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Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Addendum Report ABP-303569-19

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<b>Development</b>	Wind Farm
<b>Location</b>	Barranafaddock, County Waterford.
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Waterford City and County Council.
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	Barranafaddock, Sustainable Electricity Ltd.
<b>Type of Application</b>	Application for leave to apply for substitute consent under Section 177C(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act as amended
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2019.
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan McHugh

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1.1. This addendum report is prepared on foot of a request from the Board to consider the impact of the wind farm on the Blackwater Callows SPA (Site Code 004094).
- 1.1.2. This report should be read in conjunction with the previous report dated 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

## 2.0 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

- 2.1.1. In relation to AA I would draw the Boards attention, in particular, to the following:
  - The correct identification in the applicants AA Screening Report of the relevant Natura 2000 sites in this case being the Blackwater Callows SPA (Site Code 004094), and its associated conservation objectives.
  - The distance of the wind turbine development from the site, being 2.3km to the south of the Blackwater Callows SPA.
  - The Blackwater Callows SPA is designated for wintering waterbirds including the whooper swan, wigeon, teal and black-tailed godwit. Importantly there are no wetland habitats within the windfarm site.
  - I note the report of the planning inspector on the ecology section of the Environmental Impact Statement submitted with the original application P.A .Reg. Ref. 04/1559 ABP Ref.PL24.213290, which identified following a bird survey undertaken in November 2002, that the site was sensitive for Hen Harrier usage The inspector also noted the report of the Heritage Officer and the NPWS which identified that Merlin's had been seen in the area. In response to a request for further information, the turbine layout was substantially scaled down from 36 no. to 12 no. turbines within the site area to avoid all suitable foraging habitats, and a wind wall effect on the site and therefore potential for bird strike.
  - The AA Screening Report submitted with the current application also notes the potential for impacts on Blackwater Callows SPA through potential barrier effect or collision risk caused by operational turbines to the whooper swan, wigeon, teal and black-tailed godwit, as a result of the changes in turbine design, and whether this

could cause significant impacts to this European site. It also notes the proximity of the windfarm to the Blackwater Callows SPA (2.3km).

- The report notes that the potential for barrier effect is negligible due to the small number of turbines and the fact that they are spaced out (average 400m between turbines), which would allow any migrating or commuting birds adequate room to avoid turbines. Reference is made to surveys undertaken between 2002 and 2011 which indicated that none of the four species for which the Blackwater Callows SPA is designated were recorded within the vicinity of the of the windfarm site.
- It concludes that the windfarm is deemed not to have the potential to impact the Blackwater Callows SPA significantly in terms of barrier effect or collision risk.

2.1.2. Section 2.1 of the comparative environmental analysis submitted by the applicant (dated June 2018) refers to ecology and notes that there are no material changes in the ecological effects on the habitats as a result of extending the rotor length while maintaining the tip height.

2.1.3. I am satisfied that the current arrangement of turbines which are in the same locations as those originally permitted and with the same overall tip height permitted in amending applications in combination with permitted development does not represent a material change in terms of the ecological effects and does not require further assessment within a Stage 2 NIS.

## 2.2. Conclusion

2.2.1. I consider, therefore, that it would be reasonable to conclude, on the basis of information on the file, which I consider adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the development, which refers to minor changes only, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on this European (Natura 2000) site in view of the relevant sites Conservation Objectives.

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Susan McHugh  
Planning Inspectorate

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019