

An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-316331-23 1st Meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-316331-23 - Proposed development of an offshore wind farm and associated infrastructure for Arklow Bank Wind Park (ABWP) located on and around the Arklow Bank, approximately 6 to 15 km from the shore at Arklow, Co. Wicklow. (Design Option)		
Case Type	Marine pre-application consultation under Section 287A		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	06/11/2023	Start Time	11:35am
Location	An Bord Pleanála	End Time	12:05pm

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Ciara Kellett, Director of Planning (Chair)
Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning
Auriol Considine, Senior Planning Inspector
Eugene Nixon, Consultant
Cora Cunningham, Senior Executive Officer
Evan McGuigan, Executive Officer (online)

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Kaj Christiansen, ABWP 2
James O'Hara, ABWP 2
Marc Walshe, ABWP 2
Eimear Lenehan, SSE Renewables

Ellen McMahon, GoBe
Rosemary Daly, Turleys
Michael Gordon, Turleys

Introduction

The meeting commenced at 11:35am.

The Board's representatives referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant requesting pre-application consultations in relation to section 287A (Design Options) and invited the prospective applicant to outline the nature of the proposed design option element of the development and to highlight any matters it wished to receive advice on from the Board. The Board's representatives mentioned procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process as follows:

- The Board will keep a record of this meeting. 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 prospective applicant should note that a separate Board opinion will issue in respect of 287B of the Act and that records relating to this will not be available for public inspection until an application for permission is made to the Board.
- At the conclusion of the pre-application process under section 287A, the case file including the record of the meeting held and the report of the reporting Inspector detailing the issues arising in the consultation, will be forwarded to the Board. The Board will issue an opinion under section 287B as to whether it is satisfied that it is appropriate that the proposed application be made and decided before the prospective applicant has confirmed certain details of the application.
- 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 began its presentation by outlining the information required under section 287A in relation to design flexibility. It stated that it is seeking design flexibility for the proposed development to avail of technology that may be available after lodging a planning application and for reasons outlined in section (e)(ii) of the letter submitted by the prospective applicant to the Board on 2nd November 2023.

The prospective applicant stated that it has revised the project design for the proposed development by reducing it to two turbine design options. Both of these options would be described and assessed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The prospective applicant submitted that the project parameters have been reduced and refined, allowing for two options which allow for the use of one of three Wind Turbine Generator (WTG) models.

The prospective applicant stated that it is seeking flexibility to construct one of two WTG options, comprising of Option 1 (model 1a and 1b) and Option 2. Models 1a and 1b, under Option 1, have the same rotor diameter, hub height, tip heights and layouts – however, chord width, revolutions per minute (RPM) and noise specifications would vary slightly across the two models. All specifications (apart from lower blade tip height) would vary between Option 1 and Option 2. These details, as well as drawings and layout plans of the WTG options, were presented by the prospective applicant.

The prospective applicant outlined its reasoning in relation to seeking flexibility for this element of the proposed development. It submitted that consenting timelines would overlap with technological developments in the offshore wind industry and that it could be challenging to get the supply chain to engage fully with the proposed development in light of short-term national targets in comparison to other jurisdictions. It also submitted that flexibility would be beneficial in terms of construction vessel availability.

Discussion:

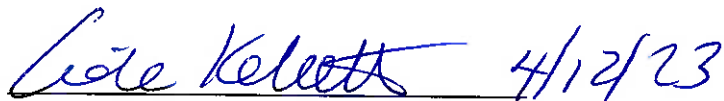
The following matters were discussed:

- The Board's representatives gave a preliminary opinion that, based on the presentation from the prospective applicant, this request for design flexibility is considered reasonable, but that ultimately a final decision on this would be made by the Board.
- The prospective applicant confirmed that this is the only element of the proposed development for which it is seeking design flexibility.
- A discussion was had between the Board's representatives and the prospective applicant regarding the parameters. Raising the limit of deviation to 100m was discussed. The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to ensure that all information regarding the limit of deviation is included in the EIAR. Following a query from the prospective applicant, the Board's representatives also advised that a separate document should be submitted with any future application in order to confirm that the prospective applicant has complied with the necessary procedures regarding design flexibility.
- The Board's representatives and prospective applicant discussed the legislation on design flexibility and what the next step would be if the Board did not accept a particular request for design flexibility. The Board's representatives confirmed that the Board would not be in a position to provide alternatives in any opinion issued by it.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant that existing offshore infrastructure should be considered and included in any material relating to this request.
- The prospective applicant stated that it would be using monopile foundations for the turbines.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to be clear in relation to cable routes and to explain thoroughly any alternative cable routes considered.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to engage with the National Monuments Service in relation to any monuments or shipwrecks that may be present in the vicinity of the proposed development.

Conclusion:

The record of the meeting will issue in due course and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing to the Board.

The meeting concluded at 12:05pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Ciara Kellett', followed by the date '4/12/23'.

Ciara Kellett

Director of Planning