



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Record of 1st Meeting ABP-319676-24

Case Reference / Description	Proposed Wind Farm development at Cahermurphy, Knocknahila More South, Carrownagry South, Caheraghcullin and Drummin, Co. Clare.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Date	9 th August 2024	Start Time	11:00am
Location	MS Teams	End Time	11:40am

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Paul Caprani (Assistant Planning Director) Chair
Mary MacMahon (Senior Planning Inspector)
Lauren Murphy (Executive Officer)

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Alan Clancy, MKO
Eoin McCarthy, MKO
Adrian Moran, MKO
Jack Smith, MKO
David Heelan, FuturEnergy Ireland
Mary Lynch, FuturEnergy Ireland
Daniel Nestor, FuturEnergy Ireland
Padraig Howard, Drumquin

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 3rd May 2024, requesting pre-application consultations under section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, 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 that it wished to receive advice on from the Board. The Board's representatives mentioned the following general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process:

- 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 in any legal proceedings.

Presentation made by the Prospective Applicant:

The prospective applicant began by providing an overview of projects which the prospective applicant is involved in. An outline of the chronology of the project was provided.

The current land use on the site comprises of coniferous forestry, agriculture and peatlands. The site is approximately 528ha and has the potential to accommodate a wind energy development in excess of 50MW. The proposed development provisionally consists of 8 number wind turbines with a tip height ranging from 180m – 185m, a hub height ranging from 98.5m – 110.5m and a rotor diameter ranging from 149m – 163m.

A proposed site layout was presented. The proposed layout was developed having regard to site constraints, such as watercourses, national monuments, a telecoms link, and sensitive residential receptors.

The grid connection would comprise of a new 110kV substation and a 110kV underground cable connecting to the existing 110kV GIS substation building located within the 400kV ESB Moneypoint substation.

The prospective applicant discussed the proposed Turbine Delivery Route (TDR) which is intended to utilise roads such as the N68, the R484 and local roads to access the site. The port of entry has not been decided yet but would be identified and assessed when the application is lodged.

The prospective applicant discussed REPowerEU, national, regional and local policy and how the proposed development would assist in reaching energy targets set out in the above strategies. The site is located in an area designated as a 'Strategic Area' in the Clare County Development Plan and was also designated a strategic area under the previous plan.

The prospective applicant discussed Natura 2000 Sites and NHA's located near the proposed development site. The prospective applicant presented a drawing of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility and stated that photomontages will be submitted from appropriate viewpoints.

The prospective applicant briefly discussed the criteria of Strategic Infrastructure Development and gave their opinion that they believe the proposed development falls within the scope of section 37A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended), being in excess of 50MW and contributing to national and regional renewable energy targets.

The scoping exercise for EIA undertaken to date was outlined and details were provided in relation to public consultation undertaken to date. An outline of chapters for the Environmental Impact Assessment Report was presented.

The prospective applicant concluded the presentation by discussing the project's next steps, with the intention of making an application to the Board in Q1 of 2025.

Discussion:

- The Board's representatives began the discussion by advising the prospective applicant to not close out the pre application process if they intend on submitted a design flexibility pre application consultation request under the provisions of section 37CC of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.
- They recommended the following to the prospective applicant:
 - that it is crucial to engage in consultations with Clare County Council regarding the proposed development as the council's opinion will be given significant weight when adjudicating on the application. It was

noted that Clare County Council have previously decided to refuse planning permission on the site.

- All relevant policies relating to the project in the Clare County Council development plan, should be considered.
- Drawings submitted as part of the planning application should show other constructed and proposed turbines in the vicinity, to give the Board a better understanding of developments within the area and also to ensure relevant cumulative effects are assessed.
- Any new policy context plans which may be imminent which may affect the development plans of the proposed development should be referred to and evaluated.
- Feedback from the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) is very important and responses to issues raised by the NPWS should be set out in the planning application.
- The presence of Hen Harrier habitats located on the site of the Cahermurphy 1 development was noted and the prospective applicant was advised to ensure that studies regarding Hen Harriers are robust as part of the planning application.
- An assessment of viewpoints from the vicinity of the Doonbeg Hotel was suggested.
- In relation to noise, to take into consideration both the 2006 WEDG Guidelines and the 2019 Draft Guidelines should be referred to and best international practice should be applied when carrying out these studies.
- The EIAR should clearly determine the direct and indirect impacts arising from the project.
- A format was recommended that a detailed contents page of the EIAR' with hyperlinks which will be beneficial to both the Board, prescribed bodies and members of the public when looking to view the proposed

development application documents. A summary chapter in the EIAR setting out the potential impacts would also be beneficial.

- It was suggested by the Board's representatives that if the application was progressed, when responding to third party submissions, it is more beneficial to respond to them in a general format especially if there is a large quantity of submissions received, save where particular local issues arise.
- It was re-iterated that when requesting closure of this pre application consultation it is important to be clear on the intended rated energy output of the proposed development. If the proposed development does not exceed the 50MW threshold then the proposed development does not fall within the scope of strategic infrastructure development and defined under the Act and an application should be made to Clare County Council.
- The Boards representatives gave their preliminary opinion that based on the information given in the presentation that the proposed development falls within the scope of section 37A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Caprani', written over a horizontal line.

Paul Caprani

Assistant Director of Planning