



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-320934-24

Case Reference / Description	Proposed Wind Farm Repowering of the existing Dunneill and Kingsmountain Wind Farms Located in the townlands of Ballyglass, Crowagh, or Dunneill Mountain, Tawnadremira, Ballygreighan Barr, Dunowla and Kingsmountain, County Sligo		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Date	25 November 2024	Start Time	11:00am
Location	MS Teams	End Time	11:55am

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Una Crosse (Assistant Planning Director) Chair
Heidi Thorsdalen (Senior Planning Inspector)
Ellen Moss (Executive Officer)
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Alan Clancy, MKO
Ellen Costello, MKO
Susan Doran, MKO
Ciara Griffin, MKO
Brandon Taylor, MKO
Garry Brides, SSE
Caroline Donnelly, SSE
Lisa English, SSE

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 15th August 2024, requesting pre-application consultations under section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and advised the prospective applicant that the instant meeting essentially constituted an information-gathering exercise for the Board; it also invited the prospective applicant to outline the nature of the proposed development and to highlight any matters that it wished to receive advice on from the Board. The Board's representatives mentioned the following general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process:

- The Board 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 Board once finalised, but the prospective applicant may submit comments on the record which will form part of the case file.
- The Board 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 Board and public consultations may also be directed by the Board.
- The Board may hold consultations in respect of the proposed development with other bodies.
- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Board 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 by briefly discussing the background of the existing developments at Dunneill and Kingsmountain Wind Farms and the existing grid connection. The prospective applicant provided information in relation to the site location, the proposed development and the proposed grid connection.

The prospective applicant provided a brief overview of the turbine delivery route. The proposed port entry is Killybegs in County Donegal. The closest designated sites to the proposed development include Ox Mountain Bogs SAC, Ox Mountain Bogs pNHA, Dunneill River pNHA, Knockalongy and Knockachree Cliffs SAC, Aughris Head SPA, Lough Nabrickkeagh Bog SAC, Ballysadara Bay SPA/SAC, and Slieveward Bog NHA. A brief overview of the landscape and visual impacts and the policy context for the proposed development was provided.

Discussion:

The Boards representatives began the discussion by querying the operational life span of the existing wind farm developments of Kingsmountain and Dunneill. The prospective applicant advised it received an extension of permission for an additional 15 years in June 2023 for Dunneill Wind Farm. The current permission will expire in 2038. There is no limitation to the permission at Kingsmountain Wind Farm.

The Boards representatives queried what the proposed repowering would consist of, with the prospective applicant advising that the 23 current turbines at the existing Dunneill and Kingsmountain wind farms would be decommissioned and repowered with new turbines.

The Boards representatives queried the anticipated impacts envisaged on adjoining landowners. The prospective applicant noted that there are a number of landowners, including Coillte who are involved in the existing scheme for access purposes, however it is proposed that turbines would be developed on Coillte lands.

The Boards representatives queried how the noise baseline study would be established. The prospective applicant advised that the noise subcontractor for the project, TNEI, would secure designated shut down periods. This system is being utilized at Dunneill and Kingsmountain Wind Farms. This has allowed for noise monitoring and modelling.

The Boards representatives queried whether the forestry on the proposed site would be felled and replanting proposed. The prospective applicant advised that felling would be required where any infrastructure would be located within forestry and would likely be keyhole felling. It is the intention to assess forestry service requirements in respect of replanting.

The Boards representatives queried the survey work completed and noted the location of the Ox Mountain Bogs SAC. The prospective applicant advised that a preliminary peat stability risk assessment is underway. The Boards representatives questioned onsite drainage. The prospective applicant advised that the area surrounding the proposed site location has existing road infrastructure drainage network and the forestry drainage network. A detailed drainage design will form part of any future application. The Boards representatives queried whether borrow pits are being proposed. The prospective applicant noted it is under consideration, there are existing borrow pits and the Dunneill and Kingsmountain Wind Farms.

The Boards representatives queried if the proposed development overlapped with the boundary of the SAC. The prospective applicant advised that the proposed turbines and infrastructure would not be located within the SAC or the hydrological buffer identified for same.

The Boards representatives noted that 3 years of bird surveys and 2 years of bat surveys had been undertaken and requested the applicant outline the findings. The

prospective applicant advised that bird/bat activity has been limited and nothing of key concern has been identified.

The Boards representatives queried the assessments undertaken in respect of archaeology. The prospective applicant referenced the cultural heritage site located within the area including Queen Meave's Tomb noting that the site is within a modified landscape with survey work ongoing.

The Boards representatives queried whether the consideration undertaken to date in respect of transportation with the prospective applicant outlining the survey work undertaken and proposed.

The Boards representatives outlined that engagement by the prospective applicant with the NPWS would be advisable. The Boards representatives also noted the Sligo landscape characterisation map included in the Sligo County Development Plan which outlines sensitive rural landscape, visually vulnerable areas and scenic routes within the study area.

The Boards representatives queried whether it is the intention of the prospective applicant to include the grid connection as part of the subject proposal with the prospective applicant advising that it is and outlined that the existing grid connection would remain, and the proposed grid connection would comprise a second connection. Two possible grid connections have been identified, however the intention is to assess both and apply for the most appropriate from an environmental perspective.

The Boards representatives advised that if the two options are sought the design flexibility would be under Section 182F with a separate pre-application consultation request under Section 182E required.

The Boards representatives reminded the prospective applicant that if they intend to seek flexibility in terms of the turbine infrastructure it is a requirement to do so while the pre-application consultation request is open. The prospective applicant queried if it is a separate meeting with the Boards representatives advising of the dual process.

Conclusion:

The Board's representatives advised that the onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the instant pre-application consultation process. The Board'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 11:55.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Una Crosse', is written over a horizontal line.

Una Crosse

Assistant Director of Planning