

Technical Appendix 4.4: Viewpoint Selection

Desk-based selection of Provisional Viewpoint Locations

4.77 The Baseline Assessment stage of the LVIA identified locations most likely to experience visibility of the Proposed Development and contain key visual receptors due the theoretical levels of visibility indicated by the ZTV diagrams, the potential sensitivity of either the location and / or the visual receptors likely to be present at these locations. The following were identified as being potential key receptors and key parts of the Study Area which should be considered in the search for Provisional Viewpoint locations (PVPs):

- Locations within the Sperrin AONB because it is statutorily designated as nationally recognised high-quality landscapes and will attract visitors by virtue of this designation and contain various visitor amenity sites and attractions. Visual receptors present at these locations are likely to be highly sensitive;
- Residential properties and the rural road network in close proximity to the Proposed Development where viewers may either be static or obtain views for prolonged periods of time and where the Proposed Development may form a key element in these views;
- Areas of settlement where viewers may also be static and obtain views for long periods of time and where the landscape in proximity to the Proposed Development is likely to form a key element within the landscape setting for these settlements;
- Locations from public rights of way, scenic drives and cycling routes where viewers are likely to be present for the primary purpose of appreciating scenic views. Such locations include: the Ulster Way, International Appalachian Trail and other footpaths which cross the Study Area from north east to south west; the National Cycle Network; and four scenic driving routes which cover various parts of the Sperrin AONB and its setting;
- The primary and secondary road network taking visitors to, from and across the AONB, some of which are classified as scenic driving routes, and others which provide access to some of the key visitor attractions within the AONB.

4.78 Using this search criteria, 63 PVPs were identified and analysed through the production of a preliminary ZTV diagram, preliminary wirelines and map-based research. These PVPs are listed in Table 4.4.1 below and their locations illustrated on Figure 4.3.

Initial site assessment and viewpoint ‘shortlisting’

- 4.79 PVP locations, where the preliminary wirelines indicated potential visibility, were visited as part of an initial site assessment. Levels of actual visibility, the nature of visual receptors present at each location, and the overall viability of each viewpoint location were analysed (see Table 4.4.1 below). Where clearer views were identified on site in proximity to a pre-selected PVP location these were also added to the list of PVPs for further consideration. A shortlist of 19 viewpoint locations was made which included a proportionate number of locations representing typical views of the Proposed Development, key visual receptors and key locations within the Study Area. For ease of analysis these shortlisted viewpoints were categorised as follows:
- A. Locations representing close and medium-range views in the Sperrin Mountains and Foothills to north and west of the Proposed Development;
 - B. Locations representing views from the Glenelly Valley, Plumbridge and environs;
 - C. Locations representing views from the southern part of the Sperrins around Bessy Bell and Gortin;
 - D. Views representing longer range views of the Development from south-facing parts of uplands containing the northern edge of the AONB;
 - E. Locations representing views of the Development from the eastern edge of the Sperrin AONB.
- 4.80 A total of 28 PVPs were not shortlisted because they were found to provide no actual view of the Proposed Development when visited. The reasons for this usually arose from differences between theoretical and actual visibility which is explained in Technical Appendix 4.2. Another 14 PVPs were not shortlisted because a more typical/ representative view was demonstrated elsewhere, where no safe stopping place was possible to take a photograph or where the viewpoint location would not be easily accessible to the public. In all instances the clearest possible views of the Proposed Development were selected whilst taking account of the aforementioned considerations. It is noted that there is a distinct lack of visibility or clear visibility of the Proposed Development across much of the Sperrin AONB, particularly to the south and east and also around the periphery of the Study Area beyond a radius of approximately 15 km because the various ranges of hills and mountains throughout the Study Area provide substantial screening. This is further analysed in Chapter 4.
- 4.81 Wirelines and photomontages have been prepared to illustrate most shortlisted viewpoint locations, but wireline-only figures have been used to illustrate viewpoints 18 and 19 which are located beyond 20 km from the Proposed Development. These are included to assist the written analysis, but visibility of the Proposed Development would, in both cases, be negligible at these distances and in the context of the extensive nature of the views available from these locations.

Technical Appendix Table 4.4.1: Provisional and Shortlisted Viewpoints

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Technical Appendix Table 4.4.1: Provisional and Shortlisted Viewpoints

Provisional Viewpoint (p) / Shortlisted Viewpoint (VP, shown in bold)			Provis. Grid Ref.		Approx. dist. to nearest turbine	Reason for provisional selection and shortlisting decision
			Easting	Northing		
p1		Plumbridge, carpark in centre	248256	391349		There would be a wide range of potentially sensitive visual receptors in and around Plumbridge which is the closest settlement to the Proposed Development, located on the Central Sperrings Scenic Drive at the western end of the Glenelly Valley and on the National Cycle Network. This viewpoint is located in the well-used carpark next to riverside in centre of village which provides access to the river, public amenities and some tourist signage. It demonstrates the lack of views from this part of the village. Glimpsed views may be obtained from the bridge crossing the river to the east (see p56 shortlisted as Viewpoint 10) and from the south side of village (see p10 shortlisted as Viewpoint 8).
p2		B48 Central Sperrins Scenic Drive near Butterlope Glen	248788	395316		Located on Central Sperrins Scenic Drive but within limited safe places to stop. Nature of views adequately represented by p3 shortlisted as Viewpoint 1. Also similar to p42, p43 and p60.
p3	1	Balix Upper to west of site	247466	394765		Close range view from central part of AONB. Represents similar, although slightly more elevated views that near by B48 which is part of Central Sperrins Scenic Drive.
p4	2	Glenmornan Road, Owenreagh	242459	397249		Represents visual effects, primarily cumulative effects, from elevated position in close proximity to the nearest existing clustered of wind farms to the Proposed Development
p5		Koram Hill to south of Craignagapple	243296	394471		Originally selected as an alternative location to p4 but views are more limited
p6		Castledamph Road near Plumbridge	252207	392113		Tertiary road network on elevated ground to north of B47 Central Sperrins Scenic Drive. It provides clearer views across Glenelly Valley than from the B47 itself including views to several existing wind farms to the south west. However, it is a quiet rural road with grazing land and barns but few residential properties. The primary focus of views is rising slopes of mountains which contain either side of the Glenelly Valley. Mullaghclogher summit is visible on the periphery of views but visibility of the Proposed Development is not clear (only two turbines were visible in wirelines produced for the preliminary layout).
p7		B47 at Glenronan near Central Sperrins Scenic Drive	254045	391674		Similar to p6, limited views
p8	11	Barnes Gap	255064	389742		Located on uplands containing the south side of Glenelly Valley and one of the few locations along the valley where there would be (partial) views of the Proposed Development (p9 and p37 - 39 illustrate lack of views elsewhere). Likely to be relatively popular with walkers due to proximity of IAT parking and amenity area at bottom of hill and position on walking routes inc. Craignamaddy Circuit, Ulster Way, Intentional Appalachian Trail and National Cycle Network. Clear views of several other wind farms from this location.
p9		Corramore Road overlooking Glenelly Valley	259242	392202		Rural residential road with scenic aspect overlooking Glenelly Valley. Limited view - see above and p37 - 39 which also demonstrate lack of views elsewhere along this road.
p10	8	Slievebeg Road near B48 to south of Plumbridge	248582	390595		Clear visibility from secondary road, cycle network and settlement in close proximity to site.
p11	12	Eskaradooy/Robber's Table footpath to south west	245946	385434		Represents clear visibility from public footpaths, tertiary road network and rural properties in south western part of AONB around Owenkillew river valley. cumulative effects with single turbine in foreground; similar views from elsewhere along this road and from footpaths leading off to the south
p12	13	Viewing area on Lenamore Road, Gortin	250673	384131		Tourist amenity site in proximity to Gortin Glen Forest Park overlooking Owenkillew River Valley with extensive views of main Sperrin mountain range. Cumulative effects from a number of wind farms and single turbines
p13		Central Sperrins Scenic Drive and cycle route to south of site	255524	380275		Selected for scenic location but no views due to rising ground immediately to north of road corridor. Houses along this road tend to be orientated to look southwards. Lots of quarrying visible from this location.
p14	14	Fingrean Road near A505	258448	377553		Selected to represent typical views in proximity to primary road network (A505 from where no viable viewpoints were identified) and Central Sperrins Scenic Drive. Limited visibility is possible but this is typical in this part of the Study Area
p15		Beaghmore Stone Circle	268482	384277		Selected to assess potential visibility demonstrated from heart of Sperrins/ dark skies area. Limited views are illustrated by wireline and confirmed by site assessment
p16		An Cregan Visitors Centre	262432	379125		Similar to above. Tourist attraction on scenic driving route and cycle network but limited views available

p17	3	Stroanbrack Road near B48 and Aghabrack GAA	249980	397492		Clear and close range visibility in proximity to rural settlement, secondary road network and scenic driving route
p18	4	Craig to north of site	252765	398312		Similar to above, rural properties on tertiary road network
p19		Ballynamallaght	248639	399117		Clear and close range visibility but similar location, type of views and visual receptors represented but p61 (shortlisted as Viewpoint 5)
p20		Pass between Sawel and Barnes	263615	395861		Selected to assess potential views from accessible upland part of main Sperrin Mountain range but limited view demonstrated
p21		Slieveboy near Park	255613	402399		Rural area with residential properties; clear mid range views shown on wireline but view unlikely to be clear/ easily/ widely available when checked on site
p22		B74 Craigdarraigh near Claudy	258384	405919		As above
p23		Ballyhanedin, cycle network	260174	406639		Initially selected to assess potential cumulative effects with consented wind farm at Ballyhanedin but view unlikely to be clear/ easily/ widely available when checked on site
p24		Highland Hill near A6, Claudy	256984	409882		Elevated viewpoint above A6; main transport route along northern side of AONB with potential cumulative effects with several other wind farm clusters; view unlikely to be clear/ easily/ widely available when checked on site
p25		Lowertown, cycle route near Dunamanagh and Slieve Kirk	246460	406108		Potential cumulative effects but view unlikely to be clear/ easily/ widely available when checked on site
p26	17	Near Carrickatane	243348	405820		Selected to represent potential cumulative effects with Sperrin Foothills cluster of wind farms on north western edge of AONB
p27		Slieve Kirk	246929	407924		Potential cumulative effects as above but view unlikely to be clear/ easily/ widely available when checked on site; largely concealed by rising foreground and turbines in the foreground that are also dominant. Elements that appear in the distance will not form substantial or prominent elements of the view.
p28		A6 at Ovil	264493	409149		Main transport route along northern side of AONB with potential cumulative effects with several other wind farm clusters; view unlikely to be clear/ easily/ widely available when checked on site
p29		A6 at Owenbeg near Dungiven	267174	409132		As above, limited view
p30	19	Benbradagh	272108	409608		Potential cumulative effects, elevated viewpoint with clear and extensive views across much of upland parts of Sperrins and also Binvenagh AONB
p31		Altahullion	264734	412884		Potential cumulative effects but view unlikely to be clear/ easily/ widely available when checked on site
p32		B68 Roe Valley Scenic Drive	269132	413508		Scenic route but no view obtained
p33		Ardstraw near Newtownstewart	236048	386199		Potential cumulative effects from medium range view in proximity to a settlement but view unlikely to be clear/ easily/ widely available when checked on site
p34		Bessy Bell	240169	381842		Potential cumulative effects; medium range view from gateway location in AONB and part of Ulster Way but site survey revealed that this is not a through road although it is indicated as such on the map. Number of visual receptors will be low although sensitive. Alternative location - p64 - provides more open/ extensive view from similar location and this has been shortlisted as Viewpoint 15.
p35		Mary Gray near Newtownstewart	243583	385624		Potential cumulative, medium range view but limited in extent
p36		B47 Scenic Drive near Goles Bridge	266377	394723		Views from this road corridor and initially channelled and physically constrained by uplands to either side of road corridor and this location is the first point that the central Sperrins area becomes visible when travelling from Draperstown (i.e. gateway point into heart of AONB). However, the Proposed Development wind farm is not visible and, prior to this point (i.e. to the east) views from the scenic drive are largely enclosed/ focused towards northern slopes with glimpses to south of Slieve Gallion/ Crockandun area. Foreground topography is undulating and landcover is complex mix of agricultural, woodland, shelter belts and hedges which restrict longer range views.
p37		Corramore Road east	263304	393675		p37 - p39 selected to analyse potential views from elevated scenic road to south of Glenelly Valley which has scenic views across the valley to the range of hills on the northern side.
p38		Corramore Road middle	261838 approx.	392938 approx.		There are residential properties along whole length of this road. Valley floor is well settled and agricultural in character; part of Ulster Way. No views of Proposed Development from any part of this road.
p39		Corramore Road near Magherabrack	255642	390405		As above. View of mast and single turbine in proximity to site but no view of Proposed Development
p40		Fairview Road, Plumbridge	248500	391775		Residential properties on elevated rural road overlooking village and Glenelly Valley; very limited views of wind farm
p41		Carnanreagh Road between Park & Craig	253733	399682		similar to PVP 18 but more distant and the latter has been shortlisted as Viewpoint 4
p42		Glencoppagh Road north	248111	395567		views from north end, similar to PVP 43

p43		Glencoppagh Road at Aghabrack Road	248574	395554		clear elevated views from rural residential road in close proximity; represented by p60 and p3 which has been shortlisted as Viewpoint 1
p44		Aghabrack Community Centre	249387	398437		Views indicated by wireline but actually screened by vegetation at this community gathering point/ section of B48 road corridor
p45		South side of Glenelly Valley on Craignamaddy	252025	390320		Demonstrates limited nature of views from south side of Glenelly Valley
p46		B48 approach from north around Ballynamallaght	247936	399804		Demonstrates developing views when driving along B48 from north towards Plumbridge but few safe stopping places along busy road corridor. Nature of view represented by p61 (shortlisted as Viewpoint 5)
p47		B44 between Park and Feeny at Magherabrack	261714	402456		No view
p48		B44 between Park and Feeny at Tamnyagan	263348	403408		No view
p49		Learmount Mountain near Park	258425	400529		No view
p50		Meeny Hill near Park	255734	399800		No view
p51		Residential lane at Glenchiel to east of site	256782	393985		No view
p52		Craigatuke to west of site	245128	393819		represented by shortlisted Viewpoint 1 (p3)
p53	6	Bradkeel Road upper to south of site	250999	392855		Clear views from close range, single turbine near quarry and Owenreagh wind farm are both visible in other parts of the view here. There are residential properties located at low density along this road.
p54	16	South-facing side of Eglish hill	249971	403392		Clear views, long range, cumulative effects with clusters around foothills of AONB
p55		Gobnascale near Dunamanagh	242777	402246		Scenic driving route in proximity to settlement, clear views shown on wireline but view unlikely to be clear/ easily/ widely available when checked on site
p56	10	Plumbridge at river in village centre	248326	391364		Glimpsed views of Mullaghclogher ridgeline above trees which line river corridor. View unlikely to be possible when trees are in leaf.
p57	7	Fairview Road, Plumbridge	248789	391926		There are no views from the start of the road in the village centre where the majority of houses are located. Focus of views from this point is in the opposite direction across Glenelly Valley. Proposed Development is located beyond foreground hills and is secondary/ detached from main view. Owenreagh is partially visible to the south west.
p58		Bradkeel Road lower at Eden Hill	250366	392698		Represented by shortlisted Viewpoint 6 (p53)
p59	9	B48 between Plumbridge and Gortin	248117	389682		Half of this route from Gortin is at a lower elevation and more wooded with no wide views. However, from mid point of road, in proximity to this location, the road corridor becomes more open and elevated with clearer views of the Proposed Development as well as single turbine and quarry and also very long range views to the west and south west with some large clusters of wind farms visible on the horizon in this direction. Also glimpsed views of single turbines at closer range on outskirts of Gortin.
p60		Alternative to p3 at Balix Upper & p43 Aghabrack	247135	395266		Represented by p3 which has been shortlisted as Viewpoint 1 (p3)
p61	5	Lough Ash	247979	400555		Owenreagh is visible at end of this road; visual receptors are residents of rural properties in a highly scenic location
p62		near B47 between Plumbridge & Newtownstewart	245752	389435		This location is on tertiary road network for safety reasons but represents typical views from B47 in this part of Study Area. Limited views revealed by site survey
p63	18	Crockandun Viewing Area near Slieve Gallion	277371	388228		Key Summit at eastern edge of Sperrins; demonstrates lack of view, wireline only

Final Viewpoint Selection

- 4.82 A total of 19 final Viewpoints have been selected for consideration in this LVIA. Detailed descriptions are an integral part of the Visual Impact Assessment section of the LVIA (Chapter 4). Their locations are indicated on all map-based Figures (Figures 4.1 - 4.8) and visualisations to accompany the detailed written analysis of these Viewpoints are provided in Figures 4.10 - 4.27.
- 4.83 The baseline assessment, including the viewpoint selection process, identified a number of key visual receptors including; residents of rural properties and settlements located in close proximity to the Proposed Development but also elsewhere in the Study Area; tourists on scenic routes, footpaths and cycle routes throughout the Study Area; receptors located within the AONB with views ranging from close range to those located at greater distances with an appreciation of the wider landscape setting and visibility of the Proposed Development in the context of this setting. Planning policy guidance recognises that wind farms will, by their nature, often be clearly visible from close range viewpoints but that this will not necessarily equate to adverse visual effects. Therefore, the final Viewpoints presented in this LVIA are intended to represent typical views of the Proposed Development that are likely to be obtained in different parts of the Study Area, from key locations and by key visual receptors. They have been grouped into categories so that the different types of views, receptors, and specific areas they represent can be accurately described and understood without unnecessary repetition. A complete list of the final Viewpoints and categories are provided in Table 4.4.2 below. Detailed descriptions of these Viewpoints are provided in the LVIA, Chapter 4 from paragraph 4.137.

Technical Appendix Table 4.4.2: Final Viewpoints

Final Viewpoint no. and location		PVP number	Final Grid Reference	
Category A: Locations representing close and medium-range views in the Sperrin Mountains and Foothills to north and west of the Proposed Development				
1	Balix Upper to west of site	p3	247466	394765
2	Glenmornan Road, Owenreagh	p4	242459	397249
3	Stroanbrack Road near B47 and Aghabrack GAA	p17	249980	397492
4	Craig to north of site	p18	252765	398312
5	Lough Ash	P61	247979	400555
Category B: Locations representing views from the Glenelly Valley, Plumbridge and environs				
6	Bradkeel Road upper to south of site	p53	250999	392855

Final Viewpoint no. and location		PVP number	Final Grid Reference	
7	Fairview Road, Plumbridge	p57	248789	391926
8	Slievebeg Road near B48 to south of Plumbridge	p10	248582	390595
9	B48 between Plumbridge and Gortin	p59	248117	389682
10	Plumbridge at river in village centre	p56	248326	391364
11	Barnes Gap	p8	255064	389742
Category C: Locations representing views from the southern part of the Sperrins around Bessy Bell and Gortin				
12	Eskaradooey/ Robber's Table footpath to south west	p11	245946	385434
13	Viewing area on Lenamore Road, Gortin	p12	250673	384131
14	Fingrean Road near A505	p14	258448	377553
15	Gortnagranagh Road, Bessy Bell	p64	239998	383653
Category D: Views representing longer range views of the Development from south-facing parts of uplands containing the northern edge of the AONB				
16	South-facing side of Eglish hill	p54	249971	403392
17	Near Carrickatane	p26	243348	405820
Category E: Locations representing views of the Development from the eastern edge of the Sperrin AONB (wireline-only figures)				
18	Crockandun viewing area near Slieve Gallion	p63	277371	388228
19	Benbradagh	p30	272108	409608