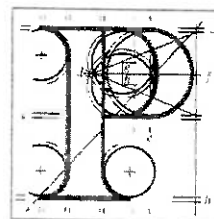


Our Case Number: ABP-319866-24



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Meath County Council
Planning Department
Buvinda House
Dublin Road
Navan
Co. Meath
C15 Y291

Date: 16 August 2024

Re: Proposed development known as North Irish Sea Array ("NISA") Offshore Wind Farm
Located off the coast of Counties Dublin, Meath and Louth (www.northirishsearraysid.ie)

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your submission in relation to the above-mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

The Board will revert to you in due course in respect of this matter. Please be advised that copies of all submissions/observations received in relation to the application will be made available for public inspection at the offices of the coastal planning authority and at the offices of An Bord Pleanála when they have been processed by the Board.

More detailed information in relation to marine infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: www.pleanala.ie.

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact the undersigned officer of the Board or email marine@pleanala.ie quoting the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence with the Board.

Yours faithfully,



Ellen Moss
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737285

OA15

Tel	Tel	(01) 858 8100
Glaao Áitiúil	LoCall	1800 275 175
Facs	Fax	(01) 872 2684
Láithreán Gréasáin	Website	www.pleanala.ie
Ríomhphost	Email	bord@pleanala.ie

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
Baile Átha Cliath 1	Dublin 1
D01 V902	D01 V902

Marine

Comhairle Chontae na Mí

Teach Buvinda, Bóthar Átha Cliath, An Uaimh,
Contae na Mí, C15 Y291

Fón: 046 – 9097000/Fax: 046 – 9097001

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Web: www.meath.ie - Registration No. 00172770



Meath County Council

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Web: www.meath.ie - Registration No. 00172770

ABP Case No: ABP- 319866-24

An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	<u>07055-24</u>
ABP-	_____
31 JUL 2024	
Fee: €	Type: _____
Time: <u>9:05</u>	By: <u>post</u>

Date: 29/07/2024

Re: ABP-319866-24 NISA (North Irish Sea Array) Offshore Windfarm

A Chara,

Please find attached the following from Meath County Council in relation to the above-mentioned application.

- Chief Executive's Report presented at the July meeting of Meath County Council.
- Draft extract of minutes of July meeting of Meath County Council. Please note the minutes are in draft format as they will not be adopted until the September meeting of Meath County Council which takes place on the 2nd September. The signed minutes will be available on Meath County Council's website following their adoption.

Yours sincerely,

Triona Keating

Triona Keating
Senior Staff Officer
Meath County Council

15-2001-1

Triona Keating

From: Triona Keating
Sent: Monday 29 July 2024 16:53
To: 'bord@pleanala.ie'
Cc: John McGearty
Subject: PL_DM_ABP-319866-24 NISA Offshore Windfarm
Attachments: CE Report NISA OffShore WF.pdf; 07-2024 Extract from Draft Minutes July Full Co Meeting.pdf

Please find attached the following from Meath County Council in relation to the above-mentioned application.

- Chief Executive's Report presented at the July meeting of Meath County Council
- Draft extract of minutes of July meeting of Meath County Council. Please note the minutes are in draft format as they will not be adopted until the September meeting of Meath County Council which takes place on the 2nd September. The signed minutes will be available on Meath County Council's website following their adoption.

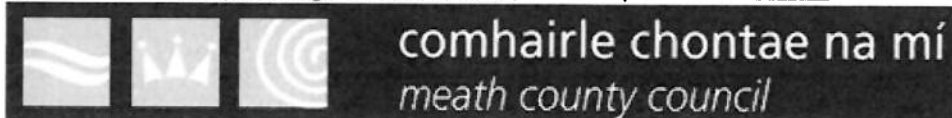
Original documents to follow in post.

Kind regards,

Triona

*Triona Keating, Senior Staff Officer, Meath County Council, Planning Department,
Buvinda House, Dublin Road, Navan, Co. Meath, C15 Y291*

T: 046 9097500 | E: planning@meathcoco.ie | Web: <http://www.meath.ie>





**MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

ON

**STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT
AN BORD PLEANÁLA REF: ABP-319866-24**

for the

**PROPOSED NISA WINDFARM
(35-49 Offshore Wind Turbines)**

**off the coast of Co. Meath, Louth & Dublin
and
in Co. Dublin**

Date: 21/06/2024

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Appendix 1 – Matters to be addressed in the Planning Authority Submission

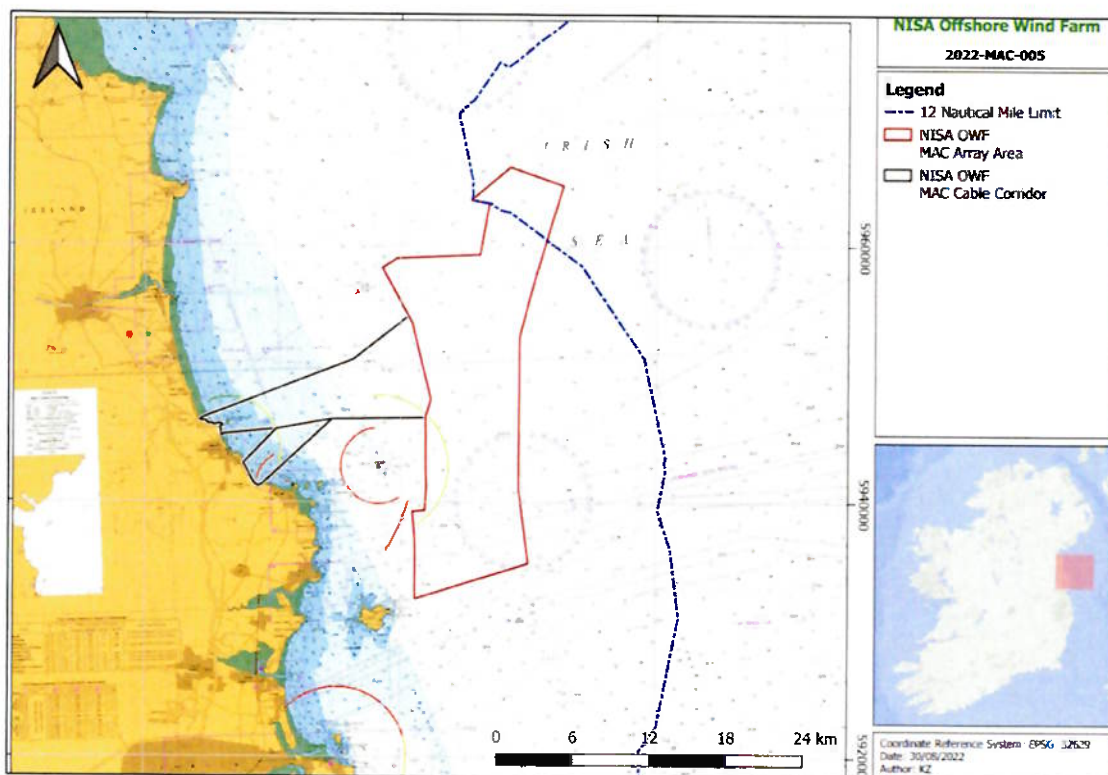
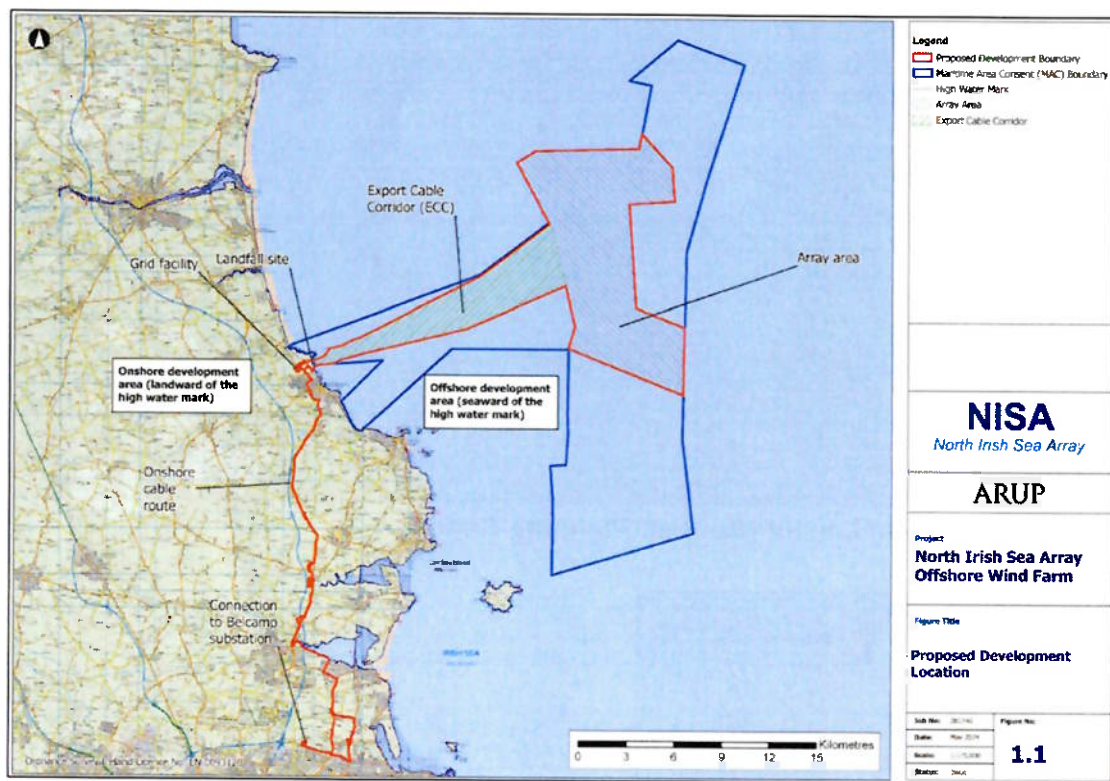




Fig. 3: Wind Farm Layout (Source: Planning Report)

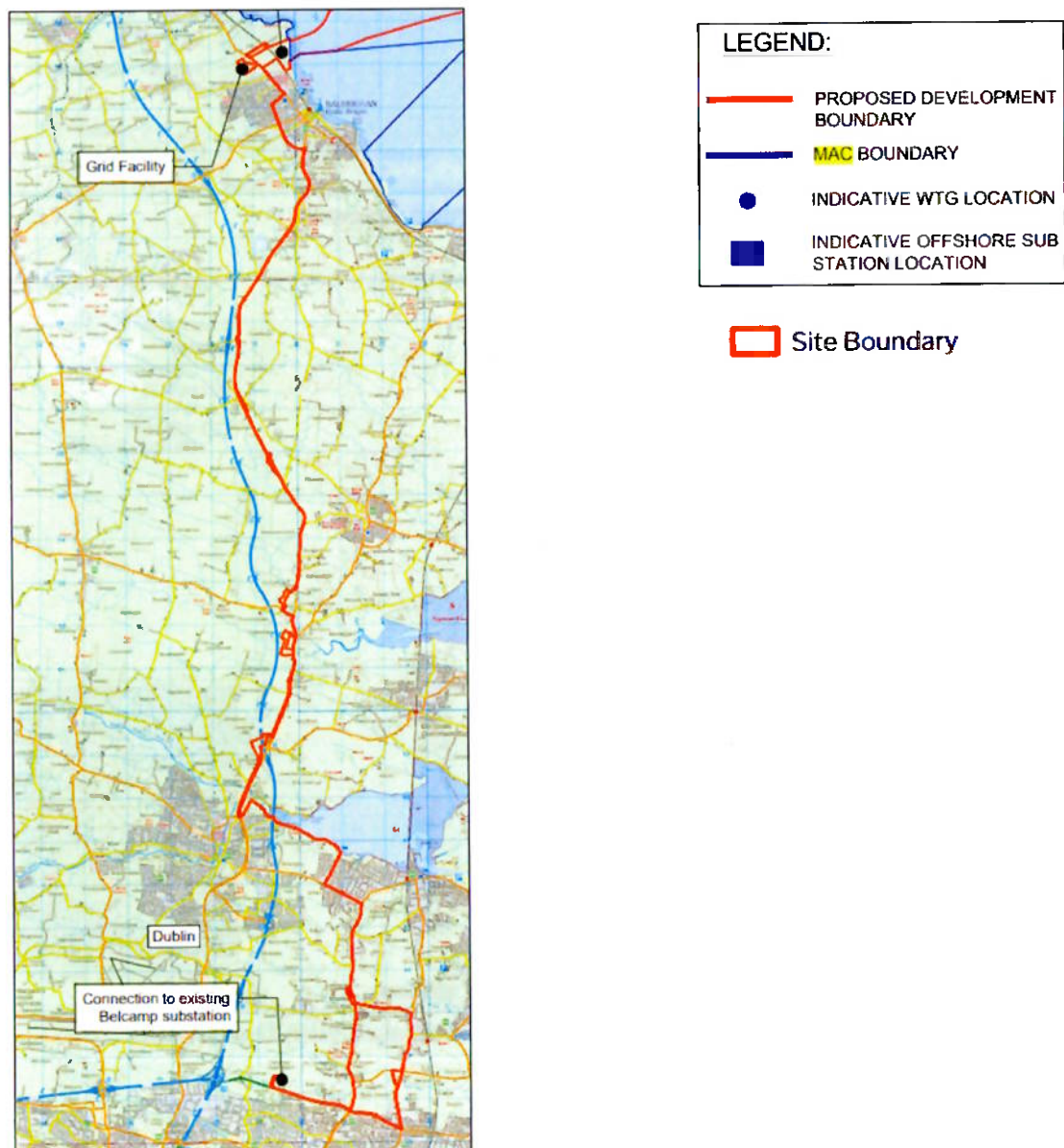


Fig. 4: Site Location - Cable Route from Bremore Bay to Belcamp Substation

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The following report is a submission from the Planning Authority (Meath County Council) on an application from North Irish Sea Array Offshore (NISA) Windfarm Ltd. to An Bord Pleanála who are seeking permission for a development under **Section 291** of the Planning & Development Act (PDA) 2000-2022. File Ref. ABP-319866-24 was received by An Bord Pleanála on 07/06/2024 and is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). The proposal follows on from a pre-application consultation process which concluded in early 2024¹.

NISA Windfarm Ltd. (a joint venture between Statkraft Ireland Ltd. and Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners P/S) is seeking to construct **35 - 49 no. offshore wind turbines with a maximum export capacity of 700 MW² of renewable energy off the coast of Co. Louth, Meath and Dublin** with associated **onshore works in Co. Dublin**. The site is partly situated within the functional area of Fingal County Council and Dublin City Council as the Coastal Authorities.

Submissions to An Bord Pleanála must be made by **15th August 2024** and application details are available on ABP's website and the applicant's website³.

Meath Co. Council is a Prescribed Body and a Coastal Authority⁴ directly affected by the proposed development. This Report is prepared in accordance with Section 291 (4) of the PDA 2000-2022, which requires a report prepared by the Chief Executive to set out the views of the Coastal Authority, having regard to matters specified in Section 34(2), 281 (3) and 282 (2) (summarised at Appendix 1).

The Chief Executive shall, before submitting any Report in relation to a proposed development, submit the Report to the Members of the Coastal Planning Authority and seek the views of the members on the proposed development.

The Members may, by resolution, decide to attach recommendations (specified in the resolution to the Report of the authority). Where the members so decide those recommendations (and the meetings administrator's record of the views expressed by the members on the proposed development) shall be attached to the Report submitted to the Board.

This Chief Executive's Report is presented at the meeting of Meath County Council on 08th July 2024 with the following **agenda item**:

¹ The pre-application consultation process which concluded on 25/01/2024 (ABP-315801-23) and a Design Flexibility Opinion was issued on 02/02/2024 (ABP-316332-23) with clarification on 04/04/2024.

² This will deliver energy to 500,000 and 700,000 homes.

³ <https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/case/319866> and www.northirishsearraysid.ie

⁴ Meath County Council is a 'Coastal Planning Authority (CPA)' as per the definition in the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021.

"To receive the Chief Executive's Report in accordance with Section 291 of the Planning and Development Acts, in relation to a Strategic Infrastructure Development application made to An Bord Pleanála, reference ABP-319866-24, for proposed development of 35-49 no. wind turbines and associated works off the coast of Co. Louth, Co. Meath and Co. Dublin".

The Report provides comments on a broad range of topics (please refer to Appendix 1) and is required to suggest appropriate conditions to be attached in the event of planning permission being granted.

It also outlines the location of the site and describes the proposed development. Relevant European, National, Regional and local planning and energy policies are considered. The comments of internal departments are included, and planning considerations provided. Conclusions, recommendations and conditions, without prejudice, are addressed at the latter end of the report.

The area within the red-line boundary of the wind farm encompasses **126.5km²**. It includes:

- Offshore Windfarm Array Area (89 km²) in the Irish Sea;
- Offshore Cable Corridor Area (36 km²) in Co. Dublin; and
- Onshore Infrastructure Area (a new 220kV Substation and a Compensation Substation c.0.03 km² and 33-35km Grid connection cable to Belcamp in Co. Dublin.

A wind power installation with a total output greater than 50 MW is considered a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) and this development is proposed in the Irish Sea, coastal area and onshore.

The proposed development requires a **Marine Area Consent (MAC)** from the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) (refer to Schedule 6 of the 'Planning Particulars' (part of the application documentation)). Under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, a MAC (a seabed lease), enables development consent, or planning permission, with one environmental assessment. The new processes provided for within the Act will apply to foreshore licences and leases, as well as planning permissions for marine projects, from seaweed harvesting to offshore renewable energy infrastructure.

The MAC (Ref. No. 2022-MAC-005) was granted by the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications on 23/12/2022 for a period of 45 years in the Array and Infrastructure Corridor and a subsidiary area. The permitted use is for *"the construction and operation of an Offshore Wind Farm and associated infrastructure (including decommissioning and other works required on foot of any Development Permission for such Offshore Wind Farm)"*.

To date, no Marine Planning Guidelines (akin to terrestrial Section 28 Guidelines under the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended) have been prepared.

The following figures illustrate the site location and key aspects of the project area.



Fig. 5: Substation & Compensation Substation Site at Bremore (Fig. 5 EIAR NTS)



Image 6 Typical WTG on a Monopile foundation (Source: A&P)



Image 7 Typical WTG on a Jacket foundation (Source: CIP)



Image 8 Typical OSP on monopile foundation (Source: A&P)



Figure 5-3 Installation vessel installing wind turbine blades

Fig. 6: Top Left (Monopile foundation); Top Right (Jacket Foundation); Bottom Left (Substation); and Bottom Right (Jack Up Vessel) (NISA/Oriel Projects)

SECTION TWO: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT/ SITE LOCATION

2.1 Proposed Development

The 'application site' comprises the proposed offshore windfarm, offshore substation platform, cable connection to the landfall location and onshore cable connecting to a new 220kV electrical substation and compensation station at Bremore together with a grid cable connection to Belcamp in Co. Dublin. **It includes infrastructure off the coast of Co. Dublin, Co. Meath and Co. Louth and onshore infrastructure within Co. Dublin (Fingal County Council and Dublin City Council administrative areas).**

The windfarm site encompasses an area of approximately **126.5km²** with the closest part of the array area 11.3km from shore and the closest turbine 12.3km from the coastline.

The offshore cable route extends for 36km² from the wind farm area to a landfall location at Bremore Td., north of Balbriggan Co. Dublin.

A further 1-1.5km of export cable from the landfall location is predominantly routed through agricultural land, under the Dublin-Belfast railway line and crossing the R-132 to connect to a new substation and compensation station on agricultural land at Bremore.

The proposed **35-49 no. wind turbines** will generate a total Megawatt Export Capacity (MEC) in the range of **700MW**.

While no turbines or associated electrical infrastructures are proposed in Co. Meath, the proposed turbines will be visible from and are proposed to be located in the marine environment off the eastern coastline of Co. Meath.

The proposed development consists of the following principal elements:

Offshore Infrastructure (located within and Array area and export cable corridor (ECC)):

- Between 35 and 49 offshore wind turbine generators (WTGs);
- An Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) within array area;
- Substructures and associated seabed foundations (for WTGs and OSP) (within array area);
- 91-111km subsea inter-array cables which will connect the WTGs to the OSP;
- 18km of offshore export cable(s) (within an offshore export cable corridor) which will deliver the generated power from the OSP to the high-water mark (HWM) as defined by OSI mapping (the HWM being the transition point between the offshore and onshore infrastructure);
- Scour protection around substructures and cable protection (as required); and
- Landfall site (interface between offshore and onshore infrastructure).

Onshore Infrastructure:

- Landfall site (interface between offshore and onshore infrastructure);
- 2 no. 220kV offshore export cable(s) (within an offshore export cable corridor) from the HWM to the landfall transition joint bays (TJBs);

- Transition Joint Bays (TJBs) (within an onshore cable corridor) where the offshore and onshore export cables are joined;
- 2 no. 220 kV HVAC underground onshore export cable(s) from the TJBs to the onshore grid facility (within an onshore cable corridor);
- Onshore grid facility (comprising a Compensation substation and Bremore 220kV substation, together within ancillary infrastructure);
- Approximately 33-35km of a 220kV HVAC underground cable(s) from the new Grid facility to the existing Belcamp Substation in Co. Dublin;
- A connection from the cable(s) to the national electricity transmission network at EirGrid / ESBN Belcamp Substation; and
- Supporting infrastructure and ancillary works.

The landfall will comprise both offshore and onshore infrastructure, with the HWM being the point of transition between the two. The export cables come ashore and transition to onshore cables at the TJBs close to the shoreline at Bremore Bay beach in Bremore, north of Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.

The application includes an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

Planning permission is sought for a period of **35 years** with a **10-year construction** period.

Construction is expected to commence in 2026 and the project operational by 2030.

2.2 Site Location and Description

The application site extends across land and sea and represents 36% of the entire MAC boundary. The project is partially in the outer maritime area off the coast of Louth, Meath and Dublin and partly in the nearshore area of Fingal Co. Council and partly onshore in the rural and urban parts of Fingal Co. Council and Dublin City Council.

The array area lies at distances ranging between approximately 12.3km (southern end) to 17km (northern end) from the nearest sections of the coastline. The proposed offshore windfarm is set out in roughly 'C' shaped area in the Irish Sea. The Ireland-NI/ UK border is located 13.6km north and 36.5km east of the offshore development area. The applicant states that the location was chosen as it is located within close proximity to areas of high population density and adjacent to the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor (Planning Report). There has been no previous development in the maritime area.

Two no. options are proposed in this project, namely Option 1: 49 wind turbines with 250m rotor diameter and Project Option 2: 35 wind turbines with 276m rotor diameter. Accounting for the proposed 500m limit of deviation in the final siting of the wind turbines, in Option 1 the nearest turbine from shore is **13km** and **12.3km** for Option 2.

A total of 6 sub-sea cables and pipelines pass through the study area, but none intersect the proposed development boundary. The array area is 0.5km from Interconnector 2 Scotland to Ireland (IC2) with the nearest wind turbine located 750m

from IC2. The onshore cable will cross IC2 twice and Interconnector 1 (IC1) once. The proposal includes the need to cross a gas pipeline onshore also.

The nearest onshore landscape character area (LCA)⁵ in Co. Meath is the Coastal Plains (Coastal Landscape) and this is dissected by the Nanny Valley (River Corridors and Estuaries) as per the LCA for Co. Meath.

There are a range of Protected Views within the coastal vicinity of Co. Meath including no. 65 and 75⁶ (Laytown Strand and Boyne Estuary) which are close to the coastline. Inland viewpoints may also be relevant to the proposed development, including Brú na Bóinne, World Heritage Site.

SECTION THREE: PLANNING HISTORY/ OTHER CONSENTS, PRE-PLANNING CONSULTATION, etc.

3.1 Relevant Planning Applications/ Other Consents/ Pre-Planning

Section 5.1.1 of the Planning Report sets out the relevant planning history or proposed developments in the vicinity of the landfall site. These include:

- Iarnród Éireann's DART+ Coastal North project which would, if approved, intersect the Landfall site. The cable would cross under the railway line and would not interfere with the proposals.

The onshore route follows public roads, except for connection at Belcamp substation, diversions under the M1 and at water crossings. Multiple planning applications intersect the boundaries of the site (e.g. residential or utility installations). Other projects which are relevant include:

- Proposed ESB MetroLink 110kV Cable Project and there is potential for colocation of part of the project with this development and design flexibility for the cable route includes potential alternative route.
- Belcamp Substation – Permitted expansions of facilities at the substation with an additional 220kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) building.
- Belcamp Substation – Proposed EirGrid East Meath-North Dublin Grid Upgrade application (37.5km from Woodland Substation in Co. Meath to Belcamp Substation).

3.2 Relevant Pre-Application Consultation

Pre application consultation took place with MCC as set out in the application documentation.

SECTION FOUR: EU, NATIONAL, REGIONAL & LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

The following policy documents are applicable in the assessment of this planning application, though the list is not exhaustive, and Section 6 and 7 of the applicant's Planning Report covers relevant policy documents.

⁵ <https://consult.meath.ie/en/consultation/meath-adopted-county-development-plan/chapter/a05-landscape-character-assessment>

⁶ https://consult.meath.ie/en/system/files/materials/7447/Map%208.6_Views%20%26%20Prospects.pdf

European Level

- **EU Directive 2009/28/EC, 2018/2001/EU⁷ & EU/2023/2413⁸ (Renewable Energy)**
- **Renewable Energy Directive EU/2023/2413**
- **Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC**
- **Marine Spatial Planning Framework Directive 2014/89/EU.**

National Level

- **Other Jurisdiction** – Relevant policies in Northern Ireland (NI) include the Strategy Planning Policy Statement for NI and a Draft Marine Plan for NI.
- **Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2021**
- **National Maritime Area Planning Act (2021)** – This requires two no. separate consent processes for the development of offshore renewable energy projects, with a Marine Area Consent (MAC) for the maritime area and a development consent for projects in the area. This application has the benefit of MAC and is seeking development permission.
- **Powering Prosperity – Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy 2024**
- **Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy 2024**
- **Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework National Marine Planning Framework 2021 – Project Ireland 2040**
- **Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA)**
- **Strategy for Renewable Energy: 2012-2020**
- **National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (NCCAF) (2012)**
- **National Mitigation Plan 2017**
- **National Adaptation Framework 2018**
- **National Renewable Energy Action Plan Ireland 2020**
- **Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act (2015), Amendment (2021)**
- **National Climate Action Plan (NCAP) 2024**
- **Wind Energy Guidelines (DEHLG, 2006) & Revised Draft Guidelines (2019) -**
- **Other Relevant Guidelines/ Guidance** - Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment, Flood Risk Management and other guidance documents on Appropriate Assessment are relevant in the context of this application.
- **Other - Sectoral Strategy – ESB** - The ESB (2023) *Networks for Net Zero Strategy*

Regional Level

- **Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES), 2019 to 2031** - Renewable Energy is one of the five primary areas of transition/ key challenges which are at the core of the Strategy. The RSES recognises the need to facilitate the provision of sufficient electricity to meet increasing demand in the region.

Local Level

- **Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027** - Several sections of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 are relevant to this application. The Meath County Development Plan (MCDP) 2021-2027 aligns with the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and it has a stated objective 10.24 to support 'the

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/renewable-energy/directive-targets-and-rules/renewable-energy-directive_en#directive-2018-2001-eu.

⁸ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202302413

sustainable development of Ireland's **offshore renewable energy resources** in accordance with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources 'Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan' and any successor thereof including any associated domestic and international grid connection enhancements'. This is set within the context of a range of renewable energy options of bioenergy, biomass, geothermal, hydro energy, solar, waste and wave.

Section **6.15.3 Renewable Energy** identifies a range of renewable energy types and of relevance in the context of the capacity of the electricity transmission network and wind energy development. The National Planning Framework refers to sustainability, security of supply and competitiveness. **Section 6.15.3.2 Wind Energy** of the MCDP 2021-2027 relates to Wind Energy and support for its generation including the modernisation and expansion of electricity infrastructure. It states the Planning Authority *'will continue to support and encourage the principle of development of wind energy, in accordance with Government policy and having regard to the provisions of the Landscape Characterisation Assessment of the County and the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) or any revisions thereof*.

In this regard, An Bord Pleanála are invited to consider Appendix A.05 '**Landscape Character Assessment**', A.10 '**Protected Views and Prospects**' and the policies and objectives of the **Infrastructure Strategy** (Section 6.15.3.6), particularly the following:

- **INF POL 34:** To promote sustainable energy sources, locally based renewable energy alternatives, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity, natural and built heritage, residential or local amenities.
- **INF POL 35:** To seek a reduction in greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources utilising the natural resources of the County in an environmentally acceptable manner consistent with best practice and planning principles.
- **INF POL 36:** To support the implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy and to facilitate measures which seek to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.
- **INF POL 41:** To encourage the development of wind energy, in accordance with Government policy and having regard to the Landscape Character Assessment of the County and the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) or any revisions thereof.
- **INF POL 42:** To support the identification, in conjunction with EMRA, of Strategic Energy Zones, areas suitable to accommodate large energy generating projects within the Eastern and Midlands Regional area.
- **INF OBJ 39:** To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal, hydro and bio-energy 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.
- **INF POL 48:** To ensure that energy transmission infrastructure follows best practice with regard to siting, design and least environmental impact in the interest of landscape protection.
- **INF OBJ 50:** 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.

Section 6.15.4 includes an objective in the Section on 'Electricity Networks Infrastructure', as follows:

- **INF OBJ 50:** 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.

Chapter 8 '**Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy**' and Sections 8.8 on '**Natural Heritage**' and Sections 8.17 – 8.19 on '**Landscape**', '**Landscape Character Assessment**', '**Views and Prospects**' and '**Green Infrastructure**' of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 are also relevant in the context of the proposed development. Chapter 10 relates to '**Climate Change Strategy**'.

The **Landscape Character Assessment** (Appendix 5 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027) for the County provides guidance in relation to physical landscape character, visual character and history and archaeology.

Chapter 11 contains the Council's '**Development Management Guidelines & Standards**', with Section 11.8.1 Energy Development and Section 11.8.3 of particular note in this regard.

Section 11.8.1 Energy Development - The Council encourages and facilitates early pre-application discussions on these projects. Refer to Chapter, 6 Infrastructure which contains the grounding policies and objectives relevant to energy related development.

- **DM POL 27:** To encourage renewable development proposals which contribute positively to reducing energy consumption and carbon footprint.
- **DM OBJ 76:** In the assessment of individual energy development proposals, the Council will take the following criteria into account:
 - o The proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
 - o The environmental and social impacts of the proposed development;
 - o Traffic impacts including details of haul routes;
 - o Impact of the development on the landscape, (please refer to Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment);
 - o Impact on protected Views and Prospects, (please refer to Appendix 10 Protected Views and Prospects);
 - o Impact on public rights of way and walking routes, (please refer to Appendix 12 Public Rights of Way);
 - o Connection to the National Grid (where applicable);
 - o Mitigation features, where impacts are inevitable;
 - o Protection of designated areas - NHAs, SPAs and SACs, areas of archaeological potential and scenic importance;
 - o proximity to structures that are listed for protection, national monuments, etc. (Please refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendices 6-9 inclusive for further details);
 - o Cumulative Impact of proposal.
 - o In the assessment of individual proposals, the Council will take the criteria outlined above into account.

Section 11.8.3 Wind Energy exclusively addresses Wind Energy Developments. It states that the Council require that any pre-application discussion and/or planning application proposal for wind farm development sets out how the project complies with DM POL 27 and DM OBJ 76. The Council will support appropriate innovative designs for wind farms. Topographical enclosures and extensive areas of degraded or previously developed lands should be identified for wind farm development to help minimise visual impacts and to harmonise wind turbines with the landscape. In general, matt finishes and neutral colours for turbines and structures are required. All planning applications shall be accompanied by detailed proposals for the restoration of the site after removal of the turbines and associated infrastructure including access roads. Adequate financial security will be required to ensure site restoration and removal of the wind farm.

- **DM POL 28:** To require compliance with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines, (2006) and Circular PL20-13, and any updates thereof. Any proposal shall be supported by both a technical and an environmental statement prepared to an acceptable standard which sets out how the proposal complies with the Guidelines.
- **DM OBJ 78:** To require that any pre-application discussion and/or planning application proposal for wind farm development sets out how the project complies with DM POL 28.
- **DM OBJ 79:** Topographical enclosures and extensive areas of degraded or previously developed lands should be identified for wind farm development to help minimise visual impacts and to harmonise wind turbines with the landscape.
- **DM OBJ 80:** In general, matt finishes and neutral colours for turbines and structures are required.
- **DM OBJ 81:** The Council will support appropriate innovative designs for wind farms.
- **DM OBJ 82:** All planning applications shall be accompanied by detailed proposals for the restoration of the site after removal of the turbines and associated infrastructure including access roads. Adequate financial security will be required to ensure site restoration and removal of the wind farm.

Other key aspects of the Meath CDP include Chapter 6 Infrastructure Strategy (INF POL 41), Chapter 8 Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy, Chapter 10 Climate Change Strategy and Chapter 11 Development Management Standards (11.8.1 and 11.8.3 and 11.8.4), CDP Appendices (A.05, A.06, A.09, A.10) and Volume 3 Book of Maps which are associated with the Appendices (including Map 8.6 Views and Prospects, etc.). ABP is directed to other relevant parts of the CDP in the context of the development proposal (e.g. transport, waste management, etc.)⁹.

- **County Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2015 – 2020**
- **County Meath Heritage Plan 2024**
- **Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029¹⁰ -**
- **Meath County Council Economic Development Strategic Action Plan 2024**

SECTION FIVE: PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Planning Application Details - General

5.1.1 General

Documentation submitted to ABP under Section 291 of the Act includes Planning Application particulars, a Planning Report, Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) together with associated Planning Drawings.

5.1.2 Overview of Key Details of the Application

The development description is set out in the application documentation.

⁹ <https://consult.meath.ie/en/consultation/meath-adopted-county-development-plan>

¹⁰ https://www.meath.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2024-02/Climate%20Action%20Plan%202024%20-%202029_0.pdf

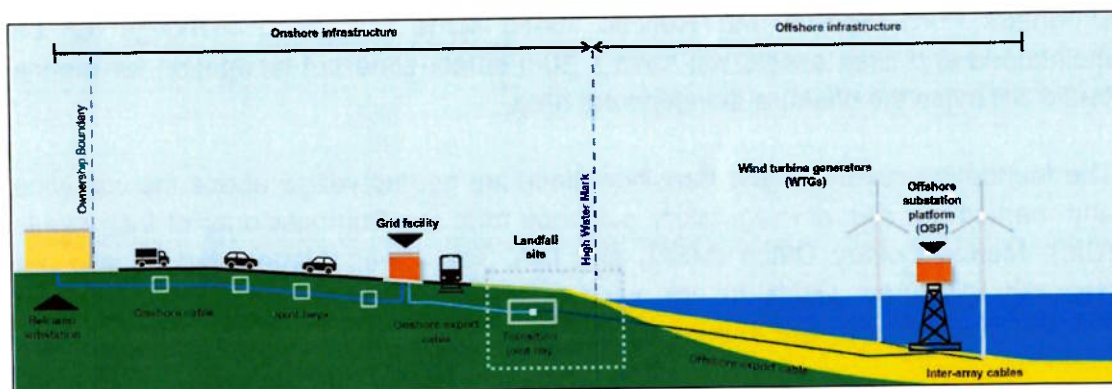


Fig. 7: Representation of Key Components of the Project (Planning Report, p. 5)

5.2 Planning Application Specific Component Details

The applicant refers to a Foreshore Licence for site investigations in the array granted in 2021 with site investigation surveying commencing in May 2022. The design was informed by survey data analysis and completed design studies, which reduced the footprint of the project.

5.2.1 Offshore Wind Turbines

The proposed turbines would be placed in the Irish Sea where the water depth is 30m-63m below LAT (Chapter 6 EIAR).

The offshore elements of the proposed development will comprise one of the following two project options:

- Project Option 1: 49 WTGs with 250m rotor diameter; or
- Project Option 2: 35 WTGs with 276m rotor diameter.

Parameter	Project Option 1	Project Option 2
Number of WTGs	49	35
WTG tip height (m above LAT)	290	316 outside aviation restricted zone 311 inside aviation restricted zone*
Rotor Diameter (m)	250	276
Foundation type	Monopiles	Monopiles or multi-leg pin piled jackets (hereafter referred to as 'jackets')
Number of OSPs	1	1
Offshore export cable length (km)	18	18
Inter-array cable length (km)	111	91

Each of the 35-49 no. turbines are designed for offshore conditions which comprise a tower section, nacelle and three rotor blades (connected to a central hub which is connected to the nacelle).

A Structure Exclusion Zone ensures there is a 3nm gap between Rockabill Island and the nearest turbine and ensures that navigation is not disrupted (in consultation with

Drogheda Port). Search and Rescue (SAR) lights and blade markings will be maintained and fixed assets will have a 50m safety zone but navigation for marine traffic will cross the offshore development area.

The foundation steelwork and transition piece are coated yellow above the waterline and marked per relevant regulatory guidance from the Commissioner of Irish Lights (CIL), Marine Survey Office (MSO) and IAA. The tower, blades and nacelle are coloured light grey. Lights on the wind turbines and substation are for low light conditions when they need to be accessed only.

5.2.2 Offshore Substation Platform (OSP)

An OSP will be located 14.8km from shore for Project Option 1 and 14.4km for Project Option 2. It is described as a hub where all the energy produced by the wind turbine generators is brought together from the inter-array cables. The 45m x 45m substation will be unmanned but subject to periodic maintenance and will be designed for temporary refuge with an emergency shelter.

5.2.3 Offshore Export Cable and Inter-array Cable

The offshore export cable corridor is described as an area of 36km². from the Offshore Substation Platform to the landfall site. When the cables are brought to shore at the landfall site, they will be connected to the onshore export cables at the Transition Joint Bays (TJB). The final selection of cable size and route will depend on detailed design. ABP permitted design flexibility at pre application consultation stage regarding the subsea cable size and subsea cable length. The separation distance between the two offshore cables is assumed to be between 50m and 200m and they will be buried to a depth of 1-3m and 43,200m³ of cable protection will be required.

5.2.4 Landfall Location

The landfall site is located north of Balbriggan and immediately south of Bremore Point in Bremore (Td.) in Fingal.

5.2.5 Onshore Substation and Grid Connection

The Grid facility comprising a 220kV GIS Substation (100m x 190m) and a Compensation Substation (50m x 115m) is proposed in 2 no. agricultural fields at Bremore Td. Co. Dublin. It is proposed that 33-35km of 2 no. 220kV HVAC cables will be laid underground from the Bremore Substation and Compensation Station to the grid connection point at an existing electrical substation at Belcamp, north Co. Dublin.

The project will not impact on the road network in County Meath.

5.2.6 Construction

The proposed development will require a construction port, where the components will be stored and, in some instances, assembled before being transferred to the offshore development area. A Construction Port Assessment was carried out during the preparation of the EIAR, which identified several suitable ports in ROI and the UK. **Transportation is expected to be by sea, rather than by road.** Several ports were considered in Ireland, UK and France and the project may involve a no. of ports for the

construction and maintenance of the project. **The final locations have not been selected.**

5.2.7 Operation/ Decommission

In the event of a grant of permission, *offshore works* would commence in Q.1 2027, with completion expected in Q.4 2029 (EIAR Ch. 8 and 9). Such works will overlap with *onshore infrastructure* expected to commence in 2026/ 2027 with completion 24 months later in 2028/ 2029).

Operation and maintenance will be managed onshore in a bespoke facility. This facility will be subject to a separation planning permission/ consent process (but is considered in the EIAR). A facility will be located onshore (coastal location) in the vicinity of the proposed development. The location of this facility has not yet been selected.

At the end of operational lifetime (i.e. 35 years), all structures above the seabed will be completely removed. A Rehabilitation Schedule (Appendix 6.2 of Volume 8 of the EIAR) must be agreed with the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) and will be prepared taking into consideration the latest technological advances as well as legislative and environmental requirements at the time of decommissioning.

5.3 Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement

The proposed development exceeds the mandatory threshold for the preparation of EIAR as per Schedule 5, Part 2 (3)(i) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2023 which refers to: "*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*".

An Bord Pleanála are the 'competent authority' for the purposes of EIA and AA.

5.4 Planning Considerations

Based on the details submitted with the application, it is recommended that An Bord Pleanála considers the following:

Relevant Policy Documents: ABP are invited to consider the policy documents and guidance strategies set out in Section 4 of this Chief Executive's Report in its assessment of the project. It is noted that Appendix D of the Planning Report submitted with the application contains a Compliance Report where the applicant seeks to demonstrate the project's consistency with the National Marine Planning Framework.

Planning History/ Pre-Planning: MCC is also aware of FS007373 which was a 2022 Application for a Foreshore Licence (Mainstream Renewable Power Ltd.) for the purposes of site investigations and surveys for an associated proposed Offshore Windfarm. This includes a windfarm investigation area and cable investigation area,

c. 19.9km off the coastline and a potential output of 1.5-2.5GW (inside and outside the 12 NM limit with 900MW within the 12NM limit). **The areas pertaining to this site are from the south of Dunany Point to Termonfeckin and south of Skerries to Portmarnock.**

Mainstream Renewable Power Ltd. included in-combination projects in its AA Screening (see the Figure 11) for the Foreshore Licence and referenced the following other project, which ABP may wish to consider in its assessment:

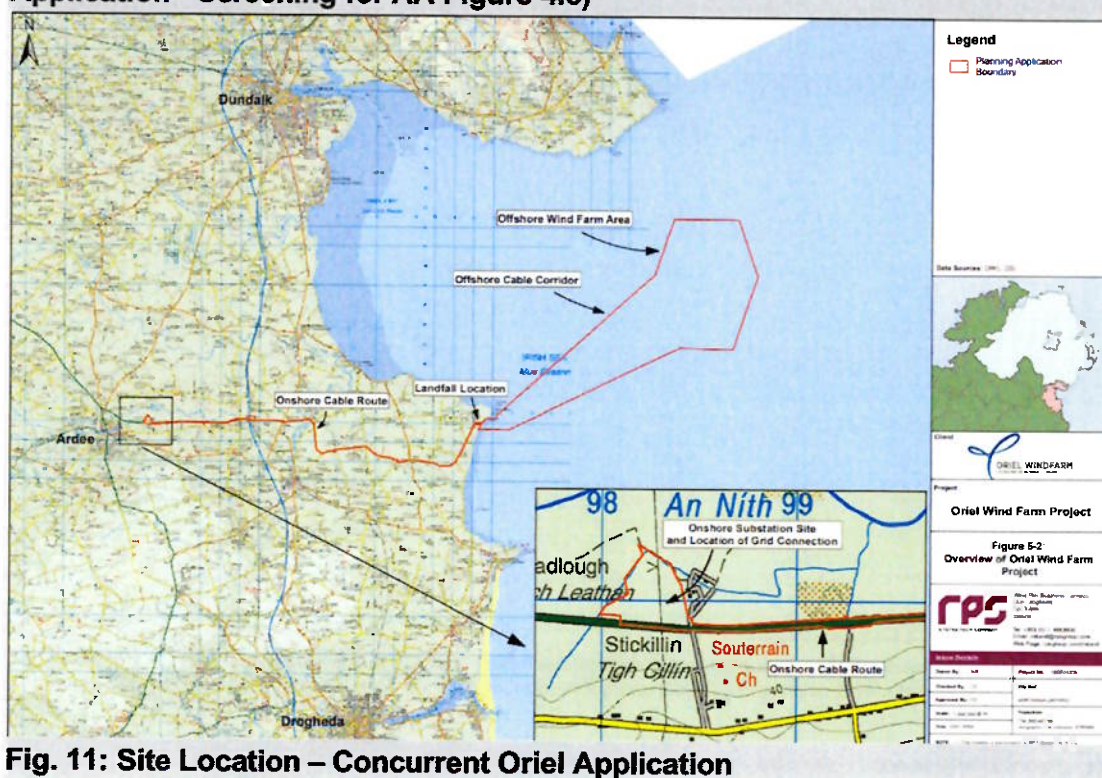
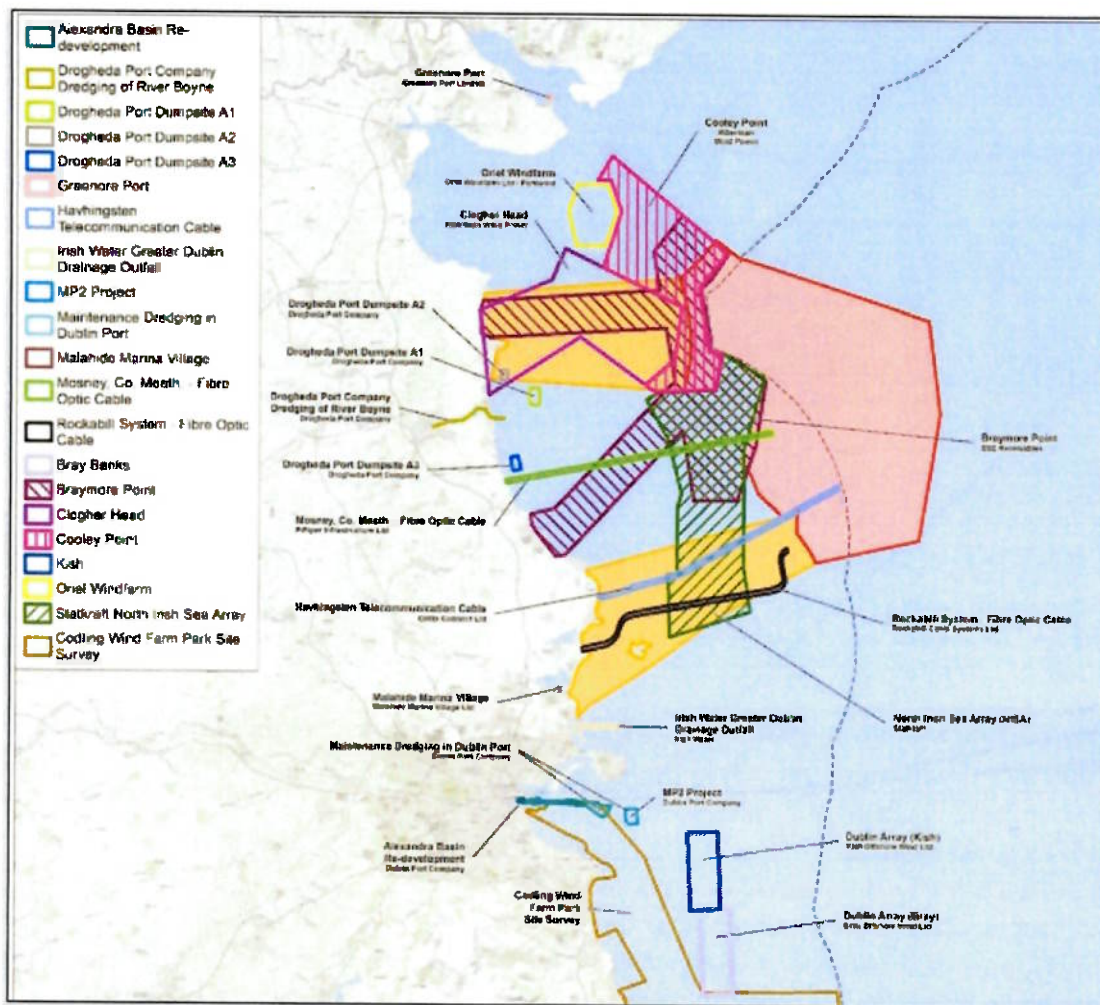
- Alexandra Basin Re-development new quays and jetties, etc. (FS005699)
- Drogheda Port Company Dredging of River Boyne (FS007028)
- Drogheda Port Dumpsite A1, A2 and A3 Permit Application (Drogheda Port Company)
- Greenore Point Ltd. Co. Louth Dredging works and mooring point (FS006676)
- Havhingsten Telecommunications Cable (Celtic Connect - FS006915)
- Irish Water Greater Dublin Drainage Outfall (FS006843)
- MP 2 Project Dublin Port Company (FS006893)
- Maintenance Dredging in Dublin Port (FS007132)
- Malahide Marina Village (FS006731)
- Mosney, Co. Meath – Fibre Optic Cable (PiPiper Infrastructure Ltd. (FS006762)
- Rockabill System – Subsea Fibre Optic Cable (FS006842)
- Braymore Point - SSE Renewables (FS006973)
- Clogher Head Hibernian Wind Power (FS006787)
- Cooley Point Co Louth – Hibernian Wind Power (FS006852)
- Kish and Bray Banks (Dublin Array – FS007029)
- Oriel Windfarm Ltd. (FS007383)
- Statkraft **North Irish Sea Array** (FS007031)
- Codling Wind Farm Park Site Survey (FS007546)

Relevant Foreshore Licence application no. have been added above but may need to be confirmed with the DHLGH, as necessary.

In addition, further south, there is a proposal to extend **Arklow Banks Wind Park** with Phase 2¹¹ proposing up to 56 wind turbines generating up to a capacity of 800MW of electricity. This application was lodged with ABP under Section 291 on 06/06/2024. A MAC was granted in December 2022 (Ref. 2022-MAC-002). The array is proposed in an area 6km – 15km off the coast in an area of 63.4km² within a wider development site area of 139.4km². Landfall with export cables is to the north of Arklow Town.

Details of the Oriel and Arklow Bank Wind Park locations are illustrated below:

11 <https://www.arklowbank2offshoreplanning.ie/planning-documents/>



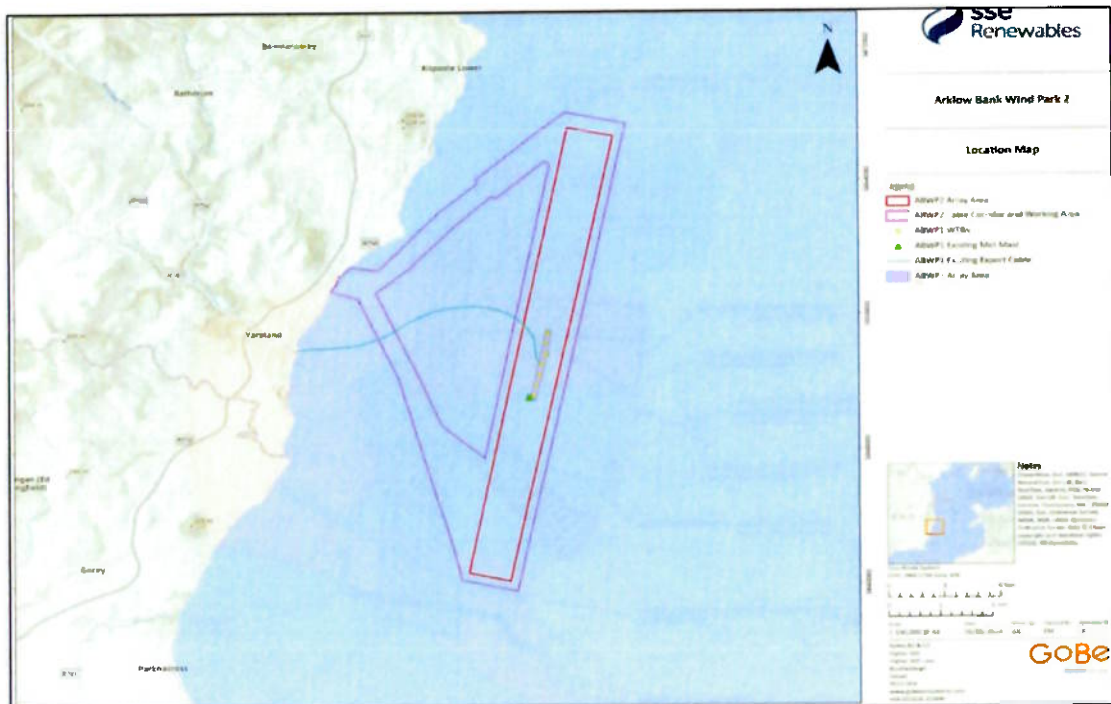


Fig. 12: Site Location – Concurrent Arklow Banks Phase 2 Application (Planning Report¹²)

EIAR Visual Impact:

ABP are invited to consider whether the varying foundation height (due to geological conditions – soil conditions, water depths and loading requirements) could result in varying tip height and a consequent visual impact when viewed from the shoreline.

In the context of Sea and Landscape Impact Assessment, ABP are respectively invited to consider the impact of the proposed development on Protected Views from Co. Meath (part of the Meath Co. Development Plan 2021-2027), including no. 65 and 75¹³, as follows:

¹² <https://www.arklowbank2offshoreplanning.ie/downloads/planning-documents/planning-report.pdf>

¹³ <https://consult.meath.ie/en/consultation/meath-adopted-county-development-plan/chapter/a10-protected-views-and-prospects>

https://consult.meath.ie/en/system/files/materials/7447/Map%208.6_Views%20%26%20Prospects.pdf

View	Location	Direction	Description	Significance
65	Laytown Strand	North	Distinctive View northwards along the shore from Laytown.	Regional
75	Boyne Estuary view from coast road between Mornington and Drogheda (past Grammar School)	North	Expansive views of the Boyne Estuary with associated long views and open skylines. Prospects towards Beaulieu are included. This view is typical of many such views along this road.	Local

Fig. 13: Coastal Protected Views (Co. Meath)

VP16: Bettystown Beach, Co. Meath Page 1: Baseline (Contextual Wireline and Photo) Page 2: Baseline (Contextual Wireline and Photo) Page 3: Wireline Page 4: Photomontage
VP17: Amenity Area, Laytown, Co. Meath Page 1: Baseline (Contextual Wireline and Photo) Page 2: Wireline Page 3: Photomontage
VP18: Dowth Passage Tomb, Co. Meath Page 1: Baseline (Contextual Wireline and Photo) Page 2: Wireline Page 3: Photomontage
VP19: Kennelstown, Co. Meath Page 1: Baseline (Contextual Wireline and Photo) Page 2: Wireline Page 3: Photomontage
VP20: Gormanston Beach, Co. Meath Page 1: Baseline (Contextual Wireline and Photo) Page 2: Wireline Page 3: Photomontage

Fig. 14: Viewpoints in Co. Meath

The Viewpoints above indicate that the offshore wind turbines will be visible along the full Co. Meath coastline. As per the comments of MCC's Architectural Conservation Officer, ABP are requested to consider the potential impact of the project on Gormanston Castle and associated Cromwell's Avenue. It is also noted that the scenic designation shown in the Zone of Theoretical Visibility only includes the proposed 290m turbines and no 316m turbines are illustrated (see Fig. 29.1 in the EIAR).

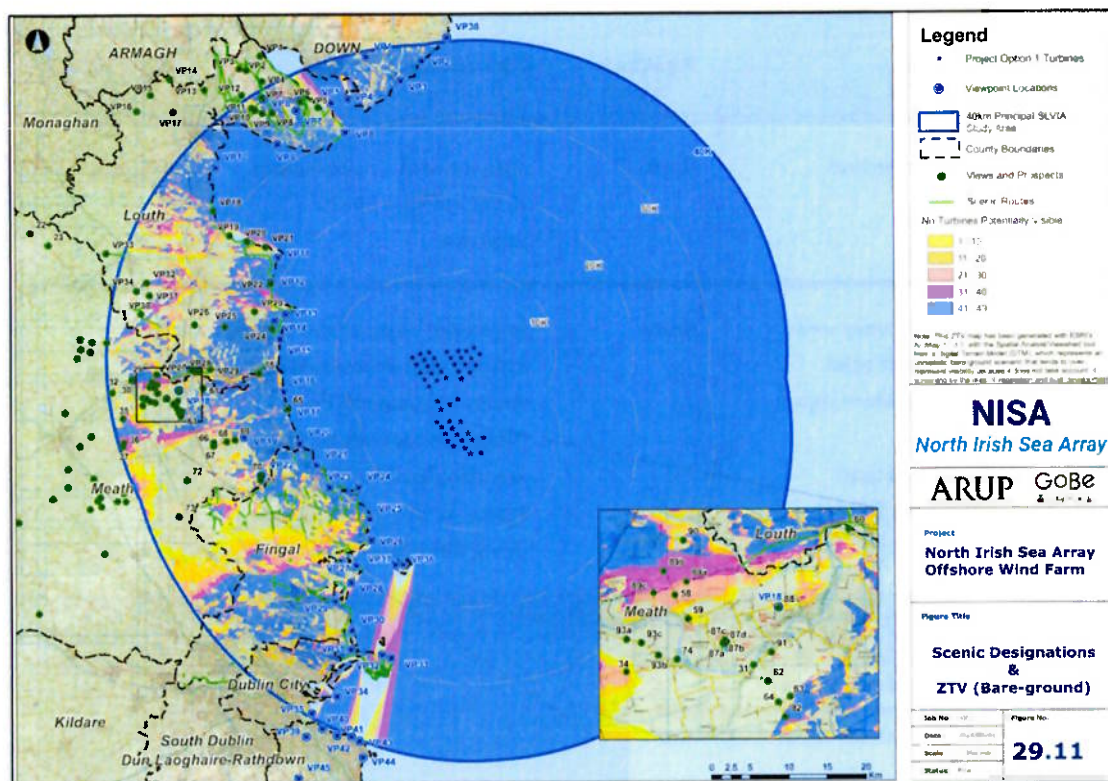


Fig. 15: Scenic Designations & Zone of Theoretical Visibility (290m Turbines)

In addition, ABP are requested to consider any other sites of importance in Co. Meath. This includes inland sites, particularly the World Heritage Site – Brú na Boinne¹⁴, where the Turbine Visibility could reach. It is recommended that An Bord Pleanála seek the advice of an independent World Heritage Expert, with specific expertise on the protection of World Heritage Sites on behalf of UNESCO, to assess whether the development could impact (either alone or in-combination with other developments) the UNESCO for World Heritage Status using established international best practice guidance. An Bord Pleanála are invited to consider the Heritage Council's (2013) *Windfarm Planning in Ireland, Planning in Harmony with Heritage* and the *National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025* in assessing this application.

In its SLIVA and in the context of visual impact, ABP are also invited to consider the impact of the adjacent proposed development (Oriol) in conjunction with other Phase 1 windfarm project and the Mona Wind Farm project off the coast of Holyhead/ Anglesey in the UK (which is the subject of current transboundary consultation). The EIAR for the Oriol project (to the north of NISA) stated that it could be theoretically visible from the Isle of Man and portions of Anglesey.

EIAR/ NIS Cumulative and In-combination Effects: ABP is requested to consider other onshore windfarms and other onshore renewable energy projects (e.g. solar farms), in addition to the proposed offshore renewable energy developments identified.

14 <https://consult.meath.ie/en/consultation/meath-adopted-county-development-plan/chapter/map-81br%C3%BA-b%C3%B3inne>

EIAR Material Assets – ABP is invited to consider tourism assets in the region and impacts on same in the region, including those identified in Fáilte Ireland's 'Ireland's Ancient East' Strategy.

SECTION SIX CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

An Bord Pleanála is respectfully requested to review the 'Planning Considerations' set out at Section 5.5 above and where relevant seek further information from the applicant. In the event of a grant of permission, a series of recommended conditions are listed at Section 6.2 for the Board's consideration.

6.1. Community Benefit

In the event of a grant of permission, an ABP are requested to apply a condition in relation to a Community Benefit Fund through the Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS) process to make finance available for the local community. It is noted that the applicant's proposed approach to community gain is addressed in the application documentation (see Section 2.5 of the Planning Report). The applicant has set up a Fund which will commence once the proposed development is in construction, providing €80 million/ €4 million p.a. for 20 years.

6.2 Recommendation

Offshore wind energy development is supported by national and regional policy in the context of climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Executive of MCC and local planning policy supports the principle of the construction of the proposed offshore wind energy development and supporting infrastructure.

There is different potential within landscape character areas to accommodate wind turbines, telecommunication structures, etc. subject to normal planning, environmental and landscape sensitivities considerations. Notwithstanding the policy approach, issues raised in relation to the potential visual impact of the proposed 35-49 no. turbines off the coast of Co. Louth, Co. Meath and Co. Dublin on protected views and cultural heritage sites is of particular concern to the Planning Authority and necessitate further assessment and information. Other aspects of the development including accompanying documents require further consideration as set out in the report above.

Accordingly, based on the examination of the documents accompanying this SID application, carried out by the Executive of MCC, in the context of National, Regional and Local planning policy, reports and comments from internal departments of MCC, a review of the planning application, its plans, particulars and supporting reports, this report respectfully recommends without prejudice that the following **Further Information** be requested by the Board to ensure a complete and comprehensive assessment of the proposed development.

1. Cumulative Impacts on Seascape and Landscape, Archaeological, Architectural, Cultural Heritage, EIAR & NIS

- (a) The Planning Authority requests that the cumulative impact of the proposed development, onshore operating windfarms, onshore permitted windfarms (not yet constructed or operational) and other large on and offshore infrastructure projects in the area are addressed in the landscape assessment within the EIAR.

Based on the theoretical visibility imagery, it is the opinion of the Planning Authority that the proposed development (and other proposed wind energy developments) could have a significant impact on the protected views from the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage List (as part of the Royal Sites of Ireland). It is also noted that the scenic designation shown in the Zone of Theoretical Visibility only includes the proposed 290m turbines and no 316m turbines are illustrated (see Fig. 29.1 in the EIAR). It is recommended that An Bord Pleanála seek the advice of an independent World Heritage Expert, with specific expertise and experience in protecting World Heritage Sites (WHS) on behalf of UNESCO, to assess whether the development could impact (either alone or in-combination with other developments) on the WHS using established international best practice.

- (b) It is recommended that An Bord Pleanála considers the need for a revised Seascape and Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) (including photomontages), taking account of the cumulative impact of the proposed development, other permitted and proposed developments including solar farms in the vicinity of the proposed development. The following Protected Views, National Monuments and Recorded Protected Structures (RPS) in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, etc. in the immediate visibility context of the site and associated with the World Heritage Site and Tentative World Heritage Site should be included in the assessment.

Protected Views ¹⁵	World Heritage Site
	65 Laytown Strand 75 Boyne Estuary All viewpoints within the World Heritage Site – Brú na Bóinne, including: 59 – Panoramic views in all directions from top of Knowth tumulus. Extensive view across a working countryside (south-east of Slane village) 87 a, b, c, d – Newgrange Passage Tomb – Panorama (south-east of Slane village) 88 – Dowth Passage Tomb – Panorama (south-east of Slane village) 30 – Hill of Slane – Panorama (north of Slane village) 43 and 44 - Views at Tara - Panorama 47 – Skryne Church – Panorama – of National Significance (east of the Hill of Tara)

¹⁵ <https://consult.meath.ie/en/consultation/meath-adopted-county-development-plan/chapter/a10-protected-views-and-prospects> and <https://consult.meath.ie/en/consultation/meath-adopted-county-development-plan/chapter/map-86-views-prospects>

National Monuments	• All National Monuments in/ vicinity of Brú na Bóinne
Protected Structures/ Industrial Heritage¹⁶	• All Protected Structures in/ vicinity of Brú na Bóinne • Gormanston Castle (a nationally significant Recorded Protected Structure), an important feature is the long vista to the sea, known as Cromwell's Avenue. RPS: 91040 and NIAH: 14322005.

An Bord Pleanála are advised of relevant sections of the **Brú Na Bóinne World Heritage Site Management Plan** (January 2017) including:

- Appendix 4: Brú na Bóinne National Monuments,
- Appendix 5: Natural Heritage Designations,
- Appendix 6: Record of Protected Structures,
- Appendix 7: Meath Industrial Heritage Survey,
- Appendix 8: Protected Views in the Meath County Development Plan; and
- Appendix 9: Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:
<https://www.worldheritageireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Bru-na-Boinne-Mgt-Plan-2017.pdf>
- A Progress Tracker Report (securing the objectives of the Management Plan) published in December 2023:
<https://www.worldheritageireland.ie/category/publications/?page=1&filter=bru-na-boinne>

2. **Visual Impact** - An Bord Pleanála is invited to clarify whether the likely alternative turbine height (due to Dublin Airport Zone) will have a visual impact when viewed from onshore locations.

If planning permission is granted, please have regard to the recommended Schedule of Conditions as set out below:

6.3. Schedule of Conditions

The comments from the various internal sections/ departments have sought specific planning conditions, in the event of a grant of permission, and An Bord Pleanála is respectfully requested to **attach conditions as set out in Section 293 (7)** of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2022 and consider the conditions listed below.

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application to An Bord Pleanála on the xx/xx/2024, except as may otherwise be required to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

¹⁶ <https://consult.meath.ie/en/system/files/materials/7447/Appendix%206%20-%20Record%20of%20Protected%20Structures.pdf#8>

Reason: In the interest of clarity and proper planning and sustainable development.

2. The Applicant shall appoint a Community Liaison Officer for all stages of the development and shall be the first point of contact for residents seeking information, making a complaint, etc. and shall be responsible for discharging information in relation to the project to residents.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and orderly development of the site

3. The period during which the development hereby permitted may be carried out shall be **ten years** from the date of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and having regard to the nature and extent of the proposed development, it is considered appropriate to specify a period of validity of this permission in excess of five years.

4. The date of decommissioning of the wind turbines and ancillary wind farm infrastructure shall be notified to, and established in writing with, the relevant Planning Authorities. This permission shall be for a period of **35 years** from the said date of commissioning of the wind farm. The wind turbines and ancillary infrastructure shall be removed at the end of this period of **35 years** unless, prior to the end of the period, planning permission shall have been granted for their retention for a further period.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and proper planning and sustainable development.

5. This permission shall not be construed as any form of consent or agreement to a connection to the national grid or to the routing or nature of any such connection.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

6. Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority/ An Bord Pleanála, the 35-49 No. wind turbines here permitted shall have an overall ground to blade tip height of between 290m-316m above LAT inclusive, a rotor diameter of 250-276m above LAT and a hub height ranging from 165m to 178m above LAT inclusive. The maximum output of all wind turbine generators will be 700MW inclusive.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and to allow for design flexibility.

7. The colour and finish of the proposed turbines and associated developments shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority/ An Bord Pleanála, prior to the commencement of development. The applicant shall submit drawings illustrating the final structure details (i.e. blade length) to be installed on site.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

8. (a) The mitigation measures and monitoring identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, Natura Impact Statement, Construction Environment Management Plan and other particulars submitted with the planning application, shall be implemented in full by the developer, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.
- (b) The developer shall appoint persons with appropriate ecological, hydrological and construction expertise such as Environmental Manager/ Ecological Clerk of Works and Hydrologist to ensure that the mitigation measures identified in the above documents are implemented in full during the pre-construction, construction stage and post construction phases to advise on, oversee and monitor mitigation measures. Monitoring shall be carried out for a minimum of 15 years post construction.
- (c) The Environmental Manager/ ECOW shall be responsible for implementation of the Piling Strategy at all times during the offshore construction, operational or decommissioning phases.
- (d) Onshore mitigation measures should be in line with the *NRA Best Practice Guidelines for the Conservation of Bats in the Planning of National Road Schemes* and the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Bats during the Construction of National Road Schemes* and any works relating to bats may only be carried out under a licence issued by the NPWS.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and the protection of the environment during construction and operational phases of development.

9. Trees and hedgerows shall not be removed during the nesting season (i.e. March 1st to August 31st in accordance with the Wildlife Act (as amended)). Replacement hedgerows shall be of native species.

Reason: In the interest of avian ecology and visual amenity.

10. The developer shall facilitate the preservation, recording and protection of archaeological materials or features that may exist within the site. In this regard, the developer shall:
- (a) Notify the planning authority in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of any site operation (including hydrological and geotechnical investigations) relating to the proposed development,
- (b) Employ a suitably qualified archaeologist in advance of construction works to complete an archaeological assessment of the project site to determine the location, date, nature and extent of any archaeological sites or features. This work

will feed into an Archaeological Mitigation Strategy Document that will determine how any archaeological remains are either preserved in situ or preserved by record.

If the advance works show nothing of archaeological significance, construction works shall be monitored, as stray finds are always a possibility. All finds and reports shall be lodged with the National Monuments Service and the National Museum of Ireland.

- (c) The suitably qualified archaeologist shall monitor all site investigations and other excavation works and prepare a report on the results of such monitoring to be submitted to the Planning Authority and to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- (d) Results of the works outlined above shall be published in digital and/ or hard copy.
- (e) Provide arrangements, acceptable to the Planning Authority, for the recording and removal of any archaeological material which the authority considers appropriate to remove.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation in situ or by record of all archaeological and historical material, features or objects, to conserve the archaeological heritage of the site, it is considered reasonable that the developer should facilitate the preservation and protection or the preservation by record of any archaeological features or materials which may exist within it.

Reason: In the interest of safety.

- 11. The Applicant shall, during the construction stage, maintain a Complaints Register to record any complaints regarding but not limited to noise, odour, dust, traffic or any other environmental nuisance. The Complaint Register shall include details of the complaint and measures taken to address the complaint and prevent repetition of the complaint.

Reason: In the interest of environmental protection and orderly development.

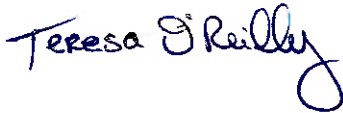
- 12. If the proposed development causes interference with telecommunications signals in the area, effective measures shall be implemented to minimise such interference. Details of these measures, which shall be at the developer's expense, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the relevant Planning Authority prior to commissioning of the turbines, and following consultation with the relevant authorities.

Reason: In the interest of orderly planning and residential amenity.

13. (a) The identification of environmental community projects and works shall be decided upon by a community liaison committee; the composition of the committee shall be based upon equal representation of personnel from the Planning Authorities, the developer, local residents and elected members of Meath, Louth, Fingal and Dublin City Councils; any variation in the composition of the committee shall be subject to the prior agreement of the Planning Authorities.

(b) The developer shall pay a sum of money to the Planning Authority, either annually or in such manner as may be agreed, towards the cost of the provision of environmental improvement and recreational or community amenities in the locality. The identification of such projects shall be decided by the relevant Planning Authority having consulted with the community liaison committee as provided for under (a) above. The amount of the contribution and the arrangements for payment shall be agreed between the developer and the planning authorities or, in default of such agreement shall be referred to the Board for determination. The amount shall be index linked in the case of phased payment. The developer shall consult with the planning authorities in this regard prior to the commencement of the development.

Reason: It is considered reasonable that the developer should contribute towards the cost of environmental, recreational or community amenities which would constitute a substantial gain to the local community.



Teresa O'Reilly,
Executive Planner.



Wendy Bagnall,
Senior Executive Planner



Padraig Maguire
Senior Planner

Appendix 1 – Matters to be addressed in the Planning Authority Submission

Matters specified in Section 34(2), 281 (3) and 282 (2) of PDA 2000-2022 include:

- Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC as amended by Commission Directive (EU) 2017/845 of 17/05/2017;
- National Marine Planning Framework;
- National Planning Framework;
- Marine Planning Policy Statement;
- Guidelines issued under Section 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021;
- Guidelines issues under Section 28 (Ministerial Guidelines);
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for Dublin and the Mid-East Region;
- Development Plan provisions;
- Any Local Area Plan applicable to a part of the functional area of the Coastal Planning Authority;
- Land-sea interactions within the meaning of Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014²¹ establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning;
- Objectives of maritime spatial planning;
- Principles of proper planning and sustainable development;
- The implications of the proposed development for maritime spatial planning;
- The implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development in the functional area concerned, and (c) the likely effects of the proposed development on the environment or any European site;
- Any special amenity area order relating to the area;
- Any European site or other area prescribed for the conservation and protection of the environment including, in particular, the archaeological and natural heritage and the conservation and protection of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed for the purposes of this paragraph;
- Where relevant, the policy of the Government, the Minister or any other Minister of the Government;
- Previous developments by the applicant which have not been satisfactorily completed;
- Previous convictions against the applicant for non-compliance with this Act, the Building Control Act 2007 or the Fire Services Act 1981;
- Any other relevant provision or requirement of this Act, and any regulations made thereunder; and
- Subject to section 99F of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, and section 54 (as amended by section 257 of this Act) of the Waste Management Act, 1996, where an application under this section relates to development which comprises or is for the purposes of an activity for which an integrated pollution control licence or a waste licence is required, a planning authority shall take into consideration that the control of emissions arising from the activity is a function of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

8th July 2024 at 1.30p.m.

Buvinda House, Navan (and online via zoom)

5.0 Statutory Business

5.3 Planning

- 5.3.1 To receive the Chief Executive's Report in accordance with Section 291 of the Planning and Development Acts, in relation to a Strategic Infrastructure Development application made to An Bord Pleanála, reference ABP-319799-24, for proposed development of 25 no. wind turbines and associated works off the coast of Co. Louth
- 5.3.2 To receive the Chief Executive's Report in accordance with Section 291 of the Planning and Development Acts, in relation to a Strategic Infrastructure Development application made to An Bord Pleanála, reference ABP-319866-24, for proposed development of 35-49 no. wind turbines and associated works off the coast of Co. Louth, Co. Meath and Co. Dublin

An Cathaoirleach welcomed Ms. Teresa O'Reilly, Executive Planner to the meeting. Ms O'Reilly advised that her presentation covers both items 5.3.1 & 5.3.2 above regarding the section 291 applications to An Bord Pleanála. She said that the Chief Executive's reports are to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála along with any submissions from the members and that the documentation is available at the council offices and online for inspection.

Ms. O'Reilly gave a detailed presentation in respect of the proposed developments by NISA Wind Farm Ltd, ABP-319866-24 & Oriel Wind Farm Ltd, Reference no. ABP-319799-24.

There were interventions from Councillors Eugene Cassidy; Alan Lawes; Joe Bonner; Brian Fitzgerald; Ronan Moore; Alan Tobin; Sean Drew; Michael Gallagher; Gillian O'Toole and Sharon Tolan. Matters raised included the following:

- Referred to the visual effect of the proposed development, prefer it to be off shore.
- Queried how the turbines connect to the national Grid.
- Looked at the 220kV lines and what the impact will be on the countryside.
- What impact will it have on the North-South Interconnector.
- Reference to an existing 220kV project and whether NISA will be connected to this.

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- What will the effect be on sea wildlife/ birdlife.
- What is the contribution to renewable energy targets and climate change.
- What is the impact on inland fisheries and small offshore fishing.
- Asked if the proposal might affect the development of a new port at Bremore.
- Is Bremore port part of this development.
- Tourism in the area needs to be considered.
- Enquired about the value of the Community fund and how it will be allocated.
- Asked about the disruption to the communities and how they can benefit.
- How else will the Local Authority benefit from funds, and can this funding be ring-fenced for the area to provide opportunities for communities affected.
- Referred to the disruption on land due to the proposed new infrastructure.
- Referred to the amount of CO₂ likely to be saved which is significant.
- Queried the role of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA).
- Referred to the Exclusion Zones around the turbines for fishing which can represent an opportunity for biodiversity and increase sustainable fishing elsewhere.
- Welcomes the proposed development as an alternative to onshore wind farms.
- Queried the impact on fishing at Clogherhead due to the Oriel Offshore windfarm.
- Asked about the impact on Meath's roads and where the cables will be located.
- Requested that a briefing be provided to the Meath Heritage Forum.
- Queried the End-of-Life Stage of the project including the concrete beds.
- Will the proposal impact on the EirGrid Kildare project.
- Referred to Renewable energy projects and interventions
- Referred to the visual impact of the proposed development from the shoreline and consider it too close.
- How will the Airport and Aircorp/ Armycamp be affected by the proposal.
- What will the impact be on the beach and the passage tombs, heritage sites.
- What impact will construction have on the blue flag status at Bettystown Beach.

Responses to queries raised were provided by Ms. O'Reilly , Executive Planner.