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# **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT (EIAR) FOR THE PROPOSED DERRYNADARRAGH WIND FARM, CO. KILDARE, CO. OFFALY & CO. LAOIS**

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## **Volume II – Main EIAR**

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### **Chapter 5 – EIA Scoping and Consultation**

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**Prepared for:**

**Dara Energy Limited**



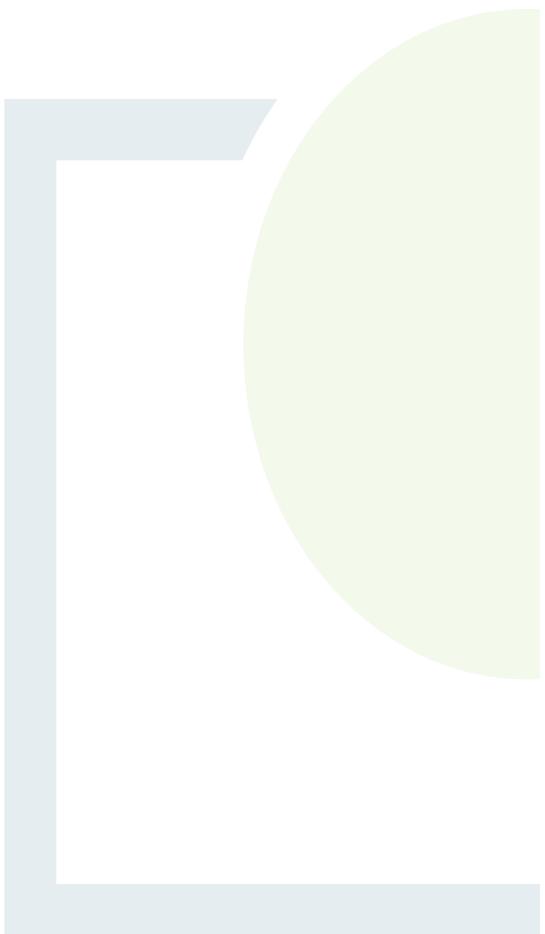
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## 5. EIA SCOPING AND CONSULTATION

### 5.1 Introduction

Consultation is an important part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. This chapter describes the consultation process and EIAR scoping that was undertaken in order to identify key effects from the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm project to be included in the EIAR. The consultation process carried out for the project has been a lengthy, detailed and thorough process. A number of points and submissions were raised as part of the consultation process which have informed the project design and this EIAR.

This chapter presents the key points that arose through the consultation process and how these points were addressed in the EIAR. The consultation process, scoping and the various pre-application consultations meetings with An Coimisiún Pleanála (previously An Bord Pleanála), Kildare County Council and Offaly County Council, undertaken in respect of the proposed development are set out in this chapter. Following receipt of scoping responses, further consultation occurred with consultees as appropriate – for instance with the NPWS relating to the Curlew breeding site, and IFI regarding the degradation of Cushina River and habitat restoration along this section of the river.

Throughout the consultation process, specific regard has been taken to the *Code of Practice for Wind Energy Development in Ireland – Guidelines for Community Engagement* published on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2016 by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment.

*"This Code of Good Practice is intended to ensure that wind energy development in Ireland is undertaken in observance with the best industry practices, and with the full engagement of communities around the country".*

The applicant had regard throughout the pre-planning process of the practical steps that renewable energy promoters should comply with, in engaging with communities as set out in this Guidance. Please refer to Chapter 4 – Policy of this EIAR for further discussion on this document, and the other legislation and guidelines considered throughout this Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

#### 5.1.1 Statement of Authority - Chapter Authors

This Chapter has been prepared by Evan Rossiter, and reviewed by Robyn Nicholl and Jim Hughes.

Evan Rossiter is a Senior Project Planner and holds a BSc in City Planning and Environmental Policy and a Masters in Regional and Urban Planning (MRUP) from University College Dublin. Evan has prepared several EIAR Chapters for a range of development types, including renewable energy developments, throughout Ireland.

Robyn Nicholl is a Principal Planner with Fehily Timoney and Company and holds a Masters' degree in Urban and Rural Design (MSc), and a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Planning (BSc) from Queens University, Belfast. She has worked in both public sector and private planning consultancy for over twelve years and has led many strategic projects both in the planning and environmental assessment disciplines, including a number of wind farm developments.

This chapter has been reviewed by Jim Hughes. Jim holds a BA in Public Administration from the University of Limerick, an MSc in Town Planning from Queen's University Belfast and a HDip in Environmental Impact Assessment from University College Dublin. Jim has led major Irish projects in the planning, environmental assessment and permitting disciplines including many wind farm developments.



## 5.2 Scoping and Pre-Planning Consultation

The purpose of the EIA scoping process is to identify the key points and issues which are likely to be important during the environmental impact assessment (EIA) of a project and to eliminate those that are not. The scoping process identifies sources or causes of potential environmental effects, the pathways by which the effects can happen, and the sensitive receptors which are likely to be affected. It defines the appropriate level of detail for the information to be provided in the EIAR. In essence, the primary focus of scoping is to define the most appropriate assessment of significant effects related to the proposed development.

A scoping request letter and scoping report detailing a description of the proposed project, draft mapping, preliminary table of contents of the EIAR and outline of the methodology for the assessment was distributed to consultees on the 12th of December 2024. The recipients included, the Council, Government Departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), interested parties and key stakeholders. Consultees were invited to contribute to the EIAR by suggesting baseline data, survey methodologies and potential impacts that should be considered as part of the impact assessment process and in preparation of the EIAR.

Table 5-1 details the complete list of consultees who were issued a copy of the scoping document. A copy of the scoping request letter and scoping report are included at Appendix 5.1, Volume III of this EIAR.

### 5.2.1 EIA Scoping Consultation

**Table 5-1: List of Consultees to whom the Scoping Report was issued**

Type of Stakeholder	Body / Department
The Councils	Kildare County Council Offaly County Council Laois County Council
Regional Authorities	Northern and Western Regional Assembly
Government Departments	Department for Rural and Community Development Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Department of Defence Department of Environment, Climate and Communications Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media Development Application Unit
NGOs & Stakeholders	An Chomhairle Ealaíon (The Arts Council) An Garda Siochána - Portarlington An Garda Siochána- Clonbologue An Taisce Angling Council of Ireland Bat Conservation Ireland (BCI) Biodiversity Ireland BirdWatch Ireland Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland Butterfly Conservation Ireland Coimisiún na Meán



Type of Stakeholder	Body / Department
	EirGrid Environmental Protection Agency ESB Networks Fáilte Ireland Forestry Service Gas Networks Ireland Geographical Society of Ireland Geological Survey of Ireland Health and Safety Authority Health and Safety Executive Heritage Council Inland Fisheries Ireland Irish Farmers Association Irish Peatland Conservation Council Irish Rail Irish Raptor Study Group Irish Wildlife Trust Magnet Networks Met Eireann National Monuments Service National Parks and Wildlife Service Office of Public Works Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland Teagasc The Irish Tourist Industry Confederation Transport Infrastructure Ireland Uisce Eireann
Aviation	Benfield Airfield Clonbullogue Aerodrom Irish Air Corps Irish Aviation Authority Limetree Airfield Weston Airport
Telecommunications	2RN AirNav Ireland Airwave Arra Communications BT Ireland Broadcasting Authority of Ireland Eir EMR Integrated Solutions



Type of Stakeholder	Body / Department
	Enet Imagine Broadband IMS Connect Lightnet Broadband Premier Broadband Telecommunications Section, An Garda Siochána Tetra Ireland (TI) Three Ireland Towercom Viatel Ireland Ltd Virgin Media Ireland Ltd Vodafone Ireland Ltd Wireless Connect Ltd
Other – to inform	Commission for Communications Regulation Commission for Regulation of Utilities



## 5.2.2 List of Scoping Responses

Full details of the scoping responses received are set out at Appendix 5.2, Volume III of this EIAR. A summary of the consultation responses received are presented in Table 5-2.

**Table 5-2: Summary of Scoping Responses Received**

	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
County Councils	Kildare County Council	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Offaly County Council	28/02/2025	<p>Offaly County Council (OCC) outlined the following in its response to the scoping request issued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given that the proposed development will be the subject of a SID Application OCC cannot issue a formal scoping EIA, as this is the responsibility of An Bord Pleanála.</li> <li>From a Roads and Haulage/Delivery Route perspective - a list of standard bullet points included for consideration through the planning app and EIAR.</li> <li>The Applicant's attention is directed to the Offaly County Council Development Plan 2021-2027 Wind Strategy and Volume One-Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 13 DMS-109 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027. Please note that other sections, policies and objectives of the plan shall also be relevant to the proposal.</li> <li>OCC would also request that a separate document be included which briefly summarises all significant potential impacts of the development, mitigation measures proposed for each significant impact and residual impacts if the mitigation measures are implemented</li> </ul>	<p>These points have been considered throughout this Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).</p> <p>In particular the following chapters address these items:</p> <p>Chapter 4: Planning Policy, Chapter 6: Population and Human Health; Chapter 8: Noise and Vibration; Chapter 9: Biodiversity; BEMP; Chapter 12: Hydrology and Water Quality; Chapter 13: Shadow Flicker; Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport; CEMP; TMP; Chapter 15: Archaeology; Chapter 16: Landscape and Visual</p>



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
	Laois County Council	N/A	No response received.	N/A
Regional Assembly	Northern and Western Regional Assembly	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Department for Rural and Community Development	N/A	No response received.	N/A
Government Departments	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Department of Defence	31/12/2024	<p>The response received from the Department of Defence stated the following:</p> <p><i>Having consulted with the Military authorities, the Department of Defence wishes to make the following observations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Minister for Defence is responsible for the regulation of military aviation, whereas the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) is responsible for the safety regulation of civil aviation including aerodromes.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The IAA does not have remit for military aviation or installations. Safeguarding of military flight operations and installations is intended to protect both current and future aircraft operations and also to take account of the security requirements associated with some of those operations.</i></p>	<p>This has been considered in Chapter 17 – Material Assets, Telecommunications and Aviation.</p>



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>All turbines should be illuminated by Type C, Medium intensity, Fixed Red obstacle lighting with a minimum output of 2,000 candela to be visible in all directions of azimuth and to be operational H24/7 days a week.</i></li> <li><i>Obstacle lighting should be incandescent or, if LED or other types are used, of a type visible to Night Vision equipment. Obstacle lighting used must emit light at the near Infra-Red (IR) range of the electromagnetic spectrum, specifically at or near 850 nanometers (nm) of wavelength. Light intensity to be of similar value to that emitted in the visible spectrum of light</i></li> <li><i>Any Irish Air Corps (IAC) requirements for are separate to Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) requirements."</i></li> </ul>	
	Department of Environment, Climate and Communications	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	02/07/2025	<p>The response received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage stated the following:</p> <p><i>"The applicant is required to engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist to carry out an Archaeological Impact Assessment of the development site. This archaeological assessment should:</i></p> <p class="list-item-l1"><i>a. examine the known and predicted archaeological environment</i></p> <p class="list-item-l1"><i>b. examine the proposed development</i></p>	<p>This comments have been considered throughout this Environmental Impact Assessment Report. In particular Chapter 15: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, and Chapter 16 Landscape and Visual Impact have addressed this commentary.</p>



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
			<p><i>c. evaluate the proposed development in terms of the impact (direct and indirect) of the proposed works on existing or predicted archaeology</i></p> <p><i>d. propose a strategy to mitigate any adverse effects of the development on the archaeological heritage.</i></p> <p><i>No subsurface work should be undertaken in the absence of the archaeologist without his/her express consent.</i></p> <p><i>The archaeologist should carry out any relevant documentary research and inspect the site. Field survey, topographical survey or geophysical survey should be undertaken as the initial phase of assessment, as appropriate. Based on the results of the initial investigations test excavation may be appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>Following further consultation with the Department test trenches may also be excavated at locations chosen by the archaeologist (informed by the results of the previous methods of non-intrusive assessment) to target the results of the topographical and/or geophysical analysis.</i></p> <p><i>A Visual Impact Assessment of the impact of the proposed development on adjacent archaeological material shall be carried out. Views to and from adjacent archaeological monuments shall be assessed in light of the proposed development and views of the monuments from all adjacent roads and approach roads assessed in relation to the proposed works.</i></p>	



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
			<p><i>Having completed the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report compiling the above information to the Department for consideration.</i></p> <p><i>No site preparation or construction work shall be carried out until after the archaeologist's report has been submitted and permission to proceed has been received in writing from the Planning Authority in consultation with the Department.</i></p> <p><i>It should be borne in mind that, if significant archaeological remains are found, refusal might still be recommended, and/or further preservation in situ or by record may be required."</i></p>	
	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Development Application Unit	N/A	No response received.	N/A
NGOs and Stakeholders	An Chomhairle Ealaíon (The Arts Council)	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	An Garda Siochána - Portarlington	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	An Garda Siochána- Clonbologue	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	An Taisce	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Angling Council of Ireland	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Bat Conservation Ireland (BCI)	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Biodiversity Ireland	N/A	No response received.	N/A



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
	Bird Watch Ireland	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Butterfly Conservation Ireland	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	Coimisiún na Meán	12/12/2024	The response received from Coimisiún na Meán stated that:  <i>"Coimisiún na Meán does not perform an in-depth analysis of the effect of wind turbines or electrical sub stations on FM networks. However, we are not aware of any issues from existing windfarms or electrical sub stations into existing FM networks. Also, the proposed substation is not located close to any existing or planned FM transmission sites."</i>	Feedback has been considered within Chapter 17: Material Assets, Telecommunications and Aviation.
	EirGrid	12/12/2024	The response received from Eirgrid stated:  <i>"In the interests of expediency of applications, and due to reduced resources, it is EirGrid policy not to comment on EIAR Scoping Reports."</i>	N/A
	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	N/A	No response received.	N/A
	ESB Networks	N/A	No response received.	N/A



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
	Fáilte Ireland	21/02/2025	<p>The feedback received from Fáilte Ireland was a standard scoping response. It drew reference to guideline documents, and stated:</p> <p><i>"Please see attached a copy of Fáilte Ireland's Updated (2023) Guidelines for the Treatment of Tourism in an EIA, which you may find informative for the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed project.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of this report is to provide guidance for those conducting Environmental Impact Assessment and compiling an Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR), or those assessing EIARs, where the project involves tourism or may have an impact upon tourism. These guidelines are non-statutory and act as supplementary advice to the EPA EIAR Guidelines outlined in section 2."</i></p>	Consideration of this updated guidance document has been captured throughout this Environmental Impact Assessment Report, with specific reference made within Chapter 6: Population and Human Health.
	Forestry Service	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Gas Networks Ireland	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Geographical Society of Ireland	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Geological Survey of Ireland	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Health and Safety Authority	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Health and Safety Executive	N/A	No response received	N/A



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
	Heritage Council	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI)	09/01/2025	<p>A comprehensive response was received from Inland Fisheries Ireland which outlined the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous site visits undertaken by the IFI to the section of the Cushina within the development site has highlighted significant over-deepening which has resulted in the removal of all/most gravels from this section of channel and over-widening of the Cushina river which has resulted in a highly degraded hydromorphology.</li> <li>• Human intervention will be necessary to facilitate the recovery of the fisheries habitat here, and it was a request of the IFI that the proposed development include habitat restoration of the section of the Cushina River flowing through the site.</li> <li>• Any crossing points of the Cushina River should be clear span structure and the design and construction method statement for same be agreed with the IFI.</li> <li>• Previous visits by the IFI have identified excellent riparian/terrestrial habitat along sections of the Cushina River. It is requested that in choosing a location for the new river crossing that a location which will limit the necessity to remove any such habitat be chosen.</li> <li>• The IFI's knowledge of the site is that the subsoils throughout are composed of heavy/fine clay which is prone to erosion and likely to result in the generation of significant suspended solids.</li> </ul>	<p>This response has been considered throughout this Environmental Impact Assessment Report.</p> <p>In particular: Chapter 9 – Biodiversity; Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan (BEMP); Chapter 11 – Soils, Geology, and Hydrogeology; Chapter 12 – Flooding, Hydrology, and Water Quality; Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP); and Chapter 14 – Traffic and Transport.</p>



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The construction of significant roadways and excavations for turbines and associated hardstands through these fine clays have potential to generate significant quantities of suspended solids, with the Cushina or Figile River being the ultimate receptor for this material if adequate steps are not put in place to address this.</li> <li>• A potential impact of projects such as that proposed is the discharge of silt-laden waters to fisheries streams. Silt can clog salmonid spawning beds, and juvenile salmonids are particularly sensitive to siltation of gill structures. Similarly plant and macro-invertebrate communities can literally be blanketed over, and this can lead to loss or degradation of valuable habitat.</li> <li>• The IFI requested that systems be put in place to ensure that there shall be no discharge of suspended solids or other deleterious matter to watercourses during any phase of works at this site.</li> <li>• The design and sizing of the surface water drainage system must ensure that no suspended solids enter the surface water network flowing to the Cushina/Figile, even during periods of prolonged heavy rainfall.</li> <li>• IFI request that the focus of any works methodology be measures which eliminate/reduce the generation of suspended solids.</li> <li>• All surface waters from the site and access roads should be channelled through adequately sized petrol/oil interceptors prior and be subject to attenuation prior to discharge to surface waters.</li> <li>• If silt settlement ponds are proposed for this facility. It is important that they are oversized to cope with all eventualities.</li> </ul>	



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The activities proposed for this site are likely to result in significant lorry traffic to and from the site, with potential for the generation of significant suspended solids pollution in the associated road run-off.                      It is imperative that the potential for suspended solids pollution from road run-off associated with vehicles entering and leaving this site is fully addressed.</li> </ul>	
	Irish Farmers Association	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Irish Peatland Conservation Council	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Irish Rail	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Irish Raptor Study Group	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Irish Wildlife Trust	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Magnet Networks	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Met Eireann	N/A	No response received	N/A
	National Monuments Service	N/A	No response received	N/A
	National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Office of Public Works	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland	N/A	No response received	N/A



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
Aviation	Teagasc	N/A	No response received	N/A
	The Irish Tourist Industry Confederation	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Transport Infrastructure Ireland	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Uisce Eireann	N/A	No response received	N/A
Aviation	Benfield Airfield	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Clonbullogue Aerodrom	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Irish Air Corps	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Irish Aviation Authority	13/12/2024	<p>The response received from the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) stated:</p> <p><i>"The proposed wind farm is proximate to the licenced Aerodrome – Clonbullogue, Co. Offaly.</i></p> <p><i>Please engage directly with the aerodrome licensee, Irish Parachute Club to make them aware of the Derrynadarragh Wind Farm proposal.</i></p> <p><i>Based on the licensee's observations, it may be necessary to undertake an aeronautical safety assessment to consider the potential impact of the wind farm on the safety of aircraft operations at Clonbullogue Airfield.</i></p>	<p>This response is addressed in Chapter 17 – Material Assets, Telecommunications and Aviation.</p>



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
			<p><i>In any case, it is likely that the following general observations would be proffered by the Authority during a formal planning process: In the event of planning consent being granted, the applicant should be conditioned to contact the Irish Aviation Authority to:</i></p> <p class="list-item-l1">(1) <i>agree an aeronautical obstacle warning light scheme for the wind farm development;</i></p> <p class="list-item-l1">(2) <i>provide as-constructed coordinates in WGS84 format together with ground and blade tip height elevations at each wind turbine location; and</i></p> <p class="list-item-l1">(3) <i>notify the Authority of intention to commence crane operations with at least 30 days prior notification of their erection.”</i></p>	
	Limetree Airfield	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Weston Airport	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Benfield Airfield	N/A	No response received	N/A
Telecommunications	2RN	N/A	No response received	N/A
	AirNav Ireland	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Airwave	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Arra Communications	N/A	No response received	N/A
	BT Ireland	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Broadcasting Authority of Ireland	N/A	No response received	N/A



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
	Eir	N/A	No response received	N/A
	EMR Integrated Solutions	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Enet	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Imagine Broadband	12/12/2024	<p>The response received from Imagine Group stated the following:</p> <p><i>"In August 2023 we received a request from Bord na Móna for information relating to telecommunication links in five Development areas as per attached .kml file.</i></p> <p><i>We provided the following information for the area below, now known as Derrynadarragh Wind Farm. We have three microwave links at Cellnex Gracefield GAA, located within this area.</i></p> <p><i>Please confirm that you will consider our microwave links in relation to any proposed wind turbine locations, Fresnel zone clearances &amp; set-back safety buffers."</i></p>	This response is addressed in Chapter 17 – Material Assets, Telecomms and Aviation.
	IMS Connect	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Lightnet Broadband	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Premier Broadband	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Telecommunications Section, An Garda Síochána	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Tetra Ireland (TI)	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Three Ireland	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Towercom	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Viatel Ireland Ltd	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Virgin Media Ireland Ltd	N/A	No response received	N/A



	Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
Others to inform	Vodafone Ireland Ltd	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Wireless Connect Ltd	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Commission for Communications Regulation	N/A	No response received	N/A
	Commission for Regulation of Utilities	N/A	No response received	N/A



### 5.2.3 Key Issues Raised During the Scoping Process

The scoping process proved beneficial to the identification of issues and potential issues in relation to the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm project. Responses received from consultees identified a range of observations which have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the respective chapters of this EIAR.

Issues raised during the scoping process are summarised as follows, and the scoping responses received are included in full in Appendix 5.1 of Volume 3 of this EIAR:

#### 5.2.3.1 *Offaly County Council*

The following response was received from Offaly County Council on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025, which noted:

*Given that the proposal development will be subject of a SID application OCC cannot issue a formal scoping EIA, as this is the responsibility of An Bord Pleanála.*

*Please note that any comments made by Offaly County Council are non-binding in the formal planning process.*

*However, please have regard to the following internal comments from sections of Offaly County Council.*

##### **Roads Section:**

###### *General Requirements*

- *A Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to OCC. Contents to include implementation of planning conditions and EIS requirements.*
- *Traffic and Transport Assessment to be carried out in accordance with TII publication, Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines PE-PDV-02045, May 2014.*
- *OCC to be advised of details of PSDP, PSCS and contractors.*
- *A road opening licence will be required from OCC*
- *Insurances*
- *Performance bond*
- *A dedicated liaison engineer to be appointed by OCC and all associated costs covered by the Developer.*
- *Long term damage fee or works in lieu.*
- *Developer to consult with An Garda Siochana, emergency services and bus operators in relation to each stage of the works*
- *Liaison with the public, residents, businesses and schools.*
- *Allow for briefing of Elected Members in affected Municipal Districts*

##### **Haulage and Material Delivery Routes**

- *Detailed programme of deliveries to be submitted to OCC in advance of commencement of deliveries. Details to include dates and times, number of loads, weights, road closure and diversion routes, support vehicles, etc.*
- *Identification of landowners at all nodes and entry/exit points requiring temporary or permanent works. If OCC consider that the land used for any temporary or permanent works would be beneficial for the improvement of the existing road, then the developer shall carry out a design for the improvement and implement same.*



- *Pre-condition survey of delivery routes, consisting of a video survey and photographs, and a detailed survey of all node locations to be carried out and a copy submitted to OCC. Survey at nodes to include drainage, landscaping, surfacing, boundary fences/hedges/gates, signage.*
- *Where OCC consider a proposed delivery route is not in a suitable condition, the developer shall upgrade the road or junction in advance of delivery operations.*
- *Any damage caused to the road shall be repaired to its previous condition, to the satisfaction of OCC.*
- *Developer to consult with all service providers (including Uisce Eireann) in relation to turbine delivery routes. OCC to be advised of any alterations required.*
- *Developer to consult with An Garda Siochana and emergency services in relation to the turbine deliveries.*
- *Design and construction details for temporary modifications at node points to be submitted, for approval by OCC. Details to include arrangements for both delivery phases and road open phases. Road safety audits in accordance with TII Road Safety Audit Guidelines, GE-STY-01027, December 2017 to be carried out, if appropriate. OCC may request All EIS requirements to be achieved.*
- *Abnormal load permits will be required.*
- *Any alterations affecting the width of the existing road shall be reinstated to the original width, unless otherwise agreed with OCC. Where roads are widened, the specification shall be that of the existing road at a minimum.*
- *An emergency plan shall be submitted.*
- *Liaison with local groups such as Tidy Towns, etc.*
- *Liaison with the TII for transportation on the motorway.*
- *All areas affected by the works shall be fully reinstated to their original condition. Where landscaping has been removed, similar plants of similar maturity shall be used for reinstatement. Where it is not possible to replace mature trees, younger trees plus additional landscaping shall be provided in lieu to enhance the area. Where hedging is removed and new hedging planted as reinstatement, suitable fencing shall be provided for the protection of the hedge, and maintenance shall be provided until the hedge is established. Where grass is replaced with new seeding, the grass shall be maintained until it is established. Full reinstatement shall be completed within one month of the final delivery.*
- *Traffic management plan to be submitted for haulage of materials, including at entry/exit points.*
- *Pre-condition survey of delivery routes, consisting of a video survey and photographs, a Road Condition Survey, and an FWD Survey where required, to be carried out and a copy submitted to OCC.*
- *Where OCC consider a proposed haul route is not in a suitable condition, the developer shall upgrade the road or junction in advance of haulage operations.*
- *Any defects that appear during the haulage period shall be rectified by the developer.*
- *Any damage caused to the road shall be repaired to its previous condition, to the satisfaction of OCC.*
- *Public roads shall be kept free of mud, dust, spillages and debris. Any necessary measures shall be put in place at site entry/exit points.*
- *Details of cable installation to be submitted to OCC in advance of commencement of works. Details to include works programme, construction details, cross-sections for each road showing location of trench in road and existing road width, existing services.*
- *Where road closures are required, an application must be submitted to OCC at least 8 weeks in advance.*
- *Where road works speed limits are required, an application shall be submitted to OCC at least 8 weeks in advance. Signs to be erected by the developer.*
- *Pre-condition structural surveys on adjacent properties shall be carried out where necessary.*
- *All works shall be in accordance with the TII Specification for Road Works unless otherwise specified.*



- *Reinstatement of the trench in local and regional roads shall be in accordance with the latest version of "Guidelines for the Opening, Backfilling and Reinstatement of Trenches in Public Roads" (The Purple Book), except where noted otherwise.*
- *Reinstatement of the trench in national roads shall be in accordance with the latest version of "Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in National Roads", except where noted otherwise.*
- *After temporary reinstatement of the trench: - A full width overlay shall be provided on all local roads.*
  - *A half road permanent reinstatement shall be provided on regional roads > 6.0 metres wide.*
  - *National road – to be agreed with TII and OCC*
- *All permanent restoration shall be agreed with OCC.*
- *Ironworks shall be raised & reset as necessary and road markings and road studs reinstated.*
- *All existing watercourse crossings/bridges shall be identified and detailed designs submitted to indicate how these will be crossed.*
- *The developer shall allow in his programme for accommodation of local events, such as charity walks and cycles.*
- *A defects liability period of 2 years shall apply. This shall commence when written notification has been given that the permanent reinstatement/overlay has been completed.*



## Municipal District of Edenderry

On examination of the scoping report submitted by Dara Energy Limited in relation to a proposed wind energy development at Derrynadarragh Wind Farm, the Municipal District of Edenderry would comment as follows.

- The proposed turbine delivery route shall be subject to a swept path analysis assessment to determine the capability of the route proposed. Pinch points, including junctions and entrances to the development and alterations required to achieve a clear delivery route shall be identified with proposals of required alterations etc included.
- Determination of the road network capacity shall be carried out by the applicant. As the road network through the Municipal District of Edenderry is founded on Peat subsoils, this characteristic must be given due diligence when determining the impact of development traffic and delivery routes for the project. A schedule of materials required to construct the development shall be developed and delivery quantities and frequency of deliveries shall be used when calculating the impact this development will have on the road network. Significant infrastructural upgrades will inevitably need to be carried out to accommodate the development and such should be included as part of proposals. A detailed Transport Management Plan including details of the road network/ haulage routes and the vehicle types to be used to transport materials on and off site and a schedule of control measures for exceptionally wide and heavy deliveries shall be included in the submission.
- All ancillary road infrastructure such as bridges, tunnels, culverts along the proposed Construction Haulage route and Turbine delivery route will require detailed structural assessments to establish their capabilities to facilitate the Construction related traffic of such a development. If Infrastructural improvements are deemed as required in order to facilitate construction, these plans shall be included as part of the submission.
- A Traffic Impact Assessment shall be included as part of the submission and relevant Health and Safety mitigation measures as required shall be submitted. This shall include risk assessments and mitigation measures required to be implemented by the applicant/ developer during the construction of such a development. Particular consideration shall be given to other road users, pedestrians and the local population around the locus of the development area.
- Cable Route – Refer to Laois Co Co and Kildare Co Co. It is noted that the cable route construction will be located in Counties Laois and Kildare only. Offaly County Council therefore have no comment to make on the cable route.
- Scoping Report should be referred to Kildare & Laois County Council also for comment.

## Relevant section of the Offaly County Development Plan

The Applicant's attention is directed to the Offaly County Council Development Plan 2021-2027 Wind Strategy and Volume One-Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 13 DMS-109 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027. Please note that other sections, policies and objectives of the plan shall also be relevant to the proposal.

OCC would also request that a separate document be included which briefly summarises all significant potential impacts of the development, mitigation measures proposed for each significant impact and residual impacts if the mitigation measures are implemented.



## Applicant Response

The detailed consultation feedback received from the Council was taken on board and used to inform the design of the Proposed Development. The above-mentioned key issues and any items raised in these scoping responses are addressed throughout this EIAR, with each relevant chapter providing extensive detail on these matters.

Furthermore, detailed surveying effort (which is detailed and informs discussion throughout this EIAR) has taken place as part of this Project which was subsequently used to inform proposed mitigation measures. The Turbine Delivery Route Assessment, prepared by Pell Frischmann (please refer to EIAR Appendix 2.3) and surveys undertaken, has informed the location of works required to facilitate turbine delivery to the Site. Confirmatory surveys will be prepared prior to delivery of turbines to site.

### *5.2.3.2 Department of Defence*

The scoping response received from the Department of Defence states that:

*Having consulted with the Military authorities, the Department of Defence wishes to make the following observations:*

- *The Minister for Defence is responsible for the regulation of military aviation, whereas the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) is responsible for the safety regulation of civil aviation including aerodromes. The IAA does not have remit for military aviation or installations. Safeguarding of military flight operations and installations is intended to protect both current and future aircraft operations and also to take account of the security requirements associated with some of those operations.*
- *All turbines should be illuminated by Type C, Medium intensity, Fixed Red obstacle lighting with a minimum output of 2,000 candela to be visible in all directions of azimuth and to be operational H24/7 days a week.*
- *Obstacle lighting should be incandescent or, if LED or other types are used, of a type visible to Night Vision equipment. Obstacle lighting used must emit light at the near Infra-Red (IR) range of the electromagnetic spectrum, specifically at or near 850 nanometers (nm) of wavelength. Light intensity to be of similar value to that emitted in the visible spectrum of light*
- *Any Irish Air Corps (IAC) requirements for are separate to Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) requirements.*

## Applicant Response

Chapter 17 – Material Assets, Telecommunications and Aviation has been compiled in light of the comments received from the Minister of Defence.



### 5.2.3.3 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

The DAU noted the following within their scoping response:

*The applicant is required to engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist to carry out an Archaeological Impact Assessment of the development site. This archaeological assessment should:*

- a. examine the known and predicted archaeological environment*
- b. examine the proposed development*
- c. evaluate the proposed development in terms of the impact (direct and indirect) of the proposed works on existing or predicted archaeology*
- d. propose a strategy to mitigate any adverse effects of the development on the archaeological heritage.*

*No subsurface work should be undertaken in the absence of the archaeologist without his/her express consent.*

*The archaeologist should carry out any relevant documentary research and inspect the site. Field survey, topographical survey or geophysical survey should be undertaken as the initial phase of assessment, as appropriate. Based on the results of the initial investigations test excavation may be appropriate. Following further consultation with the Department test trenches may also be excavated at locations chosen by the archaeologist (informed by the results of the previous methods of non-intrusive assessment) to target the results of the topographical and/or geophysical analysis.*

*A Visual Impact Assessment of the impact of the proposed development on adjacent archaeological material shall be carried out. Views to and from adjacent archaeological monuments shall be assessed in light of the proposed development and views of the monuments from all adjacent roads and approach roads assessed in relation to the proposed works.*

*Having completed the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report compiling the above information to the Department for consideration.*

*No site preparation or construction work shall be carried out until after the archaeologist's report has been submitted and permission to proceed has been received in writing from the Planning Authority in consultation with the Department.*

*It should be borne in mind that, if significant archaeological remains are found, refusal might still be recommended, and/or further preservation in situ or by record may be required.*

#### Applicant Response

*These comments have been addressed throughout this EIAR. In particular:*

- Chapter 15 – Archaeology, Architectural and Cultural Heritage includes the requested documentation as part of the documentation submitted as part of this Application for planning permission. In addition, any features identified during this assessment were given due consideration in the design of the proposed development.
- Chapter 16 – Landscape and Visual Impact provides an overview of the LVIA undertaken by Macroworks, which looks at views to the site from a number of viewpoints, and covers views from protected scenic views as highlighted within the Offaly CDP.



#### 5.2.3.4 Failte Ireland

In their scoping response

*Please see attached a copy of Fáilte Ireland's Updated (2023) Guidelines for the Treatment of Tourism in an EIA, which you may find informative for the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed project. The purpose of this report is to provide guidance for those conducting Environmental Impact Assessment and compiling an Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR), or those assessing EIARs, where the project involves tourism or may have an impact upon tourism. These guidelines are non-statutory and act as supplementary advice to the EPA EIAR Guidelines outlined in section 2.*

#### Applicant Response

These comments have been addressed through the following EIAR chapter:

- Chapter 6 – Population and Human Health, includes the most up to date Guidelines document considered as part of the assessment.

#### 5.2.3.5 Inland Fisheries Ireland

In their scoping response IFI stated the following:

*IFI is charged with the protection, conservation and promotion of fisheries within our functional area. Board policy is aimed at maintaining a sustainable fisheries resource through preserving the productive capacity of fish habitat by avoiding habitat loss and mitigating harmful alteration to habitat.*

*This site is in the upper Barrow catchment with two associated watercourses, one a small tributary of the Figile and Barrow Rivers the second the Cushina River an important salmon spawning tributary of the Barrow system.*

*Previous site visits by IFI to the section of Cushina within the development site highlighted modifications to this section of the Cushina river. The modifications noted included:*

- Deepening
- Widening

*Significant over-deepening of the Cushina River has resulted in the removal of all/most gravels from this section of channel as the river here was excavated down to subsoils beneath the river. In addition, the underlying subsoils here are composed of heavy clay with little/no associated gravel in the bed/bank for gravel recruitment and natural habitat restoration. The over-deepening here has increased the cross-sectional area of the river here resulting a significant reduction in flow velocities and because of this the substrate of the bed of the Cushina through this section of channel is dominated by deep silt deposition. Similar hydro-morphological damage to the Cushina River upstream means that there is no gravel transport from upstream to replace those removed previously.*

*Significant over-widening of the Cushina has resulted in a highly degraded hydro-morphology with the loss of natural sinuosity and natural instream variation characterized by the pool/glide/riffle sequence. The over-widening of the Cushina has also increased the cross-sectional area of the river here significantly with a reduction in flow velocities resulting in a channel characterized by deposition of silt and an over-abundance of aquatic plants clogging the channel.*



*Human intervention will be necessary to facilitate recovery of the fisheries habitat here and Inland Fisheries Ireland request that this proposed development include habitat restoration of the section of Cushina River flowing through the proposed development site.*

*It is important to stress that habitat restoration of the Cushina River is likely to improve the flood conveyance capacity of the Cushina at this location as increased flow velocities will reduce the growth of instream floating/emergent vegetation which is the main issue contributing to flooding on over-deepened/over-widened channels in the upper Barrow catchment.*

*IFI note that this development will include the construction of a new river crossing of the Cushina. Any new crossing of the Cushina River should be a clear span structure and the design and construction method statement for its construction must be agreed with IFI.*

*Previous visits to this section of the Cushina river have highlighted excellent riparian/terrestrial habitat along long sections of the Cushina River. IFI request that in choosing a location for the new river crossing here that a location which will limit the necessity to remove any such habitat be chosen.*

*IFI note that the proposed development area includes a small tributary of the Figile River which flows parallel and to the north of the Cushina River. The maps provided would suggest that an access road from the development site to the Bracknagh-Portarlington road is proposed and will require a new crossing of this watercourse. IFI request clarification if an access road is proposed here and if so, would highlight that the design and construction method statement for its construction must be agreed with IFI.*

*Other concerns of IFI include*

- *As referred to above, our knowledge of the site is that the subsoils throughout are composed of heavy/fine clay which is prone to erosion and likely to result in the generation of significant suspended solids. The construction of significant roadways and excavations for turbines and associated hardstands through these fine clays have potential to generate significant quantities of suspended solids, with the Cushina or Figile River being the ultimate receptor for this material if adequate steps are not put in place to address this.*
- *One of the potential impacts of projects such as this is the discharge of silt-laden waters to fisheries streams. Silt can clog salmonid spawning beds, and juvenile salmonids are particularly sensitive to siltation of gill structures. Similarly plant and macro-invertebrate communities can literally be blanketed over, and this can lead to loss or degradation of valuable habitat.*
- *Systems should be put in place to ensure that there shall be no discharge of suspended solids or other deleterious matter to watercourses during any phase of works at this site.*
- *The design and sizing of the surface water drainage system must ensure that no suspended solids enter the surface water network flowing to the Cushina/Figile, even during periods of prolonged heavy rainfall.*
- *IFI request that the focus of any works methodology be measures which eliminate/reduce the generation of suspended solids.*
- *All surface waters from the site and access roads should be channelled through adequately sized petrol/oil interceptors prior and be subject to attenuation prior to discharge to surface waters.*
- *If silt settlement ponds are proposed for this facility. It is important that they are oversized to cope with all eventualities.*
- *The activities proposed for this site are likely to result in significant lorry traffic to and from the site, with potential for the generation of significant suspended solids pollution in the associated road run-off. It is imperative that the potential for suspended solids pollution from road run-off associated with vehicles entering and leaving this site is fully addressed.*



## Applicant Response

These comments have been addressed throughout this EIAR. In particular:

- Chapter 9 – Biodiversity, where the proposed mitigation measures are set out in detail and the BEMP (Appendix 2.2, Volume III of this EIAR) include measures to ensure betterment along this section of the Cushina River;
- Chapter 12 – Flooding, Hydrology and Water Quality and the Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) (Appendix 12.2, Volume III of this EIAR) details the drainage design to ensure no effects downstream.
- CEMP – details the proposed construction mitigation measures and precautions to protect the water quality, and local habitats.

### *5.2.3.6 Irish Aviation Authority*

In their scoping response IAA stated the following:

*The proposed wind farm is proximate to the licenced Aerodrome – Clonbullogue, Co. Offaly.*

*Please engage directly with the aerodrome licensee, Irish Parachute Club to make them aware of the Derrynadarragh Wind Farm proposal.*

*Based on the licensee's observations, it may be necessary to undertake an aeronautical safety assessment to consider the potential impact of the wind farm on the safety of aircraft operations at Clonbullogue Airfield.*

*In any case, it is likely that the following general observations would be proffered by the Authority during a formal planning process: In the event of planning consent being granted, the applicant should be conditioned to contact the Irish Aviation Authority to:*

*agree an aeronautical obstacle warning light scheme for the wind farm development;*

*(2) provide as-constructed coordinates in WGS84 format together with ground and blade tip height elevations at each wind turbine location; and*

*(3) notify the Authority of intention to commence crane operations with at least 30 days prior notification of their erection.*

## Applicant Response

These comments have been addressed through the following chapter of the EIAR:

- Chapter 17 – Material Assets, Telecommunications and Aviation covers comments received from Imagine Broadband.



### 5.2.3.7 Imagine Ireland

Within the Imagine Ireland response they set out the following:

*In August 2023 we received a request from Bord na Móna for information relating to telecommunication links in five Development areas as per attached .kml file.*

*We provided the following information for the area below, now known as Derrynadarragh Wind Farm:*

#### Walsh Island Area

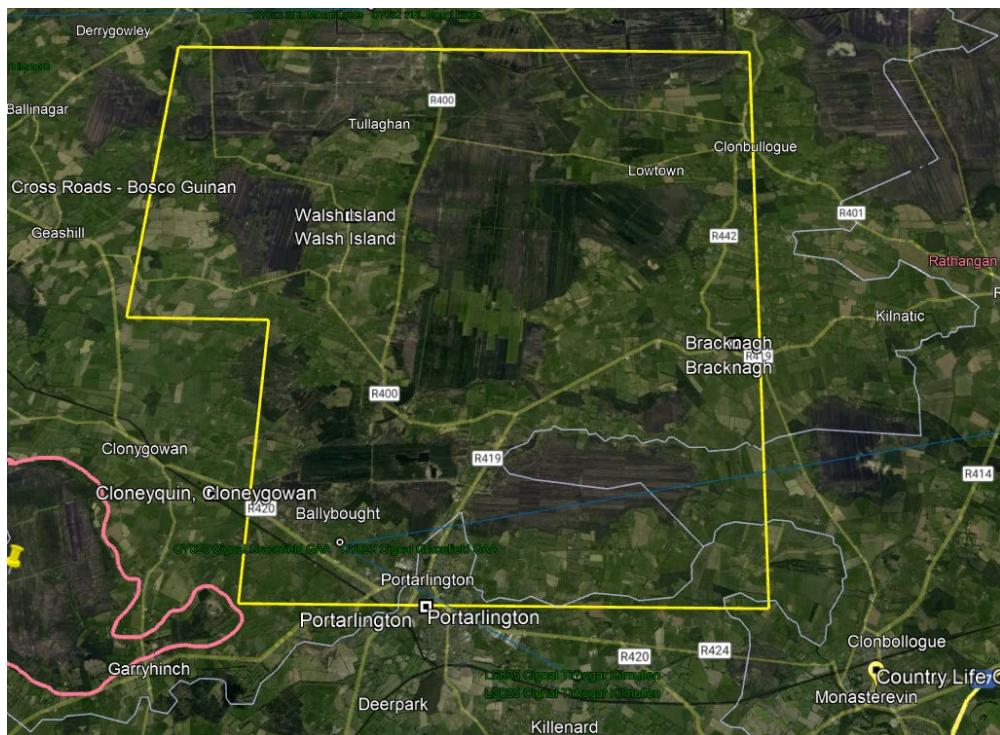


Plate 5-1: Telecommunication Links Study Area outlined in yellow

We have three microwave links at Cellnex Gracefield GAA, located within this area.



**Two over the same path to Dunmurry Hill:**

**Table 5-3: Microwave Links to Dunmurry Hill**

	KE013 Towercom Dunmurray Hill	OY020 Cellnex Gracefield GAA
<b>Latitude</b>	53.1986 N	53.168281 N
<b>Longitude</b>	6.9336 W	7.216377 W
<b>ITM Eastings</b>	671252	652395
<b>Northings</b>	716993	713375
<b>Elevation (m)</b>	159.13	86.96
<b>Antenna Height 1(m)</b>	14.20	23.4
<b>Antenna Height 2(m)</b>	14.20	23.4
<b>Frequency 1 (MHz)</b>	6670.00	
<b>Frequency 2 (MHz)</b>	6830.00	
<b>Path length (km)</b>	19.21	

**One to Kilmullen:**

**Table 5-4: Microwave Links to Kilmullen**

	LS025 Cellnex Tirhogar Kilmullen	OY020 Cellnex Gracefield GAA
<b>Latitude</b>	53.144005 N	53.168281 N
<b>Longitude</b>	7.143859 W	7.216377 W
<b>ITM Eastings</b>	657276	652395
<b>Northings</b>	710730	713375
<b>Elevation (m)</b>	83.40	86.96
<b>Antenna height (m)</b>	20.00	20.00
<b>Frequency (MHz)</b>	22806.00	
<b>Path length (km)</b>	5.57	

Please confirm that you will consider our microwave links in relation to any proposed wind turbine locations, Fresnel zone clearances & set-back safety buffers.



## Applicant Response

These comments have been addressed through the following chapter of the EIAR:

- Chapter 17 – Material Assets, Telecommunications and Aviation covers comments received from Imagine Broadband.

## 5.3 Pre-Application Consultation with Key Stakeholders

### 5.3.1 Local Authority Pre-Application Consultations

At an early stage in the design process, pre-application consultations were held with each of the 2 Local Authorities which have jurisdiction over the lands involved in this Application. The key points from each of these meetings are outlined in turn below.

#### 5.3.1.1 *Pre-Planning Meeting with Kildare County Council – KCC Ref. PP5696*

A pre-planning meeting took place with Kildare County Council on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Present at the meeting were Kildare County Council Officers, Dara Energy Ltd. (applicant), and Fehily Timoney and Company.

The key points taken from that meeting are outlined in bullet points below:

- A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment should be conducted as part of the Application and must take into consideration viewpoints from all nearby hills and scenic routes;
- Kildare County Council gave instruction for Community Consultation is to happen as early as possible with as much information as possible given to public. Opportunities have to be created to cater for as much face to face meetings as possible to garner as much community engagement as possible.
- The impacts on flightpaths need to be considered as part of this Application. This is to be captured through the scoping exercise which should include consultation with the IAA and Dept of Defence.
- A pavement condition survey needed for adjoining roads
- Autotrack Swept Path Analysis is needed for the Application
- Falling deflectometer Test is needed for the Application
- The addition of Heritage elements was requested – the Walkway, Signage on local amenities and biodiversity of Mount Lucas was highlighted as an example.
- EIAR Policy was discussed at length – it was decided to keep both jurisdictions policy in the policy section but submit a copy of a singular EIAR to each Local Authority.
- An alternative Grid Route Connection should be assessed and submitted as part of EIAR
- It was identified that Kildare County Council should establish a point of contact for Offaly County Council.



## Applicant Response

These comments have been addressed throughout this EIAR. In particular:

- Chapter 3 – Site Selection and Alternatives and Chapter outlines and discusses all alternative site layouts, turbine delivery routes and grid connection routes;
- Chapter 4 – Planning Policy Context addresses all relevant policies and guidelines contained in the Offaly County Development Plan and the accompanying appendices including the Council’s Wind Energy Strategy;
- Chapter 14 – Traffic and Transportation address comments pertaining to transportation routes, road condition, autotrack swept path analysis, and loads;
- Chapter 15 – Archaeology and Cultural Heritage discusses all matters relating to heritage and implementation of measures relating to same; and
- Chapter 16 – Landscape and Visual Impact addresses concerns relating to any visual impact of the wind farm on the surrounding environs/landscape, both individually and cumulatively.

### *5.3.1.2 Pre-Planning Meeting with Offaly County Council*

A pre-planning meeting took place with Offaly County Council on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Present at the meeting were Offaly County Council officers, Dara Energy Ltd. (applicant), and Fehily Timoney and Company.

The main considerations which were derived from that meeting are outlined in bullet points below:

- The traffic and road condition for site deliveries (especially aggregate delivery to the site) was highlighted as a major concern. TDR and Aggregate route must be considered under these pretences too. Full haul route assessment. Must ensure that the proposed red line (Site Application Boundary) covers any proposed works along TDR and Haul Routes.
- Cumulative visual impact south/eastern Offaly – due to the existing number of wind farms and permitted windfarms. Open landscape.
- Proposed wind farm on areas of land that has a medium landscape sensitivity, and is that of pristine bog. Location within bogland and with a medium sensitivity would be a concern for Offaly.
- Adhere to policies and development management standards outlined in the Offaly County Development Plan.

## Applicant Response

These comments have been addressed throughout this EIAR. In particular,

- Chapter 3 – Site Selection and Alternatives;
- Chapter 4 – Planning Policy Context addresses all relevant policies and guidelines contained in the Offaly County Development Plan and accompanying appendices;
- Chapter 14 – Traffic and Transportation address comments pertaining to transportation routes, road condition and loads; and
- Chapter 16 – Landscape and Visual Impact addressed concerns relating to any impact of the wind farm on the surrounding environs, both individually and cumulatively;



### **5.3.2 SID Pre-Application Process with An Coimisiun Pleanála**

Following the incorporation of pre-application commentary into the proposal, a detailed design was formulated and brought forward to engage in the SID Pre-Application process with An Coimisiun Pleanála (formerly ABP) in accordance with Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This process is outlined below.

It was during this time period that the formal scoping request letter was prepared and also issued to the three abovementioned Local Authorities along with all required prescribed bodies and technical consultees (which are detailed in full at Appendix 5.1, EIAR Volume III), as set out in the previous section of this report.

#### ***5.3.2.1 Pre-planning consultation with An Coimisiun Pleanála***

Two pre-application meetings were held with An Coimisiun Pleanála under Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. These meetings were conducted on the following dates:

- First Meeting: 11th September 2024
- Second Meeting: 12th December 2024

Copies of the meeting minutes are included in Appendix 5.3.

Ahead of the formal submission of the SID Application to An Coimisiun Pleanála, the SID Pre-Application process was formally closed out on 8<sup>th</sup> September (SID Pre-application case ref. ABP- 320137-24). A Copy of ACP Closing Letter is included at Appendix 1.1.

#### **Applicant Response**

In line with the discussions and feedback received from ACP since September 2024, the elements of the proposal are clearly evidenced through the EIAR. In particular, Chapter 2 – Description of Development has sought to provide a detailed description of what the proposal will entail, and clearly depicting the mitigation and enhancement measures to be put in place as part of this proposal. The rationale and benefits for including the electrical infrastructure elements within this planning application are clear and transparent for all readers of this EIAR.

### **5.3.3 Pre-Application Consultation with Local Council Roads Departments**

During the detailed design stage, it was identified that the Grid Connection Route would exit the site to the south and travel to Bracklone Substations via lands within the administrative boundary of Laois County Council. In addition, it was understood that consultation directly with the Roads Department for the new proposed main site access from the R419, and the TDR elements would be required.

As such, meetings were arranged with the Roads Department for each of the 3 no. Council Areas – Laois, Offaly and Kildare. The key points and details of these engagements are outlined below.

#### ***5.3.3.1 Meeting with Laois County Council Roads Department***

A pre-planning meeting took place with the Laois County Council Roads Department on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025 between members of the Laois County Council Roads Department, Dara Energy Ltd., and Fehily Timoney and Company.



The key points from that meeting included:

- Works are expected to be carried out on the section of road between Baylough Bridge and the L-71764 the full extents of which are not yet known. These works will be carried out by the MD office and a points of contact in the Portarlington area was provided in relation to information about proposed works at this location.
- The Roads Department of Laois County Council outlined that it is preferable for joint bays and jointing pits to be located outside of the public road network. However, where this is not possible full width reinstatement will be required along any local roads, and full lane reinstatement along regional roads once the works have been confined to one lane.

#### Applicant Response

The Grid Route Design has taken all board the Councils preferred reinstatement requirements depending on road class. Chapter 3 – Site Selection and Alternatives, and Chapter 14 – Traffic and Transport, have been compiled in light of the above commentary and have detailed discussion pertaining to same.

#### *5.3.3.2 Meeting with Offaly County Council Roads Department*

A pre-planning meeting took place with the Offaly County Council Roads Department on the 19th of June 2025 between members of the Offaly County Council Roads Department, Dara Energy Ltd., and Fehily Timoney and Company.

The purpose of the consultation meetings was to discuss their comments received as part of the EIAR Scoping Process, and present the proposed delivery and haul routes, the turbine delivery route, the grid connection route, road upgrades, and construction entrances to the Area Engineer for comment and feedback. Any recommendations received by the roads department would then be implemented to the design and application in advance of the submission to the local authority.

The key points from that meeting included:

- Comments were received seeking consideration of the entrance enabling/mobilisation option to avoid the prolonged closure period of the R419.
- Our revised approach to avoid the prolonged road closure of the R419, was the inclusion of a temporary lay down area (40m x 60m) during the construction of the site access and first stretch of internal access track. The clearance of trees, construction of the bell mouth, including the graveled lay down area could be complete within a matter of 1-2 weeks which would significantly reduce the required R419 road closure to 1-2 weeks.
- On 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025 an email was received from the Offaly County Council Roads Team confirming that the revised the entrance enabling/mobilisation option to avoid the prolonged closure period of the R419 approach would (subject to comments/ conditions applied at planning stage) would be favourable to Offaly County Council,

#### Applicant Response

The Temporary Lay Down Area for construction of site access is clearly depicted on the planning drawings 0100 series. Details on traffic management and mitigation measures have all been set out within the Traffic Management Plan in the planning application.



### 5.3.3.3 Meeting with Kildare County Council Roads Department

Several attempts were made to contact Kildare County Council Pre-Planning team in order to arrange a date for a meeting to discuss the road, TDR and GCR elements, however no response was received. Due to the location of the main site access falling within Offaly County Council area, and the Grid Connection Route covering Laois County Council, it was considered that this meeting was less critical to the development of these elements of the scheme. It is important to flag that Kildare County Council did not provide any comment through the EIAR Scoping Process. However, the comments received during the initial pre-application meeting which took place in September 2023 (as detailed within Section 5.3.1.1 above) highlighted the need for swept path analysis and consideration of an alternative Grid Connection Route which have been undertaken and assessed through the relevant Chapter 3 – Site Selection and Alternatives, and Appendices 2.3 and 2.4.

### 5.3.4 NPWS Consultation

Please see below summary of the dates email requests were issued by Wetland Surveys Ireland (WSI) to the NPWS:

- 14th March 2025 - In light of a known Curlew breeding site nearby, WSI emailed Divisional Ecologist requesting a meeting.
- 14th March 2025 - Divisional Ecologist responded the same day informing WSI that they would have to go through the formal channels and request via DAU.
- 18th March 2025 - WSI emailed DAU to request meeting to discuss proposed wind farm development and Curlew in the area.
- 18th March 2025 - Auto-response on the same day requesting site location map and informing us that it would be up to 6 weeks for a response to be issued.
- 18th March 2025 - WSI sent site location map and a provisional site layout plan and scoping report.
- 14th April 2025 - WSI emailed DAU to check if there was any update on the request for a meeting. No response to date.
- 6th March 2025 - WSI emailed official data request seeking Curlew information from NPWS on how close the known breeding area is to the proposed development. Included map of proposed red-line boundary and provisional turbine layout. There was no response received to this email from NPWS.
- 20th March 2025 - WSI emailed to query if there was any update on the data request.
- 21st March 2025 – Response from NPWS received to say they cannot give an estimate as to when we can expect a response. Apologised for any inconvenience.
- 25th April 2025 - WSI emailed again to query if any update on data request.
- 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025 – Meeting was held with NPWS and WSI staff members. Various issues were discussed, of relevance to Ornithology were the proximity of the site to a known Curlew breeding site; migratory species such as Whooper Swan; cumulative collision risk; post construction monitoring and lighting on turbines. Please refer to Chapter 9 - Biodiversity and Chapter 10 – Ornithology of Volume II of the EIAR.



## 5.4 Community Consultation and Public Information Events

The purpose of EIA scoping and community engagement is to obtain valuable information about the local community and environment. This information assists in identifying the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the surrounding environment and community. In addition, this information forms part of the key issues to be considered in the design of the Proposed Development. Throughout the design of the Proposed Development and preparation of the EIAR, the Project team, RPS Public Relations, and Dara Energy Ltd. Undertook consultations with community stakeholders either through correspondence via email, telephone, or through direct engagement. A project specific website was established which contained the project information, contact details, a google maps location of the site and supporting documents. The website was updated with a Frequently Asked Questions section to address reoccurring stakeholder questions.

### 5.4.1.1 Purpose of Engagement

The purpose of this community engagement was to visit all dwellings within a 1km radius of the proposed project study area to inform them of the proposed project. This entailed outlining the project's benefits and potential impacts, as well outlining the Community Benefit Fund and discuss ideas regarding the fund. Each pre-identified dwelling was visited on multiple occasions within a four-week period. Dates of periods of engagement can be seen within the RPS Consultation Report at Appendix 5.4.

### 5.4.1.2 Information service

A dedicated project phone line and email service went live on 1st September 2024. The phone and email were highlighted to all stakeholders engaged with. Stakeholders made contact through both the phone and email for more in-depth conversations about the project or to have follow up conversations.

- Phone line: 087-1698635
- Email: [Community@derrynadarraghwindfarm.ie](mailto:Community@derrynadarraghwindfarm.ie)
- Website: [www.derrynadarraghwindfarm.ie](http://www.derrynadarraghwindfarm.ie)

### 5.4.1.3 Project Information

A number of materials informing the community about the project were circulated in the community by RPS on behalf of Dara Energy Ltd. And made publicly available on the project website. These resources included:

- A Community Information Leaflet was produced to give stakeholders within approximately 1km distance from the proposed site, which included project information in an accessible way while also providing contact information for the project.
- A calling card was also produced to accompany the project information leaflet if there was no engagement with a property.
- Maps of the proposed development area, with turbine locations included in due course.
- An updated project leaflet circulated to stakeholders within 1km prior to Public Event in June 2025.
- Pull-ups to display the project information and a map showing the proposed preliminary layout of the turbines were also produced for the public information event.



#### 5.4.1.4 *Door to Door Community Engagement*

Door to Door consultation initially took place on several days during a four-week period between 11th September and 3rd October 2024. The appointed Community Liaison Officer (RPS) and their communications team spoke directly with 167 no. residents and left contact details in the form of an information leaflet. A total number of 30 no. households were not present or did not answer the door when attempted were made to visit. The RPS Consultation Report (Appendix 5.4) includes maps depicting the number of dwellings engaged in each area surrounding the project area.

Engagement time varied, and included visits in the Morning, Afternoon and Evening until 7:30pm. This was to maximise the chance that those working shift work, nights, part-time, full time and those commuting to other areas i.e. Dublin, were home when the engagement took place.

Throughout the engagement process, all residential dwellings identified received a project information leaflet and at least one calling card. A number of stakeholders were not present or did not answer the door when attempts were made to visit and revisited.

#### 5.4.1.5 *Public Consultation Event*

A public information event was held from 2-8pm on the 7th of May 2025 for local residents, stakeholders and members of the public. The event was organised by the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) on behalf of Dara Energy Limited.

The event was held in the local community hall, Bracknagh Community Hall, which is located within one of the housing estates in the village. This location was selected to ensure convenient access for the local community.

The CLO and two other members of the RPS Project Communications team facilitated the information event along with representatives from the appointed environmental specialists Fehily Timoney, who are carrying out the environmental impact assessment, and representatives from the developer, Inis Onshore Wind.

Project information pull-ups and maps showing the proposed preliminary layout of the turbines were displayed for attendees to read and consider. Members of the team were available to answer any questions attendees had on the proposals and document any feedback received. Approximately 50 stakeholders attended the event.

Additional information to support some stakeholder's queries was issued directly to them following the event. The feedback gathered at this event is set out within the RPS Consultation Report (Appendix 5.4).



#### 5.4.1.6 Summary of Key Issues raised during the Public Consultation

In general, stakeholders were positively disposed to the project, and there were a number of stakeholders opposed to the proposal. A summary of the topics raised by local residents/stakeholders is set out below:

- Some stakeholders proposed that the project be developed as a Solar Farm instead, which they said would get community support.
- Stakeholders questioned if forestry or trees will be planted around the turbines and if bog cutting will still be allowed on the site.
- On Ecology, it was asserted by local people that there are at least two curlews nesting in the area. People asked if the project could improve the biodiversity of the site for wildlife, rewet the bogland and create an eco-park centred around renewable energy generation.
- On the project's operational phase, residents requested that a designated person be made available for the community to contact to address any potential issues that may arise.

There were 4 no. main topics of discussion which centred on:

1. Community Benefit Fund
2. Noise
3. Impact on Bog
4. Construction Traffic
5. Grid Connection Route

Further details are enclosed at Appendix 5.4 - RPS Public Engagement Report (dated July 2025), Volume III of this EIAR.



## 5.5 Conclusion

Consultation was carried out with a number of stakeholders, including Kildare County Council, Offaly County Council, Laois County Council, An Coimisiún Pleanála (formerly An Bord Pleanála), Government Departments, Non-Governmental Organisations, aviation organisations, and local residents. Their comments and feedback were incorporated into the project design iterations and to the assessments conducted in the EIAR as identified in this chapter.

Pre-planning consultation was held with Kildare County Council, Offaly County Council, Laois County Council, to determine the key points and potential impacts of the proposed development and to inform the assessment methodology. Further detailed correspondence was received from Offaly County Council during the scoping exercise which informed various aspects of the EIAR assessment.

Pre-planning consultation was held with An Coimisiún Pleanála in accordance with Section 37B of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) to determine the key points and potential impacts of the proposed development and to inform the assessment methodology. These meetings also took place to conform with the Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) process.

The public consultation stage commenced in September 2023 and has been facilitated for 2 years through organisation of; public consultation meeting, door-to-door engagement, engagement with the local newspapers, and materials circulated to local residents by post. The developer is committed to continued community engagement with residents as the planning process progresses.

A dedicated email address, phone number and postal address was provided with circulated materials so members of the public could directly contact the project team. This process was commenced as early as possible in order to inform the design of the project and to inform the EIA process prior to its commencement. A dedicated website was also set up to allow for further open communication between the applicant and community throughout the development process and to run-up to the application submission. In addition, a project website was set up to provide information and materials to inform the public of the proposed project.

Observations and issues that arose during the scoping and consultation process have informed the design, assessment and mitigation measures proposed as part of this project as set out throughout the EIAR.



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