



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting
ABP-309259-21 3rd
meeting

Description	ABP-309259-21- Proposed Coumnagappul Wind Farm consisting of up to 11 turbines, Co. Waterford		
Case Type	Pre-application Consultation under Section 37B of the P&D Act 2000, as amended.		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	3 rd Meeting		
Venue	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Date	18/11/2022	Time	11:00am – 11:30am

Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Sarah Lynch, Senior Planning Inspector		
Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer	s.caulfield@pleanala.ie	01-8737287
Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Michael O'Connor - Coumnagappul Wind Farm Limited		
Rita Mansfield - Fehily Timoney		
Jim Hughes – Fehily Timoney		

Introduction

The Board referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant of the 25th May 2022 and the record of this meeting. The Board asked if the prospective applicant had any comments it wished to make on the record of this meeting; the prospective applicant replied that it had no comments to make.

Presentation by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant provided a brief recap on the second meeting and gave an overview of the proposed development. The current proposal now consists of 10 turbines, with a maximum tip height of 185 metres. It was submitted that the candidate turbine is the Vesta V162 which has a flexible power rating of 6.0MW to 7.2MW and this range will be assessed within the EIAR. The prospective applicant said it will be seeking a 40-year permission.

The prospective applicant provided two maps which detailed the initial turbine layout and the current proposal. From a landscape and visual impact perspective, the prospective applicant said the decision was made to remove T3 and T9 from the project scope. Additionally, it was noted that T2 and T5 have been relocated slightly to the north.

It was submitted that ground investigation works are ongoing on the site in relation to the borrow pit locations in order to fully determine the potential for the excavation of aggregates.

The prospective applicant said EIAR scoping consultations have been completed. Several meetings were held with Waterford City & County Council with the most recent being in September 2022. This meeting focused primarily on the changes to the wind strategy within the recently adopted Waterford City & County Council Development Plan 2022-2028, in which the site has been identified as a 'no go area' for wind energy development. In response to consultations, TII have stated that key considerations relate to the delivery route, grid route and any haul routes associated with the project.

In relation to turbine delivery routes, the prospective applicant said the route will depart from Waterford Port, join the N29, turn right onto the N72 and then onto local

and regional roads before accessing the site. Minor works will be required at pinch points along the route, but the prospective applicant said these works are temporary in nature and would be replaced following the turbine delivery.

Regarding the Wind Energy Strategy, the prospective applicant said the site was previously designated as a 'preferred' area for wind energy development within the 2011-2017 Development Plan but this designation has changed to a 'no go area' within the new Waterford City & Council Development Plan 2022-2028. The prospective applicant said these 'no go areas' are not defined within the new Energy Strategy, but the previous strategy did provide a definition which they are using as a guide and will demonstrate within the EIAR that the proposed development is fit for purpose in this specific location. It was noted that the key justification would be landscape and visual given the location on the foothills of the mountains and ability to utilise the natural horseshoe valley. Additionally, the prospective applicant said the area is sparsely populated with only 39 properties located within 2 kilometres of the site. These properties are mainly located to the west with most of the wind turbines located to the east.

In relation to Ecology, it was submitted that there is high level of burning in upland areas which has caused significant damage on the landscape and scarring of habitats. It said the proposed development provides several opportunities for enhancement of land and habitats on the site.

Regarding Ornithology, it was noted that the lands are of low to moderate importance for bats and birds. A Collision Risk Model has been prepared which shows a low collision risk on the site, except for Kestrel and Golden Plover which are slightly higher.

Following the relocation of T2 to the north, it is now located on the boundary of a different water catchment, which is designated for Margaritifera Fresh Water Pearl Mussel. The prospective applicant said all construction and environmental mitigation will be adopted to ensure sedimentation of this watercourse does not occur.

The prospective applicant said LVIA (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) has been completed and consists of approximately 30 photomontage viewpoint locations providing a representation of views from upland, lowland and coastal

areas. Four viewpoints were presented to the Board's representatives (from north, south, east and west).

The prospective applicant is of the opinion that the proposed development is well positioned from an LVIA perspective, and the proposed development is justifiable given the low population density in the area, the natural topography, and the wind optimisation, notwithstanding the designation as a 'no go area'.

Discussion

The following matters were discussed:

- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said they have not received any feedback to-date from the Irish Raptor Study Group.
- In relation to the borrow pits, the prospective applicant said site investigations are ongoing on the site in relation to the true potential for rock excavation.
- The prospective applicant confirmed that the peat on the site is very shallow and said a peat stability risk assessment has been completed.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said the potential enhancement areas would be included within both the EIAR and NIS.
- The prospective applicant said public consultation is ongoing and included the circulation of a 12-page newsletter, an online webinar and an in-person event. An online exhibition is expected to launch imminently, and a further webinar and in-person event is anticipated in January 2023.
- In relation to the designation within the Wind Energy Strategy, the prospective application said Waterford City & County Council advised providing robust justification for the development and a robust LVIA.
- In relation to the 40-year permission duration, the Board noted that the standard time-limit is 30 years and advised providing reasoning for this extra time.
- The prospective applicant said it hopes to submit the planning application in Q1 2023.

Conclusion

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. It will be a matter for the prospective applicant to revert to the Board if it wishes to close the pre-application consultation process.

CKellett 6-12-22

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning

