



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting ABP-320745-24

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	ABP-320745-24 - Wind Farm Comprising of 17. No Wind Turbines, Associated Infrastructure and Grid Connection with Potential Output of 75 to 95MW of Electricity. Located within the townlands of Ballincurra, Ballinlee South, Ballingayrou, Ballinbea, Knockuregare, Ballinlee North & Camas South approximately 18km southwest of Limerick City & 4km west of Bruff, Co Limerick.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application Consultation		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	20/03/2025	<b>Start Time</b>	11:00 hrs
<b>Location</b>	Virtual	<b>End Time</b>	12:40 hrs

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
<b>Staff Members</b>
Una Crosse, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Colm McLoughlin, Senior Planning Inspector
Fiona Patterson, Ecologist/Environmental Scientist
Raymond Muwaniri, Executive Officer

<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
Aileen O'Connor, Project Manager, MWP
Ken Fitzgerald, Planning & Stakeholder Manager, MWP

Caoimhe O'Connor, Project Planner, MWP
Conor McLoughlin, Civil Project Manager, MWP
Serena O'Donnell, Graduate Environmental Scientist, MWP
David McDonnell, Managing Director/Project Sponsor, Greensource
Harry Harbison, Client Project Manager, Greensource
Patrick McCoubrey, Assistant Project Co-ordinator, Greensource
Nadine Walsh, Community Liaison Officer, Greensource
Richard Baker, Divisional Director-Landscape Architect, Macroworks
Michael Dobson, Associate Director, Woodrow (APEM)
Adrian Walsh, Ecologist, Woodrow (APEM)

## Introduction

The Meeting commenced at 11am.

The Board's representative referred to the previous meeting with the prospective applicant on the 25th of October 2024, and the record for this meeting. The Board's representative asked if the prospective applicant had any comments/questions they wished to make on record. The prospective applicant replied they did not.

## Presentation made by the prospective applicant:

The presentation, which is on the file, outlined that the site is located within the "Preferred" area for wind energy in the Limerick County Development Plan (2022-2028) and set out the nature of the proposal with 16 turbines proposed, 15 of which have a proposed 160m tip height, with Turbine 6 with a proposed 150m tip height.

The ecological survey findings were outlined with a Whooper Swan Management Plan to be prepared which will include mitigation measures to provide strategic habitat enhancement. A Biodiversity Management Plan is also proposed.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment study area was outlined. Community engagement undertaken was outlined with a dedicated community liaison officer for the project. The EIAR and relevant chapters are being advanced with follow-up

meetings proposed with the Roads Department of Limerick City & County Council. A lodgement date of summer 2025 is anticipated.

#### **Discussion:**

- The Board's representative queried whether the prospective applicant had engaged with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in relation to the Turbine Delivery Route (TDR). The prospective applicant stated that TII are aware of the route given the other wind farms in the wider area. Use of the, currently under construction Adare bypass, may be feasible to project timelines.
- The Board's representative highlighted structures along the route, bridges and stone walls etc, which are not protected but may have heritage value. The Board's representative questioned whether any pre-delivery surveys had been conducted, and if the TDR will go through Croom. The prospective applicant stated that the TDR had dictated the turbine blade length proposed.
- The prospective applicant confirmed that works required for the TDR including impact on hedgerows/biodiversity will be set out and addressed in the Traffic Management Plan and application documentation including the EIAR, including analysis of the junction movements along the TDR.
- The Board's representatives enquired about the extent of forest felling proposed.
- The prospective applicant was asked if consultations with the National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) in relation to whooper swans had been undertaken. Consultation to date had resulted in a generic response but further engagement would be sought.
- In response to queries about nocturnal whooper swan surveys, the prospective applicant stated that 4 years of surveys have been conducted, including nocturnal surveys and potential impacts on the whooper swan population at Lough Gur would be considered.
- The prospective applicant highlighted that the area for whooper swan habitat enhancement extends beyond the current redline boundary of the site with the Board's representatives advising that enhancement areas proposed as mitigation should be included within the site redline boundary and accompanied by landowner consent.

- The prospective applicant was advised to consider any connectivity between the site and Special Protected Areas,
- The prospective applicant outlined that raptor and other bird surveys have been ongoing since 2021. They highlighted that otter holts and badger setts were not observed during the project ecological surveys.
- A comprehensive consideration of archaeological features was advised by the Board's representatives.
- In relation to the Grid Connection Route (GCR), the prospective applicant was advised to address alternatives, methodology, the extent of excavation, material removal and precise details regarding how they intend to address the route alignment along hard shoulders, dual-flow carriages, single-lane carriages and bridge crossings.
- The prospective applicant stated they have gathered extensive information and the GCR is designed to maintain access with site investigations informing the consideration of alternatives. It was outlined that EirGrid had identified the Killonan substation as the preferred connection point.
- The Board's representative enquired about bridge crossings, water courses, and if any Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) is proposed. The prospective applicant stated they were gathering information on water point crossings including bridge crossings and the use of HDD.
- The Board's representative highlighted the consideration required in respect of traffic and construction management where the grid route works would pass by schools and sensitive receptors. The prospective applicant stated the route is 20km long with multiple entrance points, and they have a robust plan in place to account for local resident access
- The prospective applicant outlined that the lower height of Turbine 6 was due to the 300m separation distance required by EirGrid to the proposed substation (i.e. 2.5 times the tip height).
- With reference to the difference in maximum tip height for one of the proposed turbines, the Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to clearly state the relevant turbine in the public notices and documentation submitted.

- The prospective applicant was advised to be consistent in terms of the mitigation measures to be employed to address impacts on surface and ground water quality and to ensure that there is consistency in the measures proposed across the various factors to be examined, biodiversity, water, land, soil and geology, and within the CEMP and NIS.
- The prospective applicant outlined the 22 viewpoints proposed as part of the landscape and visual impact assessment with the Board's representative outlining the separation of 1.4km between Turbine 4 & 6 and enquired whether the development would be viewed as a single development, or two clusters given the separation distance.
- The prospective applicant was advised to address the community engagement required for the various stages of the proposed development.
- In relation to the location of the proposed borrow pits, the prospective applicant was advised to consider the reasons for the locations chosen, including context relative to the nearest residential receptors and any intended processes to be undertaken/mitigation proposed as part of this element of the project.
- The Board's representatives queried the volume of material to be removed at the borrow pit and if any ground water would be encountered during excavations. The prospective applicant stated that the volume would be dependent on the type of material (e.g. gravel or rock) and that they would not be interacting with the water table.
- The Board's representatives queried whether the 2019 draft guidelines separation distances were being met in relation to all residential receptors, with the prospective applicant confirming this to be the case.
- The prospective applicant was advised to provide clarity in the documentation regarding the intended operational span for the project and the rationale for same, with the prospective applicant advising that they will be seeking a 10-year permission, with a 35-year lifespan for the project.

**Conclusion:**

The Board's representatives advised that onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the subject 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.



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**Una Crosse****Assistant Director of Planning**