



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-315469-23 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	ABP-315469-23 Renewable energy development including 8-9 wind turbines and associated infrastructure, with the potential to generate more than 50MW of electricity. Laurclavagh and adjacent townlands, Co. Galway.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	30/01/23	<b>Start Time</b>	11.00 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	N/A	<b>End Time</b>	11.30 a.m.

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Sarah Lynch, Senior Planning Inspector
Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
John Willoughby, MKO
Órla Murphy, MKO
Niamh McHugh, MKO
William O'Connor, Enerco Energy Ltd
Niall Galvin, Enerco Energy Ltd

The meeting commenced at 11.00 a.m.

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant requesting pre-application consultations and advised the prospective applicant that the instant meeting essentially constituted an information-gathering exercise for the Board; it also invited the prospective applicant to outline the nature of the proposed development and to highlight any matters it wished to receive advice on from the Board. The Board mentioned general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process as follows:

- The Board will keep a record of this meeting and any other meetings, if held. Such records will form part of the file which will be made available publicly at the conclusion of the process. The record of the meeting will not be amended by the Board once finalised, but the prospective applicant may submit comments on the record which will form part of the case file.
- The Board will serve notice at the conclusion of the process as to the strategic infrastructure status of the proposed development. It may form a preliminary view at an early stage in the process on the matter.
- A further meeting or meetings may be held in respect of the proposed development.
- Further information may be requested by the Board and public consultations may also be directed by the Board.
- The Board may hold consultations in respect of the proposed development with other bodies.
- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Board in any way and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or any legal proceedings.

### **Presentation by the prospective applicant:**

The prospective applicant opened its presentation with some background information about the applicant company and the proposed development. The prospective applicant, Laurclavagh Limited is an associated company of Enerco Energy Ltd., an Irish-owned company with extensive experience in the design, construction and operating of wind energy developments throughout Ireland. The proposed development will consist of 9 wind turbines with the potential to generate more than 50MW, and all associated works.

The site of the proposed windfarm is situated approximately 10km North of Claregalway and 9km Southwest of Tuam. Site selection was based on a number of elements including wind resource, environmental and ecological constraints, residential amenity and viability, including land ownership. The prospective applicant stated that the land had been zoned 'Open to Consideration' for wind energy development in the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021. It was stated that this zoning had been updated in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 to 'Generally to be Discouraged'. The prospective applicant stated that it does not consider the designation prohibits wind energy development within the zone and it considers the site appropriate for the proposed development. The prospective applicant stated that the development plan and renewable energy policy is supportive of wind farm developments.

The prospective applicant presented a constraints map illustrating buffer zones which have been incorporated around dwellings, national monuments, Annex 1 habitats and telecoms.

The prospective applicant presented a map indicating the proposed location of the 9 turbines, existing and planned roads, and substation. The prospective applicant stated that it is considering the possibility of developing 8 turbines, which would still have the potential to generate over 50MW. Regarding the grid connection and substation, it was stated that a separate pre-application consultation would be held in relation to this, under section 182E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.

With regard to consultations to date, the prospective applicant stated that a scoping document will be circulated to prescribed bodies in Q1 of 2023. The prospective

applicant intends to meet with Galway County Council and public consultation is ongoing.

The prospective applicant presented the structure of the EIAR which will accompany the application. It was stated that surveys are ongoing with special consideration being given to certain areas, water and geology for example, due to the karst landscape nature of the site.

Photomontages will accompany the application. The prospective applicant presented a map of viewpoints to be included.

The prospective applicant intends to submit a planning application in Q2 of 2023.

**Discussion:**

The prospective applicant confirmed, when asked, that borrow pits are not proposed on site.

The Board's representatives advised that a robust justification would be required in the application regarding the issue of zoning with respect to the amendments made to the recently adopted Development Plan which designated the proposed location of the turbines as 'Generally to be Discouraged'. It was advised that the prospective applicant consult with Galway County Council in relation to this prior to lodging an application.

Following the Board's representatives query, the prospective applicant confirmed that nothing of significance had been found in relation to the Bird Surveys.

A brief discussion was had in relation to the pre-application consultation process for section 37A and 182A projects and whether the substation and grid connection could be submitted as part of the windfarm application. The prospective applicant queried if it is necessary to submit one or two applications. The Board's representatives stated that the Board is accepting both types of application, i.e. separate or a single application for both under section 37A. It was stated that if the substation and grid connection is to be considered as part of this pre-application consultation, the development description will have to be amended and advised that another meeting should be held.

The Board's representatives advised that the prospective applicant be clear in its application documentation as to the methodology in relation to the foundations for the proposed development having regard to the karst landscape.

**Conclusion:**

The record of the instant meeting will issue in due course and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing or alternatively bring any comments for discussion at the time of any further meeting. The onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the instant pre-application consultation process.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 a.m.

 2/2/23

**Ciara Kellett**

**Assistant Director of Planning**