



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-303105-18

Development	Proposed wind farm of between 20 and 25 turbines with an approximate yield of 90 MW at Carrownagowan, Co. Clare.		
Location	Slieve Bernagh, Co Clare		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	2 nd Meeting		
Date	08/08/19	Time: 11.00 am	to 12.30 pm

Attendees
Representing An Bord Pleanála
Anne-Marie O'Connor, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Gillian Kane, Senior Planning Inspector
Maeve Flynn, Ecologist
Ellen Morrin, Senior Administrative Officer
Rob Mac Giollarnáth, Executive Officer r.macgiollarnath@pleanala.ie 01-8737247
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Helen Burman-Roy: Project Manager (Malachy Walsh and Partners)
Ken Fitzgerald: Planning & Stakeholder Management (MW & P)
Sinéad O'Malley: Project Manager (Coillte)
Gerard Hynes: Project Manager (Coillte)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. Following introductions, the Board referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant held on the 11th February 2019 and enquired if the prospective applicant had any comments on the record of this meeting. The prospective applicant stated that it had forwarded its comments on the record to An Bord Pleanála. The Board confirmed that the comments would be associated with the case file.
- 1.2. The Board enquired if the prospective applicant intended to have another meeting or close the pre-application consultation today. The prospective applicant replied that it had not made its decision on closure at the present time.

2.0 The prospective applicant's presentation

- 2.1. The prospective applicant opened their presentation with a site overview and a project update. The site is within a Strategic Wind Development Area, with a target of 150 MW (Clare Wind Energy Strategy).
- 2.2. The site is approximately 4 km northeast of the village of Broadford, 7km north west of Killaloe and 2.5 km south of the village of Bodyke, at its closest point.
- 2.3. A layout map was produced which displayed the location of 20 turbines, site entrances, borrow pits and construction sites. Reference was made to stream crossings on the site (three arched clear span crossings), surface water and contacts with Inland Fisheries Ireland regarding these matters. A preferred route map was handed in.
- 2.4. The prospective applicant stated that:
 - There are hen harriers on the site and data on this will be included in the NIS.
 - Multiple design revisions had been carried out for noise & visual optimisation.
 - Peat stability assessment is complete.
 - Baseline is complete except for bats (bat monitors will be collected in early September).
 - Transport assessment is complete (Foynes/Galway).

- Grid Route assessment is complete.
- Infrastructure layout and design will be finalised end of month.
- Community engagement is ongoing.

3.0 Discussion

The following matters were discussed:

- **Hen Harrier:** 3 years of bird survey data to SNH standard have been undertaken on the site. Hen harrier activity has been observed in two areas: a breeding pair in the north west part of the site, and an additional non-breeding pair in the south. Exclusion zones are being provided to protect species in these areas. The applicant stated that the survey evidence has found no link between the hen harriers on the site and any SPA. The Board advised that this conclusion would have to be robustly proven in order to screen out any SPA for which the hen harrier is a Special Conservation Interest. Even if hen harrier falls outside of the scope of Appropriate Assessment, it will still be a key issue in the consideration of any future planning application. Any conclusion that the proposed development will not adversely affect the hen harrier must be robustly supported by scientific evidence which should be clearly detailed in the application.
- **Bats:** The prospective applicant referred to the discussion regarding bats at the previous meeting and stated that survey work and assessment was continuing. Regard was being had the SNH guidelines on bats and wind farm development.
- **Other biodiversity:** The prospective applicant stated that a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan was being prepared to address key sensitivities.
- **Visual and residential Impacts:** Confirmed height of the turbines is 169 metres. The nearest dwelling to a turbine will be 1 km. The applicant stated that the bulk of the turbines will be seen from Bodyke village, and that at the high point at Moylussa there will a view of a turbine (from hub height to tip). The Board advised that the visual impacts of the proposed development should be thoroughly assessed including Lough Derg (water body and surrounding land, including the Tipperary side), Holy Island, Moylussa, Broadford and Bodyke villages, and any other local villages and settlements landmarks within the zone

of visual influence. Photomontages (including wireframes) and drawings should all be fully annotated.

- **Transport:** The haulage route and alternatives routes had been assessed and road improvements along the haulage routes are not envisaged. Local territory routes to the south will be used for the turbine deliveries avoiding Broadford.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment:** The EIAR must also address the indirect effects of the proposed development including tree felling and replanting. The applicant stated that the level of tree felling required for turbines has been assessed along with related water/ecological issues and will be fully detailed in the EIAR. Off-site re-planting areas have been identified and will be considered under indirect effects in the EIAR. The cumulative effects, particularly in respect of other windfarms, must also be assessed. The Board stated that the EIAR to be submitted with the application must be robust and be capable of being easily understood by the public. Conclusions in the reports must be supported by data and analysis.
- **Appropriate Assessment:** The identification of European Sites for the purposes of screening and appropriate assessment should be based on the source-pathway-receptor model, and any conclusions in relation to potential impacts on European Sites must be supported by best scientific information. The previous discussion in relation to the Hen Harrier and AA apply.
 - **Consultation:** The following bodies/ groups have been engaged with:
 - Irish Aviation Authority: the north west site is partly under an overhead flight path mainly used by flight instructors on test flights. IAA do not have an issue with it.
 - NPWS: Meetings had been held with local Park Rangers. In this regard, the Board advised the prospective applicant to engage with the DAU directly to make sure that they are aware of all relevant issues and to get an in-depth response from them if possible, particularly in relation to the hen harrier issue.
 - Inland Fisheries Ireland: Issues regarding biodiversity enhancement and stream crossings had been raised with them.

- Clare County Council: Due to meet with planners and relevant transport engineers. Meeting also to be held with Tipperary County Council.
- TII: Issued a letter to TII.
- Irish Water: No issues which would involve Irish Water.
- There was ongoing public consultation by holding monthly meetings and workshops in the Coillte office. Public concerns in relation to the proposed development included noise, ecology and visual impact.
- **Application drawings:** The Board advised the prospective applicant to submit A3 booklets of all drawings and to include 1 map which showed the entire project.

4.0 **Application Procedures**

The procedures for the making to an application to An Bord Pleanála were outlined to the prospective applicant.

5.0 **Conclusion**

- 5.1. The record of the meeting will issue to the prospective applicant and it will then be a matter for the prospective applicant to submit any comments on this if it wishes to do so. Following this, the prospective applicant should seek a further meeting with the Board or request closure to the pre-application process.
- 5.2. If closure to the pre-application process is requested, the reporting inspector will complete the report and recommendation which will be forwarded to the Board for determination. A decision will then issue to the prospective applicant.
- 5.3. A copy of the procedures for the making of an application to the Board are attached.

Anne Marie O'Connor
Assistant Director of Planning