What will the Ballyleagry Solar Farm look like?

Overview

Solar farms by their nature do not involve high structures relative to many other types of infrastructure development. The solar panels will be approximately 3.5 metres in height, and lighting and CCTV columns onsite will have a maximum height of approximately 4 metres.

Examples of other associated development onsite include inverter/transformer cabins, a substation, internal access roads, and security fencing.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is being prepared by specialist consultancy Macroworks, which will be submitted with the planning application for the project. This will be carried out in line with best practice.

The objectives of an LVIA are to:

- Present an objective analysis of the landscape and visual character of a defined area (the 'Study Area') in so far as they relate to the Development
- Identify the potential effects of the Development on these baseline conditions including direct, indirect, permanent, temporary and cumulative effects
- Clearly distinguish between landscape effects – the effects on the physical landscape as a resource in its own right – and visual effects – the effects on specific views and general visual amenity as experienced by people
- Propose appropriate mitigation measures to address likely significant effects, where possible, and to assess any residual effects that remain following the implementation of these measures
- Present all information clearly and objectively in a manner that will inform the decision-making process

It is proposed that the LVIA will be structured around a series of representative viewpoint locations. Viewpoints are chosen to provide a representative sample of viewers (visual receptors) and types of views of the development across the Study Area and, most importantly, to demonstrate potential views of the development rather than to show the screening effect of landscape features.

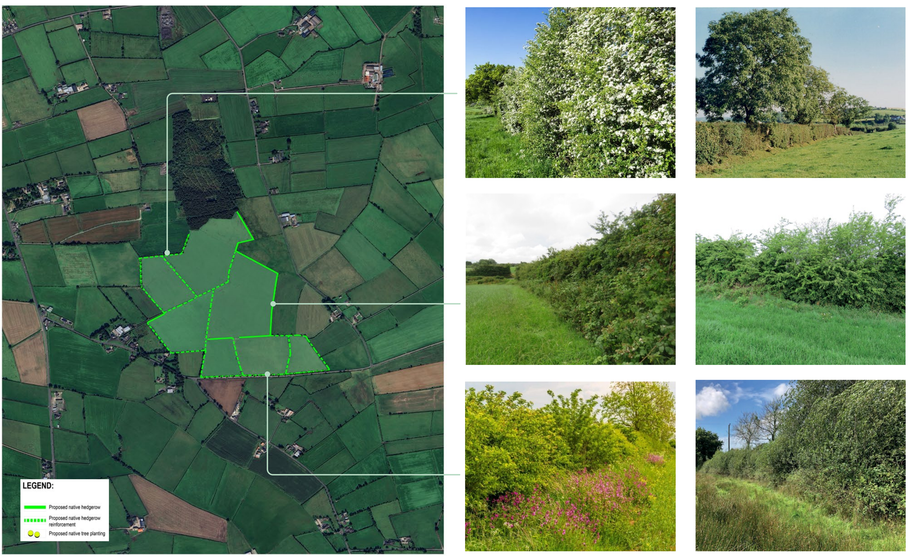
Viewpoints are selected in publicly accessible locations and those frequented by members of the public such as rights of way, car parks, popular visitor attractions and views from settlements, as well as viewpoints located in particularly scenic areas because these are likely to represent a greater concentration of sensitive visual receptors. Viewpoints from which the development is likely to be prominent are also favoured if they are available.

Private residential views are represented where possible by the selection of appropriate viewpoints on public roads in proximity to residential receptors. This is in accordance with current best practice guidance. Although the views chosen will be representative, they cannot always be typical of the whole Study Area.

A series of photographic montages will be prepared, showing the site upon operation, as well as in 5 years and 10 years post planting.

Examples of native species hedges that could be used include Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Holly, Guelder Rose, Wild Cherry, Crab Apple, and Spindle.

If required, examples of single standard trees that could be used include Silver Birch, Sessile Oak and Alder.



Indicative landscape mitigation plan with examples of native species.

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