SDCC Rathcoole Housing Development

Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)
Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual

South Dublin County Council (SDCC)

October 2026

Quality information

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12 Landscape and Visual

12.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) describes the landscape and visual effects of the proposed Rathcoole Housing Development (herein referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). The Site of the Proposed Development (herein referred to as 'the Site') is located to the south and south-east of Rathcoole, Co. Dublin.

This chapter has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (2022) as well as the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA[1]) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3) (2013).

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is accompanied by the following technical appendices:

Volume II, Appendix 12-1: Booklet of Photomontages:

- A3 Photomontages of the Proposed Development, prepared by 3D Design Bureau.

Volume III, Figures:

- **Figure 12-1**: Landscape Character;
- **Figure 12-2**: Landscape Designations; and
- **Figure 12-3**: Walking and Cycling Routes, Viewpoints.

12.2 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

12.2.1.1 European

The Council of Europe Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176) as amended according to the provisions of the Protocol of amendment to the Convention (CETS No. 219) as from its entry into force on 1 July 2021, provides guidelines for managing landscapes. The Convention is not an EU Directive. Countries that sign and ratify the Convention make a commitment to upholding the principles it contains within the context of their own domestic legal and policy frameworks. The convention was ratified by Ireland on 22 March 2002 and entered into force in Ireland on 01 March 2004. The European Landscape Convention requires each Party "*to integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape*".

12.2.1.2 National

National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025

The *'National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025'* (NLS) was launched in May 2015 and promotes the sustainable protection, management and planning for the landscape. The NLS states that:

"The National Landscape Strategy will be used to ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing the landscape while positively managing its change. It will provide a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions". It also states that "The Strategy sets out Ireland's high-level objectives and actions with regard to landscape. It also positions landscape in the context of existing Irish and European strategies, policies and objectives, and outlines methods of ensuring co-operation at a sectoral and at a European level by the State".

As of August 2026, no further reviews of the NLS have been taken place. A question on the future of the NLS was raised to the Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on

[1] Now called the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP).

the 19th of February 2026. The response included the following statement: "*With regard to the completion of a National Landscape Character Assessment, which would complement the Local Character Assessments already prepared by Local Authorities, this continues to be an identified National Policy Objective set out in the revised National Planning Framework (NPF)*".

12.2.1.3 Regional

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern Midland Region

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly's *'Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031'* (RSES), which is aligned with the NPF, sets ambitious targets to achieve compact growth, with 50% of new housing to be delivered within or contiguous to the built-up areas of Dublin City and suburbs. To meet this goal, the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) (contained within Chapter 5 of the RSES) identifies strategic residential and employment corridors along key public transport routes, both existing and planned. The aim of the MASP is to ensure a steady supply of serviced development lands to support Dublin's sustainable growth. Key principles of the MASP include compact sustainable growth and accelerated housing delivery, integrated transport and land use and alignment of growth and enabling infrastructure. The Proposed Development Site is located within the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028

The South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (South Dublin CDP) is the main strategic planning policy document which guides the future renewal and development of South County Dublin and came into effect on 3rd August 2022.

It considers the outstanding landscapes of the County as *"one of its most important economic assets"* which are *"important not only for their intrinsic value as places of natural beauty but also because they provide a real asset for residents and visitors alike in terms of recreation, tourism and other uses".* As such, the South Dublin CDP identifies and describes a number of landscapes, views, and prospects in Appendix 9 (Landscape Review), and sets out specific zoning objectives aimed at protecting them. The Proposed Development Site comprises the following three zones, with the relevant landscape policy objectives identified below. The South Dublin County Development Plan (CDP) sets out a range of policies and objectives that are directly relevant to the proposed development and its delivery on the Site.

Zoning Objectives

- **Objective RES-N**: *"To provide for new residential communities in accordance with approved area plans".*
- **Objective RU**: *"To protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture".*
- **Objective OS**: *"To preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities".*

An extract of the zone's objectives are shown in Plate 12-1.

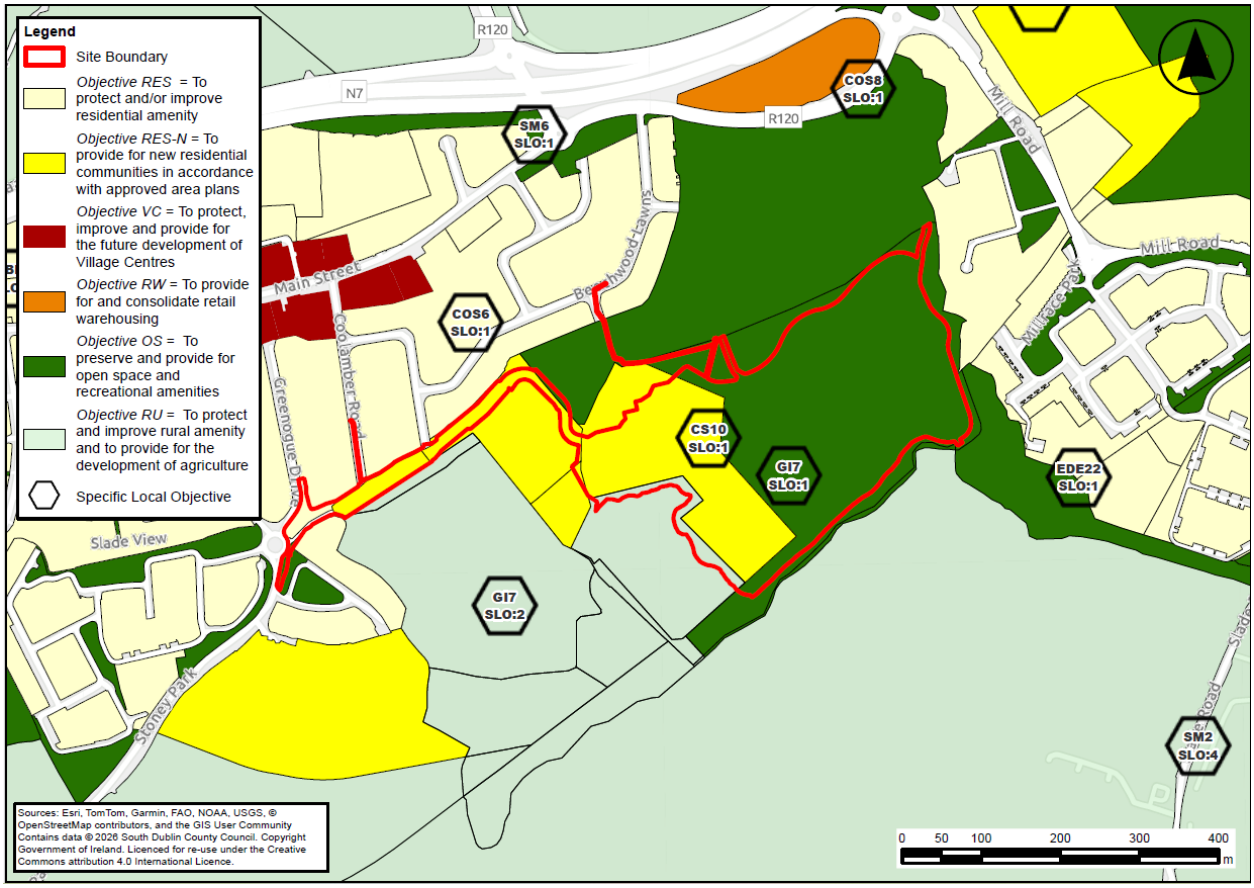


Plate 12-1: Extract of Zoning Objectives (Source: South Dublin CDP, Map 8)

Specific Objectives

The following Specific Objectives on the Rathcoole Lands are noted:

– **Specific Objective 'TA'**: This annotation in areas zoned as 'RES-N', indicates a specific objective "*to provide for traveller accommodation (indicative sites)*".

– **Specific Objective 'S'** This annotation in areas zoned as 'RES-N', indicates a "*proposed school*". For further details please refer to planning reference numbers SD23A/0336 & ABP-321696-25.

Specific Local Objectives

The following Specific Local Objectives (SLO) on the Rathcoole Lands are noted:

– **G17 SLO1**: *"The current green wildlife corridor between Saggart and Rathcoole be maintained and the need to preserve this wildlife corridor be incorporated into the design and development plans for Rathcoole Park".*

– **GI7 SLO2**: *"To ensure the adequate protection and augmentation of the identified Alluvial Rathcoole Woodlands within the zoning RU, and in recognising their value as green infrastructure and the potential linkages to Lugg Woods and Slade Valley and other amenity areas, provide for sensitive passive amenity uses which have regard to their Annex 1 status".*

– **CS10 SLO1**: *"To ensure that the provision of a primary school, library hub, 2 full sized GAA pitches and 1 junior pitch and associated pavilion, access road and open space is provided in tandem with new residential development having regard to the provisions of GI7 SLO2".*

Housing

Table 11 of the South Dublin CDP sets a housing target of 15,576 units for South Dublin for the period Q3 2022 to Q3 2028, of which 487 units are allocated to Rathcoole.

- **CS10 Objective 1**: *"To facilitate the commencement and completion of development on zoned residential lands within and contiguous to the settlement boundary of Rathcoole which recognises natural heritage assets and facilitates connections to the village core and other areas to provide for active travel opportunities".*
- **CS10 Objective 3**: *"To proactively support and promote the highest levels of services, social infrastructure, facilities, retail and economic activity to meet the needs of current and future growth in line with the scale and function of Rathcoole within the settlement hierarchy".*
- **CS10 Objective 4**: *"To facilitate the delivery of new residential development in a coordinated manner, ensuring alignment with investment infrastructure and supporting amenities and services. Such measures shall be delivered through appropriate phasing in line with CS10 SLO1 and SLO2".*

12.2.1.4 Guidance

This chapter has been prepared in accordance with the guidance documents:

- European Commission (EC) (2017). *Guidance on the Preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report*;
- EPA (2002). *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements;*
- EPA (2003). *Advice Notes on Current Practice in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements;*
- EPA (2022). *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports;*
- Government of Ireland (2018). *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment*;
- Landscape Institute (2019). *Visual Representation of Development Proposals – Technical Guidance Note 06/19*;
- Landscape Institute (UK) & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA (2013). *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;*
- Landscape Institute (UK). Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01. '*Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3)*'; and
- Landscape Institute (UK). Technical Guidance Note TGN 02-21 '*Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations'.*

12.3 Methodology

This section sets out the methodology used to assess the potential landscape and visual impacts associated with Proposed Development.

The landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development have been assessed for the following phases:

- Construction phase, anticipated to occur over a period of approximately two years; and
- Operational phase.

12.3.1 Scope

The type and duration of the landscape and visual effects associated with the Proposed Development fall within two main stages as follows:

- Construction (temporary and of a short duration):
  - Potential physical effects arising from construction of the Proposed Development on the landscape resource within the Site;
  - Potential effects to landscape character or visual amenity within the wider study area as a result of visibility of construction activities or the Proposed Development during construction;
  - Effects of temporary site infrastructure such as – site traffic, construction compounds, cranes; and
  - Potential effects of partially built development in various stages of construction.
- Operational (permanent duration):
  - Potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape resources and landscape character, including the perceptual qualities of the landscape;
  - Potential effects of the Proposed Development on views and visual amenity; and
  - Potential cumulative effects of the development in combination with other planned and Proposed Developments of a similar type and scale upon the landscape and visual resource of the study area.

12.3.1.1 Study Area

The Site covers an area of approximately 11.4 ha to the south and south-east of Rathcoole Village, County Dublin. Rathcoole Village is located approximately 15 km to the south-west of Dublin City Centre, approximately 13 km north-east of Naas, County Kildare and approximately 13 km to the north of Blessington, County Wicklow. Rathcoole Village largely consists of a traditional development pattern with a central main street which contains local shops and facilities and is surrounded by relatively low-density housing estates.

A study area extending to a radius of 2 km from the Site boundary has been determined as appropriate for the assessment of landscape and visual effects. The extent of the study area is based on initial findings of the desktop study and later verified on-site during the fieldwork survey. It is acknowledged that the Proposed Development may be visible from locations beyond the study area, and as such, it is important to note that the 2 km study area defines the area within which potential effects could be significant, rather than defining the extent of visibility.

Baseline data for the LVIA has been compiled from aerial imagery (Google Earth), publicly available documents including the South Dublin CDP's Landscape Character Assessment, and the SDCC Rathcoole Lands (2021) land-use concept. A site visit on 30 May 2025 reviewed the existing landscape character and recorded a range of views from representative viewpoints (VPs) within the defined study area.

12.3.1.2 Effects Scoped Out

The Proposed Development will become a permanent feature in the landscape following the completion of construction works. The assessment takes account of this in the determination of residual landscape and visual effects.

12.3.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Criteria

This chapter has been prepared based on the EPA guidance document '*Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*', May 2022. Good practice guidance, such as the '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition'* (GLVIA3), 2013, Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA provide specific guidelines for LVIAs. Therefore, a combination of the EPA guidelines, the Landscape Institute guidelines and professional experience has informed the methodology for the assessment as reported herein.

The Landscape Institute guidelines require the assessment to identify, predict and evaluate the significance of potential effects to landscape characteristics and established views. The assessment is based on an evaluation of the sensitivity to change and the magnitude of change for defined landscape or visual

receptors. For clarity, and in accordance with best practice, the assessment of potential effects on landscape character and visual amenity, although closely related, are undertaken separately.

The assessment acknowledges that landscape and visual effects change over time as the existing landscape external to the Proposed Development evolves and proposed planting establishes and matures.

The significance of an effect is determined by two distinct considerations:

- 1. The nature of the RECEPTOR likely to be affected, namely:
  - The value of the receptor or view;
  - The susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the Proposed Development; and
  - Landscape sensitivity is determined by combining the value of the receptor and its susceptibility to the type of change proposed.
- 2. The nature or magnitude of the EFFECT likely to occur, namely:
  - The size and scale of the landscape and visual effect (for example, whether there is a complete or minor loss of a particular landscape element);
  - The geographical extent of the areas that will be affected;
  - The duration of the effect and its reversibility; and
  - The quality of the effect, whether it is neutral, beneficial, or adverse.

12.3.2.1 Assessment Process

The assessment has been undertaken based on the following key tasks and structure:

- Establishment of the baseline or receiving environment;
- Appreciation of the Proposed Development; and
- Assessment of effects.

12.3.2.2 Establishment of the Receiving Environment

A baseline study has been undertaken through a combination of desk-based research and site appraisal in May 2025 by landscape architects in order to establish the existing conditions of the landscape and visual resources of the study area and to identify representative viewpoint locations. Desk based research has involved a review of mapping and aerial photography, relevant planning and policy documents, the relevant Landscape Character Assessments, and other relevant documents and publications, such as the South Dublin CDP. Verified viewpoint photography was taken in June 2026.

Relevant landscape designations are illustrated in Figure 12-2 (refer to Volume 3 of this EIAR).

12.3.2.3 Appreciation of the Proposed Development

In order to be able to accurately assess the full extent of likely effects on landscape character and visual amenity, it is essential to develop a thorough and detailed knowledge of the Proposed Development. This includes a comprehensive understanding of its location, nature and scale, and is achieved through a review of detailed descriptions of the Proposed Development, drawings, and an on-site appraisal.

Full details on the background, Site history, and the Proposed Development is provided in Chapter 2: Description of Development, and the Planning Statement submitted with this planning application.

12.3.2.4 Assessment of Effects

The LVIA seeks to identify, predict and evaluate the significance of potential effects to landscape characteristics and established views. The assessments are based on an evaluation of the sensitivity to change and the magnitude of change for each landscape or visual receptor.

The assessment acknowledges that landscape and visual effects change over time as the existing landscape internal and external to the Proposed Development evolves. The assessment therefore reports on potential effects during both construction (approximately 24 months) and during operation. The prominence of the Proposed Development in the landscape or view will vary according to the existing screening effects of local topography, intervening existing vegetation and building structures.

12.3.3 Landscape Effects

Landscape effects describe the impact on the fabric or structure of a landscape or landscape character.

The assessment of landscape effects firstly requires the identification of the components of the landscape. The landscape components are also described as landscape receptors and comprise the following:

- Individual landscape elements or features;
- Specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects; and
- Landscape character, or the distinct, recognisable, and consistent pattern of elements (natural and human-made) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another.

The assessment identifies the interaction between these components and the Proposed Development during construction and operational phases. The condition of the landscape and any evidence of current pressures causing change in the landscape have also been documented and described.

Landscape sensitivity

Paragraph 5.39 of GLVIA3 states that "*landscape receptors need to be assessed firstly in terms of their sensitivity, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape*".

Landscape Value

Landscape value is frequently addressed by reference to international, national, regional and local designations, determined by statutory and planning agencies. However, the absence of such a designation does not necessarily imply a lack of quality or value. Factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality, highly valuable as a local resource. The quality and condition are also considered in the determination of the value of a landscape.

With reference to GLVIA3, landscape value refers to the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. The definition and application of landscape value have also been informed by the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations.

The assessment of the value of each landscape receptor has been informed by the information set out in the baseline, including any relevant landscape designations, geographic criteria and valued attributes as set out in GLVIA3 Box 5.1, e.g. aesthetic, perceptual, or experiential value.

Landscape value is assessed on a scale ranging from very high to very low, applying professional judgement and with reference to the criteria in Table 12-1.

Table 12-1: Landscape Value[2]

Classification	Criteria
Very High	The landscape is likely to be valued for one or more of its attributes at a national or regional level, and may be protected by a statutory landscape designation, e.g. National Park. The landscape may contain elements/features which are rare or perceived as very representative of the national or regional attributes and cultural associations. The landscape may provide a high scenic and landscape quality as well as many recreational opportunities.
Medium	The landscape is likely to be valued for one or more of its attributes at a community or local level and may be designated by a landscape policy designation, e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV). The landscape may contain elements/features which are representative of the community or local level attributes and cultural associations. The landscape may provide some scenic and landscape quality and some recreational opportunities.
Very Low	The landscape is likely to be valued at a limited level only and not covered by any landscape designations. The landscape may contain features which are common and therefore do not specifically contribute to the wider landscape or cultural association. The landscape may provide a limited scenic and landscape quality and few recreational opportunities.

Landscape Susceptibility

GLVIA3 paragraph 5.40 defines landscape susceptibility as: *"the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be overall character or condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or features, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies"* (paragraph 5.40).

The following aspects of the landscape are considered to be particularly susceptible to the change proposed:

- Expansion of suburban character along the fringes of Rathcoole and interaction with adjoining rural landscape character;
- Vegetation patterns formed by Rathcoole Park, network of hedgerows in adjoining fields, and areas of emerging woodland;
- Sense of separation between existing settlements;
- Openness of landscape;
- Sense of remoteness from development;
- Landscapes with sloping or elevated topography; and
- Intricate, historic landscapes.

Landscape susceptibility is assessed on a scale ranging from very high to very low, applying professional judgement and with reference to the criteria set out in Table 12-2.

[2] Adapted from Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013), 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition', and EPA (2022), 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR)'.

Table 12-2: Landscape Susceptibility Criteria[3]

Susceptibility Classification	Criteria
Very High	The receptor has a low capacity to accommodate the proposed development without effects upon its overall integrity. The landscape is likely to have a strong pattern/texture or is a simple but distinctive landscape and essentially intact. Undue consequences are likely to arise from the Proposed Development.
Medium	The receptor has some capacity to accommodate the proposed development without effects upon its overall integrity. The pattern of the landscape is mostly intact and/or with a degree of complexity and with features mostly in reasonable condition. Undue consequences may arise from the Proposed Development.
Very Low	The receptor is robust; it can accommodate the proposed development without effects upon its overall integrity. The landscape is likely to be simple, monotonous, and/or partially degraded with common/indistinct features and minimal variation in landscape pattern. Undue consequences are unlikely to arise from the Proposed Development.

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape value and landscape susceptibility is assessed separately and then combined to define the sensitivity of the landscape receptor, with reference to the criteria set out in Table 12-3.

Table 12-3: Landscape Sensitivity to Change Criteria[4]

Landscape Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Landscapes of international or national value with distinctive and rare elements with a very high susceptibility to the Proposed Development.
High	Landscape of national or regional value with distinctive elements and characteristics, with a high susceptibility to the Proposed Development. Typically, these would be landscape receptors: • With distinctive elements and features making a positive contribution to character and sense of place. • Likely to be designated or are adjacent to the designated area but exhibit elements which underpin the designation, especially at the local scale. • Areas of special recognised landscape value through use (e.g. visitors), perception or historic and cultural associations. Likely to contain features and elements that are rare and could not be replaced.
Medium	Landscape of local or community value, with mostly common elements and characteristics, which by nature of their character would be able to accommodate some change. Typically, these would be landscape receptors: • Comprised of mostly common elements and features, creating a generally unremarkable character but with some sense of place. • Locally designated, or value may be expressed through non-statutory local publications. • Containing some features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations. Likely to contain some features and elements that could not be replaced.
Low	Landscape of community or limited value and relatively inconsequential elements and characteristics, the nature of which is potentially tolerant of substantial change of the type proposed. Typically, these would be;

[3] Adapted from Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013), 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition', and EPA (2022), 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR)'.

[4] Adapted from Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013), 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition', and EPA (2022), 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR)'.

Landscape Sensitivity	Description
	• Comprised of some features and elements that are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place. • Not designated. • Containing few, if any, features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations. Likely to contain few, if any, features and elements that could not be replaced.
Very Low	Landscape of very low or limited value, which is damaged, degraded or a substantially modified landscape pattern with few or no natural or original features remaining, such that it is tolerant of change.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

Magnitude of change is an expression of the size or scale of change in the landscape, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and reversibility of the resultant effect. The variables involved are described below:

- The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape;
- The extent to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones;
- Whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are integral to its distinctive character;
- The geographic area over which the landscape effects will be felt (within the Site of the Proposed Development itself; the immediate setting of the Site; at the scale of the landscape type or character area; on a larger scale influencing several landscape types or character areas); and
- The duration of the effects (short term, medium term, or long term) and the reversibility of the effect (whether it is permanent, temporary, or partially reversible).

Changes to landscape characteristics can be both direct and indirect. Direct change occurs where the Proposed Development will result in a physical change to the landscape within or adjacent to the Site. Indirect changes are a consequence of the direct changes resulting from the Proposed Development. They can often occur away from the Site (for example, off-site construction staff parking) and may be a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway (for example, a new road or footpath construction may increase public access and associated problems such as littering). They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects.

The indicative criteria applied to determine the magnitude of landscape effects are set out in Table 12-4. These are indicative and provide an example of considerations, supported and modified by explanative text in the LVIA.

Table 12-4: Indicative Criteria for Magnitude of Landscape Effects[5]

Magnitude	Typical Criteria Descriptions
High	Large alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact an extensive area or unique characteristics at a local level. May be longer term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Medium	Partial alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a wide area or characteristics at a local level. May be medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.

[5] Adapted from Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013), 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition', and EPA (2022), 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR)'.

Low	Slight alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a restricted area and few key characteristics. May be short to medium term impacts, permanent or reversible.
Very Low	Very slight alteration to the landscape receptor or may impact a limited area or no key characteristics. May be short term impacts, permanent or reversible.
None	No change to the landscape receptor.

12.3.4 Visual Effects

Visual effects are determined by the extent of visibility and the nature of the visibility (i.e. how a development is seen within the landscape); for example, whether it appears integrated and balanced within the visual composition of a view or whether it creates a focal point.

Negative visual effects may occur through the intrusion of new elements into established views, which are out of keeping with the existing structure, scale and composition of the view. Visual effects may also be beneficial, where an attractive focus is created in a previously unremarkable view, or the influence of previously detracting features is reduced. The significance of effects will vary, depending on the nature and degree of change experienced and the perceived value and composition of the existing view.

Receptors

For there to be a visual impact, there is the need for a viewer. Views experienced from locations such as settlements, recognised routes and popular vantage points used by the public have been included in the assessment. Receptors are the viewers at these locations. The degree to which receptors, i.e. people, will be affected by changes as a result of the Proposed Development depends on several factors, including:

- Receptor activities, such as taking part in leisure, recreational and sporting activities, travelling, or working;
- Whether receptors are likely to be stationary or moving and how long they will be exposed to the change at any one time;
- The importance of the location, as reflected by designations, inclusion in guidebooks or other travel literature, or the facilities provided for visitors;
- The extent of the route or area over which the changes will be visible;
- Whether receptors will be exposed to the change daily, frequently, occasionally, or rarely;
- The orientation of receptors in relation to the proposed development and whether views are open or intermittent;
- Proportion of the developments that will be visible (full, sections or none);
- Viewing direction, distance (i.e. short-, medium- and long-distance views) and elevation;
- Nature of the viewing experience (for example, static views, views from settlements and views from sequential points along routes);
- Accessibility of viewpoint (public or private, ease of access);
- Nature of changes (for example, changes in the existing skyline profile, creation of a new visual focus in the view, introduction of new man-made objects, changes in visual simplicity or complexity, alteration of visual scale, landform, and change to the degree of visual enclosure); and
- Nature of visual receptors (type, potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected).

Value Attached to Views

GLVIA3 stresses the importance of considering the value attached to views, for example in relation to heritage assets within the view, or through planning designations. It provides a list of indicators of the value of views in paragraph 6.37, including:

- Appearance in guidebooks or tourist maps;

- Provision of facilities, such as parking places, sign boards, and interpretive materials; and
- References in literature or art.

The assessment of the value attached to views is also informed by the location of the viewing place and the quality or designation of the existing elements in the view, with reference to the criteria set out in Table 12-5.

Table 12-5: Value of the View[6]

Classification	Criteria
Very High	Recognised or iconic views within nationally/internationally designated landscapes, such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and/or national/international landmarks with views recognised in planning policy and/or management plans.
High	Views or viewing places identified in regional strategies.
Medium	Views across high-quality landscape which might include features of interest, such as landmarks, which may be identified in a Local Area Plan.
Low	Views of relatively common landscape elements, likely to be valued by the communities which experience the view.
Very Low	Views across poor quality landscape with a high degree of detracting or common elements.

Visual Susceptibility

GLVIA3 identifies that the susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is a function of:

- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at a particular location; and
- The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

For example, residents in their home, walkers whose interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or a particular view, or visitors at an attraction where views are an important part of the experience often indicate a higher level of susceptibility. Whereas receptors occupied in outdoor sport, where views are not important, or at their place of work, are often considered less susceptible to change. Visual susceptibility criteria are outlined in Table 12-6.

Table 12-6: Visual Susceptibility[7]

Classification	Criteria
Very High	People visiting areas where the view is a very important part of the experience and specific to the reason for visiting the location.
High	People visiting areas where the view is an important part of the experience and/or residents with an expectation of enjoyment of the view.
Medium	People passing through the area where views are relevant to the experience of the journey but are not specific to the reasons for visiting.
Low	People passing through the area on secondary roads, where the view is not relevant to the activity. People working outdoors where the view is not relevant to the activity but may enhance it.

[6] Adapted from Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013), 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition', and EPA (2022), 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR)'.

[7] Adapted from Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013), 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition', and EPA (2022), 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR)'.

Very Low	People working in buildings where the view is not relevant to the activity or passing through the area of main road and rail networks, such that views are variable and expectation of enjoyment of them is secondary.

Visual Sensitivity

Sensitivity to change considers the nature of the receptor; for example, a person occupying a residential dwelling is generally more sensitive to change than someone working in a factory unit. The importance of the view experienced by the receptor also contributes to an understanding of the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change as well as the value attached to the view.

The following criteria, as set out in Table 12-7, have been referred to in determining the sensitivity of visual receptors from the combination of value and susceptibility. The criteria are included as an indicative example rather than definitive categories.

Table 12-7: Indicative Classification of Sensitivity of Visual Receptors[8]

Classification	Criteria
High	Users of outdoor recreational facilities, on recognised national cycling or walking routes or in nationally designated landscapes. Residential buildings.
Medium-high	Users of outdoor recreational facilities, in highly valued landscapes or locally designated landscapes or on local recreational routes that are well publicised in guidebooks. Road and rail users in nationally designated landscapes or on recognised scenic routes, likely to be travelling to enjoy the view.
Medium	Users of outdoor recreational facilities including public open space in moderately valued landscapes. Users of primary transport road network, orientated towards the Proposed Development, likely to be travelling for other purposes than just the view.
Medium-Low	People engaged in active outdoor sports or recreation and less likely to focus on the view. Primary transport road network and rail users likely to be travelling to work with oblique views of the project or users of minor road network.

Magnitude of Visual Effects

Visual effects are direct effects, with the magnitude of change determined by the extent and nature of the Proposed Development visible within an existing view. The magnitude of the visual effect resulting from the development at any particular viewpoint or receptor is based on the size or scale of change in the view, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The variables involved are described below:

- The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the development;
- The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape form, scale, mass, line, height, sky lining, back-grounding, visual clues, focal points, colour, and texture;
- The nature of the view of the proposed development, in relation to the amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses;
- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor, distance of the viewpoint from the development and the extent of the area over which the changes will be visible; and
- The duration of the effects (short term, medium term or long-term) and the reversibility of the effect (whether it is permanent, temporary, or partially reversible).

[8] Adapted from Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013), 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition', and EPA (2022), 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR)'.

The magnitudes of visual effects are classified in Table 12-8. These are indicative and provide an example of considerations, supported and modified by explanative text in the LVIA.

Table 12-8: Indicative Criteria Descriptions for Visual Magnitude[9]

Magnitude	Classification Criteria
High	The Proposed Development will cause a pronounced change to the composition of the view or may be viewed in the foreground or directly. May be longer term effects, permanent or reversible and could include.
Medium	The Proposed Development will cause a noticeable change to the composition of the view or may be viewed in the middle ground or indirectly. May be medium term effects, permanent or reversible and could include glint and glare effects.
Low	The Proposed Development will cause an unobtrusive change in the composition of the view or may be viewed in the background or obliquely. May be short to medium term effects, permanent or reversible and is not likely to include glint and glare effects.
Very Low	The Proposed Development will cause a barely perceptible change in the composition of the view or may be viewed in the background and very obliquely. May be short term effects, permanent or reversible and would not include glint and glare effects.
None	No change to the view.

12.3.5Duration and Quality of Effects

The duration of landscape and visual effects has been described in Table 12-9.

Table 12-9: Definition of Duration of Effects[10]

Duration	Description
Temporary	Effects lasting one year or less.
Short Term	Effects lasting one to seven years.
Medium Term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years.
Long Term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years.
Permanent	Effects lasting over sixty years.
Reversible	Effects that can be undone, e.g. through remediation or restoration.

The quality of both, landscape, and visual effects, can be Beneficial (Positive), Adverse (Negative) or Neutral according to the definitions as set out in Table 12-10.

Table 12-10: Definition of Quality of Effects[11]

Effect	Effect Description
Neutral	This will neither enhance nor detract from the landscape character or view.
Beneficial (Positive)	This will improve or enhance the landscape character or view.
Adverse (Negative)	This will reduce the quality of the existing landscape character or view.

[9] Adapted from Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013), 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition', and EPA (2022), 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR)'.

[10] Guided by EPA (2022). *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*.
[11] Guided by EPA (2022). *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*.

12.3.6 Significance Criteria

The objective of the assessment process is to identify and evaluate the potentially significant effects arising from the Proposed Development. The assessment identifies residual effects likely to arise from the finalised design considering mitigation measures and the change over time.

The significance of effects has been assessed by considering the sensitivity of the receptor and the predicted magnitude of effect in relation to baseline conditions. In order to provide a level of consistency and transparency to the assessment and allow comparisons to be made between the various landscape and visual receptors subject to assessment, the assessment of effect significance has been informed by pre-defined criteria as outlined in Table 12-11. When assessing effect significance, individual effects may fall across several different categories of significance and professional judgement has therefore been used to determine which category of significance best fits the overall effect to a townscape or visual receptor.

Table 12-11: Categories of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects[12]

Significance Category	Description of Effect
Profound	An effect that obliterates sensitive characteristics within the landscape and/or visual environment.
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the landscape and/or visual environment.
Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the landscape and/or visual environment.
Moderate	An effect that alters the landscape in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the landscape and/or visual environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the landscape and/or visual environment but without significant landscape and / or visual consequences.
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant landscape and/or visual consequences.

The significance of the effect has been determined by considering the magnitude of the effect and the quality of the baseline environment affected by the Proposed Development. The basis for consideration of the effect significance is shown on Plate 12-2.

[12] Guided by EPA (2022). *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*.

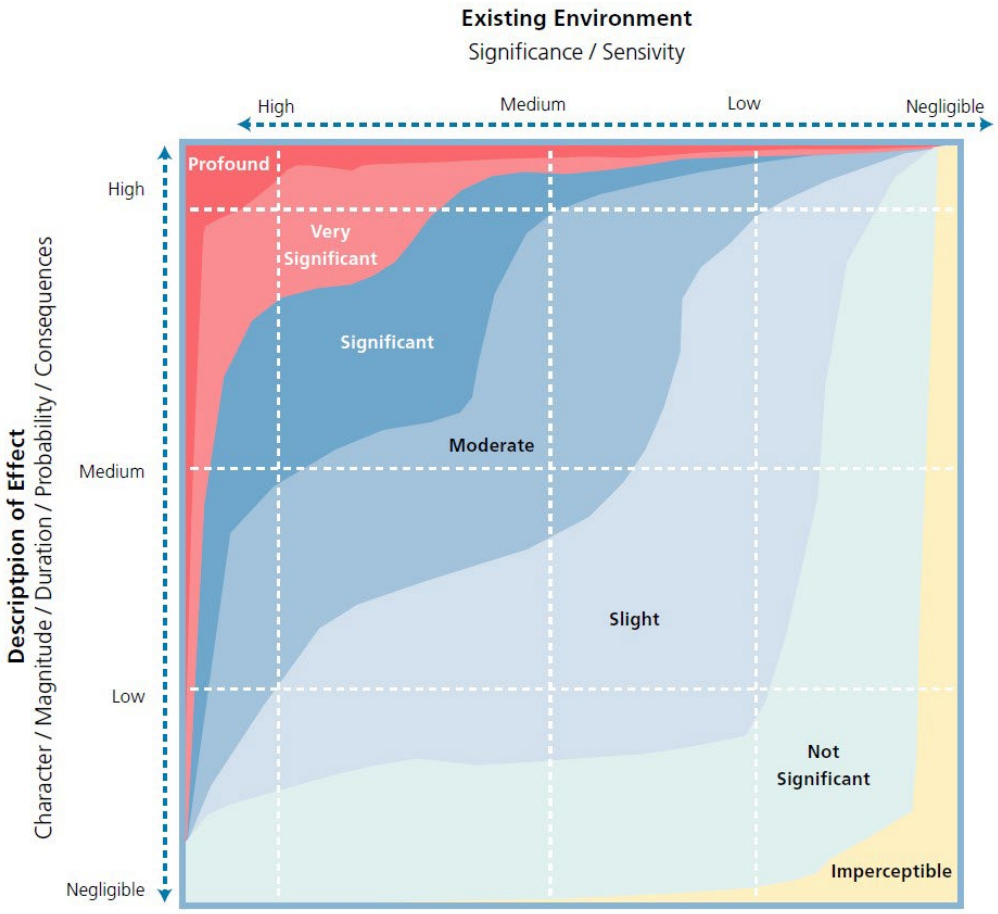


Plate 12-2: Basis for Consideration of Significance of Effects[13]

Effects have been assessed for all phases of the Proposed Development. Construction effects are considered to be temporary, short-term effects which occur during the construction phase only. Operational/residual effects are permanent effects, which will occur as a result of the presence or operation of the Proposed Development.

The quality of each effect is based on the ability of the landscape character or visual receptor to accommodate the Proposed Development, and the impact of the development within the receiving context. Once this is done, the quality of the effect is then assessed as being neutral, beneficial or adverse. A change to the landscape or visual resource is not considered to be adverse simply because it constitutes an alteration to the existing situation.

12.3.7 Cumulative Landscape Effects

In addition to landscape and visual effects associated with the Proposed Development, it is also important to consider the potential for cumulative effects. The approach used to determine cumulative effects has drawn on guidance on cumulative impact assessment published by the GLVIA3[14]. Cumulative landscape and visual effects may result from additional changes to the baseline landscape or views as a result of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other developments of a similar type and/or scale.

The cumulative assessment includes developments that are consented but not constructed, that are the subject of undetermined applications or are currently at scoping which are similar in type and scale to the Proposed Development.

Potential cumulative developments have been reviewed from known planning applications available on planning search of South Dublin County Council's website and known proposed public sector projects.

[13] EPA (2022). *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*.
[14] Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013). *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition.*

Magnitude of Cumulative Effects

The principle of magnitude of cumulative effects makes it possible for the Proposed Development to have major effects on a particular receptor, while having only minor cumulative effects in conjunction with other existing developments.

The magnitude of cumulative effects arising from the Proposed Development is assessed as Very High, High, Medium, Low or Negligible, with intermediate categories, based on interpretation of the following parameters:

- The additional extent, direction, and distribution of existing and other developments in combination with the Proposed Development;
- The distance between the viewpoint, the Proposed Development, and the cumulative developments; and
- The landscape setting, context, and degree of visual coalescence of existing and Proposed Development and cumulative developments.

Significance of Cumulative Effects

As for the assessment of landscape and visual effects, the significance of any cumulative effects follows a same classification as illustrated in Plate 12.2 in Section 12.3.6, and is assessed as Profound, Very Significant, Significant, Moderate, Slight, Not Significant or Imperceptible.

Limitations of Cumulative Effects

The cumulative assessment considers potential landscape and visual effects arising from both the construction and operational phases of the identified cumulative developments. Given the uncertainty regarding the timing and sequencing of construction activities, the assessment of cumulative construction effects is necessarily precautionary and considers the potential for construction activities to occur concurrently. Operational cumulative effects are assessed based on the permanent elements of each identified development.

12.3.8 Fieldwork

A site survey carried out in May 2025 identified the potential visibility of the Proposed Development within the study area and the wider landscape taking into account topography, existing screening vegetation, and other localised factors. Viewpoint photography was taken in June 2026. Deciduous trees show foliage and therefore do not illustrate the winter season scenario without foliage, i.e. worst-case scenario. However, existing screening provided has been accounted for when determining the magnitude of change of landscape and visual effects.

12.3.9 Selection of Viewpoints

Viewpoint selection has been carried out according to the current good practice standards and the following industry guideline:

- Landscape Institute (UK) & IEMA (2013). *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA)*, 3rd Edition.

It is not feasible to take photography from every possible viewpoint located in the study area. Photography has been taken from viewpoints which are representative of the nature of visibility at various distances and in various contexts. Viewpoint photography has been used as a tool to inform the assessment of the nature of the potential residual effects. The selection process of viewpoint locations was as follows:

- The location of viewpoints within the study area is informed by desktop and site surveys;
- Identification and selection of representative viewpoints showing typical open or intermittent views within a local area, which will be frequently experienced by a range of viewers; and
- Identification and selection of specific viewpoints from key viewpoints in the landscape such as routes or locations valued for their scenic amenity, main settlements etc.

12.3.10 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

Mapping the extent of the area from which a development is likely to be visible is commonly referred to as a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). ZTV prediction does not take into account the effects of seasons, lighting, weather conditions, or visibility over distance. Moreover, a ZTV does not take into account the screening effects of existing vegetation or built structures. Therefore, in reality, the principal use of ZTV mappings is to identify viewing points for further analysis.

Considering the scale, context and overall setting of the Proposed Development as well as the quality of available contour and existing screening data, the production of a ZTV would not have been useful in the identification of viewpoints and indicator of visibility within the study area. The assessment has relied therefore on comprehensive site survey to establish the nature of visibility within the study area and to identify key viewpoint locations.

12.4 Baseline Environment

Below is an overview of landscape and visual baseline conditions to provide context and inform the proposed scope of the assessment. The LVIA has reviewed relevant policy, landscape character and sensitivity, and scenic views, drawing on guidance and designations outlined in local planning documents.

12.4.1 Context of the Proposed Development

Rathcoole is located in the south-western part of South Dublin County, approximately 15 km south-west of Dublin city centre. The village occupies a transitional setting between the established suburban areas of the Dublin metropolitan area to the east and the more open rural landscape of south-west County Dublin and north County Kildare. Its wider setting is characterised by a combination of the historic village, suburban residential development, extensive employment areas and major transport infrastructure, with areas of agricultural land remaining beyond the developed settlement.

The historic village is focused along Rathcoole Main Street, which forms the local centre and accommodates a range of retail, commercial and community uses. The compact village core is surrounded by more recent residential development, predominantly comprising two-storey housing estates with associated roads, footpaths and areas of open space. The proximity of Citywest and Saggart to the east contributes to the increasingly suburban character of the wider settlement.

The N7/M7 Naas Road forms a major transport corridor immediately north of Rathcoole, providing a strategic and audible connection between Dublin and the wider regional road network. The R120 provides an important connection between Rathcoole, the N7 and the employment areas to the north, with the surrounding local road network providing connections to Newcastle and the wider area. These routes contribute to the urbanised and infrastructural character of the northern and eastern approaches to the village.

The wider study area contains a substantial concentration of employment and commercial development, including business parks at Greenogue, Aerodrome and Baldonnell. These areas are characterised by large-scale industrial, logistics, warehousing and commercial buildings, associated yards, parking and road infrastructure, creating a more utilitarian and large-scale built character than the village core.

Casement Aerodrome (Baldonnell) located north-east of Rathcoole is another distinctive influence on the wider setting. Its extensive landholding and aviation infrastructure, together with the surrounding business parks and major road network, contribute to the strongly influenced metropolitan fringe character of the area.

Overall, Rathcoole has a mixed settlement character reflecting its position between the established village, expanding suburban development and the wider metropolitan employment and transport infrastructure. While the historic Main Street retains a distinct local identity, the wider setting is increasingly urbanised, particularly to the north and east, contrasting with the more open agricultural landscape that remains evident towards the south and west.

12.4.2 Landscape Baseline

12.4.2.1 Landscape Character Types

Appendix 9 of the South Dublin CDP features a Landscape Character Assessment which allows identification of the different landscape character types in the county. According to this Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Character Types (LCT) are described as: *"distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the county. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, landcover and historical land use. For example, limestone farmland is a distinct landscape character type and as such, whether they occur in South Dublin or other counties".*

The LCTs within SDCC and the approximate location of the Proposed Development within are illustrated in Plate 12-3 as well as in Figure 12-1: Landscape Character.

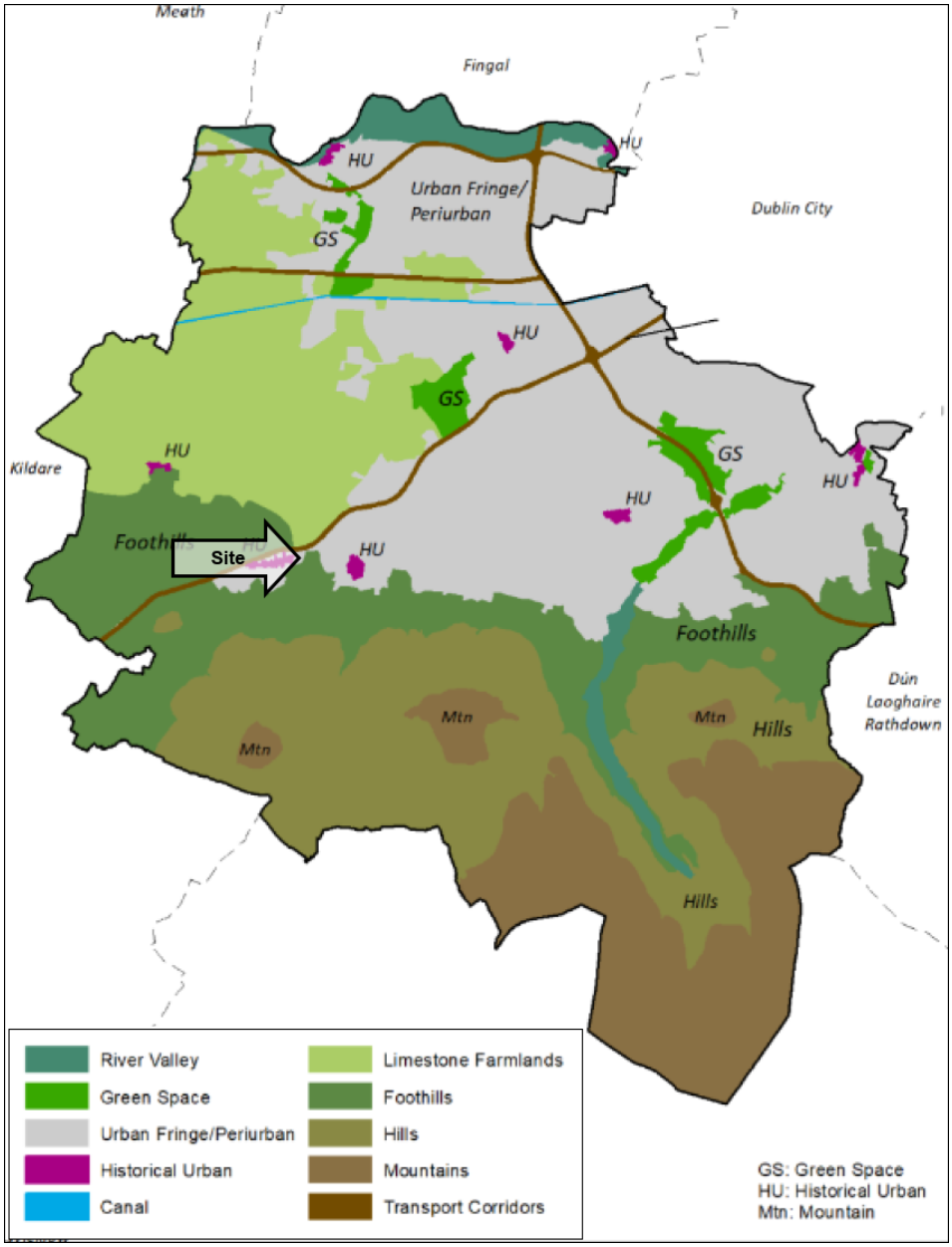


Plate 12-3: Landscape Character Types and Approximate Location of the Proposed Development (Source: extract of South Dublin CDP Appendix 9, p.46)

The Proposed Development Site sits within the 'Foothills' LCT and small sections of the Urban Fringe/Peri-Urban LCT. The wider 2 km study area also covers areas west, north, and east of the Site which are of the 'Urban Fringe/Peri-urban' LCT and 'Historical Urban' LCT, and an area to the south of the study area sitting within the 'Hills' LCT. Areas north of the N7 'Transport Corridor' LCT cover sections of the Limestone

Farmlands LCT as well as 'Foothills' LCT to the north-west and 'Urban Fringe/Periurban' LCT to the north-east.

Table 12-12: Landscape Character Types within the administrative area of SDCC

LCT	Location/Context	Key Characteristics
Foothills	Across South Dublin County; below Limestone Farmlands LCT (east), Urban Fringe/Peri urban LCT (centre/west), Dublin Hills (south)	Elevation 100–200 m Above Ordnance Datum AOD; bedrock of sandstone, shales, greywackes; landcover mainly pasture/rough grazing; dispersed rural housing with single-storey farmhouses and vernacular round gate pillars; golf courses and forest walks present
Limestone Farmlands	Rural setting north of Site, above N7 Dublin–Limerick Road	Gently undulating low-lying land (<100 m AOD); limestone bedrock; land use includes tillage and pasture; generally dispersed settlement; areas near N7 include industrial/business parks
Urban Fringe / Peri-Urban	Around Rathcoole and Saggart	Built land around historic settlements; nucleated villages/towns with historic cores; surrounded by 20th-century residential development and recent developments in past two decades
Historical Urban	Within Rathcoole and Saggart (2 km Study Area)	Nucleated settlements with historic cores, often early Christian or medieval origins; includes Newcastle, Rathcoole, Saggart
Hills	South of Study Area, east–west across County	Elevation >200 m; similar bedrock to Foothills; increasing forestry (coniferous plantations); sparse settlement with elevation; recreational forest walks present
Transport Corridors	N7	Major transport routes that are typically of low permeability in that they often provide few places where the route can be crossed safely.

The LCTs provide information which has been considered as part of the LVIA for the Proposed Development, such as the landscape sensitivity. According to Appendix 9 of the South Dublin CDP, sensitivity is used as a term to measure a landscape's *"sensitivity to development and capacity to accommodate development activities".* A landscape with a high sensitivity has a low capacity for new development, while a landscape with a low sensitivity has a higher capacity for new development. The sensitivity categories of LCTs within the administrative area of SDCC are illustrated in Plate 12-4; as observed, the 'Foothills' LCT containing the Site sits within an area of Medium to High sensitivity. The Urban Fringe/Peri-Urban LCT does not have sensitivity or value rating according to South Dublin CDP. However, it can be considered as Very Low due to the existing built-up townscape character, which has transformed the historic rural landscape character almost entirely.

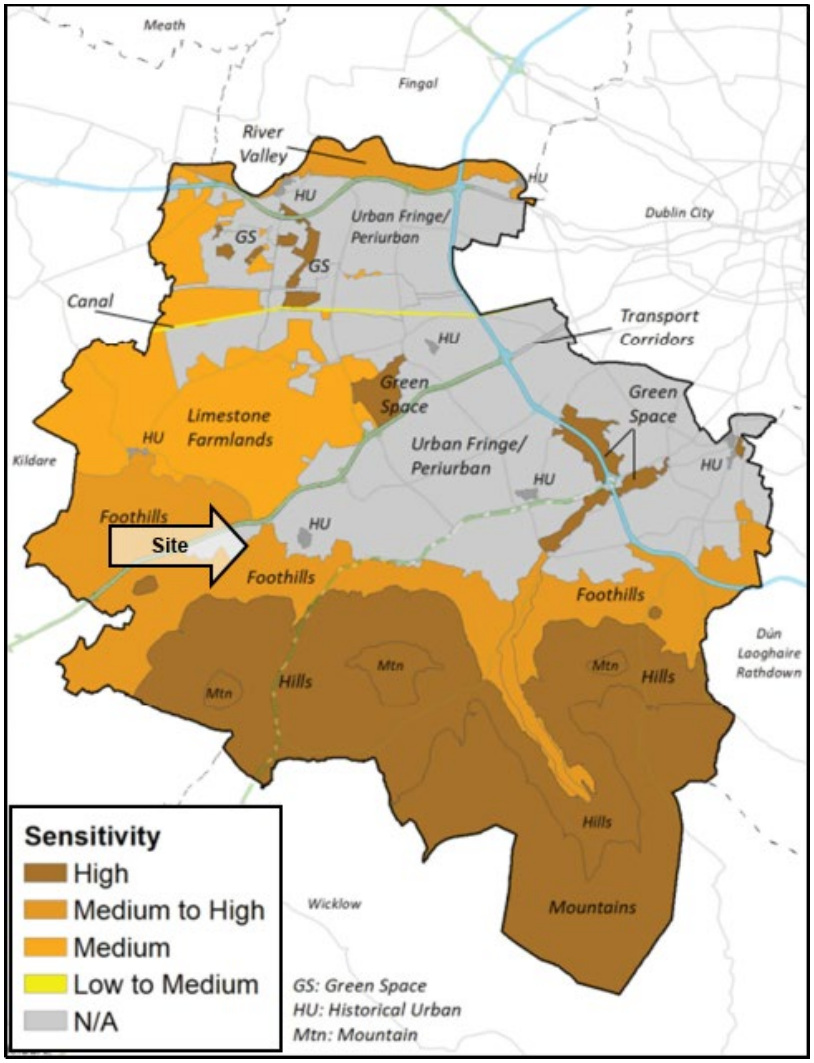


Plate 12-4: Landscape Sensitivity and Approximate Location of the Proposed Development (Source: extract of South Dublin CDP Appendix 9, p.91)

12.4.2.2 Landscape Character Areas

In addition to LCTs, Appendix 9 of the South Dublin CDP also identifies Landscape Character Areas (LCA) as shown on Plate 12-5 as well as in Figure 12-1: Landscape Character. Note that there may be several LCTs located within each LCA. The LCA provides an insight into the areas capacity for change by considering the ability of the landscape to accommodate change without the loss of its intrinsic character.

In addition to landscape sensitivity categories for the overall administrative area of SDCC, the South Dublin CDP also includes 'LCAs of Sensitivity'. In association with these areas, the South Dublin CDP establishes **Policy NCBH14** (Landscapes) which seeks to: *"Preserve and enhance the character of the County's landscapes, particularly areas that have been deemed to have a medium to high Landscape Value or medium to high Landscape Sensitivity and to ensure that the landscape considerations are an important factor in the management of development".* This map and policy have been used to assess the Proposed Development impact as part of the LVIA.

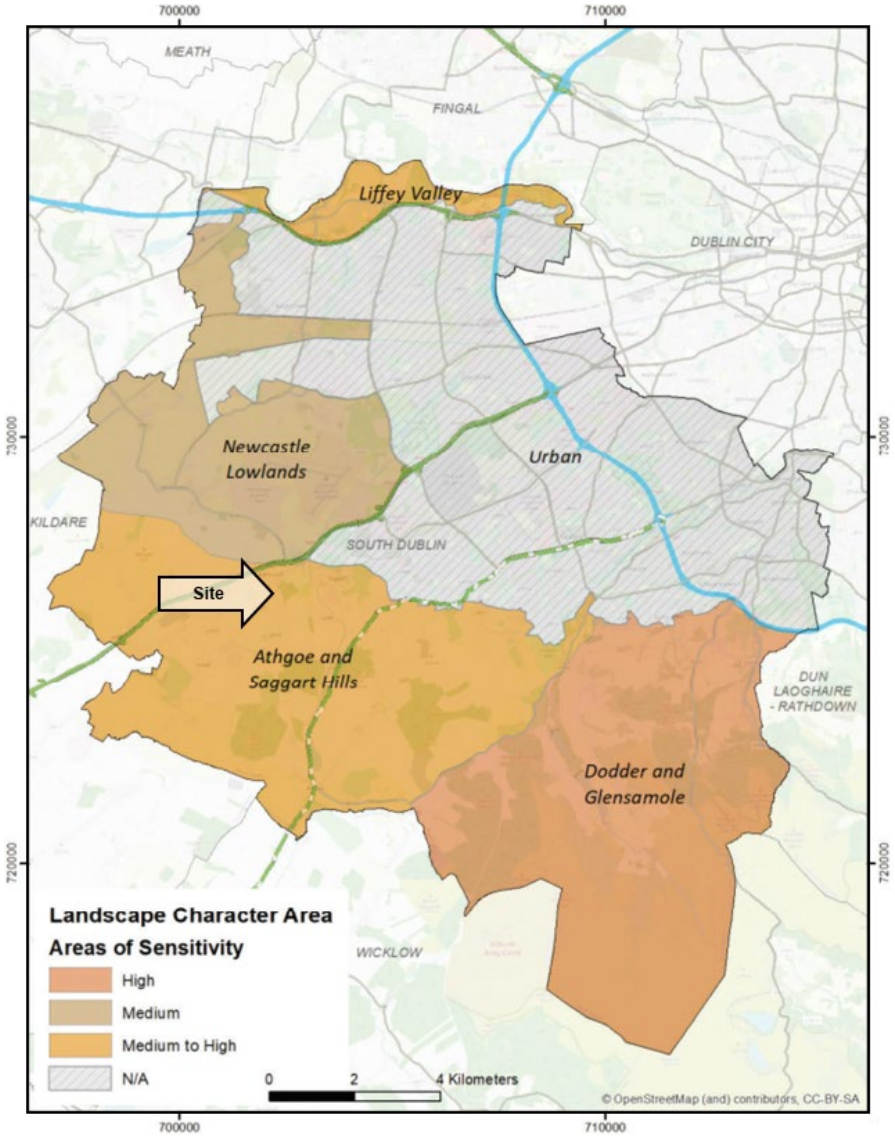


Plate 12-5: LCAs of Sensitivity Approximate Location of the Proposed Development (Source: extract of South Dublin CDP p.112)

The Proposed Development Site, the southern half of the study area and sections to the west and north of the N7 transport corridor, sit within the LCA of 'Athgoe and Saggart Hills' which has a **Medium** to **High** landscape sensitivity.

The wider 2 km study area covers two additional LCAs: the area north of the N7 road is within 'Newcastle Lowlands' (which is a landscape of **Medium** sensitivity), and the eastern section of the study area is defined as 'Urban', so it does not have a defined landscape sensitivity.

The LCAs are described in detail within SDCC's Landscape Character Assessment (2022), the details of which can be found in Appendix 9 of the South Dublin CDP. The key characteristics and details of the LCAs Sensitivity and Principals for Development are outlined in Table 12-13, Table 12-14 and Table 12-15.

Table 12-13: Athgoe and Saggart LCA - Summary of Key Characteristics

Category	Key Characteristics
Topography and Landform	Flat to gently undulating terrain typical of lowland agricultural landscapes; long views across surrounding lowlands to the north and east.
Enclosure and Field Pattern	Enclosure varies: open and expansive on hills (Athgoe, Saggart) to more intimate, enclosed areas on slopes with high earth banks and hedgerows; medium to large rectangular field patterns with evidence of recent removal/rationalisation of boundaries.
Land Use and Cover	Dominated by pasture and arable farmland; hedgerows, tree lines, and occasional woodland patches; sheep grazing. The hilltops are commonly covered with coniferous plantations some

Category	Key Characteristics
	of which are open to walkers such as Saggart Hill; on the lower slopes there is an increase in housing some of which are unsympathetic to local landscape character and comprise a variety of non-vernacular imported styles that do not generally integrate well with the surrounding area and cumulatively detract from the landscape character.
Cultural and Built Heritage	Round pillars associated with vernacular style; Newcastle village designated as an Architectural Conservation Area; vernacular rural structures.
Ecology	Hedgerows and field boundaries function as important ecological corridors.
Historical Features	Rich in archaeological features, including historic field systems; heritage of rural settlement patterns.
Landscape Sensitivity and Value	Landscape Sensitivity: Medium to High; Landscape Value: Moderate to high (rural character, ecological features, cultural heritage).
Forces for Change and Principles for Development	• Expansion of existing settlements with housing styles not reflective of vernacular townscape character • Rathcoole and Saggart constitute valuable components of the landscape as historic centres (royal demesnes). Their legacy has been muted by contemporary developments and steps should be taken to 'salvage' some recollection of their former historical importance. • Careful consideration to extension of the urban centres, particularly at Rathcoole and Saggart, is merited to avoid the two settlements merging – maintenance of the separation distance contributes to the countywide Green Infrastructure network. • Development should reflect local landscape character and more use of native hedgerows in schemes would assist screening and bring positive local ecological benefits.

Table 12-14: Newcastle Lowlands LCA - Summary of Key Characteristics

Category	Key Characteristics
Topography and Landform	Low-lying and gently undulating agricultural lands over limestone; rolling hills and foothills shaped by glacial activity.
Enclosure and Field Pattern	Predominantly pasture with some tillage; areas of forestry and hedgerow networks; agricultural land-use dominant.
Land Use and Cover	Grand Canal and railway corridor traverse east–west; proximity to motorways, national and regional roads; two aerodromes at Weston and Baldonnell.
Cultural and Built Heritage	Long history of settlement; medieval landscape complex around Newcastle village; number of demesnes and former country houses (e.g. Peamount, Baldonnell) often reused.
Ecology	Supports diverse habitats including woodlands, grasslands, and riparian zones.
Historical Features	Prehistoric and medieval settlement patterns; archaeological features such as standing stones and ringforts; historic field boundaries and rural road networks.
Landscape Sensitivity and Value	Landscape Sensitivity: Medium; Landscape Value: High (scenic views, biodiversity, cultural heritage).
Forces for Change and Principles for Development	• Increasing urban influences that impact on the rural landscape character. • Loss of separation distance between established urban and rural character. • The relatively flat and open landscape is vulnerable to adverse visual and landscape impacts of development. • This LCA functions as the rural landscape that frames western Dublin and retaining both separate distances and its agricultural character is very important.

Table 12-15: Urban/Sub-Urban Dublin South LCA - Summary of Key Characteristics

Category	Key Characteristics
Land Use and Cover	Built – up urban area with extensive housing estates and industrial/commercial parks; Grass open spaces in gardens, industrial parks, golf courses, school playing fields, and miscellaneous spaces in housing areas.
Landscape Values	Views out to Dublin Mountains and agricultural hinterland.

Category	Key Characteristics
Cultural and Built Heritage	Variety of house styles and layouts dating from the late 19th century to late 20th century.
Historical Features	Settlements with important historical legacy and remnants; 19th century industrial heritage.
Landscape Sensitivity and Value	Not specified by South Dublin CDP. However, the landscape sensitivity is considered Low and the landscape value is also considered Low.
Forces for Change and Principles for Development	Proposed developments should be audited for their impact on views particularly those to the rural hinterland of the county.

12.4.2.3 Specific South Dublin CDP Local Objectives

Appendix 8 of the South Dublin CDP outlines the Specific Local Objectives for the administrative area of SDCC for each of South Dublin CDP's Chapters. The following are relevant to the study area:

- **Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage NCBH 19 SLO 3:** *"To protect Glebe House RPS Ref. 313 (Former Mary Mercer Trust Charter School for girls), Rathcoole",* a former Mary Mercer Trust Charter School for Girls on Main Street (Rathcoole).
- **Green Infrastructure (GI7 SLO 1):** "*The current green wildlife corridor between Saggart and Rathcoole be maintained and the need to preserve this wildlife corridor be incorporated into the design and development plans for Rathcoole Park*". This forms part of the wider River Camac Corridor (refer to Plate 12-6 overleaf), a primary green infrastructure corridor marking the transition between urban and rural South Dublin.
- **Green Infrastructure (GI7 SLO 2):** "*To ensure the adequate protection and augmentation of the identified Alluvial Rathcoole Woodlands within the zoning RU, and in recognising their value as green infrastructure and the potential linkages to Lugg Woods and Slade Valley and other amenity areas, provide for sensitive passive amenity uses which have regard to their Annex 1 status*".

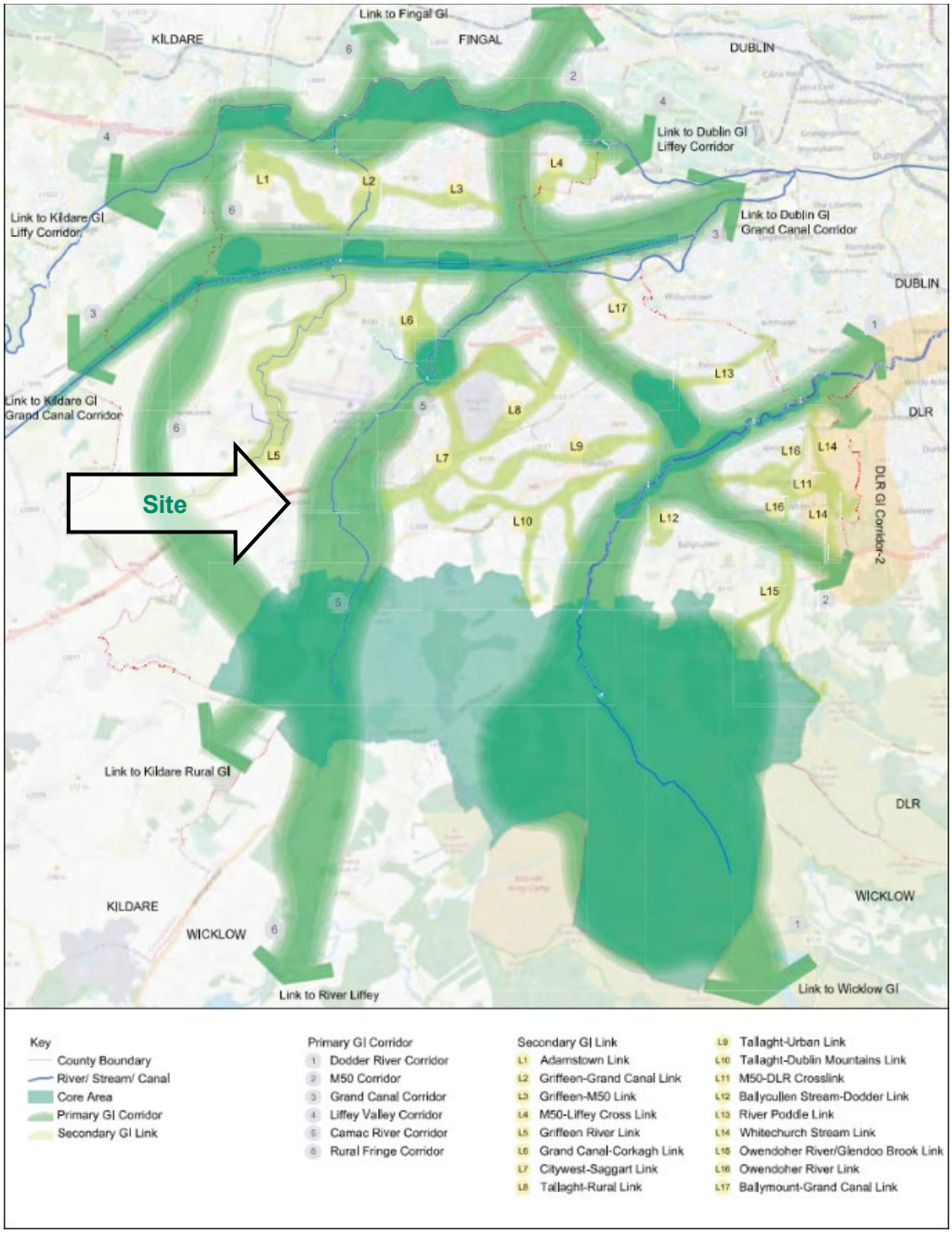


Plate 12-6: Proposed Development Site in Relation to the River Camac Primary Green Infrastructure Corridor (source: extract of South Dublin CDP p.163)

Zoning Objectives and Specific Local Objective: the South Dublin CDP identifies zoning and specific objectives for the western part of the County, including the Proposed Development Site. The wider 2 km study area is covered by Land-Use Zoning Maps no. 07, 08, 11a, and 11, which also highlight the presence of 'Protected and Preserved Significant Views'.

12.4.2.4 Architectural Conservation Areas

One Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), stretching along Main Street in the village centre, is located less than 50 m north-west of the Site at its closest point north of Beechwood Lawns. The Rathcoole Village ACA extends further north-west and is bounded by sections of the N7 in the north, St Patrick Crescent in the west, and Beechwood Lawns in the south and east as indicated in Figure 12-2: Landscape Designations. There is currently no identified visual relationship between the Proposed Development Site and the ACA.

12.4.2.5 Walking and Cycling Routes

The Proposed Development is not located along any SDCC cycleways. It borders the Fitwalk Circuit, which is contained within Rathcoole Park and was designed to promote accessibility in the park. It will be visible

from the north from the Fitwalk Circuit, the Slí Na Sláinte Walking Route, and the National Cycle Network route located north of the Site along the R120. Figure 12-3: Walking and Cycling Routes shows the location of the Proposed Development in relation to walking and cycling routes.

The Slievethoul & Lugg walking route is located south of Rathcoole in the foothills of the Dublin Mountains. Open views of Rathcoole can be experienced from the northern path at Lugg in areas where coniferous forestry has been cleared. An overview of this walking routes is shown in Plate 12-7.

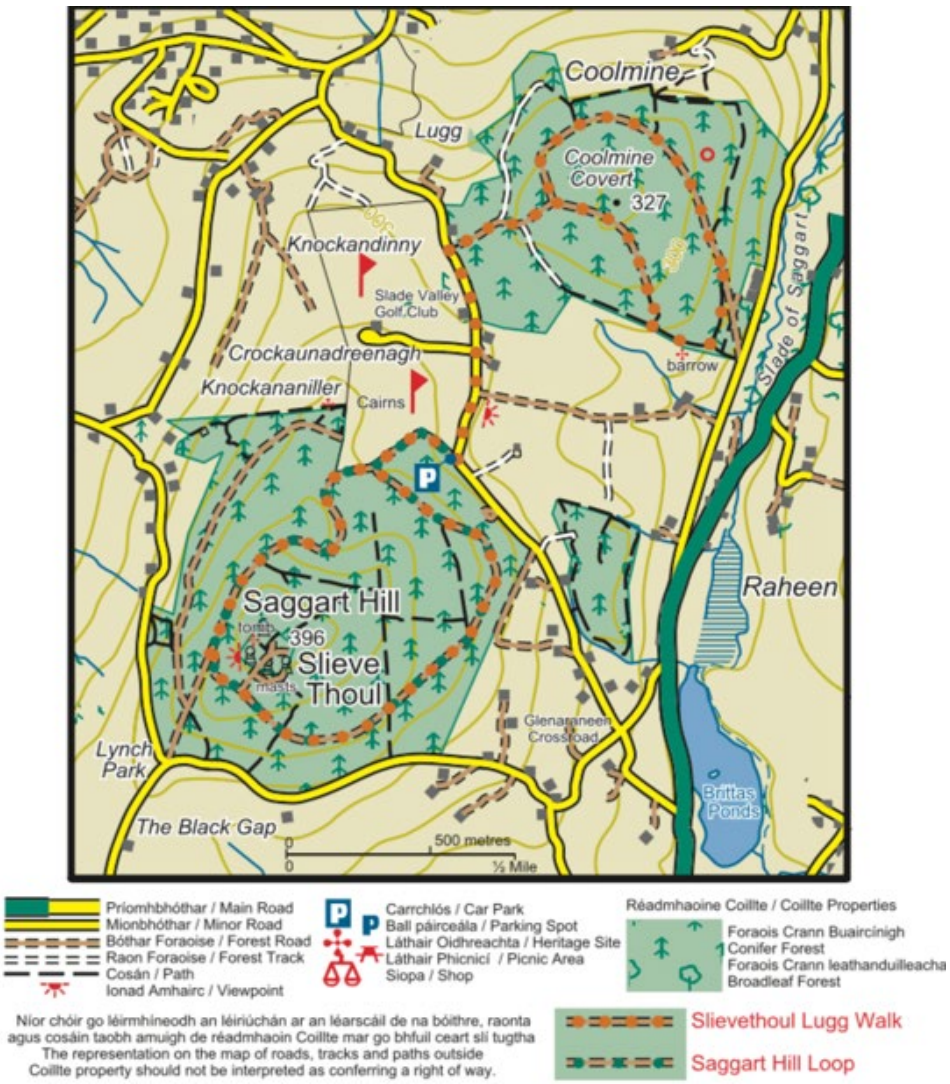


Plate 12-7: Slievethoul & Lugg Walking Routes (Source: Scenic Irish Walks[15])

12.4.2.6 Summary of the Landscape Baseline

The landscape baseline describes the existing context against which potential effects of the Proposed Development have been assessed. The Site lies on greenfield land to the south of Rathcoole, gently sloping from 136 m AOD in the south to 124 m AOD in the north, with a shallow gradient of approximately 12 m across the Site. The River Camac forms the eastern boundary, while the Crockshane (Slade) Stream runs along the Site's southern boundary. A dry drainage ditch and a nearby pond, as well as Saggart and Boherboy Reservoirs, contribute to the Site's hydrological features.

The Site sits within the Athgoe and Saggart Hills LCA to the south and north-west and is adjacent to the Newcastle Lowlands LCA to the north-east. Land cover includes regenerated alluvial woodland, areas of emerging woodland, hay meadows, orchid-rich grasslands, and established hedgerows along watercourses. Informal walking paths cross the Site, connecting to local recreational networks.

[15] Website: Scenic Irish Walks, Available at: Slievethoul and Lugg – Scenic Irish Walks

The surrounding context includes residential areas in Rathcoole to the north and the village of Saggart to the east, with Newcastle located approximately 2.8 km to the north. The Site is close to major transport routes including the N7 and M50, and local roads linking villages, business parks, and recreational amenities. The area contains cultural heritage assets such as Rathcoole House, Mercer's Charter School, the Old Courthouse, Swiftbrook Paper Mill, Saggart Castle ruins, and historic bridges. Recreational amenities include Rathcoole Park, sports pitches, a golf course, National Cycle Network routes, and the Slade Valley Trail. View of the Dublin Mountains are possible from within Rathcoole Park and a number of adjacent residential properties.

Overall, the landscape is a mix of gently undulating lowlands, foothills, watercourses, semi-natural vegetation, and urban-fringe settlements, with landscape sensitivity varying across the study area.

The Site will not be visible from the nearby ACA, but will be visible from limited sections of walking and cycling routes to the north of the Site.

12.4.3 Existing Visual Amenities

12.4.3.1 Prospects and Significant Views

Chapter 3 of the South Dublin CDP identifies Prospects to be Preserved and Protected as well as Significant Views to be protected and preserved. Prospects and Views potentially relevant to the Proposed Development are identified in South Dublin CDP 2022-2028, Written Statement, Table 3.5 and mapped on Maps 7, 8, 11 and 11a.

There are no Prospects located within the 2 km study area. There are a number of Significant Views located within the study area as indicated in Figure 12-2: Landscape Designations. The orientation of these views is shown in South Dublin CDP, Map 8. One view is orientated towards Rathcoole and the Proposed Development Site as listed below:

- N81 Blessington Road, north-west towards Saggart and Rathcoole

12.4.4 Visual Receptor Groups

Table 12-16 summarises relevant key visual receptor groups and their sensitivity. Visual receptors have been separated based on their distance from the Site and grouped by receptor types.

Table 12-16: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Receptors	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Adjacent environs, up to approx. 200 m radius)			
Residents	Medium	High	High
Recreational users: Rathcoole Park	Medium	Medium	Medium
Recreational users: outdoor sport	Low	Medium	Low
Vehicle users	Low	Low	Low
Environs, beyond approx. 200 m radius and up to 700 m)			
Residents	Medium	Medium	Medium
Recreational users: outdoor sport	Low	Medium	Low
Vehicle users	Low	Low	Low

The value, susceptibility, and sensitivity of visual receptor groups in relation to the Proposed Development beyond 700 m is considered Low given the distance and intervening existing vegetation.

12.4.5 Representative Viewpoints

Eight viewpoints (VP) were selected to represent a mix of close-distance (adjacent streets to the Proposed Development Site), middle-distance (within Rathcoole and Rathcoole Park), and long-distance views (as

identified from Prospect points listed in South Dublin CDP). Receptors largely comprise of local residents, recreational users, and vehicle users. Some VPs may be applicable to several receptor categories, in which case, visual effects have been assessed for the group that has the higher sensitivity.

Table 12-17 describes the location of each VP and the associated receptor groups.

Table 12-17: Location and Receptor Type Associated with each VP

Viewpoint	Distance from Proposed Development	Location	Receptor type
1	Close	Location within Rathcoole Park	Recreational users Residents
2	Middle	L2005 Slade Road near nursing home	Residents Vehicle users
3	Middle	Coolmine Road	Recreational users Residents Vehicle users
4	Middle	Lugg Forest	Recreational users
5	Close	Mullally's Lane	Residents Vehicle users
6	Close	Coolamber Drive	Residents Vehicle users
7	Close	Public green adjacent to the site	Recreational users Residents
8	Close	Beechwood Lawns	Residents Vehicle users

Table 12-18 describes the baseline view from each VP that would exist without the Proposed Development, including the susceptibility, value and sensitivity of each view.

Table 12-18: Viewpoint Baseline Description

Viewpoint	Baseline Description	Susceptibility to Change	Value
1	The view is representative of recreational users in Rathcoole Park. It is also similar to that experienced by residents of Springbank Saggart from the back of their properties including first floor or dormer windows. This close-distance view consists of common park elements such as grass lawns, sport pitches, belts of shrubs and trees. The emerging woodland in the middle distance provides a boundary to Rathcoole Park. Countryside elements such as open fields and woodland can be seen above the tree line extending uphill towards Lugg located at the fringe of the Dublin Mountains in the background.	High	Medium
2	The view is representative of vehicle users travelling along L2005 Slade Road. It is also similar to that experienced by residents on L2005 Slade Road and Coolmine Road. This middle-distance view consists of common countryside elements such as road infrastructure, open fields, hedges, road signs, and belts of trees. High-voltage overhead transmission lines are visible above the hedge in the foreground and the belt of trees in the background introducing an industrial element.	Medium	Low
3	This panoramic view is representative of recreational and vehicle users travelling along Coolmine Road. It is also similar to that experienced by residents on Coolmine Road. This is a middle-distance view taken from an elevated position within the foothills of the Dublin Mountains. It consists of common countryside elements	Medium	Medium

Viewpoint	Baseline Description	Susceptibility to Change	Value
	such as open fields, hedges, belts of trees, and residential housing stock. The background also contains industrial elements in the form of high-voltage overhead cables as well as large industrial buildings related to the Aerodrome, Baldonnell, and Greenogue as well as other business parks. The Casement Aerodrome with its runways and hangars is visible in the background.		
4	The open and panoramic view is representative of recreational users along the northern section of the Slievethoul Lugg walking trail above Coolmine. This is a middle-distance view north from an elevated position at the western edge of the Dublin Mountains. It offers an open view across sections of rural countryside and of Rathcoole in the foreground below and expansive views into plains of County Kildare in the middle ground, background and horizon. The view is not protected and a result of clear-felling of coniferous forestry. It will disappear again once the young coniferous plantation, already visible adjacent to the viewpoint, matures. The view consists of common landscape elements such as open fields, hedges, belts of trees, scattered farms and residences in the foreground, followed by residential housing estates surrounding Rathcoole village. The Proposed Development Site, Rathcoole Park and the Rathcoole Woodlands can be seen in the foreground. Large warehouse districts / business parks and the Casement Aerodrome at Baldonnell define the middle ground. The background contains a mix of rural areas together with large suburban housing areas related to Adamstown, Leixlip, Celbridge and others, which appear embedded in a network of tree belts from this location. The view contains also a number of high voltage overhead transmission lines discernible in the fore- and middle ground.	Medium	Medium
5	The view is representative of vehicle users and residents along Mullaly's Lane Cul de Sac. This close distance view consists of elements common to the edge of a housing estate such as road infrastructure, grass verges, front garden walls of adjacent residences, and overhead low-voltage transmission lines. The middle ground in the centre of the view is occupied by shrubs and woodland.	High	Low
6	The view is representative of vehicle users and residents at the end of Coolamber Drive Cul de Sac. This close distance view consists of common elements at the edge of a housing estate such as road infrastructure, grass verges, front garden walls of adjacent residences, and overhead low-voltage cables. The midground of the view is formed by trees related to Rathcoole Woodland.	High	Low
7	The view is located outside the back garden walls of residences along Beechwood Lawns, west of the entrance to Rathcoole Park. Similar views will be experienced from first floor or dormer windows of these residences facing south towards Rathcoole Park. This or similar views will also be experienced by recreational users of Rathcoole Park. This close distance view consists of common park elements such as grass lawns, meadows, belts and individual stands of trees.	High	Medium
8	The view is representative of vehicle users and residents along Beechwood Lawns facing the entrance to Rathcoole Park. This close distance view consists of common landscape elements such as road infrastructure, grass verges, street trees, garden walls of adjacent residences and the entrance gate to Rathcoole Park. The middle- and background in the centre of the view are occupied by trees related to Rathcoole Park.	High	Low

12.5 Potential Effects

Full details of the construction phase of the Proposed Development are presented in Chapter 2: Description of Development.

Due to the location of the Proposed Development and the study area's topography, landscape and visual effects during the construction stage will be experienced within the vicinity of the Site as well as within Rathcoole Park and adjoining elevated areas to the south. Locations affected include middle-distance views of the Site, views across Rathcoole Park, and views along the local road network where construction traffic will travel. Construction activity will generally include the movement of machinery, equipment and site workers, cranes lifting materials and structures into position, the construction of buildings, service connections, scaffolding, and the temporary storage of materials within the Site.

12.5.1 Construction

12.5.1.1 Landscape Effects at Construction

Construction effects on the landscape character resulting from the Proposed Development will be direct and indirect, temporary or short term, and result from the following:

- Loss of existing vegetation and habitat;
- Soil stripping, earthworks, grading, etc;
- Effects of temporary to short-term site infrastructure such as site traffic, construction compounds, soil storage areas etc. especially those located in areas close to sensitive visual receptors; and
- Physical effects arising from construction of the Proposed Development will be confined to the Site.

The Proposed Development is mainly located within the receiving environments identified as Foothills LCT. Small sections will be located within the Urban Fringe/Peri-Urban LCT. It will be entirely located within the Athgoe and Saggart Hills LCA. The Proposed Development Site is located within a transition zone between a suburban landscape character of Rathcoole village at the fringe of Dublin and a rural landscape character still remaining in the western slopes of the foothills of the Dublin Mountains. Direct landscape change will occur locally within the Proposed Development Site itself, where sections of emerging woodland will be cleared and permanently transformed into a built-up suburban landscape character. Sections of Rathcoole Park will also be amended to facilitate a higher density of sport pitches. The magnitude of landscape change will be **High**. Considering the medium to high landscape sensitivity of the Foothills LCT and the Athgoe and Saggart LCA, the significance and quality of landscape effects will be **Very Significant/Adverse** as the majority of sensitive aspects, i.e. the emerging woodland on the Site will be altered. However, the addition of construction works for the Proposed Development itself is not uncharacteristic considering that the zoning of the area to be developed within the overall Site supports the establishment for new residential communities. The extension of the Proposed Development into small areas of the Urban Fringe/Peri-Urban LCT is not expected to materially alter the defining characteristics of this LCT, given its existing suburban context. Considering a Very Low sensitivity of this LCT, landscape change will be **Very Low** and its significance/ quality will be **Not Significant/Neutral**.

The change within the Site resulting from the construction works will temporarily and indirectly affect the landscape character of the surrounding area due to the open or partial visibility of construction activities and traffic. These activities will temporarily intensify the suburban character and indicate its further expansion into the transition zone between rural and suburban character areas. However, this change is not entirely uncharacteristic given the local zoning objectives. Indirect landscape change outside of the Proposed Development Site within the surrounding context is therefore considered to be **Low-Medium**. The resulting significance/quality will be **Slight-Moderate/Adverse**.

The perceptible change in the wider study area within the Foothills LCT, Hills LCT, Limestone Farmlands LCT, the Athgoe and Saggart LCA, Newcastle Lowlands LCA, Urban/Sub-Urban Dublin South LCA resulting from construction works will not materially alter the defining characteristics or overall perception of the wider LCTs and LCAs given the scale and location of these character types and areas. The Proposed Development will form a small component in the Foothills LCA and Athgoe and Saggart LCA. Landscape change is therefore considered **Very Low** and the resulting significance/quality is considered **Not Significant/Neutral** as the landscape change will either be not or barely recognisable. Proposed

Development construction will not change the overall perception of the LCTs and LCAs and their sensitive elements in the wider study area.

12.5.1.2 Visual Effects at Construction

The eight photomontages accompanying this assessment do not illustrate the construction phase, as a single snapshot in time would not meaningfully represent the dynamic and changing nature of construction activities.

Visual construction effects will comprise:

- Removal of sections of the emerging woodland and other vegetation within sections of Rathcoole Park;
- Potential effects to visual amenity within the locality or the wider study area as a result of the visibility of construction activities such as the construction of access roads, service connections, and buildings with associated scaffolding, and machinery including cranes;
- Effects of temporary site infrastructure such as site traffic and construction compounds especially those located in areas adjacent to sensitive visual receptors; and
- Potential physical effects arising from construction of the development and in particular on the visual resource within the Site.

The sensitivity of residential views is generally considered High. The visual envelope that is likely to be most affected will be local and concentrates at the existing neighbouring residential estates along Beechwood Lawns, Coolamber Drive, Coolamber Road, Mullally's Lane, Rathcoole Park, Springpark Saggart, and Millrace Park where views of the removed vegetation and the subsequent construction works will be possible depending on the nature of intervening vegetation and type of homes (one storey or more). Furthermore, recreational users will experience views of the construction on the Site when within Rathcoole Park. Views for vehicle users along the roads listed above will be limited by intervening built structures and vegetation, however, partial and often oblique views will be possible. The sensitivity of recreational users of Rathcoole Park is considered Medium. Sensitivity of vehicle users along the local street network is considered Low. Construction effects are most likely to be associated with the visibility of construction traffic, scaffolding and cranes. The upper part of the Site with cranes and scaffolding will be visible above the existing boundary and adjacent existing built structures. It is predicted that these will be most prevalent in close distance views (within approximately 150 m – 200 m) from adjoining residential developments and Rathcoole Park with open or partially open views towards the Proposed Development Site. The magnitude of visual effects for the most exposed residents and recreational users of Rathcoole Park is anticipated to range from **Medium** to **High**, depending on the openness and duration of views, the extent of intervening vegetation and seasonal variations. The resulting visual effects are anticipated to range from **Significant** to **Very Significant/Adverse**, with **Very Significant** effects confined to the most exposed receptors with open and direct views of construction activities. For less exposed residential receptors and local road users, where views are partial, oblique or substantially filtered by intervening vegetation and built form, the magnitude of effect is anticipated to be **Low** to **Medium**, resulting in **Slight** to **Moderate/Adverse** visual effects depending on receptor sensitivity and the degree of visibility.

It is considered that there will also be a number of mid-distance views between approximately 200 m and 900 m of construction works from the nearby road network particularly from sections along the elevated Coolmine Road in the southern part of the study area as well as from residences located along this road. From these locations, construction activities will generally form a relatively limited component of the wider views. The magnitude of visual effects is anticipated to be **Low** to **Medium** for residential receptors and **Low** for vehicle users. The resulting effect significance is anticipated to range from **Slight/Adverse** for vehicle users to **Moderate/Adverse** for residential receptors where more open views are available.

Longer distance views beyond 900 m will relate to the visibility of cranes and taller sections of the Proposed Development including scaffolding. This will include vehicle users and residents along Bolger's Lane in the west, intermittent views from elevated sections of Lugg Lane in the south, as well as along sections of the northern most part of the Slievethoul & Lugg walking trail with panoramic open views to the north. At these distances, the construction works will form a small component of wider panoramic views and are unlikely to become a principal focus point. The magnitude of visual effects is therefore anticipated to be **Low**, resulting in **Slight/Adverse** visual effects for the more sensitive residential and recreational receptors. The significance/quality of visual effects is considered therefore **Slight/Adverse**. Views from the N7 and the low-lying areas north of the N7 corridor will be substantially screened by intervening vegetation and built

form. Where visible, the construction works are likely to be limited to upper sections of cranes in the distance. The magnitude of visual effects is anticipated to be **Very Low**, resulting in **Not Significant/ Adverse** visual effects. Table 12-19 provides a summary of visual effects in relation to receptor locations.

Table 12-19: Summary of Visual Effects at Construction

Receptor Location	Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Visual Effects during Construction	Significance of Visual Effects during Construction
Closest, open residential views	High	High	Very Significant/Adverse
Closest, partially screened residential views	High	Medium	Significant/Adverse
Rathcoole Park – open views	High	Medium–High	Significant–Very Significant/Adverse
Local roads – vehicle users	Low	Low–Medium	Slight/Adverse
Coolmine Road – residential	High	Low–Medium	Slight–Moderate/Adverse
Coolmine Road – vehicle users	Medium–Low	Low	Slight/Adverse
>900 m residential / recreational	High	Low	Slight/Adverse
N7/low-lying northern areas – all receptor groups	Low	Very Low	Not Significant/Adverse

12.5.2 Operation

12.5.2.1 Landscape Effects at Operation

The landscape assessment considers the completed Proposed Development at Year 1 and Year 15, allowing for the progressive establishment of the proposed landscape planting. Year 15 is assessed separately in Section 12.7 Residual Effects.

Operational effects on landscape character will be direct and indirect, permanent, and will result from:

- Permanent loss and alteration of existing vegetation and habitat;
- Permanent changes to landform and ground conditions, including grading and earthworks;
- Introduction of residential buildings, access roads, hardstanding, open space and associated landscape infrastructure; and
- Establishment and maturation of landscape mitigation planting to integrate the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development is mainly located within the Foothills LCT, with small sections within the Urban Fringe/Peri-Urban LCT, and entirely within the Athgoe and Saggart Hills LCA. The Site occupies a transition between the suburban character of Rathcoole village and the more rural landscape of the western foothills of the Dublin Mountains.

Direct landscape change will occur within the Site through permanent removal of sections of emerging woodland and their transformation to a built-up suburban character. Sections of Rathcoole Park will also be amended to facilitate a higher density of sports pitches. At Year 1, the magnitude of landscape change is considered **Medium-High**. Although substantial, the proposed residential use and associated infrastructure are not uncharacteristic of Rathcoole's existing suburban character or the relevant zoning objectives. Given the Medium to High sensitivity of the Foothills LCT and Athgoe and Saggart LCA, the significance/quality of landscape effects is considered to be **Significant/Adverse**.

Within the small areas of the Urban Fringe/Peri-Urban LCT, the Proposed Development will not materially alter the character of the LCT. Given its Very Low sensitivity, the magnitude of change is considered **Low**, resulting in a **Not Significant/Neutral** significance/quality of landscape effects.

Within the wider study area, including the Foothills, Hills, Urban Fringe/Peri-Urban and Limestone Farmlands LCTs and Athgoe and Saggart Hills, Newcastle Lowlands and Urban/Sub-Urban Dublin South LCAs, the Proposed Development will form a small component of the wider landscape. It will not materially alter the defining characteristics of these landscape character areas, particularly given the scale and location of the development. Landscape change is therefore considered **Very Low**, the significance/quality of landscape effects is considered to be **Not Significant/Neutral**. The Proposed Development will not alter the overall perception or key characteristics of the wider LCTs and LCAs.

A summary table of landscape effects at operation is detailed in Table 12-20.

Table 12-20: Summary of Landscape Effects at Operation

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude (at operation) of Landscape Effects	Significance of Landscape Effects	Quality of Landscape Effects	Duration of Landscape Effects
Direct effects (within the Site)					
Foothills LCT	Medium to High	Medium-High	Significant	Adverse	Permanent
Urban Fringe / Peri-Urban LCT	Very Low	Low	Not Significant	Neutral	Permanent
Athgoe and Saggart Hills LCA	Medium to High	Medium-High	Significant	Adverse	Permanent
Indirect effects					
Foothills LCT	Medium to High	Very Low	Not Significant	Neutral	Permanent
Urban Fringe / Peri-Urban LCT	Very Low	Very Low	Not Significant	Neutral	Permanent
Limestone Farmland LCT	Medium	Very Low	Not Significant	Neutral	Permanent
Hills LCT	High	Very Low	Not Significant	Neutral	Permanent
Athgoe and Saggart Hills LCA	Medium to High	Very Low	Not Significant	Neutral	Permanent
Newcastle Lowlands LCA	Medium	Very Low	Not Significant	Neutral	Permanent

12.5.2.2 Visual Effects at Operation

At operation, the Proposed Development will result in a permanent change to views from surrounding visual receptors through the introduction of new built development within the Site. Unlike during construction, temporary compounds, machinery, cranes and scaffolding will no longer be present. The assessment therefore considers the completed development at Year 1 and Year 15, allowing for the progressive establishment of the proposed landscape planting. Year 15 is assessed separately in Section 12.7 Residual Effects. Viewpoint locations and associated photomontages are shown on Figure 12-3: Walking and Cycling Routes, Viewpoints, as well as the Booklet of Photomontages (refer to Appendix 12-1) and should be viewed when reading the visual assessment at operation.

At Year 1, the Proposed Development will be visible from a number of locations within the local area, particularly adjoining residential areas and Rathcoole Park where open or partially open views towards the Site are available (refer to Viewpoints 01, 05. 06, 07 and 08). Views will vary according to the orientation and height of individual dwellings, intervening vegetation and built form. The upper parts of the Proposed Development may be visible above existing boundary vegetation and adjacent buildings; however, it will be experienced within the context of the existing suburban settlement and built environment. Residential

receptors and recreational users of Rathcoole Park are considered to have High sensitivity, while vehicle users of the local road network are considered to have Medium to Low sensitivity.

For the closest residential receptors and users of Rathcoole Park, generally within approximately 150 -200 m, the magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 is anticipated to range from **Low** to **Medium**, depending on the openness, angle and duration of views and the extent of intervening vegetation and built form. The resulting significance of visual effects are anticipated to range from **Moderate to Significant/Adverse**, with **Significant** effects limited to the most exposed receptors with open and direct views. Views from the local street network will generally be partial, oblique and intermittent due to intervening buildings and vegetation. The magnitude of visual effects is anticipated to be **Low**. The resulting significance/quality of visual effects is considered to be **Slight/Adverse** effects for vehicle users.

At mid-distance locations between approximately 200 m and 900 m, including elevated sections of Coolmine Road and residences along this road, the Proposed Development will be visible as part of the wider suburban setting which is not considered uncharacteristic (refer to Viewpoints 02 and 03). The magnitude of effect is anticipated to be **Low** for residential receptors and **Very Low** to **Low** for vehicle users. The resulting significance of visual effects will be **Slight to Moderate/Adverse** for residential receptors and **Not Significant to Slight/Adverse** for road users.

Beyond approximately 900 m, including potential views from Bolger's Lane, elevated sections of Lugg Lane and the Slievethoul and Lugg walking trail (refer to Viewpoint 04), the Proposed Development will form a relatively small component of wider views containing existing built, infrastructural and landscape elements. It is unlikely to become a principal focus in available views. The magnitude of effect is anticipated to be **Very Low** to **Low**, resulting in **Not Significant to Slight/Adverse** effects.

Views from the N7 and low-lying areas north of the N7 corridor will remain substantially screened by intervening vegetation and built form. Where glimpsed views are available, these are likely to be limited to upper sections of the Proposed Development. The magnitude of effect is anticipated to be **Very Low**. The resulting significance of visual effects will be **Not Significant/Adverse**.

Photomontages submitted with this planning application illustrate the location of the Proposed Development in views from various directions and at different distances. Viewpoint locations and photomontages are shown on Figure 12.3: Walking and Cycling Routes, Viewpoints. A detailed description of each viewpoint is included herein and should be read in conjunction with the Booklet of Photomontages (refer to Appendix 12-1), submitted with this planning application.

Viewpoint 1: Location within Rathcoole Park

The photomontage illustrates the components of the Proposed Development as seen from the eastern edge of Rathcoole Park, including sports pitches and belts of trees. The removal of sections of the emerging woodland is evident in the middle distance. New landscaping and sports pitches from the Proposed Development will occupy most of the extent of the view in the foreground, while the proposed residential buildings will be partly visible between and above the existing vegetation in the middle ground. Views of the foothills of the Dublin Mountains will be retained. Key receptors will be recreational users.

The magnitude of visual change is considered **Medium**. The Proposed Development will introduce multi-storey residential elements with a height that is uncharacteristic to the existing view, but these will not become a dominant new feature. The visual significance/ quality will be **Moderate/Adverse**.

Viewpoint 2: L2005 Slade Road close to Millbrook Manor Nursing Home

The photomontage illustrates the components of the Proposed Development as seen from along Slade Road. The tops of the proposed apartment buildings are visible on a slightly elevated position in the distance, with the remainder of the Proposed Development being screened by intervening vegetation and topography. Key receptors will be vehicle users.

The magnitude of visual change is considered **Low**. The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by existing intervening vegetation. The Proposed Development will introduce a new built component into the view, which is, given the overall setting, not uncharacteristic. However, the built-up sub-urban fringe is encroaching further into rural views in this area. The significance/quality of visual effects will be **Slight/ Adverse**.

Viewpoint 3: Coolmine Road

The photomontage illustrates the components of the Proposed Development as seen from an elevated position along Coolmine Road. Similar panoramic views will be experienced by residents along this section of Coolmine Road. The upper sections of the proposed buildings are visible in the distance, with the remainder of the Proposed Development being screened by intervening vegetation. Key receptors will be residents and vehicle users.

The magnitude of visual change is considered **Very Low** for vehicle users and **Low** for residents. The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by existing intervening vegetation. Vehicle users will experience oblique views at speed when travelling along Coolmine Road. The Proposed Development will not become a prominent new feature in the view. It will, however, expand the existing sub-urban fringe further into rural areas and reinforce the existing built-up character components of the view, which contains prominent large light industrial buildings in the Aerodrome and Baldonnell business parks in the middle distance. The significance/quality of visual effects will be Not Significant/Adverse for vehicle users and Slight**/Adverse** for residents.

Viewpoint 4 Slievethoul & Lugg Walking Trail

The view illustrates the components of the Proposed Development as seen from an elevated position along the northern section of the Slievethoul & Lugg walking trail at an elevated location in the foothills of the Dublin Mountains. The upper sections of the proposed buildings as well as changes in the woodland cover will be visible in the distance, with the remainder of the Proposed Development being screened by intervening vegetation. Key receptors will be recreational users.

The magnitude of visual change is considered **Low**. Because of the distance, the majority of the Proposed Development will be screened or filtered by existing intervening vegetation and will be viewed as one residential element together with the existing ones in the landscape. The Proposed Development will not become a prominent new feature in the view. Similar to Viewpoint 4, it will expand the existing sub-urban fringe further into rural areas and reinforce the existing built-up character components of the view. Considering the elevated panoramic view, the focus rests more on the existing large business parks and the Casement Aerodrome in the middle distance, and the expansive views into the background towards the horizon. The significance/quality of visual effects will be **Slight/Adverse**.

Viewpoint 5 Mullally's Lane

The photomontage illustrates the components of the Proposed Development from the proposed pedestrian and cycle access from Mullally's Lane with an open view of the proposed new vehicular and pedestrian access road / T-Junction from Greenogue Drive, including verges, pavements, and roadside trees leading towards the Proposed Development. Key receptors will be residents and vehicle users.

The magnitude of visual change is considered **Medium-High**. The Proposed Development will change the existing road layout and provide a new road entrance from Greenogue Drive opening up this cul-de-sac to provide an access road to the Proposed Development. The associated changes in surfacing and consolidation of the road layout can be considered beneficial and are not considered out of character, as Mullally's Lane forms part of a residential housing estate where these types of surfaces and treatments are common and not uncharacteristic. However, the change will also result in a significant increase in vehicular traffic serving the Proposed Development, which will adversely affect the overall visual experience of adjacent residents. The significance and quality of visual effects is therefore considered **Significant/Adverse**.

Viewpoint 6 Coolamber Drive

The photomontage illustrates the components of the Proposed Development at the proposed Site entrance on Coolamber Drive, including the removal of existing vegetation, a new pedestrian and cycle route entrance, verges and pavements. Key receptors will be residents and vehicle users.

The magnitude of visual change is considered **Medium-High**. The Proposed Development will change Coolamber Drive from a cul-de-sac to a permeable connection for pedestrian and cyclists connecting to the Proposed Development. The entrance leading towards the Proposed Development will be clearly visible in the midground and will require the removal of part of the existing vegetation at the end of the road. The proposed buildings will be fully screened by existing intervening buildings and vegetation. The changes in surfacing and pedestrian and cycle infrastructure are not considered uncharacteristic of the suburban

setting of this viewpoint. However, the change will result in an increase in vehicular and people traffic serving the Proposed Development, which will adversely affect the overall visual experience of adjacent residents. The significance and quality of visual effects is therefore considered **Moderate/Adverse**.

Viewpoint 7 Public Green Adjacent to the Site

The photomontage illustrates the components of the Proposed Development as seen from the northern edge of Rathcoole Park and from the rear of residential properties along Beechwood Lawns. Components of the Proposed Development, in the form of multi-storey residential buildings, will become visible in the background through gaps in the intervening vegetation in the middle ground. Key receptors will be residents and recreational users.

The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by intervening vegetation, with taller elements emerging above and between gaps in the intervening tree canopy. The Proposed Development will introduce multi-storey residential elements of a height that is uncharacteristic to the existing view, creating new points of focus. The Proposed Development will become more visible from first floor and dormer windows of adjacent residences. Visibility will also increase during the winter months when the intervening trees are without foliage, with the proposed apartment block likely to become substantially visible, although filtered by the intervening bare tree canopies. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Low** during the summer months and **Medium** during the winter months. The significance and quality of visual effects during the summer months is considered **Slight/Adverse**, increasing to **Moderate/Adverse** during the winter months.

Viewpoint 8 Beechwood Lawns/Entrance Rathcoole Park

The photomontage illustrates the components of the Proposed Development at the entrance to Rathcoole Park from Beechwood Lawns. Key receptors will be residents and vehicle users.

The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by existing intervening vegetation located within Rathcoole Park and street trees along Beechwood Lawns during the summer months. Visibility will increase during the winter months when the intervening trees are without foliage, with the proposed building blocks becoming visible, although filtered by the intervening bare tree canopies. The magnitude of visual change is considered Very Low during the summer months and Low during the winter months. The significance and quality of visual effects during the summer months is considered **Not Significant/Neutral**, increasing to **Slight/Adverse** during the winter months.

Table 12-21: Summary of Visual Effects at Operation

Viewpoint	Receptor Group	Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Visual Change	Significance of Visual Effects	Quality of Effect	Duration of Visual Effects
1	Recreational Users	High	Medium	Moderate	Adverse	Permanent
2	Vehicle Users	Low	Low	Slight	Adverse	Permanent
3	Residents/ Vehicle Users	Medium/Low	Low	Slight	Adverse	Permanent
4	Recreational Users	Medium	Low	Slight	Adverse	Permanent
5	Residents/ Vehicle Users	High/Low	Medium-High	Significant	Adverse	Permanent
6	Residents/ Vehicle Users	High/Low	Medium-High	Moderate	Adverse	Permanent
7	Residents/ Recreational Users	High/High	Low (summer) Medium (winter)	Slight (summer) Moderate (winter)	Adverse	Permanent
8	Residents/ Vehicle Users	High/Low	Very Low (summer) Low (winter)	Not Significant (summer) Slight (winter)	Neutral (summer)	Permanent

Adverse
(winter)

12.5.2.3 Visual Effects on Prospects and Significant Views

Visual effects from the relevant designated Significant View located within the study area is summarised below.

N81 Blessington Road, northwest towards Saggart and Rathcoole

The N81 is accompanied by considerable roadside vegetation which, together with intervening topography, screens the majority of views towards the north-west during both summer and winter. Glimpsed views towards Saggart and Fortunestown can be experienced through intervening vegetation along sections of the road. Views are oblique and experienced by vehicle users travelling at speeds of up to 80 km/hr. There are no footpaths or parking areas from which receptors can appreciate longer-distance views.

Given the distance from the Proposed Development, limited visibility, oblique nature of views and speed of travel, a perceptible change is unlikely. The identification of the Proposed Development at this distance and scale would be barely perceptible. The magnitude of visual change is therefore considered **None**, with the resulting significance and quality of effects considered **Imperceptible/Neutral**.

12.5.3 Indirect, Secondary & Transboundary Effects

Indirect or secondary effects are described in the EPA Guidelines as "*effects on the environment, which are not a direct result of the project, often produced away from the project site or because of a complex pathway*". Transboundary effects are those affecting another state or jurisdiction.

The zone of influence of the effects identified does not affect any other state or states, thus transboundary would not be experienced.

The potential for indirect or secondary effects has been considered in the preparation of this LVIA chapter. Indirect landscape effects have been identified and assessed; however, all visual effects identified in this chapter are considered direct effects and have been assessed as such. While some elements of the Proposed Development will develop over time, such as the proposed planting schedule, the subsequent maturing and change in plant size have been fully captured within the assessment of the Year 1 and Year 15 scenarios.

12.6 Mitigation Measures

Considering the location and height of the Proposed Development, the principal mitigation for the Site is inherent in the architectural design, façade materials and details. The architectural design statement prepared by the architects of Metropolitan Workshop, which is accompanying the planning application, outlines the architectural design and palette of materials to be used.

Landscape proposals have been developed by AECOM and a landscape design report and associated drawings form part of this planning application.

The proposed landscape design will provide screening at ground level. The drawings illustrating the proposed landscape design and the associated detailed design report are contained within the planning application documents. A synopsis of the proposed landscape design is provided below.

12.6.1 Construction Phase

During the construction phase, mitigation will focus on confining activity to the defined Site boundary and preventing unnecessary disturbance to adjacent vegetation and soils. All mature hedgerows and tree lines will be retained where practicable, maintaining the current overall character of the surroundings. Retained vegetation will be safeguarded through the use of protective fencing and root-protection zones in accordance with BS 5837:2012 - Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction, ensuring that root systems and canopies remain undisturbed through the works. Additionally, mixed native hedgerow is proposed in the open spaces to mitigate the removal of hedgerow during site construction. On completion of construction, any temporary ground disturbance will be reinstated promptly using locally sourced topsoil and appropriate seed mixes, stabilise soils, and support rapid vegetation recovery.

12.6.2 Operational Phase

During the operational phase, a comprehensive programme of landscape and ecological enhancement will be implemented to restore temporarily disturbed areas and establish the proposed landscape framework. Considering the nature and location of the Proposed Development, the principal mitigation is inherent in the high-quality architecture, design and choice of materials. The Stage 2a Landscape Design Report which is accompanying the planning application outlines the landscape strategy, landscape plan, planting strategy, and palette of materials to be used.

The design intention of the landscape strategy is to create an inclusive and coherent new community based on best practice urban planning and landscape design principles, giving residents a sense of place, ownership and identity. The design concept responds to the Site's existing landscape, and the SDCC development plan. The landscape strategy includes the following:

- Preservation and enhancement of the riparian corridor;
- Protection and management of existing woodland;
- Integration of green fingers and local parks;
- Provision of semi-private and private green spaces;
- Enhanced permeability through green links;
- Active recreation areas;
- Integration of SuDS; and
- Street tree planting and urban integration.

The woodland edge forms a transitional landscape between the Proposed Development and the existing transition woodland in the Site creating a sensitive interface between built form and the natural environment. A linear swale is incorporated as part of the wider Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS), providing both a functional drainage element and a strong visual edge to define the space. A natural material palette is proposed throughout, with meadow and grassland areas softening the interface and blending the development into the surrounding landscape.

12.6.3 Public Lighting Concept

A Public Lighting Concept has been prepared and accompanies the planning application. The below summarises the proposed lighting concept and outlines the measures proposed to reduce landscape and visual effects.

Public Lighting Concept

The proposed lighting scheme has been developed to provide the illumination necessary for the safe use of roads, pedestrian and cycle routes and parking areas, while minimising the introduction of artificial light into the surrounding environment. Particular consideration has been given to light pollution, glare, sky glow and light spill towards neighbouring properties, existing trees and ecologically sensitive areas.

Lighting will be concentrated principally along the proposed roads, pedestrian and cycle routes and within parking areas, rather than providing general illumination across the wider Site. Different mounting heights and lighting classes are used according to function, including lower 4 m columns along pedestrian and cycle routes, 6 m columns within parking areas and 8 m columns along the main roads. Low-wattage, warm-white 3000K LED (Light Emitting Diode) luminaires are proposed for the general external lighting.

The location, spacing and orientation of luminaires have been optimised through predictive lighting modelling to contain illumination within the areas where it is required and to minimise unnecessary lighting and visual clutter. Asymmetrical beam optics are used to control the distribution of light and reduce spill beyond the intended areas, while high-quality optics, controlled aiming and appropriate illumination levels reduce glare, over-illumination and sky glow. The luminaires are designed to avoid direct upward illumination.

The lighting is also capable of being dimmed, with the report proposing reduced lighting between 23:00 and 06:00, subject to agreement with South Dublin County Council. This will further limit the duration and intensity of lighting during the quieter night-time period. Overall, the Proposed Development will inevitably introduce new sources of lighting into parts of the Site that are currently dark, resulting in an increase in district lighting. The lighting strategy seeks to contain this increase within the developed areas and movement corridors, while minimising light spill, glare and sky glow affecting the surrounding landscape and neighbouring areas.

12.7 Residual Effects

Effective implementation of the proposed landscape mitigation measures, as described in Section 12.6 above, will have a beneficial impact and help to minimise landscape and visual effects associated with the Proposed Development. Sensitive design of the proposed building structures as proposed above will help integrating the Proposed Development into the surrounding environment.

Following the completion of construction works and the implementation of the proposed landscape mitigation measures, the Proposed Development will become a permanent feature in the landscape and visual amenity.

12.7.1.1 Residual Landscape Effects

By Year 15, the proposed landscape mitigation planting will have established and matured, reinforcing the existing vegetation structure and providing greater integration of the Proposed Development within its landscape setting.

The residual landscape character of the Site will remain substantially changed through the permanent removal of sections of emerging woodland and their transformation to a built-up suburban character. Sections of Rathcoole Park will also remain amended to accommodate a higher density of sports pitches. However, the established landscape framework will integrate the Proposed Development with the surrounding landscape and reinforce existing vegetation patterns. The residual magnitude of landscape change is therefore considered **Medium**, with the resulting significance/quality of landscape effects considered **Moderate/Adverse**, given the Medium to High sensitivity of the Foothills LCT and Athgoe and Saggart Hills LCA. While the Proposed Development will remain perceptible as a permanent change in land use and landscape character, the residual character will be more closely associated with the existing suburban character of Rathcoole and will no longer appear as a distinct or isolated extension into the surrounding landscape.

Within the small areas of the **Urban Fringe/Peri-Urban LCT**, the residual landscape change will remain limited and will not materially alter the characteristics of the LCT. Given its Very Low sensitivity, the magnitude of change remains **Low**, resulting in **Not Significant/Neutral** significance/quality of landscape effects.

Within the wider study area, the Proposed Development will remain a small component of the Foothills, Hills, Urban Fringe/ Peri-Urban and Limestone Farmlands LCTs and Athgoe and Saggart Hills, Newcastle Lowlands and Urban/Sub-Urban Dublin South LCAs. The residual change in landscape character will be locally perceptible but will not affect the defining characteristics or overall perception of these wider LCTs and LCAs. The residual magnitude of landscape change is therefore considered **Very Low**, with **Not Significant/Neutral** significance/quality of landscape effects.

12.7.1.2 Residual Visual Effects

By Year 15, the proposed landscape mitigation planting will have established and matured sufficiently to reinforce the existing vegetation structure, provide increased screening and integrate the Proposed Development. This will reduce the prominence of the built form in views from the closest residential areas and Rathcoole Park and strengthen its visual relationship with the existing suburban landscape.

At Year 15, the magnitude of visual effects for the closest residential receptors and recreational users of Rathcoole Park is anticipated to reduce to **Low to Medium**, with the most exposed receptors continuing to experience some visibility. The resulting significance of residual visual effects are anticipated to range from **Slight to Moderate/Adverse**, with the majority of views becoming increasingly filtered by established vegetation. The visual influence of the Proposed Development will remain concentrated within the immediate locality and, while resulting in a permanent change to some local views, will be experienced within the existing suburban context of residential development, local roads and surrounding commercial and employment areas.

From mid- and longer-distance locations, established mitigation will further reduce the visibility and prominence of the Proposed Development. The magnitude of residual visual effects is anticipated to reduce to **Very Low to Low.** The resulting significance of residual visual effects will range from **Not Significant to Slight/Adverse**.

A detailed description of each viewpoint is included herein and should be read in conjunction with the Booklet of Photomontages (refer to Appendix 12-1), submitted with the planning application.

Viewpoint 1 Location within Rathcoole Park

By Year 15, the proposed landscape mitigation will have established and matured, providing increased screening and integration of the Proposed Development. The residential buildings will remain partially visible between and above the established vegetation, while the proposed sports pitches and landscape framework will become more integrated with the park setting. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Low-Medium**. The significance/quality of residual visual effects will be **Moderate/Adverse**.

Viewpoint 2 L2005 Slade Road near nursing home

By Year 15, established landscape mitigation will not provide additional screening due to the height of the apartment blocks and intervening topography and vegetation which will screen the landscape mitigation. The upper sections of the proposed buildings will remain visible in the background and remain a minor component of the view. The magnitude of visual change will remain **Low**. The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by existing intervening vegetation. The significance/quality of residual visual effects will be **Slight/Adverse**.

Viewpoint 3 Coolmine Road

By Year 15, established landscape mitigation will further filter views of the Proposed Development, with the upper sections of the buildings remaining visible in the distance. The Proposed Development will remain a minor component of the wider view and will be experienced alongside the existing residential, industrial and infrastructural elements. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Very Low to Low**. The significance/ quality of residual visual effects will be **Not Significant to Slight/Adverse**.

Viewpoint 4 Slievethoul & Lugg Walking Trail

By Year 15, established landscape mitigation will further screen and integrate the Proposed Development with the surrounding landscape. The upper sections of the buildings may remain visible but will form a small component of the expansive panoramic view, with the existing business parks, Casement Aerodrome and wider landscape continuing to form the principal focus. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Very Low**. The significance/quality of residual visual effects will be **Not Significant/Adverse**. It should be noted that by Year 15 the replanted coniferous forestry in the foreground adjacent of the viewpoint is likely to have grown to an extent that it will fully screen this panoramic view.

Viewpoint 5 Mullally's Lane

By Year 15, established landscape mitigation will provide increased integration of the Proposed Development, although the proposed access road and associated vehicular traffic will remain evident. The change to the road layout and associated infrastructure will remain perceptible to adjacent residents. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Medium**. The significance/quality of residual visual effects will be **Moderate/Adverse**.

Viewpoint 6 Coolamber Drive

By Year 15, established landscape mitigation will provide increased integration and screening of the Proposed Development, with the buildings remaining screened by intervening vegetation and built form. The change from a cul-de-sac to a pedestrian and cycle access point and associated traffic will remain evident to adjacent residents. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Low**. The significance/ quality of residual visual effects will be **Slight/Adverse**.

Viewpoint 7 Public Green Adjacent to the Site

By Year 15, established landscape mitigation will provide increased screening and integration, particularly during the summer months. Taller elements of the Proposed Development will remain visible through and above the established vegetation, with greater visibility during winter when trees are without foliage. The

magnitude of visual change is considered **Low** during summer and **Medium** during winter. The significance/ quality of residual visual effects will be **Slight/Adverse** during summer and **Moderate/Adverse** during winter.

Viewpoint 8 Beechwood Lawns

By Year 15, established landscape mitigation will further strengthen screening from the entrance to Rathcoole Park. The Proposed Development is expected to remain largely screened during summer, with limited filtered visibility during winter when intervening vegetation is without foliage. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Very Low** during summer and **Low** during winter, resulting in **Not Significant/ Neutral** effects during summer and **Slight/Adverse** effects during winter.

Table 12-22: Summary of Residual Visual Effects

Viewpoint	Receptor Group	Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Visual Change	Significance of Visual Effects	Quality of Effect	Duration of Visual Effects
1	Recreational Users	High	Low-Medium	Moderate	Adverse	Permanent
2	Vehicle Users	Low	Low	Slight	Adverse	Permanent
3	Residents/ Vehicle Users	Medium/Low	Very Low - Low	Not Significant to Slight	Adverse	Permanent
4	Recreational Users	Medium	Very Low	Not Significant	Adverse	Permanent
5	Residents/ Vehicle Users	High/Low	Medium	Moderate	Adverse	Permanent
6	Residents/ Vehicle Users	High/Low	Low	Slight	Adverse	Permanent
7	Residents/ Recreational Users	High/High	Low (summer) Medium (winter)	Slight (summer) Moderate (winter)	Adverse	Permanent
8	Residents/ Vehicle Users	High/Low	Very Low (summer) Low (winter)	Not Significant (summer) Slight (winter)	Neutral (summer) Adverse (winter)	Permanent

12.8 Cumulative Effects

In addition to landscape and visual effects, it is also important to consider potential cumulative effects. As stated in the methodology, significant cumulative effects may occur where a number of developments combine to increase the prevalence of that type of development within a landscape or view to the extent that they become a defining characteristic.

The cumulative assessment assesses the additional effects of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other developments of the same or similar type and scale. This is typically assessed as the effect arising from the Proposed Development when considered against a baseline containing the other developments in the scenario being considered. Cumulative landscape and visual effects at construction will depend on the programming of construction works for each project.

Table 12-23 provides a summary of how each of the short-listed proposed schemes has been evaluated in conjunction with the Proposed Development to investigate the potential for cumulative effects.

Table 12-23: Short-listed Proposed Schemes within the Study Area

ID	Application Reference	Brief Description of Development	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Consideration for Assessment
1	SDCC Pl. Ref. SD23A/0336 / ACP Pl. Ref. 321696	Granted permission on 19 May 2025, this application involves the construction of a new primary school and associated works (e.g. new access road).	0.00	**Scoped in** The permitted school development is located immediately adjacent to and partly within the Proposed Development Site boundary, resulting in a high degree of intervisibility. During construction, the combined developments would substantially intensify construction activity and associated landscape and visual change. The additional magnitude of change arising from the Proposed Development is considered **High**, resulting in **Very Significant/Adverse** cumulative effects, which will be temporary or short term. During operation, the permitted school will itself introduce substantial built form and activity into the local landscape. The Proposed Development will add further residential development, consolidating and intensifying the suburban character of this part of Rathcoole. While the combined change will be substantial, the incremental contribution of the Proposed Development will be moderated by the permitted school forming part of the future baseline. The additional magnitude of change is therefore considered **Medium-High**, resulting in **Significant/Adverse** cumulative effects.
2	SDCC and ABP Pl. Ref. 324071	Located at a site approximately 100 m south-west of the Proposed Development. (1) Demolition of 5 no. existing dwellings and associated outbuildings on the site. (2) Construction of a 176 no. dwellings on the site to the east of Stoney Hill Road comprising 100 no. duplex units and 76 no. houses (3) A total of 245 no. surface car parking spaces (4) Bicycle parking comprising of 187 no spaces (5) Open space comprising of: a) 8,725 sq.m of public open space (6) A new vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist access from Stoney Hill Road (7) A 2-no. storey creche building	0.10	**Scoped in** The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by intervening existing vegetation. However, due to the close proximity of both developments, partial intervisibility will result in cumulative landscape and visual effects during construction. The additional magnitude of landscape and visual change arising from the Proposed Development, when considered in conjunction with the permitted development, is considered **Low-Medium**. The resulting cumulative landscape and visual effects during construction are considered **Slight/Adverse** and temporary or short term. During operation, intervening vegetation will continue to substantially limit intervisibility between the developments. The additional magnitude of landscape and visual change arising from the Proposed Development is therefore considered **Low**, with the resulting cumulative landscape and visual effects considered **Slight/Adverse**.
3	SDCC Pl. Ref. SD24A/0092W / ACP Pl. Ref. 322539	Located at a site approximately 160 m south-east of the Proposed Development, decision is pending for this residential development which seeks to build 73 no. residential units set around a central amenity space.	0.16	**Scoped in** The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by intervening existing vegetation. However, due to the close proximity of both developments, partial intervisibility will result in cumulative landscape and visual effects during construction. The additional magnitude of landscape and visual change arising from the Proposed Development, when considered in conjunction with the permitted development, is considered **Low-Medium**. The resulting

ID	Application Reference	Brief Description of Development	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Consideration for Assessment
				cumulative landscape and visual effects during construction are considered **Slight/Adverse** and temporary or short term. During operation, intervening vegetation will continue to substantially limit intervisibility between the developments. The additional magnitude of landscape and visual change arising from the Proposed Development is therefore considered **Low**, with the resulting cumulative landscape and visual effects considered **Slight/Adverse**.
4	ACP Pl. Ref. 312501	Permission was granted on 2 August 2022 for a residential development consisting of 274 no. residential units, a creche, and associated site works at a site located approximately 170 m north-east of the Proposed Development.	0.17	**Scoped in** The Proposed Development will result in cumulative landscape and visual effects during the construction phase due to its close proximity, approximately 170 m from the permitted development, and the resulting intervisibility between both developments. The additional magnitude of landscape and visual change arising from the Proposed Development, when considered in conjunction with the permitted development, is considered **Medium-High**. The resulting cumulative landscape and visual effects during construction are considered **Significant/ Adverse** and temporary or short term. During operation, both developments will remain in close proximity and intervisible, resulting in a noticeable intensification of built development within the local landscape and available views. The additional magnitude of landscape and visual change arising from the Proposed Development is considered **Medium**, with the resulting cumulative landscape and visual effects considered **Significant/ Adverse**.
5	SDCC Pl. Ref. SD22A/0323 and SD24A/0048	Permission was granted on 12 September 2023 for this application, with subsequent changes also granted permission on 10 June 2024. Located approximately 210 m north-west of the Site, this application involves the construction of 14 no. residential units and associated works.	0.21	**Scoped out** This proposed scheme will not result in additional landscape or visual changes in conjunction with the Proposed Development at construction and during operation due to its location and lack of intervisibility.
6	SDCC Pl. Ref. SD23A/0100	Permission was granted on 20 February 2024 for a solar farm and associated works within a site of 6.7 ha located approximately 400 m north-east of the Proposed Development.	0.40	**Scoped out** This proposed scheme will not result in additional landscape or visual changes in conjunction with the Proposed Development at construction and during operation due to its location and lack of intervisibility.
7	SDCC Pl. Ref. SD21A/0230	Permission was granted on 29 November 2021 for the construction of two logistics/ warehouse units, including car parking, landscaping, photovoltaic	0.49	**Scoped out** This proposed scheme will not result in additional landscape or visual changes in conjunction with the Proposed Development at construction and during operation due to its location and lack of intervisibility.

ID	Application Reference	Brief Description of Development	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Consideration for Assessment
		panels, internal roads, etc., at a site located approximately 490 m north of the Proposed Development.		
8	SDCC Pl. Ref. SD24A/0187W / ACP Pl. Ref. 321950	Permission was granted on 15 July 2025 for Primary Care Centre building and associated site works at a site located approximately 590 m east of the Proposed Development.	0.59	**Scoped out** This proposed scheme will not result in additional landscape or visual changes in conjunction with the Proposed Development at construction and during operation due to its location and lack of intervisibility.
9	SDCC Pl. Ref. SD22A/0457 / ACP Pl. Ref. 317989	Permission was granted on 22 December 2020 for the construction of 224 no. apartments and associated site works at a site located approximately 1 km north-east of the Proposed Development.	1	**Scoped out** This proposed scheme will not result in additional landscape or visual changes in conjunction with the Proposed Development at construction and during operation due to its location and lack of intervisibility.
10	ACP Pl. Ref. 308088	Permission was granted on 3 September 2024 for a cemetery located approximately 880 m north-east of the Proposed Development.	0.88	**Scoped out** This proposed scheme will not result in additional landscape or visual changes in conjunction with the Proposed Development at construction and during operation due to its location and lack of intervisibility.
11	SDCC Pl. Ref. SD21A/0301	Permission was granted on 2nd March 2022 at the Millbrook Nursing Home (located approximately 700 m south-east of the Proposed Development) for the extension of the existing building.	0.70	**Scoped in** **Construction:** This Proposed Development will result in cumulative visual effects during the construction phase due to partial intervisibility. The additional visual change arising from the Proposed Development, when considered in conjunction with the permitted development, is considered **Low-Medium**. Changes to landscape character and visual amenity are therefore considered **Slight/Adverse** and temporary or short term. **Operation:** During operation, the additional visual change arising from the Proposed Development when seen in conjunction with the permitted development is considered **Very Low**. Given the limited intervisibility and the existing built-up and infrastructural context, cumulative visual effects are considered **Not Significant/Neutral**.

12.8.1 Cumulative Effects During Construction

Cumulative landscape and visual effects during construction would be temporary or short term and arise where construction of the Proposed Development and other proposed or permitted schemes listed in Table 12-18 occurs simultaneously. For most developments, cumulative effects would be limited due to distance, intervening topography, vegetation and built structures, resulting in limited or no intervisibility.

Greater cumulative effects may occur where developments are located close to and intervisible with the Proposed Development, resulting in an increased extent and intensity of construction activity within the local landscape and available views.

12.8.2 Cumulative Effects During Operation

During operation, cumulative effects for most developments will be limited due to a lack of intervisibility or because completed developments form part of the existing landscape and visual baseline. Greater cumulative effects may occur where proposed or permitted developments are located close to and intervisible with the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development will incrementally extend and intensify the residential suburban character and prominence of built development within the local area. However, this change will generally not be uncharacteristic given the existing suburban setting and presence of other proposed and permitted development. The incremental contribution of the Proposed Development will vary according to the proximity, scale and intervisibility of individual cumulative developments, as identified in Table 12-18.

12.9 'Do Nothing Scenario'

All components of the environment are constantly changing due to a combination of natural and human processes. The assessment therefore considers both the existing environment and the likely future environment in the absence of the Proposed Development (the 'Do Nothing' scenario).

If the Proposed Development did not proceed, sections of emerging woodland within the Site would remain and continue to mature. Other areas, including the relevant sections of Rathcoole Park, would remain broadly in their existing use and would similarly continue to mature. The resulting landscape and visual change associated with the 'Do Nothing' scenario is considered **Imperceptible / Neutral**.

However, the Site is located at the edge of the existing suburban area of Rathcoole and within an area where local planning policy and zoning objectives support further residential or civic development. There is therefore ongoing development pressure within and adjacent to this part of Rathcoole. While the nature and timing of any future development cannot be predicted as part of the 'Do Nothing' scenario, the wider landscape context is likely to continue to evolve towards a more suburban character over time. Relevant proposed and permitted developments are considered separately within the cumulative assessment.

12.10 Summary

12.10.1 Landscape Effects

Construction
Construction will result in the greatest landscape effects within the Foothills LCT and Athgoe and Saggart Hills LCA, particularly within the Site where sections of emerging woodland will be removed and transformed into a built-up suburban character, and parts of Rathcoole Park will be altered to accommodate additional sports pitches. Direct landscape effects will be Significant. Within the small areas of the Urban Fringe/Peri-Urban LCT, effects will be Not Significant.

Construction activity and traffic will temporarily intensify the suburban character of the surrounding transition zone between Rathcoole and the more rural landscape. The magnitude of this indirect landscape change is considered Not Significant.

Within the wider study area, the Proposed Development will form a small component of the wider landscape and will not alter the overall character or sensitivity of the relevant LCTs and LCAs, resulting in Not Significant effects.

Operation
At Year 1, the permanent removal of sections of emerging woodland and transformation of the Site to a built-up suburban character will remain the principal landscape change. The magnitude of change within the Foothills LCT and Athgoe and Saggart Hills LCA is considered Significant. Although substantial locally, the Proposed Development is not uncharacteristic of Rathcoole's existing suburban character or the relevant zoning objectives. Effects within the small areas of the Urban Fringe/Peri-Urban LCT will remain Not Significant.

Within the wider study area, the Proposed Development will form a small component of the surrounding landscape and will not materially alter the defining characteristics or overall perception of the relevant LCTs and LCAs. The landscape change is considered Not Significant.

12.10.2 Visual Effects

Construction
Construction activities, including vegetation removal, earthworks, construction traffic, scaffolding, cranes and temporary site infrastructure, will result in temporary adverse visual effects. Effects will be greatest within approximately 150 – 200 m of the Site, particularly for neighbouring residential receptors and recreational users of Rathcoole Park, where effects are anticipated to be Significant. For less exposed receptors, effects will generally be ranging between Significant and Not Significant depending on the extent of intervening vegetation and built form.

At mid-distance locations between approximately 200 m and 900 m, construction activities will form a more limited component of wider views, resulting in effects ranging between Significant and Not Significant. Beyond approximately 900 m, effects will generally reduce to Not Significant, while substantially screened locations, including the N7 and low-lying areas to the north, will experience Not Significant effects.

Operation
At Year 1, visual effects will be concentrated within the immediate locality, particularly adjoining residential areas and Rathcoole Park. The removal of temporary construction elements will reduce visual prominence, although the completed built development will remain visible. Effects for the closest and most exposed receptors are anticipated to be Significant, while effects from the local road network will generally be Not Significant.

At mid-distance locations, the Proposed Development will be experienced as part of the wider suburban setting, resulting in Not Significant to Significant effects depending on receptor sensitivity and visibility. Beyond approximately 900 m, the Proposed Development will form a small component of wider views, with effects generally Not Significant.

By Year 15, established landscape mitigation will provide increased screening and integration of the Proposed Development. Residual effects for the closest residential and recreational receptors are anticipated to reduce but remain Significant, while mid- and longer-distance effects will generally reduce to Not Significant. The visual influence of the Proposed Development will therefore remain predominantly localised and increasingly integrated with the existing suburban setting.

12.10.3 Cumulative Effects

During construction, cumulative landscape and visual effects will be temporary and generally limited by distance, intervening topography, vegetation and built form. Greater effects may occur where developments are close to and intervisible with the Proposed Development, increasing the extent and intensity of construction activity. Effects will range from Not Significant to Significant, with the greatest effects confined to the immediate locality.

During operation, cumulative effects will generally be limited due to distance, screening or developments forming part of the existing or future baseline. The Proposed Development will incrementally extend and intensify the suburban character of Rathcoole, but will generally not be uncharacteristic of its setting. Effects will range from Not Significant to Significant, with greater effects confined to nearby and intervisible developments.

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