

An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-315851-23 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	ABP-315851-23 Proposed wind turbines up to 9-10 wind turbines with a generation capacity greater than 50MW and all associated infrastructure including the provision of a 110kV connection to the national grid. Townlands of Borrisbeg, Graffin, Skehanagh, Knockanroe, Clonmore, Ballycahill, Eastwood, and Strogue Co. Tipperary.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	21/04/23	<b>Start Time</b>	11.00 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	N/A	<b>End Time</b>	12.00 p.m.

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
Paul Caprani, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Pauline Fitzpatrick, Senior Planning Inspector
Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer
Ashling Doherty, Executive Officer
Ellen Moss, Administrative Assistant
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
John Willoughby, MKO
Karen Mulryan, MKO

Grainne Griffin, MKO
Alan Clancy, MKO
William O'Connor, Buirios Limited
Niall Galvin, Buirios Limited

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 an introduction to the applicant company Buirios Limited, an associated company of Enerco Energy Ltd., an Irish company with extensive experience in the design, construction and operation of wind energy developments.

The proposed development consists of 9 wind turbines with a total generating capacity of more than 50MW, and all associated works.

The site of the proposed development is located 11km south of Roscrea and 2km northeast of Templemore. The site is predominantly agricultural grassland. The prospective applicant stated that this site was selected due to its designation in the Tipperary County Development Plan as 'open for consideration' for wind energy development, the lack of designated sites in close proximity, good accessibility to the site, suitability of the site as a wind resource and ability to achieve setbacks from sensitive receptors.

The prospective applicant referenced a number of Policy documents from European, National and local level which strongly support renewable energy projects, including REPowerEU, the National Energy Security Framework April 2022, Climate Action Plan 2023 and the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028. It was stated that a target of 600MW has been set for wind energy over the lifetime of the Development Plan.

The prospective applicant presented a map of the proposed turbines, site constraints and buffer zones, including transmission links, dwellings and watercourses. The presence of a National Monument on site was noted. It was stated however that this is a redundant record, a geological feature, which will not be included on the next list of National Monuments. The monument has been avoided in the proposed design.

Regarding designated sites, the prospective applicant presented a map of all sites within a 15km radius. The closest site, Kilduff, Devilsbit Mountain SAC is 5km away. The nearest hydrological link is to the Lower River Suir SAC, circa 17km away.

A draft design of the windfarm was presented which included two possible locations for an onsite substation and an underground cable, which will connect to a 110kV line to the east of the site.

The proposed haul route and possible grid connection routes were presented. The prospective applicant stated that access to the site is very good, using a haul route of the M7 and N62.

Regarding the grid connection, the prospective applicant stated that it intends to open a separate consultation process pursuant to section 182 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

The prospective applicant presented a map of the zone of theoretical visibility, identifying proposed viewpoint locations for photomontages. Viewpoint locations were chosen based on scenic routes and views. It was stated that certain viewpoints had been chosen to take into account cumulative impacts and that further input with regard to locations would be sought from Tipperary County Council.

A scoping document was issued to prescribed bodies in October/November 2022 and a meeting has been requested with Tipperary County Council. Regarding community consultation, a community liaison officer was appointed at an early stage and a project website was developed. Three separate mailings with updates on the project have been circulated to residents within a 2km radius.

Regarding the SID status of the proposed development, the prospective applicant outlined its opinion that it does constitute SID, stating that the turbines will have a 5-6MW output and therefore exceed the threshold specified in the 7<sup>th</sup> schedule, and stating that the proposed development satisfies section 37A(2)(a) and (b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

The prospective applicant presented an overview of the format of the EIAR.

The prospective applicant intends to submit an application in Q3 of 2023.

## **Discussion:**

Regarding submission of an application, the Board stated that it is at the prospective applicant's discretion whether to submit one application, including the grid connection or to make two applications. Both approaches are being accepted by the Board.

The Board's representatives asked for clarity regarding the output of each turbine and the overall output of the windfarm, drawing particular attention to the range specified in the presentation of 5-6MW per turbine. It was stated that 9 turbines at 5MW would not exceed the 50MW threshold and, as such, would not be considered to be SID. The prospective applicant agreed to submit further information clarifying the windfarm and turbine MW output.

The Board's representatives advised that cumulative impacts be robustly assessed.

Regarding photomontage viewpoints, the Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to cover viewpoints from counties Offaly, Kilkenny and Laois, due to the proximity of borders, with cumulative impacts in mind in particular.

The prospective applicant clarified that the nearest house is over 600m from the site and is involved in the project. The nearest house not involved in the project is 750m from the site.

The Board's representatives asked if any of the watercourses on site were classified as 'at risk' in the Water Framework Directive. The prospective applicant could not confirm but advised that the requirements of the Directive would be adhered to. The Board's representatives referred to Map 10 of the Tipperary Wind Energy Strategy which shows Protected Surface Water Areas in the county and advised that a robust hydrological assessment be undertaken.

The prospective applicant confirmed that it had scoped the development with the NPWS and IFI but had not had any more detailed consultation with them. The Board emphasised the need for the prospective applicant to consult as closely as possible with the NPWS.

The prospective applicant clarified that its intention is to assess and seek permission for a single turbine parameter. The Board advised that if a number of options of turbines were being applied for, all options must be assessed.

The Board's representatives advised that consideration of an offshore development be addressed in the alternatives section of the EIAR.

The prospective applicant clarified that the connection to the substation will most likely be loop-in-loop-out as opposed to tail-fed.

It was clarified that the underground cable connection from the windfarm to the existing 110kV line will be 1.3km in length.

Regarding the haul route the prospective applicant advised that it had scoped the project with TII and that it does not envisage road improvement works along the N62, although it is still assessing this. The Board advised that the applicant consult with TII if works are required.

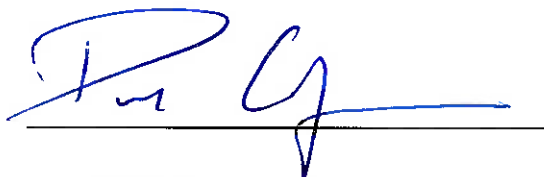
The prospective applicant stated that it had not ruled out borrow pits on site at this stage. It was advised that these must be fully assessed, including any cumulative impacts that may arise during the construction phase if on site borrow pits proposed.

The Board asked the prospective applicant to provide a larger scale drawing of the draft layout of the turbines.

**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 12.00 p.m.



**Paul Caprani**

**Assistant Director of Planning**