



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting ABP-321611-25

Case Reference / Description	Proposed development of Iron Mountain Wind Farm which will consist of 8 no. wind turbines, onsite substation, connection to national grid and other associated development works located in the townlands of Slievenakilla, East County Leitrim.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Date	26 th February 2025	Start Time	11:00am
Location	MS Teams	End Time	12:00pm

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Una Crosse, Assistant Director of Planning
Tomas Bradley, Senior Planning Inspector
Finbarr Quigley, Senior Environmental Scientist
Lauren Murphy, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Valerie Brennan, RPS
Paul Chadwick, RPS
Karen Mulryan, RPS

Carlos LaraGonzalez, RPS
Jennifer McCorry, RES
Aiden McElroy, RES

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 6th January 2025, requesting pre-application consultations under section 37B 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's presentation, which is on file, provided the site context with the site approximately 200 hectares in area and is within an 'Available Area' for Wind Development, according to Leitrim County Council Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2029.

The prospective applicant provided a draft design layout of the proposed development with the proposed wind turbines intended to have a tip height of 180m, a hub height of 98.5m, a rotor diameter of 163m and a total output of over 50MW. The prospective applicant advised the Board that it is their intention to have an on-site battery energy storage system (BESS) on the proposed development site which will form part of the planning application.

The prospective applicant briefly discussed the proposed Turbine Delivery Route, which will begin at Killybegs Port, County Donegal.

The prospective applicant discussed the proposed grid connection route which they intend to submit as part of the planning application under section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. They are examining two grid connection options which will be finalised to one before application submission.

The prospective applicant discussed the constraints to date in relation to the proposed development, which include landslide susceptibility as there are areas of deep peat. They presented a drawing which included the Geological Society of Ireland (GSI) landslide susceptibility mapping compared to site specific mapping prepared for them by SLR Consulting. They are still undergoing assessments and are currently considering phase 2 of these assessments.

The prospective applicant discussed the potential viewpoints of the proposed development and noted that there may be one viewpoint from Northern Ireland.

The prospective applicant further discussed Leitrim County Councils Renewable Energy Strategy, followed by European, National, Regional and Local Policy Context.

The prospective applicant concluded the presentation by providing their view that the proposed development, which would have a total output of approximately 52 megawatts, would fall within the scope of Strategic Infrastructure Development and a planning application should be made directly to An Bord Pleanála under section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Discussion:

The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant of their preliminary view that the proposed development falls within the scope of Strategic Infrastructure Development, however any material change in the proposed development (i.e. number or output of turbines) may affect this determination due to the total output of the proposed development being close to the threshold at 50MW.

The Boards representatives queried if it is intended to request a design flexibility opinion with the prospective applicant stating it is not.

The prospective applicant stated that they propose to include the grid connection element of the proposal with this planning application. The Boards representatives advised that if they intend on seeking a design flexibility opinion on the grid connection aspect they will have to undergo the pre application process under section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and request a design flexibility opinion under 182F, which will result in the grid connection aspect of the proposed development being subject to a separate planning application.

The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant of the need to ensure application documentation is robust given the timelines and limitations on further

information likely to be introduced on foot of the transposition of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED III) and the forthcoming Planning and Development Act, 2024.

The prospective applicant advised that they have been in contact with Roscommon County Council in relation to potential works required to the turbine delivery route.

The Boards representatives referenced the proximity of the proposed site to the Northern Irish border and the potential for transboundary affects which should be considered under the Espoo Convention.

The Boards representatives noted difference between the mapping produced by Geological Survey Ireland and the prospective applicants mapping in respect of landslide susceptibility and while it was acknowledged that this may relate to the site-specific investigations undertaken by the prospective applicant, the history of peat slides and bog bursts in the area should be noted necessitating robust studies and surveys are carried out.

The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant to examine the relevant water quality surveys prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency in respect of waterbodies in the study area and the potential impact on same.

The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant to endeavour to engage with National Parks and Wildlife Services, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the relevant Roads Authorities within which the proposed grid connection cable route is proposed prior to submitting the planning application.

In relation to the proposed Battery Energy Storage Unit (BESS) aspect of the proposed development the Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant to address any fire and firefighting related issues including water supply and fire

tender access. It was also advised that the applicant should engage with the fire officers in Leitrim County Council. The prospective applicant clarified that the inclusion of a borrow pit as part of the proposal was being considered.

The Boards representatives enquired about the potential for recreational amenity on the site.

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 12:00pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Una Crosse', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Una Crosse

Assistant Director of Planning