



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ACP-323296-25

|                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                   |        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| <b>Case Reference / Description</b>                                              | Proposed development of 11 no. turbine wind farm located in Raheenakeeran, Enaghan, Clonsast Upper, Clonsast Lower, Cushina (Ballyshear E.D), Cushina (Bracknagh E.D) and other townlands in County Offaly |                   |        |
| <b>Case Type</b>                                                                 | Pre-application consultation                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |        |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting</b> | 1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |        |
| <b>Date</b>                                                                      | 3 November 2025                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Start Time</b> | 2:30pm |
| <b>Location</b>                                                                  | MS Teams                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>End Time</b>   | 3:55pm |

|                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Representing An Coimisiún Pleanála</b>                   |
| Una Crosse (Assistant Planning Director) Chair              |
| Heidi Thorsdalen (Senior Planning Inspector)                |
| Fiona Patterson (Senior Ecologist/Environmental Specialist) |
| Ellen Moss (Executive Officer)                              |

|                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b> |
| Simon Carleton (Galetech Energy)              |
| Blaithin Rafferty (Galetech Energy)           |
| James Carville (Galetech Energy)              |

## Introduction

The Commission referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025, requesting pre-application consultations under section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

- The **purpose of the pre application meeting** was outlined as follows:  
To give an opinion as to whether the proposed development comes within the provisions of s.37A such that an application for approval should be made to the Commission under s37E.
- The meeting also provides the Commission with an opportunity to give advice regarding the procedures around the making of any application and what considerations relating to the proper planning and sustainable development and the environment may have a bearing on a decision.
- Given the nature of the proposed development, a consideration of the proposal in the context of the requirements set out in the Regulations transposing the RED III Directive is required, this includes the consideration of the completeness check required to process the application and any other relevant requirements.
- To this end, it is envisaged that this first meeting will provide the Commission with an overview of the proposed development and that further meetings will be held to address the procedures and considerations in respect of the proposal.
- Following receipt of the request for a second meeting, an agenda will be forwarded identifying the topics which the Commission consider should be addressed and to facilitate the prospective applicant in identifying the most appropriate team members to address the procedures and considerations which may arise.

The Commission's representatives mentioned the following **general procedures** in relation to the pre-application consultation process:

- The Commission will keep a record of this meeting and any other meetings, if held. Such records will form part of the file which will be made available publicly at the conclusion of the process. The record of the meeting will not be amended

by the Commission once finalised, but the prospective applicant may submit comments on the record which will form part of the case file.

- The Commission will serve notice at the conclusion of the process as to the strategic infrastructure status of the proposed development. It may form a preliminary view at an early stage in the process on the matter.
- A further meeting or meetings may be held in respect of the proposed development.
- Further information may be requested by the Commission and public consultations may also be directed by the Commission.
- The Commission may hold consultations in respect of the proposed development with other bodies.
- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Commission in any way and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in any legal proceedings.

#### **Presentation made by the prospective applicant:**

The prospective applicant began their presentation, which is on file, with an introduction to the project team, provided information on the location and characteristics of the proposed site, as well as the proposed development and the following:

- Details in respect of the following were outlined:
- Turbine component haul route,
- Proposed construction of a permanent bridge over the Daingean River,
- Connection to the proposed 110kV Derrynadarragh substation (ACP-323728-25), currently at application stage with the Commission.
- Layout of the proposed wind farm and outlined the access tracks to each turbine.
- Species identified on site.
- Permanent met mast to be located to the north of the proposed site.
- Site is within an area open for consideration in the Offaly County Development Plan.

- Context of the site in respect of Natura 2000 sites.
- Consultations undertaken to inform environmental scoping.
- Proposed EIAR chapters were briefly outlined.
- Key next steps including: public consultation, pre-application process to remain open.
- A request for Design Flexibility is proposed.
- An EIA scoping request is being considered.

#### **Discussion:**

- The Commission's representatives sought a copy of the drawings included in the presentation at an appropriate scale.
- The Commission's representatives inquired whether the BESS indicated on Slide 4 would be included; the prospective applicant clarified that this would not form part of the application.
- The prospective applicant advised that the borrow pit had been reduced due to the presence of bats, badgers, and geological factors. Trial pitting and further assessments are required to determine the extent of the borrow pit and the suitability of the rock for constructing the access tracks.
- The Commission's representatives enquired about the works required outside of the public road to accommodate the TDR, and the prospective applicant advised that the required works are generally minimal with four areas where works would including the bridge at RM6, the widening of the junction at RM11, the upgrading of the road at RM18, which would involve extensive excavation, the junction at RM19 has a lower ground level than the public road, and some infilling would be required, street furniture would be moved at RM5, at RM3 there is a bend in the road.
- There are no plans for remedial works on bridges other than the bridge over the Daingean River. The Commission's representatives emphasised that the EIAR should assess all relevant areas.

- The Commission's representatives requested clarification on the grid connection. The prospective applicant advised that the proposal as set out is their preferred solution and likely to be encouraged by EirGrid.
- A discussion on environmental scoping was held.
- The Commission's representatives queried the methodology used to conduct peat probing with the maximum depth was queried; these figures were not available. Trial pitting is due to commence at the end of November 2025. The landowner has indicated that rock is located across various areas of the site. It was advised that peat probing should not be confined to the construction area.
- The Commission's representatives enquired about the drainage arrangement on the proposed site. Peat extraction has been undertaken to the North of the proposed site.
- The consideration of the Water Framework Directive should be a standalone document.
- Carbon calculations to be carried out once the design is finalised.
- The proposed height of the turbines was discussed with the Commission's representatives requested that a drawing setting out the study area for the consideration of cumulative impacts be provided.
- The Commission's representatives enquired whether background noise monitoring had been conducted with consultation ongoing and monitors to be deployed.
- In relation to the proposed bridge, the Commission's representatives queried whether consultations had been held with the County Council with the prospective applicant advising that it is awaiting consultation with the Roads Department of Offaly County Council with further queries raised regarding engagement with the OPW in relation to a Section 50 application.
- The Commission's representatives noted that consultations with Benfield Aerodrome are ongoing and queried the concerns raised. Benfield Aerodrome utilise the area for flight training purposes; no further input has been received.

- The Commission's representatives queried survey findings in respect of badger setts and bats. Trail cameras have been set up to inform the survey with a bat roost has been identified within an old structure. A 50-metre buffer zone is proposed to be established, with works restricted during specific periods and the proposed location of T6 amended to allow for the buffer zone. It was noted that a derogation licence, if required, would need to be obtained prior to the Commission making a decision. Bird surveys are ongoing.
- Minimal forestry removal is required at T6 and T9.
- Details in respect of the bird surveys being undertaken were discussed.
- The Commission's representatives reminded the prospective applicant that this development will fall under the scope of the RED III and that there would be limited opportunities to request further information once an application is lodged.
- It was advised that any road closures or road works should be outlined in the transport management plan.
- The Commission's representatives queried any requirement to regularise historic peat harvesting with the prospective applicant not aware of any requirement.

#### **Conclusion:**

The Commission's representatives advised that the record of the instant meeting will be issued in the meantime and that the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing or alternatively bring any comments for discussion at the time of any further meeting.

The Meeting concluded at 15:55.



**Una Crosse**

**Assistant Director of Planning**