

An  
Bord  
Pleanála

**Record of Meeting**  
**ABP- 315864-23**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> meeting**

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	Construction of up to 31 no. wind turbines (Tirawley Wind Farm), a permanent 110kV substation, 110kV underground cable and grid connection to the existing 110kV substation at Tawnaghmore Co. Mayo.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-Application Consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	<b>Start Time</b>	14:30pm
<b>Location</b>	Microsoft Teams	<b>End Time</b>	15:30pm

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning
Jimmy Green, Senior Planning Inspector
Ashling Doherty, Executive Officer

<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
Michael Garvey, Jennings O'Donovan
David Kiely, Jennings O'Donovan
Darren Timlín, Jennings O'Donovan
Ian Douglas, Planning Policy Consultant
Nicola O'Neill, Constant Energy
Paddy Hynes, Constant Energy
John Whiteford, Whiteford Geo Services

Cian Douglas, MacroWorks
Richard Barker, Macroworks

The meeting commenced at 14:30pm

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 referenced general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process and set out at the first pre application consultation meeting 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. The Board may at any time conclude the consultation where it considers appropriate to do so.
- 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:**

Some of the matters raised in the presentation are summarised as follows:

Since the previous meeting held on August 14<sup>th</sup> 2023 the number of turbines has been reduced to 21 with 4 larger turbines being removed. The removal of the 4 larger turbines has been undertaken with the aim of reducing the visual impact from Downpatrick Head and the Ceide Fields. The 21 turbines will have a 125m tip height which will render them similar in scale to the existing turbines in the general area of the proposed development. Further investigations have been carried out on the abandoned quarry and it is being proposed to change the use of an existing dwelling and farmyard buildings to a permanent operations building/office/welfare and project compound.

The prospective applicant stated that preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is in the final stages, with final field surveys completed for hydrology, heritage, ecology and wind measurement. Site layout adjustments have been made by removing the proposed access track and bridge between turbine numbers AT01 and AT02 due to constraints. The prospective applicants also presented the proposed layout in the context of the Renewable Energy Strategy for Co. Mayo.

Investigations carried out by the prospective applicant indicate that the quarry was last operated in 2009, and it is not intended that the quarry would be used as such following construction of the project. A review of Mayo County Council records by the prospective applicant indicated there is no enforcement action in place for the abandoned quarry. The prospective applicant proposes to build an access track and cable route through the abandoned quarry to turbines AT20 and AT21, and to use the abandoned quarry as a potential source of building materials and a spoil depository during the construction phase which will reduce construction traffic on local roads and provide a degree of landscape remediation for the existing quarry.

The prospective applicant is proposing to change an existing dwelling and farmyard to an operations building and compound for the life cycle of the windfarm.

The prospective applicant stated that it proposes to submit the application in January 2024.

The prospective applicants stated that the revised design presented at the meeting would have an output of 72.45MW and that the proposed development would therefore exceed the 50MW threshold set out in the 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Planning and

Development Act. It was submitted by the prospective applicants that the proposed development would constitute strategic infrastructure.

The prospective applicants specifically sought the opinion of the Board on the proposed use of the dwelling house as an operations building and compound for the duration of the project and also what would be the most appropriate description for the quarry in any application.

**Discussion:**

The Board's representatives raised the topic of the change of use of the unused dwelling and farmyard to an operations building and compound and advised the prospective applicant to be mindful of sight lines and access to the proposed compound due to its location on a county road. As it is an old established building it is important to ensure the foul drainage systems would be up to proper specification and no traffic hazards are created. The proposed application should also ensure that any decommissioning plan for the wind farm project included in any future planning application, addresses what will happen to the operations building/dwelling and compound.

The Board's representative sought clarity on the meeting held between the prospective applicant and the Planning Authority (PA), Mayo County Council. The prospective applicant confirmed a meeting had been held in which the PA raised concerns regarding visual impact, and it was largely in response to these concerns that the 4 larger turbines (which had initially been proposed in the northernmost part of the proposal) had been removed.

When questioned by the Boards representative the prospective applicant confirmed that any future application will specify the particular turbine type being proposed within its documentation and associated assessments to ensure clarity and that the

issues identified in the Derryadd judgment will not arise. The Board's representative discussed the abandoned quarry and how it would be presented in the application and the EIAR while noting the potential for complications this could present for any future EIA application that may be relying on extant works with an unclear planning history. Ultimately the decision as to how the quarry would be described in the application is a matter for the prospective applicants on the basis of the full information available to them at the time any application is made.

The prospective applicant stated the abandoned quarry will never be used again following the construction of the project and that there are environmental benefits which the proposed development could bring in terms of remediating the quarry within the landscape to a certain degree.

The Board's representatives stated that the application and drawings should clearly indicate the drainage and water management measures that will be in place and also include the proposed safety fencing around the abandoned quarry.

The Board's representative noted that side casting remained as a measure for dealing with spoil from the site and advised the prospective to ensure that the side casting locations were clearly indicated on the drawings, that a clear methodology is included to determine where sidecasting is considered appropriate, and that any potential sidecasting extents and locations were included within any peat stability assessments and calculations.

While noting that some turbines had been omitted from previous iterations of the proposed layout, the Board's representative advised that landscape and visual impact would remain a primary consideration in the assessment of any future application.

The Board's representative noted that a significant number of proposed turbines are located in the non-designated area (i.e., outside Priority, Tier 1, or 2 areas) of the Renewable Energy Strategy included in the Mayo County Council Development Plan. The Board's representatives advised that the reasoning behind this must be clearly stated and justified in the application documentation as any future application will be assessed in the context of the County Development Plan. In response, the Prospective Applicant noted that the Mayo County Development Plan does not explicitly rule out the provision of turbines outside the designated (Priority, Tier 1 or 2

areas) within the Renewable Energy Plan but also stated that detailed justification for the turbine locations would be provided.

The Board's representative advised the prospective applicant that further assessments should be carried out to assess the impact on the residential amenities of dwellings located in the vicinity of the proposed development, due to the spatial extent of the emerging layout and the established dispersed settlement pattern in which dwellings are located throughout the area.

The Boards representatives stated that their preliminary view remained that the proposed development is likely such that it would constitute strategic infrastructure, however this is a matter for the Board to decide once a request for closure of the pre application consultation process had been received.

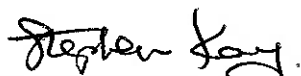
The Board's representative advised the prospective applicant to only close off the pre-application process once they are satisfied with all elements of the proposed application have been established as this must be the application they then submit to the Board. Should the applicant choose to close out the pre-application process they were advised to submit a finalised site layout with clear turbine numbering, red line boundary and other infrastructure locations clearly indicated that would be consistent with any future application.

### **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 close out the pre-application discussions.

The meeting concluded at 15:30pm

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Kay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

**Stephen Kay**

**Assistant Director of Planning**