

## Lauren Murphy

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**From:** Virginia Cosgrove <vcosgrove@MayoCoCo.ie>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 27, 2024 3:33 PM  
**To:** Lauren Murphy  
**Subject:** Glenora Wind Farm SID Your reference  
**Attachments:** Glenora Windfarm SID.pdf; Report on Glenora Windfarm.pdf; Council Meeting Note 25-Mar-2024 Glenora Windfarm.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Good afternoon Lauren,

Please see the correspondence attached in relation to Glenora SID:

1. a copy of the signed CE Report in respect of the Glenora Strategic Infrastructure Development.
2. A informal record/note of the views of the elected members on the Glenora SID - taken at the Council meeting held on Monday last (25<sup>th</sup> March 2024).

Please note that the formal admin. record of the meeting will not be available until after the next Council meeting, which is to be held in April 2024. The Admin. Record will be forwarded after meeting minutes are formally adopted at the April meeting.

A hardcopy has been sent by registered post.

Kindest regards,  
Virginia

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**BY REGISTERED POST**

Ms Lauren Murphy,  
An Bord Pleanála,  
64 Marlborough St.,  
Dublin 1

**AN BORD PLEANÁLA**  
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ABP- \_\_\_\_\_  
28 MAR 2024  
Fee: € \_\_\_\_\_ Type: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: 9:47 By: reg post

27 March 2024

**ABP-318701-23 (Pre application reference ABP-310528-21) - Glenora Strategic Infrastructure Development**

Dear Ms Murphy,

Please see attached the following documents in relation to the Glenora Strategic Infrastructure Development:

1. A copy of the signed CE Report in respect of the Glenora Strategic Infrastructure Development.
2. An informal record/note of the views of the elected members on the Glenora SID - taken at the Council meeting held on Monday last (25 March 2024).

Yours sincerely,

*Ann. Mairé Beall*  
of Mary Gordon A.O.,  
Planning & Development

ENCS

**Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)  
Strategic Infrastructure Act 2006**

**Report to Elected Members as required by Section 37E(4) of the Planning & Development Act 2000  
(as amended)**

<b>An Bord Pleanála Ref No:</b>	ABP 318701 ABP-310528-21 (pre-app ref.)
<b>Applicant:</b>	Glenora Wind Farm (DAC)
<b>Received:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
<b>Agent:</b>	MKO (McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan Ltd. t/a MKO)
<b>Site Location: (townlands)</b>	Glenora, Altderg, Keerglen, Ballykinletteragh, Ballycastle, Ballyglass, Killeena, Glencullin and Lugnalettin, County Mayo
<b>Proposed Development (summary):</b>	<p><b>The proposed development will comprise the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 22 no. wind turbines &amp; all associated hard-standing areas. Total blade tip height = 180m; hub height = 99m; and rotor diameter =162m;</li><li>• 1 no. permanent Meteorological Anemometry Mast ( 99m in height) &amp; hard standing area;</li><li>• Upgrade of existing tracks &amp; road, anew permanent site access roads and upgrade of 1 no. existing site entrance including the provision of security cabin with automatic traffic barriers;</li><li>• Temporary widening of sections of the public road (Ballyglass);</li><li>• Provision of a new temporary roadway (Ballyglass) to facilitate delivery of turbine components and other abnormal loads;</li><li>• 1 no. wind farm operation &amp; maintenance control building (Glenora);</li><li>• 3 no. borrow pits;</li><li>• 13 no. peat placement areas;</li><li>• 5 no. temporary construction compounds with temporary site offices and staff facilities;</li><li>• Permanent recreation and amenity works, including marked trails, seating areas, amenity carpark &amp; associated amenity signage.</li><li>• Site drainage;</li><li>• Site signage;</li><li>• Ancillary forestry felling to facilitate construction &amp; operation of the proposed development;</li><li>• Works associated with the habitat enhancement and biodiversity management within site;</li><li>• Associated site development works &amp; ancillary infrastructure.</li></ul>

## 1.0 Purpose of this Report

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and following consultation pursuant to Section 182E of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), An Bord Pleanála has determined that this proposed development constitutes Strategic Infrastructure Development within the meaning of Section 182A of the Act. In such circumstances the normal mechanism of applying to Mayo County Council for planning permission does not apply with the proposal requiring a planning application to be made directly to An Bord Pleanála. Glenora Windfarm, as required, has applied directly to An Bord Pleanála for planning permission.

The purpose of this report is to set out the Planning Authority's required views on the effects of the proposed development on the environment and on the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, having regard in particular to the matters specified in section 34(2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (hereafter referenced as the PDA 2000). The matters specified in section 34(2) are:

- (i) the provisions of the development plan,
- (ia) any guidelines issued by the Minister under section 28,
- (ii) the provisions of any special amenity area order relating to the area,
- (iii) any European site or other area prescribed for the purposes of section 10(2)(c),
- (iv) where relevant, the policy of the Government, the Minister or any other Minister of the Government,
- (v) the matters referred to in subsection [34](4),
- (va) previous developments by the applicant which have not been satisfactorily completed,
- (vb) previous convictions against the applicant for non-compliance with this Act, the Building Control Act 2007 or the Fire Services Act 1981, and
- (vi) any other relevant provision or requirement of this Act, and any regulations made thereunder.

When making its decision in relation to an application under this section, the planning authority shall apply, where relevant, specific planning policy requirements of guidelines issued by the Minister under section 28.

In the interests of clarification, there are no Special Amenity Area Orders (item ii above) in County Mayo. The matters referred to in section 34(4) of the PDA 2000 are those matters which the Planning Authority takes account of and may attach conditions relevant to, during the consideration of a normal planning application.

This report will be submitted for the consideration of An Bord Pleanála as required under Section 37E(4) of the PDA 2000.

## 2.0 Description of the Proposed Development

The proposed development consists of the following components:

- 22 no. wind turbines and all associated hard-standing areas. The following parameters will apply:
  - A total blade tip height of 180m;
  - Hub height of 99m; and
  - Rotor diameter of 162m;
- 1 no. permanent Meteorological Anemometry Mast with a total height of 99m and associated hard standing area;
- Upgrade of existing tracks and roads, provision of new permanent site access roads and upgrade of 1 no. existing site entrance including the provision of 1 no. security cabin with automatic traffic barriers;
- Temporary widening of sections of the public road in the townland of Ballyglass;
- Provision of a new temporary roadway in the townland of Ballyglass to facilitate delivery of turbine components and other abnormal loads;
- 1 no. wind farm operation and maintenance control building in the townland of Glenora;

- 3 no. borrow pits;
- 13no. peat placement areas;
- 5 no. temporary construction compounds with temporary site offices and staff facilities;
- Permanent recreation and amenity works, including marked trails, seating areas, amenity carpark and associated amenity signage.
- Site drainage;
- Site signage;
- Ancillary forestry felling to facilitate construction and operation of the proposed development;
- All works associated with the habitat enhancement and biodiversity management within the proposed windfarm site;
- All associated site development works and ancillary infrastructure.

The projected output of the proposed wind farm is estimated to be c. 158.4MW (7.2MW capacity per turbine). It is intended to connect the proposed development to the national electricity grid via a 110kV underground cable, connecting to the existing Tawnaghmore 110kV substation located 14km southeast of the intended on-site 110kV substation at Tawnaghmore Upper. The proposed cable route (c.26km in length) does not form part of the subject application.

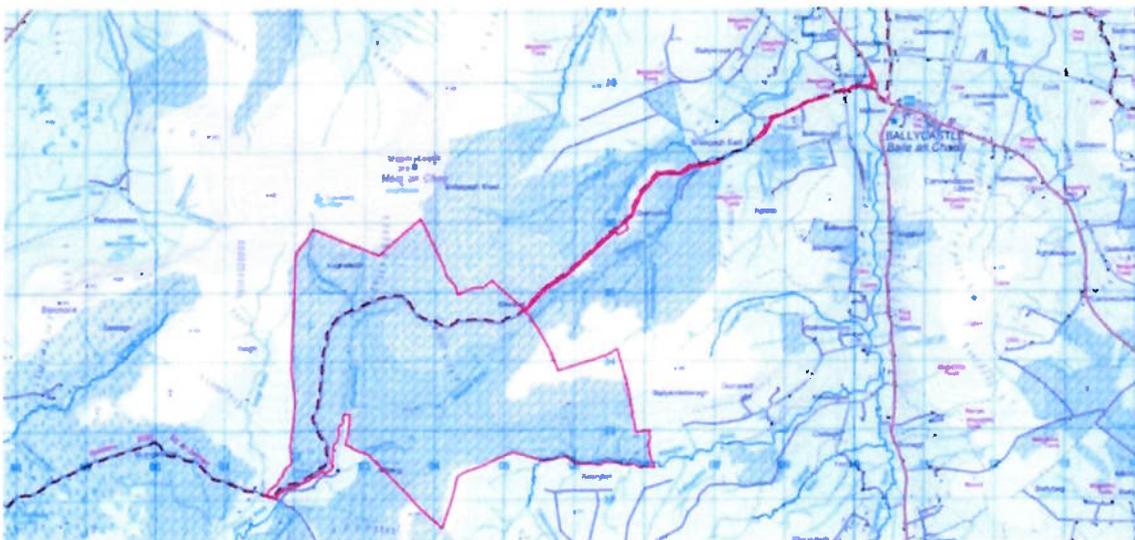
It is intended that a separate application will be made seeking planning permission for the grid connection.

This application is seeking a 10-year planning permission and 35-year operational life of the proposed development from the date of commissioning of the entire proposed development.

The application contains the following documentation:

- Completed planning application form
- Copy of Site notice
- Copy of the newspaper notices (2 no.)
- EIA Portal Confirmation (Portal ID reference number)
- Planning Cover letter to An Bord Pleanála (including landowner consent letters)
- Confirmation of payment of SID planning application
- Copy of notification letters to Prescribed Bodies
- Planning report
- Planning Application Drawings
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), consisting of 3 no. volumes. Vol.1 - Non-technical Summary (NTS) and Main Report; Vol.2 – Photomontage Booklet; Vol.3- EIAR Appendices
- Natura Impact Statement (NIS)

### 3.0 Site Location



The proposed development is located approx. 6.5km s/west of Ballycastle village and 5km south of the of the North Mayo Atlantic coast.

The area of the site is sparsely populated and characterised by commercial coniferous forestry plantation. The location of the proposed turbines is accessible by an existing forestry access road from the east of the site in the townland of Glencora. The access road meets the Ballyglass road c.4.7km northwest of the area of the proposed turbines. There are a number of protected European Sites in the general area of the site, including the Glenamoy Bog Complex Sac (site code: 000500), Bellacorrick Bog Complex SAC (site code: 001922) and Bellacorrick Iron Flush SAC (site code: 000466). In addition to a number of designated Natural Heritage Areas including Inagh Bog NHA (site code: 002391), Ummerantarry Bog NHA (site code 001570), Bellacorrick Bog Complex NHA (site code: 001922) and Forrew Bog NHA (site code: 002432).

The Glenora River flows through the site in a north to south/west direction. The Glencullin River is adjacent to the access road serving the site, flowing in a south to north-east direction. The site is directly adjacent to the Keerglen River (EPA Code: 33K01). The site is within the Blacksod- Broadhaven WFD catchment (33).

## 4.0 Relevant Policy

### 4.1.1 International Energy Policy

Ireland is a party to the UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol which provide an international legal framework to address climate change. On November 4<sup>th</sup> 2016 Ireland and the EU ratified and made effective the Paris Agreement which aims to keep global temperature rise this century to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. This is a legally binding agreement to achieve net zero emissions by the second half of this century, through increasing national determined contributions (NDCs) over time. The NDC for Ireland and all member states will be determined by the EU which has committed to reduce GHG emission by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

In September 2015, Ireland adopted the non-legally binding United Nations' 2030 Agenda (Transforming Our World, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) along with all 193 Member States of the UN, which aims to deliver a more sustainable, prosperous and peaceful future for the entire world, and sets out a framework for how to achieve this by 2030. It sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) covering the social, economic and environmental requirements for a sustainable future, including, inter alia mitigating climate change and providing affordable clean energy.

### 4.1.2 European Energy Policy European Green Deal (2019)

#### **2020 Climate and Energy Package**

This policy sets three key targets - 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels); 20% of EU energy to be from renewables; and 20% improvement in energy efficiency, which was agreed in 2007 and enacted in legislation in 2009. The EU's Effort Sharing Decision addresses the emissions including from housing, agriculture, waste and transport (excluding aviation) through binding annual national targets to 2020. Under the 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework (European Council, adopted 24/10/14, with targets revised 2018) binding EU targets of at least 40% reduction in GHG emissions and at least 23% share of renewable energy for all energy consumed in the EU by in 2030, and at least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency. The EU's Effort Sharing Regulation (EU) 2018/842 lays down obligations on Member States with respect to their minimum contributions for the period from 2021 to 2030 to fulfilling the Union's target of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels in 2030 in the various sectors and contributes to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement. A GHG reduction target of at least 30% applies to Ireland.

#### **Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC (23/04/09)**

The Directive refers to the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources. Article 4 requires each member state to produce a national renewable energy plan to achieve the following: - an overall reduction in GHG emissions of 20%, a 20% increase in energy efficiency and 20% of energy consumption across the EU to come from renewable energy by 2020. Member states are to achieve their individual binding target across the heat, transport and electricity sectors and apart from a sub-target of a minimum of 10% in the transport sector

that applies to all Member States. There is flexibility for each country to choose how to achieve their individual target across the sectors. Ireland's overall target is to achieve 16% of energy from renewable sources by 2020.

#### **Revised Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001/EU (January 2019)**

The Directive sets a new target for the share of energy from renewable sources in the EU of at least 32% for 2030, with a view to increasing the target through legislation by 2023. Member States are required to set national targets to meet, collectively, the binding Union target through integrated national energy and climate plans. The final share of energy from renewable sources for Ireland's gross final consumption of energy from 1st January 2021 must not be lower than 16% and Ireland will be obliged to take the necessary measures to ensure compliance with same.

More recently, the EU Commission has proposed another revision to the Directive, raising the target to 45% (up from 32%) as part of the Fit for 55 package to deliver on the European Green Deal, and as part of REPowerEU in order to step-up our energy independence from fossil fuels given the Russian invasion of the Ukraine.

### 4.1.3 National Energy & Climate Policy

#### **Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021**

Ireland has a legally binding path to net-Zero emissions no later than 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of this decade. A key element, from a local authority perspective, is the requirement to prepare individual Climate Action Plans. These Plans will include both mitigation and adaptation measures and are required to be updated every five years.

Key components of the Act include:

- The Act embeds the process of setting binding and ambitious emissions-reductions targets in law,
- The Act provides for a national climate objective, which commits to pursue and achieve no later than 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy.
- The Act provides that the first two five-year carbon budgets proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council should equate to a total reduction of 51% over the period to 2030, relative to a baseline of 2018.
- The role of the Climate Change Advisory Council has been strengthened, enabling it to propose carbon budgets to the Minister which match our ambition and international obligations.
- The government must adopt carbon budgets that are consistent with the Paris agreement and other international obligations. All forms of greenhouse gas emissions including biogenic methane will be included in the carbon budgets, and carbon removals will be taken into account in setting budgets.
- The Government will determine, following consultation, how to apply the carbon budget across the relevant sectors, and what each sector will contribute in a given five-year period.
- Actions for each sector will be detailed in the Climate Action Plan which must be updated annually,
- Government Ministers will be responsible for achieving the legally binding targets for their own sectoral area with each Minister accounting for their performance towards sectoral targets and actions before an Oireachtas Committee each year.
- Local Authorities must prepare individual Climate Action Plans which will include both mitigation and adaptation measures and will be updated every five years. Local Authority Development Plans must be aligned with their Climate Action Plan.
- Public Bodies will be obliged to take account of Climate Action Plans in the performance of their functions.

#### **Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply**

The Programme for Government commits Ireland to an average 7% per annum reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions from 2021 to 2030 (a 51% reduction over the decade) and to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

In order to contribute to the achievement of these targets, the Government has committed that up to 80% of electricity consumption will come from renewable sources by 2030 on a pathway to net zero emissions. Ensuring continued security of electricity supply is considered a priority at national level and within the overarching EU policy framework in which the electricity market operates.

The Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply sets out a number of updates to national policy in the context of the Programme for Government commitments relevant to the electricity sector, planning authorities and developers.

The policy statement includes explicit Government approval that:

- The development of new conventional generation (including gas-fired and gasoil/distillate-fired generation) is a national priority and should be permitted and supported in order to ensure security of electricity supply and support the growth of renewable electricity generation.
- It is appropriate that existing conventional electricity generation capacity should be retained until the new conventional electricity generation capacity is developed in order to ensure security of electricity supply.
- The connection of large energy users to the electricity grid should take into account the potential impact on security of electricity supply and on the need to decarbonise the electricity grid.
- It is appropriate for additional electricity transmission and distribution grid infrastructure, electricity interconnection and electricity storage to be permitted and developed in order to support the growth of renewable energy and to support security of electricity supply.
- It is appropriate for additional natural gas transmission and distribution grid infrastructure to be permitted and developed in order to support security of electricity supply.

### **Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2023**

The policy document provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 50% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting us on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and as set out in the Climate Act 2021. The plan aims to put Ireland on a more sustainable path, cut emissions, create a cleaner & greener economy and society and protect Ireland from the devastating consequences of climate change. It is a huge opportunity to create new jobs and grow businesses in areas like offshore wind; cutting-edge agriculture; and retrofitting - making our homes warmer and safer.

The Plan provides a suite of actions needed to deliver on our climate targets and sets indicative ranges of emissions reductions for each sector of the economy. It will be updated annually to ensure alignment with our legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral ceilings.

### **Renewable Electricity Spatial Policy Framework (RESPF)**

Under Action EL/23/2 of CAP23, a Renewable Electricity Spatial Policy Framework (RESPF) is currently being prepared. This will form the national policy for onshore renewable electricity and will inform and reshape the development and distribution of onshore renewables in order to enable the delivery of Ireland's renewable electricity targets, as set out in CAP23. The RESPF will promote a plan-led and evidence-based approach to the allocation of renewable electricity spatial and generation targets across the three Regional Assemblies, to facilitate the achievement of the national target of 80% RES-E by 2030. The objective of such a spatial policy framework is to effectively translate renewable electricity objectives, as those outlined in Climate Action Plan 2023, to the regional level and allocate regional spatial and renewable generation capacity targets. This will then form the basis under which specific targets at local authority level can be established and subsequently planned for.

### **National Mitigation Plan (DCCA, July 2017)**

The National Mitigation Plan specifies the policy measures required to manage GHG emissions and the removal of emissions to further the national transition objective framed around de-carbonizing four main carbon emitting sectors - electricity generation, the built environment, transport, and agriculture. It recognizes that

Ireland is unlikely to meet its GHG emissions reduction target, with a reduction of only 4% - 6% below 2005 levels for all sectors, with emissions exceeding the effort sharing decision limit by 13.7Mt, compared to the 20% target.

It refers to quantity of carbon stored in Irish peatlands (64% of total soil organic carbon stock present) and to the National Peatland's Strategy as setting out how to sustainably manage and protect/conservate this national resource, but it does not include any explicit reference to the potential for peatland restoration / rehabilitation to contribute to climate change mitigation.

### **National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025**

The National Landscape Strategy was published by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in June 2015. The main objectives include the development of a National Landscape Character Assessment, which would provide a framework for the protection and management of change within the landscape in terms of its cultural, social, economic and environmental values. The aim of the National Landscape Strategy is to seek to achieve a balance between social, cultural and economic needs and the environment, and the landscape. It is stated that a National Landscape Character Assessment would ensure consistency between and within public authority functions and areas; would inform LCA's at a local level and would guide the development of landscape policy.

### **National Planning Framework Project Ireland 2040 (2018)**

It is a goal of the National Planning (NPF) Framework to refocus planning to tackle Ireland's higher than average carbon-intensity per capita and enable a national transition to a competitive low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, through harnessing our country's prodigious renewable energy potential, including, inter alia onshore and offshore wind energy.

The Government will support the roll-out of renewables and protection and enhancement of carbon pools such as forests, peatlands and permanent grasslands; and climate change being taken into account in planning-related decision-making processes.

The NPF sets out a series of National Policy Objectives (NPOs), the following being pertinent to the proposed development:

- **NSO 8** - Transition to Sustainable Energy states that new energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, more renewable focused energy generation 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. A target of 40% of the Country's electricity needs from renewable sources by 2020 is stated along with a strategic aim to increase renewable deployment in line with EU targets and national policy objectives up to 2030 and beyond.
- **NPO 23** - Facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bioeconomy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.
- **NPO 52** - The planning system will be responsive to our national environmental challenges and ensure that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the requirements of all relevant environmental legislation and the sustainable management of our natural capital.
- **NPO 54** - Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.
- **NPO 55** - Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050.

### **Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS)**

The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme is provided by the Government of Ireland. It is an auctioned-based scheme which invites renewable projects to bid for capacity and receive a guaranteed price for the electricity generated. The RESS is a pivotal component of the Government's Climate Action Plan 2021, whereby the Scheme

aims to assist in meeting Ireland's target of up to 80% of our energy generated being from renewable sources by 2030. To date there have been three rounds of the RESS, the most recent auction results (RESS 3) were announced in early October 2023. For successful projects the Scheme typically applies for approximately 15 years. The Programme for Government is committed to holding RESS auctions at frequent intervals throughout the lifetime of the scheme. This measure is to ensure Ireland can take advantage of falling costs of technology and ensure the best price is passed on to the consumer and allows for multiple opportunities for developers to have new technologies included, potentially generating energy more efficiently at a lower cost.

All RESS 3 Projects are required to establish a Community Benefit Fund prior to Commercial Operation of the relevant RESS 3 Project. With effect from the Commercial Operation Date a RESS 3 Project shall be required to make a contribution of €2/MWh of Loss-Adjusted RESS Metered Quantity for all RESS 3 Projects.

### **Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006**

The guidelines provide advice to the Board and to planning authorities on wind energy development through the Development Plan and the development management process. They are intended to provide for consistency in the approach to wind energy development in terms of the identification of suitable locations for such development and in the determination of planning applications. Such projects should be plan-led with clear guidance on where wind energy development should locate and what factors will be taken into account.

The matters to be considered in a planning application are set out in Chapter 4, including - potential impacts on the built and natural heritage, ground conditions and drainage, visual and landscape impacts, local environmental impacts, (including noise, shadow flicker, electromagnetic interference), and adequacy of local access road network. Best practice suggests that an integrated planning application which includes grid connection information should ideally be submitted and that developers should be encouraged to engage in public consultation with the local community.

Potential environmental impacts arising from wind energy developments are discussed in Chapter 5. Guidance is given on matters such as noise, shadow flicker, natural heritage, archaeology, architectural heritage, ground conditions, aircraft safety and windtake. Whilst setback distance is not established, it is stated that noise is unlikely to be a significant problem where the distance to the residential property is more than 500m.

- **Noise:** the recommended standard is a lower fixed limit of 45dBA or a maximum increase of 5dBA above background noise and nearby noise sensitive locations, apart from very quiet areas where the daytime level is limited to 35-40dB(A). A night-time limit of 43 dB(A) is recommended.
- **Shadow flicker:** the recommended standard is a maximum of 30 hours per year or 30 minutes per day for dwellings and offices within 500m. It is stated that at distances of greater than 10 rotor diameters, the potential for shadow flicker is very low.
- **Design:** Chapter 6 provides guidance on siting and design of wind energy development in the landscape, including advice on siting, spatial extent and scale, cumulative effect, spacing of turbines, layout of turbines and height of turbines. Advice is provided on landscape character types as a basis for application of the guidance on siting and design.

### **Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019**

It should be noted that the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government published Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines in December 2019. A public consultation period was held until the 19th of February 2020. The proposed key revisions include the following:

- **New noise standards:** The draft guidelines include proposed new standards aimed at reducing noise nuisance from wind energy developments for local residents and communities. The proposed new standards are in line with international standards, as incorporated in the 2018 World Health Organisation Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region. The permitted noise levels will take account of certain noise characteristics specific to wind energy projects i.e. tonal, amplitude modulation and low frequency noise and provide penalties for tonal noise and amplitude modulation and a threshold for low frequency noise above specified limits which, if breached, will result in turbine shut down. The implementation of a new robust noise monitoring framework is also proposed.

- **Visual Amenity, setback and spacing:** The draft guidelines require a setback distance for visual amenity purposes of four times the tip height between each wind turbine and the nearest point of the curtilage of any residential property in the vicinity of the proposed development, subject to a minimum mandatory setback distance of 500 metres. This setback requirement is also subject to the need to comply with the proposed noise limits outlined above.
- **Control of shadow flicker:** Automatic shadow flicker control mechanisms will be required to be in place for the operational duration of a wind energy development project. It will be a specific condition of planning permissions that should shadow flicker occur and impact existing properties, the relevant wind turbines must be shut down.
- **Community consultation:** Wind energy developers will be mandatorily required to engage in active public consultation with the local community at an early stage, requiring the preparation and submission of a 'Community Report' as part of a planning application - outlining how they have consulted and engaged with the local community regarding the proposed development.
- **Community dividend:** Wind energy developers will have to provide an opportunity for the proposed development to be of enduring economic or social benefit to the local community, whether by facilitating community investment/ ownership in the project, other types of benefits/ dividends, or a combination of the two.
- **Grid connections:** The draft guidelines contain updated guidance regarding the Environmental Impact Assessment-related requirements in respect of wind energy development projects. In addition, the guidelines require consideration of the siting, route and design of the proposed grid connections as part of the whole project.

#### 4.1.4 Regional Policy

##### North and Western Regional Assembly

###### Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032

The primary purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Region.

The adopted RSES (2020-2032) for the Northern and Western Region provides a growth framework to transform the region based on the key principle of People and Places through the pursuit of compact growth in settlements, and 5 growth ambitions: Vibrant Ambition - Economy and Employment; Natural Ambition - Environment, Connected Ambition – Connectivity; Inclusive Ambition - Quality of Life; and Enabling Ambition – Infrastructure.

Underpinning these growth ambitions are a series of Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's). The following RPO's are of particular relevance to the proposed development:

- **RPO 4.16:** The NWRA shall co-ordinate the identification of potential renewable energy sites of scale in collaboration with Local Authorities and other stakeholders within 3 years of the adoption of the RSES. The identification of such sites (which may extend to include energy storage solutions) will be based on numerous site selection criteria including environmental matters, and potential grid connections.
- **RPO 4.17:** To position the region to avail of the emerging global market in renewable energy by stimulating the development and deployment of the most advantageous renewable energy systems, including:
  - Stimulating the development and deployment of the most advantageous renewable energy systems.
  - Raising awareness and public understanding of renewable energy and encourage market opportunities for the renewable energy industry to promote the development and growth of renewable energy businesses; and

- Encourage the development of the transmission and distribution grids to facilitate the development of renewable energy projects and the effective utilisation of the energy generated from renewable sources having regard to the future potential of the region over the lifetime of the Strategy and beyond.
- **RPO 4.18:** Support the development of secure, reliable and safe supplies of renewable energy, to maximise their value, maintain the inward investment, support indigenous industry and create jobs.
- **RPO 8.3:** The Assembly support the necessary integration of the transmission network requirements to allow linkages with renewable energy proposals at all levels to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner.
- **RPO 8.4:** That reinforcements and new electricity transmission infrastructure are put in place and their provision is supported, to ensure the energy needs of future population and economic expansion within designated growth areas and across the Region can be delivered in a sustainable and timely manner and that capacity is available at local and regional scale to meet future needs. Ensure that development minimises impacts on designated areas.

#### 4.1.5 Local Policy and Guidance Documents

##### The Mayo County Development Plan 2022- 2028

###### Policy & Objective(s):

<p>Chapter 4 Economic Development</p>	<p><b>Objective EDO 3:</b> To continue to promote the county to attract enterprise and investment into Mayo through the Enterprise &amp; Investment Unit and/or Local Enterprise Office, with a focus on a number of established and emerging sectors including tourism, manufacturing, marine, renewable energy, ICT, food and agri-food.</p> <p><b>Objective EDO 54:</b> To facilitate rural enterprises, and resource development (such as agriculture, agrifood sector, agri-tourism, commercial fishing, aquaculture, rural tourism, forestry, bio- energy, the extractive industry, recreation, cultural heritage, marine enterprise sector, research and analysis) and renewable energy resources (such as wind/ solar/ocean energy) that are dependent on their locality in rural locations, where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity. Where proposals demonstrate measures to promote environmental enhancement through improved ecological connectivity, such as measures in the Pollinator Plan, additional native species planting or blue and green infrastructure measures, these will be favorably considered.</p> <p><b>EDO 69:</b> To support and facilitate renewable energy initiatives that facilitate a low carbon transition.</p>
<p>Chapter 7 Infrastructure</p>	<p><b>Policy INP 21:</b> To support the provision of high-quality, electricity infrastructure and development of an enhanced electricity supply, to serve the existing and future needs of the county and to facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects, including the delivery and integration of renewable energy proposals to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner, whilst seeking to minimise any adverse impacts on local communities and protect and maintain biodiversity, wildlife habitats, scenic amenities, including protected views and nature conservation.</p> <p><b>Objective INO 39:</b> To seek the delivery of the necessary integration of transmission network requirements to facilitate linkages of renewable energy proposals to the electricity transmission grid, in a sustainable and timely manner.</p>

Chapter 11

Climate  
Action Plan  
and  
Renewable  
Energy

**Policy CAP 1:** To support and enable the implementation and achievement of European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents, taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage); Climate Action Plan (2018 and any subsequent versions);

- Relevant provisions of any Sectoral Adaptation Plans prepared to comply with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, including those seeking to contribute towards the National Transition Objective, to pursue, and achieve, the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050; and
- Mayo Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019-2024 and any subsequent versions).

**Policy CAP 4:** To support local, regional, national and international initiatives for climate adaptation and mitigation and to limit emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources, which make use of all natural resources, including publicly owned lands, in an environmentally acceptable manner.

**Policy CAP 6:** To support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency and supporting nature-based solutions to climate adaptation and mitigation that provides co benefits.

**Policy CAP 9:** To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of all appropriate renewable energy sources at suitable locations within the county, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities, so as to provide for further residential and enterprise development within the county.

**Objective CAO 1:** To support and advance the provision of renewable energy resources and programmes in line with the Government's National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), the Governments' Energy White Paper "Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future" (2015-2030) and any other relevant policy adopted during the lifetime of this plan.

**Policy REP 1:** To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of a range of renewable energy sources at suitable locations within the county, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities to ensure the long-term sustainable growth of the county.

**Policy REP 3:** To actively encourage and support the sustainable development, renewal and maintenance of energy generation infrastructure in order to maintain a secure energy supply, while protecting the landscape, archaeological and built heritage and having regard to the provisions of the Habitats Directive.

**Policy REP 4:** To ensure that developers of proposed large-scale renewable energy projects carry out community consultation in accordance with best practice and commence the consultation at the initiation of project planning.

**Policy REP 5:** To promote the use of efficient energy storage systems and infrastructure that supports energy efficiency and renewable energy system optimization, subject to

the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and consideration of environmental and ecological sensitivities.

**Policy REP 6:** To work with relevant stakeholders and industry to establish Mayo as a centre of excellence for renewable energy research and development activities.

**Policy REP 7:** To promote the harnessing of wind energy to contribute toward decarbonising County Mayo, including new emerging by-product markets

**Objective REO 3:** To encourage and facilitate, where possible, the production of energy from established and emerging renewable technologies

**Objective REO 6:** To ensure all renewable energy proposal comply with the provisions of the Mayo County Council Renewable Energy Strategy 2011-2022 (or as updated).

**Objective REO 8:** To encourage the development of wind energy, in accordance with Government policy, and having regard to the Landscape Appraisal of County Mayo and the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) and Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy, or any revisions there of or future guidelines, and ensure consistency with the provisions of RPO 4.16 and RPO 5.2(b) of the RSES (2020-2032).

### The Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) for County Mayo 2011-2020

Mayo County Council adopted a Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo on the 9th May 2011. The Strategy provides a framework to assist in achieving the national renewable energy targets, as well as providing guidance on opportunities for individuals, communities and businesses to harness renewable energy in a sustainable manner and to assist in combating climate change. All relevant policies and objectives in the County Development Plan 2008-2014 (or subsequent plan) will apply when assessing planning applications for renewable energy developments.

The policies and objectives of the RES relevant to the subject site and surrounding area are as follows:

#### Policy 1

##### Climate Change:

It is the policy of the Council to support the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012.

- **Objective 1.1:** It is an objective of the Council to assist in achieving national targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy production by encouraging and promoting the reduction in energy consumption and by encouraging renewable energy developments at appropriate locations within the County, having regard to relevant planning guidance and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and through the implementation of this Strategy.
- **Objective 1.2:** It is an objective of the Council to encourage renewable energy production from wind, wave, tide, biomass, biofuel, biogas, solar power, tidal, hydro and geothermal sources in the County, particularly at locations set out in the Maps accompanying this Strategy and having regard to principles of proper planning and sustainable development.
- **Objective 1.3:** It is an objective of the Council to assist in achieving the target that a minimum of 16% of the County's overall energy requirements and 42.5% of the County's electricity requirements will be provided from renewable sources by 2020 by implementing this Strategy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objective 1.4:</b> It is an objective of the Council to encourage energy efficiency, low energy design and integration of renewable energy techniques into new and existing developments.</li> <li>• <b>Objective 1.5:</b> It is an objective of the Council to continue to ensure energy efficiency, low energy design and integration of renewable energy techniques into the Council's own operations, construction programmes and running of vehicle stock.</li> <li>• <b>Objective 1.6:</b> It is an objective of the Council to utilise renewable energy technologies at the sites of its major infrastructure (e.g. sewage treatment plants, water treatment plants etc.) where feasible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 2</b></p> <p><b>The Natural and Built Environment:</b></p> <p>It is the policy of the Council to ensure that a balance between the provision of renewable energy developments and the preservation and conservation of the natural and built environment is maintained, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats and Birds Directives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objective 2.1:</b> It is an objective of the Council to ensure full compliance with European and National legislation in relation to renewable energy production and protection of the environment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Objective 2.2:</b> It is an objective of the Council to follow a sustainable plan led approach to renewable energy development within County Mayo through the implementation of this Strategy, in particular guiding renewable energy developments to preferred locations as set out in Section 6.4 and requiring all renewable energy developments to comply with standards and mitigation measures outlined in Section 6.5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objective 2.3:</b> It is an objective of the Council that all proposed renewable developments will be assessed on the principles of proper planning and sustainable development, ensuring minimal adverse environmental impact to biodiversity, flora and fauna; population and human health; soil; water; air and climatic factors; material assets; cultural heritage; and landscape. Full account shall be taken of the presence and requirement to protect all Natura 2000 sites, natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, the national Park and Nature Reserves. Projects will be subject to Habitats Directive Assessment where considered appropriate.</li> <li>• <b>Objective 2.4:</b> It is an objective of the Council to ensure that renewable energy developments do not interfere with, damage, remove, or impinge on the visual amenity of, existing rights of way, public walking and cycling routes, scenic routes and scenic views, architectural heritage including protected structures and Architectural Conservation Areas, archaeological heritage including recorded monuments, Ballycroy National Park and vulnerable or sensitive landscapes in the County.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 3</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Infrastructure:</b></p> <p>It is the policy of the Council to encourage and assist in the provision of strategic infrastructure at appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objective 3.1:</b> It is an objective of the Council to actively pursue the upgrading of the national grid and for the provision of a 400kV line in Mayo with the Minister, The Commission for Energy Regulation and EirGrid.</li> <li>• <b>Objective 3.2:</b> It is an objective of the council that the final route of any new 110/220 or 400 kV transmission lines be selected in line with best International Practice. Among other things, this process will require</li> </ul>

<p>locations to facilitate the provision and exporting of renewable energy.</p>	<p>that a highly detailed study be carried out incorporating technical and environmental considerations to assist in selecting the most appropriate route. As part of this process the feasibility of using all existing linear infrastructure corridors such as road and rail as well as the existing transmission corridors for the 110 kV and 38 kV circuits or their established way leaves should be given due consideration. The existing transmission corridors for the 110kV and 38kV circuits shall be followed as far as technically and environmentally practicable.</p>
<p><b>Policy 4</b> <b>Community Benefit:</b></p> <p>It is the policy of the Council to require that renewable energy developments are carried out in a manner that promotes economic and social benefits for the community of Mayo as a whole.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objective 4.1:</b> It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the advantages presented by renewable energy development outweigh the disadvantages for the majority of the community residing in the area of any proposed renewable energy development, and for the wider environment, when assessing planning applications for renewable energy development.</li> <li>• <b>Objective 4.2:</b> It is an objective of the Council to encourage community based renewable energy developments in the County having regard to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.</li> <li>• <b>Objective 4.3:</b> It is an objective of the Council to require developers to incorporate the concept of community benefit into any renewable energy development proposal. Details of the particular form/model of community benefit proposed by the developer shall be submitted with the planning application for agreement by the Council at planning stage.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

## 5.0 EIA SCREENING

The proposed development falls within the definition of a project under the EIA Directive as amended by Directive 2014/52 and falls within the scope of Class 3 under Part 2 Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, (as amended), Development for the Purposes of Part 10:

*Energy Industry (i) Installations for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms) with more than 5 turbines or having a total output greater than 5 megawatts.*

EIA is required. The applicant has submitted an EIAR.

## 6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

### Planning History on subject site

Pl.Ref	Details
03/1383  PL.16.206517 (ABP)	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Airtricity Developments (Ireland) Ltd. and Coilte Teoranta.</p> <p><b>Proposed Development:</b> Permission sought for the construction of a wind farm, consisting of 29 wind turbines (max hub height of 65m and max blade diameter 80m with a total height not exceeding 100m), a 110kV substation including pylon and control buildings, one 65m high meteorological mast, construction and upgrading of site entrances, site tracks and associated works.</p> <p><b>Decision :</b> Refused by MCC 17/02/2004 / Refused by ABP (11/04/2004)</p> <p>Reasons (ABP)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The location of the site in an area designated as vulnerable in the [then]current CDP where there is an objective to recognise and facilitate appropriate development in a manner that has regard to the character and sensitivity of the landscape.....the proposed wind farm sited at this location, would be intervisible with existing and permitted wind farm developments at Bellacorick, would constitute an obtrusive development which would detract from the rural character and scenic amenities of this sensitive and vulnerable area.....</li> <li>2. Having regard to the extent of the existing &amp; permitted wind farm development in the general Bellacorrik area, the proposed wind farm development would be premature pending the preparation of a Wind Energy Strategy for the County.....</li> </ol>
02/2528	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Airtricity Developments (Ireland) Ltd. and Coilte Teoranta.</p> <p><b>Proposed Development:</b> Permission sought for 1 no. 50m high wind monitoring mast</p> <p><b>Decision :</b> Granted (01/05/2003)</p>
ABP 310528-21 (SID Pre-application)	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Glenora Wind farm DAC, <b>Location:</b> Glenora adjacent townlands, Co Mayo</p> <p><b>Proposed development:</b> Wind farm (22 turbine), with blade tip height 180meters, hub height of 99m, rotor diameter 162m, generating capacity 154-198MW. 3 borrow pits, peat placements areas, construction compound, overnight turbine component storage area, widening of local roads to facilitate transport, upgrade of forest tracks, internal access, security cabin, drainage and cabling works.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Determined a SID (08/05/2023) by ABP</p>

### Immediately west of subject site

Pl.Ref	Details
02/174 ABP 16.131318	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Contracts Renewables Ltd</p> <p><b>Proposed Development:</b> Wind farm (30 turbine, 1.75M) with hub height 67m and rotor diameter of 66m, 110kV substation building/compound and associated works.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Refused by MCC (06/11/2003) / Refused by ABP (02/04/2004)</p> <p>Reasons ABP</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [...]the proposed development is sited in a prominent location...a sensitive landscape that adjoins the designated vulnerable area comprising the Owenmore River system[.....] The proposed wind farm, sited at this elevated, prominent and exposed location, would constitute a highly obtrusive development that would detract from the rural character and scenic amenities of this sensitive and vulnerable area[...]would contribute to the erosion of the visual and environmental amenity of the area.</li> <li>2. The site of the proposed development hosts extensive priority habitat designated under the EU Habitats Directive, namely blanket bog and dry heath. In addition the Glenamoy Bog Complex c.SAC and the site is in the immediate vicinity of the designated Bellacorick Bog Complex c.SAC, which lies to the south[...] the site hosts the protected bird species of golden plover and red grouse and contains the Inagh River which is part of the Owenmore River System, an important salmonid fishery in north Mayo....[...] It is considered that the proposed development including the construction of a substation and compound, as well as the operation of the wind farm, would have significant adverse impacts on the</li> </ol>

	ecological ornithological and aquatic importance of this site and the immediate area by way of destruction of habitat, disturbance and displacement of protected species, and pollution potential for the important watercourses within and bounding the site.....[...]
01/356	<b>Applicant:</b> Electricity Development Ltd. Wind farm (40 turbine) with max hub height 50m, electrical substation with control building, 50m high meteorological mast, upgrade of site entrance and construction of internal site trackway and associated works. <b>Decision:</b> Incomplete Application

## Planning History in the wider area

### Bellacorrick Wind Farm

PI.Ref	Details
20/834 ABP 31157	<b>Applicant:</b> ABO Ireland Ltd. <b>Proposed Development:</b> Permission for development of an electricity service. Incl. - laying of c.10.5km of 38Kv underground cable from the Sheskin wind farm to connect the wind farm to the national grid at the existing Bellacorrick 110Kv ESB. Connection to be installed along existing tracks, public roadway and short section of private agricultural land. <b>Decision:</b> Granted on appeal by ABP (31/8/2022). 7 Conditions
19/457	<b>Applicants:</b> ABO Ireland Ltd. <b>Proposed Development:</b> Amendments to planning permission granted under PL5/825 for 8no turbines (max height 150m). Amendments including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase height of turbines from 150m to 176 (turbines 1-3) and 150m to 165m(turbines 4-8) comprising a tower height of 95-120m to which 3 blades of 55-70m length will be attached.</li> <li>- Increase in the max height of the permanent met-mast from 100m to 120m</li> <li>- Increase of the foundation base from 22m to 26m</li> <li>- Amendment to condition no. 46. To revise the community benefit payment to €2/MWH consistent with government guidance set out in RESS</li> </ul> The red line boundary and all other aspects of the permitted development to remain. <b>Decision:</b> Granted by MCC. 51 conditions.

### Oweninny Wind Farm

PI.Ref	Details
ABP 16. P0029 SID	<b>Applicants:</b> Oweninny Power Limited <b>Proposed Development:</b> Oweninny Wind Farm and associated works, consisting of 112no. turbines (370MW output) <b>Decision:</b> Granted by ABP 02/06/2016
ABP 307261	<b>Applicants:</b> Oweninny Power 2 DAC Alteration to terms of permitted WF granted under PL16.PA0029 <b>Proposed Development:</b> Construction of radial underground cables from permitted, but as yet unbuilt, Turbine T82 to the existing Substation 1 (constructed as part of Phase 1). This includes a crossing of the Srahnakilly local road (L52925) and the Oweninny River (via the existing bridge, constructed as part of Phase 1); Omission of Substation 2; and the omission of an overhead line (OHL) / underground cable (UGC) connection from Substation 2 to Bellacorrick ESB Substation, as approved under PL16.PA0029. <b>Decision:</b> (23/07/2020). Alter decision: Not a material alteration - Section 146B Planning application for amendments to ABP PA0029 for Oweninny Windfarm
ABP 309375 (Pre-application)	<b>Applicants:</b> Bord na Mona Powergen Ltd. Pre-app consultation: Oweninny WF Phase 3 . <b>Proposed Development:</b> Between 10 and 20 Wind Turbines turbine (including tower sections, nacelle, hub, rotor blades) with an approximate capacity of 90mw and a maximum blade height of 200metres. <b>Decision:</b> determined a SID (04/04/2022) by ABP

ABP 316178 SID	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Bord na Mona Powergen Ltd.</p> <p>Development of Oweninny Wind Farm Phase 3.</p> <p><b>Proposed Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18 no. turbines, max blade tip height 200m, rotar diameter 158m, hub height 121m, associated foundations and hard standing areas for each turbine,</li> <li>- Decommissioning &amp; removal of 21no. existing turbines incl. tower sections, nacelle hub and rotor blades,</li> <li>- New internal access roads, passing bays, car parking &amp; drainage,</li> <li>- Amenity route to existing visitors center with access from local road off the N59 near Dooleeg,</li> <li>- 2no. borrow pits, 5no. peat deposition areas,</li> <li>- Installation of 1 no. permanent Met. Mast (120m height), decommissions &amp; removal of existing 100 m Met Mas on site,</li> <li>- Temporary construction compounds (4 no.),</li> <li>- 1 no. 110kV electrical substation compound (incl 2 no control buildings, 36m heigh telecom tower, electrical plant &amp; equipment and wastewater holding tank; Underground electrical and comms cabling – connecting proposed turbines to proposed substation,</li> <li>- All works associated with the connection of the proposed wind farm to the national electricity grid, incl 110kV underground cabling from the proposed on-site electrical substation to the existing substation at Bellacorick,</li> <li>- All related site works and ancillary development,</li> <li>- A 10-year planning permission and a 30-year operations life from date of commissioning of the entire wind farm</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision – Status:</b> requires further consideration (as per 22/02/2024)</p>
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### Killala Community Wind Farm

Pl.Ref	Details
17/619	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Killala Community Windfarm Designated Activity Company.</p> <p>Location: approx. 1.3km south of Killala.</p> <p>Proposed Development: Development consists of an updated application to the consented 6 turbine wind farm p09/780. 10 Year planning permission for wind farm (5no. turbines)</p> <p><b>Proposed Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 no. electricity generating wind turbines, each with a rotor diameter not exceeding 103.2m, a hub height not exceeding 73.5m and a blade tip height of not exceeding 126m.</li> <li>- the development will include a met mast max height of 82m,</li> <li>- internal underground electrical cabling,</li> <li>- a substation building,</li> <li>- an external underground grid connection cable and ducting to the existing 110kv Tawnaghmore substation,</li> <li>- associated grid substation works,</li> <li>- associated site access roads and ancillary site works including upgrades to existing site access, a temporary construction compound and haulage route works.</li> </ul> <p>Max output capacity of the wind farm will be up to 18mw with an intended operation life of 25 years</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Granted 15/02/2018. 19 Conditions</p>
19/260	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Killala Community Windfarm Designated Activity Company.</p> <p><b>Proposed Development:</b> 25 Year permission for a single electricity generating wind turbine with an overall maximum height of up to 125m. The development also includes a turbine hardstand, access track of c.394m, internal cable trench of c.1,775m and ancillary site works. Application is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Granted 15/10/2019. 12 Conditions</p>

### Dooleg More Single Turbine Development

Pl.Ref	Details
20/467	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Cearth Ltd</p> <p><b>Proposed Development:</b> Permission for a single wind turbine generator and 20kV grid connection to Bellacorick 110kV substation.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Granted 25/03/2021. 15 Conditions</p>

### Bunnahowen Wind Farm

PI.Ref	Details
18/873	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Gus Ruddy ALT Turbines Co. Ltd</p> <p><b>Proposed Development:</b> Permission to modify existing permission P.08/1997, to include three (3) 1mw turbines, control house and ancillary associated works.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Granted 10/03/2019. 6 Conditions</p>

### Kilsallagh/Kilcommon Wind Farm

PI.Ref	Details
ABP 312282 SID	<p><b>Applicant:</b> EDF Renewables Limited</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Kilsallagh and adjacent townlands, Kilcommon, Co. Mayo.</p> <p><b>Proposed Development:</b> Pre-application lodged with An Bord Pleanála for Proposed Kilsallagh Wind Farm consisting of 13 wind turbines (tip height of 200 meters) and ancillary equipment including 110kV substation infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Status: Lodged</p>

### Sheskin Wind Farm

PI.Ref	Details
ABP 310529 (Pre-application)	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Sheskin South Renewables Power DAC</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Sheskin and adjacent townlands, Co Mayo</p> <p>21 No. wind turbines within the following ranges:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Blade tip height of 189.5 – 200m.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Hub heights of 115 – 125m. Rotor diameter of 149 – 170m Generating capacity of 105 – 143MW.</p> <p><b>Proposed Development :</b> 1 No. anemometry mast, 3 No. potential borrow pits, 4 No. temporary construction compounds, Internal road network and entrances, Turbine components laydown area. Peat placement areas around turbine bases. Site drainage infrastructure. Associated cabling and works. An associated on-site 110kV substation and 110kV grid connection to the existing 110kV Bellacorick substation is also proposed, however this will not form part of the planning application for the wind farm</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Determined a SID (30/08/2022) by ABP</p> <p><b>Current Status:</b> SID lodged (1/3/2023)</p>
ABP 315933 SID	

### Firlough Wind Farm and Hydrogen Plant, Bunnyconnellan, Co Mayo & Castleconnor, Co Sligo

PI.Ref	Details
ABP 307264-20 (Pre-application)	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Mercury (Carrowleagh) Renewables</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Bonniconlon, Co Mayo &amp; Castleconnor, Co Sligo</p> <p><b>Proposed Development :</b> windfarm development including 13 no. wind turbines in Bunnyconnellan, Co. Mayo &amp; hydrogen plant in Castleconnor, Co. Sligo</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Determined a SID (01/11/2022) by ABP</p> <p>SID Lodged (06/07/2023) / Decision pending</p>
ABP 317560	

### Other Renewable Energy Development in the general area

22/502	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Constant Energy Limited</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Croaghaun West, Srahnakilly, Bellacorrick, Co Mayo.</p> <p><b>Proposed Development :</b> Single Storey process building (13.3m in height), 16 no. fin fan coolers (6.9m in height), Hydrogen storage area (6450sq.m); Gas Injection compound (1000sq.m), 2 no Gas Agi buildings (3m in height), Electrical substation (2407.62sq.m), 2 no. substation buildings (4m in height), Raw water and fire storage tank (879.6sq.m), Pump house (5m in height), Water abstraction chamber (2.9sq.m), Resurfacing, repair &amp; improvement of entrance; Replacement bridge, internal access roads and associated grid connection works within the L52925 public roadway; 12. No parking spaces, footpath, landscaping, fencing and all other associated site development plant and equipment, surface water and foul water wastewater drainage infra.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Granted 26/06/2023.</p>
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23/60028	<p><b>Applicant:</b> Constant Energy Limited</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Croaghaun West, Srahnakilly, Bellacorrick, Co Mayo</p> <p><b>Proposed Development :</b> Gas Peakin Plant (114-Megawatt gas fired peaking power plant) running on a mix of natural gas and hydrogen) comprising the 'electricity generating station'; will comprise of 2 no. open cycle gas turbine (OCGT) generators. In addition, the development will include: - Above Ground Installation (AGI), with compound area 3 no. Gas AGI buildings; Admin &amp; welfare block; Electrical Substation; 1 no. Substation building; Electrical building; 3 no. Secondary fuel storage tanks; Fire Water Storage Tank &amp; Pumphouse; Sludge Tank &amp; Pump House; Resurfacing, Repair of Existing Site Entrance; Replacement Bridge; Gatehouse; Internal Access Roads; and associated Grid Connection Works. 12 no. parking spaces, footpaths, landscaping, fencing and all other associated site development plant and equipment and other works including surface water and foul wastewater drainage infrastructure. Demolition and removal of a dwelling and farm buildings,</p> <p>Planning permission is sought for a period of 25 years.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Granted by MCC 31/01/2024. 32 Conditions</p>
23/162	<p><b>Applicant:</b> The Electricity Supply Board</p> <p><b>Location :</b> Shranakilla Road, Bellacorick, Co. Mayo</p> <p><b>Proposed Development :</b> Synchronous condenser/flywheel, located within a fenced compound of c.0.85 ha.</p> <p>Supporting items of plant; cooling equipment, modular containers, 2 auxiliary transformers and electrical plant including external circuit breaker, HV electrical compound with electrical switchgear and main step-up transformer, and new c.200m underground cable grid connection to the Bellacorick 110kv substation; diesel generator, fire water tank, underground oil separator and collection pit, services connections including electrical, water and wastewater and constructed wetland connecting to Owenmore River; 3 office/welfare buildings and 2 spare parts containers. External lighting poles, lightning monopole and Scada communications mast, 4 fire walls around main step-up transformer, 2 fire walls either side of auxiliary transformers, 3 firewalls around cooler for main transformer, 8m high. Ancillary site clearance and development works, bounded by one c. 3.6m high palisade fence on the east side and one 5m high palisade fence to the south side. Site access will be by means of a new palisade gate and a second 3.6m sliding gate accessed off the N59.</p> <p>Permission sought is for 10 years. NIS submitted with application.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Granted 03/09/2023. 11 Conditions</p>

## 7.0 Enforcement

Not applicable to subject site

## 8.0 Designated Sites

### 8.1 European Sites

European sites consist of Special Protected Areas (SPA's), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's), Ramsar Sites. The list below identifies all designated sites (Natura Network) within a c.15km zone of potential of the subject site.

#### Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

Site Name	Site Code
Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC	000500
Bellacorick Bog Complex	001922
Lough Dahybaun SAC	002177
Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC	000458
Lackan Saltmarsh and Kilcummin Head SAC	000516
River Moy SAC	002298

#### Special Protection Area (SPA)

Site Name	Site Code
Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SPA	004036
Illanmaster SPA	004074
Owenduff/Nepin Complex SPA	004098

### Ramsar Sites

Site Name	Ramsar ID
Killala Bay/ Moy Estuary	843
Owenboy	371
Knockmoyle/ Sheskin	382
Owenduff catchment	336

## 8.2 National Designated Sites

Sites of national importance consist of Natural Heritage Areas, Proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Nature Reserves, National Parks. See below - all sites of national importance within c.15km of the site.

### Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA)

Site Name	Site Code
Glenamoy Bog Complex pNHA	000500
Benaderreen Cliffs pNHA	000467
Bellacorick Bog Complex pNHA	001922
Slieve Fynagh Bog pNHA	000542
Killala Bay/Moy Estuary pNHA	000458
Lackan Saltmarsh And Kilcummin Head pNHA	000516
Creevagh Head pNHA	00482
Killala Esker pNHA	001517

Site Name	Site Code
Downpatrick Head pNHA	000494
Cloonagh Lough (Mayo) pNHA	001485
Owenduff/Nepkin Complex pNHA	000534

### Natural Area (NHA)

Site Name	Site Code
Ummerantary Bog NHA	001570
Inagh Bog NHA	002391
Forrew Bog NHA	002432

### Nature Reserves

Knockmoyle Sheskin Nature Reserve
Owenboy Nature Reserve

### National Park

Ballycroy Wild Nephin National Park
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## 8.3 Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive

Chapter 6 of the EIAR refers to Biodiversity. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was carried out for the Proposed Development in compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. As part of this assessment, the potential effects arising from the proposed development on any European sites in the Zone of Influence (Zoi) was considered.

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment concludes as follows:

It cannot be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the proposed Wind Farm development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will [have] have a significant effect on the following European Sites. Measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful

effects of the proposed development on European sites (i.e., “mitigation measures”) or best practice measures have not been taken into account in the screening stage appraisal.

- Bellacorick Bog Complex SAC [001922]
- Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC [000458]
- Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SPA [004036]

As a result, an Appropriate Assessment is required, and a Natura Impact Statement shall be prepared in respect of the proposed development. It also concluded that it can be excluded on the basis of objective information that the proposed development, individually or in combination with any other plan or project will not have a significant effect on any other European Site. Accordingly, it is submitted that an Appropriate Assessment is required for the above European Sites. A Stage 2 Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is submitted with this application. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) accompanies the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) which provides the mitigation measures and monitoring proposals that are required to be adhered to in order to complete the works in an appropriate manner. The NIS concluded by stating - that the EIAR site boundary is located primarily within a large plantation coniferous forestry that has been assessed as having of low ecological value. Consequently, any potentially significant effects of the project on the Key Ecological Receptors identified in the NIS have been avoided by the project design or by the implementation of mitigation measures as detailed in Section 6.7 of the NIS; including all references made to mitigation specified in other Chapters and appendices of the EIAR. The implementation of the Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan (as described in appendix 6-5), will result in the restoration of approximately 41ha of peatland habitat through conifer removal and drain blocking will significantly increase the abundance and quality of exiting peatland habitats within the EIAR boundary. The restoration of this area will also provide a connection with the Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC. It is also stated that the mitigation described in chapter will be implemented in full and is therefore predicted that there will be no significant individual or cumulative effects on any KERs.

The Board should satisfy itself that the Natura Impact Statement on the proposed Windfarm adequately address the likely impact on the Natura 2000 sites identified, either alone in combination with other plans or projects and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

## 8.4 Built Heritage, Archaeological Sites, Special Amenity Orders

### **UNESCO Sites:**

No UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) or those on a Tentative List are located on or in close proximity to the proposed development. The Céide Fields and North West Mayo Boglands were previously included in the 2010 Tentative List for Ireland.

### **National Monuments:**

One monument subject to a Preservation Order is located within 10km of the nearest proposed turbine and consists of an Early Christian Enclosure and church site (MA014-061/001-006, Preservation Order No. 11/1983). It is located 9km to T16 and T22 and is located to the east of the proposed development site. Potential impacts and mitigation are addressed in Section 13.4.3 of Chapter 13 of the EIAR.

### **Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)**

There are no recorded monuments directly within the subject site (EIAR site boundary).

**The Céide Fields:** The Céide Fields is a statutory Recorded Monument (ref MA006-032). The Zone of Archaeological Potential relative to the proposed development measures 3km to the nearest proposed turbine (T15). The 2011 publication entitled Excavations on Céide Hill, Behy & Glenultra, North Co. Mayo, 1963-1994 provides a map of the surveyed extent of the Céide Field walls. The surveyed fields walls measure 1km to the east of the nearest proposed turbine (T22).

### **Sites and Monuments:**

There are no recorded Sites and Monuments (SMRs) located within the subject site.

A total of forty-one (41) archaeological monuments are located within 5km of the nearest proposed turbine.

The following Recorded Monuments and Places (RMPs) are in closest proximity to the subject site.

Reference No	Description	Location
MA013-002----	Redundant record	Keerglen
MA013-001----	Megalithic tomb - court tomb	Aghoo (south of the proposed access route)
MA007-046----	Megalithic tomb - court tomb	Ballyglass (Tirawley By., Doonfeeny Par.) (north of access, north of Ballycastle village)
MA013-003----	Crannog	Moing an Iarainn (west of site)

The remainder with 5 km of the nearest proposed turbine

Reference No	Description	Location
M A014 -123----	Cairn- unclassified	Keerglen
MA014 -122----	Enclosure	Keerglen
M A014 -043----	Burial Ground	Keerglen
MA014 - 042001-	Ringford - Cashel	Keerglen
MA014 - 042002-	Souterrain	Keerglen
MA013-007----	Standing stone - pair	Keeryglen
MA013 -006----	Monument al structure	Clydagh
MA020 -004----	Children's Burial Ground	Crocknacally
M A014 -045----	Ringfort-Rath	Clydagh
MA014 -024----	Ringford-Rath	Ballykinlettragh
M A014 -023----	Enclosure	Ballinglen
MA014 - 044001-	House-indeterminate date	Keerglen
MA014 - 044002-	Souterrain	Keerglen
M A014 -044----	Ringford-Rath	Keerglen
MA014 -025----	Ringfort-Rath	Ballykinlettragh
MA014 -021----	Children's burial ground	Ballinglen
MA014 -047----	Ringford-Rath	Annaghmore
MA014 -049----	Ringford-Cashel	Clydagh
MA014 -067----	Enclosure	Glenedaghoughter
MA014 -124----	Megalithic structure	Clydagh
MA014-026----	Ringford-Rath	Ballinglen
MA014 -022----	Castle-towerhouse	Ballinglen
MA006 -027----	Megalithic tomb - court tomb	Sralagagh West
MA014 -027----	Ritual site- holy well	Ballinglen
MA014 -048----	Enclosure	Annaghmore
MA014 - 048001-	Children's Burial Ground	Annaghmore
MA006 -021----	Megalithic tomb - court tomb	Glenurla
MA014 -050----	Megalithic structure	Annagh Beg
MA021 -001----	Ringfort-cashel	Glenedagh Oughter
MA006 -026----	Crannog	Ráth Aibhistín
MA014 -001----	Ringfort-rath	Ballinglen
MA006 -025----	Crannog	Ráth Aibhistín
MA014 -051----	Ringfort-rath	Annagh Beg
MA020 -003----	Burialground	Croughaun East
MA014 -068----	Ringfort-rath	Creevaghbeg
MA014 - 002007-	Megalithic tomb-court tomb	Ballinglen

#### Protected Structures/Architectural Conservation Areas:

There are no Protected Structures within the site and the site is not located within an Architectural Conservation Area. The nearest protected structure the Stella Maris hotel is c. 7km north-east of the proposed development. The structure is located in an area where 6-10 turbines will theoretically be visible, albeit at a distance of c. 7km (Figure 13-12). Protected structures located along the grid connection cable route and transport delivery route are described below in sections 13.3.3.2.1 and 13.3.4.3 below respectively.

## 8.5 Public Services

### **Public Water Supply**

There are no surface water or groundwater abstractions used for public water supply purposes within or downslope/downgradient of the Wind Farm Site. The nearest source of public water supply is at Belderrig, c.6 km to the northwest of Glenora Forest, outside sub catchments that are linked with the Proposed Development. Two wind farm control buildings will be located within the substation compound, which will include staff welfare facilities during the proposed operational phase of the project. Due to the specific nature of the proposed development, there will be a very small water requirement for occasional toilet flushing and hand washing and does not necessitate a potable source. Rainwater harvesting is proposed. Alternatively, installation of a groundwater well adjacent to the substation is proposed as an option. A pump house is not required as an in-well pump will direct water to a water tank within the roof space of the control building.

Bottled water will be supplied for drinking.

### **Sanitary Facilities**

Wastewater from the staff welfare facilities in the control buildings will be managed by means of a sealed storage tank, with all wastewater being tankered off site by permitted waste collector to wastewater treatment plants. Such a proposal for managing the wastewater arising on site has become almost standard practice on wind farm sites, which are often proposed in areas where finding the necessary percolation requirements for on-site treatment would be challenging. The proposed wastewater storage tank will be fitted with an automated alarm system to notify when the tank requires emptying. The wastewater storage tank alarm will be part of a continuous stream of data from the site's turbines, wind measurement devices and electricity substation that will be monitored remotely 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. These will be supplied and maintained by a licensed supplier.

### **Surface Water**

The general design approach for wind farm developments seeks to utilise and integrate the project with the existing land infrastructure where possible whether it be existing access tracks or the existing land drainage network. Two distinct methods will be employed to manage drainage water within the site. The first, by avoiding disturbance to natural drainage features, minimising any works in or around artificial drainage features, and diverting clean surface water flow around excavations and construction areas. The second, by collecting any drainage waters from works areas within the site that might carry silt or sediment, to allow attenuation and settlement prior to controlled diffuse release.

Drainage water from any works areas of the site of the proposed development will not be directed to any natural watercourses within the site.

Interceptor drains will be installed horizontally across slopes to run in parallel with the natural contour line of the slope. Intercepted water will travel along the interceptor drains to areas downgradient of works areas, where the drain will terminate at a level spreader.

Drainage swales will remain in place to collect runoff from roads and hardstanding areas of the proposed development during the operational phase. Check dams will restrict flow velocity, minimise channel erosion and promote sedimentation behind the dam and will be installed as the interceptor drains are being excavated. Piped slope drains will be used to transfer water away from areas where slopes are too steep to use level spreaders. A selection of suitable areas to use as vegetation filters will be determined to carry outflow from the level spreaders as overland sheet flow, removing any suspended solids and discharging to the groundwater system by diffuse infiltration. Settlement ponds will be used to attenuate runoff from works areas of the site during the construction phase and will remain in place to handle runoff from roads and hardstanding areas during the operational phase. 'Silt busters' (silt traps) will be available to filter any water pumped out of excavation areas. Dewatering silt bags and sedimats will trap any of the finer silt and sediment remaining in the water after it has gone through the previous drainage measures. The dewatering silt bags will ensure that there will be no loss of peaty silt into watercourses.

## 9.0 Flood Risk Assessment

Hydrology and Flood Risk is addressed in Chapter 9 of the EIAR (Appendix 9.1 contains Flood Risk Assessment). Areas of the proposed development as being at risk of flooding was informed by consulting, OPW's CFRAMS flood maps ([www.floodinfo.ie](http://www.floodinfo.ie)), groundwater flood maps prepared by GSI, and historical 6" and 25" base maps (OSI).

The EIAR summarises that, the Wind Farm Site was not considered in OPW's Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme. However, the National Indicative Fluvial flood risk map shows a "medium probability" and 'low probability' of flood extents (fluvial flooding) along sections of the Altderg and Keerglen Rivers. The section along Altderg River extends to the southern boundary of the Wind Farm Site. The section on Keerglen River follows the southeastern boundary but does not extend into the Wind Farm Site.

Based on the accompanying text to the flood risk map, which defines "medium probability" flooding as a "modelled extent of land that might be flooded by rivers (fluvial flooding) during a theoretical or 'design' flood event with an estimated probability of occurrence, rather than information for actual floods that have occurred in the past." In this instance, the probability of occurrence is 100:1, which is a 100-year return period event, noting that this does not account for possible effects of climate change. The "low probability" flood risk extent is defined by a 1,000:1 probability of occurrence, or a 1000-year return period event.

Historical OSI 6-inch or 25-inch sheets for the Wind Farm Site do not identify any lands that are "liable to flood. The nearest recorded flooding on a river that is hydrologically linked with the Wind Farm Site is on the Owenmore River, between Bellacorick and Bangor Erris, more than 20 km downstream of the Wind Farm Site

GSI's groundwater flood mapping do not indicate a groundwater flood risk within or in the vicinity of the site.

All infrastructure within the Wind Farm Site, with the exception of roads and road crossings on lower ground, is located outside and above the OPW-modelled 1,000- and 100-year return period flood levels. As such, all planned infrastructure is located in Flood Zone C (Low Risk).

## 10.0 Water Framework Directive

The site is located in the headwater subcatchment of the Owenmore and Ballinglen Rivers in Hydrometric Area 33. The Owenmore River drains to Tullaghan Bay, approximately 27 km straight-line distance to the southwest of the site. The Ballinglen River drains to Bunatrahir Bay, approximately 8km straight-line distance to the northeast of the site. Within the proposed Wind Farm site, the headwaters of the Owenmore and Ballinglen Rivers are as follows:

- The Altderg River (incorporating the Glenora River and Fiddaunfrankagh Stream). The Altderg River flows south and merges with Inagh River to become the Oweninny River, further south it becomes the Owenmore River, after its merger with Sheskin River.
- The Keerglen River, which flows east to Ballinglen River. The Keerglen River has several small, unnamed streams which flow south from within the eastern part of Glenora Forest.
- The headwaters of the Glencullin River, includes the Sralagagh River, originates within Glenora Forest also, but are outside the Wind Farm Site.

River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) have been published for all River Basin Districts in Ireland in accordance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and outline the water quality objectives for each waterbody.

The assessment highlights that there are several other, existing wind farm developments within 20 km of the proposed Wind Farm Site. To date, there has been no discernible or identified effects from the existing wind farms on the WFD ecological status of associated water bodies. Most of these existing wind farms are either downslope of or in separate subcatchments from the Proposed Development. As such, they will not interact with Proposed Development.

The Killala Community Wind Farm, is situated within the same subcatchment of the Moyne River which encompasses the Tawnaghmore grid connection point. The trenching associated with the proposed

development will pass c.300m south of Killala Community Wind Farm. Mitigation measures outlined in the EIAR will be implemented, and construction of the Tawnaghmore grid connection will be planned and coordinated in such a manner it will not interfere with the Killala Community Wind Farm operations. Also, forestry activity within the site is considered as forestry operations and have the potential to influence water quality and biological conditions of local streams both directly and indirectly. Such operations are subject to best management practices and license conditions. The integration of the drainage management systems and the addition of both check dams and settlement ponds, along with diffuse discharges at greenfield runoff rates, will serve to reduce or mitigate risks of water quality effects. Implementation of mitigation measures and best practice methods on the part of both the proposed development and forestry operators, risks of effects are reduced, and potential cumulative effects can be monitored, managed and mitigated. As such, it is stated that significant residual cumulative effects are not likely to occur.

The EIAR states that the mitigation measures proposed are proven from other wind farm sites and considered 'best practice' for wind farm developments. Mitigation involves constructing a comprehensive drainage management system which intercepts pathways between potential sources of pollution (works areas) and receptors (streams). These measures will ensure that the proposed development presents no likelihood for significant effects on surface or groundwater quality following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures.

## 11.0 Environment Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)

The following section gives the Planning Authority's views in relation to the adequacy of the EIAR submitted as part of this planning application. Where possible it has been attempted to keep the planning, assessment separate from those comments specifically relating to environmental impact, it should be noted that there is some crossover.

In this case, An Bord Pleanála is the competent authority for the purposes of carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIAR submitted by the applicant informs this EIA, as does information available to An Bord Pleanála and information given by the Local Authority.

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018) specify that (as per EU Directive 2014/52/EU) there is a requirement for the EIAR to be prepared by component experts. For the most part, the EIAR is set out in a clear format and consists of a wide-ranging, comprehensive assessment of the full range of issues and factors that could reasonably be anticipated for a wind farm development of this scale. The Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is considered adequate.

The section below provides a brief summary of the environmental impacts of the proposal as outlined in the chapters contained in the EIAR.

### Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Introduction clearly sets the overall context for the proposed development. It sets out the legislative context for the Environmental Impact Assessment in terms of Strategic Infrastructure Development under section 37A(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended); as well as the Guidelines taken into consideration in preparing the EIAR. It provides the background on the Applicant, and a description of the proposed windfarm development and overall project.

The main body of the EIAR (Volume 1) uses the 'grouped structure' method to describe the existing environment, the potential impacts of the proposed development thereon and the proposed mitigation measures. Chapters are organized to provide information relating to the proposed development, including scoping, consultation undertaken and a description of the proposed development. The grouped format sections describe the effects of the proposed development in terms of population and human health, biodiversity, ornithology soils and geology, hydrology and hydrogeology, air and climate, noise and vibration, landscape and visual, cultural heritage and material assets such as traffic and transportation, together with the interaction of the foregoing, as well as the expected effects deriving from the vulnerability of the project to risks of major accidents and/or disasters that are relevant to the project concerned; followed by identification of measures to mitigate and monitor. Reference is made to the scoping and consultation process,

undertaken with the various stakeholders during the consultation process. Chapter 1 states that each chapter has been completed by a component expert(s) and a 'Statement of Authority' has been provided in relation to each chapter. The level of expertise of the component experts appears reasonable. This is a matter for the Board to determine.

This chapter concluded that no general difficulties or limitations were encountered in compiling the information required to be provided in this EIAR.

### **Chapter 2 – Background and Policy**

This chapter of the EIAR includes the relevant Energy and Climate Change related policy and targets as well as the European, National, Strategic, Regional, and Local planning context for the proposed development, scoping and consultation, and the cumulative impact assessment process.

The chapter identifies the primary drivers behind the proposed development, in particular the need to provide additional renewable energy to offset the use of fossil fuels within the electricity generating sector. Increasing electricity generation from wind power represents the most economical renewable option to reduce emissions within the power generation sector and is the most mature technology available to achieve national targets that have been established for de-carbonization.

This review of relevant policy contained in this Section of the EIAR concludes that the proposed Glenora Wind Farm is consistent with the overarching planning framework with regard to facilitating the move away from dependency on fossil fuels and the promotion of proper planning and sustainable development.

### **Chapter 3 – Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives**

This Chapter contains a description of the reasonable alternatives that were studied by the developer which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, in terms of site location and other renewable energy technologies, incorporating size and scale of the project, connection to the national grid and transport route options to the site. This chapter also outlines the design considerations in relation to the wind farm, including the associated substation, construction compound and borrow pits. It provides an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.

### **Chapter 4 – Description of the proposed development**

In Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the proposed development and its components with development layout configuration. Particulars are provided regarding development components including turbines - number, type and capacity, assembly mechanism, meteorological mast, upgrade of existing tracks & roads, new permanent site access and upgrade of 1 no existing site entrance; new security cabin, automatic barriers, temporary widening of public road, new temporary roadway to facilitate delivery of turbine components & abnormal loads, substation/operation & maintenance control building, borrow pits, peat placement areas, construction compound(s), recreation & amenity works (trails, seating areas, amenity car park & associated signage), site drainage, signage, ancillary forestry felling to facilitate construction & operation of the proposed development, works associated with biodiversity management within the site, all associated site development & ancillary infrastructure. It confirms that - all of the elements listed above; as well as the intended substation and grid connection route and turbine delivery route accommodation works are collectively referred to as the "proposed development".

This chapter also provides details on Traffic Management, Community Gain proposal, Renewable Energy Support Scheme, Community Benefit Fund, Community Investment Opportunity, as well as, details concerning a Recreation and Amenity Proposal to be developed in tandem with the wind farm site.

This chapter also provides details on environment management of construction works which feeds into the overall construction environment management plan. Details are provided in respect of the proposed operation & maintenance building; and a proposal for a Decommissioning plan are included in this chapter.

## **Chapter 5 – Population and Human Health**

Chapter 5 identifies, describes and assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on population and human health. The key issues examined in this chapter of the EIAR include population, human health, encompassing employment and economic activity, land-use patterns, services, tourism, residential amenity (noise, visuals, setbacks), community facilities and services, tourism, property values, shadow flicker and health and safety.

## **Chapter 6 – Biodiversity**

This chapter assesses the likely significant effects (both alone and cumulatively with other plans and projects) that the Proposed Development may have on Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna and sets out the mitigation measures proposed to avoid, reduce, or offset any potential significant effects that are identified. The residual impacts on biodiversity are then assessed. Particular attention has been paid to species and habitats of ecological importance. These include species and habitats with national and international protection. Impacts on avian receptors (Birds) are considered in Chapter 7 of the EIAR

## **Chapter 7 – Ornithology**

Chapter 7 provides an overview of the potential effects associated with the proposed development on ornithological features. A Bird Impact Assessment Report (BIAR) was completed for the proposed development, a summary of which is contained in this chapter. The BIAR includes descriptions and results of all bird surveys undertaken by MWP during the following survey periods: Summer 2019, Winter 2019/2020, Summer 2020, Winter 2020/2021, Summer 2021, Winter 2021/2022, Summer 2022, and Winter 2022/2023. The BIAR comprises an ecological impact assessment of the Proposed Development focusing on avian (bird) species potentially affected by the project. The process then determines whether the site's avian fauna will be subject to impacts arising from the Proposed Development and characterises these impacts and their effects in terms of significance.

## **Chapter 8 – Land, Soils and Geology**

This chapter provides a baseline assessment of the likely and significant effects of the proposed development (Glenora Wind Farm) and its associated development in terms of land, soils and geology and discusses the potential likely significant, direct, indirect and cumulative effects that the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development will have. Where required, appropriate mitigation measures to avoid any identified effects to land, soils and geology are recommended and the residual effects of the Proposed Development post-mitigation are assessed.

## **Chapter 9 – Hydrology and Hydrogeology**

This chapter of the EIAR, provides an assessment of the impact on the hydrology and hydrogeology on the receiving environment, as a result of the proposed development. It assesses the potential likely and significant hydrological and hydrogeological effects of the proposed development on the receiving water environment (surface water and groundwater). The assessment is guided by the source-pathway-receptor model of environmental risk assessment that underpins water protection initiatives in Ireland.

The site is located in the headwater subcatchment of the Owenmore and Ballinglen Rivers in Hydrometric Area 33. The Owenmore River drains to Tullaghan Bay, approximately 27 km straight-line distance to the southwest of the Site. The Ballinglen River drains to Bunatrahair Bay, approximately 8km straight-line distance to the northeast of the Site. Within the proposed Wind Farm site, the headwaters of the Owenmore and Ballinglen Rivers are as follows:

- The Altderg River (incorporating the Glenora River and Fiddaunfrankagh Stream). The Altderg River flows south and merges with Inagh River to become the Oweninny River, further south it becomes the Owenmore River, after its merger with Sheskin River.
- The Keerglen River flows east to Ballinglen River. It has several small, unnamed streams which flow south from within the eastern part of Glenora Forest.

The headwaters of the Glencullin River, includes the Sralagagh River, originates within Glenora Forest but is outside the subject. With regard to the groundwater bodies that underlie the proposed development, these were all at 'Good' status in the period 2016-2021 and classified as 'Not at Risk' of failing to achieve 'Good' status objectives in year 2027. Only the Ballinglen river water bodies are classified as being at risk of failing to achieve WFD objectives in year 2027. The Ballinglen river water bodies are subjects of ongoing investigative assessments by the Local Authority Waters Programme.

In relation to forestry activity, a total of 116ha of forest will be felled to accommodate the proposed development. The felling activity will occur intermittently through the first year of the 2-year total construction period. Clear-felling will involve the use of machinery which results in physical disturbance of residual peat and subsoil. The disturbance is from vehicle tracking and skidding, forwarding extraction methods, and damage to existing tracks and timber/brush in stacking areas. The related activity can release sediments, organic matter (including dissolved organic carbon) and nutrients into drains. For these reasons, the EIAR includes a proposed suite of mitigation measures to protect quality of surface water and aquatic habitat.

### **Chapter 10 – Air Quality**

This chapter identifies, describes and assesses the potential significant direct and indirect effects on air quality and climate arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed Glenora Wind Farm development including the substation, grid connection and the turbine delivery route.

Construction of the proposed development will have a Short-Term, Imperceptible Negative Effect as a result of greenhouse gas emissions from construction plant, transportation of components and vehicles.

The assessment found that during the construction phase of the Proposed Development and other developments within 20km of the wind farm site (yet to be constructed), there will be minor emissions from construction plant and machinery, turbine components and construction material delivery vehicles and potential dust emissions associated with the construction activities. Should these developments be constructed simultaneously, there will be a short-term slight negative cumulative impact on air quality due to vehicular and dust emissions. Operation of the proposed development will have a Direct Long-Term Moderate Positive Impact on air quality.

### **Chapter 11 – Climate**

This chapter identifies, describes and assesses the potential significant direct and indirect effects on climate arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development and has been completed in accordance with the EIA guidance and legislation. The assessment assesses the potential effects that the proposed development may have on Climate and sets out proposed mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset any potential significant effects that are identified.

During the construction phase of the proposed development and other permitted or proposed projects (yet to be constructed) there will be greenhouse gas emissions arising from production of construction materials (such as cement), and operation of construction vehicles and plant. These will be restricted to the duration of the construction phase but will give rise to emission over a short-term duration. It is stated that the emissions arising from construction phase activities will have a permanent imperceptible negative effect on Climate, however the proposed development will offset CO<sub>2</sub> associated with the construction and operational phase that will be lost to the atmosphere in c.28 months of operation. The nature of the proposed development, once operational, will have a long-term, moderate, positive impact on climate. Considering these greenhouse gas emissions within the context of the Electricity Sector Emissions Ceilings the proposed development will displace carbon dioxide from fossil fuel-based electricity generation, over the proposed 35-year lifespan of development. Therefore, it will take place under the Electricity sector emissions ceiling and will be offset by the operation of the proposed development within its operational life. Thus, it states there will be no cumulative effects arising on climate from the proposed development and other permitted or proposed developments and plans in the area.

## **Chapter 12 – Noise**

This chapter assesses the potential noise impacts at the nearest Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSRs), which are residential properties within c. 3km of the Proposed Development

The result of the construction noise assessment show that for all construction phases there are no significant effects anticipated at the nearby NSRs (ie. residential properties), and, although there is no requirement for any mitigation measures, good practice measures will be implemented. Likely operational noise impact was assessed and found that wind turbine noise would meet the noise criteria established in accordance with guidance. Therefore, the operational noise effect is not significant.

It is not considered that a significant effect is associated with the operation of this development, since the predicted residual noise levels associated with the proposed development will be within the relevant best practice noise criteria curves for wind farms.

## **Chapter 13 – Cultural Heritage and Archaeology**

Chapter 13 presents a comprehensive review of the potential impacts of the proposed development on the surrounding archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage landscape. It provides assessment of cultural and archaeological features, including pre-mitigation and residual impact assessment along with proposed mitigation measures during construction phases. This assessment concluded that there will be no significant potential impacts on the archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage environment during decommissions of the proposed development. Any potential impacts will already have been resolved through mitigation measures during construction phase. Based on the evidence provided it is considered that these findings would appear logical and reasonable.

## **Chapter 14 – Landscape and Visual**

This chapter addresses the potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposed Glenora Wind Farm. The proposed development Site itself is of low landscape value and sensitivity given its current landcover and land use of commercial plantation forestry. The site is partially located within an area designated within the County Mayo RES as having areas of 'Tier 2 Open to Consideration' and 'Tier 1 Preferred (Large Wind Farms)'.

Having considered the designated vulnerable landscape features, including ridgelines and riverbanks, the EIAR found that there are no 'Significant' landscape effects deemed to arise, owing to the remote nature of the proposed development site i.e. there is limited access to areas where there will be substantial visibility of the development. In terms of the wider landscape, the assessment considered the impact on its landscape character where it was found that effects range from 'Moderate' to 'Not Significant'. Mitigation measures are considered.

The EIAR considered the landscape character of the area where the proposed development site is located as one which contains open, expansive views, which assist in allowing the landscape to accommodate a large number of turbines.

In conclusion, the EIAR found that the proposed development is an appropriately designed and suitably scaled project, and likely landscape and visual effects are deemed to 'not be Significant'.

## **Chapter 15 – Material Assets**

This chapter addresses the likely significant effects of the proposed development on transportation infrastructure and on Other Material Assets which are economic assets of human origin including Telecommunications and Aviation. The impact that traffic generated by the proposed development would have on the local highway network is addressed, in addition to an assessment of the route geometry with respect to accommodating the abnormally sized vehicles required to deliver the turbine plant to the site. During construction phase it found that there will be a temporary, slight, negative impact on general traffic using the surrounding road network. Once the facility is operational the traffic impact created by maintenance staff will be negligible. In terms of Water Supply, Electricity, Telecommunications and Aviation, the assessment found that proposed development will have no significant effects subject to mitigation measures.

The EIAR concludes that the proposed development would not have any unacceptable direct or indirect impacts in terms of material assets and that cumulative effects are not likely to arise.

#### **Chapter 16 – Major Accidents and Natural Disaster**

This chapter describes the likely significant effects on the environment arising from the vulnerability of the proposed development to risks of major accidents and/or natural disasters. The EIAR found that the risk of a major accident and/or disaster during the construction of the proposed development is considered 'low' in accordance with 'Guide to Risk Assessment in Major Emergency Management' (DoEHLG, 2010). It states that the proposed development has been designed and (will be) built in accordance with the best practice measures set out in this EIAR and, as such, mitigation against the risk of major accidents and/or disasters is embedded through the design.

#### **Chapter 17 – Interaction of Effects**

Chapter 17 of the EIAR provides an assessment of the potential interactions between the various aspects of the environment.

A matrix is provided to identify potential interactions of impacts between the various aspects of the environment already assessed in the various chapters of the EIAR.

The matrix highlights the occurrence of potential positive or negative impacts during both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. Where any potential interactive impacts have been identified, the EIAR considers that appropriate mitigation is included in the relevant sections.

Where any potential interactive impacts have been identified, appropriate mitigation is included in the relevant sections.

#### **Chapter 18 – Schedule of Mitigation and Monitoring Proposals**

Chapter 18 provides a list of all mitigation measures proposed within the relevant chapters of the EIAR, which will be implemented during the pre-construction, construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the development (Pre-construction Phase, Construction, Operational and Decommissioning Phases).

## 12.0 Comments: Adequacy, etc. of the EIAR submitted with the application

The Council is satisfied that the EIAR complies with Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) in relation to the information to be contained in an EIAR.

## 13.0 Carrying Capacity and Safety of Road Network

Please refer to the details contained in Chapter 15 Material Assets.

The area engineer for Ballina MD provided comments in respect of the potential impact of the proposed development. In particular, there is some concern in relation to transportation aspect of the proposal i.e. alternative options to road for transportation. The report highlights that the proposed circuitous route for component deliveries from Ballina along the N59 through Crossmolina Regional R313 and along local road L1204 is not approved, indicating that deliveries shall be from Ballina to Ballycastle. Details of any proposed alterations to public road must agreed with Mayo County Council in advance of works; and road safety audits shall be completed for alterations to public road. The approved route may be reconsidered/amended if it can be established that due to restrictions it is not passable. In addition, it is advised that road closures may not be guaranteed, and it is advised that contingency may be required.

In relation to the grid connection, as the route connection is not yet approved - it is suggested that the 28km long connection to the 110kV at Tawnaughmore be reviewed by the developer. A possible shorter route should be explored by looking at the existing renewable energy infrastructure in North Mayo i.e. that associated with the established wind farm development.

It is highlighted that the use of directional drilling and private lands be utilised where possible, as the proposed make up of trench with 6 ducts spacings etc. would have a significant impact on public roads and may not be

feasible due to drainage infrastructure, road conditions, existing services, etc. In addition, special design considerations will be required in the case of bog ramparts.

An Bord Pleanála, should ensure that they are satisfied that the above concerns can be adequately addressed.

## 14.0 Environmental Carrying Capacity of the Site & Surrounding Area

Having regard to the assessments contained within the EIAR, in particular under Chapter 15 it is considered that the findings and recommended mitigation measure address this aspect of the development.

## 15.0 Reports from Relevant Local Authority Sections

This (SID) proposal was referred to the following sections of Mayo County Council for comment:

### **Roads Dept. MCC:**

It is recommended that comment on this proposal should be provided by Ballina MD as the significant issues are the abnormal load haul routes and construction access routes on the Regional and Local road network.

### **Area Office/Engineer (Ballina MD Area):**

The report states that the proposed circuitous route for component deliveries from Ballina along the N59 through Crossmolina Regional R313 and along local road L1204 is not approved, and that deliveries should be from Ballina to Ballycastle. Furthermore, the details of any proposed alterations to public road must be agreed with Mayo County Council in advance of works; and road safety audits shall be completed for alterations to public road. The approved route may be reconsidered/amended if it can be proven that due to restrictions it is not passable as it is noted in the documentation submitted that - for restricted local roads it is possible to re-angle components up to 60 degrees to enable passage.

In addition to the above, the queries are raised:

- Have all transportation possibilities been exhausted i.e. is there an alternative to transportation by road?
- Road closures cannot be guaranteed, and the statutory process must be followed. Advised that contingency may be required.
- Could an on-site effluent treatment system be considered to serve the proposed development as an alternative to road tankering effluent generated by c.120 site staff for two years. It is pointed out that the Oweninny Windfarm obtained an environmental award for their on-site system with UV treatment system.
- The route of the grid connection is queried, suggesting the 28km long connection to the 110kV at Tawnaughmore be reviewed by the developer – to explore a possible shorter route via existing infrastructure in North Mayo i.e. that associated with existing wind farm development.
- It is highlighted that the use of directional drilling and private lands be used where possible, as the proposed make up of trench with 6 ducts spacings etc. would have a significant impact on public roads and may not be feasible due to drainage infrastructure, road conditions, existing services, etc. Special design consideration will be required in the case of bog ramparts.

In addition to the above, a suite of recommended conditions is also provided.

### **Environment Section MCC**

The following comments are provided by MCC Environment:

- Water protection measures must be in place as described in the NIS documents during all phases of the works including tree felling, construction works and re-planting activities at the site.
- Soil removal works or excavation work to be timed in accordance with weather conditions and curtailed or deferred if necessary if significant rainfall is forecast.
- The developer to engage a suitably qualified forestry advisor to determine, if possible, the potential to re-plant the site with native tree species and which species to plant.
- To demonstrate that suitable temporary welfare facilities will be provided for those working/visiting the site.
- To ensure the site is secure and measures in place to deter illegal dumping at the site.
- All environmental measures as set out in the CEMP to be undertaken in line with best practice to address potential issues relating to waste, dust and noise.

### Archaeology MCC

The report states that - all recommendations outlined in the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) should be implemented in full. A suite of suggested conditions is provided, should the development be granted.

### Tourism Section MCC

Having reviewed the plans for the proposed development, it is confirmed that it has no impact on the Looped Walk or the Céide Coastal Path. No stated objection.

## 16.0 Third Party Observations/Submitted to An Bord Pleanála

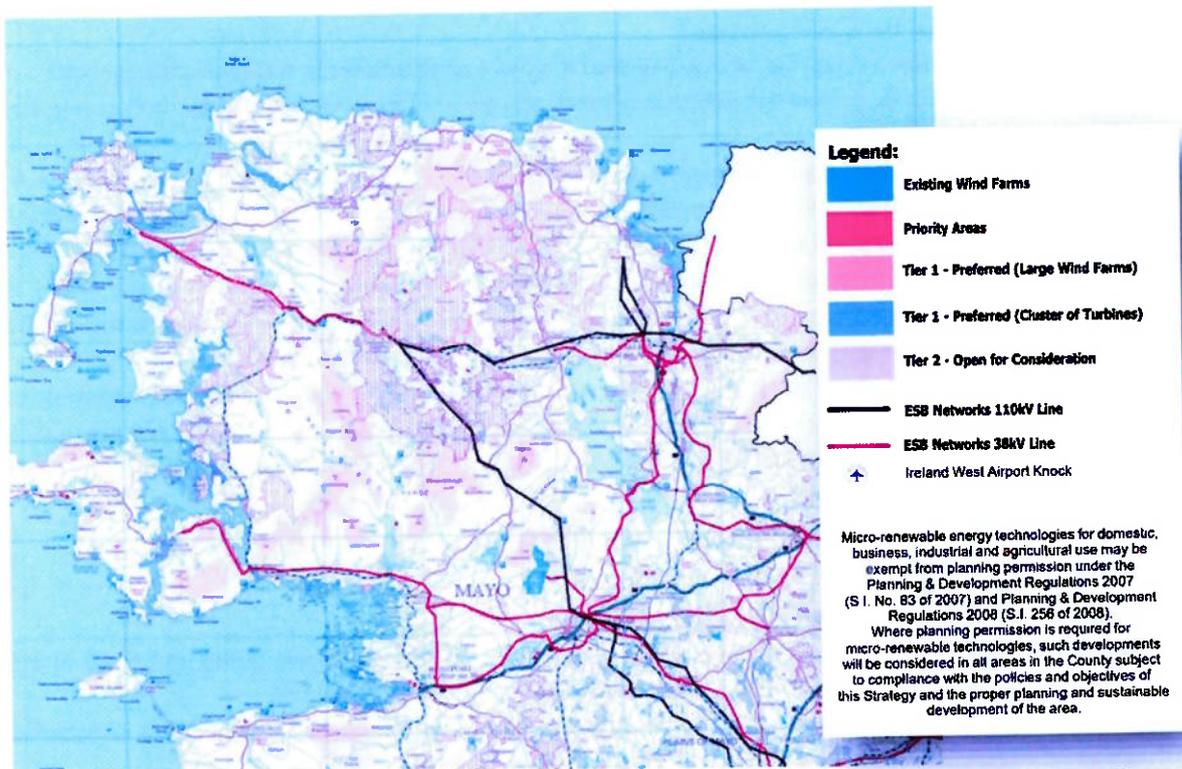
The closing date for submissions to An Bord Pleanála is 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024, as advertised in the public notices.

## 17.0 Planning Authority Assessment

### Principle of Proposed Development:

Mayo County Council adopted a Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) for County Mayo on the 9th May 2011. The Strategy sets out a path to allow County Mayo to contribute to meeting the national legally binding renewable energy targets and sets out opportunities for individuals, communities and businesses to harness renewable energy in a sustainable manner and to assist in combating climate change.

Map 1 of the Mayo RES, details the locations within the County where wind farms will be considered, including priority area, preferred for large wind farm development and clustered development. It also provides locations 'Open for Consideration, see extract from map below:



The proposed development is in a location that includes Tier 1 and Tier 2 areas as identified in the RES for County Mayo, with a large tranche of unclassified lands contained to the north and east of the site. A considerable portion of the site is spread between a Tier 1 'Preferred' location suitable for Large Wind Farm development, and Tier 2 an area 'Open for Consideration'. Therefore, in principle the location is considered acceptable.

**Planning History:**

There is little planning history associated with this specific site. The permissions that were refused on site were over 20 years ago, which were subject to provisions of the County Development Plan in place at the time. Proposals for Windfarm development was considered premature at the time, pending the preparation of a Wind Energy Strategy for the County.

The wider area of north Mayo has received several permissions for wind farm development and other renewable energy projects. It is considered that the use of the lands in this general area is established and that the proposed use is broadly acceptable.

**Residential Amenity:**

In considering the amenity of residents in the context of a proposed wind farm, there are three main potential impacts of relevance- Shadow Flicker, Noise and Visual Amenity or interference with telecommunications. The assessments accompanying this SID consider impact on residential or noise sensitive receptors (NSRs) in the area (c.3km of the proposed development). Sensitive receptors are located in Ballycastle settlement; and a cluster (c.8) of properties to the east of proposed wind farm site, and a number of properties to the south of the site. There are no occupied dwellings within 500meters of the closest Turbine, the closest proposed turbine is 1,179meters from the nearest occupied dwelling.

The proposed development is seeking 22 no. large scale turbines, with a total blade height of 180m. The height and scale of the proposed turbines will be visible from roads, houses and agricultural properties within the immediate area. The proposed turbines are located over twice the required set-back distance from the nearest residential property, with topographical screening mitigating effects on residential visual amenity as such impact on residential amenity could be regarded as 'low' resulting from the proposed development.

**Shadow Flicker and Noise:**

Wind Turbines, like other tall structures, can cast long shadows when the sun is low in the sky. The effect known as 'shadow flicker' occurs where the blades of a wind turbine cast a shadow over a window in a nearby house and the rotation of the blades causes the shadow to flick on and off. Generally only properties within 130 degrees either side of north, relative to the turbines, can be affected at these latitudes in Ireland, turbines do not cast long shadows on their southern side.

The DoEHLG Wind Energy Guidelines (2006) state that shadow flicker lasts only for a short period of time and occurs only during certain specific combined circumstances, as follows:

- the sun is shining and is at a low angle in the sky, i.e just after dawn and before sunset, and
- the turbine is located directly between the sun and the affected property, and
- there is enough wind energy to ensure that the turbine blades are moving, and
- the turbine blades are positioned so as to cast a shadow on the receptor.

The DoEHLG 2006 wind energy guidelines recommend that shadow flicker at dwellings within 500 metres of a proposed turbine location should not exceed a total of 30 hours per year or 30 minutes per day. There are no occupied dwellings within 500m of any proposed turbine location with the nearest occupied dwelling located at approximately 1179m from the closest turbine, well in excess of the 4 x tip height setback requirement set out in the 2019 Draft Wind Energy Guidelines. There are only a further 12 no. residential dwellings within 3km of the proposed turbines. A significant separation distance from all residential dwellings and proposed wind turbines has been achieved with the project design and given the remote location of the proposed development site. Given the separation distance of the residential properties from the proposed turbines, and the level of existing screening in the area it is considered that the proposed development will have no significant impact on existing visual amenity of inhabited dwellings.

There is an occupied residential dwelling located within a distance of 10 rotor diameters (1,620 metres) from the proposed turbine locations. The shadow flicker modelling indicates that the 1 no. residential dwelling located within the shadow flicker study area will not experience any shadow flicker due to the operation of the proposed

development. The DoHPLG 'Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines' December 2019 recommend local planning authorities and/or An Bord Pleanála impose conditions to ensure that:

*"no existing dwelling or other affected property will experience shadow flicker as a result of the wind energy development subject of the planning application and the wind energy development shall be installed and operated in accordance with the shadow flicker study submitted to accompany the planning application, including any mitigation measures required."*

Detailed noise and shadow flicker modelling has been carried out as part of this EIAR, which shows that the proposed development will meet all required guidelines in relation to noise and the shadow flicker thresholds set out in the 2006 DoEHLG Wind Energy Guidelines and the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019. Assessments shows that the predicted wind turbine noise levels from the proposed development on its own, with a 162meters rotor diameter candidate wind turbine, meet the Site-Specific Noise Limits under all conditions at all NALs for both daytime and nighttime periods, as such there are no significant effects predicted to occur.

#### **Visual Amenity:**

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines set out guidance for the siting and design of wind energy developments in various landscape contexts by defining six landscape character types that represent most situations where wind turbines may be proposed. The guidance is intended to be indicative and general, and notes that it, represents the 'best fit' solutions to likely situations. However, regarding these six landscape character types, the Guidelines also note that it is common for a wind energy development to be located in one landscape but visible from another and recommends that the entire visual unit should be taken into consideration.

As noted in the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) there is a need to balance the preservation and enhancement of nature conservation and habitat protection against the need to develop key strategic infrastructure in a manner that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development. The proposal would have a visual impact from roads in the vicinity and from residential properties therein, where screening is not available or maintained. It is considered that direct effects on landscape character are localised with visual impacts ranging from imperceptible to moderately significant in a landscape of 'High to Moderate' sensitivity for the type of development proposed.

In a wider context, it is considered that the integrity of the designated scenic views along the north Mayo coastline including Downpatrick Head which is a sensitive landscape feature and acts as a key contributor to the scenic amenity in north Mayo, a key tourist route along the Wild Atlantic Way is vulnerable.

#### **Impact on Roads Infrastructure:**

The construction phase is the critical period with respect to the traffic effects experienced on the surrounding road network in terms of both the additional traffic volumes that will be generated on the network, and the geometric requirements of the abnormally large loads associated with the wind turbine project.

Entry for large turbine components will be via Galway Port. Vehicles delivering large turbine components and other abnormal loads to the site take a route through Galway City, N83, the N17, the N5, the N58, the N26 and continue north to Ballina before turning west onto the N59 to Bangor Erris, north onto the L1204 and continuing northward reaching the R314, finally merging onto an unnamed local road at Ballycastle. Then west along the local road before merging onto a forest road to the proposed development site.

The delivery route(s) for general construction traffic may vary depending on the location of suppliers used to construct the proposed development. It is estimated that concrete and general construction traffic may travel to the site via the R314 to the east and west, or the R315 to the east, and that these roads then link into the national road network via the N59.

Noting the comments received from the Area Engineer, it would appear that there is further exploration of the transportation route required. There is some concern with regard to the circuitous route proposed and it would be a preference to utilise R314 from Ballina to Ballycastle for component deliveries. Notwithstanding the

mitigation measures proposed in the EIAR, it is considered ABP should be satisfied that the proposed route is feasible and that any proposed alterations to public roads can be met.

#### **Impact on the Environment:**

The EIAR identifies comprehensively the potential environmental impacts arising from the development. Furthermore, The EIAR sets out in detail proposed mitigation and monitoring measures which when implemented will reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts.

It is the considered view of Mayo County Council, that subject to the mitigation measures proposed in the EIAR, the proposed development will not have a significant impact on the environment of the area.

## 18.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

Mayo County Council is supportive of renewable energy projects within the County. Based on the current policy, in particular the Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo, the location is on a landscape that could assimilate wind turbines. It should be noted that RES for County Mayo is currently at review stage.

The North West of County Mayo has become a focus for renewable energy projects with several existing and proposed renewable energy projects. In considering this SID proposal, ABP should note that the Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo was adopted in 2011 where Wind Power was its main focus. Since the RES for County Mayo was adopted Renewable Energy Technologies have evolved considerably. In terms of the visual analysis, the photomontages submitted demonstrate the proposed development will have impacts of varying magnitude on the landscape of the area. It is recognized that the area is remote and project design has aimed to minimize the visual impact of the development. Whilst the location is considered suitable in terms of the Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy (2011), it should be noted that it was adopted prior to the current utilisation of turbines which have significant escalation in height.

Of some concern, is Photomontage 8/Derry Lower which shows the cumulative visual impact of the several renewable energy projects, including the proposed and permitted Sheskin Wind Farm; the existing and proposed Oweninny Wind Farm; existing Bellacorrick Wind Farm; proposed Met Mast; and proposed Glenora Wind Farm from along the R312/Western Way. Also, worth considering is Photomontage No 3/Knockaun - view from Downpatrick Head demonstrating the impact of the proposed development on the landscape of the area.

Mayo County Council has some concerns that the proposed development may have intrusion on the landscape along the Wild Atlantic Way, a major tourist route. A visual analysis of the impact of the development along the coastal scenic routes and designated views should be further considered.

In assessing this proposal An Bord Pleanála should consider the multiplicity of renewable energy developments (permitted and pending decision outcome) in North Mayo area and the overall cumulative impact of such development in the north Mayo area, including its significance in terms of the tourism product along the Wild Atlantic Way and the sensitive archaeological & heritage landscape associated with the Céide Fields. In respect of the Céide Fields, it is a stated Objective of the MCDP 2022-2028 *'To protect the tentative World Heritage Site in Mayo on the UNESCO Tentative List - Ireland 2010, The Céide Fields, from inappropriate development and support its nomination to World Heritage Status'* (Objective BEO2).

Noting the comments received from MCC Environment Section, it is considered that a proposed on-site effluent treatment system should be considered for inclusion in the proposed development. A UV type system similar to that provided in the Oweninny Wind Farm development, if feasible, should be considered.

Having regard to the comments and advice provided by the Ballina MD in relation to the Roads and the indicated transportation route, it should be noted that the proposed route from Ballina along the N59 through Crossmolina Regional R313 and along local road L1204 has not been agreed/approved. A less circuitous route is preferred as indicated by A/Engineer i.e. the Ballina to Ballycastle route, if possible.

In addition, any proposed alterations to public roads, including completed road safety audits for alterations to public roads, must be agreed with Mayo County Council in advance of works. Clarity is required relating to road closures, as well as contingency proposals.

An Bord Pleanála must be satisfied that the transportation route required to serve the delivery of component

parts is achievable and agreed, as such the route as proposed is not agreed and clarification and agreement. The proposed route may be reconsidered/amended where it is proven that due to restrictions it is not passable. In agreeing and determining the transportation route, An Bord Pleanála should be satisfied that all other transportation possibilities have been explored and exhausted.

In respect of the grid route, though not part of the SID application, the following points should be considered by An Bord Pleanála. Prior to making a decision on the proposed development, an alternative route should be fully explored whereby it may be possible to have a shorter route to the grid i.e that associated with existing wind farm development in the greater North Mayo area as a possible alternative to the 28km long proposed route connection to the Tawnaghmore 110kV substation c.14km southeast of the development site.

An Bord Pleanála should be satisfied that the most efficient and feasible route to the national grid is achievable.

#### **Recommendation 1**

Request a detailed assessment of any potential adverse visual impacts the development proposed may have on the visual amenity along the designated scenic routes and views along the Wild Atlantic Way. It is also noted that the visual analysis of the proposed development is from a daylight perspective, there is no indication what, if any, the proposal in isolation or cumulatively of red flashing warning lights on top of the turbines will have on the environment or human population.

#### **Recommendation 2**

Consideration should be given to the potential impact, if any, that may arise from the red flashing warning lights with this development and cumulatively with other developments in the wider area, that may impact the local populations and/or on light sensitive species.

#### **Recommendation 3**

Consideration should be given to the provision of an on-site effluent treatment system to serve the proposed development given the estimated staff/workforce over a two-year period. An on-site system with UV treatment system should be considered.

#### **Recommendation 4**

Prior to make a decision, consideration should be given to exploring a shorter alternative route to achieve the most efficient and feasible connection to the national grid, possibly achievable via infrastructure (substation) serving existing/permitted renewable energy developments in the general area to the south.

#### **Recommendation 5**

In the event of a grant of planning permission Mayo County Council considers that the following conditions should be applied:

### **Reasons and Considerations**

Having regard to national policy and the creation of sustainable development resources; the general suitability of the site for a wind powered electricity generating facility; the nature of the landscape in the area; the provisions of the current Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028; and the proposed mitigation measures outlined in the EIAR it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the visual amenities or the landscape character of the area, would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience, would not be likely to have a significant detrimental effect on ecology or protected species and would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

#### **Conditions Relating to Roads & Road Infrastructure**

1. A structural capacity of the local roads network, including the visual and Falling Weight Deflectometer surveys are to be undertaken on all roads used as haul routes for this project in advance of the project commencing and again at the completion of the project. These surveys are to be submitted to Mayo County Council. Any pavement damage or deterioration which is identified by the surveys and is clearly as a result of this project is to be repaired by the developer in consultation with Mayo County Council.

**Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety.

- 2 Bridge structural surveys are to be undertaken to all bridges along haul roads associated with this project in advance of the project commencing and at monthly intervals as the project is under construction. These surveys are to be forwarded to Mayo County Council and any deterioration in a bridge structure identified as the project proceeds is to be repaired by the applicant in consultation with Mayo County Council.

**Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety.

3. Construction details in respect of proposed new roads shall be submitted to the Local Authority for agreement prior to commencement of development. Details should include dimensions, composition and treatment/finishes of proposed new roads. Note: Unfinished surfaces will not be acceptable in highly scenic locations and the Wild Atlantic Way.

**Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety and scenic amenity.

4. (i) Proposed access routes along local roads L5189 and L51892 near Ballycastle shall be strengthened and upgraded prior to commencement of development, to the satisfaction of Mayo County Council.  
(ii) Detailed design for any proposed new road construction shall be submitted to Mayo County Council for agreement prior to commencement of development.  
(iii) New road to have a minimum length of 15m bound surface from interface with public road. Joints to comply with current TII Specification for Bituminous pavements.

**Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety.

5. Owing to the significant quantity of construction materials required for the proposed development, the applicant is required to submit details in respect of the proposed haul routes for construction materials for the 15.4 Km upgrade and 10.5Km new road, including concrete deliveries etc. Local roads (L5189 & L51892) shall not to be used for such purposes.

**Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety.

6. The applicant shall provide details in respect of proposed fencing and reinstatement of roadside boundaries, with due consideration given to the sensitivity of location along the Wild Atlantic Way.

**Reason:** In the interests of visual and scenic amenity and traffic safety.

7. A wheel wash facility shall be provided on site. The applicant shall ensure that discharge of mud/dirt/dust on to public road is prevented. The wheel wash shall have rumble grids to dislodge mud and dust.

**Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety.

8. A traffic management plan, including a Construction stage mobility management plan for workforce, for the project is to be agreed with Mayo County Council prior to the project commencing. All proposed haul routes are to be detailed in this plan and must be agreed by Mayo County Council in advance of project commencement.

**Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety.

9. Abnormal load permits will be required for all oversize deliveries associated with the project. All costs associated with the relocation of road infrastructure to facilitate oversized loads are the responsibility of the developer.

**Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety.

10. (i) Road surface water drainage is to be maintained at all times during this project.  
(ii) No surface water shall be permitted to discharge from the site onto the public road.

**Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety.

11. Publication of road closure/parking restriction notices etc. and associated costs shall be borne by the developer.

**Reason:** In the interest of traffic safety and proper planning.

12. Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall have established and agreed with the Local Authority, the most efficient, feasible and shortest connection to the existing 110kV infrastructure.  
**Reason:** In the interest of proper planning and efficient use of existing infrastructure.
13. Where Overhead power lines have to be relocated, they shall be permanently located underground.  
**Reason:** In the interest of visual amenity and proper planning.
14. A dedicated Community Liaison officer shall be appointed to this project to engage meaningfully with the community affected by the project before, during and after the construction of the proposed development in relation to works, road closures, deliveries (day & nighttime), diversions, parking restrictions etc.  
**Reason:** In the interest of proper planning
15. A detailed complaints procedure shall be prepared and made available on website to ensure that all complaints arising from the project are satisfactorily dealt with during the construction phase /defects period for the project.  
**Reason:** In the interest of proper planning.
16. A contingency plan for dealing with breakdowns during delivery of components shall be submitted to Mayo County Council, for agreement. Due to the size of components significant impact to daytime traffic will occur if TTMP is not established in advance of works.  
**Reason:** In the interest of traffic management and public safety.
17. Before & after survey of all diversion routes associated with the development to be completed, any damage caused to be rectified by developer to satisfaction of Mayo County Council  
**Reason:** To ensure satisfactory completion of the development and protection of public infrastructure.
18. A refundable cash deposit of €300,000 shall be lodged by the Developer to Mayo County Council to cover any costs incurred by the local authority to rectify any damage to road network or road infrastructure as a result of the proposed development.  
**Reason:** To ensure satisfactory completion of the development and protection of public infrastructure.

#### **Conditions Relating to Archaeology**

19. (i) All recommendations outlined in the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage chapter of the EIAR should be implemented.
- (ii) The developer is required to employ a suitably qualified archaeologist to undertake under licence from the National Monuments Section, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, a programme of archaeological Pre-Development Testing of the proposed development site, including all ground disturbance works associated with the proposed development.
- (iii) All archaeological pre-development testing and monitoring works must be undertaken by a suitably qualified archaeologist licensed by and agreed with the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Should archaeological material be uncovered during the course of the testing or monitoring the archaeologist shall have work on the site stopped, pending a decision as to how best to deal with the archaeology. The developer shall be prepared to be advised by the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with regard to any necessary mitigating action (e.g. preservation in situ, or excavation) and should facilitate the archaeologist in recording any material found.
- (iv) The Planning Authority and the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage shall be furnished with a report describing the results of all archaeological pre-development testing and monitoring works.

(v) In addition, the developer should consult with the Manager of the Céide Fields Visitor Centre Ms. Gretta Byrne regarding the most up to date location of the Céide Fields pre-bog walls complex in relation to the proposed development site.

(vi) All tree felling on the proposed development site should be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist in advance of archaeological pre-development works.

(vii) Licensed archaeological monitoring should be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist in all sections of the grid connection route which are in fields i.e off road.

**Reason:** In the interests of proper planning and development.

20. The degree, extent and frequency of the monitoring shall be determined by The National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and agreed to by the licensed archaeologist. All geotechnical trial holes and associated works must also be monitored by a suitably qualified licensed archaeologist.

**Reason:** In the interests of proper planning and development.

21. (i) A buffer zone should be established and fenced off, under archaeological supervision, around the corn kiln (ITM E502753. N834154) and associated structures to protect them from any possible damage.  
(ii) A buffer zone should be established and fenced off, under archaeological supervision, around the complex of derelict and ruinous buildings (ITM E505889 N833391) to protect them from any possible damage.

**Reason:** In the interests of proper planning and development.

22. Should archaeological material be uncovered during the course of the archaeological monitoring, the archaeologist shall have work on the site stopped, pending a decision as to how best to deal with the archaeology. The developer shall be prepared to be advised by the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with regard to any necessary mitigating action (e.g. preservation in situ, or excavation) and shall facilitate the archaeologist in recording any material found.

**Reason:** In the interests of proper planning and development.

23. The Planning Authority and the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage shall be furnished with a report describing the results of the monitoring.

**Reason:** In the interests of proper planning and development.

#### **General Conditions**

24. Construction operations shall be restricted to between 0800 hours and 2000 hours Monday to Friday and 0800 hours and 1800 hours on Saturdays.

**Reason:** In the interest of orderly development and residential amenities.

25. Prior to commencement of development, a detailed reinstatement program for the decommissioning of the wind farm shall be submitted to Mayo County Council for written agreement. The said program shall apply to full or partial decommissioning of the wind farm, or if the wind farm ceases operation for a period of more than one year. The said program shall provide for the dismantling and removal from the site of masts, turbines, and buildings including foundations and roads. The site shall be reinstated in accordance with the said program (including all access roads) and all decommissioned structures shall be removed within three months of decommissioning.

**Reason:** To ensure the satisfactory decommissioning of the project.

26. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall agree a protocol for assessing any impact on radio or television or other telecommunication reception in the area. In the event of interference occurring, it shall be the responsibility of the developer to mitigate such interference according to a methodology to be agreed with Mayo County Council.

**Reason:** In the interest of orderly development.

27. All cabling from the turbines to the substation shall be placed underground.

**Reason:** in the interest of visual amenity

**Environmental conditions**

28. Costs incurred by Mayo County Council Environment Staff in carrying out any necessary monitoring, monitoring checks, inspections and environmental audits, shall be reimbursed by the developer.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity, and the protection of the environment during the earthworks and construction phase.

29. Prior to commencement of the development, an Environmental Monitoring Committee (EMC) shall be established to assess and monitor the surface water run-off, drainage control, traffic management, road maintenance, dust control, noise monitoring and other environmental issues during the period of construction. The EMC shall comprise two representatives of the developer, two representatives of Mayo County Council, and an invitation shall be extended to Inland Fisheries Ireland and National Parks & Wildlife Service to provide a representative for the committee. In addition, one representative of the local community, selected in accordance with procedures to be agreed with Mayo County Council, shall be invited to serve on this committee. The EMC shall have the right to co-opt other members as required.

**Reason:** To ensure effective monitoring during construction phase in the interest of the proper planning and the protection of the environment.

30. The site preparation and the construction shall adhere to best practice and shall conform to the following Inland Fisheries Ireland Guidance "Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries Habitat during Construction and Development Works at River Sites".

**Reason:** In the interest of proper environmental control during the earthworks and construction phase.

31. In the event that works give rise to siltation of watercourses the environmental Clerk of Works or supervising Hydrologist will stop all works in the immediate area around where the siltation is evident and additional drainage measures installed. All water pollution incidents must be recorded and reported to Inland Fisheries Ireland.

**Reason:** In the interest of proper environmental control during the earthworks and construction phase.

32. (i) All environmental measures as set out in the CEMP contained in the EAIR to be undertaken in line with best practice to address potential issues relating waste, dust and noise.  
(ii) Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall agree a Construction Management Plan (CEMP) for construction works on the site. This shall include access arrangements for construction materials, the storage of materials on site; details for the control of run-off from the site, extraction and infilling of borrow pits (if any), the removal of all machinery, spoil and waste material from the site following completion and the restoration of vegetation and landscaping; and provisions for emergencies.

**Reason:** In the interest of visual amenity, public safety and the prevention of pollution.

33. An Emergency Response Procedure shall be prepared, with Inland Fisheries Ireland included as a notifiable body in the case of an environmental emergency.

**Reason:** In the interest of proper environmental control during the earthworks and construction phase.

34. Measures should be put in place to prevent the spread of invasive species

**Reason:** In the interest of proper environmental control during the earthworks and construction phase.

35. The water quality monitoring locations, parameters and schedules should be agreed with Inland Fisheries Ireland. Daily surface water monitoring should be carried out during construction.  
**Reason:** In the interest of proper environmental control during the earthworks and construction phase.
36. The use of poor tensile strength rock such as shale as road construction material is not permitted.  
**Reason:** In the interest of proper environmental control during the earthworks and construction phase.
37. The schedule of works shall show that all silt mitigation and surface water control measures, such as silt fences and settlement ponds, are in place prior to the ground works commencing. All drainage channels should be constructed in advance of construction works to allow the channels to grass over prior to flooding. Peat storage areas should be reseeded or have vegetated turf placed on them once completed.  
**Reason:** In the interest of proper environmental control during the earthworks and construction phase.
38. An emission limit value of 25mg/l suspended solids shall apply to all discharges from the site to watercourses. The developer shall submit to Mayo County Council, for written agreement, at least six months prior to the commencement of the development details for continuous monitoring of suspended solids, in addition to turbidity, at representative locations. The monitoring equipment shall be operational at the agreed locations at least three months prior to the commencement of development.  
**Reason:** In the interest of proper environmental control during the earthworks and construction phase.
39. The monitoring results and the interpretation of the monitoring shall be available on site and shall also be submitted to Mayo County Council on a monthly basis in both hardcopy and electronic format.  
**Reason:** In the interest of proper environmental control during the earthworks and construction phase.
40. (i) The developer shall appoint a suitably qualified and experienced Environmental Scientist or Environmental Engineer for the period of the earthworks and construction phase. As part of his/her duties, the Environmental Officer shall liaise with Mayo County Council in relation to the implementation of the required environmental monitoring, and shall be responsible for reporting to Mayo County Council –  
    (a) any malfunction of any environmental system,  
    (b) any occurrence with the potential for environmental pollution,  
    (c) any emergency which could reasonably be expected to give rise to pollution of waters. (ii)  
The Environmental Officer/Manager shall maintain a record of any such occurrences and any action taken. The records shall be available for public inspection at the developer's site offices during normal office hours.  
**Reason:** In the interest of proper environmental control during the earthworks and construction phase.
41. During construction and haulage, noise levels shall be kept to a minimum. Any activity that will result in a significant increase in the ambient noise levels, for example, piling or rock breaking, shall be notified to Mayo County Council in advance.  
**Reason:** In the interest of public health and residential amenity.
42. Dust levels shall not exceed 350 mg/m<sup>2</sup> (TA Luft Air Quality Standard) per day averaged over thirty days when measured at the site boundaries. Any activity, which could reasonably be expected to exceed that dust level and proposed mitigation measures, shall be notified to Mayo County Council in advance.

**Reason:** In the interest of public health and residential amenity.

43. All tank and drum storage areas on the site shall, as a minimum, be bunded to a volume not less than the greater of the following –
- (a) 110% of the capacity of the largest tank or drum within the bunded area, or
  - (b) 25% of the total volume of substance which could be stored within the bunded area.

All fuel storage areas and cleaning areas, particularly for concrete trucks, shall be rendered impervious to the stored or cleaned materials and shall be constructed to ensure no discharges from the areas.

**Reason:** To prevent surface and ground water pollution.

44. The developer shall maintain on the site for the duration of the construction period, oil abatement kits comprising of booms and absorbent materials. The precise nature and extent of the kits shall be agreed in writing with Mayo County Council prior to commencement of development.

**Reason:** To prevent water pollution.

45. (i) Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall submit, and obtain the agreement of Mayo County Council to a plan containing details for the management of waste (and, in particular, recyclable materials) within the development, including the provision of facilities for the storage, separation and collection of waste and, in particular, recyclable materials, and for the ongoing operation of these facilities.

(ii) The developer to ensure the site is secure and measures in place to deter illegal dumping at the site.

**Reason:** To provide for the appropriate management of waste and, in particular, recyclable materials, in the interest of protecting the environment.

46. No stream diversions, culvert installations or replacements should be carried out without prior consultation and agreement with Inland Fisheries Ireland Galway. Clear span structures to be used where possible.

**Reason:** In the interests of prevention of water pollution.

47. (i) The construction of the development shall be carried out only outside the breeding season of locally sensitive bird species.

(ii) No works or site preparation shall be carried out during the bird-nesting season in the first year of construction.

(iii) No re-commencement of construction works shall be permitted during the bird-nesting season in subsequent years after any significant periods of inactivity.

(iv) An annual monitoring program of birds in accordance with the methodology used to gather baseline data in the EIS to review interaction by birds with the wind farm, to survey species and to document bird casualties shall be submitted to Mayo County Council for written agreement prior to commencement of development. This program shall be developed in consultation with Mayo County Council and the Heritage Division of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and shall cover the entire period of the operation of the wind farm and the program shall be forwarded to Mayo County Council.

**Reason:** To provide for the mitigation of effects of the development on avian species.

48. (i) Prior to commencement of development, a detailed conservation plan for the rehabilitation of the site following completion of construction shall be submitted to Mayo County Council for written agreement. The conservation plan shall be prepared by a suitably qualified Ecologist. The conservation plan shall include for habitat management and enhancement measures on the site, the reinstatement

of hedgerows and embankments removed to facilitate construction and an agreed monitoring period. The implementation of the conservation plan shall be monitored by a suitably qualified Ecologist, and a copy of this plan and monitoring reports shall be submitted to Mayo County Council and the National Parks & Wildlife Service.

(ii) The developer to engage a suitably qualified forestry advisor to determine, if possible, the potential to re-plant the site with native tree species and which species to plant.

**Reason:** To provide for the mitigation of effects of the development on the ecology of the area.

#### **Financial conditions**

49. The developer shall lodge with Mayo County Council, a cash deposit, or such other security as may be acceptable to Mayo County Council, to secure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site, couple with an agreement empowering Mayo County Council to apply such security or part thereof to the satisfaction completion of the reinstatement, including all necessary demolition and removal. The security shall be lodged as follows:

- a) a cash sum, to be agreed prior to any development on site, is to be paid by the developer to Mayo County Council to be applied at its absolute discretion if not completed to its satisfaction; or
- b) such other security as may be accepted in writing by Mayo County Council

**Reason:** To ensure the satisfactory completion of the project.

50. The developer shall pay to Mayo County Council a contribution of €10,000 per megawatt of electricity produced from the development in accordance with the Mayo County Council Development Contribution Scheme 2023.

**Reason:** To comply with Mayo County Council's Development Contribution Scheme.

51. The developer shall pay to Mayo County Council an annual contribution of €10,000 per megawatt of electricity produced from the development in accordance with Table 1 of policy document entitled '*Policy on Community Benefit Contributions required for certain major developments*' towards the cost of the provision of environmental improvements, recreational or community amenities, cultural and heritage facilities and social inclusion and community development in the locality.

**Reason:** It is considered reasonable that the developer should contribute towards the cost of environmental, recreational or community amenities which will help mitigate the impact of the transport of waste peat on the local community.



Signed By: John Mc Myler  
Senior Planner

Date: 15/03/2024.



Recommendation By: Catherine McConnell  
Director of Services

Date 19/03/2024.



Kevin Kelly  
Chief Executive

Date: 20/03/2024.

## Comments from the Elected members on Glenora Wind Farm SID

In accordance with Section 37E(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) a CE Report was prepared in respect of the Glenora Wind Farm Strategic Infrastructure Development. The CE report was circulated to the elected members of Mayo County Council for their consideration in advance of the March Council meeting held in Council Chambers on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 where the following views were provided.

In accordance with Section 37E(5) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the following views, observations and comments of the members were recorded, as follows:

<p>Cllr J Munnelly</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The exposed location and nature of the site in north Mayo is noted, particularly in relation to the visual sensitive coastal area and its archaeological sensitivities in the form of the Céide Fields and associated landscape. The proposed Glenora Wind Farm Development would be visible from Down Patrick Head and along the north Mayo coast which has many protected views.  Policy, Objectives and Standards contained in the County Development Plan for Mayo hold proposals for dwellings to account in relation to visual impact, many of which have been refused on this basis. It is argued that the same rigor should be applied in respect of more impactful development such as that of the Glenora Wind Farm in relation to the visual sensitivities and protected views.  Would like more focus on the visual amenity of the area in light of its location along the Wild Atlantic Way.</li> <li>2. The need for renewable energy sources and infrastructure is acknowledged. Mayo, particularly in the north of the county has many renewable energy projects in existence, permitted and awaiting decision. The volume of such development together with many other proposals for similar type development is creating anxiety locally.  In this regard, the need for an up-to-date Renewable Energy Strategy is warranted for the County.</li> </ol>
<p>Cllr. G Coyle</p>	<p>Such projects benefit only investors, with no great benefit to the community.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Considers such development proposals to date as only exploiting the north Mayo area (wind and gas resources). The Erris, Bellacorrick and North Mayo area experiences many power outages despite this renewable energy development in the area, so there is no gain in that respect.</li> <li>2. For such development taking place, there should be much greater benefit to the area in terms of this energy source to serve the area as well as providing a financial to benefit the communities of the area.</li> </ol>

Cllr. G Murray	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emphasis placed on the need for an up-to-date Renewable Energy Strategy for Mayo.</li> <li>2. Fund for Road repair and the restoration of lighting.</li> </ol>
Cllr. M Loftus	<p>Wishes to place emphasis on the regard for the issues of the area, in particular the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bog slippage - a common problem in the north mayo area. Would like full consideration of the proposed development in this regard.</li> <li>2. Archaeology of the area, and the archaeological sensitive landscape of the Céide Fields.</li> <li>3. The visual impact on the amenity of the Céide coast landscape is a main concern and should be considered carefully.</li> <li>4. The potential damage incurred by transportation of components along haul routes is a significant concern particularly for the town of Crossmolina, along the N59. It has past experience of issues including damage to roads and buildings resulting from the transportation of Wind Farm components going through the town. Considers it appropriate that a Construction Fund be put in place to address such issues.</li> <li>5. Community Benefit Scheme: it is important that a robust Community Benefit Scheme be put in place which has a locally beneficial impact.</li> <li>6. It is a priority that a new Renewable Energy Strategy is prepared for the County.</li> </ol>
Cllr. J O'Hara	<p>The impact of this type of development on the road network is significant. Require a fund established for the specific purpose of repair and upkeep of roads.</p>
Cllr M McLoughlin	<p>Enquired about a renewable energy development that was applied for at the former Asahi plant in Killala.</p>
Cllr. A Forkan	<p>Queries the application of rates on turbines – what do they get for those rates applied?</p>
Cllr R Finn	<p>Also queries what do renewable energy businesses get in return for their rates? Why are they so high?</p>

Relating to the Glenora Wind Farm SID proposal - main points extracted from above:

**Landscape & Visual Sensitivities:**

Notwithstanding the desire to provide renewable energy infrastructure, concern is expressed in relation to visual amenity, protected views and sensitive landscapes resulting from this large-scale development and the cumulative impact of the growing number of similar wind energy developments in the Céide coastal landscape. Consistency in applying policy, objectives and standards in protecting sensitive views and landscapes should apply to all development.

It is therefore vitally important that the visual integrity of the landscape at this location, along the Wild Atlantic Way be maintained.

**Archaeology:**

The archaeological significance of the Céide fields landscape is important to maintain and preserve.

**Environment:**

The issue of bog slippage is common in the north Mayo area and should be carefully assessed and considered in the context of the proposed development.

**Repair & Reinstatement:**

The repair of roads & structures, as well as the reinstatement of lighting, buildings, surfaces, etc. along the transportation route is critically important in relation to large-scale development of this nature. The impact of the proposed development, together with existing and permitted development of a similar nature in the north Mayo area should be properly provided for. An appropriate Fund or Bond should be established to ensure that the necessary funding is available for works required to repair, reinstate or improve roads, structures, etc. along the transportation haul roads used to facilitate the proposed development.

**Renewable Energy Strategy:**

An up-to-date Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo is a priority. The north of the county has a significant number of existing renewable energy projects in addition to permitted development (yet un-commenced) and some awaiting decision. The volume and scale of this type of development together is creating anxiety locally, particularly given that the current Renewable Energy Strategy for Mayo is in excess of 13 years old.

In this regard, the need for an up-to-date Renewable Energy Strategy is warranted for the County.

**Benefit to the Community:**

Community benefit must have a greater local impact. Energy security in the general area would be regarded as a direct gain, as would a Fund that would meaningfully contribute towards the benefit of the locally administered Oweninny Wind Farm community benefit fund.

The above was proposed and seconded by the elected members present.