



An
Bord
Pleanála

**Board Order
PL 27.249299**

Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2018

Planning Authority: Wicklow County Council

Planning Register Reference Number: 17/814

Appeal by Richard Moore O’Ferrall and others care of Peter Sweetman and Associates of 113 Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin and by ABO Wind Ireland Limited care of Tom Phillips and Associates of 80 Harcourt Street, Dublin against the decision made on the 28th day of August, 2017 by Wicklow County Council to refuse permission to ABO Wind Ireland Limited of Unit 4 Aspen Court, Cornelscourt, County Dublin for the proposed development.

Proposed Development: A ten year permission for a development consisting of up to eleven wind turbines with a maximum overall height of 150 metres to blade tip from existing ground level, a transformer at each turbine, a hard-stand area adjacent to each turbine, a 38kV electrical substation and all associated infrastructure and works, up to two permanent/temporary meteorological masts with a maximum overall height of 100 metres tip from existing ground level and associated infrastructure and works, a temporary site compound and all associated works, new site tracks and upgraded site tracks and all associated works, two new access entrances to local road and all associated works, 20kV underground cables facilitating the connection of turbines to 38kV electrical substation and all associated infrastructure and works, land clearance including tree felling and vegetation removal and all ancillary works in

the townlands of Roddenagh, Killaduff, Ballymanus, Preban, Ballinglen and Askakeagh, County Wickow.

Decision

GRANT permission the above proposed development in accordance with the said plans and particulars based on the reasons and considerations under and subject to the conditions set out below.

Matters Considered

In making its decision, the Board had regard to those matters to which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard. Such matters included any submissions and observations received by it in accordance with statutory provisions.

Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to:

- (a) European, national, regional and local policy and targets with regard to the development of alternative and indigenous energy sources (including for renewable energy, and wind energy in particular) and the minimisation of emissions from greenhouses gases,
- (b) the provisions of the Wind Energy Development Guidelines – Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in June, 2006,

- (c) the policies of the planning authority as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016 -2022,
- (d) the character of the landscape in the area and the absence of any ecological designations on the site,
- (e) the characteristics of the site and of the general vicinity,
- (f) the pattern of existing and permitted development in the area,
- (g) the distance to dwellings and other sensitive receptors from the proposed development,
- (h) the Environmental Impact Assessment Report submitted,
- (i) the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted,
- (j) the submissions made in connection with the planning application, and
- (k) the report and recommendation of the Inspector.

Appropriate Assessment

The Board noted that the proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site.

In completing the screening for Appropriate Assessment, the Board accepted and adopted the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's report in respect of the identification of the European Sites which could potentially be affected, and the identification and assessment of the potential likely significant effects of the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on these European Sites in view of the sites' conservation objectives. The Board was satisfied that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on the Slaney River Valley Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000781), or any other European Site, in view of the sites' conservation objectives.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The Board undertook an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development, taking into account:

- (a) the nature, scale and location of the proposed development,
- (b) the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and associated documentation submitted in support of the application,
- (c) the submissions made in connection with the planning application, and
- (d) the Inspector's report.

The Board considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant, adequately considers alternatives to the proposed development and identifies and describes adequately the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment.

The Board completed an Environmental Impact Assessment in relation to the proposed development and, in doing so, except in the case of landscape and visual amenity, agreed with the examination, set out in the Inspector's report, of the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, the associated documentation submitted by the applicant, and submissions made in the course of the application, and adopted the Inspector's assessment in this regard.

The Board considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the environment are, and would be mitigated as follows:

- impacts arising on population and human health as a result of traffic nuisance during the construction phase, which would be mitigated by the temporary nature of the works phase, and traffic management controls to be implemented by the developer in accordance with the National Roads Authority publication, 'Traffic Signs Manual' (2010).

The Board concluded that, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the effects of the proposed development on the environment, by itself and in combination with other plans and projects in the vicinity, would be acceptable, having regard to its overall benefits.

Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would be in accordance with European energy policy, the National Planning Framework, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010–2022, and the Wind Energy Development Guidelines – Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in June, 2006, and would:

- make a positive contribution to the implementation of Ireland's national strategic policy on renewable energy and its move to a low energy carbon future,

- have an acceptable impact on the landscape having regard to its overall benefits,
- not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity,
- not adversely affect the archaeological or natural heritage, and
- be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience.

The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

In deciding not to accept the Inspector's recommendation to refuse permission, the Board had regard to the significant man-made interventions in the existing low to medium sensitivity landscape and, notwithstanding the location of the site in an area less favoured for wind farm development as set out in the Wicklow Wind Energy Strategy, considered that the proposed development would not be visually obtrusive and would not, cumulatively with the permitted windfarm to the west at Ballycumber, interfere with the character of the landscape and obstruct or form an obtrusive or incongruous feature in Listed Prospect Number 54.

Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The period during which the development hereby permitted may be carried out shall be ten years from the date of this Order.

Reason: Having regard to the nature and extent of the proposed development, the Board considered it appropriate to specify a period of validity of this permission in excess of five years.

3. This permission shall be for a period of 25 years from the date of the commissioning of the wind turbines. The wind turbines and related ancillary structures shall then be decommissioned and removed unless, prior to the end of the period, planning permission shall have been granted for their continuance for a further period.

Reason: To enable the relevant planning authority to review the operation of the wind farm in the light of the circumstances then prevailing.

4. The mitigation measures and monitoring commitments identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and other plans and particulars submitted with the planning application shall be implemented in full by the developer, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.

Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit to, and agree in writing with, the planning authority, a schedule of these mitigation measures and monitoring commitments, and details of a time schedule for implementation of the mitigation measures and associated monitoring.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and protection of the environment during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

5. Prior to commencement of development, a detailed environmental management plan for the construction and operational stages shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority. The environmental management plan shall incorporate the following:
 - (a) a detailed plan for the construction phase incorporating, inter alia, construction programme, supervisory measures, noise management measures, construction hours and the management of construction waste,
 - (b) a comprehensive programme for the implementation of all monitoring commitments made in the application and supporting documentation during the construction and operation period, and
 - (c) proposals in relation to public information and communication.

A record of daily checks that the works are being undertaken in accordance with the Construction Management Plan shall be kept for inspection by the planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of environmental protection and orderly development.

6. No development shall commence until a landscaping and biodiversity scheme has been submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority to suitably screen the proposed development over the life of the facility. The scheme shall comprise a planting plan and schedule which shall include details of:
 - (a) existing and proposed ground levels in relation to an identified fixed datum,
 - (b) existing area of tree cover, landscaping features and vegetation to be maintained,
 - (c) location, design and materials of proposed boundary treatment, fences and gates, where applicable,
 - (d) proposed soft and hard landscaping works including the location, species and size of trees/shrubs to be planted at the substation,
 - (e) details of reinstatement works, including timing and location of landscaping, to include native species,
 - (f) biodiversity enhancement proposals, and

- (g) A programme for the timing, method of implementation, completion and subsequent on-going maintenance.

All of the hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Any trees/shrubs which within a period of five years from the completion of the approved landscaping scheme fail to become established, die, become seriously diseased, or are removed or damaged shall be replaced in the following planting season with equivalent numbers, sizes and species as those originally required to be planted unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to integrate the development into its surroundings.

7. The following design requirements shall be complied with:
- (a) The hub height shall not exceed 98.3 metres, the tip height shall not exceed 156.8 metres, and the blade length shall not exceed 58.5 metres. Details of the turbine design, and hub height, tip height, and blade length complying with these limits, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. The wind turbines, including tower and blades, shall be finished externally in a light grey colour.
 - (b) Cables within the site shall be laid underground.
 - (c) The wind turbines shall be geared to ensure that the blades rotate in the same direction.
 - (d) No advertising material shall be placed on or otherwise be affixed to any structure on the site without a prior grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of clarity and visual amenity.

8. This permission shall not be construed as any form of consent or agreement to a connection to the national grid or to the routing or nature of any such connection.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

9. The operation of the proposed development, by itself or in combination with any other permitted wind energy development, shall not result in noise levels, when measured externally at nearby noise sensitive locations, which exceed:

(a) 40 dB(A) L_{90,10min} between the hours of 0700 and 2300.

(b) 43 dB(A) L_{90,10min} at all other times.

Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall submit to, and agree in writing with, the planning authority a noise compliance monitoring programme for the subject development, including any mitigation measures such as the de-rating of particular turbines. All noise measurements shall be carried out in accordance with ISO Recommendation R 1996 "Assessment of Noise with Respect to Community Response," as amended by ISO Recommendations R 1996-1. The results of the initial noise compliance monitoring shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority within six months of commissioning of the wind farm.

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.

10. (a) Shadow flicker arising from the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other existing or permitted wind energy development in the vicinity, shall not exceed 30 hours per year or 30 minutes per day at existing or permitted dwellings or other sensitive receptors.
- (b) The proposed development shall be fitted with appropriate equipment and software to control shadow flicker in accordance with the above requirement. Details of these control measures shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to the commencement of development.
- (c) A report shall be prepared by a suitably qualified person in accordance with the requirements of the planning authority, indicating compliance with the above shadow flicker requirements at dwellings. Within 12 months of commissioning of the proposed wind farm, this report shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority. The developer shall outline proposed measures to address any recorded non-compliances, controlling turbine rotation if necessary. A similar report may be requested at reasonable intervals thereafter by the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.

11. In the event that the proposed development causes interference with telecommunications signals, effective measures shall be introduced to minimise interference with telecommunications signals in the area. Details of these measures, which shall be at the developer's expense, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commissioning of the turbines and following consultation with the relevant authorities.

Reason: In the interests of protecting telecommunications signals and of residential amenity.

12. Details of any aeronautical requirements shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Prior to commissioning of the turbines, the developer shall inform the planning authority, the Irish Aviation Authority and the Department of Defence of the as constructed tip heights and co-ordinates of the turbines.

Reason: In the interest of air traffic safety.

13. (a) Prior to commencement of development, details of the following shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority:
- (i) a Transport Management Plan, including details of the road network/haulage routes and the vehicle types to be used to transport materials on and off site and a schedule of control measures for exceptionally wide and heavy delivery loads. The plan shall also contain details of how the developer intends to engage with and notify the local community in advance of the delivery of oversized loads,
 - (ii) a condition survey of the roads and bridges along the haul routes to be carried out at the developer's expense by a suitably qualified person both before and after construction of the wind farm development. This survey shall include a schedule of required works to enable the haul routes to cater for construction-related traffic. The extent and scope of the survey and the schedule of works shall be agreed in writing with the planning authority/authorities prior to commencement of development,
 - (iii) detailed arrangements whereby the rectification of any construction damage which arises shall be completed to the satisfaction of the planning authority,
 - (iv) detailed arrangements for the protection of bridges to be crossed,
 - (v) a construction traffic management plan, including details of temporary traffic arrangements/controls on roads, and

- (vi) a phasing programme indicating the timescale within which it is intended to use each public route to facilitate construction of the development.
- (b) Within three months of the cessation of the use of each haul route to transport material to and from the site, a road survey and scheme of works detailing works to repair any damage to these routes shall be submitted to the planning authority.
- (c) All works arising from the aforementioned arrangements shall be completed at the developer's expense, within 12 months of the cessation of each road's use as a haul route for the proposed development.

Reason: To protect the public road network and to clarify the extent of the permission in the interests of traffic safety and orderly development.

14. The developer shall facilitate the archaeological appraisal of the site and shall provide for the preservation, recording and protection of archaeological materials or features which may exist within the site. In this regard, the developer shall:

- (a) notify the relevant planning authority in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of any site operation (including hydrological and geotechnical investigations) relating to the proposed development, and
- (b) employ a suitably-qualified archaeologist prior to the commencement of development. The archaeologist shall assess the site (including by pre-development archaeological testing) and monitor all site development works.

The assessment shall address the following issues:

- (i) the nature and location of archaeological material on the site, and
- (ii) the impact of the proposed development on such archaeological material.

A report, containing the results of the assessment, shall be submitted to the planning authority and, arising from this assessment, the developer shall, prior to commencement of construction works, agree in writing with the planning authority details regarding any further archaeological requirements (including, if necessary, archaeological excavation).

In default of agreement on any of these requirements, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the area and to secure the preservation (in-situ or by record) and protection of any archaeological remains that may exist within the site.

15. On full or partial decommissioning of the wind farm, or if the wind farm ceases operation for a period of more than one year, the turbines concerned and all decommissioned structures shall be removed, and foundations covered with soil to facilitate re-vegetation. These reinstatement works shall be completed to the written satisfaction of the planning authority within three months of decommissioning or cessation of operation.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory reinstatement of the site upon cessation of the project.

16. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the relevant planning authority, to secure the reinstatement of public roads which may be damaged by the transport of materials to the site, coupled with an agreement empowering the relevant planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to the satisfactory reinstatement of the public road. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the relevant planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory reinstatement of the delivery route.

17. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the relevant planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the relevant planning authority, to secure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site upon cessation of the project, coupled with an agreement empowering the relevant planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to such reinstatement. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the relevant planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site.

18. The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to the commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

Reason: It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.

**Member of An Bord Pleanála
duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Board.**

Dated this day of 2019