Iarnród Éireann
Irish Rail

Rosslare ORE Hub

EIAR Environmental Topic Chapters

Chapter 23:

Seascape, Landscape and Visual Assessment

venterra | GDG GAVIN & DOHERTY GEOSOLUTIONS | NICHOLAS O'DWYER an RSK company

Co-funded by the European Union

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AH	Amenity and heritage features
CDP	County Development Plan
CP	Centres of Population
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ELC	European Landscape Convention
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GLVIA	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
KV	Key Views
LCU	Landscape Character Units
LCV	Local Community views
MR	Major Routes
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
S/LIA	Seascape / Landscape Impact Assessment
SCA	Seascape Character Areas
SCT	Seascape Character Types
SLVIA	Seascape / Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
SR/SV	Scenic Routes and Views
VIA	Visual Impact Assessment
VP	Viewpoint
VRP	Viewshed Reference Points
ZTV	Zone of Theoretic Visibility

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23 SEASCAPE/LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

23.1 INTRODUCTION

Iarnród Éireann – Irish Rail is applying for development permission for the Rosslare Offshore Renewable Energy Hub (hereafter the 'Proposed Development'), located immediately adjacent and to the northwest of the existing Rosslare Europort at Rosslare Harbour in County Wexford, which is operated by Iarnród Éireann. The Proposed Development includes capital dredging to achieve navigable depths for vessels delivering ORE components; land reclamation to create a storage area for these components; and construction of two new berths to facilitate loading and unloading of ORE components. The land reclamation works include infilling the existing small boat harbour, after the construction of a new small boat harbour. The Proposed Development also includes the installation of a new slipway and facility for local clubs, such as the Sea Scouts.

The purpose of the Proposed Development is to provide a facility for the efficient handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate installation of offshore wind energy projects by ORE developers and operators. The Proposed Development is designed to provide facilities that accommodate a wide range of infrastructure uses, both for current requirements and anticipated future needs. For instance, the Proposed Development could be used for traditional port activities if required, including during periods of reduced ORE-related activity. Refer to Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) Chapter 6: Project Description for further detail.

This chapter of the EIAR presents the assessment of the likely significant effects (as per the "EIA Regulations") of the Proposed Development on Seascape/Landscape and Visual receptors arising from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, both alone and cumulatively with other projects. The scope of the chapter was determined following the issue of a Scoping Report to the following relevant stakeholders (please see Chapter 4 Scoping and Consultation for full details of consultation):

- Wexford County Council

The assessment presented is informed by the following Technical Appendix:

- Appendix 23a: Photomontages

This Seascape / Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) describes the landscape context of the Proposed Development and assesses the likely seascape and landscape and visual effect of the scheme on the receiving environment. Although closely linked, landscape and visual effect are assessed separately.

- **Seascape / Landscape Impact Assessment (S/LIA)** relates to changes in the physical landscape coastline brought about by the Proposed Development, which may alter its character, and how this is experienced. This requires a detailed analysis of the individual elements and characteristics of a seascape / landscape that go together to make up the overall character of that area. By understanding the aspects that contribute to seascape / landscape character, it is

possible to make judgements in relation to its quality (integrity) and to identify key sensitivities. This, in turn, provides a measure of the ability of the landscape in question to accommodate the type and scale of change associated with the Proposed Development without causing significant adverse changes to its character.

- **Visual Impact Assessment (VIA)** relates to assessing effects of a development on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people. This deals with how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements. Visual impacts may occur from: Visual Obstruction (blocking of a view, be it full, partial or intermittent) or; Visual Intrusion (interruption of a view without blocking).

This chapter comprises the following elements:

- Summary of relevant policy and guidance
- Data sources used to characterise the Study Area
- Summary of consultations with stakeholders
- Methodology followed in assessing the impacts of the Proposed Development (such as information of the Study Area and the approach taken in assessing the potential impacts)
- Review of baseline conditions
- Assessment of likely effects arising from the construction of the Proposed Development
- Identification of further mitigation measures and/or monitoring requirements (if any) in respect of any significant effects (following the 'mitigation hierarchy' of avoidance, minimisation, restoration and offsets in consecutive order)
- Summary of residual impact assessment determinations in the case of any additional mitigation measures identified during this process.

23.1.1 POLICY, LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

23.1.1.1 RELEVANT POLICIES AND PLANS

Seascape Character Assessment

At the highest level, the European Landscape Convention promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes and organises European co-operation on landscape issues. The Convention was ratified by Ireland in 2002. As one of the obligations under the convention, a draft National Landscape Strategy was issued for public consultation by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Following consideration of submissions, the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 was published in mid-2015 by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. A key objective of this strategy is to prepare a National Landscape Character Assessment, and whilst this has not yet occurred, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine issued a comprehensive seascape equivalent, the Regional Seascape Character

Assessment in 2020. This assessment, along with the Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment (2014), is discussed below.

Regional Seascape Character Assessment for Ireland (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine – 2020)

A Regional Seascape Character Assessment for Ireland was produced in 2020, which divides the country's seascapes into 13 Seascape Character Types (SCT). These are defined as "*distinct types of seascapes that are relatively homogeneous in character…" "…may occur in different locations but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, bathymetry, ecology, human influences and perceptual and aesthetic attributes*". The majority of the coastline adjacent to the Proposed Development is identified as the following SCT:

- SCT 7: Broad estuarine bays & complex low plateau and cliff coastline
- The SCTs are further subdivided into geographically specific Regional Seascape Character Areas (SCA) with the relevant one in this instance being SCA 13 – South-East Irish Sea. This SCA "*comprises a portion of the coastline of east Wexford and Wicklow and extends from Carnsore Point in the south, to 12 nautical miles offshore and ends at Wicklow Head. It comprises a variety of SCT's namely SCT 7 (Broad estuarine bays and complex low plateau and cliff coastline), SCT 8 (Low lying and estuarine coastal plain with long, narrow sandy beaches) and offshore SCT 12 (Shallow offshore waters)"……" The coastal form comprises an interplay of broad, moderate scale bays and estuaries. Long, relatively narrow beaches are a key characteristic in this SCA and are punctuated by Carnsore Point, Cahore Point, Kilmichael Point and Wicklow Head. From Raven Point north to Cahore Point a spectacular series of strands are present including Curracloe, Ballinesker and Morriscastle Beach."*
- In terms of recreation and tourism, the current Seascape Character Assessment outlines several 'contemporary' influences on this SCA:
- "This SCA remains a popular area for beach and pier fishing in addition to commercial fishing landings at Arklow and Wexford.
- Arklow Harbour has an active fishing sector with catches of mussels, herring, and whelks. Wexford Harbour and town retain a strong maritime tradition also. The harbour itself is used on a commercial basis by local fishing vessels. The harbour front is an important public amenity in the town with attractive public realm and well used amenity space. The ballast bank is an important seamark from the harbour and is used as the base for the fireworks display announcing the start of the Wexford Opera Festival.
- Recreational and tourism activity is well established with seaside restaurants, beach activities, hotels, caravan parks and tourism accommodation within this area. The Sunny South-East and Irelands' Ancient East are the main tourism marketing brands. Arklow town has an impressive maritime museum that tells the story of the maritime history of the town with a focus on boat building, life boat and fishing traditions.
- Influence of Dublin region is more apparent further north within this SCA.
- From Arklow northwards to Howth sailing this part of the coast is very popular.

- The Rosslare Europort (bordering on SCA 12) operates both passenger and freight lines and expects to grow into a port suitable for the needs of a post-Brexit Ireland by strengthening trade with mainland Europe."
- In terms of 'Perceptual Influences' the Seascape Character Assessment notes the following with regard to SCA 13.
- "Views along the coast comprise mostly low-lying headlands that frame the view but do not dominate.
- With islands largely absent, visual reference points and clues are provided by these headlands and sometimes by the offshore turbines.
- The increasing elevation further north provides for longer visibility in certain areas, for example at Wicklow Head.
- Views from sea to land are possible from the passenger and freight ferries from Rosslare Port, the fishing vessels and recreational users such as kayakers and inshore fishermen."
- Landscape Character Assessment

Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028

The current Wexford County Development Plan (CDP) includes a Landscape Character Assessment that identifies areas of common character called landscape character areas or landscape character units (LCU). The current CDP defines an LCU as "*a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that makes it different from its neighbouring landscape. Each LCU has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, land use, cultural, historical and ecological features".* The current CDP identifies five LCUs within County Wexford, the most relevant of these being 'Coastal'. Of most relevance is the east coast of County Wexford, which is described in the Landscape Character Assessment as "*generally characterised by long, relatively straight coasts of sand or shingle backed up by low cliffs and sand dune systems. Within this coastal landscape are the more distinctive land and seascapes of Wexford Harbour, Wexford Slobs and Cahore Polders and Dunes. The northern part of the eastern coast has more promontories and smaller bays. There are concentrations of sand extraction developments which form prominent features in the landscape, notably near Blackwater*". The Landscape Character Assessment also noted that "*The coastal areas of Wexford experience greater pressure for tourism and residential development and are very sensitive to development and require protection both in their own right and for the services and economic benefits they bring."*

Subsection 3.2 of the current Landscape Character Assessment gives a sensitivity classification to each of the LCUs within County Wexford. The 'Coastal' LCU is classified as of 'High' sensitivity. LCUs classified with a high sensitivity have "*a limited ability to absorb new development. Development proposed within these areas must be shown not to impinge in any significant way upon their character, integrity or uniformity when viewed from the surrounding. Particular attention should be given to the preservation of the character and distinctiveness of these areas as viewed from scenic routes and the environs of archaeological and historic sites*".

The current CDP also identifies 'Distinctive Landscape' within county Wexford, which are different to the main LCU that they are located within. These areas are described as generally representing "*features in the landscape and seascape which have visual interest and prominence. Certain landscapes also have particular values which communities or individual attach to them e.g. historical, ecological, social-cultural and/or religious interest. In some cases, landscapes may have more than one value attached to them*". It is important to note that there are no 'distinctive landscape' designations within the immediate context of the Project Development Boundary or wider Study Area.

Figure 23.1: Excerpt from Map 7.1 of the current Wexford Landscape Character Assessment showing LCUs in relation to the Proposed Development

With regard to scenic routes and protected views, subsection 5.0 of the current Landscape Character Assessment notes that "*this plan does not designate specific routes but notes that scenic routes may fall into a number of categories*:

- Route through Upland, Coastal, River Valley and Distinctive Landscapes
- Trails such as Eurovelo, Norman Way, Greenways and Wexford Walking Trails where sightseeing visitors are more likely to be concentrated along these routes.
- Other scenic views might include:
- Views to the sea and towards land from the sea and rivers in locations which may host tourism or amenity / journeys arrivals by boat.

- Planner views and vistas such as those associated with planned settlement and heritage properties and gardens".

It is important to note that all scenic routes within the study area have been visited during fieldwork investigations. Where there is potential for visibility of the Proposed Development, a representative view has been included within the visual impact appraisal.

The current CDP outlines landscape objectives in the Landscape Character Assessment, some of which are relevant to the Proposed Development and are outlined below.

Objective L04: *To require all developments to be appropriately sited, designed and landscaped having regard to their setting in the landscape, ensure that any potential adverse visual impacts are minimised and that natural features and characteristics of the site are retained.*

Objective L05: *To ensure that developments are not unduly visually obtrusive in the landscape, in particular, in or adjacent to the Upland, River Valley, Coastal or Distinctive Landscape Character Units.*

Objective L06: *To ensure that, where a development will have a negative impact in the Upland, River Valley, Coastal, or Distinctive Landscape Character Unit, an overriding need is demonstrated for that particular development and ensure that careful consideration is given to site selection. The development should be appropriate in scale and be sited, designed and landscaped in a manner which minimises potential adverse impacts on the subject landscape.*

Objective L07: *To encourage appropriate development which would enhance an existing degraded landscape and/or which would enhance views to or from an Upland, River Valley, Coastal or Distinctive Landscape Character Unit from public viewpoints.*

Objective L08: *To seek to minimise the individual and cumulative adverse visual impacts that rural housing may have on Upland, River Valley, Coastal and Distinctive Landscape Character Units. In this regard, in locations where the Council considers that there is a risk of individual or cumulative adverse impacts, the Council will only consider proposals for housing developments where a need for the dwelling has been demonstrated in accordance with the criteria contained in Table No. 4-2 in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing, Volume Written Statement.*

Objective L09: *To protect views worthy of protection, including views to and from sea, river, landscape feature, mountains, tourism sites, landmark structures such a bridges and urban settlements from inappropriate development that by virtue of design, scale, character or cumulative impact would block or detract from such views.*

Objective L10: *To protect planned views and vistas, such as those that might be associated with planned settlements, heritage properties and monuments and ensure that new development does not detract from such views as may be identified within towns, formal settings and designated landscapes. In evaluating planning applications for development in the foreground of such views and vistas, consideration shall be given to the effect such development may have on the view or prospect.*

23.1.1.2 GUIDANCE

The SLVIA adopts an approach that is founded in the following best practice guidance documents:

- Landscape Institute. (2013). Guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment. Routledge. (GLVIA3);
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2022). 'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements' (2022); and
- Landscape Institute. (2019). Technical Guidance Note 06/2019 'Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'.

23.2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This document uses methodology as prescribed in the previously mentioned GLVIA3, which follows the European Landscape Convention (ELC) definition of landscape:

> *"Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (Council of Europe, 2000). Thus, GLVIA-2013 covers all landscapes from "high mountains and wild countryside to urban and fringe farmland (rural landscapes), marine and coastal landscapes (seascapes) and the landscapes of villages towns and cities (townscapes)" - whether protected or degraded*[1].

23.2.1 STATEMENT OF COMPETENCE

This SLVIA was prepared by Cian Doughan (BSLA, MILI), Associate Director at Macro Works Ltd of Cherrywood Business Park, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18; a consultancy firm specialising in Landscape and Visual Assessment and associated maps and graphics. Macro Works' relevant experience includes a broad range of infrastructural, renewable energy, industrial and commercial projects since 1999, including numerous urban, residential, and mixed-use development projects.

23.2.2 CONSULTATION

During scoping, a response was provided from Wexford County Council in relation to the Proposed Development. Specific responses were included in relation to the visual aspect of the Proposed Development, which is included below:

> *"The Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane* Settlement Plan contained in Volume 3 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out a number of objectives for the area. Notwithstanding the support for ORE associated development, Rosslare Europort and the surrounding area is also a key area for tourism. The plan recognises the needs to improve the public realm and visual amenities of the settlement to encourage visitors to spend time there, and also to give a positive introduction to our county for those arriving at the Europort.

[1] Available at https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/definition-and-legal-recognition-of-landscapes

The Plan recognises the need to improve the 'place' quality and public realm and the quality of architecture will be required to be high to create a sense of arrival to Ireland for people disembarking from the boat. Section 2.4.3 of the Plan outlines the 'Place Concept' and states that the future development at the port should:

- *Result in an attractive place with an attractive public realm and where possible to ensure that the buildings are used to define the spaces*
- *Use its location beside the sea to take advantage of views for people waiting for the boat and other visitors to the port*
- *Create a high-quality experience for people arriving in the country*
- *Is accompanied by a public realm and landscape plan*
- *Is cognisant of the natural heritage of the area."*

It should also be noted that following engagement between the Project Team and Wexford County Council during the EIA scoping phase of the project and public engagement events outlined in Chapter 4: Scoping and Consultation, Wexford County Council wrote to the Project Team on the 21st of June 2024 to provide their views on the Proposed Development. Following this the project team met with Wexford County Council staff on 24th October 2024.

23.2.3 SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

GLVIA3 establishes guidelines and not a specific methodology. The preface recognises that:

"This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand."

The methodology for this assessment has therefore been developed specifically for this assessment to ensure that it is appropriate and fit for purpose. The LVIA Methodology can be summarised as undertaking the following key tasks:

- Desk study and site visits
- Defining the Baseline Landscape setting and conditions
- Identification and Evaluation of key components of the Proposed Development
- Consideration of Mitigation Measures
- Assessment of Landscape Effects
- Assessment of Visual Effects
- Summary Statement of Significance.

23.2.4 STUDY AREA

Whilst there will be a particular focus on receptors within the immediate study area (<500m from the site), a 5km study radius has been used in this instance, as many of the operational phase structures utilising the Proposed Development have the potential to be visible at a further distance than the immediate study area. Thus, these structures have the potential to influence receptors throughout the wider landscape and seascape context. Whilst there is currently no guidance as to the extent of study areas for developments such as this, based on professional judgement and current best practice, and in the interests of a comprehensive appraisal, a 5km radius study area is used in this instance (refer to Figure 23.2).

Figure 23.2: 5km Extent of the Study Area

23.2.5 LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This part of the LVIA provides an assessment of how the introduction of the Proposed Development will affect the physical features and fabric of the landscape, and then how the proposals influence landscape character with reference to published descriptions of character and an understanding of the contemporary character of the landscape as informed through desktop and site studies.

When assessing the potential landscape effects of the development, the value and sensitivity of the landscape receptor is weighed against the magnitude of impact to determine the significance of the landscape effect. Criteria outlined below are used to guide these judgements.

23.2.5.1 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

The sensitivity of the landscape to change is the degree to which a particular setting can accommodate changes or new elements without unacceptable detrimental effects to its essential characteristics. In accordance with GLVIA3, the sensitivity of a landscape receptor (Landscape Character Area or feature) is derived from combining judgements in relation to its susceptibility to change and its value. The judgement reflects such factors as its quality, value, contribution to landscape character and the degree to which the particular element or characteristic can be replaced or substituted. Landscape Sensitivity is classified using the following criteria set out in Table 23.1.

Table 23.1: Landscape Value and Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Areas where the landscape character exhibits a very low capacity for change in the form of development. Examples of this are high value landscapes, protected at an international or national level (World Heritage Site/National Park), where the principal management objectives are likely to be protection of the existing character.
High	Areas where the landscape character exhibits a low capacity for change in the form of development. Examples of this are high value landscapes, protected at a national or regional level (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), where the principal management objectives are likely to be considered conservation of the existing character.
Medium	Areas where the landscape character exhibits some capacity and scope for development. Examples of this are landscapes which have a designation of protection at a county level or at non-designated local level where there is evidence of local value and use.
Low	Areas where the landscape character exhibits a higher capacity for change from development. Typically, this would include lower value, non-designated landscapes that may also have some elements or features of recognisable quality, where landscape management objectives include, enhancement, repair and restoration.
Negligible	Areas of landscape character that include derelict, mining, industrial land or are part of the urban fringe where there would be a reasonable capacity to embrace change or the capacity to include the development proposals. Management objectives in such areas could be focused on change, creation of landscape improvements and/or restoration to realise a higher landscape value.

23.2.5.2 MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE – LANDSCAPE

The magnitude of change is a product of the scale, extent or degree of change that is likely to be experienced as a result of the Proposed Development and, to a lesser extent, the duration and reversibility of that effect. The magnitude takes into account whether there is a direct physical impact resulting from the loss of landscape components and/or a change that extends beyond the immediate setting that may have an effect on the landscape character. Table 23.2 outlines criteria used to inform this judgement.

Table 23.2: Magnitude of Change – Landscape

Magnitude	Description
Very High	Change that would be large in extent and scale with the loss of critically important landscape elements and features, that may also involve the introduction of new uncharacteristic elements or features that contribute to an extensive change of the landscape in terms of character, value and quality.
High	Change that would be more limited in extent and scale with the loss of important landscape elements and features, that may also involve the introduction of new uncharacteristic elements or features that contribute to a considerable change of the landscape in terms of character, value and quality.
Medium	Changes that are modest in extent and scale involving the loss of landscape characteristics or elements that may also involve the introduction of new uncharacteristic elements or features that would lead to noticeable changes in landscape character, and quality.
Low	Changes affecting small areas of landscape character and quality, together with the loss of some less characteristic landscape elements or the addition of new features or elements that would lead to discernible changes in landscape character and quality.
Negligible	Changes affecting small or very restricted areas of landscape character. This may include the limited loss of some elements or the addition of some new features or elements that are characteristic of the existing landscape or are hardly perceivable leading to no material change to landscape character, and quality.

23.2.6 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This part of the SLVIA provides an assessment of how the introduction of the Proposed Development will affect views within the landscape. It therefore needs to consider:

- Direct impacts of the Proposed Development upon views through intrusion or obstruction
- The reaction of viewers who may be affected, e.g., residents, walkers, road users, rail users, ferry users
- The overall impact on visual amenity.

It has been deemed appropriate to structure the assessment around a series of representative viewpoint locations. All viewpoints are located within the public domain and are representative of views available from main thoroughfares and pedestrian areas within the vicinity of the Proposed Development. The selected viewpoints (using Zone of Theoretic Visibility (ZTV) mapping and

fieldwork investigations) are considered to be comprehensive in communicating the variable nature of the visual effects.

When assessing the potential visual effects of the development, the sensitivity of the visual receptor is weighed against the magnitude of the visual impact to determine the significance of the visual effect. Criteria outlined below are used to guide these judgements.

23.2.6.1 SENSITIVITY OF VISUAL RECEPTORS

As with landscape sensitivity, the sensitivity of a visual receptor is categorised as Very High, High, Medium, Low, and Negligible. Unlike landscape sensitivity, however, the sensitivity of visual receptors has an anthropocentric (human) basis. It considers factors such as the perceived quality and values associated with the view, the landscape context of the viewer, the likely activity the viewer is engaged in and whether this heightens their awareness of the surrounding environment.

A list of the factors considered by the assessor in estimating the level of sensitivity for a particular visual receptor is outlined below (section 23.2.6.2 and section 23.2.6.3) to establish visual receptor sensitivity at each viewpoint location.

23.2.6.2 SUSCEPTIBILITY OF VISUAL RECEPTORS TO CHANGE

In accordance with GLVIA3, visual receptors most susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity are:

- Residents at home.
- People, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation or water-based recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape/seascape and on particular views.
- Visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience.
- Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area
- Travellers on road, rail, ferries or other transport routes where such travel involves recognised scenic routes and awareness of views is likely to be heightened.

Visual receptors that are less susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity include:

- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape.
- People at their place of work whose attention may be focussed on their work or activity, not their surroundings and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life.

23.2.6.3 VALUES ATTACHED TO VIEWS

The value attached to a view is determined by considering the following:

- Recognised scenic value of the view (Development Plan designations, guidebooks, touring maps, postcards, etc). These represent a consensus in terms of which scenic views and routes within an area are strongly valued by the population because in the case of County Developments Plans, for example, a public consultation process is required.

- Views from within highly sensitive landscape areas. These are likely to be in the form of Architectural Conservation Areas, which are incorporated within the Development Plan and therefore subject to the public consultation process. Viewers within such areas are likely to be highly attuned to the landscape around them.
- Primary views from residential receptors. Even within a dynamic city context, views from residential properties are an important consideration in respect of residential amenity.
- Intensity of use, popularity. This relates to the number of viewers likely to experience a view on a regular basis and whether this is significant at a national or regional scale.
- Provision of vast, elevated panoramic views. This relates to the extent of the view on offer and the tendency for receptors to become more attuned to the surrounding landscape at locations that afford broad vistas.
- Sense of remoteness and/or tranquillity. Receptors taking in a remote and tranquil scene, which is likely to be fairly static, are likely to be more receptive to changes in the view than those taking in the view of a busy street scene, for example.
- Degree of perceived naturalness. Where a view is valued for the sense of naturalness of the surrounding landscape it is likely to be highly sensitive to visual intrusion by distinctly manmade features.
- Presence of striking or noteworthy features. A view might be strongly valued because it contains a distinctive and memorable landscape / townscape feature such as a cathedral or castle.
- Historical, cultural and / or spiritual significance. Such attributes may be evident or sensed by receptors at certain viewing locations, which may attract visitors for the purposes of contemplation or reflection heightening the sense of their surroundings.
- Rarity or uniqueness of the view. This might include the noteworthy representativeness of a certain landscape type and considers whether the receptor could take in similar views anywhere in the broader region or the country.
- Integrity of the landscape character. This looks at the condition and intactness of the landscape in view and whether the landscape pattern is a regular one of few strongly related components or an irregular one containing a variety of disparate components.
- Sense of place. This considers whether there is special sense of wholeness and harmony at the viewing location.
- Sense of awe. This considers whether the view inspires an overwhelming sense of scale or the power of nature.

Those locations which are deemed to satisfy many of the above criteria are likely to be of higher sensitivity, and no relative importance is inferred by the order of listing.

It is recognised that a viewer's interpretation and experience of the landscape can have preferential and subjective components. Where relevant, judgements are made on key elements of the landscape focusing on those that are considered to contribute more prominently and positively to the visual quality, as well as identifying elements that detract from it. Overall sensitivity may be a

result of a number of these factors or, alternatively, a strong association with one or two in particular.

23.2.7 MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE – VISUAL

The magnitude of change is again a product of the scale, extent, or degree of change that is likely to be experienced as a result of the Proposed Development. This is directly influenced by its 'visual presence / prominence', as experienced by visual receptors in the landscape. These terms are somewhat quantitative in nature and essentially relate to how noticeable or 'dominant' the proposal is within a particular view. Aside from the obvious influence of scale and distance, a development's visual presence is influenced by the extent and complexity of the view, contextual movement in the landscape, the nature of its backdrop, and its relationship with other focal points or prominent features within the view. It is often, though not always, expressed using one of the following terms: Minimal; Sub-dominant; Co-dominant; Dominant; Highly dominant. Criteria used to inform judgements are provided in Table 23.3.

Table 23.3: Magnitude of Change – Visual

Magnitude	Description
Very High	Complete or very substantial change in view, dominant, involving complete or very substantial obstruction of existing view or complete change in character and composition of baseline, e.g., through removal of key elements.
High	A major change in the view that is highly prominent and has a strong influence on the overall view. This may involve the substantial obstruction of existing views or a complete change in character and composition of baseline, e.g., through removal of key elements or the introduction of new features that would heavily influence key elements.
Medium	Moderate change in view which may involve partial obstruction of existing view or partial change in character and composition of baseline through the introduction of new elements or removal of existing elements. Change may be prominent but would not substantially alter scale and character of the surroundings and the wider setting. View character may be partially changed through the introduction of features which, though uncharacteristic, may not necessarily be visually discordant.
Low	Minor change in baseline - change would be distinguishable from the surroundings whilst composition and character would be similar to the pre change circumstances.
Negligible	Very slight change in baseline - change would be barely discernible. Composition and character of view substantially unaltered.

23.2.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT

The significance of a landscape or visual effect is based on a balance between the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change, and is categorised as Profound, Substantial, Moderate, Slight, or Imperceptible. Intermediate judgements are also provided to enable an effect to be more accurately described where relevant. 'No Effect' may also be recorded, where appropriate, if the effect is negligible.

The judgement of the significance category is determined using the Significance Matrix in Table 23.4 as a guide. This applies the principle that significance is a function of magnitude weighed against

sensitivity, but employs slightly different terminology to avoid the potentially confusing use of the term 'significant' (as recommended by GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 (Landscape institute, 10th June 2013)).

Table 23.5 provides indicative criteria used to define the categories of significance of effect.

Table 23.4: Significance Matrix

Magnitude	Sensitivity of Receptor				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Very High	Profound	Profound-substantial	Substantial	Moderate	Slight
High	Profound-substantial	Substantial	Substantial-moderate	Moderate-slight	Slight-imperceptible
Medium	Substantial	Substantial-moderate	Moderate	Slight	Imperceptible
Low	Moderate	Moderate-slight	Slight	Slight-imperceptible	Imperceptible
Negligible	Slight	Slight-imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Table 23.5: Indicative criteria to define significance of effect

Significance of Effect	Landscape	Visual
Profound	There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over an extensive area or a very intensive change over a more limited area.	The view is entirely altered, obscured or affected.
Substantial	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the landscape. There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over a substantial area or an intensive change over a more limited area.	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the visual environment. The proposal affects a large proportion of the overall visual composition, or views are so affected that they form a new element in the physical landscape.
Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends. There are minor changes over some of the area or moderate changes in a localised area.	An effect that alters the character of the visual environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends. The proposal affects an appreciable segment of the overall visual composition, or there is an intrusion in the foreground of a view.
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the landscape without affecting its sensitivities. There are minor changes over a small proportion of the area or moderate changes in a localised area or changes that are reparable over time.	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the visual environment without affecting its sensitivities. The affected view forms only a small element in the overall visual composition or changes the view in a marginal manner.

Significance of Effect	Landscape	Visual
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences. There are no noticeable changes to landscape context, character or features.	An effect capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences. Although the development may be visible, it would be difficult to discern resulting in minimal change to views.

It is important that the likely effects of the proposals are transparently assessed and understood in order that the determining authority can bring a balanced, well-informed judgement to bear when making a planning decision.

As such, whilst the significance matrix and criteria provide a useful guide, the significance of an effect is ultimately determined by the landscape specialist using professional judgement. Occasionally, hybrid judgements are applied to account for nuances in the assessment.

Effects assessed as 'Substantial' or greater (shaded cells in Table 23.4) are considered to be the most notable in landscape and visual terms and may be regarded as 'Significant'. However, it is important to note that this is not a reflection on their acceptability in planning terms.

23.2.9 QUALITY OF EFFECTS

In addition to assessing the significance of landscape and visual effects, the quality of the effects is also determined. Within this SLVIA, effects are described as negative/adverse, neutral, or positive/beneficial, and the following criteria have been used to guide these judgements:

Table 23.6: Quality of Effect

Quality	Description
Positive/beneficial	A change which improves the quality of the environment, enhancing the existing view/landscape.
Neutral	No effects or effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation e.g., will neither detract from nor enhance the existing view/landscape.
Negative/adverse	A change which reduces the quality of the environment, detracting from the existing view/landscape.

In the case of new energy / infrastructure developments within coastal, rural and semi-rural settings, the landscape and visual change brought about by an increased scale and intensity of built form is seldom considered to be positive / beneficial. Effects in these contexts are generally considered to be adverse in nature, or neutral, where the effect has little influence on the landscape/views.

23.2.10 MITIGATION

As discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology, three types of mitigation measures are considered in this chapter.

- Primary mitigation

- Secondary mitigation
- Tertiary mitigation

23.3 BASELINE: SLVIA IN RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

23.3.1 SEASCAPE/LANDSCAPE BASELINE

The seascape/landscape baseline represents the existing seascape/landscape context and is the scenario against which any changes to the landscape brought about by the Proposed Development will be assessed. A description of the landscape context of the Proposed Development site and wider study area is provided below under the headings of landform and drainage (23.3.1.1), vegetation and land use (23.3.1.2), centres of population and houses (23.3.1.3), transport routes (23.3.1.4) and public amenities and facilities (23.3.1.5). Although this description forms part of the landscape baseline, many of the landscape elements identified also relate to visual receptors i.e., places and transport routes from which viewers can potentially see the Proposed Development. The visual resource will be described in greater detail in the visual baseline section below (refer to section 23.3.2).

23.3.1.1 LANDFORM AND DRAINAGE

At a macro level, the study area comprises relatively flat coastal plain landscape at the south-eastern most extent of Ireland's coastline. The Proposed Development is situated at the southern end of Rosslare Bay, where the coastline is oriented in an east-west direction. The coastline in this area is defined by low but steep escarpments and sea cliffs down from the planer landscape to the shoreline. In the immediate context of the site, the coastline is defined by anthropogenic features associated with the surrounding Port complex, such as ship berths and reclaimed areas of land that host ancillary development associated with the port. As per the historical mapping, the surrounding shoreline has gone through a considerable degree of change in terms of its physical composition, from a naturalistic coastline of beaches, bays and sea cliffs to a more engineered coastline to accommodate Rosslare Port (refer to Figure 23.3 and Figure 23.4 below). Greenore Point is the most notable coastal promontory within the study area and is situated along the coastline in the southern half of the study area.

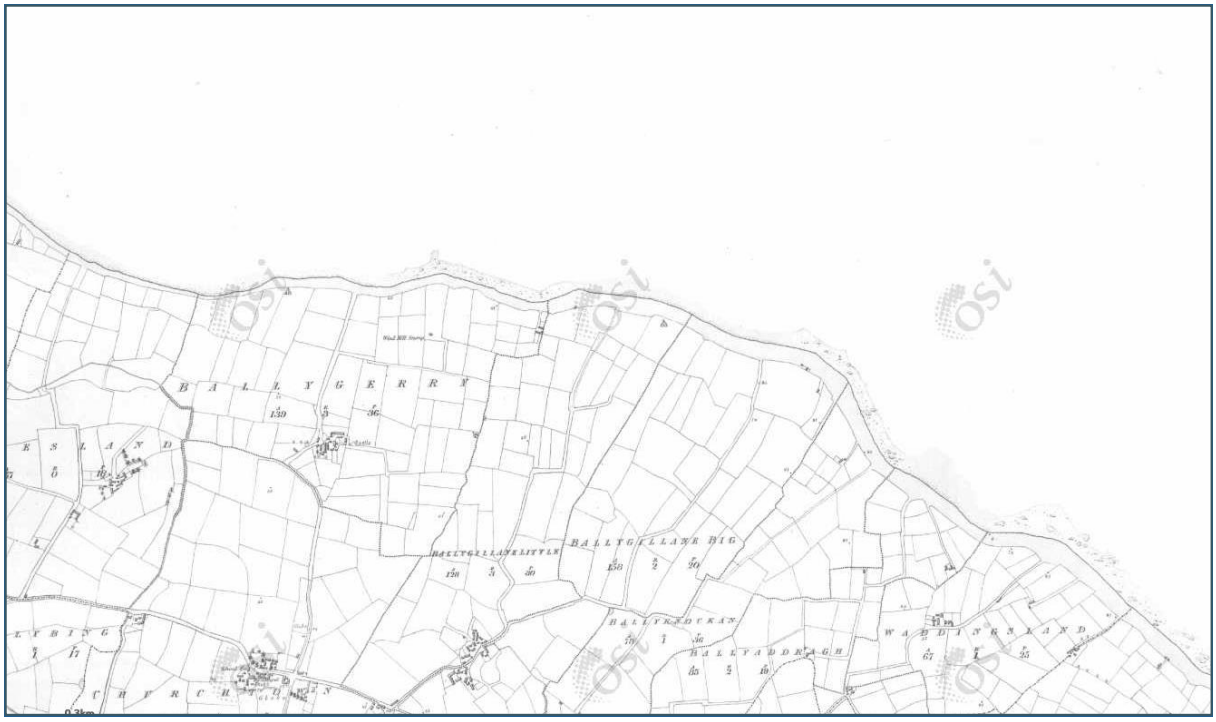

Figure 23.3: Historical Mapping showing the coastal context of the immediate study area from the early 19th Century

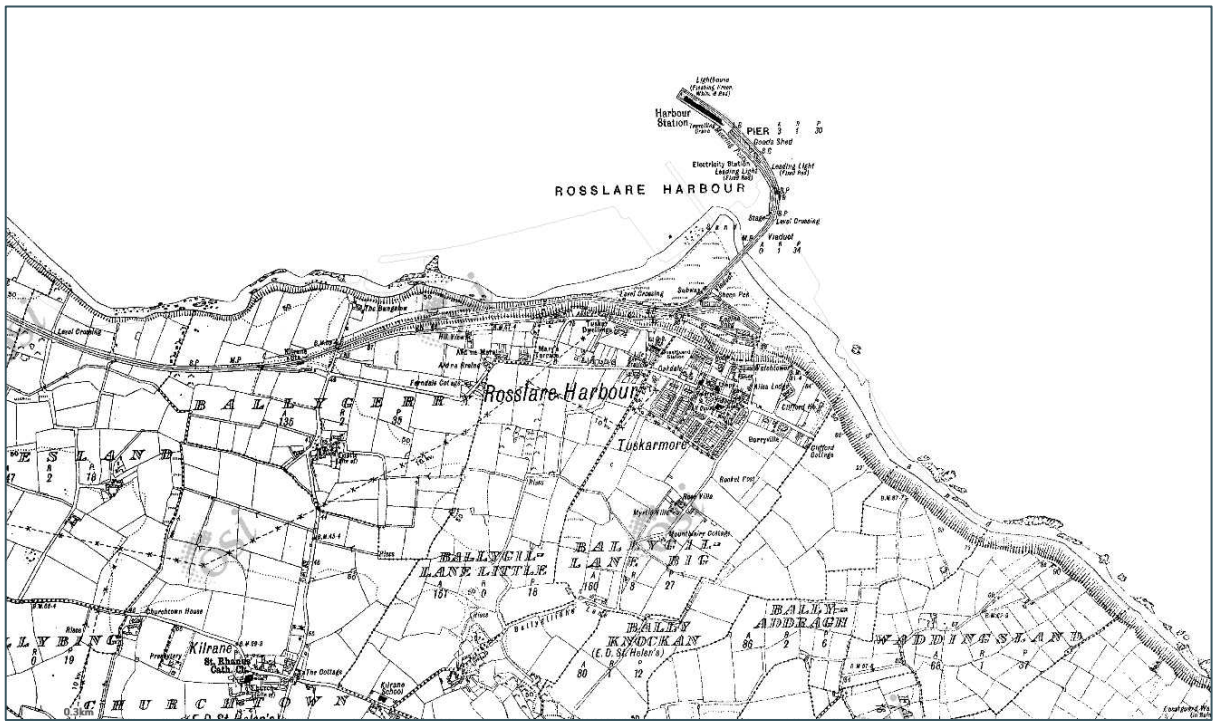

Figure 23.4: Historical Mapping showing the coastal context of the immediate study area from the later 19th Century/early 20th Century

23.3.1.2 VEGETATION AND LAND USE

The land use in the vicinity of the Proposed Development is particularly varied and reflects the nature of this port settlement. Much of the immediate surrounding land use relates to Rosslare Europort and includes extensive holding areas and storage areas for the freight coming on and off the ferries. A small boat harbour is also located in the immediate site context, whilst the surrounding urban areas within the settlement of Rosslare are separated from the port by a section of the national railway line, which follows the coastline throughout the northern extent of the study area. South of the national railway line, one of the principal land uses is the urban settlement of Rosslare itself, which comprises notable areas of industrial and commercial land uses due to its strategic location adjacent to the Port. Nevertheless, moving further away from the immediate surrounding settlement, it is clear that the predominant land use within the study area is pastoral farmland comprising medium to large-sized fields defined by mixed hedgerow vegetation.

With regard to vegetation in the immediate surrounds of the coastline, this is limited to areas of low coastal scrub, whilst in the southern extent of the study area adjacent to Rosslare Beach is a small sand dune system carpeted in coastal grasses.

Figure 23.5: Landscape/Seascape Context of the Central Study Area

23.3.1.3 CENTRES OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

The most notable centre of population in relation to the Proposed Development is that of Rosslare Harbour, which occurs immediately south of the Proposed Development and south of the existing Port complex. Kilrane, a small settlement that is almost contiguous with Rosslare Harbour, lies to the south of the N25 and is just over 1.2 km from the Proposed Development. A small settlement known as Tagoat is also situated adjacent to the N25, 2.5 km to the southwest of the site. The coastal settlement of Rosslare is one of the largest settlements within the study area and is predominately contained around the coastline in the northern half of the study area. The wider parts of Rosslare, which is a popular domestic tourism destination during the summer months, are located some c. 2.5 km northwest of the site.

At a finer scale, the nearest residential receptors to the Proposed Development are located along Cliff Road, which is situated immediately south of the national railway line along locally elevated

coastal terrain. A linear cluster of residential dwellings located at Ballygerry is slightly further offset from the coastline but affords similar visibility across the coastline to those along Cliff Road. It is important to note that there are no residential dwellings located along the coastal side of the National Railway Line cutting within the immediate study area.

23.3.1.4 TRANSPORT ROUTES

The principal transport route in relation to the Proposed Development is the N25 National Primary Route, which connects the wider Rosslare Port and County Wexford to Cork City and the wider southern extent of Ireland. The N25 culminates at Rosslare Port and extends through the study area in a general west/north-westerly direction. The wider study area also encompasses the R736 and R740 regional roads, both of which are contained in the wider western half of the study area. The nearest of the two, the R736, is located just over 2.5 km west of the site at its nearest point. Otherwise, the central study area west of the Proposed Development comprises a dense web of local roads, the nearest of which is Cliff Road, situated along the immediate coastline.

The National Railway Line is another notable major route corridor within the study area and flanks the coastline. It is contained immediately west of the site and denotes the divide between the Port context and the more settled parts of the central study area. The ferries that dock at the Port complex are another notable transport route within the study area. Rosslare Port has weekly crossings to Cherbourg, Fishguard and Bilboa, where users of these Ferries have contrasting approach to the Port settlement than all other transport receptors.

23.3.1.5 TOURISM, HERITAGE AND PUBLIC AMENITIES

The Wexford cycle hub, a network of cycling trails that passes through Enniscorthy, Wexford town, Rosslare and Kilmore Quay, runs along the N25 national road within the study area. The Rosslare Harbour Village Trail also passes through the central areas of Rosslare Harbour, where views are afforded across the existing port facility. A section of the EuroVelo 1 – Atlantic Coast Route also runs along the N25 national road in the central parts of the study area. A local cliff walking trail is also located along the coastline in the eastern half of the study area to the south of Rosslare Harbour Beach.

St Helens Bay Golf Club and Toskar Rock Golf Club are both situated immediately adjacent to each other, 2 km to the southeast of the Proposed Development. A number of public beaches are situated along the adjoining coastline, including Rosslare Harbour Beach located some c. 600 m east of the site, St Helens beach located some 2.2 km to the southeast and Rosslare strand 3 km to the north of the Proposed Development.

23.3.2 VISUAL BASELINE

23.3.2.1 ANALYSIS OF ZONE OF THEORETIC VISIBILITY (ZTV) MAPPING

A computer-generated ZTV map has been prepared to illustrate from where the Proposed Development is potentially visible. The ZTV below is based on the max height of the proposed reclamation area above the existing water levels. The ZTV map is based solely on terrain data (bare ground visibility), and ignores features such as trees, hedges or buildings, which may screen views. Given the complex vegetation patterns within this landscape, the main value of this form of ZTV

mapping is to determine those parts of the landscape from which the proposed project will definitely not be visible, due to terrain screening within the 5km study area.

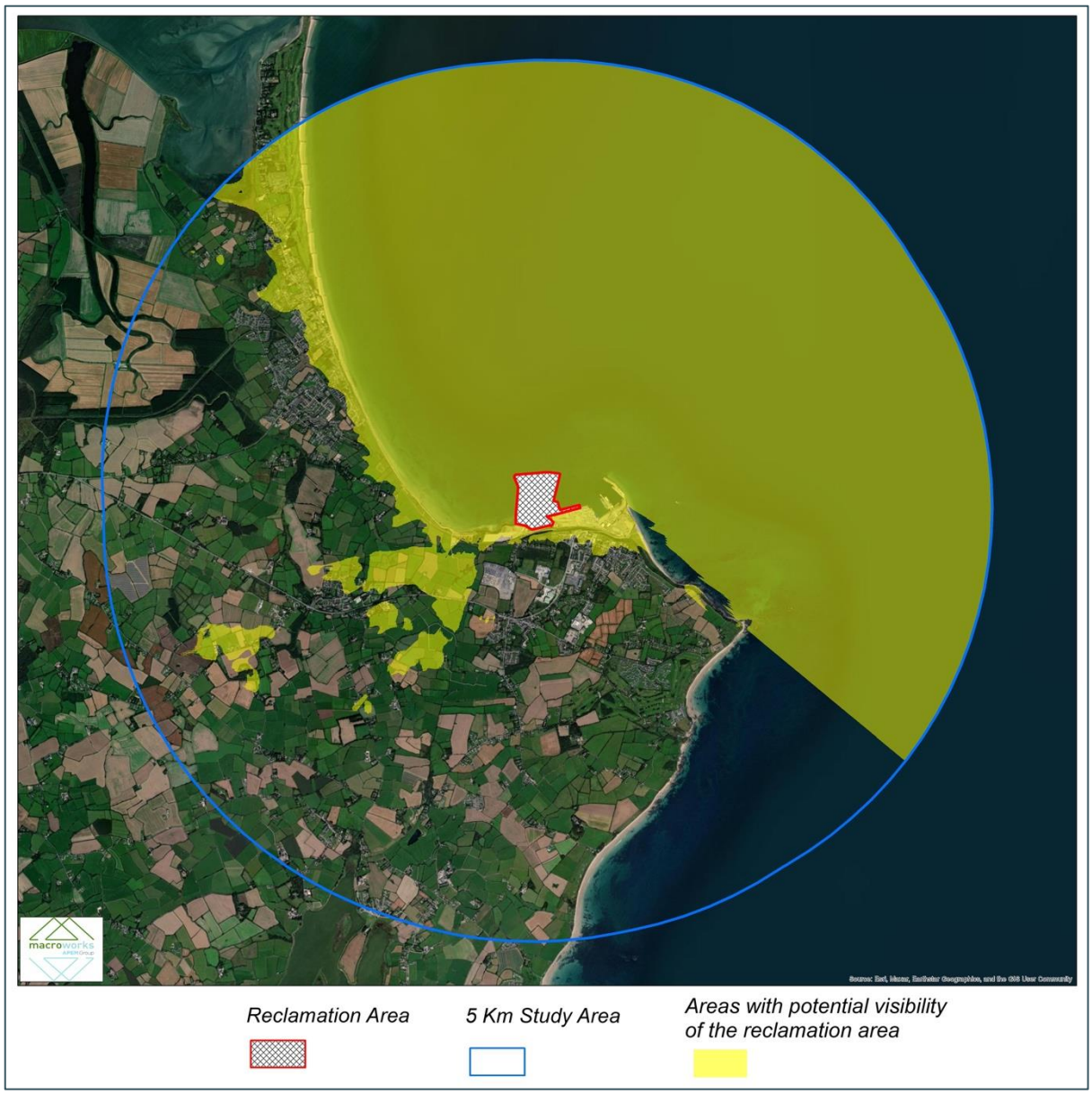

Figure 23.6: Zone of Theoretic Visibility (ZTV) Map showing areas of theoretic visibility of the Proposed Development within the study area

The key points from the ZTV (Figure 23.6 above) are outlined below:

- The proposed area of reclamation is generally well screened beyond the immediate coastline due to the steep escarpment located immediately south of the proposed development.
- There is potential for visibility of the Proposed Development from the surrounding port complex and from the nearest visual receptors located along the immediate coastline at the settlement of Rosslare Harbour.
- The Proposed Development will also be theoretically visible along Rosslare Strand and from visual receptors situated along the immediate coastline.

- Some localised areas of theoretical visibility also extend inland to the southwest of the site and in the vicinity of the settlement of Tagoat.

The most important point to make in relation to this 'bare-ground' ZTV map is that it is theoretical. The proposed reclamation area will only rise slightly above the high tide line and will, therefore, be considerably screened by surrounding and intervening hedgerow vegetation, trees, and numerous buildings, walls, and embankments scattered throughout the study area, resulting in a much lesser degree of actual visibility.

It is also important to note that the ZTV above does not account for the potential visibility of operational-phase structures that will be stored and partially assembled along the area of reclamation. Therefore, consideration will be given to including representative views further inland that may be screened by the proposed reclamation area, but which will have potential visibility of the operational-phase structures.

23.3.2.2 IDENTIFICATION OF VIEWSHED REFERENCE POINTS AS A BASIS FOR ASSESSMENT

Viewshed Reference Points (VRP's) are the locations used to study the visual impacts of a Proposed Development in detail. It is not warranted to include each and every location that provides a view of a development as this would result in an unwieldy report and make it extremely difficult to draw out the key impacts arising from the Proposed Development. Instead, the selected viewpoints are intended to reflect a range of different receptor types, distances and angles. The visual impact of a Proposed Development is assessed by Macro Works using up to 6 no. categories of receptor type as listed below:

- Key Views (from features of national or international importance) (KV)
- Designated Scenic Routes and Views (SR/SV)
- Local Community views (LCV)
- Centres of Population (CP)
- Major Routes (MR)
- Amenity and heritage features (AH).

VRP's might be relevant to more than one category and this makes them even more valid for inclusion in the assessment. The receptors that are intended to be represented by a particular VRP are listed at the beginning of each viewpoint appraisal. The VRPs selected in this instance are set out in Table 23.7 and Figure 23.7 below.

Table 23.7: Outline Description of Selected Viewshed Reference Points (VRPs)

VRP No.	Location	Representative of*	Direction of view
VP1	Rosslare Strand	AH, CP	SE
VP2	Local road at Rosehill Bay Beach	AH	SE
VP3	Local Picnic Area at Rosslare Harbour	AH, CP, LCV	N
VP4	Rosslare Harbour Beach	AH	W
VP5	Cliff Road west of the N25	CP, LCV	N
VP6	Local road overbridge of the National Railway Line at Ballygerry	MR, LCV	NE
VP7	St, Patricks Church Rosslare	CP, AH	N
VP8	Station Road at Ballygerry	LCV	N
VP9	Waddingsland Bay Cliff Trail	AH	NW
VP10	R738 regional road at St. Marys Cemetery north of Tagoat	AH, CP, MR	NE
VP11	N25 (Picnic Area) at Hayesland	MR	NE
VP12	St Helens Bay Golf Club & Resort	AH	NW

*(KV=Key views, SR=Scenic Routes, LCV=Local Community Views, CP=Centres of Population, MR=Major Routes and AH=Amenity and Heritage Features)

Figure 23.7: Viewpoint location map

23.4 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

23.4.1 "DO-NOTHING" SCENARIO

The 'do-nothing' scenario refers to the non-implementation of the Proposed Development. The primary effect of this would be that the impacts and effects identified would not directly occur. In this regard the following issues are relevant: the site, which currently comprises a small boat harbour, would likely see further applications for the development of the wider Rosslare Port and Harbour complex due to its strategic importance and connections with mainland Europe.

23.4.2 PRIMARY MITIGATION

As outlined in Chapter 6: Project Description, the southern side of the perimeter access road will have a cycle lane and pedestrian footpath. A verge will be retained to support planting of native tree species, tolerant of the marine exposure conditions.

23.4.3 ASSESSMENT OF RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY - LANDSCAPE

This is a complex landscape that comprises a mix of land uses, many of which are associated with Rosslare Harbour and Port complex. While some portions of the study area present as a rural hinterland setting, this is principally a landscape strongly influenced by industrial, commercial and transport infrastructure land use and residential and urban areas. As such, it has a relatively low degree of landscape integrity coupled with a utilitarian character. Providing something of a balance and a contrast to the busy working aspects of this landscape are the rocky sea cliffs of the coastline between the Europort and Rosslare Town further to the north, and areas of coastal farmland bound by networks of hedgerow vegetation further to the west. Nonetheless, landscape and seascape values here are strongly associated with the busy working port complex, whilst some landscape values are associated with tourism, as the port complex is also home to several passenger ferries and is therefore perceived as a gateway into Ireland.

None of the planning objectives of the current Wexford County Development Plan (2022 - 2028) identify any particular landscape or visual vulnerabilities within the immediate environs of the Proposed Development. Whilst the Wexford County Development Plan (2022-2028) classifies the 'coastal' landscape type with a 'high' sensitivity, it is not considered that this particular coastal landscape type is highly sensitive and instead is heavily influenced by numerous contrasting anthropogenic landscape features and land uses. Nonetheless, beyond the context of the immediate study area, the coastline retains its natural features and presents with a much higher degree of susceptibility.

Despite its coastal location, the study area is a landscape influenced by highly anthropogenic features such as large warehouses, business parks and major transport corridors and is not considered distinctive or sensitive on a local, regional or national level. On the basis of the reasons outlined above and in accordance with the criteria contained in 23.2.6 above, the sensitivity of the receiving landscape/seascape is considered to be Medium. However, areas of much higher sensitivity exist in the wider surrounds of the study area, where the built development and highly utilitarian forms within the working Port complex have less of an influence on the perceived character of the surrounding coastline.

23.4.4 ASSESSMENT OF RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY - VISUAL

This is a relatively complex landscape context comprising a varied array of contrasting landscape values. Whilst the immediate context of the site is that of a coastal context, it has largely been influenced by highly anthropogenic development over the past several decades associated with Rosslare Europort. In this regard, the naturalistic qualities of surrounding similar coastal contexts are not as intact within the immediate site vicinity and principally comprise large shipping berths, areas of reclaimed land and constructed piers. As a result, the coastal context in the immediate vicinity of the site is much less susceptible to change than other areas of the coastline within the study area. Thus, users of the immediate coastline in the surrounds of the site and Rosslare Europort are considered to have a visual receptor sensitivity ranging between Low to Medium; the areas in the immediate vicinity of the Port that are heavily influenced by the heavily built and industrial infrastructure that forms part of the Port are considered to have a Low receptor sensitivity; and

visual receptors within areas of the surrounding coastline that have a broader view across the Port and surrounding landscape are considered to be of a Medium receptor sensitivity.

The most scenic and susceptible parts of this landscape and seascape context are considered to be the coastal areas within the wider surrounding study area that are not notably influenced by the highly anthropogenic Port complex. Indeed, the broad sandy beaches along Rosslare Strand and the smaller, more distinctive coastal areas in the surrounds of Greenore Point present with a much higher degree of scenic amenity and some sense of the naturalistic. These parts of the coastline are considered highly susceptible to development and often encompass heritage and amenity assets including golf courses and coastal walks and are deemed to have a visual receptor sensitivity ranging between High and High-medium.

It is also important to consider water-based receptors in this context. Indeed, passenger and freight ferries will have a much broader view of coast when entering and exiting the Port complex and may encompass tourists visiting the country. Water-based visual receptors in this instance are deemed to have a visual receptor sensitivity of High-medium, beyond the Port context. However, the sensitivity of water-based visual receptors within the Port complex are considered to be much less susceptible to visual change as the Port comprises a strong industrial character. Thus, water-based receptors within the Port are considered to have a visual receptor sensitivity of Medium

Inland from the coastline, views of the working agricultural landscape are generally pleasant in terms of its pastoral aesthetic and 'green' settled working character. The network of hedgerows and vegetation throughout it contributes to some sense of naturalness and generates a sense of containment in some locations. However, whilst a pleasant pastoral aesthetic is noted throughout some parts of the study area, as noted above, this is a typical robust rural landscape that is not considered highly rare or distinctive. Overall, the sensitivity of visual receptors within the more typical working landscape context that is often influenced by an array of anthropogenic features tends to range between Medium and Medium-low, with those of a Medium sensitivity representing more open expansive views across the wider landscape.

Key differentials in terms of visual receptor sensitivity relate to the occupation of the visual receptor and whether views of the surrounding landscape are an inherent part of the experience. Static residential receptors are generally considered more susceptible to changes in views compared to those experienced transiently by travellers moving through the landscape. This is particularly true along major transport routes, where road infrastructure and traffic volume draw from visual amenity. Likewise, receptors located in closer proximity to the site are considered more susceptible to changes in views compared to those where views are experienced at a distance.

Based on the site-specific factors outlined above and in accordance with the general visual receptor sensitivity considerations contained in section 23.2.6.1 of the methodology, sensitivity judgement for each representative viewpoint are provided in the table in section 23.3.2.2 below and range from High to Low, with those of a higher sensitivity considered more susceptible to change.

23.4.5 CONSTRUCTION PHASE EFFECTS

23.4.5.1 MAGNITUDE OF CONSTRUCTION PHASE LANDSCAPE/SEASCAPE EFFECTS

During the construction phase, there will be a higher intensity of activity at the site than during the operational phase. The Proposed Development will be a permanent physical disruption of the land cover of the site to prepare for the extensive area of reclaimed land, which will result in a substantial modification to the existing seascape and coastal context, extending some 500 m north of the existing coastline. The construction activities associated with the Proposed Development include the following.

- Mobilisation and establishment of temporary site compound
- Dredging and Reclamation
- Construction of ORE 1 and ORE 2 berth pockets and quaysides
- Construction of new Small Boat Harbour Pontoons
- Site clearance within the existing Small Boat Harbour at Ballygeary and infilling of existing Small Boat Harbour
- Construction of a slipway and relocation of storage shed and parking to accommodate the training boats and equipment of the local Sea Scouts
- Construction of medium voltage single storey electrical substation and switch room located along the new access road
- All ancillary development works including installation of drainage and services, boundary treatment, landscaping and hardscaping, fencing, lighting, waste management facilities, fire water storage, foul pump station
- Establishment of Temporary ORE Compound

Construction of the extension works is expected to take around 18-24 months to complete and will involve large heavy earth moving machinery, mobile cranes and large vessels used for dredging. Other features which are a new addition to this northern section of the port are the RNLI berth and building associated with the Proposed Development.

Ancillary construction stage features will also include storage areas, temporary car parking and welfare facilities for workers (see Chapter 6 Project Description for a full technical description of construction-related works). All of these construction-stage features and activities will add significantly to the intensity and scale of activities associated with the existing port facility. However, these construction stage works and associated effects are ‘short-term’ in duration (1-7 years in as defined by EPA, (2022), and occur in the context of the existing busy working Port facility where construction works are not uncommon.

All of these aspects of the construction phases will detract from the prevailing coastal character in the immediate surrounds of the Proposed Development. Indeed, the scale and intensity of the construction stage works are likely to be one of the most prominent features for receptors along the immediate sections of the surrounding coastline.

For these reasons, the magnitude of landscape impact during the construction stage is deemed to be Very High within and immediately around the site (c. 0-250 m) but reducing steadily thereafter with distance as the construction works become a proportionately smaller component of a broader landscape context. Indeed, the construction stage landscape effects in the wider inland sections of the study area will be limited where visibility of the coastal areas is heavily screened by surrounding intervening built development and layers of existing hedgerow vegetation.

With reference to the significance matrix above (Table 23.4), the Medium seascape/landscape sensitivity judgement attributed to the study area, coupled with a Very High magnitude of construction stage landscape effect in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development (<250 m) is considered to result in an overall significance of 'Substantial'. The quality of effect is deemed Negative / advese and the duration of effect is deemed 'Short-term'. As a result, construction stage landscape effects are considered to be 'Significant' in EIA terms, albeit these effects are considered to be highly localised. Indeed, beyond the immediate context of the site, the significance of construction phase landscape effect is deemed to reduce rapidly to 'Moderate' and 'Moderate-slight' along sections of the coastline in the wider study area.

23.4.5.2 MAGNITUDE OF CONSTRUCTION PHASE VISUAL EFFECTS

During construction, the main visual impacts will arise from frequent heavy vehicle movements and worker vehicles travelling to and from the site, in addition to the large vessels located within the surrounding coastal areas used for construction and dredging purposes. These are likely to encompass mobile cranes and large structures that will be visible from the surrounding coastal context.

There will also be dredged material moved about in the reclamation area by bulldozers and construction materials awaiting use, whilst the establishment of the broad area of reclaimed land will also be clearly visible from the immediate surrounding coastal context. Overall, the construction materials, vehicles and vessels associated with the Proposed Development will likely result in heavily cluttered views of the surrounding coastlines and will result in a marked increase in the intensity and scale of development.

Nonetheless, while the intensity of construction-related activity on site will result in cluttered views along the coast and will detract from the degree of scenic amenity afforded here, it is important to note that this is a busy working Port context that is heavily influenced by existing vessels and large-scale infrastructure associated with the existing Port. Furthermore, construction-related activity is short-term in nature and will cease once the development becomes fully operational.

Overall, construction stage visual effects in the immediate surroundings of the site are likely to result in a magnitude of visual effect of Very High and High in the immediate surroundings of the site, reducing to Medium and Low with distance. Combined with the Medium to Low receptor sensitivity in the immediate surrounds of the site (local community views, centres of population, amenity and heritage features and major routes), the significance of construction-stage visual effects is deemed to range between 'Substantial' and 'Moderate' within the immediate vicinity of the site. Thus, construction-stage visual effects in the immediate context of the site (i.e. visual receptors within c. 250m of the Proposed Development that afford a clear view of the construction-stage works) are deemed 'Significant' in EIA Terms, although it is important to note that these effects are highly

localised to small sections of the coastline in the immediate surrounds of the Port and Proposed Development. Furthermore, beyond the immediate context of the site (<250 m) the significance of effect will reduce rapidly to 'Moderate-slight' and 'Slight' as the construction-stage activities become a much smaller component of the surrounding coastline.

23.4.6 OPERATIONAL PHASE EFFECTS

23.4.6.1 MAGNITUDE OF OPERATIONAL PHASE LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Once the construction of the Proposed Development is complete, it will result in a notably physical alteration to the coastal environs in the immediate surround of the site, which will extend some c. 500 m north from the existing coastline and will have a highly engineered form. Whilst the development will not appear incongruous in the context of the surrounding working Port, it does represent a high degree of visual change and will result in a considerable increase in the intensity and scale of development along the western extents of Rosslare Europort. Indeed, the reclaimed area of land will total an area of c. 21 ha and will almost double the size of the existing Port Complex. In addition to the scale of the development, there will be a clear increase in the intensity of activity at the site and in its immediate surrounds, where both land-based vehicles and water-based vessels will be travelling to and from the site. Nevertheless, these activities are commonplace in a working Port setting. Operational stage activities within the proposed Rosslare Europort ORE Hub will include the following:

- Unloading of renewables components (turbine tower sections, nacelles, blades, transformers etc.) with some temporary laydown and storage
- Loading renewables components or modules on to barges or specialist heavy lift vessels
- Berthing of visiting supply boats, anchor handling vessels, renewable energy service vessels or other large vessels
- Freight ferry movements and associated parking, and marshalling areas
- General cargo handling e.g., bulk materials
- Maintenance dredging will also be undertaken on an ongoing basis throughout the lifetime of the port.

Overall, the Proposed Development will result in a marked degree of physical change to the coastal environs in the immediate surrounds of the site and will substantially increase the intensity of development within the wider Port complex. Whilst the location of the Proposed Development will not present as an inappropriate form of development in the context of the already well-established Rosslare Europort, it will intensify the overriding industrial/working character of the surrounding landscape/seascape, becoming one of the principal coastal developments along the southern portion of the Irish coastline. Furthermore, whilst the reclaimed land will likely be heavily screened from most of the study area, as noted above, the operational activities will introduce substantial infrastructure within the Port setting. This will further intensify development and has the potential to increase the visual exposure of the proposed ORE Hub to the wider and more inland parts of the study area. Thus, these operational phase activities have the potential to impact the perceived character of the wider surrounding landscape. In terms of duration, whilst the project design life for

the quay structures and marine work is 50 years (from construction completion), it is envisaged that all port facilities developed by the project will be retained and required beyond this time period (with ongoing maintenance and repairs undertaken). Thus, the operational phase effects of the development are deemed Permanent in terms of duration.

Based on the factors discussed above, the magnitude of the operational stage landscape effect is considered High within the site and its immediate vicinity, encompassing areas within approximately c. 250 m of the Proposed Development. Thereafter, the magnitude of the operational stage landscape effect is deemed to reduce rapidly as the Proposed Development becomes a progressively smaller component of the overall coastline and is heavily screened by the layers of intervening vegetation and existing built development further inland. Beyond the immediate study area, the landscape effects will reduce to Medium and Low, and in some cases Negligible, where the development will have no impact on the perceived landscape character of wider surrounding areas.

With reference to the significance matrix in Table 23.4, the Medium landscape sensitivity attributed to the study area, coupled with the High magnitude of landscape effect at the site and in its immediate environs (< 250 m), results in an overall significance of 'Substantial-moderate'. For the remainder of the 5 km study area, residual effects are likely to range from 'Moderate' to 'Imperceptible'. The quality of effects is classified as 'Negative/adverse', and their duration is deemed 'Permanent'.

23.4.6.2 MAGNITUDE OF OPERATIONAL PHASE VISUAL EFFECTS

The assessment of visual impacts (refer to Table 23.8 below) at each of the selected viewpoints is aided by photomontages of the Proposed Development. Photomontages are a 'photo-real' depiction of the scheme within the view utilising a rendered three-dimensional model of the development, which has been geo-referenced to allow accurate placement and scale. For each viewpoint, the following images have been produced:

- Existing view
- Outline view (yellow outline showing the extent of the Proposed Development and magenta outline showing outline of potential operational phase structures)
- Montage view.

Table 23.8: Visual Impact Appraisal

VP no.	Existing view	VP Sensitivity	Visual impact magnitude	Pre mitigation significance / Quality / Duration of impact
VP1	Rosslare Strand: This is a pleasant view from Rosslare Strand that represents the coastal settlement of Rosslare and the surrounding strand which is a popular local amenity. The depicted view is oriented southeast along the coastline in the direction of Rosslare Port. The Port settlement and the Port Complex are delineated by steep escarpments along the immediate coastline, with the settled areas located elevated from the working Port.	High	The reclaimed area of land is viewed within the immediate context of the existing port and will extend the visual envelope of the working Port to the west. Nonetheless, the eastern aspect of the development is well contained by the existing pier at Rosslare Port. Whilst the proposed area of reclamation and ancillary structures that form part of the Proposed Development will be primarily viewed backed by the existing coastline and do not break the skyline, the operational phase built structures will present as some of the most prominent features of the Port from this distance of over c. 2.7 km. The most notable visual effects will be generated by the storage of the large-scale renewables infrastructure and moving vessels, which will result in a considerable increase in the intensity and scale of development in the distance and will block and partially block the visibility of the Port settlement. Nonetheless, the Proposed Development will not appear incongruous here and represents an intensification of an existing and established land use. Overall, the magnitude of change is deemed Medium-low.	Moderate-slight / Negative / adverse / Permanent
VP2	Local road at Rosehill Bay Beach: This is a pleasant view afforded from the coastline at the end of a local road adjacent to Rosehill Bay Beach. The view is representative of the local amenity feature and surrounding local	High	The Proposed Development will be visible here from a distance of just under c. 2km. As with VP1 above, the lateral extent of the development does not extend beyond the visual envelope of the existing coastline within the view, with the	Moderate-slight / Negative / adverse / Permanent

VP no.	Existing view	VP Sensitivity	Visual impact magnitude	Pre mitigation significance / Quality / Duration of impact
	community receptors, in addition to the national railway line, which is situated slightly further inland to the west. The depicted view extends southeast along a relatively non-distinctive section of the coastline that comprises a broad bay and grassed escarpments.		existing Pier at Rosslare Port extending slightly further to the east than the Proposed Development. In terms of the reclaimed area of land and proposed ancillary structures, these present as relatively low-lying features and are primarily viewed backed by the existing escarpments along the coastline and the surrounding built development in the Port settlement. Nonetheless, the operational phase features will considerably increase the perceived scale and intensity of development in the surroundings of the Port, with highly anthropogenic built features and large vessels extending the vertical extent of development within the view. Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to generate a magnitude of visual change in the order of Medium-low.	
VP3	Local Picnic Area at Rosslare Harbour: This is a locally elevated view afforded from the top of the coastal escarpments that delineate the settled parts of Rosslare Port and the Port complex itself. The view is from a small carpark and picnic area located immediately adjacent to the Port that afforded views across the Port and the terminal 7 development, which is currently under-construction. Beyond the built context of the busy foreground, a view is afforded across Rosslare Bay further to the	High-medium	The Proposed Development will be prominently visible here from this elevated coastal view at the settlement of Rosslare Port and is viewed behind the new Terminal 7 development (currently under construction). The Proposed Development is slightly offset from here by the consented Terminal 7 development, which will be visible immediately north of this view. Nonetheless, a clear view of the proposed reclaimed land and operational phase development will be afforded here beyond the Terminal 7 development and	Substantial / Negative / adverse / Permanent

VP no.	Existing view	VP Sensitivity	Visual impact magnitude	Pre mitigation significance / Quality / Duration of impact
	northwest, which encompasses Rosslare Strand. Views of elevated inland terrain contained the background of the view.		existing holding areas. Although the proposed reclaimed land and surrounding ancillary development, such as the proposed and all ancillary works, will not block or obstruct views across the coastline further to the north and northwest, the proposed operational phase structures will considerably increase the scale and intensity of development from this viewing context. These large-scale utilitarian features and large vessels have the potential to partially block and obstruct views to the north and will result in a marked degree of visual change here. Nonetheless, they represent the intensification of the established Port facility and, thus, will not appear incongruous. Overall, the Proposed Development and its associated operational phase built features will result in a considerable increase in the intensity of development here and will detract from the scenic amenity afforded to the north. The large-scale, highly anthropogenic built features will also add a strong sense of clutter to the view and have the potential to generate some sense of enclosure here. On balance of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Very High.	
VP4	Rosslare Harbour Beach: This is a view from a grassy dune system at Rosslare Harbour Beach, immediately south of the existing Port facility.	Medium-low	Whilst much of the Proposed Development will be entirely screened from here, the operational phase features of the Proposed Development are	Slight / Negative-/ adverse neutral / Permanent

VP no.	Existing view	VP Sensitivity	Visual impact magnitude	Pre mitigation significance / Quality / Duration of impact
	The view is representative of the beach as a local amenity feature, although it is important to note that the main aspect of visual amenity here relates to views to the east and south across the surrounding dunes, coastline and out to sea. The depicted view extends northwest towards the Port Facility, which presents beyond the coastal grassland in the foreground. Whilst many of the ground-hugging elements within the Port are partially screened here, numerous highly anthropogenic built forms present stacked in the near middle ground within the Port Complex.		visible, rising beyond the existing Port facility in the background of the view. The large vessels and tall turbine components present are stacked against the other existing Port infrastructure, generating a highly cluttered view to the northwest. Indeed, the introduction of the operational phase features of the Proposed Development will generate a notable increase in the intensity and scale of development at the Port Facility. Nevertheless, the operational phase built features are present within the visual envelope of the existing Port and do not generate any strong sense of overbearing from this distance of over c 1 km. Overall, the proposed reclaimed area of land will be entirely screened here, but the operational phase elements of the Proposed Development will generate an increase in the quantum of built development in this view and will further reinforce the highly industrial nature of the working Port facility. On balance of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Medium-low.	
VP5	Cliff Road west of the N25: This is a locally elevated view afforded from the immediate coastline just south of the National Railway Line corridor. The view is representative of local community receptors located along Cliff Road in addition to the wider settlement of Rosslare Harbour. The depicted view extends	High-medium	This represents one of the clearest and nearest potential views of the Proposed Development, where the extensive nature of the reclaimed area of land is clearly evident beyond the the new Terminal 7 development (currently under construction). Whilst the proposed area of land reclamation and associated built ancillary	Substantial / Negative / adverse / Permanent

VP no.	Existing view	VP Sensitivity	Visual impact magnitude	Pre mitigation significance / Quality / Duration of impact
	across a grassy verge at the top of the neighbouring coastal escarpment. To the north/northwest, a pleasant view is afforded across the coastline in the surrounds of Rosslare Strand and further afield towards the entrance to Wexford Harbour and its coastline further to the north. To the northeast, the view extends across Rosslare Europort, which is a highly modified and anthropogenic setting that comprises holding areas for incoming and outgoing freight, ferry terminals and other ancillary Port infrastructure.		infrastructure that forms part of the Proposed Development will result in a notable modification to the existing Port complex, aside from the proposed lighting poles which are slender in nature, they represent relatively low-lying built features in comparison to the locally elevated nature of the view and will not heavily obstruct visibility further to the north along the coastline. Nonetheless, the operational phase features, including the proposed offshore wind turbine components and large vessels, will result in a considerable degree of visual change from here and present in a highly prominent manner along this section of the coastline. Whilst they will only partially block and obstruct visibility of the coastline and seaward view, the extensive scale and extent of the operational phase infrastructure will be one of the principal features of this local view. They will generate a strong sense of clutter here and will notably increase the industrial working character of this section of the coastline. Overall, the Proposed Development and its operation phase built components will be one of the principal features of this view and will result in a notable detraction in the degree of scenic amenity afforded from here. Notwithstanding, the Proposed Development does not appear inappropriate in the context of the surrounding working Port facility, although it will generate a	

VP no.	Existing view	VP Sensitivity	Visual impact magnitude	Pre mitigation significance / Quality / Duration of impact
			considerable increase in the quantum of Port-related development at these local receptors. On balance, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Very High.	
VP6	Local road over bridge of the National Railway Line at Ballygerry: This is a view from a local road over bridge of the National Railway Line that is representative of both the railway line and surrounding local community receptors along Station Road. The depicted view extends north towards the coastline, where the immediate coastline is partially screened by layers of surrounding vegetation. In the distance, views are afforded towards the distant coastline in the northern extent of Wexford.	High-medium	The proposed area of land reclamation is partially screened here by the low-rolling coastal terrain directly north of the view. Only the proposed lighting and other smaller ancillary structures are visible here, extending north from the coastline. Nevertheless, the existing highly anthropogenic structures and large vessels associated with the operational phase of the development will be prominently visible from here, rising from the coastline at a distance of some c 300-400 m. Whilst the operation phase components will not present with any notable sense of overbearing here, they will be a notable feature of this coastal view and generate a strong sense of visual clutter in this northern aspect. Although the development represents an intensification of the existing Port infrastructure, the Port itself is well-screened here, and thus, the Proposed Development presents with some degree of ambiguity here. Overall, the Proposed Development and its operational phase activities will be one of the principal built features in this aspect of the view and will generate a marked increase in the intensity of built development along this part of	Substantial-moderate / Negative / adverse / Permanent

VP no.	Existing view	VP Sensitivity	Visual impact magnitude	Pre mitigation significance / Quality / Duration of impact
			the coastline. Thus, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed High.	
VP7	St. Patrick's Church Rosslare: This is a relatively contained view afforded from St. Patrick's Church immediately adjacent to the N25 in the centre of Rosslare Harbour. The depicted view is representative of the centre of population and heritage feature and extends across the N25 to the northwest. The view is well contained at a relatively short distance by the existing areas of built development within the settlement.	Medium-low	The Proposed Development will be entirely screened from here by the existing areas of built development to the north of the Church grounds. Nonetheless, the operational phase built features have the potential to be viewed here along the built skyline and will generate some sense of ambiguity as to their actual location. Indeed, the partial views of the operational phase infrastructure will generate a degree of visual tension and clutter in this view whilst further reinforcing the industrial and working nature of the settlement. Overall, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Medium-low.	Moderate-slight / Negative / adverse / Permanent
VP8	Station Road at Ballygerry: This is a contained view afforded from a section of Station Road in the wider surrounds of the settlement of Rosslare Harbour. The view is representative of local community receptors along the local road but is contained just beyond the road corridor by the neighbouring linear cluster of dwellings and their surrounding vegetation.	Medium	The Proposed Development will be largely screened from this local road context; albeit brief visibility of the proposed operational phase structures has the potential to be afforded between the linear cluster of dwellings along the local road. Indeed, only the tallest operational phase structures have the potential to be visible here, where they will rise above the boundary vegetation to the rear of the nearby dwellings. Although the structures have a strong association with the Port facility, they have the potential to generate a sense of visual ambiguity in relation to their actual context. Overall, the operational phase structures will increase the intensity of	Moderate-slight / Negative / adverse / Permanent

VP no.	Existing view	VP Sensitivity	Visual impact magnitude	Pre mitigation significance / Quality / Duration of impact
			development where visible to the north and will further intensify the industrial working character of this Port settlement. On balance of the reasons outlined above, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Medium-low along this local road.	
VP9	Waddingsland Bay Cliff Trail: This is a view from a coastal walking trail located in the southern surrounds of the settlement of Rosslare Harbour. The view is representative of users of the amenity feature in addition to local community receptors in the southern extent of Rosslare Harbour. The depicted view extends west/northwest back along the trail and encompasses views across Rosslare Harbour Beach and its surrounding coastline. The view is contained at a middle distance by layers of stacked vegetation and existing residential development to the west. It is important to note the main aspect of visual amenity here relates to the views across the coastline and out to sea in a general north/northeasterly direction.	High-medium	The Proposed Development will be entirely screened here by the coastal terrain to the northwest. Nonetheless, some brief visibility of the operational phase features of the Proposed Development has the potential to be afforded beyond the stacked vegetation to the northwest. The large-scale utilitarian built structures and vessels will only be briefly visible here and are viewed in the immediate context of the working Port. They do not present incongruous or over-scaled from this distance and do not block or obstruct any of the sensitive viewing aspects afforded in this view. Thus, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Low.	Slight / Negative / adverse / Permanent
VP10	R738 regional road at St. Marys Cemetery north of Tagoat: This is a view afforded from a local cemetery north of the settlement of Tagoat. The view is representative of the heritage receptors and centre of population, and extends north across the burial ground,	Medium	The Proposed Development is entirely screened here by intervening terrain. However, a partial view of the operational phase infrastructure has the potential to be afforded along the vegetated skyline at this distance. The operational phase structures add some sense of visual ambiguity to	Slight / Negative / adverse / Permanent

VP no.	Existing view	VP Sensitivity	Visual impact magnitude	Pre mitigation significance / Quality / Duration of impact
	which is surrounded by a slightly sloping pastoral field. The view is contained shortly beyond the cemetery by a low ridge and surrounding hedgerow vegetation.		this view, as it is unclear where the structures are located within the wider landscape context. Indeed, the highly utilitarian structures will increase the intensity of built development in this low-intensity pastoral setting and will result in a slight detraction in the degree of visual amenity afforded from here. Nonetheless, they will present as distant features in the background of the view and, thus, have a limited visual presence here. Overall, the magnitude of visual effect is deemed Low.	
VP11	N25 (Picnic Area) at Hayesland: This is a view afforded from the busy N25 corridor in the townland of Hayesland adjacent to a roadside picnic area. The view is representative of the major route receptor and is generally contained at the roadside by the surrounding hedgerow vegetation. Some brief visibility of industrial units and the surrounding settled areas within Rosslare Harbour are afforded in the distance over the top of the roadside vegetation.	Low	A brief glimpse of the operational phase structures has the potential to be afforded over the top of the roadside hedgerow to the northeast. The partial view of the structures is unlikely to draw the eye here and will have little notable effect on the visual amenity of this busy road carriageway. Thus, the magnitude of effect is deemed Negligible.	Imperceptible / Neutral / Permanent
VP12	St Helens Bay Golf Club & Resort: This is a locally elevated view from the main club house in the St Helens Bay Golf Resort and is representative of the amenity receptor. The depicted view is oriented to the northwest across the surrounding golf course and towards a cluster of residential dwellings	Medium	The Proposed Development and its associated ancillary features will be entirely screened in this view, located some c. 2.7 km from the site. Nonetheless, the operational phase structures have the potential to be visible in the distance rising along the skyline. The structures will present with some degree of ambiguity with regard to	Slight / Negative / adverse / Permanent

VP no.	Existing view	VP Sensitivity	Visual impact magnitude	Pre mitigation significance / Quality / Duration of impact
	located in the foreground of the view. Beyond these dwellings, the stacked vegetation and further partial views of built development contain this aspect of the view.		their perceived scale in relation to the middle-ground dwellings. Furthermore, the actual landscape context of these structures is also unknown from here, as the lower half is screened by the intervening layers of built development and vegetation. Overall, the highly anthropogenic structures will generate an industrial character in this more rural view and will increase the intensity of built development in the view, albeit from a distance of over c. 2.7 km. Overall, the operational phase structures introduce a degree of scale disparity within the view and will detract from the overriding rural character of this view. Nevertheless, the structures are viewed as distant background features, and thus, the magnitude of effect is deemed Low.	

Other Visual Receptors

The 12 views included in the assessment above are representative, and it is not possible to include viewpoints for every receptor within the 5km study area. In this instance, notable parts of the study area are contained within the Irish Sea, which includes water-based receptors such as recreational sailing boats, working fishing boats and incoming/outgoing passenger ferries from the UK and mainland Europe. The included 12 viewpoints represent various receptors, viewing angles and viewing distances. In terms of potential visibility for water-based receptors, the operational phase features of the ORE Hub will be clearly visible from incoming and outgoing passenger ferries. The potential for visual effects from water-based receptors, most notably incoming passenger ferries, has been depicted by an aerial photomontage to the north of the Proposed Development (refer to EIAR Technical Appendix 11: Photomontages). From this perspective, the scale and intensity of the development will be clearly evident from these water-based receptors. However, the ORE Hub will not appear incongruous when viewed from such passenger ferries as it will be viewed in the context of the existing working Port setting, which comprises similar Port infrastructure. Nevertheless, the Proposed Development will result in a clear and notable degree of visual change and will be a prominent feature, especially when assembling or storing the large-scale renewable energy development components.

Overall, whilst the Proposed Development will be clearly visible from water-based receptors within the study area, especially from incoming passenger ferries, it will present as an appropriate development type in the context of the busy existing working Port facility. The structures that will be stored within the ORE Hub during the operational phase are likely to generate some of the most notable visual effects. The sensitivity of water-based visual receptors within the wider seascape context is assessed as being high-medium. However, in the immediate vicinity of the active port setting, the sensitivity of visual receptors is somewhat reduced due to the pronounced industrial character of this aspect of the coastline. Consequently, water-based receptors in close proximity to the Port are regarded as having a medium level of visual receptor sensitivity. In terms of potential visual effects during operation of the ORE Hub will constitute some of the most prominent built features visible to water-based receptors entering the Port complex. The magnitude of visual change is assessed as high within the immediate context of the Port, diminishing with distance as the development becomes a less prominent feature within the broader coastal context.

On balance, the significance of visual effect sat surrounding water-based receptors within the study area is considered to be Substantial-moderate and will reduce at increasing distance from the site.

23.5 MITIGATION MEASURES FOR SLVIA

23.5.1 CONSTRUCTION PHASE MITIGATION MEASURES

Due to the scale and nature of the development, there is limited potential to employ any notable mitigation measures for the construction phase of the development. Nevertheless, as site construction evolves, the Proposed Development will be encircled with appropriate site hoarding and fencing to partially screen the construction of the proposed buildings and some of the lower-lying constructed elements within the development. Whilst this results in a much neater and less

cluttered appearance of the Proposed Development during the construction stage, the proposed hoarding will also generate some localised visual effects.

23.5.2 OPERATIONAL PHASE MITIGATION MEASURES

The main mitigation by avoidance measure employed in this instance is the siting of the Proposed Development within an existing busy Port complex so it will not appear out of place or inappropriate along the coastline. Furthermore, the site is contained to the north of a steep escarpment along the coastline adjacent to Rosslare Harbour, resulting in partially screened and heavily screened views of the Proposed Development from the more inland sections of the study area.

Due to the scale and nature of the development, there are very few opportunities to provide additional screening in the form of additional areas of vegetation beyond the proposed verge of native trees outlined in section . Nonetheless, during the operational phase of the development, the storage of renewable energy infrastructure within the ORE Hub will be undertaken in a neat and organised manner to reduce and further visual effects relating to visual clutter and confusion.

23.6 RESIDUAL EFFECTS

In terms of residual Landscape/Seascape effects, whilst the extensive area of land reclamation and areas of dredging are the cause of the greatest physical and landscape change, the visual presence of the large-scale operational stage features (turbine components, tower cranes and vessels) and incoming vessels will have the most notable effect on the character of the surrounding coastal environs.

In terms of impacts on landscape/seascape character, the Proposed Development and its associated operational phase activities will markedly increase the industrialisation of the Port setting. Nevertheless, this is a well-established land use that has formed part of the seascape/landscape for over the past two decades, and thus, the Proposed Development and its operation phase activities relate to the intensification of a well-established land use. With regard to the surrounding context of the site, it is evident that the coastal setting is neither highly distinctive nor rare. Rather, the coastline and its adjacent landscape have undergone extensive human intervention over many years, resulting in a highly modified landscape and coastal context. Furthermore, inland from the coastline, the settlement of Rosslare Port and its surrounding landscape context is not considered highly rare or distinctive and instead has a strong industrial and commercial character due to its location adjacent to the busy Port facility. Nevertheless, the Proposed Development and its operational phase activities, combined with the existing Port facility, will become one of the predominant land uses along this section of the coastline and will considerably increase the quantum of built development here. As a result, the residual magnitude of seascape/landscape effect at the site scale and in its immediate vicinity is deemed ‘Substantial-moderate’. The quality of effect is classified as Negative / adverse, and the duration of effect is deemed ‘Permanent’.

Visual effects were assessed at 12 viewpoints throughout the immediate and wider landscape/seascape context, representing various viewing distances, angles and receptor types. Indeed, some of the most sensitive and visually susceptible parts of the study area are considered to be the immediate coastal environs. These areas tend to be classified with a visual receptor sensitivity of High. Notwithstanding, the degree of sensitivity along the coastline is somewhat diminished in the

immediate surrounds of the settlement of Rosslare Harbour due to the presence of the existing working Port facility, which imparts a notable working and industrial character on the surrounding sections of the coastline. Visual receptors along the coastline in the surrounds of Rosslare Harbour tend to vary between High-medium to Medium sensitivity, depending on their influence from the existing Port facility. Other visual receptors that afford views further inland from the coast that are influenced by more typical rural environments or are influenced by a range of modified land use have a visual receptor sensitivity ranging between Medium to Low, with those at the lower end of the scale typically representing major routes or highly industrialised parts of the study area. Overall, the varied visual receptor sensitivity further reinforced the complex nature of this landscape context, that comprises numerous contrasting sensitivities and landscape values.

The residual significance of visual effects ranged between 'Substantial' and 'Imperceptible', with those effects considered Significant in EIA terms (i.e., substantial and above) principally located in the immediate surrounds of the Proposed Development. Both viewpoints, VP3 and VP5, were classified with a residual significance of visual effect of 'Substantial', and both represent some of the clearest and nearest views afforded of the Proposed Development and its operational phase activities. Whilst the physical area of land reclamation and the proposed ancillary structures will have a notable visual effect on surrounding receptors, it is important to note that in almost all instances, the operational phase activities and associated structures and vessels, generate some of the most notable visual effects. Indeed, these extensive and sizable structures result in the development having a higher degree of visual exposure on the surrounding landscape. These operational phase activities and components also present with a strong anthropogenic character and will be some of the most prominent built features in the immediate and wider surrounds of the site.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that these operation phase activities within the site will fluctuate over time, and thus, the assessed visual effects represent the worst-case scenario in terms of residual effects. It should also be noted that two viewpoints have been included (refer to Rosslare ORE Hub Additional Montages) to depict the proposed RORO area, which falls within the Proposed Development lands. This localised area of the Proposed Development will see a small part of the Proposed Development finished in an asphalt paved surface to accommodate RORO trailers. This change to the surfacing will generate no additional visual effects than those stated above. Indeed, whilst the additional capacity for RORO trailers will increase the intensity of Port activity, it will not appear out of place in this well-established Port complex.

Overall, whilst the Proposed Development will generate some highly localised significant visual effects, its character and physical composition, along with its operational activities, will not appear incongruous within the context of the surrounding busy, working Port setting to which it is adjacent. In summary, whilst the Proposed Development represents a marked increase in the quantum of built development along these coastal environs, it presents as an extension to the already highly modified Port facility.

23.6.1 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS AND OTHER INTERACTIONS

The nature of the Proposed Development within an evolving working Port and its potential to generate cumulative impacts with other permitted and proposed development is considered below.

23.6.1.1 CONSTRUCTION STAGE

The construction of the Proposed Development will take place largely within the existing Port complex and in the immediate surroundings of Rosslare Harbour and will be characterised by a higher intensity of activity at the site than during the operational phase. Additional cumulative effects may arise from the combined construction stage effects of the Proposed Development with other planned and permitted developments. A review of the developments listed in Chapter: 25 Interactions, this EIAR identified the following projects have the potential to be constructed concurrently with the Proposed Development:

- Rosslare Europort Access Road (WCC 314015)
- Berth 3 -Irish Rail (WCC 20211672)

The combined construction stage effects of the proposed and permitted developments will result in a markedly increased degree of activity within the port facility and in the surrounding local landscape, including at the settlement of Rosslare Harbour. Whilst the increase in construction stage works will result in some detraction in the visual amenity afforded here, they will not appear incongruous in the context of the busy, highly anthropogenic Port facility that has undergone considerable development over the past decade. Overall, it is considered unlikely that the construction stage works of one or more of the proposed and permitted developments will run concurrently with each other due to the scale and nature of each development. However, due to the scale of the Proposed Development and the relatively condensed nature of all other proposed and permitted developments within the immediate vicinity of the site, should the construction of one or more developments run concurrently with the Proposed Development, it will have the potential to contribute to a Significant cumulative construction stage effect, albeit, these effects will be highly localised and are deemed 'Short Term' in terms of duration. The quality of the potential cumulative construction stage effects is deemed Negative / adverse.

23.6.1.2 OPERATIONAL STAGE

A full list of proposed, permitted and developments under construction is included in Chapter: 25 Interactions and identified in Figure 23.8 below. Those developments within the immediate context of the site, such as the Rosslare Europort Access Road (WCC 314015), the Terminal 7 development (WCC 20211322), the Main Access Road Development (Irish Rail) (WCC 20200725) and Berth 3 (Irish Rail) 20211672), all have the potential to have notable cumulative landscape and visual effects in combination with the Proposed Development.

With regard to landscape effects, the proposed, permitted and developments under construction will contribute to the Rosslare Port becoming one the most prominent single coastal developments along this section of the Irish Coastline. Indeed, the Port facility will almost double in terms of its size, whilst there will be a marked increase in the quantum of built infrastructure within the Port complex. In terms of perceived landscape impacts, the Proposed Development, in combination with all other permitted proposed and under construction development, will considerably increase the degree of port-related activity in the Port, along the surrounding roads and at the settlement of Rosslare Harbour. Nonetheless, the expansion of port-related infrastructure will not appear

incongruous in this context; instead, it represents the extension and expansion of well-established land use.

In terms of cumulative visual effects, the Proposed Development, in combination with all other cumulative developments, will result in a highly noticeable degree of visual change, especially at receptors along the immediate coastline to the south of the site. However, beyond the immediate coastline, there will be limited potential visibility of the Proposed Development in combination with other proposed, permitted and under-construction developments due to the high degree of existing built development along the coastline and as a result of the steep escarpment that separates the wider Port facility from the more inland settled parts of the settlement of Rosslare Harbour. Nonetheless, when viewed from the immediate coastline, such as from VP3 and VP5, the Proposed Development, in combination with all other cumulative developments, has the potential to present in a cluttered and condensed manner and will further intensify the highly anthropogenic character of this section of the coastline. Indeed, from localised sections of the coastline immediately south of the existing Port facility, there is potential for the Proposed Development, in combination with all other developments, to contribute to Significant visual effects. It is important to note that these developments all represent the intensification of well-established land use and not the introduction of new and unfamiliar development types. Beyond the immediate coastline, the potential for notable cumulative visual effects reduces considerably as the Proposed Development and all other proposed, permitted and developments under construction, are screened and partially screened by intervening terrain, built development and intervening vegetation. Indeed, beyond the immediate coastline and immediate context of the port facility, it is not considered that the Proposed Development will result in significant cumulative landscape and visual effects.

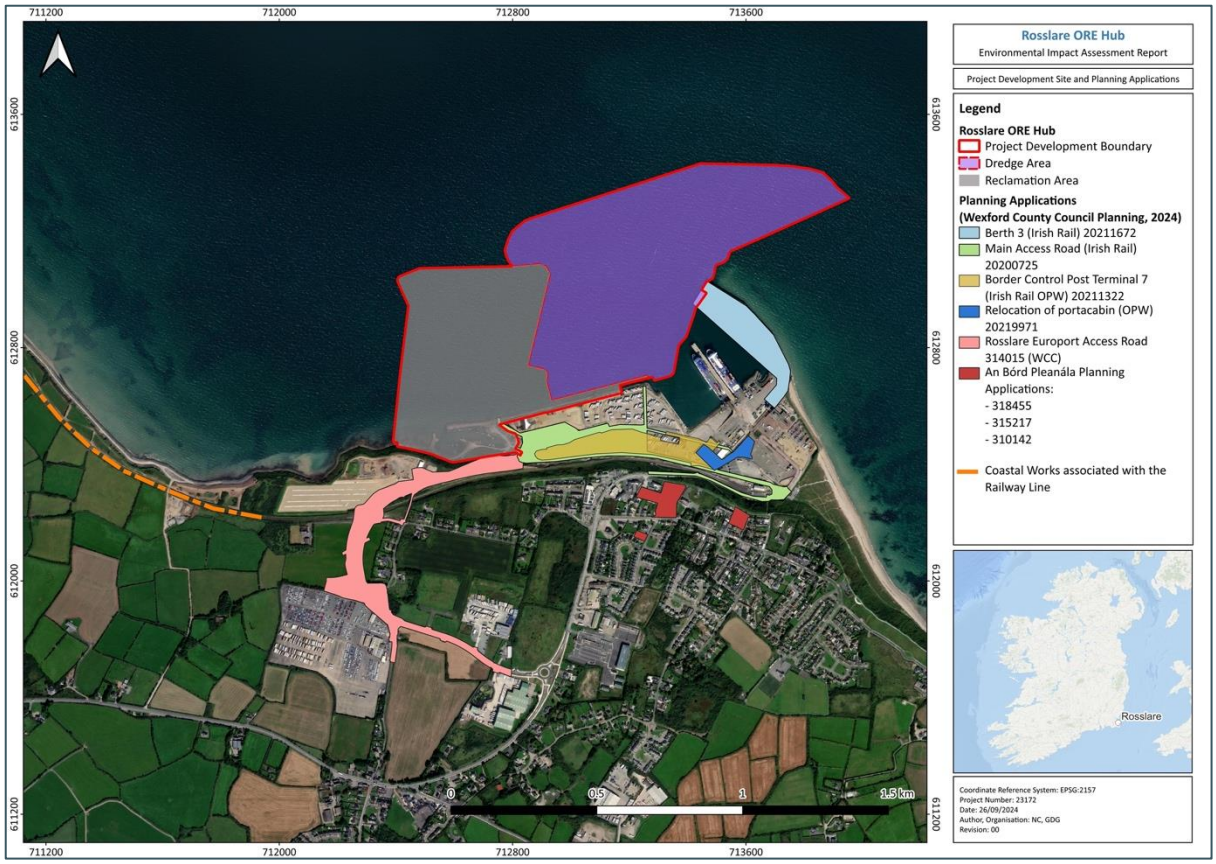

Figure 23.8: Map of relevant developments within the immediate context of the site

23.7 MONITORING

There are no relevant monitoring measures with regards to landscape and visual receptors.

23.1 SUMMARY

This chapter of the EIAR has assessed the potential environmental impacts on Seascape, Landscape and Visual from the construction and operation phases of the Proposed Development, the assessment is summarised in Table 23.9.

Table 23.9: Assessment Summary

Potential Effect	Construction / Operation	Beneficial / Adverse / Neutral	Extent (Site / Local / National / Transboundary)	Short term / Long term	Direct / Indirect	Permanent / Temporary	Reversible / Irreversible	Significance of Effect (according to defined criteria)	Proposed Mitigation	Residual Effects (according to defined criteria)
Landscape Effects	Construction Stage	Adverse	5km Study Area	Short-term	Direct	-	Irreversible	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible'	-	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible
Visual Effects	Construction Stage	Adverse	5km Study Area	Short-term	Direct	-	Irreversible	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible'	-	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Moderate'
Landscape Effects	Operational Stage	Adverse	5km Study Area	-	Direct	Permanent	Irreversible	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible'	-	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible'
Visual Effects	Operational Stage	Adverse	5km Study Area	-	Direct	Permanent	Irreversible	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible'	-	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible'
Cumulative Effects	Construction Stage	Adverse	5km Study Area	-	Direct	Short-term	Irreversible	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible'	-	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible'
Cumulative Effects	Operational Stage	Adverse	5km Study Area	-	Direct	Permanent	Irreversible	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible'	-	Ranging from 'Substantial' to 'Imperceptible'

23.2 REFERENCES

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2022) Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements.

Landscape Institute. (2019). Technical Guidance Note 06/2019 'Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'.

Landscape Institute (2013). Guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment. Routledge. (GLVIA3)

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