



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting ABP-321507-24

Case Reference / Description	ABP-321507-24 - 11 no. Turbine Wind Farm and Associated Infrastructure, located within the townlands of Beagh More, Cloonbar, Cloonnaglasha, Corillaun, Derrymore, Shancloon, Toberroe and Tonacooleen, County Galway.		
Case Type	Pre-application Consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st		
Date	12/03/2025	Start Time	11:00 hrs
Location	Virtual	End Time	11:50 hrs

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Staff Members
Una Crosse, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Una O'Neill, Senior Planning Inspector
Emmet Smyth, Senior Scientist
Raymond Muwaniri, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Rita Mansfield, Fehily Timoney
Robyn Nicholl, Fehily Timoney
Matt Geraghty, RWE Renewable Ireland Ltd
Michael James, RWE Renewable Ireland Ltd
Cliona O'Sullivan, RWE Renewable Ireland Ltd

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 16th of December 2024 requesting pre-application consultations under Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and advised the prospective applicant that the first meeting 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:

RWE has been involved in the Energy Sector for 120 years, focusing on wind energy, solar power and battery storage in Ireland. The site location is approximately 154ha in size and located 8km northwest of Tuam and 3.5km east of Shrute. RWE is proposing 11 no. turbines with individual power outputs of between 5.6 to 6.6MW, 110kV onsite substation and a loop in connection to the existing Cashla Dalton 110kV overhead line. All turbines are located within the 'Open to Consideration' zoning classification for Wind Energy, outlined in the Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028. Average wind speed in the area is 6m/s.

A small portion of the site falls within a flood zone, and a detailed Flood Model will be prepared. Noise will be assessed within the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a limit of 43dB has been assumed or +5dB above background, and 40dB for low noise areas has been adopted. 3 locations above daytime levels have been identified. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been based on rotor diameter of 155m, and tip height of 180m. A total of 21 no. viewpoints have been identified and due to the gently rolling landscape there is limited locations with sufficient elevation to have visibility of the turbines above hedgerows and treelines.

The wind farm will be cumulatively assessed against surrounding developments within a 20km radius. There is 1 no. existing wind farm within the study area (Clonlusk), and 2 no. at planning stage (Laurclavagh and Clonberne).

Discussion:

- The Board's representative noted the proposed development was the subject of a previous pre-application process, which is now closed, for a similar scaled development which was determined to be SID. The applicant was requested to provide an update with respect to surveys undertaken, including in relation to biodiversity, and all other technical aspects of the proposal since the previous consultation process was closed. The prospective applicant stated surveys were ongoing since the previous pre-application consultation was held with the Board, with the last round of surveys undertaken in November 2024.
- Some turbine locations have been revised due to the presence of bats.
- The prospective applicant was advised to clearly set out the baseline guidance and methodology applied to assessments within the planning application documentation.
- The prospective applicant outlined that their LVIA chapters would refer to the design flexibility options proposed. The Board's representative advised them to ensure the impacts of all options are examined in the EIAR, and to consult the planning authority in relation to viewpoints chosen.
- The prospective applicant stated that the limited area of Annex I habitat identified within the site area is highly degraded. Floating roads are proposed in certain areas, limiting the potential impact on peat and raised bog.
- One badger sett has been identified on the site no potential damage anticipated, with biodiversity enhancement proposed within the site to ensure net biodiversity gain.
- The prospective applicant outlined the proposed drainage strategy site and outlined that the Office of Public Works were satisfied.
- The turbine delivery route is being examined by the Road's Department of Galway County Council.
- The Board's representative highlighted the importance of consultation with prescribed bodies, including inter alia the National Parks Wildlife Services.

- The Board's representative noted Canadian pondweed, which is an invasive species, was previously identified throughout the site which it was advised should be considered as part of the application.
- The Board's representatives enquired if surveys showed presence of species associated with European sites in the wider area. The prospective applicant stated that bird surveys have been ongoing since 2021. Raptors and ground nesting birds can be found in the area, but low collision risk for the site.
- The cumulative assessment undertaken should address all environmental factors comprehensively.
- The Board's representative identified two watercourses at risk and enquired about any potential impacts anticipated to ground water quality, as well as any potential dewatering processes. The prospective applicant outlined their proposal to clear a small forest area to provide a sediment pond, nutrient runoff control, and the implementation of a diffuse filter to separate the clean and dirty water onsite. Gravity Foundation dewatering is proposed.
- In relation to noise, the prospective applicant was advised to clearly highlight where mitigation is proposed, for example by way of curtailment. Application documentation should consider the current and draft Wind Energy Guidelines, or any update at the time of the application.
- The prospective applicant intends to submit one application to include the wind turbines and electricity infrastructure, under section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Conclusion:

The Board's representatives advised that 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.



Una Crosse

Assistant Director of Planning