An Coimisiún Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-310844-21

Development	Proposed windfarm of between 13 and 17 turbines and associated site works.
Location	Lemanaghan and surrounding townlands, Co. Offaly
Prospective Applicant	Lemanaghan Wind Farm DAC
Type of Application	Pre-Application Consultation under Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended
Planning Authority	Offaly County Council
Date of Site Inspection	29th January 2026
Inspector	Niall Haverty

1.0 Introduction

1.1. The Board (now Commission) received a request dated 15th July 2021 to enter into pre-application consultations under Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended ('the Act'), in relation to a proposed development of a wind farm of between 13 and 17 turbines and associated development in Lemanaghan and surrounding townlands, Co. Offaly.

1.2. The prospective applicant sought closure of the pre-application consultation by correspondence dated 6th February 2026.

2.0 Site Location

2.1. The site is located at Lemanaghan Bog, c. 3km north east of Ferbane, Co. Offaly and c. 8km south west of Clara, Co. Offaly. The site extends to a stated area of 1,258 hectares and is located in Lemanaghan and surrounding townlands.

2.2. The site is currently accessed via the N62 national road, R436 regional road, and the L7001 and L7002 local roads.

2.3. The site features various landcover types, including bare cutaway peat, re-vegetated peat, degraded raised bog, scrub, low woodland, and remnants of high bog.

3.0 Description of Proposal

3.1. The proposed development, as outlined in the request for closure of the pre-application consultation process, is as follows:

- The provision of 15 No. wind turbines with a tip height of 220m, hub height of 145m and rotor diameter of 150m.
- 1 No. 220kV substation and associated buildings and infrastructure.
- 0.8km of 'Loop in/Loop out' overhead line connection to the existing 220kV Shannonbridge-Maynooth 220kV transmission line.
- 1 No. meteorological mast of a height of 145m.
- 5 No. temporary construction compounds.
- 4 No. borrow pits.

- Peat and Spoil Management.
- Provision of new internal roads and upgrade of existing site roads, including for dedicated amenity track.
- New and upgrades to existing site entrances.
- All supporting infrastructure and works.

3.2. It is stated that each wind turbine will have a generating capacity of 6MW or greater, which would result in an estimated installed capacity of 90MW.

3.3. The closure request states that one minor amendment has been made to the design since the final pre-application meeting. This relates to site entrance 2, to the southeast of the site, which has been redesigned to enable a pedestrian underpass connecting to the midlands trail network project granted by Offaly County Council in September 2025 (Reg. Ref: 2560014) with the proposed development no longer including an upgrade to the existing entrance. A drawing of the final layout was enclosed with the closure request.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. Peat Extraction Substitute Consent Application (ACP-323676-25)

4.1.1. An application was submitted by Bord na Móna Energy Limited to the Commission on 12th September 2025 for substitute consent under the provisions of section 177E of the Act for peat extraction and ancillary works at Lemanaghan Bog. A Remedial Natura Impact Statement and Remedial Environmental Impact Assessment Report were submitted with the application. A decision is pending on the application.

4.2. Integrated Pollution Control Licence (IPC) - Ref. P0500-01

4.2.1. The EPA granted an IPC Licence in May 2000 for the Boora Bog Group, within which Lemanaghan Bog is located. Condition 10 of the licence relates to decommissioning and rehabilitation.

5.0 Precedent Decisions

5.1. No relevant precedent.

6.0 Pre-Application Consultation Meetings Held

6.1. A total of 3 No. pre-application consultation meetings were held between the prospective applicant and the Commission's representatives over a number of years. Copies of the prospective applicant's presentations and meeting records are on file for each meeting. The principal matters arising were as follows:

6.2. **Meeting 1: 23rd September 2021**

- Surveying methodologies.
- Turbine foundations and impacts on hydrology/hydrogeology.
- EPA Licence, rehabilitation and implications for proposed development.
- Peat stability.

6.3. **Meeting 2: 23rd January 2025**

- Grid connection.
- Water Framework Directive.
- Public consultation.
- Location of particular turbines with respect to areas deemed suitable for wind energy.
- Bird survey results.

6.4. **Meeting 3: 10th December 2025**

- Life span of proposed development.
- RED III issues.
- Confirmation that no design flexibility opinion to be sought.

- Policy issues.
- EPA Licence and implications of rewetting and rehabilitation for baseline of assessment.
- Consultation with public and prescribed bodies.
- Traffic issues.
- Cultural heritage.
- Noise.
- Hydrology and hydrogeology.
- Cumulative impact assessment approach.
- Biodiversity and ornithology.
- Peat stability.

7.0 Legislation

7.1. Planning and Development Act 2000, as Amended

7.1.1. Section 2(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended ('the Act'), defines 'strategic infrastructure' as including, inter alia:

> "(a) any proposed development in respect of which a notice has been served under section 37B(4)(a),"

7.1.2. Section 37A of the Act states that:

> "(1) An application for permission for any development specified in the Seventh Schedule (inserted by the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006) shall, if the following condition is satisfied, be made to the Commission under section 37E and not to a planning authority.
>
> (2) That condition is that, following consultations under section 37B, the Commission serves on the prospective applicant a notice in writing under that section stating that, in the opinion of the Commission, the proposed development would, if carried out, fall within one or more of the following paragraphs, namely—

(a) the development would be of strategic economic or social importance to the State or the region in which it would be situate,

(b) the development would contribute substantially to the fulfilment of any of the objectives in the National Planning Framework or in any regional spatial and economic strategy in force in respect of the area or areas in which it would be situate

(c) the development would have a significant effect on the area of more than one planning authority."

7.1.3. The current SID thresholds are set out within the 7th Schedule of the Act. The relevant threshold for the proposed project is "an installation for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (a wind farm) with more than 25 turbines or having a total output greater than 50 megawatts".

8.0 Environmental Impact Assessment

8.1. Section 37E(1) of the Act requires that an application for permission for development in respect of which a notice has been served under section 37B(4)(a) shall be made to the Commission and shall be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report in respect of the proposed development. Therefore, the submission of an EIAR is mandatory.

9.0 Appropriate Assessment

9.1. The nearest European Sites are Ferbane Bog SAC, located c. 2.3km west of the site and Mongan Bog SPA, located c. 8.6km from the site

9.2. There is also a hydrological connection between the site and the River Shannon Callows SAC and the Middle Shannon Callows SPA.

9.3. The applicant intends to submit a Natura Impact Statement with the application.

10.0 Assessment

10.1. Seventh Schedule Development

10.1.1. The proposed development will comprise the construction of a wind farm with 15 No. wind turbines and a total installed capacity of 90MW.

10.1.2. The relevant SID thresholds set out within the 7th Schedule of the Act are ng and Development Act 2000, as amended. The relevant threshold for the proposed project is "an installation for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (a wind farm) with more than 25 turbines or having a total output greater than 50 megawatts"

10.1.3. Having regard to the 90MW capacity of the proposed development, I am satisfied that the development accords with Section 37A(1) of the Act.

10.2. Section 37A(2) Criteria

10.2.1. Accordingly, under Section 37A(2) of the Act, the proposed development must fall within one or more of the following conditions:

10.2.2. (a) the development would be of strategic economic or social importance to the State or the region in which it would be situate

10.2.3. The development would be of strategic economic and social importance to the region due to the significant economic investment it entails in the region, as well as to the State as a whole. The development also has the potential to make a significant contribution to meeting the State's renewable energy targets, and those set out for the region under the revised NPF. It will assist in meeting the objectives of the Climate Action Plans 2024 and 2025 in a sustainable way through the provision of 15 No. wind turbines which will be connected to the national grid. The proposed development will assist in meeting national renewable energy targets and will also result in reductions in carbon emissions from electricity generation and reduce the country's reliance on fossil fuels.

10.2.4. Having regard to the national and regional policy context and the details of the subject proposal outlined above, I am satisfied that the development would be of strategic economic importance to the State and the Region and would, therefore, comply with the condition set out in section 37A(2)(a) of the Act.

10.2.5. (b) the development would contribute substantially to the fulfilment of any of the objectives in the National Planning Framework or in any regional spatial and economic strategy in force in respect of the area or areas in which it would be situate,

10.2.6. National Strategic Outcome (NSO) 8 of the Revised National Planning Framework (NPF), 'transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society'. NSO 8 states that:

> "The electricity sector faces a significant challenge to meet its requirements under the targets set out in Climate Action Plan 2024. Electricity will also play a key role in the decarbonisation of other sectors through electrification, including transport, heating, and industry.
>
> The accelerated delivery of additional renewable electricity generation is therefore essential for Ireland to meet its climate targets, reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, and improve its energy security by reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels and diversifying its electricity supply.
>
> New energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generating system, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy to the major sources of demand."

10.2.7. As part of NSO 8, the following targets are noted in relation to Green Energy:

> "Deliver 80% of our electricity needs from renewable sources by 2030 with a strategic aim to increase renewable deployment in line with EU targets and National policy objectives out to 2030 and beyond. It is expected that this increase in renewable deployment will lead to a greater diversity of renewable technologies in the mix."

10.2.8. The following National Policy Objectives (NPOs) are also noted:

- **NPO 70:** Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a climate neutral economy by 2050.
- **NPO 74:** Each Regional Assembly must plan, through their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, for the delivery of the regional renewable electricity

capacity allocations indicated for onshore wind and solar reflected in Table 9.1 below, and identify allocations for each of the local authorities, based on the best available scientific evidence and in accordance with legislative requirements, in order to meet the overall national target.

- **NPO 75:** Local Authorities shall plan for the delivery of Target Power Capacity (MW) allocations consistent with the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, through their City and County Development Plans.

10.2.9. Table 9.1 of the Revised NPF, which is referenced in NPO 74, sets a regional electricity capacity allocation for the Eastern and Midlands Region of 1,966MW for onshore wind.

10.2.10. The NPF also states that "opportunities also exist for co-location of renewable technology in areas, alongside transport infrastructure corridors, within forestry lands, and on industrial and post-industrial peatlands". Similarly, under the heading of 'Making a Just Transition – Peatlands', the NPF states that: "in relation to peatlands, some of Ireland's cutaway bogs are suitable to facilitate the generation of energy, most notably wind/biomass."

10.2.11. A number of 'key future planning and development and place-making policy priorities for the Eastern and Midland Region' are set out in the Revised NPF, including:

> " Developing the potential of the region in renewable energy terms, in accordance with the capacity allocation targets set out in Chapter 9: Climate Transition and Our Environment, across the technological spectrum from wind and solar to biomass and, where applicable, wave energy, focusing in particular on the extensive tracts of publicly owned peat extraction areas in order to support a managed just transition of local economies to greener energy."

10.2.12. I consider that the proposed development, being a renewable energy project, would contribute to the fulfilment of NSO 8 and NPOs 70 and 74 of the Revised NPF and would assist the Eastern and Midlands Region in meeting its onshore wind allocation under the NPF and with regard to NPO 75, would assist Offaly County Council in contributing to the regional obligation. As detailed above, the use of former peat extraction areas for renewable energy projects is also supported by the Revised NPF.

10.2.13. With regard to the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region (RSES), I note Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 10.20:

- **RPO 10.20:** Support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity and gas supplies, and associated networks, to serve the existing and future needs of the Region and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this Strategy. This Includes the delivery of the necessary integration of transmission network requirements to facilitate linkages of renewable energy proposals to the electricity and gas transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.

10.2.14. The RSES also states that:

> "Local authorities should harness the potential of renewable energy in the Region across the technological spectrum from wind and solar to biomass and, where applicable, wave energy, focusing in particular on the extensive tracts of publicly owned peat extraction areas in order to enable a managed transition of the local economies of such areas in gaining the economic benefits of greener energy. The provision of infrastructure should be supported in order to facilitate a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system, harnessing both on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting sites of optimal energy production to the major sources of demand."

10.2.15. Having regard to the above, I am satisfied that the development would meet relevant National Policy Objectives of the Revised NPF and would serve to fulfil the relevant Regional Policy Objectives of the RSES for the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly. The development would, therefore, satisfy the requirement set out in section 37A(2)(b) of the Act.

10.2.16. <u>(c) the development would have a significant effect on the area of more than one planning authority.</u>

10.2.17. The project, including the wind farm, grid connection and turbine delivery route works are all entirely located within Co. Offaly.

10.2.18. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not have a significant effect on the area of more than one planning authority. The proposed development would not, therefore, satisfy the requirement set out in section 37A(2)(c) of the Act.

10.3. Prescribed Bodies

10.3.1. In view of the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, as set out in the prospective applicant's submissions and in this report, it is recommended that the prospective applicant consult with the prescribed bodies listed in Appendix 1, in respect of any future application for approval.

10.4. Schedule of Information to Inform the Completeness Check

10.4.1. Attached at Appendix 2 is a Schedule of Information which is considered necessary to submit in order to facilitate the undertaking of the Completeness Check under Section 37JA of the Act.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1. Based on the foregoing assessment, it can be concluded that the proposed development would exceed the threshold set out in the Seventh Schedule of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and therefore satisfies Section 37A(1) of the Act. It can also be concluded that the development is of strategic importance by reference to the requirements of Section 37A(2)(a) and Section 37A(2)(b) of the Act.

11.2. I recommend that the Commission serve a notice on the prospective applicant, pursuant to Section 37(B)(4) of the Act, stating that it is of the opinion that the proposed development constitutes a strategic infrastructure development within the meaning of Section 37A of the Act for the reasons and considerations set out below.

REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Having regard to the size, scale and location of the proposed wind farm and related development, and to the policy context, it is considered that the proposed

development of 15 No. wind turbines with an estimated generating capacity of 90MW, a 220kV substation, 220kV overhead line connection to the existing 220kV Shannonbridge-Maynooth 220kV transmission line and associated development on a site at Lemanaghan and adjacent townlands, Co. Offaly, constitutes development that falls within the definition of energy infrastructure in the Seventh Schedule of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, thereby satisfying the requirements set out in Section 37A(1) of the Act.

The proposed development is also considered to be of strategic importance by reference to the requirements of sections 37A(2)(a) and 37A(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

An application for permission for the proposed development must, therefore, be made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála under Section 37E of the Act.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.

Niall Haverty
Senior Planning Inspector

17th February 2026

Appendix 1: Prescribed Bodies

- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment
- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
- Offaly County Council
- Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Uisce Éireann
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Irish Aviation Authority
- Health Service Executive
- Office of Public Works
- Environmental Protection Agency
- EirGrid
- ESB Networks
- An Taisce
- Heritage Council
- An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- Fáilte Ireland

Further notifications should also be made, where deemed appropriate.

Appendix 2: Schedule of Information to Inform the Completeness Check

This Schedule of Information seeks to provide details which will facilitate An Coimisiún Pleanála in undertaking the Completeness Check required by Section 37JA of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in order to process the application. It shall not be construed as comprising an assessment of the application documentation or a consideration of the merits of the proposed development.

Details of Proposed Development at Closure	
Pre-Application Ref.	ABP-310844-21
Prospective Applicant:	Lemanaghan Wind Farm DAC
Date of Final Meeting:	10th December 2025
Number of Turbines:	15
Design Flexibility opinion:	No
Is Grid Connection Included:	Yes
Is a BESS included:	No
Accommodating works for TDR:	Yes

Information

Plans and Particulars	
Public Notice	• Time Period for Consultation and Fee for Submissions • Standalone website address • EIAR and NIS referenced • Reference to RED III and Section 37JA

	• All townlands within the site boundary to be correctly referenced. • Copies of notices to be submitted
Prescribed Bodies	Notification of all Prescribed Bodies and a copy of the correspondence sent to same.
Land Ownership	• Interest in land • Written consent of all other landowners (Inc. legally binding agreement & land registry map if required)
Design Flexibility	Design flexibility not sought.
Fee	Details of appropriate fee payment
Application Form	Completed form to be submitted
EIA Portal	Letter from Portal
Planning Report	• Renewable Energy Designation Policy Statement • Statement outlining compliance with all relevant policies and objectives in the County Development Plan, including a justification for material contravention of same if relevant. • Consultation overview • Community Benefit Fund • Planning history
Drawings	• Drawing Schedule • Site location map • Site layout plan • Plans, elevations, sections and cross-sections • Wayleaves shown • Grid Connection Route • Scales appropriate

EIAR	
No design Flex	15 No. wind turbines with a tip height of 220m, hub height of 145m and rotor diameter of 150m
Non-Technical Summary	Provided as a standalone section
Introduction	• Legislative context • Scoping Consultation • Community Engagement Report • Methodology/ methodologies for the assessment of the environmental factors and for the description and consideration of the significance of effects • Study Area(s) and justification for same. • Project Team (Author qualifications, experience and expertise) • Technical Difficulties/Limitations
Description of the Proposed Development	• Detailed description (all stages) of the characteristics of the proposed development including use of natural resources, production of waste, emissions & disturbances • Construction Environmental Management Plan • Decommissioning Plan • Waste & Resource Management Plan
Consideration of Alternatives	• Site selection & design process • Reasonable alternatives considered (Layout, scale, technologies, grid connection, turbine delivery, substation infrastructure, construction methodology etc.)

Population and Human Health	• Population & settlement patterns • Economic activity & employment • Tourism & amenities (incl. recreational trails) • Human health & wellbeing (reference up to date studies/research) • Property devaluation/house prices (reference up to date studies/research)
Biodiversity	• Derogations (if required) • Ecological Impact Assessment • Terrestrial Surveys (habitats, protected flora, invasive plant species, mammals, amphibians and reptiles as relevant) • Aquatic Surveys (habitats, macroinvertebrate, electro-fishing, fisheries as relevant) • Bat Surveys (to include as relevant): o Preliminary Roost Assessment Surveys, o Bat activity transect surveys, o Static bat detector deployments, o Emergence/re-entry bat roost, • Extent and location of tree/hedge removal • Biodiversity Enhancement Areas/Management Plan (to clearly address interaction with rehabilitation of IPC licenced site) • Invasive Species Management Plan
Ornithology	• Surveys (vantage point, breeding & non-breeding, hinterland, dusk, walkover, roost & winter surveys as relevant)

	• Connectivity with European Sites • Collision Risk Model (CRM) Assessment • Monitoring programme • Cumulative assessment
Noise and Vibration	• Baseline noise levels • Map of all receptors within 4 x tip of turbines (to include any extant planning permissions) • Predicted noise levels • Proposed noise limits (cumulative) • Operational noise monitoring proposals • Mitigation strategy for operational Amplitude Modulation and Tonal Noises • Cumulative noise assessment
Shadow Flicker	• Map of all receptors (to include any extant planning permissions) • Shadow flicker analysis • Wind turbine control measures
Air and Climate	• Carbon Impact Assessment including Embodied Energy Assessment and Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment • Dust generation/emissions and management • Vehicle emissions and management
Land, Soils & Geology	• Ground Condition Assessment (incl): o Ground Investigations Report o Site Investigations Report o Ground and surface water monitoring results o Peat Stability Risk Assessment and Report

	○ Slope Stability Analysis • Peat and Spoil Management Plan
Hydrology, Hydrogeology & Water Quality	• Hydrological Assessment • Hydrogeological Assessment • Flood Risk Assessment • Surface water/Drainage Management Plan • Standalone Water Framework Directive Compliance Report • Emergency Response Plan • Water Quality Management Plan
Landscape & Visual	• Photomontages • ZTV Analysis (min. 20km radius from development site) • Landscape Character Assessment • Viewpoint Assessment
Traffic & Transportation	• Turbine Delivery Route & Swept Path Analysis • Haul Route & Swept Path Analysis • Traffic and Transport Assessment • Traffic Management Plan (including Construction traffic) • Stage 1 Road Safety Audit
Material Assets	• Gas/ESB networks, as relevant • Telecommunications Impact Study • Aviation Review Statement • Any other relevant material assets identified in consultation process

Cultural Heritage	• Heritage Impact Assessment • Archaeological Impact Assessment
Major Accidents and Disasters	• Construction Stage • Operational Stage • Impact of Climate Change
Cumulative Assessment	Projects considered should be clearly identified and the location of the cumulative assessment clearly labelled within each Chapter as relevant.
Interactions of the Foregoing	Description of interactions between factors.
Compendium of Mitigation Measures	• Intent expressed for the implementation of mitigation measures to be clearly set out as – 'shall'. • Commitments need to be expressed clearly and be specific.
Appendices	All appendices and sub appendices to be submitted in hard and soft copy. To include: • Glossary of Terms • Noise Survey Results & Calibration Certificates • Material Volume Calculations • Statement of Competency • Other relevant documents
AA Screening Report	• Author qualifications, experience and expertise • Methodology • Zone of Influence (ZOI) and identification of relevant European Sites to be based on a Source-

	Pathway-Receptor Model using the precautionary principle • Must include consideration of: Ferbane Bog SAC, Mongan Bog SPA, River Shannon Callows SAC, Middle Shannon Callows SPA
NIS	• Author qualifications, experience and expertise • Methodology • Biodiversity & Ornithology Surveys for QI & SCI species and habitats in accordance with Best Practice • Consideration of relevant Hydrological, hydrogeological & water reports/assessments* • Consideration of relevant Land, soils & geology reports/assessments* • Assessment in view of Conservation Objectives • Compendium of Mitigation Measures (Intent expressed for implementation of mitigation measures – 'shall') • Clear statement on site integrity in view of Conservation Objectives * As stipulated above for EIAR.
Appendices	All appendices and sub appendices to be submitted in hard and soft copy.
Other Documents (To include):	
Civil Engineering Report	• Site Entrances • Access Tracks • Wind turbines • Cable routes & connections

	• Substation (Compound & Buildings) • Meteorological Mast • Temporary construction compounds • Borrow Pits & Deposition Areas • Haul Route • Turbine Delivery Route • Surface Water Design • Wastewater • Potable Water • Decommissioning & Restoration