

An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting ABP-321892-25

Case Reference / Description	Proposed development of 9 wind turbines and all associated development works in the townlands of Glendine North, Fahanlunaghta More, Curraghodea, Letterkenny, Cloghaun More, Tooreen and Silverhill, County Clare		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Date	06/03/2025	Start Time	11:00am
Location	Virtually	End Time	11:50am

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Sarah Lynch, Assistant Planning Director, Chair
Donogh O'Donoghue, Senior Planning Inspector
Maeve Flynn, Senior Ecologist
Lauren Murphy, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Ronan Dunne, MKO
Susan Doran, MKO
Ellen Costello, MKO
Colm Ryan, MKO
William O'Connor, App

Niall Galvin, App
Jonathan Benn, App

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 14th February 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 presentation began by the prospective applicant giving a brief introduction to their company 'Slieveacurry Ltd' which is an associate company of Enerco Energy Ltd which are responsible for over 875MW of wind energy projects currently both in operation and under construction in Ireland.

The prospective applicant then discussed the proposed site location, which is located 5km East of Miltown Malbay, 6.5km Southeast of Lahinch and 7km West of Inagh, County Clare. They briefly discussed the reasons and considerations considered during the site selection process.

The design process and site constraints were discussed by the prospective applicant, presented with a drawing showing the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) Site Boundary, the draft turbine layout plan, and various ecological constraints were identified and discussed.

The prospective applicant discussed the nearest designated sites in proximity of the proposed development site. The nearest designated sites are:

- Slievecallan Mountain Bog – National Heritage Area (Site Code:002397).
- Inagh River Estuary – Special Area of Conservation (Site Code:00036).
- Mid Clare Coast – Special Protection Area (Site Code:004182).

The prospective applicant presented a drawing of the proposed wind farm aspect which includes the development of 9 wind turbines and ancillary infrastructure including meteorological mast, new site access roads, a temporary construction

compound and a borrow pit. The proposed development is intended to have a generating capacity of over 50MW.

Furthermore, the proposed grid connection route aspect of the development was discussed by the prospective applicant, with the proposed wind farm to the existing 110kV substation at Knockalassa via approximately 7.1km of underground cabling. For the facilitation of this wind farm an upgrade to Knockalassa substation is required.

The prospective applicant discussed the previous planning history of the proposed development site and noted that the proposed extension to Knockalassa 110kV substation was subject to a Pre-Application Consultation with the Board (ABP-308005-19), which was determined that the proposed development would not constitute Strategic Infrastructure Development.

The prospective applicant discussed the reasons for previous refusal under a first party appeal (ABP-312728-22) and the studies and surveys they are carrying out under this project to address the issues.

The proposed development was discussed in detail in the context of EU Policy, National Policy and Local Policy. Furthermore, the prospective applicant discussed Wind Energy Zoning in the Clare County Council Development Plan 2023-2029 and how the proposed site location is deemed suitable for wind farm developments.

The prospective applicant discussed their landscape and visual assessments to date which have been followed under best practice guidance methods. They noted that there is a range of viewpoints located at different distances and elevations across a 25km study area.

The prospective applicant discussed the application documents of the proposed development and briefly discussed studies underway which will form part of the planning applications Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

The public consultation process was discussed, with a public information exhibit being held in April 2025 for members of the local community, a scoping document was also circulated to prescribed statutory bodies in January 2025 for feedback. A pre application consultation meeting request has also been submitted to Clare County Council, there has yet to be a meeting date set.

The presentation was concluded by discussing the Strategic Infrastructure Criteria and how the proposed development falls within the scope of the 7th Schedule and an application should be made directly to the Board under Section 37A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The prospective applicant intends on making the planning application to the Board in Q3 2025.

Discussion:

- The Boards representatives began the discussion by raising a query to the prospective applicant if they intend on seeking a design flexibility request. The prospective applicant clarified that they intend on seeking a design flexibility request under section 37CC of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. They intend on seeking this request once they have finalised the various possible proposed wind turbine dimensions.
- The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant that the previous planning application Board Order and Inspectors Report has many issues in relation to the proposed development and proposed development site which are clearly laid out and should be addressed accordingly in this planning application.

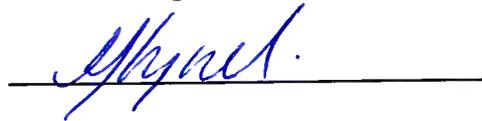
- Furthermore, the Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant that refusal reason number 1 of the previous Board decision was due to deep peat found at various locations on the proposed development site. The prospective applicant advised that they now have a refined turbine layout with further site investigation works, and a peat spoil management plan.
- The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant to ensure that they are consulting with the National Parks and Wildlife Services in particular in relation to Hen Harriers enhancement proposals.
- Following on from a query raised by the Boards representatives the prospective applicant advised that there has not been much feedback in relation to their public consultations, however their community liaison officer has been in discussion with those who have requested contact.
- The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant that all proposed study areas must be within the red line boundary of the planning application.
- The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant to consider issues raised by third party submissions during the previously refused planning application, in particular the submission made by the Development Applications Unit (DAU).
- The Boards representatives note that the prospective applicant has carried out over 5 years of bird surveys on the proposed development site but reminds them that cumulative impacts, nocturnal studies, enhancement plans, and biodiversity studies are carefully assessed. The Boards representatives also advised the prospective applicant that the use of national context on a local project may be problematic and to be aware of this.

- The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant to ensure they submit a robust noise impacts assessment as part of their planning application.
- The Boards representatives also advised the prospective applicant to become familiar with the proposals set out under the Renewable Energy Directive (RED III), which has strict further information request timelines and advised the prospective applicant to ensure their application is as robust as possible.
- Following a query raised by the Board the prospective applicant advised that their Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment is a technical appendix which will form part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.
- The Board representatives advised the prospective applicant to consult with Transport Infrastructure Ireland in relation to the proposed Turbine Delivery Route and any potential road works which will need to be carried out.
- The prospective applicant concluded the discussion by advising the Board that they do not intend on seeking closure of this pre application process as it is their intention to seek a design flexibility request in the near future.

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 11:50am.



Sarah Lynch

Assistant Director of Planning