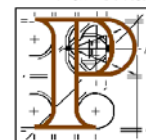


Record Of Meeting

An Bord Pleanála



Case Reference/ Description	19.PC0209 Wind Farm, Cloncreen, Co. Offaly.		
Case Type:	Pre-app consultation		
Date:	18 th November, 2015	Start Time:	12.10 p.m.
Location:	1 st Floor Meeting Room	End Time:	1.30 p.m.
Chairperson:	Anne Marie O'Connor,	Executive Officer:	Kieran Doherty

Attendees:

Representing An Bord Pleanála

Anne Marie O'Connor, Assistant Director of Planning

Stephen O'Sullivan, Senior Planning Inspector

Marcella Doyle, Senior Executive Officer

Kieran Doherty, Executive Officer

Representing Prospective Applicant

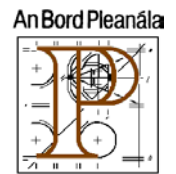
Michael Watson, EIS Co-ordinator, McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan

Jimmy Green, Planner, McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan

Brendan Connolly, Engineer, Bord na Mona

Sean Creedon, Project Manager, Bord na Mona

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Introduction

The representatives of An Bord Pleanála welcomed the prospective applicant and the teams were introduced.

The Board's representatives acknowledged receipt of the prospective applicant's request by letter dated 2nd October 2015 to enter into pre-application consultations in relation to the proposed development under section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in order to determine whether the proposed development constitutes strategic infrastructure development. In this regard, the Board's representatives noted the prospective applicant's preliminary view that the proposed development falls within the scope of section 37A(2)(a) and (b) of the 2000 Act and therefore constitutes strategic infrastructure development.

This meeting is considered by the Board to be a preliminary meeting, the purpose of which is to obtain information in relation to the project to facilitate the Board's consideration of the matter. Further information in relation to the proposed development may be required and a further meeting or meetings may be held to give advice on procedural matters involved in making an application and to advise on matters relating to proper planning and sustainable development or the likely effects on the environment, which may have a bearing on the Board's decision in respect of a future application.

The Board's representatives stated that a record of the meeting will be taken, a copy of which will be forwarded to the prospective applicant. This is the Board's record of the meeting and an opportunity will be afforded to the prospective applicant to comment on same at any following meeting or in writing. The records and the pre-application consultation file will become available to the public following formal closure of the pre-application consultation process.

The Board's representatives may consult with other persons or bodies in respect of the proposed developments, e.g. the planning authority, and the Board may require the prospective applicant to give notice to the public or to carry out consultations with other persons or bodies prior to lodgement of any application.

When the pre-application consultation process has concluded the Board will issue notice to the prospective applicant on whether the proposed development constitutes strategic infrastructure development, having regard to the provisions of section 37A of the Act. The prospective applicant was advised that the holding of consultations

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does not prejudice the Board in any way and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

Prospective Applicant's Proposal

Introduction

The prospective applicant informed the meeting of the following:

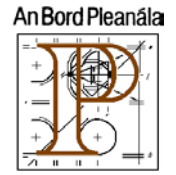
- Bord na Móna is a publically owned company with power generation being one element of the business.
- The importance of wind energy as the main component of Ireland's renewable energy development is acknowledged.
- The proposed development is consistent with national and international policies.
- The prospective applicant has been in the business of wind generation since 1992 in Bellacorrick, Co. Mayo.
- A significant amount of the prospective applicant's land bank will come out of peat production as bogs become exhausted or no longer economically viable.
- Such peatland would be suitable for future wind energy production.

Site Selection

A site selection process considered 25 potential Bord na Móna sites which would be suitable for wind farm development. The factors to be considered include:

- Consistent wind resource
- Proximity to houses
- Low population density
- Grid access and capacity
- Local authority development plans
- Natura 2000 sites
- Cumulative impact
- Aviation constraints
- Depth of remaining peat
- Telecommunications
- Flood plain analysis
- Road infrastructure

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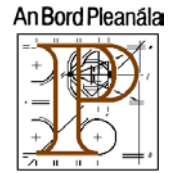
Site assessment scores were allocated to each potential site and Cloncreen emerged with the highest score. The Cloncreen site:

- Is situated approximately 4.5 km south-west of Edenderry.
- Measures 1,000 hectares of worked bog so can accommodate a large scale wind energy development while maintaining the required set-back distance from houses in the surrounding area. Currently, the separation distance from the nearest house is over 700 m.
- Is approximately 3 km from north to south and 4.5 km from east to west at the widest point.
- Is within an area deemed suitable for wind energy development in the local authority development plan.
- Has expected wind speeds of between 7 m/s and 8 m/s.
- Has a low ecological sensitivity. There are no Natura 2000 sites within a 5 km radius of the proposed development site and no NHAs or pNHAs within a 3 km radius.
- Is still being extracted but will be completely cutaway by 2020.
- Does not have any identified flooding issues.
- Is close to the electricity transmission network.
- Has no scenic amenity on site, the nearest is 8 km away. There is a scenic route 8.8 km to the west.
- Has a low cumulative impact, having regard to the receiving landscape. The operational Mountlucas wind farm, comprising 28 turbines, is located within 5 kilometres.
- Is well served by the road network in term of turbine component delivery. The Mountlucas Wind Farm delivery route can be used.

However:

- It is situated close to Clonbulloge aerodrome, approximately 2.3 km south of the Cloncreen site boundary. An aviation / parachuting safeguard area will be included in the design of the wind farm layout to address this.
- It has a telecommunications mast on the site, which is in the control of Bord na Móna. This can be dealt with by turbine layout or additional telecom relay masts.

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The prospective applicant referred to the drawings that were presented to the meeting, which showed:

- The flat, low lying nature of the site due to the removal of peat.
- A disused sand and gravel quarry to the north-east.
- A licenced ash repository to the south (which is subject to an EPA waste licence).
- Minimal housing in the area.
- The Edenderry power plant to the east.
- A 110-kV power line running to the south of the site.
- The existing industrial railway, a proposed 19 turbine layout, two potential substation locations, and proposed roads (Figure 5).

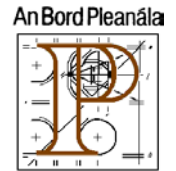
Additional details

- Approximately 25 turbines are proposed for the site (although a layout for just 19 was presented).
- The turbine tip height will be 170 m.
- The power output will be approximately 75 MW.
- All wind farm cabling will be laid underground.
- Two options are available for the connection to the national grid , both of which will be dealt with in the EIS.
- The on-site substation will be 110 kV so the link to the grid will be 110 kV.
- The boundary with Kildare County Council is 3-4 km from the site.

Site Constraints

- Any revised wind energy guidelines.
- The Offaly County Development Plan requires a set-back of 2 km from the core of towns and villages.
- The ash depository is in continuous use.
- Buffers from rivers and streams will be required.
- The existing telecommunications mast.
- The aerodrome will require a buffer of between 2-7 km.
- The scenic routes in Kildare and Offaly will be considered, including the cumulative impact of all turbines within 20 km of the site.

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Grid Connection

- A grid connection application was made to EirGrid in 2014 for a potential installed capacity of 75 MW.
- The status of the application is 'on hold'.
- It is outside of the Gate 3 process.
- The connection could be to the south of the Edenderry power station, by loop-in connection to the power line south of the site, or via Rhode.
- The prospective applicant stated that it was conscious of the planning implications of the Ó Grianna ruling.

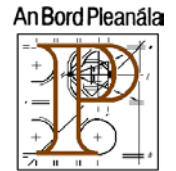
Environmental Impact Statement

- Scoping is ongoing.
- Site surveys have been conducted since 2010, including bird surveys since 2012. These surveys were used for the site selection process.
- The prospective applicant has a large existing ecological database.
- Fieldwork will continue in the next few weeks in relation to geotechnical mapping, mapping of hydrological features, baseline noise information, and cultural heritage assessments.
- Revised habitat mapping completed in 2015.

Public Consultation

- Meetings took place with Offaly and Kildare County Councils.
- Information sessions took place in Edenderry, Clonbulloge and Ballyfore in June 2015.
- Houses within 2 km have been visited.
- Project clinics have taken place.
- 8,400 houses receive a quarterly project newsletter.
- A community engagement forum has been established with community representatives to get suggestions for a community gain scheme and a near neighbour scheme.
- A community ownership scheme will be considered to assess whether there may be any interest from the community to invest in the financing of the proposed development.
- The prospective applicant has a long connection with the area with many local employees.

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Other Issues

- The Board's representatives queried the potential impact on the amenity of the Grand Canal and in particular it's walking route.
- Any new wind farm guidelines would be taken into account by the Board.
- There is a mitigation strategy for the quarry at the position of turbine number 2. The rehabilitation is 90-95% complete. There are no plans to use the quarry as a borrow pit for the wind farm construction. Material from the quarry was used for the Bord na Móna rail network.
- There is an existing drainage regime at the site with on-going water monitoring. A specific drainage design will be submitted with the planning application.
- A separation distance of 700m is achieved between any turbine and the nearest residential property.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to liaise with the NPWS.
- The Board's representatives drew attention to the proximity to the border with Kildare County Council and any impacts that may arise in relation to haulage routes or the grid connection crossing the boundary.
- The Board's representatives may look to discuss the proposed development with Offaly County Council.
- The prospective applicant expects to be in a position to make a planning application in quarter 2 of 2016.

Conclusion

The prospective applicant will request a further meeting when field work has been completed. The Board's representatives stated that a future meeting will cover the procedures involved in the making of a planning application. A list of prescribed bodies will be provided when the consultation process is complete.

Anne Marie O'Connor,
Assistant Director of Planning
December 2015