



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-315803-23 3rd Meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-315803-23 - Proposed development of Oriel offshore wind farm, located off the coast of Co. Louth.		
Case Type	Marine pre-application consultation under Section 287		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	3 rd		
Date	09/11/2023	Start Time	11:05am
Location	An Bord Pleanála	End Time	12:00pm

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Ciara Kellett, Director of Planning (Chair)
Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning
Jimmy Green, Senior Planning Inspector
Maeve Flynn, Ecologist
Eugene Nixon, Consultant
Marcella Doyle, Senior Administrative Officer (online)
Cora Cunningham, Senior Executive Officer
Evan McGuigan, Executive Officer (online)

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Garrett Connell, Parkwind and Oriel Windfarm Limited
Richard Church, Parkwind and Oriel Windfarm Limited
Mairead Hogan, ESB

Valerie Brennan, RPS
Cathriona Cahill, RPS

Introduction

The meeting commenced at 11:05am.

The Board's representatives referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant on 31st August 2023 and the record of this meeting. The Board's representatives asked if the prospective applicant had any comments it wished to make on the record of this meeting or questions; the prospective applicant replied that it had no further questions.

Presentation by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant began its presentation with a general update of progress regarding the proposed development since the previous meeting. It stated that the overall project design remains unchanged and that a number of actions had been completed based on the discussions held.

Regarding the onshore cable route, the prospective applicant stated that it had held consultations with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and that an amendment had been made to the proposed cable infrastructure – including ducts, joint bays, and communication link chambers. The amendment would involve this infrastructure being moved from the hard shoulder to the northern verge of the N33. The prospective applicant has requested further consultations with TII and Louth County Council to discuss these design changes in more detail.

Regarding the recently enacted Historic and Archaeological Heritage Act, the prospective applicant stated that it had held consultations with the National Monuments Service (NMS), as well as the Underwater Archaeology Unit (UAU), to discuss the provisions in the new legislation. It believes that the new Act will not have any significant impact on the proposed development.

The prospective applicant noted the recently published conservation objectives from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and stated that it had held consultations with the NPWS regarding the Northwest Irish Sea candidate Special Protection Area (cSPA). It also stated that transboundary consultations – which included engagements with public bodies in Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the United Kingdom had now been completed.

The prospective applicant stated that it had continued to hold engagements and exchange data with other Phase 1 projects based in the Irish Sea in relation to cumulative impacts. It submitted that various topics had been discussed, including ornithology, marine mammals and fish, fauna, seascape, landscape and visual impact assessments, shipping, navigation, and bats in the marine environment. It also submitted that these engagements involved the sharing of data in relation to approaches, methodologies, and project design parameters.

The prospective applicant confirmed that it had submitted a request for design flexibility to the Board in relation to the proposed development (ABP-318274-23) and that it had sent sample drawings for the proposed development to the Board for comment regarding clarity, legibility and legislative compliance. The prospective applicant also stated that it had provided a list of names and details of transboundary stakeholders to the Board and that it would also provide a list of the statutory and non-statutory bodies contacted regarding the proposed development to the Board in due course.

Discussion:

The following matters were discussed:

- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to ensure that screening and where appropriate full assessments are carried out on SPAs, SACs and cSPAs within the vicinity of the proposed development, regardless of whether the proposed development falls within these areas or not.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to consider transboundary issues and marine species (particularly in relation to feeding areas).

- The prospective applicant stated that it is aware that the NPWS is working on a document related to noise impacts from offshore developments and that it is awaiting to see this.
- The prospective applicant queried if it would be important to wait until the upcoming Offshore Wind Planning guidelines are published before lodging an application for the proposed development. The Board's representatives stated that it would be up to the prospective applicant to decide and that they are not aware yet of what the guidelines will say. The Board's representatives also stated that, according to the latest information available, these guidelines would possibly be made available by the Department in the final quarter of this year or the first quarter of 2024.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to provide robust assessments regarding mammals, particularly noting varying survey methodologies arising from boat and aerial studies.
- A discussion was held between the Board's representatives and the prospective applicant regarding the sharing of data and information between Phase 1 projects. As noted above, the prospective applicant submitted that it had shared data with other east coast-based Phase 1 projects and that there was consistency among them in terms of methodologies.
- Following a query from the Board's representatives, the prospective applicant stated that it had gathered data in relation to bats.
- A discussion was held between the Board's representatives and the prospective applicant regarding the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to cover the NMPF during engagements with other Phase 1 projects and to assess the NMPF thoroughly in any future application for the proposed development, especially in relation to co-existence and seafood. The Board's representatives also stated that the NMPF would be important to the Board's decision-making in relation to any future application.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to ensure that any drawings in relation to the proposed development are clear and legible for the public, particularly in terms of acronyms.

- Following a query from the Board's representatives, the prospective applicant stated that it had yet to receive a response from the Department of Defence in relation to the proposed development.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to clearly explain its approach in relation to the type of foundations to be used for the proposed development. The prospective applicant stated that it already has a method statement from a contractor in relation to this issue, and that it will be addressed. The Board's representatives also advised that drawings in relation to the foundations are clear, particularly in terms of what the area will look like before and after the construction process.
- A discussion was held between the Board's representatives and the prospective applicant regarding the construction process and drilling involved for both the turbines and the foundations.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to be clear with the type of photomontages it intends to use. The prospective applicant submitted that it already has a variety of them in preparation.
- The prospective applicant stated that it is addressing herring spawning beds in the vicinity of the proposed development and that full consideration will be set out in any future EIAR.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to consider recent studies in relation to similar developments in the North Sea and their impacts regarding wake effects both atmospheric and in the sea in terms of energy displacement and any tidal or water column impacts, and that these issues may qualify as cumulative effects. The prospective applicant stated that, while the environments are different, it will address these issues in relation to the proposed development. The Board's representatives also advised the prospective applicant to include the most up to date information and science in relation to these issues.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to ensure that its assessments in relation to site selection are as robust as possible and detailed within any future EIAR.
- The prospective applicant stated its aim to have lodged an application for the proposed development by January or February 2024. The Board's

representatives stated that they are aware that the Marine Area Consents (MAC) for Phase 1 projects are due to expire in June 2024.

- The Board's representatives asked the prospective applicant if it intends to include the onshore element of the proposed development in any future application. The prospective applicant stated that it is considering its options and is keeping track of recent legislation as it is currently being enacted. The Board's representatives suggested that the prospective applicant could contact the Department to seek clarification regarding this issue.
- The Board's representatives suggested to the prospective applicant to seek legal advice in relation to the appropriate scales for drawings and stated that sample drawings could be sent to the Board's administration team prior to the lodgement of an application to ensure that they are acceptable to the Board.
- A discussion was held between the Board's representatives and the prospective applicant in relation to next steps once consultations are closed off. The prospective applicant queried what the estimated timeline would be in terms of the issuing of an opinion on the case. The Board's representatives stated that they would hope to issue an opinion as soon as is practicable.
- It was agreed between the prospective applicant and the Board's representatives that administrative queries regarding the lodgement of an application for the proposed development would be discussed further at a future consultation meeting.

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 Board will revert to the prospective applicant in relation to scheduling a further meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12:00pm.

 4/12/23

Ciara Kellett

Director of Planning