

An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP- 317763-23 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	Proposed development of 110kV grid connection to facilitate the connection of a proposed windfarm at Knockshanvo, Co. Clare, to the national grid.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-Application Consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	<b>Start Time</b>	11:00am
<b>Location</b>	Virtually by Microsoft Teams	<b>End Time</b>	11:50am

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
Paul Caprini, Assistant Director of Planning (Meeting Chair)
Anthony Kelly, Planning Inspector
Ashling Doherty, Executive Officer

<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
Alan Clancy, MKO
Eoin Sullivan, MKO
Shaun Doolin, MKO
Jade Power, MKO
Sandra Kelly, FuturEnergy Ireland
Sinead O'Malley, FuturEnergy Ireland

The meeting commenced at 11:00am

The Board's representative (Chair) referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant requesting pre-application consultation and advised the prospective applicant that the instant meeting essentially constituted an information-gathering exercise for the Board. The Chair 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 Chair 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. 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:**

The presentation is summarised as follows:

The prospective applicant for the proposed development is FuturEnergy Knockshanvo Designated Activity Company (DAC). FuturEnergy Knockshanvo DAC is a wholly owned subsidiary of FutureEnergy Ireland Holdings. FuturEnergy Ireland is an Irish-owned, joint venture company with Coillte and ESB. Its ambition is to develop 1GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030.

The proposed grid connection will originate from the proposed on-site 110kV electrical substation via an underground connection to the Ardnacrusha 110kV electrical substation in the townlands of Castlebank and Ballykeelaun. The grid connection route measures approximately 8.7km in length, located within existing forestry tracks and the public road corridor. The windfarm site is located approximately 3km south of Broadford, 3.5km southeast from Kilkishen, and 4km northeast of Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare. Current land-use along the proposed grid connection route comprises of public road corridor and coniferous forestry. Land-use in the wider landscape comprises a mix of agriculture, low density residential, and commercial forestry. The windfarm site is located within an area which is designated as 'Strategic Areas' for wind energy and within an area which is designated as 'Acceptable in Principle'.

The prospective applicant highlighted the planning policy context which included The National Energy Security Framework, The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework, and the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

Feasibility surveys were conducted on a number of preliminary routes with two route options brought forward for further analysis. A detailed review of all reasonable alternatives considered for the proposed development will be undertaken and incorporated into the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The assessment will also include the main reasons for selecting the chosen option and will include a comparison of the environmental effects of the reasonable alternatives.

The proposed development site is not located within any area designated for ecological protection. If required, a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be prepared and submitted with the proposed application.

The prospective applicant proposes to submit separate planning applications for the windfarm and the 110kV substation, and the proposed grid connection, but will submit a single EIAR/NIS.

A scoping document was issued to fifty two relevant bodies in January 2023 providing details of the proposed development. From the responses received to date none of the bodies have expressed significant concerns regarding the proposed development. A pre-application meeting took place with Clare County Council in April with a follow-up meeting to discuss updates requested. The prospective applicant has been engaging with local residents through an appointed Community Liaison Officers (CLO) to provide an interface for the community. Newsletters were issued in November 2022, April 2023, and July 2023 providing information and updates on the proposed development.

The prospective applicant is hoping to submit the application in Q4 of 2023 or Q1 of 2024.

### **Discussion:**

The Board's representatives drew the prospective applicant's attention to the removal of hedgerow in the context of S.I. 383 of 2023 (restructuring of rural landholdings) and for the prospective applicant to ensure to reference the reasons why it is being screened in or out when preparing the EIAR.

The Board's representatives sought to clarify if road closures would be required during the construction phase. The prospective applicant confirmed they will be completing a traffic and transport assessment which will include a traffic management plan. They envisage there will be temporary road closures, but this will be clearly outlined in the assessment.

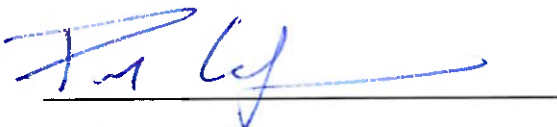
The Board's representatives highlighted the importance of submitting a robust EIA and to ensure it covers the cumulative impacts of other proposed developments in the area.

The Board's representatives asked the prospective applicant to highlight in an application cover letter to the Board that an associated application is also to be submitted, should both the proposed wind farm and proposed grid connection applications both comprise SID and not be submitted at the same time.

**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 request closure of the pre-application consultation process.

The meeting concluded at 11:50am



**Paul Caprani**

**Assistant Director of Planning**