out of scale or context within this scene. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**	
	Medium low	**Low-negligible**	**Slight**	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP18	N56 at Donegal Town	NE	9.9 km	13
Representative of:	• A major route • A centre of Population			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Low**			
Existing View	This is a slightly elevated view from the N56 northern bypass of Donegal Town where the eye is principally drawn along the fall and rise of the broad road corridor for about 1 km to the east. The road is framed by patches of mature broadleaf vegetation between which can be seen and undulating farmed landscape beyond to the north. Rising in the far distance are the tawny upland ridges of the north-eastern end of the Bluestacks Mountains and the plateau of the Croaghnameal uplands. Upon the latter can be seen the dense array of the small Barnesmore turbines to the left of a foreground clump of trees and the larger Meenadreen turbines to the right of the same trees.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	The proposed repowering turbines will fill the same visible section of the distant ridge as their existing counterparts, albeit the southernmost turbine is screened from view behind the clump of foreground trees. Whilst the lateral extent is comparable, the vertical envelope of the proposed development is considerably increased. Although there is fewer of them, the proposed turbines will increase the visual presence of Barnesmore turbines from sub-dominant / minimal for the existing scheme to co-dominant / sub-dominant for the proposed scheme. In this view the existing turbines appear as a bristle of whiskers on a chin and are almost under-scaled for the upland terrain context in which they sit, especially when seen in combination with the larger Meenadreen turbines further along the ridge. By comparison the fewer / larger proposed turbines are more overt, but less ambiguous and have a scale that appears more appropriate to the underlying landscape context. Nonetheless, they are also noticeably larger than the Meenadreen turbines which are at a comparable distance or slightly closer and this generates a minor degree of scale confusion. There are also a couple of instances of turbine overlap between the proposed turbines, which generates a degree of visual clutter, albeit without the intensity of the existing turbines. On balance of the visual presence and aesthetic factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium-low			

Viewshed Reference Point			Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP19	Local road at Croaghnakern	NNW	3.7 km	11
Representative of:	• Local Community Views			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium-low**			
Existing View	This is a broad upland view across a gently rolling plateau landscape consisting of few simple elements. These include large commercial conifer plantations interspersed with moorland bog / cutover areas and frequently punctuated by the wind turbines from the Meenadreen Windfarm. The Meenadreen turbines are seen at vastly different scales relative to viewing distance with those furthest away to the north appearing at a relatively modest scale. Beyond these can be seen the partial blade sets of some of the Barnesmore turbines above a middle distance skyline ridge.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	The proposed repowering turbines will be seen with a comparable lateral extent across the section of middle distance ridgeline that the existing Barnesmore turbines currently occupy, albeit those to the left rise above a section of intervening forestry that masks the existing turbines. The vertical envelope is considerably greater for the proposed turbines, which are more prominent within the view, but in the context of much closer and more spatially dominating views of the nearest Meenadreen turbines. Indeed, the scale and positioning of the proposed turbines allows them to blend readily with three of the more distant Meenadreen turbines, such that they form a cohesive cluster. The intensity of wind energy development is noticeably increased, but less so the scale and extent. Thus, the visual presence of Barnesmore turbines is considered to increase from minimal to sub-dominant with the proposed repowering project when seen in this context. Aesthetically, there is considerable merit in the fact that the proposed repowering turbines form a cohesive cluster with the aligned Meenadreen turbines. However, this also generates a degree of visual clutter from turbine overlapping. There may also be some scale / contextual confusion for those who examine the scene more closely, as the proposed turbines have a closely comparable scale to the considerably nearer Meenadreen turbines. This is caused by the variation in turbine height as well as comparative ground levels.			

Viewshed Reference Point			Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	Overall it is considered that the proposed turbines will have a Low magnitude of visual impact in this scene which is already characterised by fore-to-middle ground wind turbines.				
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP20	Donegal Town	NE	10.5 km	13
Representative of:	• A Centre of Population			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium low**			
Existing View	This is a view from a well frequented playground and community centre facility within Donegal town that also affords intermittent views of the distant upland skyline to the northeast in the direction of Barnesmore Gap. Beyond the foreground community facility is a cycle track and residential housing estate. It is above and between the roofs and amenity trees within this housing estate that the distant mountain ridges can be observed. Occupying the undulating ridgeline is the dense bristle of Barnesmore turbines to the left of the foreground community centre building. To the right of the same building can be seen a dense cluster of around 4-5 nearer and larger turbines from the Meenadreen Windfarm masked among intervening tree tops.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	The proposed Barnesmore repowering turbines occupy the same section of ridgeline as their existing counterparts, albeit the south-easternmost turbine is screened by the intervening community centre building. Due to their increased height, the proposed turbines are more prominent within this scene, but still as a distant background feature. The visual presence of the proposed turbines will be sub-dominant within this scene in comparison to the existing turbines which are considered to be in the order of sub-dominant / minimal. Aesthetically, the proposed turbines appear more appropriately scaled to their underlying landscape context of broad upland ridge than the existing turbines, which appear as dense prickles on the skyline ridge. Although there is several instances of turbine overlap and blades sets rotating on the skyline ridge which together can generate visual clutter and disharmony, the turbines are read as a cohesive cluster with a profile that broadly matches that of the underlying ridge. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP21	N56 at Mountcharles	NE	15.7 km	13
Representative of:	• A major route • A centre of population			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium low**			
Existing View	This is a slightly elevated and vast vista to the northeast from the N56 national secondary road as it passes on the inland side of the small settlement of Mountcharles. It should be noted that most of the visual amenity enjoyed from the settlement of Mountcharles is across Donegal Bay to the south. The view in question is dominated by the broad corridor of the N56 road as it sweeps downhill in the direction of Donegal Town. Whilst the landscape immediately beyond the road corridor is generally screened by dense roadside vegetation, above this can be seen a steeply undulating drumlin farming context across the middle ground. In the far distance, the view is contained by the north-eastern extents of the Bluestacks range as it meets the Croaghnameal uplands at the Barnesmore Gap. To the right of the Gap, the dense bristle of Barnesmore turbines can be seen hugging the skyline, whilst further right again are the Meenadreen turbines at a much more noticeable scale on direct alignment with the road corridor.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	The proposed repowering turbines are seen with a marginally increased lateral extent and considerably increased vertical extent compared to their existing counterparts. They are seen at a comparable or slightly larger scale than the Meenadreen turbines despite being slightly further away. Together these two developments combine to make wind energy development a more proportionally dominant feature along the distant skyline ridge than in the existing scenario, mainly because the existing turbines are simply less noticeable. Aesthetically, there is a balance between the dense 'picket fence' of existing turbines hugging the skyline ridge and the more overt, but comprehensible view of fewer larger turbines rising well above the skyline. There is a more noticeable degree of turbine overlap for the proposed turbines, but at this distance this is only a minor factor that has little bearing on visual amenity.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	Overall, the increase in visual presence and the resultant contribution to cumulative impact in conjunction with the Meenadreen Windfarm is considered to result in a Medium-low magnitude of visual impact.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.			
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**	
	Medium low	**Medium low**	**Moderate slight**	

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP22	N15 at Drumbar	NE	10.1 km	11
Representative of:	• A major route			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Low**			
Existing View	This is an oblique view to the northeast from a locally raised section of the N15 as it passes through drumlin farmland to the south of Donegal Town. Beyond the steeply rolling foreground context of fields hedgerows and farmsteads rises undulating upper slopes and ridgeline of the Croaghnameal uplands. The extensive Meenadreen Windfarm occupies the upper slopes of the nearest section of this upland area, whilst the smaller and more distant Barnesmore turbines are much less noticeable above the skyline further to the northeast.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	The proposed repowering turbines will occupy a slightly wider horizontal envelope and noticeably taller vertical envelope than the existing windfarm. Although there is only half the number of proposed turbines, they are more conspicuous within this scene than the existing turbines as they compare in perceived scale to the nearer Meenadreen turbines. Together these developments occupy the majority of the visible section of the Croaghnameal skyline. Aesthetically, the proposed turbines appear more compatible with the broad scale of the underlying landform and land use pattern than their existing counterparts which appear almost under-scaled in this context. The proposed turbines also appear more compatible with the Meenadreen turbines in terms of scale, extent and arrangement. However, there is a minor degree of scale and contextual confusion due to the similar perceived scale of the proposed turbines and the Meenadreen turbines despite the latter being closer to the viewer. This can serve to reduce the sense of depth in the scene, but is only a minor issue in this instance.			

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Medium low.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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:
VP23	Local road west of Laghey	NE	5.9 km	0
Representative of:	• Local community views			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium low**			
Existing View	This is a locally elevated view from deep within the rural drumlin landscape inland to the east of Donegal Town. It is principally a down-valley south-easterly view enjoyed by a series of dwellings on the uphill (northern) side of the road, whereas the view in question is uphill to the northeast. This is a relatively short distance aspect of the view that is truncated by a combination of terrain and foreground tree-lined hedgerows. There is a glimpse view of the partial blades sets of around 6 of the Meenadreen turbines in the middle distance against a backdrop of both terrain and sky.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	Only the blade tips of 2-3 turbines will be potentially visible from here above the forested north-eastern skyline ridge. These will be barely noticeable in the context of the nearer and more exposed Meenadreen turbines and this is not a key aspect of the view in terms of the visual amenity. For these reasons, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Negligible.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP24	Donegal Golf Club	NE	15.4 km	13

Representative of:	• An amenity feature		
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium**		
Existing View	This is a picturesque inland view from near the clubhouse of Donegal Golf Club, which occupies a narrow spit that extends into Donegal Bay to the southwest of Donegal Town. Beyond the manicured setting of the golf course in the foreground can be seen the waters of Donegal Bay and forested sunken drumlin islands, which soon give way to farmed drumlin hills on the mainland. These are set against a distant backdrop of the Croaghnameal uplands and Barnesmore Gap. The extensive Meenadreen Windfarm can be seen on upper slopes at the nearest, south-western, end of this upland area, whilst the Barnesmore turbines are barely discernible above a more distant section of skyline to the right of Barnesmore Gap.		
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	The proposed repowering turbines have a similar lateral extent to the existing Barnesmore turbines, but a noticeably increased vertical extent that makes them more prominent within the view despite their fewer number. They combine with the Meenadreen turbines to occupy a considerable portion of upland skyline, albeit in the context of a broad mountainous skyline across the north-eastern quarters of the view. Whereas the existing turbines are considered to have a minimal visual presence in the context of this extensive view, the proposed turbines are deemed to be sub-dominant. The comparable scale of the proposed Barnesmore turbines and those of the Meenadreen Windfarm means that they appear compatible, although there may be some degree of scale confusion because the Meenadreen turbines are actually closer. This effect is ameliorated by the contextual separation between the developments as the Meenadreen turbines occur on the upper and mid slopes of the nearest section of uplands and the Barnesmore turbines rise above a more distant ridgetop. There are few instances of turbine overlap in the proposed turbine array and its profile closely mimics the underlying ridge. Overall, the magnitude of impact is deemed to be Low.		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP25	B72 at Shanvia	NW	18.6 km	13

Representative of:	• Major route
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium low**
Existing View	This is a broad vista across a shallow upland valley contained in forestry, marginal grazing and improved grassland with a relatively extensive windfarm occupying the opposing ridge. In the far distance can be seen the ridgeline of the of the Bluestacks Mountains and set below this are the small-scale turbines of the Barnesmore Windfarm on the same alignment as the nearer windfarm.
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	All of the proposed turbines will be visible above the same section of distant ridgeline as their existing counterparts, but rising in silhouette against the sky where they will have a low degree of contrast, especially at this distance. Because they occur on the same alignment as the nearer windfarm, the effect is an increase in the intensity of wind energy development in this north-westerly section of the view rather than increased extent. Nonetheless, the visual presence of repowered windfarm is noticeably greater than the existing windfarm. The key visual effects relate to the relationship with the nearer windfarm through which the proposed turbines are visible. The relative scale of the turbines (small / modest distance versus tall / far distance) results in a perceived reduction in the depth of the scene as the Barnesmore turbines almost appear as a seamless continuation into the distance of the nearer development. Whilst this may cause some degree of scale / contextual confusion for those examining the relationship, to a casual observer the relationship is likely to appear cohesive. On balance of the factors outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP26	Station Island Pilgrimage site in Lough Derg	NNW	9.5 km	1

Representative of:	• A place of spiritual reflection and contemplation

Viewshed Reference Point			Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
	• A tourist feature				
Receptor Sensitivity	**Very High**				
Existing View	This view is obtained from the northern side of the island that contains the monastic pilgrimage site in the middle of Lough Derg. It is understood that the monastic island hosts pilgrims during the summer months who slowly circulate the island visiting the Stations of the Cross. Whilst it is a relatively contained and introspective setting within the various chapels and buildings on the island, it is strongly influenced by the tranquillity of the wider landscape setting. This consists of the waters of Lough Derg throughout the fore-to-middle distance and then the forested and farmed hills that enclose the Lough. There are very few built structures visible within the wider landscape setting other than wind turbines penetrating just above the skyline ridges to the north and northeast where they do little to compromise the remote tranquillity of the setting.				
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	Whereas only some of the Meenadreen turbines are currently visible above the skyline ridge to the northwest, the blades and blade tips of around 6 of the proposed repowering turbines at Barnesmore will penetrate just above the forested ridge to the north. They will be seen with a low degree of contrast against a backdrop of sky and are less noticeable than the Meenadreen turbines further west along a bare section of the same ridgeline. In this context the visual presence of the proposed turbines is deemed to be sub-dominant to minimal. Aesthetically it is not ideal for turbine blades to rotate on a skyline ridge, particularly without their hubs being visible, but this effect is balanced by the low degree of visual presence and the clearer view of Meenadreen blade sets, which provide clearer context to all of the turbines on the northern skyline. Although the intensity and extent of wind energy development is marginally increased by the proposed turbines, they are adding to an established land use within this view that does not materially detract from the tranquillity experienced on the monastic island. On balance of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible.				
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.				
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**		
	Very high	**Low-negligible**	**Moderate-slight**		

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP26a	Visitors Centre Pier at Lough Derg	NNW	10.1 km	6

Representative of:	• A place of spiritual reflection and contemplation • A tourist feature		
Receptor Sensitivity	**High**		
Existing View	The viewing context at this location is very similar to that described above in respect of the view from the monastic island in the middle of Lough Derg. That being, the Lough and several small wooded islands occupying the fore-to-middle distance and enclosure provided thereafter by farmed forested and moorland slopes below a modest ridge that hosts 6 turbines from the Meenadreen Windfarm. However, the main difference is that the principle focus of this view is the highly developed monastic island itself which serves as the ornate centrepiece of the Lough. This view is enjoyed by the majority of people who visit Lough Derg, but not the monastic island and this is why two views have been used to represent Lough Derg as a visual receptor.		
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	This view is set back from the skyline ridge to a greater extent than from the monastic island and therefore, there is a slightly more exposed view of the blades and partial blade sets of 10 of the proposed repowering turbines above the forested section of ridge to the north. However, they are a minor background feature in the context of the view of the monastic island and even the Meenadreen turbines, which are closer to the alignment of the monastic island. For these reasons, the visual presence of the proposed turbines is deemed to be sub-dominant to minimal within the overall view. Although the view of turbine blades rotating on the skyline is not aesthetically optimal, as it can be ambiguous, this effect is ameliorated by the clearer view of northernmost Barnesmore turbines (near full blade sets) and the Meenadreen turbines further south. The proposed turbines represent the minor intensification and spread of a familiar form of development around the perimeter skyline of Lough Derg. However, this is not a form of development that conflicts with the sense of tranquillity in this setting. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible.		
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.		
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**
	High	**Low-negligible**	**Slight**

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP27	R232 at Trumman West	NNE	10.3 km	4

Representative of:	• A major route
Receptor Sensitivity	**Low**
Existing View	This is a channelled view along the R232 road corridor to the northeast. Whilst the foreground is relatively enclosed, the landscape of the Croaghnameal uplands opens up in the distance. The land cover within view alters from rough grazing in the foreground setting to mountain moorland and forestry in the distance. The blades sets of around 8-10 of the Meenadreen turbines can be seen rising above a middle distance ridgeline, whilst the small scale partial blade sets of 4 of the Barnesmore turbines can just be made out on the distant skyline further north.
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	The blade set of one of the proposed repower turbines and the partial blade sets and blades of around 7 more will be seen rising above the same section of distant ridgeline as their existing counterparts, albeit with a wider lateral extent. The vertical envelope is more noticeably increased and the proposed turbines are presented at similar scale to the nearer Meenadreen turbines, Thus, wind energy development is now perceived to occupy most of the distant skyline in this channelled view. Aesthetically, there is a much more cohesive balance of scale between the proposed turbines and the Meenadreen turbines. Indeed, they read as part of the same extensive development. There is some potential for scale / contextual confusion because the proposed turbines are further away, but present at a similar scale to the Meenadreen turbines. However, this effect is limited by the difficulty in reading the context and distance to the various skyline ridges because much of the intervening landscape is screened from view. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low.
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.

	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**
	Low	**Low**	**Slight imperceptible**

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
VP28	Local road at Barr of Ballynacarnick	NNE	14.3 km	4

Representative of:	• Amenity Feature (Kingfisher Cycle Route)

Viewshed Reference Point		Direction of View	Distance to nearest turbine	Number of turbine nacelles visible
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium**			
Existing View	This is a vast view to the north across a tundra-like plateau landscape of rough grazing, moorland, and forestry interspersed with occasional farmsteads and wind turbines. The fore-to-middle ground is principally a low intensity farmed landscape and the background containing the other upland land uses. The uppermost ridges of the Bluestacks range around Barnesmore Gap can be seen rising above intervening ridgelines in the far distance, however the existing Barnesmore turbines are not visible. Instead the wind energy development in view consists of around 25 of the Meenadreen turbines, from blade tips to full machines beyond the middle ground of this view.			
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	Nearly all of the proposed Barnesmore repowering turbines will be visible from here to varying degrees ranging from one full blade set to just blade tips. These are seen through and beyond the Meenadreen turbines, but at a comparable scale (due to larger dimensions) such that they appear as part of a single development. Thus, the proposed turbines add to the intensity of distant wind energy development and marginally to the vertical imprint, but overall, this is a very minor increase in the visual presence of such development in this section of the view. On balance it is considered that the cohesion between the proposed turbines and the Meenadreen turbines outweighs any sense of scale or contextual confusion arising from the comparable scale of turbines that are actually separated by a reasonable distance in the direction of the view. The proposed turbines add to the intensity of an established feature of the view, but without particular consequence for the visual amenity experienced at this location. For the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual impact is deemed to be Low-negligible.			
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 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
VP29	Procklis Road at Bigwood	NW	17.1 km	3
Representative of:	• Amenity Feature (Kingfisher Cycle Route)			
Receptor Sensitivity	**Medium low**			

Viewshed Reference Point			**Direction of View**	**Distance to nearest turbine**	**Number of turbine nacelles visible**
Existing View	This is fairly contained view from a section of the Kingfisher cycle route just to the east of the settlement of Pettigo. It is a lush and verdant scene across good quality pasture within a matrix of mature hedgerows. There is a glimpse of around 6 turbines from the Meenadreen Windfarm above the skyline in the uphill view to the northwest, but these are barely noticeable to the casual observer.				
Visual Impact of Repowered Barnesmore Windfarm	Only the blades of a couple of the proposed turbines are potentially visible from here between sections of skyline vegetation and are very unlikely to be noticed by a casual observer. Even if they are, they will not have a material bearing on visual amenity and consequently, the magnitude of visual presence will be Negligible.				
Summary	Based on the assessment criteria and matrices outlined in section 11.2.6.2 the significance of visual impact is summarised below.				
	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	**Visual Impact Magnitude**	**Significance of Visual Impact**		
	Medium low	**Negligible**	**Imperceptible**		