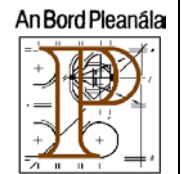


# Record Of Meeting



<b>Case Reference/Description</b>	17.PC0214 Castletownmoor wind farm consisting of 25 no. wind turbines, substation and grid connection.		
<b>Case Type:</b>	Pre-app consultation		
<b>Meeting:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>Date:</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> April, 2016	11a.m.	
<b>Location:</b>	Board's offices		
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Anne Marie O'Connor		

## Attendees:

### Representing An Bord Pleanála

Anne Marie O'Connor – Assistant Director of Planning

Stephen Kay – Senior Planning Inspector

Marcella Doyle – Senior Executive Officer

Kieran Somers – Executive Officer

### Representing Prospective Applicant

Tim Cowhig, North Meath Wind Farm Ltd

Kevin O'Donovan, North Meath Wind Farm Ltd

Anne-Marie Coyle, North Meath Wind Farm Ltd

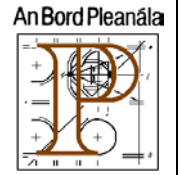
Tina Raleigh, Fehily Timoney and Co

The meeting commenced at 11a.m.

## Introduction:

The Board referred to the letter received by it from the prospective applicant dated the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2016 formally requesting pre-application consultations with the Board. It advised the prospective applicant that the instant meeting essentially constituted

# Record Of Meeting



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 it wished to receive advice on from the Board.

The Board mentioned general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process as follows:

- 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 Board will serve formal notice at the conclusion of the process as to whether or not the proposed development is SID. It may form a preliminary view at an early stage in the process as to whether the proposed development would likely constitute strategic infrastructure.
- 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 any legal proceedings.

## **Presentation by the prospective applicant:**

The prospective applicant gave a presentation in respect of the proposed development. A copy of this presentation is on file. It referred to the following points and commented as follows:

- The Emlagh wind farm planning application which consisted of up to 46 turbines was refused planning permission by the Board on the 4th of February, 2016.
- The Inspector's report and the Direction from the Board confirmed that environmental issues, human health, noise, shadow flicker, and potential effects on animals were not reasons for refusal.
- The Inspector concluded that the Emlagh project would be compatible with the established rural landscape in the area. The Board Direction however stated that it was concerned at the scale, extent and size of the turbines proposed due to its sensitive location in terms of population and cultural heritage.

# Record Of Meeting



- The prospective applicant now considers that the reduction in size of the project to 25 turbines and the removal of two clusters concentrating the project in one flat, low lying site addresses the Boards main concerns.
- The prospective applicant believes that all of the reasons for refusal can be addressed and that the scaled-down Castletownmoor project can be accommodated on the subject site.
- The North Meath area was identified as having potential for wind farm development as a result of a nationwide search for suitable lands.

The prospective applicant said that the constraint analysis used in the nationwide search included the following criteria:

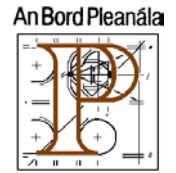
- An avoidance of environmentally designated areas.
- An avoidance of excessive cumulative impacts.
- Siting within suitable areas in county development plans.
- Suitable wind speeds.
- An avoidance of direct impacts on cultural heritage.
- Proximity to available grid capacity on the Irish network.
- An avoidance of areas of large settlements.
- Access to the site and constructability.

The prospective applicant said that the Castletownmoor wind farm consists of a single wind farm site of up to 25 turbines in County Meath. The 25 Turbine locations are the same as the Castletownmoor cluster of the Emlagh wind farm planning application. The proposed development will have an output of up to 85MW (based on a 3.4MW turbine). The proposed turbines will be up to 169 metres in height. The same grid connection route on the public road to the existing Gorman substation is proposed and will be included as part of the planning application. Gate 3 Grid capacity has been secured for the site and all cables are to be laid underground. Responding to the Board's query, the prospective applicant confirmed that the proposed substation is sited in the same location as per the previous planning application (i.e. within the Castletownmoor cluster).

The prospective applicant said that the reasons for refusal in respect of case reference number PA0038 can be addressed under the headings of size, scale and extent; amenity; size (landscape and guidelines); cultural heritage; and wind energy strategy. The prospective applicant showed the Board four viewpoints comparing the previous application to the current proposal. These were Stokes Cross Road, Lobinstown, the Tower of Lloyd and Governstown.

The prospective applicant set out the need for the proposed development in terms of meeting climate change commitments, security of energy supply, and the danger of Ireland failing to meet its 2020 Renewable Electricity (RES-E) target. The

## Record Of Meeting



prospective applicant also commented that documents and reports which have come out since the time of the oral hearing in respect of the previous planning application clearly demonstrate the need for the proposed development.

### Public consultations:

The prospective applicant advised of the following with respect to public consultations:

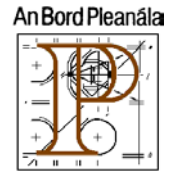
- An advert was placed in the Meath Chronicle on the 19th of March, 2016.
- A detailed 12 page booklet was prepared and issued to all houses within one kilometre of the proposed development on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, 2016.
- A public evening is planned in April, 2016.
- Feedback is currently being sought on proposals for community benefit.
- Funding is to be made available for the 30-year lifetime of the project.
- Schemes proposed to be community led are the subject of consultation with Meath County Council.
- The Near Neighbour Scheme is to be made available to all houses within one kilometre of proposed turbines.

### Other matters:

The prospective applicant also made the following remarks:

- The direction and order from the Board for the previous planning application did not refer to environmental concerns on the site.
- In performing his appropriate assessment, the reporting inspector screened out impacts on European sites, and this was accepted by the Board.
- Environmental studies on site began in 2012 and detailed site assessments were undertaken in 2012 and 2013.
- Supplemental ecology surveys are ongoing in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2016.
- A scoping report will issue shortly. The prospective applicant confirmed to the Board that this will issue to the same prescribed bodies as per the previous planning application.
- Consultations with key stakeholders (such as the NPWS and IFI) are ongoing since 2012.
- Meetings are being sought with key stakeholders including Meath County Council and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

## Record Of Meeting



- The prospective applicant restated its opinion that the proposed development would constitute strategic infrastructure given the number of proposed turbines and proposed output and the economic impact on the region.
- The grid connection route is assessed and will be included in the redline boundary.
- The turbine delivery route is being assessed.
- Revised landscape and visual montages are being prepared.
- Noise, shadow flicker and all other environmental impact assessments are being re-done for the instant proposal.

In terms of timelines, the prospective applicant signalled its intention to make a formal planning application to the Board at the end of May, 2016. It indicated that it might seek a formal SID determination from the Board following this meeting.

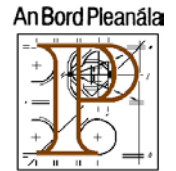
### **Board comments/queries:**

The Board pointed out that it was not the function of the pre-application process to advise further on the details of the previous application and decision. The nature, scale, extent, siting and design of any future proposal should, however, seek to address the reasons for refusal. The prospective applicant replied that it considers that such concerns have been addressed in the revised proposal by way of the reduced size of the proposed wind farm and its siting within a single cluster. The prospective applicant stated its opinion that the proposed development would now be in line with the provisions of the Landscape Character Assessment of the county development plan. The Board's representatives noted reference in the Board Direction to the Landscape Character Assessment and 'medium potential capacity' for wind energy. It stated that a future application would need to demonstrate consistency with this categorisation. The visual impact of the revised proposal should also be addressed in detail in any future application, both in terms of the amenity of the local area and the impact on sites of cultural heritage.

The Board stated its opinion that a further meeting in this process would be advisable. The Board's representatives said they would inform the Board of the information presented and any matters arising out of this could be brought to the attention of the prospective applicant at a subsequent meeting. Responding to this, the prospective applicant said it will consider the matter and revert to the Board as to whether it sees the necessity for a further meeting. It emphasised that there is a time constraint with respect to the proposed development generally and that it is therefore seeking a formal SID determination from the Board as soon as possible.

In the event that there is no further meeting in relation to the instant pre-application case, the Board advised the prospective applicant of the formal procedures for making a planning application to it. These were as follows:

## Record Of Meeting

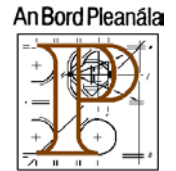


- An application can only be lodged after formal notice has been received by the prospective applicant under section 37A(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended.
- The application must be made by way of full completion of an application form to An Bord Pleanála.
- The sequencing of the application process and the content of the public notice is as set out at section 37E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.
- The Board requires as a minimum that the public notice of the application would be in two newspapers circulating in the area to which the proposed development relates, one of which should be a national newspaper. A site notice in accordance with the protocols set out in the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001-2011 must also be erected. The date of the erection of the site notice is to be inserted; otherwise it should contain the same information as the newspaper notices and should remain in place for the duration of the period during which the public can make submissions to the Board. The Board can give advice as regards the positioning of site notices.
- The documentation relating to the application is to be available for public inspection at the offices of the relevant planning authority and the offices of An Bord Pleanála. In this regard the requirements in terms of the number of copies of the documentation to be lodged with the relevant planning authority and the Board is as follows:
  - Planning Authority – 5 hard copies and 2 electronic copies.
  - An Bord Pleanála – 3 hard copies and 7 electronic copies.

The Board also requires the prospective applicant to provide a stand-alone website containing all of the application documentation. The address of this website is to be included in the public notice.

- The public notice of the application is to indicate that the application documentation will be available for public inspection after the elapsment of at least 5 working days from the date of the publication of the notice so as to ensure that the documentation is in place for such inspection.
- The time period for the making of submissions by the public is to be at least seven weeks from the date the documents become available for inspection (not from the date of publication of the public notices). The Board requires that the public notice must indicate the deadline time and date for the making of submissions to the Board. It was agreed that the prospective applicant would advise the Board's administrative personnel in advance of the details of its proposed public notice and that any further definitive advice on same including confirmation of dates/times could be communicated at that stage.

## Record Of Meeting



- The service of notice of the application on any prescribed bodies must include a clear statement that the person served can make submissions to the Board by the same deadline as specified in the public notice.
- The service letter on the planning authority with the necessary copies of the documents should be addressed to the County Manager and should also alert the authority to the Board's requirement that the application documentation be made available for public inspection/purchase by the planning authority in accordance with the terms of the public notice (copies of any newspaper/site notices should be provided to the planning authority). It is the Board's intention that all of the application documentation will remain available for public inspection during the currency of the application.
- The depositing of the application documentation and the making of the application to the Board should take place immediately after the publication of the notice and the completion of the service requirements. It should not await the elapsment of the period for the public to make submissions. The application documentation should include a copy of all letters serving notice of the application on prescribed bodies and the local authority, copies of the actual newspaper notices as published and the site notice.

The fee for lodging an application is €100,000. The fee for making a submission in respect of an application is €50 (except for certain prescribed bodies which are exempt from this fee). There is an existing provision enabling the Board to recover its costs for processing any application from the applicant. In addition it was pointed out that the legislation also enables the Board direct payment of costs or a contribution towards same to the planning authority and third parties.

### **The sequencing of the making of the application was summarised as follows:**

1. Publish newspaper notices.
2. Serve copy of relevant documents on bodies/persons required to be notified of the application. Deposit required number of copies with relevant planning authority.
3. Deposit required number of copies of application documentation with An Bord Pleanála and make an application to it.

### **Conclusion:**

The Board said a record of the instant meeting will issue to the prospective applicant as soon as possible. Responding to a query from the prospective applicant, the Board said it would give advice on how best to present photomontages in relation to the proposed development in a practical and user-friendly way.

## Record Of Meeting

An Bord Pleanála



The meeting concluded at 12p.m.

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**Anne Marie O'Connor, Assistant Director of Planning**