

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Record of 2nd Meeting ABP-316466-23

Case Reference / Description	Cooloo Windfarm consisting of 9 no. wind turbines with an estimated maximum energy capacity of c. 54MW within the townlands of Cooloo, Elmhill, Cloondahamper, Lecarrow and Dangan Eighter, Co. Galway.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	2 nd Meeting		
Date	10/07/2025	Start Time	11:00am
Location	Virtually	End Time	11:40am

Representing An Bord Pleanála

Una Crosse, Assistant Planning Director

Donogh O'Donoghue, Senior Planning Inspector

Sinead White, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant

Ronan Dunne, MKO

Hannah Rice, MKO

Brandon Taylor, MKO

Eoin McCarthy, MKO

Evan Connolly, MKO

Niall Quane, Neoen

Introduction

The Commission's referred to the correspondence received from the prospective applicant requesting this second meeting and to the first meeting held on 19th June 2023.

The Commission's representatives also mentioned the general procedures for the pre-application consultation process referenced at the first meeting which remain applicable.

Presentation made by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant discussed the site location and selection before giving an update on the proposed development which may include a battery energy storage facility. They discussed the proposed transport delivery routes, noting that the port of Galway is preferred.

The prospective applicant outlined the national and local policies in relation to the proposed development before discussing the wind energy designation applying to the site, noting that 3 proposed turbines are within an area designated as 'generally discouraged'.

The prospective applicant outlined the public information event held on the 31st of January 2024. Leaflets were distributed and a Community Liaison Officer was appointed. The prospective applicant stated that a scoping document was circulated to prescribed statutory bodies in April 2023 and a pre-planning consultation was held with Galway County Council in March 2024.

The prospective applicant outlined the rationale presented in respect of the Strategic Infrastructure status of the proposal and discussed the proposed project timeline, should the Commission determine that the proposal constitutes Strategic Infrastructure.

Discussion:

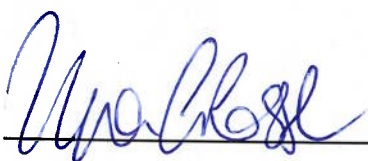
- The Commission's representatives enquired as to whether the applicant understood the rationale underpinning part of the site being within the area designated as generally discouraged' in the current Galway Development Plan. The Commission advised that any future application should include a robust planning statement which considers the evolution of the policy provision and any other relevant policies as it relates to the subject site.
- The Commission's representatives enquired as to the occurrence of peat on the site and any peat harvesting undertaken on the site. The prospective applicant addressed this query in terms of peat outlining that they sought to avoid areas of excessive peat depths. The Commission outlined that any application should address peat stability informed by appropriate technical investigations.
- Following a query from the Commission's representatives the prospective applicant detailed that forestry felling will be required, the details of which and examination of same will be addressed in the EIAR.
- Following a query from the Commission's representatives the prospective applicant outlined that 2 years of bat surveys and 3 years of bird surveys have been undertaken which will inform the EIAR.
- The prospective applicant clarified that the proposed biodiversity enhancement area would be included within the red line application boundary.
- The Commission's representatives asked if there has been any update on scoping and if there have been any recent discussions. The prospective applicant stated that there hasn't been as the layout hasn't change significantly since it was initially set out but that the statutory bodies comments and requirements will be addressed in the EIAR.

- In response to a query from the Commission's representatives in relation to the pre-application consultation for the proposed related substation, the prospective applicant stated they are not in a position to seek closure as the options grid connection to connect the proposed windfarm are still being considered.
- The Commission's representatives concluded the meeting by having a general discussion with the prospective applicant in respect of procedures around the making of an application.

Conclusion:

The Board's representatives advised that the onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the instant pre-application consultation process. The Board's representatives advised that the record of the instant meeting will be issued in the meantime, and that 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 Meeting concluded at 11:40am.



Una Crosse

Assistant Director of Planning