



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ACP 321826-25

Development	15 no. turbines, a substation and all associated works.
Location	Maughanaclea and adjacent townlands Co. Cork
Prospective Applicant	Maughanaclea Ltd.
Type of Application	Pre-Application Consultation under Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.
Planning Authority	Cork County Council
Date of Site Inspection	12/03/25
Inspector	Pauline Fitzpatrick

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. The Commission received a request dated 7th February 2025 to enter into pre-application consultations under Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, in relation to a proposed windfarm, 110kV substation, grid connection and associated works at Maughanaclea and adjacent townlands Co. Cork.
- 1.2. The applicant sought closure of the pre-application consultation by correspondence dated 11th December 2025.

2.0 Site Location

- 2.1. The site subject of the pre-applications consultation is located in West Cork approx. 1.8 km east of Kealkill village, 10km north-west of Bantry and 12.5km west of Dunmanway.
- 2.2. The site comprises of two land parcels to either side of regional road R585. The northern cluster within the townlands of Coomclogh, Gortnaloughra, Ballynamought, Maughanaclea and Cousane is situated on the south-westerly slopes of Shehy Beg in the Shehy Mountains. It comprises of a mix of commercial coniferous forestry, wet grassland, degraded wet heath and shallow blanket bog.
- 2.3. The southern land parcel is within the townlands of Maughanaclea, Kealkill, Maularaha, Ardrah, Gortnacowly, Coomleagh West and Cousane and is on the western slopes of Maughanaclea Hills. It comprises a mix of commercial coniferous forestry, moors and heathland, blanket bog and grassland.
- 2.4. The route of the grid connection to the Dunmanway 110kV substation will be along the R585, L4909, L4609, L4615, R587, L4621 and R586.
- 2.5. The nearest European Site is Bandon River SAC c. 10km to the east.

3.0 Description of Proposal

3.1. As Originally Submitted

The development as proposed in the initial submission of the 7th February, 2025 entailed:

- 15 no. turbines with a ground to blade tip height of up to 176.5 metres and a rotor diameter of up to 150 metres (under review)
- Access roads and entrances
- Borrow pits and spoil management areas
- Temporary construction compounds
- Permanent meteorological mast
- 110kV substation
- Underground grid connection to the existing Dunmanway 110kV substation

3.2. Proposed Scheme at Time of Closure

As refined during the course of the pre-application consultations the proposed development will include the following:

- 14 no. turbines with an overall tip height of 169 metres and rotor diameter of 133 metres and hub height of 102.5 metres and associated foundations and hard standing areas,
- 3 no. construction compounds
- 4 no. borrow pits,
- 30 metre high meteorological mast
- 110kV substation,
- Underground electrical (110kV) and communications cabling to Dunmanway substation,
- Underground electrical (33kV) and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines and meteorological mast to the on-site substation.
- Upgrade of existing and provision of new site tracks/roads,
- Upgrade to existing site entrance off R585 and provisions of new entrance off R585,
- Forestry felling,
- Peat and Spoil management.

- Biodiversity management and enhancement measures,
- Site drainage,
- Site signage
- All associated site development and ancillary works.

4.0 Planning History

No relevant planning history on the site.

The following provides a summary of other windfarm proposals within a 25km radius of the site:

Ref. No.	Description	Approx. Distance from Proposal
ACP 322743-25	8 no. turbines and associated works (Gortloughra Wind Farm) Co. Cork 1 st Party appeal v. PA's decision to refuse. Decision pending	c. 1.5km to north east (borders the Shehy windfarm below)
PL04.243486	12 no. turbines and associated works at Shehy More Co. Cork Grant subject to conditions	c. 2km to the north east
ABP 315656-23 (ABP 308244-20 decision quashed)	7 turbines and associated works at townlands of Derreendonee etc. Co. Cork Refuse permission	c. 5km to north west
PL04.246353	5 no. turbines and associated works (Carrigarierk Wind Farm), Co. Cork Grant subject to conditions	c.8 km to north east
ABP 313261-22	3 no. turbines and associated works. (Extension to Carrigarierk Wind Farm	c. 8km to north east

	permitted under PL04.246353) Co.Cork Grant subject to conditions	
PL04.246742	11 no. turbines and associated works at townlands of Derragh etc. Co. Cork Grant subject to conditions Leave to apply for substitute consent granted.	c. 12km to the north/north-east
ABP-314602-22	14 no. turbines and associated works at townlands of Cahernacaha etc, Co. Kerry. Grant subject to conditions	c. 12 km to the north
ABP-319741-24	Repowering of Kilgarvan wind farm, Co. Kerry. Removal of 28 no. turbines and erection of 11 no. turbines. Grant subject to conditions	c.17 km to the north
ABP-317240-23	7 no. turbines and associated works at townlands of Shronagree etc. Bantry, Co. Cork Refuse permission	c.19 km to south-west
ABP-308210-20	6 no. turbines and associated works at townlands of Lackareagh etc. Teerelton, Co. Cork Grant subject to conditions	c. 22 km to north east
ABP 321029-24	17 no. wind turbines and related works at townlands straddling Co. Kerry/Co. Cork border	c. 23km to the north

	Decision pending	
--	------------------	--

5.0 Prospective Applicant's Case

The prospective applicant's case can be summarised as follows:

- The proposed development is strategic development as defined under the 7th Schedule of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, given that the project comprises a windfarm which would have an output greater than 50 MW.
- The proposal satisfies two of the criteria set out in section 37A(2) of the Act and therefore is strategic infrastructure development namely:
 - (a) The capital investment required for the construction of such a project, when combined with the commercial rates, contributions and community gain proposals, will cumulatively represent a significant economic construction to the region if not the country as a whole.
 - (b) It is in accordance with the promotion of sustainable energy development as set out in the provisions of Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework and Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan with reference made to NPF 1st Revision Policy Objective 70. It is also in accordance with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region with reference made to regional policy objectives (RPOs) 87, 95, 98 and 99.

The site and grid connection are located entirely within the functional area of Cork County Council. On this basis section 37A(2)(c) is not applicable.

6.0 Pre-Application Consultations

2 no. meetings were held between the Commission and the prospective applicant on the 28th March 2025 and 18th November 2025. Full details of the meetings and matters discussed are contained in the Commission's records for the meetings. The principal matters arising related to:

- Output of the proposed development,

- Nature and extent development and design flexibility,
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment,
- Cumulative impacts with existing, permitted and proposed developments,
- Roads and access including works if required along turbine delivery route,
- Cultural Heritage and archaeological assessment,
- Site drainage,
- Grid connection route,
- Tree felling required,
- Ornithology
- Consultations with prescribed bodies including NPWS.
- Biodiversity enhancement plans,
- Hydrology and aquatic baseline,
- Peat stability,
- Residential amenities and nearest sensitive receptors in terms of noise and shadow flicker,
- Health impacts

The prospective applicant confirmed that battery energy storage system is not proposed as part of the proposed development. It was also confirmed that design flexibility is not being sought.

Consultation with NPWS was outlined at the meeting of the 18th November.

The transposition of the RED III Directive was noted at the meeting of the 18th November. The prospective applicant was advised that a schedule of information will be provided with the SID determination which will inform the required completeness check to be undertaken on the lodgement of the application.

7.0 Legislative Provisions

7.1. Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

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)',

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 significant effect on the area of more than one planning authority.

Class 1 of the Seventh Schedule relates to energy infrastructure and includes the following category of development:

'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'.

7.2. European Union (Planning and Development)(Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025

This transposed the RED III Directive into Irish legislation with the majority of the provisions coming into effect on 7th August 2025.

In addition to introducing mandatory permit granting timelines it also introduces a completeness check process which commences once the application is received.

7.3. Environmental Impact Assessment

Section 37E(1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, 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 (EIAR) in respect of the proposed development. Therefore, the submission of an EIAR is mandatory.

7.4. Appropriate Assessment

Bandon River SAC (site code 002171) is c. 10km to the south-east of the wind farm site. Sections of the local road network to the north of Dunmanway along which the grid connection route is to run are within the SAC boundary.

The prospective applicant intends to submit a Natura Impact Assessment.

8.0 Assessment

The proposed development will comprise of 14 no. turbines each with a generating capacity of 4.8MW resulting in a total generating capacity of 67.2MW. A 110kV substation with underground grid connection cable to the existing 110kV substation at Dunmanway will also form part of the application

The current SID thresholds are set out within the 7th Schedule of the Planning 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'. Having regard to the combined generating capacity of the proposed development, I am satisfied that the development accords with Section 37A(1) of the Act.

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

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

The prospective applicant's case is that the proposal satisfies the conditions under 37A(2)(a) of the Act due to the scale of the project which would generate more than 50MW.

The development would be of strategic economic and social importance to the state due to the significant economic contribution to the region and to the country as a whole. The development has the potential to have a significant impact in meeting the State's renewable energy targets, it will meet the objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and it will do so in a sustainable way through the provision of 14 no. 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.

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 requirements set out in section 37A(2)(a) of the Act.

(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,

The prospective applicant states that the proposed development would contribute to the objectives of the NPF and the provisions of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Regional Assembly. Having reviewed the NPF 1st Revision published in April 2025, I note National Policy Objective 70 which seeks to 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. I also note that Table 9.1 in the NPF allocates an

additional onshore wind capacity of 978 MW wind for the Southern Region to be realised by 2030.

At a regional level I note that the RSES for the Southern Region and, in particular Objective RPO 99, seeks to support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on shore and off shore) at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the region in compliance with national Wind Energy Guidelines.

Having regard to the above, I am satisfied that the development would meet the relevant national policy objectives of the NPF and would serve to fulfil the relevant regional policy objectives of the RSES for the Southern Regional Assembly. The development would, therefore, satisfy the requirements set out in section 37A(2)(b) of the Act.

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

The site is fully contained within the area of one planning authority, Cork County Council. I am satisfied that the proposed development will not have a significant effect on the area of more than one planning authority.

Accordingly, I am of the opinion that the proposal would not come within the scope of this requirement to be considered as complying with section 37A(2)(c) of the Act.

8.1. Prescribed Bodies

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

8.2. Schedule of Information to Inform the Completeness Check

Appendix 2 contains a schedule of information to inform the completeness check as required by Section 37JA of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.

9.0 Recommendation

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.

I recommend that the Commission serve a notice on the prospective applicant, pursuant to Section 37(B)(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, stating that it is of the opinion that the proposed development which comprises the following:

- 14 no. turbines with an overall tip height of 169 metres and rotor diameter of 133 metres and hub height of 102.5 metres and associated foundations and hard standing areas,
- 3 no. construction compounds
- 4 no. borrow pits,
- 30 metre high meteorological mast
- 110kV substation,
- Underground electrical (110kV) and communications cabling to Dunmanway substation,
- Underground electrical (33kV) and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines and meteorological mast to the on-site substation.
- Upgrade of existing and provision of new site tracks/roads,
- Upgrade to existing site entrance off R585 and provisions of new entrance off R585,
- Forestry felling,
- Peat and Spoil management.
- Biodiversity management and enhancement measures,

- Site drainage,
- Site signage,
- All associated site development and ancillary works.

would constitute a strategic infrastructure development within the meaning of Section 37A of the Act for the reasons and considerations set out below.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the size, scale and location of the proposed windfarm and related development, and to the policy context, it is considered that the proposed development of 14 no. wind turbines with an estimated generating capacity of 67.2MW, a 110 kV substation, and underground grid connection to the 110kV substation at Dunmanway on a site at Maughanaclea and adjacent townlands Co. Cork 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 Section 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 Bord 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, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.


Pauline Fitzpatrick
Senior Planning Inspector

28th January, 2026

Appendix 1 – Prescribed Bodies

- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media
- Cork County Council
- Southern Regional Assembly
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- An Chomhairle Ealaíon (Arts Council)
- The Heritage Council
- Fáilte Ireland
- An Taisce
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Irish Aviation Authority
- HSE
- The Commission for Regulation of Utilities

Further notifications should also be made where deemed appropriate.

Appendix 2 - Schedule of Information required 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 321826-25
Prospective Applicant:	Maughanaclea Ltd.
Date of Final Meeting:	16 th November 2025
Number of Turbines:	14
Design Flexibility opinion:	No
Is Grid Connection Included:	Yes
Is a BESS included:	No
Accommodating works for TDR:	No

Information

Plans and Particulars	
Public Notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time period for consultation and fee for submissions • Standalone website address • EIAR and NIS referenced • Reference to Section 37JA

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All townlands within the site boundary to be correctly referenced.
Prescribed Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of all Prescribed Bodies and a copy of the correspondence sent to same.
Land Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in land • Written consent of all other landowners (incl. legally binding agreement & land registry map if required)
Design Flexibility	Design flexibility not sought.
Fee	
EIA Portal	Letter from Portal
Planning Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	14 no. turbines with an overall tip height of 169 metres and rotor diameter of 133 metres and hub height of 102.5 metres
Non-Technical Summary	To be provided as a standalone section.
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site selection & design process • Reasonable alternatives considered (layout, scale, technologies, grid connection, turbine delivery, substation infrastructure, construction methodology etc.)

<p>Population and Human Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)
<p>Biodiversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological Impact Assessment • Terrestrial Surveys (habitat protected flora, invasive plant species, mammals, amphibians and reptiles as relevant) • Bat Surveys (to include as relevant): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preliminary Roost Assessment Surveys, ○ Bat activity transect surveys, ○ Static bat detector deployments, ○ Emergence/re-entry bat roost, • Aquatic surveys (incl. river habitat, macroinvertebrate, electro-fishing, fisheries as relevant) • Extent and location of tree felling • Invasive Species Management Plan. • Derogations (required/obtained) • Biodiversity Enhancement Areas and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (incl. extent and location of priority habitat to be lost)
<p>Ornithology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys (vantage point, breeding & non-breeding, hinterland, Dusk, walkover, roost & winter surveys as relevant) • Connectivity with European sites • Collision Risk Model (CRM) Assessment • Cumulative assessment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Programme
Noise and Vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of all receptors (to include any extant planning permissions) • Shadow flicker analysis • Wind turbine control measures
Air and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon Impact Assessment including Embodied Energy Assessment and Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment • Dust generation/emissions and management • Vehicle emissions and management
Land, Soils & Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground Condition Assessment (incl): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ground Investigations Report ○ Site Investigations Report ○ Peat Stability Risk Assessment and Report ○ Slope Stability Analysis • Peat and Spoil Management Plan
Hydrology, Hydrogeology & Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrological Assessment • Hydrogeological Assessment • Flood Risk Assessment • Surface water/Drainage Management Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standalone Water Framework Directive Compliance Report • Emergency Response Plan
Landscape & Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photomontages • Landscape and Visual Assessment to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ZTV Analysis (25km radius from development site). ○ Landscape Character Assessment ○ Viewpoint Assessment
Traffic & Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunications Impact Study • Any other relevant material assets identified in consultation process
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Impact Assessment • Archaeological Impact Assessment
Major Accidents and Disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Stage • Operational Stage • Impact of Climate Change
Cumulative Assessment	<p>Projects considered should be clearly identified and the location of the cumulative assessment clearly labelled within each chapter as relevant. Assessment to include existing, permitted and proposed wind farm development within a 25 km radius of the site.</p>

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glossary of Terms • Noise survey results & calibration certificates • Material volume calculations • Statement of competency • Other relevant documents
AA Screening report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Bandon River SAC
NIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author qualifications, experience and expertise • Methodology • Biodiversity & Ornithology Surveys for QI & SCI species and habitats in accordance with Best Practice • Consideration of relevant land, soils & geology reports/assessments* • Consideration of relevant hydrological, hydrogeological & water reports/assessments* • Assessment in view of conservation objectives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compendium of Mitigation Measures (intent expressed for implementation of mitigation measures – ‘shall’) • Clear statement on site integrity in view of conservation objectives <p><i>* As stipulated above for EIAR.</i></p>
Appendices	All appendices and sub appendices to be submitted in hard and soft copy.
Other Documents (To include):	
Civil Engineering Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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