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**To:** [SIDS](#)  
**Cc:** [Eamon Cahill](#); [Aisling Ryan](#); [David O'Hara](#)  
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I have attached a copy of this report for your records.

Any queries, please contact me.

With Kind Regards,  
Marie

Marie Murray  
Oifigeach Sinsearach Foirne | Senior Staff Officer  
**Planning Department**  
Comhairle Contae Laoise | Laois County Council

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Comhairle Contae  
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County Council

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**Cc:** Eamon Cahill <[ecahill@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:ecahill@laoiscoco.ie)>  
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Hi,

Please see sharefile notification of Planning Authority report for ACP 324055-26

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**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**PLANNING REPORT**



**ACP REFERENCE:  
PAX09.324055**

**LCC PLANNING REF:  
26/324055**

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

<b>Applicant Name:</b>	Dara Energy Ltd
<b>Development Description:</b>	<p>In accordance with section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Dara Energy Limited gives notice of its intention to make an application to An Coimisiún Pleanála (the “Commission”) for permission for a period of 10 years, for development comprising the construction and operation of a wind farm and related works within the townlands of Kilbeggan South, Hallsfarm, Stonehouse Farm; Ballybought, Durrow Demesne, Aghancarnan, Gormagh, Acantha, Ballynasrah or Tinnycross, Ardan, Puttaghan, Cappancur, Cloncollog, Meelaghans, Annagharvey, Ballycollin, Ballina, Ballyknockan, Ballymooney, Ballycue, Ballinagar, Knockballyboy, Clonad, Townparks, Castlebarnagh Big, Killoneen, Killeen, Esker Beg, Ballycon, Drumcaw or Mountlucas, Derrycricket, Ballaghassaan, Walshisland, Bunnagappagh, Coolagary, Raheenakeeran, Enaghan, Moanvane, Cushina, Clonsast Lower, and Chevychase or Derrynadarragh in County Offaly; Aughrim and Derrylea in County Kildare; and Inchacooly, Coolnaferagh, Ullard or Controversyland, Clonanny, Lea, Loughmansland Glebe, and Bracklone in County Laois.</p> <p>This development is covered by the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive III (Directive 2023/2413) and the planning application is subject to a completeness check under section 37JA of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The proposal is considered a ‘Renewable Energy Development’ under the definition introduced by S.I. 274 of 2025 into Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. When a notice issues in accordance with section 37JA(b), the provisions of article 26A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2025 shall apply. A previous application was submitted to the Commission on these lands in September 2025 under reference ACP-323728-25 which was the subject of a notice of incomplete application issued pursuant to section 37JA(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.</p>

	<p>The development is a renewable energy development and will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 10-year permission and a 35-year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire Wind Farm.</li> <li>• Construction of 9 no. wind turbines – 4 no. turbines will have a tip height of 186m above existing ground level with a hub height of 105m and rotor diameter of 162m, and 5 no. turbines will have a tip height of 187m above existing ground level with a hub height of 106m and rotor diameter of 162m.</li> <li>• Construction of permanent turbine foundations and crane pad hardstanding areas and associated drainage;</li> <li>• Construction of 1 no. new main site entrance on Regional Road R419 to serve as construction and operation access, and upgrade works to 1 no. existing site entrance (L70481, Derrylea Road) to the south to service for construction only;</li> <li>• Construction of 9,360m of new internal access tracks and associated drainage infrastructure;</li> <li>• Upgrading of 550m of existing tracks and associated drainage infrastructure;</li> <li>• All associated drainage and sediment control including interceptor drains, cross drains, sediment ponds and swales;</li> <li>• Installation of 1 no. permanent single span bridge crossing Cushina River within the proposed Wind Farm site;</li> <li>• All associated infrastructure, services and site works including excavation, earthworks, peat and spoil management;</li> <li>• Creation of dedicated peat and spoil deposition areas for the management of peat and spoil within the site;</li> <li>• Establishment of 3 no. temporary construction compounds, and associated ancillary infrastructure including parking;</li> <li>• Establishment of 2 no. temporary wheel washing areas during construction only;</li> <li>• Forestry felling of 6.01ha (60,100 m<sup>2</sup>) to facilitate construction and operation of the Proposed Development;</li> <li>• Provision of recreational amenity area comprising 2 no. parking spaces and picnic table;</li> <li>• Biodiversity enhancement measures within the site boundary;</li> <li>• Construction of 1 no. IPP Substation and associated compound including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wind farm Control building with welfare facilities</li> <li>▪ Electrical infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Parking</li> <li>▪ Security Fencing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Construction of 1 no. permanent onsite 110kV TSO electrical substation and associated compound including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Welfare facilities</li> <li>▪ TSO control building</li> <li>▪ Electrical infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Parking</li> <li>▪ Wastewater holding tank</li> <li>▪ Rainwater harvesting tank</li> <li>▪ Security fencing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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- Installation of medium voltage electrical and communication cabling underground between the proposed turbines and the proposed on-site TSO substation and associated ancillary works;
- Installation of 11.4km of permanent high voltage (110kV) and communication cabling underground, primarily within the public roads between the proposed on-site substation and the Bracklone Substation (within the townland of Bracklone in Co. Laois) and associated ancillary works. The proposed grid connection cable works will include trenching, laying of ducting, installing 15 no. joint bays and 7 no. watercourse crossings, pulling cables and the back filling of trenches and reinstatement works, within the townlands of Cushina in County Offaly; Aughrim and Derrylea in County Kildare, and Inchacooly, Coolnaferagh, Ullard or Controversyland, Clonanny, Lea, Loughmansland Glebe, and Bracklone in County Laois. The underground cabling will traverse the following roads; L70481 (Derrylea Road); L71764; L7050; L7051; L7176; L71761; R424; and R420 (Lea Road);
- Accommodation works required along the Proposed Turbine Delivery Route (TDR) to facilitate turbine component deliveries at the following seven locations in Co. Offaly:
  - Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, and reprofiling of embankment on R420/R402 Junction within the townland of Ballina,
  - Construction of load bearing surface, removal of railing and planters, and reprofiling of road on R402 at junction to L2025 Ballinagar, within the townland of Ballinagar,
  - Installation of 1 no. permanent single span bridge crossing Daingean River at R402/R400 Junction and Philipstown Bridge along Turbine Delivery Route, within the townlands of Esker Beg and Drumcaw or Mountlucas,
  - Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, reprofiling on R400, within the townlands of Drumcaw or Mountlucas,
  - Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, reprofiling on R400 at junction to L1013 Enaghan, within the townland of Enaghan,
  - Construction of load bearing surface on northeastern verge, removal of vegetation and trees, reprofiling on R400, within the townland of Moanvane,
  - Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, and reprofiling of embankment on R419 at junction to R400, within the townland of Cushina.

A 35-year operational life from the date of full commissioning of the entire wind farm is being sought. This reflects the lifespan of modern-day turbines.

	<p>A permanent planning permission is being sought for the Grid Connection and onsite 110 kV substation as these will become an asset of the national grid under the management of EirGrid and will remain in place upon decommissioning of the Proposed Wind Farm.</p>
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	<p>An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in relation to the project and accompany this planning application. The EIAR and NIS is prepared in respect of the construction, operation and, decommissioning of the proposed development and works to facilitate turbine delivery from the port of entry of Galway from Lough Atalia Road, R339, crossing junction with R338, continuing on R339, R336, N6, onto the M6, exiting M6 at Junction 5 Tullamore, N52, R420, R402, R400, R419, onto the proposed new site entrance off the R419.</p>
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## 1.0 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is in accordance with the requirements of Section 37E (4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended (the Act) and is to set out the views of the Planning Authority on the effects of the proposed development on the environment and on the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, with particular regard to the matters specified in section 34(2) namely:

- i) The provision of the Development Plan
- ii) The provision of any special amenity area order relation to the area
- iii) Any European site or other area prescribed for the purposes of Section 10(2) (c)
- iv) Where relevant, the policy of the Government, The Minister or any Minister of the Government
- v) The matters referred to in subsection (4) (i.e. conditions)
- vi) Any other relevant provision or requirement of this act and any regulations made thereunder.

The Planning Authority can also submit a list of recommended conditions to be attached in the event of the Board granting planning permission. In addition, this report has been informed by the following guidance documents- *'7<sup>th</sup> Schedule Strategic Infrastructure Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* and the OPR's *Strategic Infrastructure Development*.

Section 37E (4) of the 2000 Act requires that this report shall be submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála by **16<sup>th</sup> April 2026**. Section 37E (5) requires that before this report is submitted to the Board, the Chief Executive shall submit it to the elected members in order to seek their views on the proposed development.

The members may, by resolution, decide to attach recommendations to the report (Section 37E (6) of the 200 Act refers).

## 2.0 Planning Application Submission

The planning application includes the following information, which, where necessary, is cross referred in this report:

- Planning Application Form
- Planning Application Payment to An Coimisiún Pleanála
- Site Notice
- Newspaper Notice
- Letters of Consent
- EIA Portal Confirmation Notice
- ACP Completeness Check
- Statutory Undertaker Letter
- Schedule of Planning Application Drawings
- Full Planning Application Drawing Pack
- Planning Application Notification Letter to Laois County Council
- Planning Application Notification Letter to each Prescribed Body
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)
  - Volume I – Non-Technical Summary
  - Volume II – EIAR Chapters
  - Volume III – EIAR Appendices

- Volume IV - EIAR Figures
- Volume V– LVIA Photomontages
- Natura Impact Assessment Report (NIS)
- Renewable Energy Planning Statement\*

\*Upon review of the Renewable Energy Planning Statement it is noted that there are 14no. instances of “**Error! Reference source not found**” throughout the document when referencing various extracts and tables/maps etc in relation to the proposed development. This hinders the overall readability of the document and necessitates additional time to review and interpret the material.

### 3.0 Site Location

The proposed development (comprising Wind Farm site, Grid Connection Route, and Turbine Delivery Route) is a cross-boundary proposal located within the jurisdictions of Kildare County Council, Offaly County Council, and Laois County Council.

The proposed Wind Farm site comprises of approximately 213.67 hectares with a proposed total of 9 no. turbines, with the positioning of 4 no. turbines to be located in the jurisdiction of County Kildare (townlands of Aughrin and Derrylea), and 5 no. turbines are to be located in the jurisdiction of County Offaly (townlands of Cushina, Clonsast Lower, and Chevychase or Derrynadarragh). The turbine array is located approximately 1.7km south of Bracknagh, 5.24km north-west of Monasterevin and 6.5km north-east of Portarlington.

The subject site/s are predominantly agricultural, adjacent to turbary activities and forestry. In addition, one off rural dwellings are also located in close proximity to the subject site/s. The site is proposed to be accessed from a new entrance onto the R419 Regional Road (for both construction and operation) and an existing entrance at Derrylea Road (for construction only).

Specifically to Laois the proposed development follows the R420 from lands at Bracklone on the outskirts of Portarlington along the Lea Road to Ullard or Controversyland meeting the L7176 into Kildare and back into Laois at the townland of Inchacooly.

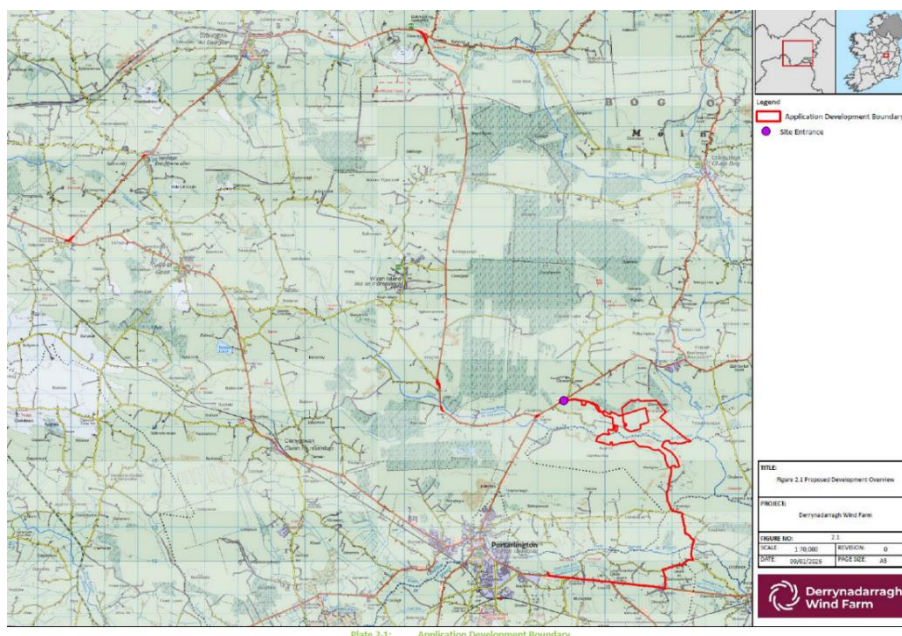


Figure 1.0 – Site Location Map

## 4.0 The Proposed Development

### 4.1 Description of Development

The description of the proposed development as per the application to An Coimisiún Pleanála is as follows:

In accordance with section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Dara Energy Limited gives notice of its intention to make an application to An Coimisiún Pleanála (the “Commission”) for permission for a period of 10 years, for development comprising the construction and operation of a wind farm and related works within the townlands of:

- Kilbeggan South, Hallsfarm, Stonehouse Farm; Ballybought, Durrow Demesne, Aghancarnan, Gormagh, Acantha, Ballynasrah or Tinnycross, Ardan, Puttaghan, Cappancur, Cloncollog, Meelaghans, Annagarvey, Ballycollin, Ballina, Ballyknockan, Ballymooney, Ballycue, Ballinagar, Knockballyboy, Clonad, Townparks, Castlebarnagh Big, Killoneen, Killeen, Esker Beg, Ballycon, Drumcaw or Mountlucas, Derrycricket, Ballaghassaan, Walshisland, Bunnagappagh, Coolagary, Raheenakeeran, Enaghan, Moanvane, Cushina, Clonsast Lower, and Chevychase or Derrynadarragh in County Offaly;
- Aughrim and Derrylea in County Kildare and;
- Inchacooly, Coolnaferagh, Ullard or Controversyland, Clonanny, Lea, Loughmansland Glebe, and Bracklone in County Laois.

This development is covered by the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive III (Directive 2023/2413) and the planning application is subject to a completeness check under section 37JA of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The proposal is considered a ‘Renewable Energy Development’ under the definition introduced by S.I. 274 of 2025 into Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. When a notice issues in accordance with section 37JA(b), the provisions of article 26A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2025 shall apply. A previous application was submitted to the Commission on these lands in September 2025 under reference ACP-323728-25 which was the subject of a notice of incomplete application issued pursuant to section 37JA(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

The development is a renewable energy development and will consist of the following:

- A 10-year permission and a 35-year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire Wind Farm.
- Construction of 9 no. wind turbines – 4 no. turbines will have a tip height of 186m above existing ground level with a hub height of 105m and rotor diameter of 162m, and 5 no. turbines will have a tip height of 187m above existing ground level with a hub height of 106m and rotor diameter of 162m.
- Construction of permanent turbine foundations and crane pad hardstanding areas and associated drainage;
- Construction of 1 no. new main site entrance on Regional Road R419 to serve as construction and operation access, and upgrade works to 1 no. existing site entrance (L70481, Derrylea Road) to the south to service for construction only;

- Construction of 9,360m of new internal access tracks and associated drainage infrastructure;
- Upgrading of 550m of existing tracks and associated drainage infrastructure;
- All associated drainage and sediment control including interceptor drains, cross drains, sediment ponds and swales;
- Installation of 1 no. permanent single span bridge crossing Cushina River within the proposed Wind Farm site;
- All associated infrastructure, services and site works including excavation, earthworks, peat and spoil management;
- Creation of dedicated peat and spoil deposition areas for the management of peat and spoil within the site;
- Establishment of 3 no. temporary construction compounds, and associated ancillary infrastructure including parking;
- Establishment of 2 no. temporary wheel washing areas during construction only;
- Forestry felling of 6.01ha (60,100 m<sup>2</sup>) to facilitate construction and operation of the Proposed Development;
- Provision of recreational amenity area comprising 2 no. parking spaces and picnic table;
- Biodiversity enhancement measures within the site boundary;
- Construction of 1 no. IPP Substation and associated compound including:
  - Wind farm Control building with welfare facilities
  - Electrical infrastructure
  - Parking
  - Security Fencing
- Construction of 1 no. permanent onsite 110kV TSO electrical substation and associated compound including:
  - Welfare facilities
  - TSO control building
  - Electrical infrastructure
  - Parking
  - Wastewater holding tank
  - Rainwater harvesting tank
  - Security fencing
- Installation of medium voltage electrical and communication cabling underground between the proposed turbines and the proposed on-site TSO substation and associated ancillary works;
- Installation of 11.4km of permanent high voltage (110kV) and communication cabling underground, primarily within the public roads between the proposed on-site substation and the Bracklone Substation (within the townland of Bracklone in Co. Laois) and associated ancillary works. The proposed grid connection cable works will include trenching, laying of ducting, installing 15 no. joint bays and 7 no. watercourse crossings, pulling cables and the back filling of trenches and reinstatement works, within the townlands of Cushina in County Offaly; Aughrim and Derrylea in County Kildare, and Inchacooly, Coolnaferagh, Ullard or Controversyland, Clonanny, Lea, Loughmansland Glebe, and Bracklone in County Laois. The underground cabling will traverse the following roads; L70481 (Derrylea Road); L71764; L7050; L7051; L7176; L71761; R424; and R420 (Lea Road);
- Accommodation works required along the Proposed Turbine Delivery Route (TDR) to facilitate turbine component deliveries at the following seven locations in Co. Offaly:
  - Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, and reprofiling of embankment on R420/R402 Junction within the townland of Ballina,

- Construction of load bearing surface, removal of railing and planters, and reprofiling of road on R402 at junction to L2025 Ballinagar, within the townland of Ballinagar,
- Installation of 1 no. permanent single span bridge crossing Daingean River at R402/R400 Junction and Philipstown Bridge along Turbine Delivery Route, within the townlands of Esker Beg and Drumcaw or Mountlucas,
- Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, reprofiling on R400, within the townlands of Drumcaw or Mountlucas,
- Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, reprofiling on R400 at junction to L1013 Enaghan, within the townland of Enaghan,
- Construction of load bearing surface on northeastern verge, removal of vegetation and trees, reprofiling on R400, within the townland of Moanvane,
- Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, and reprofiling of embankment on R419 at junction to R400, within the townland of Cushina.

A 35-year operational life from the date of full commissioning of the entire wind farm is being sought. This reflects the lifespan of modern-day turbines.

A permanent planning permission is being sought for the Grid Connection and onsite 110 kV substation as these will become an asset of the national grid under the management of EirGrid and will remain in place upon decommissioning of the Proposed Wind Farm.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in relation to the project and accompany this planning application. The EIAR and NIS is prepared in respect of the construction, operation and, decommissioning of the proposed development and works to facilitate turbine delivery from the port of entry of Galway from Lough Atalia Road, R339, crossing junction with R338, continuing on R339, R336, N6, onto the M6, exiting M6 at Junction 5 Tullamore, N52, R420, R402, R400, R419, onto the proposed new site entrance off the R419.

#### Further Details of Proposed Development

The proposal consists of a 9no. turbine wind farm and associated infrastructure including internal access tracks, hard standings, onsite 110kV substation and associated grid connection infrastructure, electrical and communications cabling between turbines and on-site substation (medium voltage) and between on-site substation to Bracklone Substation (high voltage), temporary construction compounds, drainage infrastructure, amenity provision, biodiversity enhancement measures, accommodations works along the Proposed Turbine Delivery Route and all associated works related to the construction of the Proposed Development.

The Wind Farm site is contained within the townlands of Cushina, Clonsast Lower, and Chevychase or Derrynadarragh in County Offaly, and Aughrin and Derrylea in County Kildare. The Site is located within the lowland topography with predominantly flatlands. Red Hill (194m), Dunmurry Hill (234m) and Grange Hill (223m) are located within 10km to the east of the site. The site is located on the Derrylea Bog which is connected to Clonsast Bog to the north, and Derryounce Bog to the west.

The Turbine Delivery Route will pass through the townlands of Kilbeggan South, Stonehousefarm, Hallsfarm, Rostalla, Pallas, Ballybought, Durrow Demesne, Aghancarnan, Gormagh, Acantha, Ballynasrah or Tinnycross, Ardan, Puttaghan, Cappancur, Cloncollog, Meelaghans, Annagharvey, Ballycollin, Ballina, Ballyknockan, Ballymooney, Ballinagar, Knockballyboy, Clonad, Townparks, Castlebarnagh Big, Killoneen, Killeen, Esker Beg, Ballycon, Drumcaw or Mountlucas, Derrycricket, Ballaghassan, Walshisland,

Bunnagappagh, Coolagary, Raheenakeeran, Enaghan, Moanvane, Cushina, and Clonsast Lower.

The turbine delivery route from the port of entry of Galway, will travel along the following roads; Lough Atalia Road, R339, crossing junction with R338, continuing on R339, R336, N6, onto the M6, exiting M6 at Junction 5 Tullamore, N52, R420, R402, R400, R419, onto the proposed new site entrance off the R419.

The Proposed Grid Connection will comprise 11.4km of underground 110kV electrical cabling, which will pass through the townlands of Cushina in County Offaly; Derrylea, and Inchacooly in County Kildare, and Coolnaferagh, Ullard or Controversyland, Clonanny, Lea, Loughmansland Glebe, and Bracklone in County Laois.

The Proposed Grid Connection has been identified to supply power from the proposed development to the Irish National Electricity Grid and will exit the site to the south and follow the public road to Bracklone Substation (currently under construction). The underground cabling will traverse the following roads: L70481 (Derrylea Road); L71764; L7050; L7051; L7176; L71761; R424; and R420 (Lea Road).

## 4.2 Site Layout

The 9no. wind turbines are proposed, 4 located in Co. Kildare and 5 located in Co. Offaly. No turbine structures are proposed for Co. Laois.



Figure 2.0 – Grid Connection Route & Turbine Location

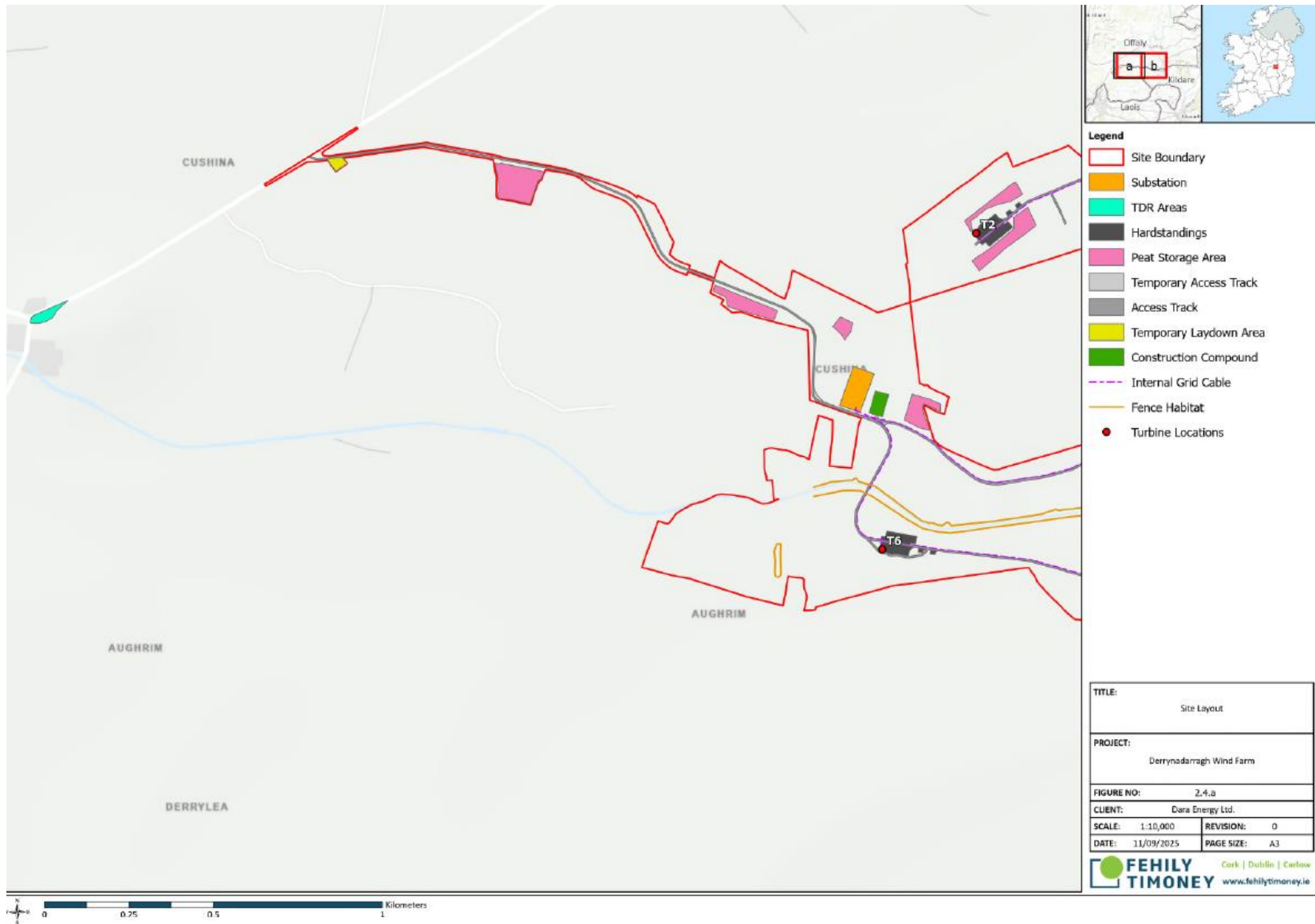


Figure 3.0 – Site Layout 1

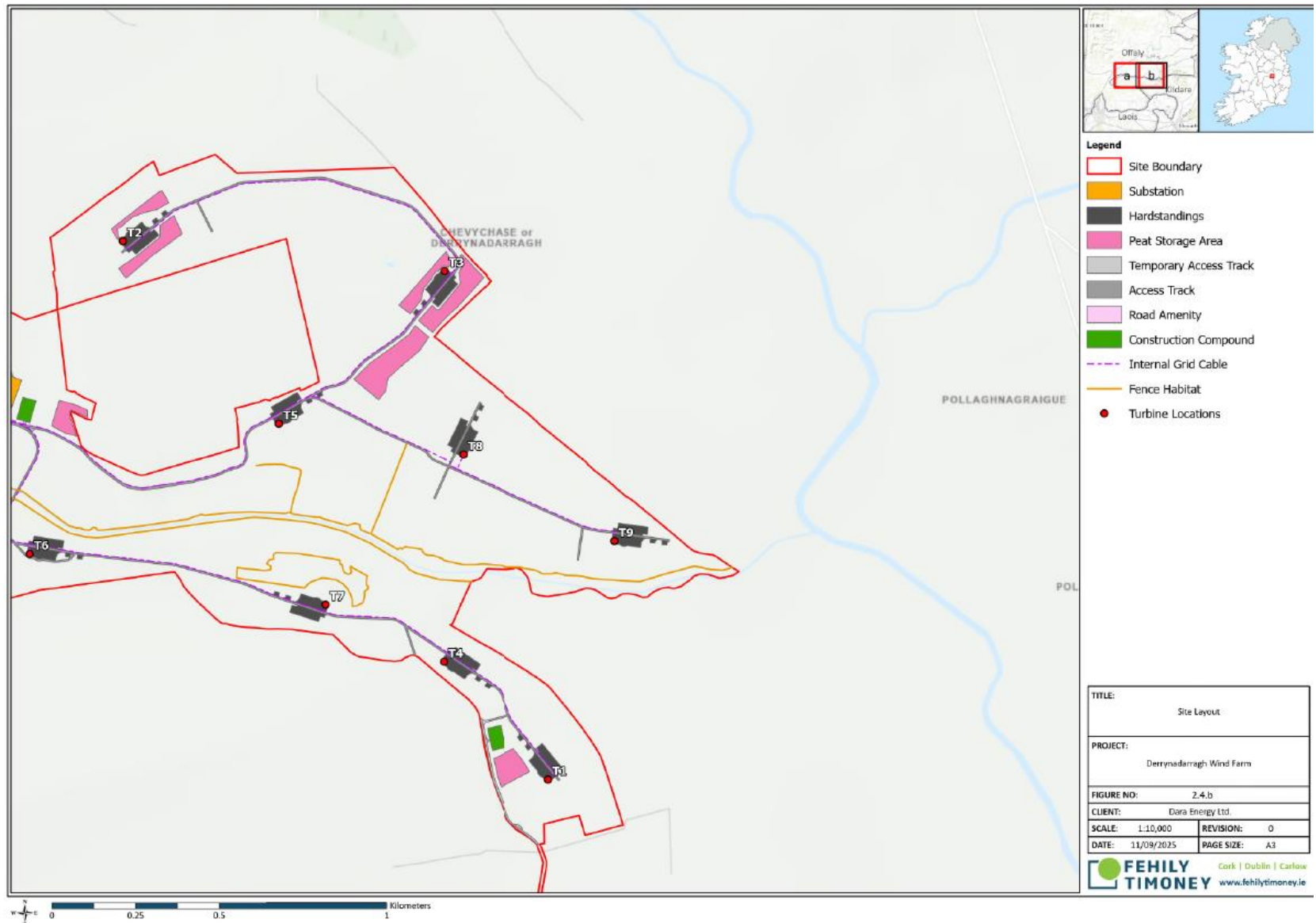


Figure 3.1 – Site Layout 2

### 4.3 Proposed Development within Municipal Districts

The below map shows the proposed development crossing the Municipal Districts. It shows that the proposed development crosses the Graiguecullen / Portarlington Municipal District. The site of the turbines does not fall within Laois County Council Authority Boundary; only the Grid Connection route traverses into Laois County Council functional area.

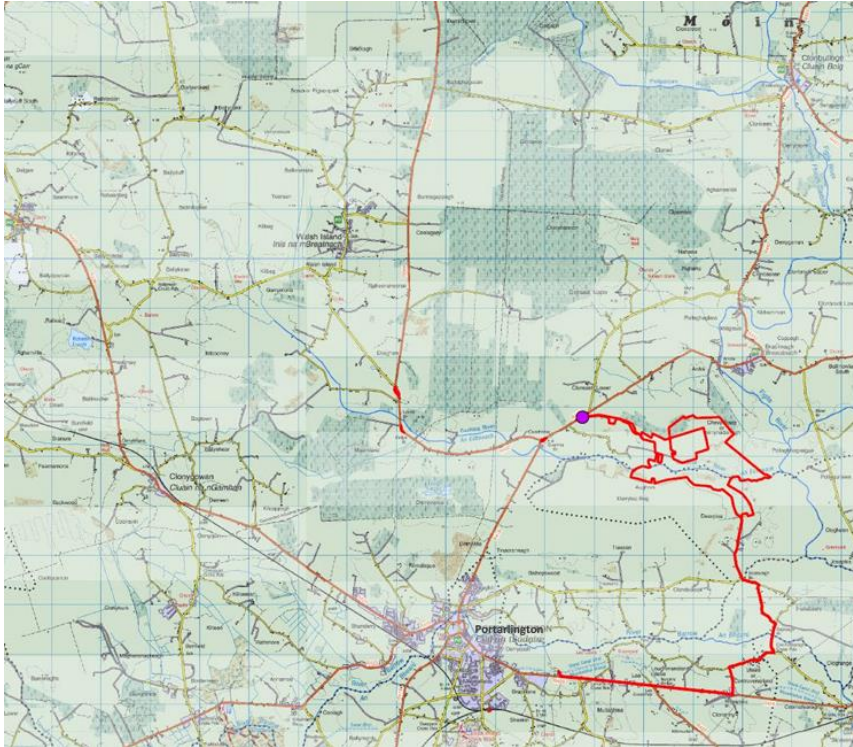


Figure 4.0 – Proposed Development Boundary

### 4.4 Design Flexibility

The applicant did not request a Design Flexibility Opinion in relation to this application. This was discussed with An Coimisiún Pleanála during pre-application consultations.

### 4.5 Turbine Specifications and Layout

The turbine dimensions have been specified in the application as follows:

- Maximum Tip height from ground:
  - 4no. – 186m
  - 5no. – 187m
- Hub height of between 105m to 106m
- Rotor Diameter 162m
- Potential power output range of 9 Wind Turbines generating approx. 64.8 MW of electricity per annum
- Conventional three-blade design.

Laois County Council notes that a ratio in the order of 1:1 gives rise to the typical tall, slender and proportionate appearance of turbines. However, LCC also notes that when the rotor diameter exceeds the hub height by a significant margin, the entire structure may become visually dominant. The preferred wind turbine design should be considered against all other reasonable alternatives to ensure that it does not give rise to

unacceptable or significant landscape impacts. However, it is also noted that the site of the 9no. turbines does not fall within Laois County Council Authority Boundary, only the Grid Connection route traverses into Laois County Council functional area.

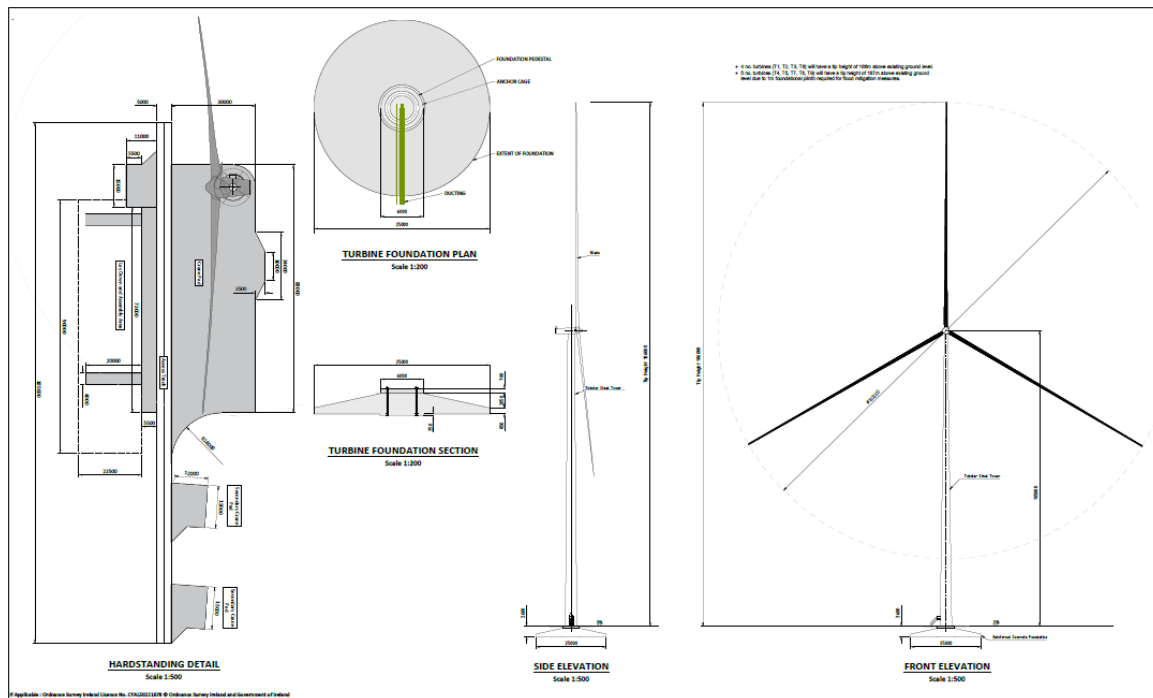


Figure 5.0 – Turbine Elevation & hardstanding Details

#### 4.6 Internal Access Tracks

The Proposed Development will require the upgrading of 550m of existing tracks and the Construction of 9,360m of new internal access tracks.

All access tracks will be approximately 4.5-5 m wide along straight sections and wider at bends as required. The tracks will be finished with a well graded aggregate. The drainage system will be installed adjacent to the internal access tracks.

The applicant as noted that the proposed turbine locations have been carefully selected in areas of the site close to the existing access tracks to reduce the length of new access tracks required and drainage will be towards the existing drainage network.

In relation to Landscape Impact Assessment the applicant has noted that *“a high proportion of the existing track network from these land uses will be utilised in the construction and operational phases of the development”*

#### 4.7 Turbine Delivery Route

The turbine delivery route (TDR) is proposed as follows:

The Turbine components will be delivered to the Galway Port and travel to the M6. The Turbine Delivery Route will exit the M6 at junction 5 and continue southbound on the N52 southbound for 8.6km, then taking the second exit on the Ardan Roundabout and continuing on the N52 southbound for 2.9km which includes taking the second exit at Cappancur Roundabout to stay on the N52. At the Cloncollog Roundabout, take the first exit onto the R420 and continue south-east bound on the R420 for 6.6km. Then turn northbound onto the R402 and continue northbound on the R402 for 8.3km including going through the village of Ballinagar. In the village of Daingean, turn onto

the R402 Edenderry and continue on the R402 eastbound for 5.6km. Then turn southbound on to the R400 and continue on the R400 southbound for 14.8km. Finally turn northbound on the R419 and continue northbound for 1km before arriving at the Site Entrance. The TDR will be confined to the public road corridor except for locations where accommodation works will be required to facilitate the delivery of abnormal loads. Chapter 2 of the EIAR details the works required to facilitate the delivery of the turbine components.

It is acknowledged that the delivery route does not traverse any part of County Laois.

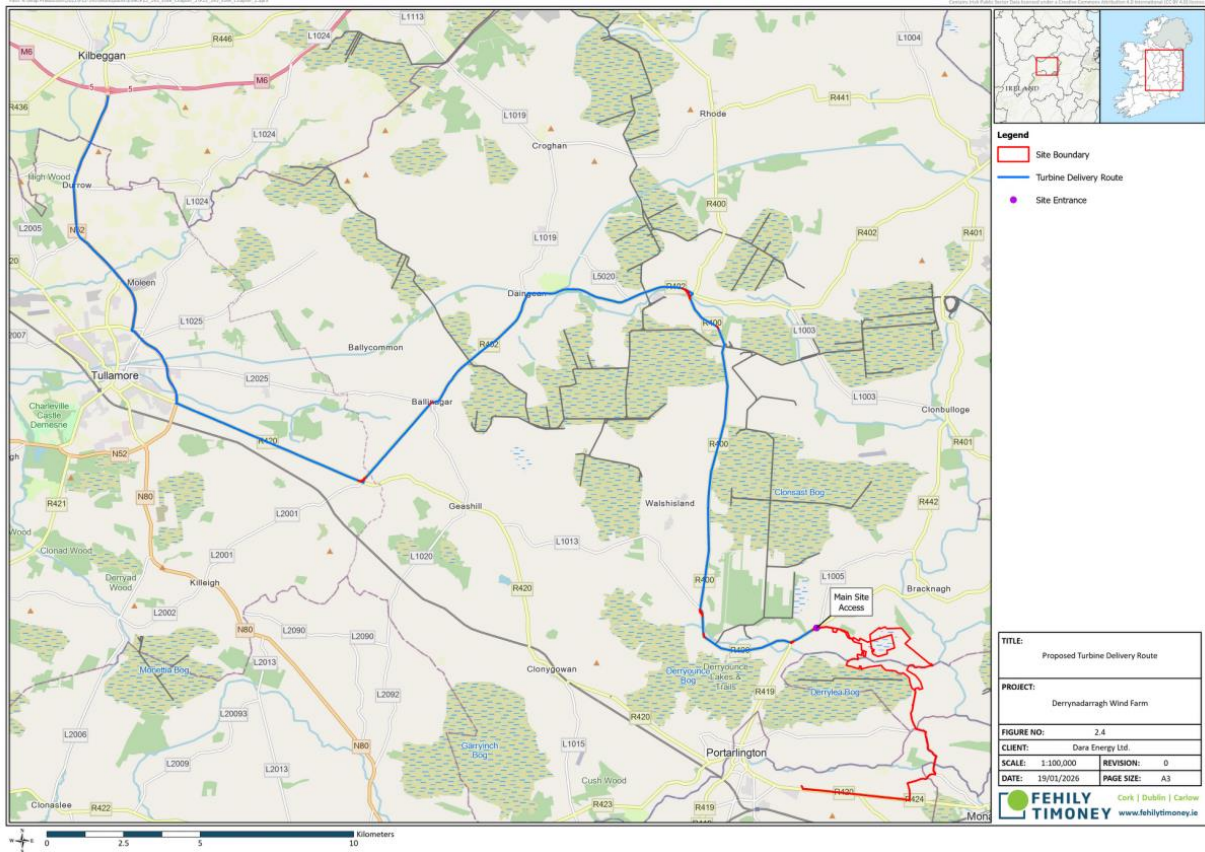


Figure 6.0 – Proposed Turbine Delivery Route

## 4.8 Secondary Project Elements

Off-site and secondary elements of the project which are included for assessment in the EIAR but are **not** included in the current planning application and will be subject to a separate licensing and/or consenting process, include:-

- Cable Route
- Hedge Or Tree Trimming,
- Temporary Relocation of Powerlines/Poles,
- Lampposts, Signage
- Temporary Local Road Widening

## 4.9 Cable Route / Grid Connection

*The Proposed Grid Connection will comprise 11.4km of underground 110kV electrical cabling, which will pass through the townlands of Cushina in County Offaly; Derrylea, and Inchacooly in County Kildare, and Coolnaferagh, Ullard or Controversyland, Clonanny, Lea, Loughmansland Glebe, and Bracklone in County Laois. The Proposed Grid Connection has been identified to supply power from the proposed development to the Irish National Electricity Grid and will exit the site to the south and follow the public road to Bracklone Substation (currently under construction). The underground cabling will traverse the following roads: L70481 (Derrylea Road); L71764; L7050; L7051; L7176; L71761; R424; and R420 (Lea Road).*

The applicant has noted that “a permanent planning permission is being sought for the Grid Connection and onsite 110 kV substation as these will become an asset of the national grid under the management of EirGrid and will remain in place upon decommissioning of the Proposed Wind Farm”

The cable route options are shown below:

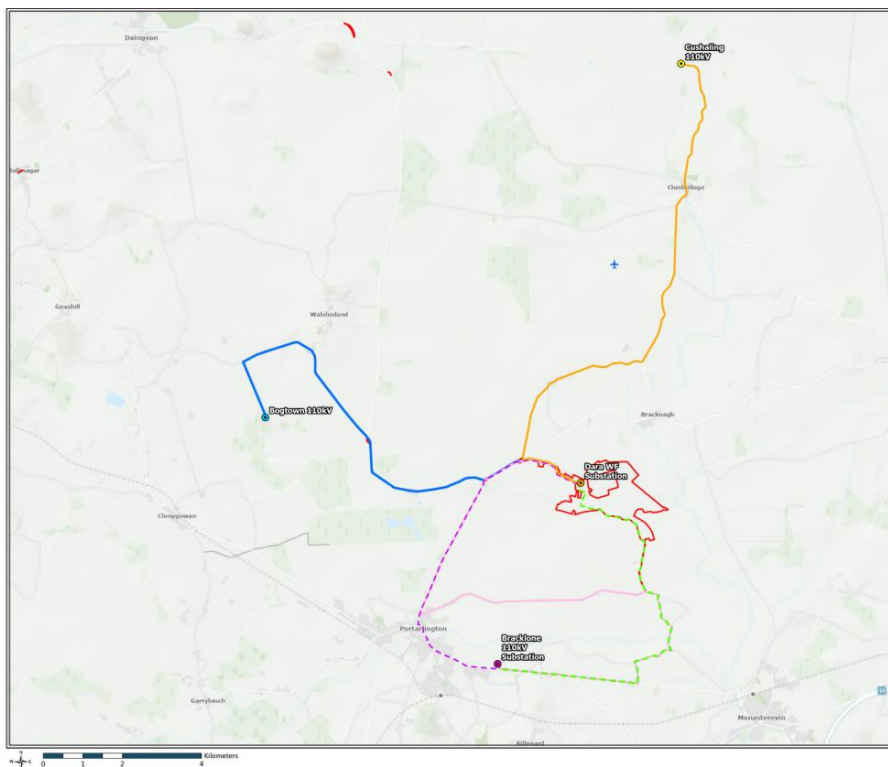


Figure 6.0 – Cable Route Options

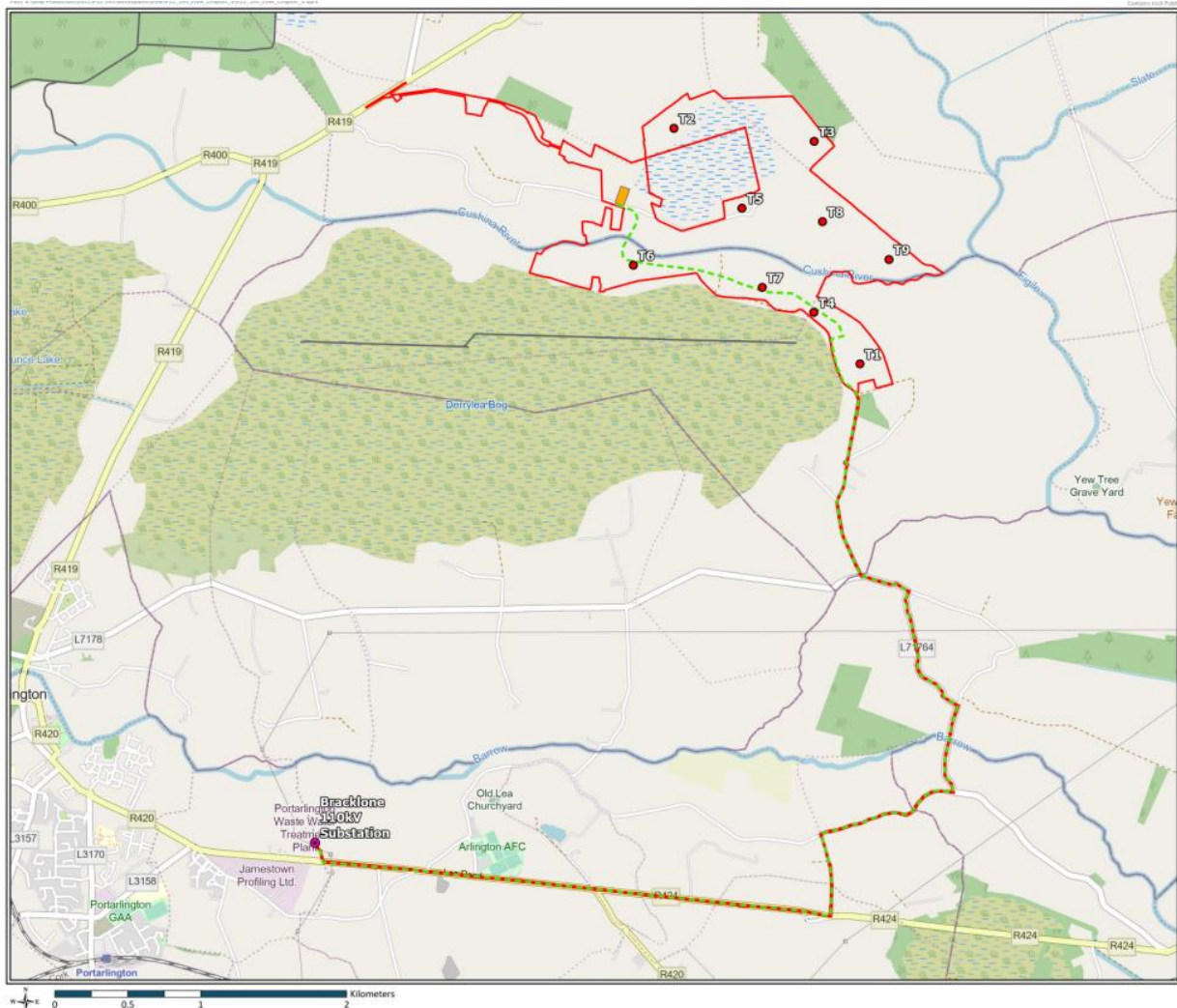


Figure 6.1 – Chosen Grid Connection Route

#### 4.9 Overall Output

The proposed development will deliver approx. 64.8 MW or up to c. 175,971 MWh of electricity per annum over the lifetime of the project.

### 5.0 Pertinent Policy

#### 5.1 International and European Energy Policy

##### **EU Commission European Green Deal 2019**

The European Green Deal sets out increased levels of ambition for the EU as a whole and aims to deliver net-zero greenhouse gas emissions at EU level by 2050 and to increase the EU-wide greenhouse gas emissions reduction target from 40% to up to 55% by 2030. Delivering the Green Deal will require a transformation of the EU and national economies with sectors such as transport, the built environment, agriculture, industry, and energy all having to become more environmentally sustainable if the goal of decoupling economic growth from resource use is to be achieved. The EU Climate and Energy Package 2020 resulted in a set of binding legislation which aims to ensure the EU meets its ambitious climate and energy targets for 2020.

### ***Climate and Energy Framework (2030)***

This framework plan was agreed by EU leaders in July 2018. In September 2020, the European Commission proposed an increase in the 2030 targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions from 40% to at least 55% compared to 1990 levels. These targets seek a greater contribution from renewable energy under key policy pillars covering renewable energy, energy efficiency and emissions trading.

### ***EU Directive 2009/28/EC***

The Renewable Energy Directive created an overarching EU policy for the production and promotion of energy from renewable sources. It required an overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) of 20% across the EU, a 20% increase in energy efficiency and that 20% of the EU's energy consumption to be from renewable sources. It also required each member state to adopt individual targets and setting out how these targets would be efficiently achieved.

In December 2018, the revised Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001/EU was adopted, to assist the EU in meeting its emissions reduction commitments under the Paris Agreement. The revised directive establishes a new binding renewable energy target for the EU for 2030 of at least 32% of energy consumption to be from renewable sources. In addition, each member state is required to draft 10-year National Energy & Climate Plans (NECPs) for 2021-2030, outlining how they will meet the new 2030 targets for renewable energy and for energy efficiency.

### ***EU Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action Regulation (EU) 2018/1999EU***

This regulation sets the overall framework for the achievement of the EU climate and energy 2030 targets and requires Member States to develop a National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP). The aim of the NECPs is to provide an integrated policy framework for the period up to 2030 to ensure regulatory certainty and a coordinated approach among Member States.

## **5.2 National Energy Policy and Guidance Documents**

### ***White Paper – Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future for Ireland 2015-2030***

The White Paper outlines a framework to guide Government policy and the actions in the energy sector up to 2030. It is based on the following three 'pillars' Sustainability, Security of Supply and Competitiveness. It reaffirms the targets for 2020 as stated previously (i.e. 16% overall renewable energy target and 40% target for electricity from renewable sources by 2020). It also incorporates the new targets agreed in Paris (2015) of 80-95% GHG reduction by 2050 and zero emissions by 2100.

The White Paper places strong emphasis on embracing new technologies and in radically changing behaviour to achieve a consensus approach by all stakeholders to the transition to a low carbon economy. There is an identified need to focus on citizens and communities as active participants and agents of change in order to achieve the ambitious energy transition goals.

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

This Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act was enacted in December 2015 and provides a statutory basis for the national objective of a transition to a low carbon economy by 2050. It provides for the development of a National Mitigation Plan to

specify the Greenhouse House Gas mitigation policy for each Government department to transition to low carbon. It also makes provision for a 'National Adaptation Framework', which would be a strategic policy framework across all departments, as well as 'Sectoral Adaptation plans', which would ensure the adoption of measures taken by Departments.

### ***National Mitigation Plan***

The National Mitigation Plan was adopted in 2017 and represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the deep decarbonisation in line with Government policy objectives by mid-century. It includes a range of mitigation measures and actions to decarbonise the electricity generation sector and to prepare for the EU renewable energy targets that Ireland will take on for 2030.

### ***National Adaptation Framework***

The National Adaptation Framework (2018) sets out the national strategy to reduce the vulnerability of the country to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of positive impacts. As part of this framework, key Government departments are required to prepare sectoral adaptation plans in relation to a priority area that they are responsible for. In addition, local authorities are required to prepare their own local adaptation strategies which are to be reviewed at least once every five years.

### ***Climate Action Plan - 2023***

The Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23) is the second annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2019. On 21 December 2022, the plan was officially launched. Its primary objective is to implement the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings while providing a clear roadmap for decisive action. The plan aims to cut our emissions in half by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions no later than 2050, as outlined in the Programme for Government (2022).

The following actions relevant to onshore wind farm development

- EL/23/3 Publish a roadmap for the development and implementation of Regional Renewable Electricity Strategies
- EL/23/4 Prepare new draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines for onshore renewables
- EL/23/5 Complete analysis to update Shaping Our Electricity Future to accommodate 80% renewables and align with carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings for electricity
- EL/23/6 Ensure electricity generation grid connection policies and regular rounds of connection offers which facilitate timely connecting of renewables, provides a locational signal and supports flexible technologies
- EL/23/10 Deliver onshore and offshore RESS auctions as per the annual RESS auction calendar.

### ***The National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040***

The National Planning Framework (NPF) was published in 2018 and sets out high level, strategic planning and development for the Country until 2040, to ensure economically, socially and environmentally sustainable growth.

The NPF sets out 10 National Strategic Outcomes to guide the future development of Ireland over the next 20 years. The following NPF outcomes and policies are considered to be relevant to the proposed development:

- National Strategic Outcome 8 – Transition to Sustainable Energy states that new energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, more renewable focused energy generation system, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy.
- National Policy Objective 23 - *‘Facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism’.*

Chapter 9 of the NPF: Realising Our Sustainable Future recognises the need to accelerate action on climate change for a low carbon energy future. In this regard the following NPO’s are of relevance:

- National Policy Objective 54 seeks to “reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.”
- National Policy Objective 55 - *Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050’*

### **National Planning Framework: First Revision 2025**

National Policy Objective 70: Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a climate neutral economy by 2050.

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

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

The matters to be considered in a planning application are set out in Chapter 4 of that document. These include potential impacts on:

- The built and natural heritage;
- Ground conditions and drainage;
- Visual and landscape impacts;

- Local environmental impacts, including noise, shadow flicker, electromagnetic interference);
- Adequacy of local access road network to facilitate the construction of the project and the transportation of large machinery and turbine parts to the site;
- Cumulative effects due to other projects;
- Information on the location of quarries to be used or borrow pits;
- Disposal or elimination of waste; and
- Decommissioning considerations.

It is stated that best practice would suggest that an integrated planning application that include grid connection information should ideally be submitted and that developers should be encouraged to engage in public consultation with the local community.

Chapter 5 includes reference to the potential environmental impacts arising from wind energy developments. Guidance is given on matters such as natural heritage, ground conditions / geology, archaeology, architectural heritage, noise, safety aspects, proximity to roads, railways and power lines, aircraft safety, shadow flicker, windtake, decommissioning and reinstatement.

A setback distance is not established; however, in terms of shadow flicker, the recommended standard is a maximum of 30 hours per year or 30 minutes per day for dwellings and offices within 500m. It is further stated that at distances of greater than 10 rotor diameters, the potential for shadow flicker is very low.

In respect of noise, whilst no specific figures are included in the 2006 guidelines, the recommended standard is a lower fixed limit of 45dBA or a maximum increase of 5dBA above background noise and nearby noise sensitive locations, apart from very quiet areas where the daytime level is limited to 35-40dB(A). A nighttime limit of 43 dB(A) is recommended.

Chapter 6 provides guidance on siting and design of wind energy development in the landscape. This includes advice on siting, spatial extent and scale, cumulative effect, spacing of turbines, layout of turbines and height of turbines. Advice is also given regarding landscape character types as a basis for application of the guidance on siting and design.

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

The Department of Housing Planning and Local Government published Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines in December 2019 following a focused review to establish clearer guidance to facilitate the achievement of wider renewable energy targets, while also considering community, spatial planning, energy policy, environmental, technological and industry issues that all need to be balanced.

The proposed key revisions include the following;

- **New noise standards:** The proposed new standards have been brought up to date in line with the 2018 World Health Organization (WHO) Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region, including a maximum noise level of 43 dB(A). A robust new noise monitoring framework is also proposed.
- **Setback distance:** This is required for the purposes of visual amenity and comprises a distance of **four times the tip height** between a wind turbine and nearest point of the curtilage of any residential property in the vicinity of the

proposed development, subject to a minimum mandatory setback distance of 500 metres. This setback distance must also comply with the proposed noise limits.

- **Shadow flicker:** Automatic control mechanisms for shadow flicker will be required during the operational phase of a wind energy development.
- **Community engagement:** Developers will be required to undertake mandatory and active consultation with the public and the local community at an early stage in project development. There is also a requirement for the preparation of a 'Community Report' to be submitted as part of the planning application.
- **Community dividend:** Wind energy developers must provide an opportunity for the local community to receive social or economic benefit from the project (e.g., community investment, ownership etc.)
- **Grid connections:** Updated advice has been included concerning the requirements of EIA as they relate to wind energy development and associated grid connections, as informed by relevant case law.

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

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

### **5.3 Regional Policy and Guidance Documents**

#### ***Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly***

County Laois forms part of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) which has 3 sub regions or Strategic Planning Areas (SPAs), namely the Midland, Eastern and Dublin SPAs. Laois is located in the Midlands SPA along with Offaly, Westmeath and Longford. The EMRA adopted the RSES on May 3rd, 2019 which became effective on June 28th, 2019.

The EMRA defines the RSES as a '*strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives. At this strategic level it provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development throughout the Region*'.

Aligning with the National Policy Objectives of the NPF, the RSES sets out 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) which set the framework for City and County Development Plans to build climate resilience into their policies and objectives and to support the transition to a low carbon economy by 2050. The Strategy identifies the following RSOs in relation to climate action:

- RSO 6. Integrated Transport and Land Use
- RSO 7. Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources
- RSO 8. Build Climate Resilience

- RSO 9 Support the Transition to Low Carbon and Clean Energy: Pursue climate mitigation in line with global and national targets and harness the potential for a more distributed renewables focused energy system to support the transition to a low carbon economy by 2050.
- RSO 10. Enhanced Green Infrastructure
- RSO 11. Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

The following relevant Regional Policy Objectives (RPO) are considered to be:

### **RPO 6.7**

Support local authorities to develop sustainable and economically efficient rural economies through initiatives to enhance sectors such as agricultural and food, forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bioeconomy, tourism, and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage.

### **RPO 7.36**

Planning policy at local authority level shall reflect and adhere to the principles and planning guidance set out in Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government publications relating to 'Wind Energy Development' and the DCCAE Code of Practice for Wind Energy Development in Ireland on Guidelines for Community Engagement and any other relevant guidance which may be issued in relation to sustainable energy provisions.

### **Renewable Energy Directive RED III**

The Renewable Energy Directive (RED III) has been transposed into Irish legislation by way of European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 (SI 274 of 2025). The majority of the provisions under RED III came into effect on 7 August 2025, with the exception of the EIA opinion provisions which will come into force on 1 May 2026. The Regulations introduce measures relevant to the following categories of renewable energy development:

- energy from a renewable non-fossil source - wind energy, solar energy, geothermal energy, osmotic energy, ambient energy, tide, wave and other ocean energy, hydropower, biomass, landfill gas, sewage treatment plant gas or biogas;
- repowering development;
- small-scale renewable energy installations, including heat pumps and solar energy equipment.

## **5.4 Local Policy Context**

### ***Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027***

The Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 (Laois CDP) was adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and came into effect 8th March 2022. A Ministerial Direction associated with this plan was submitted on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

The relevant Sections, Policies and Objectives of the Laois CDP, which have significance to the proposed development are outlined below and have been informed

as appropriate by the Wind Energy Strategy as outlined in Appendix V of the Laois CDP 2021-2027 and referenced later in this report.

### *Climate Action and Energy*

Chapter 3 (Climate Action and Energy) includes the aim “To reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.”

The following are the pertinent policies and objectives of the Council to:

- CMRE 1 - Prepare a Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) for County Laois including to identify the target which County Laois can contribute in delivering its share of overall Government targets on renewable energy and climate change mitigation over the plan period, and in particular wind energy production and the potential wind energy resource (in megawatts), and commencement of the variation to the County Development Plan within 1 year of adoption of the plan. Once adopted this will be by way of a variation to the Laois County Development Plan
- CM RE 2 – Promote and encourage the development of energy from renewable sources such as hydro, bio-energy, wind, solar, geothermal and landfill gas subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria in co-operation with statutory and other energy providers.
- CM RE 5 – Promote and facilitate wind energy development in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Wind Energy Development (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government) and any update thereof and the Appendix 5 Wind Energy Strategy of this Plan, the Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change, and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.
- CM RE 6 - Ensure a setback distance for Wind turbines from schools, dwellings, community centres and all public roads in all areas open for consideration for wind farm development as per the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Wind Energy Development (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government).
- CM RE 7 – Promote the location of wind farms and wind energy infrastructure in the ‘preferred areas’ as outlined on Map 3.2 to prohibit such infrastructure in areas as ‘Areas not open for consideration’ and to consider, subject to appropriate assessment, the location of wind generating infrastructure in areas ‘open for consideration’ and as per the Laois Wind Energy Strategy 2021-2027.

Section 3.5.5 (Wind Energy) states that there are a number of issues which must be taken into consideration when dealing with applications for wind energy development.

These include visual impact, landscape protection, impacts on residential amenity, impact on wildlife and habitats, connections to the national grid and impact of construction and ancillary infrastructure including access roads and grid connections. The Council will have regard to the Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines for

Planning Authorities (DHPLG, 2019) in relation to the siting and development of wind turbines and the information required as part of a planning application.

Appendix 5 (Wind Energy Strategy) of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 includes the methodology used to inform the wind energy strategy for County Laois.

The methodology has been primarily informed by a number of considerations including the amount of existing and approved capacity in the county to date, the potential of other renewable energy options including solar, available wind data and transmission network, settlement patterns and population densities of the county as well as the relevant environmental, tourism promotion and landscape policies in the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Section 4 of Appendix 5 includes reference to:

- Wind Resource Mapping
- Transmission Network
- Settlement Patterns and Population Densities
- Designated Areas
- Landscape Character Types in County Laois
- Views and Prospects Worthy of Preservation
- Archaeology
- Recreation, Tourism and Amenity
- Landslide Susceptibility
- Wind Energy Strategies in Adjoining Counties

Appendix 5 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 includes the following Wind Energy policies which are considered to be relevant:

- WES 1: Development of Renewable Energy Generation - It is the policy of the Council to support, in principle and in appropriate scales and locations, the development of wind energy resources in County Laois. The future sustainable development of the County is dependent on a secure supply of energy. There is a need to promote the development of renewable energy to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and to comply with national and European policies with regards to renewable energy resources and to address the challenge of climate change. It will be an objective of the Council to ensure the security of energy supply by accommodating the development of wind energy resources in appropriate areas and at appropriate scales in the county.
- WES 2: Development of Low Carbon Economy - Laois County Council will seek to promote itself as moving towards becoming a low carbon County by 2018 as a means of attracting inward investment to the County and the wider Midlands region.
- WES4: Community Involvement and Gain - Laois County Council will seek to promote community involvement and require community benefit where possible in proposed windfarm developments.

### *Specific Area Policies*

Three area classifications [there are no Strategic Areas] have been recommended for windfarm development in County Laois and specific policies pertaining to each are presented below:

- WES 5: Preferred Areas - These areas are considered suitable for windfarm development because of sufficient wind speeds, access to grid network, and established patterns of enquiries.

Projects within these areas must demonstrate conformity with existing and approved wind farms to avoid visual clutter, be developed in line with the Planning Guidelines in terms of siting, layout and environmental studies. Proximity to a Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area will require a Habitats Directive Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitat Regulations.

- WES 6: Areas Open for Consideration - Wind energy applications in these areas will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis subject to viable wind speeds, environmental resources and constraints and cumulative impacts.
- WES 7: Areas Not Open for Consideration - These areas are not considered suitable for wind farm development due to their overall sensitivity arising from landscape, ecological, recreational and/or cultural and built heritage resources as well as their limited wind regime.

Section 6 of Appendix 5 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 includes the Council's development management standards for Wind Development. These are as listed as follows:

- Buffer Zones
- Boundary
- Shadow Flicker
- Cumulative Impacts
- Archaeology
- Bird Migratory Routes
- Fencing
- Noise
- Environmental Monitoring
- Roads
- Aquifers
- Ancillary Structures and Equipment
- Grid Connection
- Electromagnetic Interference
- Aeronautical Safety
- Financial Contributions
- Safety Aspects
- Single Turbine Developments
- Decommissioning of associated infrastructure at end of life.

Map 3.2 (Wind Energy) of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 includes reference to the following:

- Preferred Areas - Preferred Areas are deemed suitable for wind energy development unless specific local planning circumstances within the context of the development plan support a decision to refuse;

- Areas Open for Consideration - Applications in these areas will be treated on their merits with the onus on the applicant to demonstrate why the development should be granted permission; and
- Areas Not Open for Consideration - These are areas identified as particularly unsuitable for windfarm development. This category is used for areas which due to their scenic, ecological or tourism values are unable to accommodate development of this type.

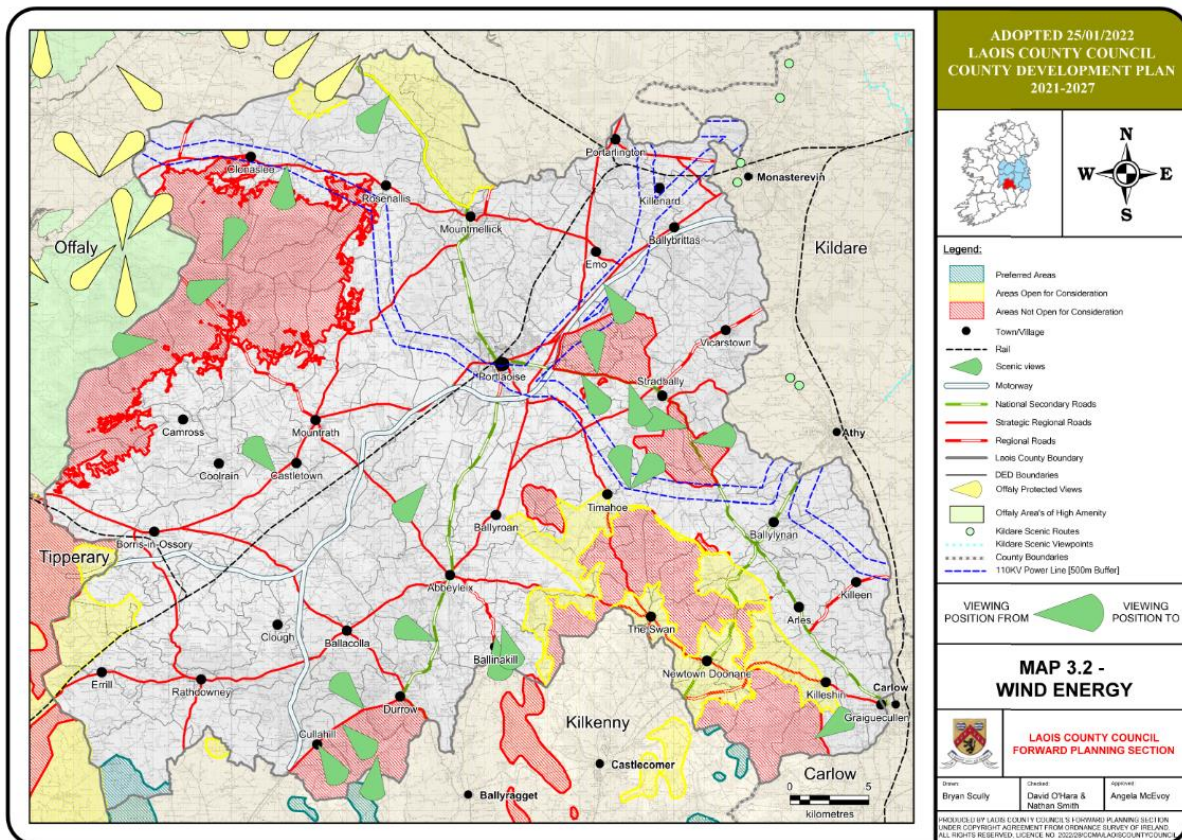


Figure 7.0 Wind Energy Map

### Landscape

Section 11.10 of the Laois CDP addresses matters associated with landscape in the County.

Laois County Council has prepared a Landscape Character Assessment to identify specific areas that are characterised by sensitive landscapes. Sensitive areas include upland areas, visually open and expansive areas and areas in the vicinity of natural heritage or built heritage assets or scenic views.

The Assessment aims to will help developers select less sensitive sites for development. Landscape Character Types are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout any defined area. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use. For example, blanket bog uplands are distinct landscape character types and are recognisable as such whether they occur in County Laois or other counties.

The Landscape Character Areas for County Laois are as follows and are identified in

Map 11.7.

- Hills and Upland
- Lowland Agricultural Areas
- River Corridors and Lakes
- Mountain Areas
- Peatland Areas
- Urban Fringes
- Rolling Hills

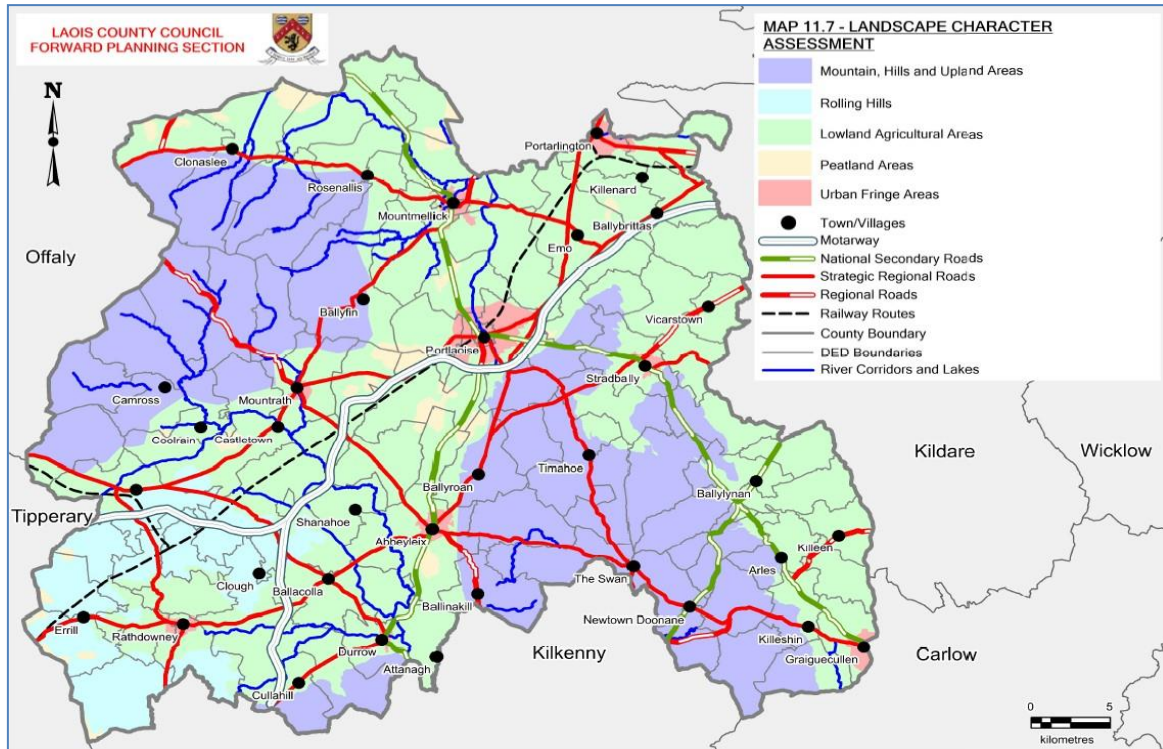


Figure 8.0 – Laois Landscape Character Assessment

Map 11.7: Landscape Character Assessment (Source Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027)

The application site is located outside the Laois County Council boundary but the proposed grid network for the development runs through northern Laois beginning in the Urban Fringe Area (shaded red in the above map) and running out along into the Lowland Agricultural Areas (shaded green in the above map) landscape character area.

The following is an extract of Table 11.6 (Landscape Sensitivity) of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Sensitivity	Landscape Character Area and Special Features	Description
Low Sensitivity	Lowland Agricultural Areas, Urban Fringes	Areas with the capacity to generally accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area

### **Landscape Sensitivity (Source Table 11.6 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027)**

The pertinent landscape policies with respect to the proposed development of the Council are as follows:

<b>Policy Objectives for Landscape Character Areas</b>	
<b>LCA 1</b>	Ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity, as indicated in Table 11.6 of the Plan, is an important factor in determining development uses. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design, type and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations.
<b>LCA 2</b>	Protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the existing local landscape and conserve valuable habitat including any European and National Designations.

<b>Policy Objectives for Lowland Agricultural Areas</b>	
<b>LCA 12</b>	Recognise that this lowland landscape character area includes areas of significant landscape and ecological value, which are worthy of protection, particularly the 18th and 19th century estate landscapes and associated parkland & woodland to develop them as a tourism resource.
<b>LCA 13</b>	Continue to permit development that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, whilst taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation
<b>LCA 14</b>	Recognise that the lowlands are made up of a variety of working landscapes, which are critical resources for sustaining the economic and social wellbeing of the county
<b>LCA 15</b>	Promote good agricultural practices to create a sustainable rural economy and support incentives for smaller rural/family farms to manage their land to avoid loss of hedgerows and field patterns.

### **Views and Prospects**

Scenic routes and protected views consist of important and valued views and prospects within the county. Table 11.7 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2022 lists the specific scenic views of the landscape, many of which are located along scenic routes and include built and archaeological features. Map 11.8 also indicates such scenic views within the county, which is below.

The Council recognises the need to protect the character of the county by protecting views and scenic routes.

Laois County Council recognises that the site of the turbines does not fall within Laois County Council Authority Boundary and only the Grid Connection route traverses into Laois County Council functional area. Therefore, the works required in Laois will not be affected by the developments impact on protected views.

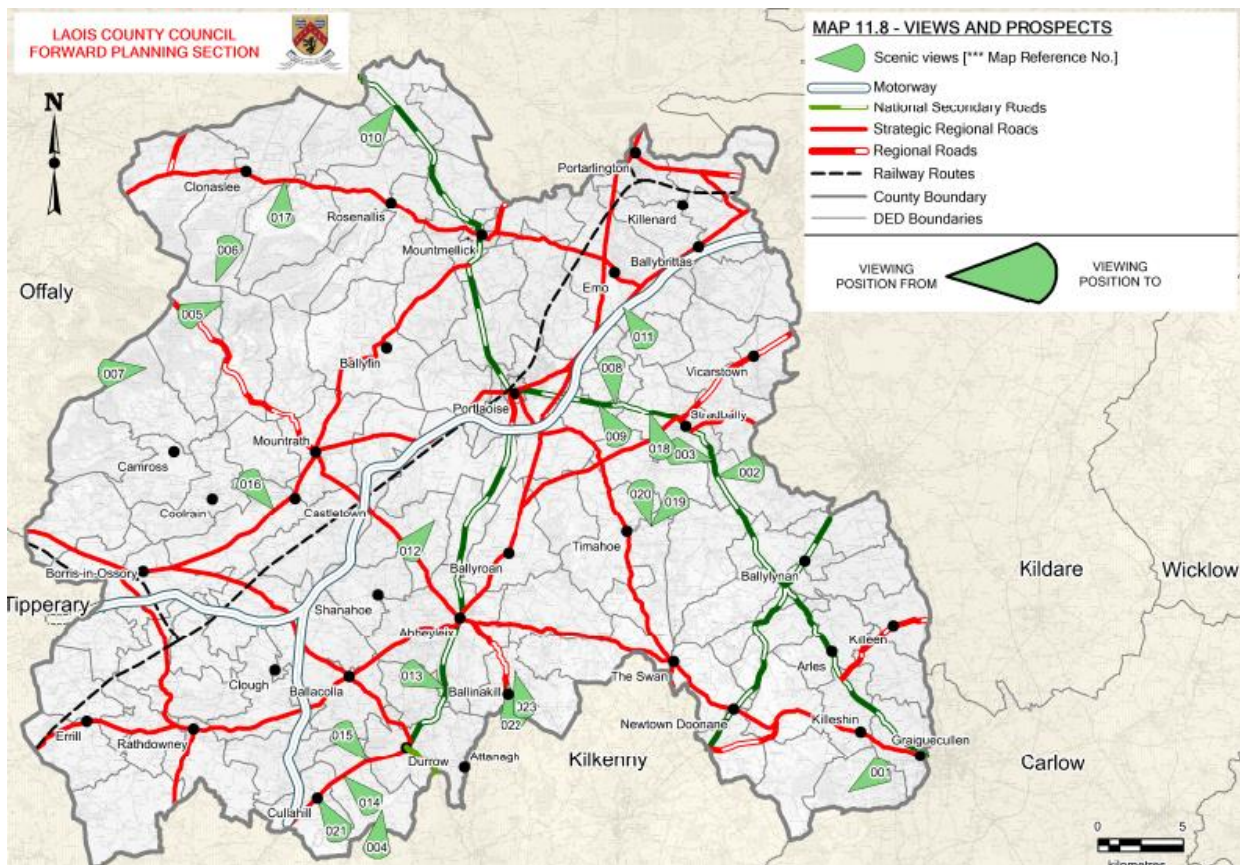


Figure 9.0 – Laois Viewpoints / Scenic Views

## 6.0 Relevant Planning History and Enforcement Matters

### 6.1 Planning History

The applicant has prepared a desktop study and advised that no relevant planning history was available for the subject land. A summary of planning applications within 500m of the proposed development site have been noted, none of which are located within the Laois County Boundary.

For the purpose of this report and relevant to Laois County Council:

24/321064: SID - Statkraft Ireland were granted permission for One (1) 110kV substation with associated compound, including Two (2) single storey control and operational buildings, electrical plant, equipment, cabling, lighting, CCTV, lightning masts, diesel generator and diesel tank, security palisade fencing, • 2.45km underground electric cabling systems between the wind farm site and the proposed 110kV substation overlain with 5.5m wide stone access track • 10.85km of 110kV underground electrical cabling from the proposed 110kV substation to the consented Bracklone 110kV substation including enabling works, services diversions, joint bays, along the grid route • New entrance and access road to substation site from the R423. • New clear span and box culvert/piped water course crossings • Peat/spoil deposition areas and all associated felling, drainage and ancillary works necessary to facilitate the development. The applicant is seeking a ten-year permission for the purposes of construction of the

proposed development as outlined above. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in relation to the project and accompanies the application

23/60261: Neoen Renewables Ireland Ltd were granted permission to develop (i) 136 no. battery storage units; (ii) 17 no. MV skids (PCS + MV/LV Transformer solution); (iii) a new site access and onsite access tracks; (iv) electrical and communications cabling; (v) pole-mounted security cameras; (vi) security fencing and security gates; (vii) a temporary construction compound; (viii) all associated and ancillary site development, landscaping and reinstatement works, over a total site area of ca.3.4 hectares. The operational lifetime of the proposed development is 35-years.

20/638: The Electricity Supply Board were granted permission to construct a 110 kV/MV electricity station on a c.0.74 ha site. The site will be surrounded by a 1.4 m post and rail fence. The substation itself will be located within a compound secured by a 2.6 m high palisade fence and gates and includes: (a) a two-storey control and switchgear building (c.623 sq.m and 15.2 m high); (b) jive transformers with bund walls and associated oil interceptors and NER plinth; (c) two house transformers; (d) two 15 m high lightning monopoles; (e) landscaping, parking, an internal access road and all ancillary works including; connections to public water supply and foul water services or a foul water holding tank if a foul water connection is not available; (f) overhead line (OHL) works including: one new pole set (c.15 m high)- this is required on a temporary basis to divert the 110 kV OHL during construction of the substation, it will be removed on completion of the substation. One existing 110 kV OHL structure within the substation site will be replaced by a line/cable interface mast to facilitate connection of the OHL into the new substation following its completion. The existing pole set to the south will be removed. Planning permission is being sought for a duration of 10 years. Note for information purposes: This application represents a resubmission of a similar application permitted (but now expired) by Laois County Council under Reg. Ref. 10/236. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the application.

## **6.2 Enforcement Information Relating to the Subject Site**

Enforcement matters relating to the subject site fall under the remit of Offaly County Council and Kildare County Council.

## 7.0 Designations

### 7.1 European Designations

The Cable route running through Laois County Council is not located within any SAC or SPA.

However, the cable route runs adjacent to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC along R424 road and crosses the River Barrow and River Nore SAC at Baylough Bridge (Note this is a protected structure RPS 827)

There is 1no. SAC within 20km of the project site (location of the wind turbines only) from a Co. Laois perspective. This SAC is as previously noted, the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.

The applicant notes the following:

*“Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are sites of international importance due to the presence of listed habitats or species that are of European importance. The nearest designated SAC to the Proposed Development Site is the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code: 002162), located circa 2.3 km south at its nearest point. The site is of conservation value for twelve habitats listed on Annex I, and ten species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.”*

*In addition, the GCR includes a crossing of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, which will involve drilling under the riverbed using HDD methodology. The HDD launch and receiver pits will be set back a minimum of 50m of the River Barrow River Nore SAC.*

Special Protection Area:

*“Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for Birds are designated based on the presence of internationally significant populations of listed bird species. The nearest SPA to the Proposed Development Site is the Slieve Blooms SPA (site code: 004160) located circa 19.6 km south-west of the Proposed Development Site.”*

The SPA is designated for the protection of breeding Hen Harrier. It is noted that there are no designated SPAs within 15km of the Proposed Development Site.

### 7.2 National Designations

There are a number of pNHAs within 20km of the Proposed Development and Cable Route Options. The below are relevant to Laois County council.

- Derries Wood - 8.4km to the south of the Site at its nearest point
- Emo Court - 9.1km to the south-east of the Site at its nearest point.
- The Great Heath of Portlaoise - 14.1km to the south southwest of the Site at its nearest point.



A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared by the applicant and included with this application. These designated sites are discussed in detail in both the EIAR and the NIS submitted with the planning application.

The EIAR concludes that having regard to the precautionary principle, the Proposed Project will not result in a significant residual effect on any habitat of high ecological significance and will not have any significant effects on the ecology of the wider area. Provided that the Proposed Project is constructed, operated and decommissioned in accordance with the design, best practice and mitigation that is described within this EIAR, significant effects on biodiversity are not anticipated at any geographic scale.

The NIS concludes that it has been objectively concluded that the proposed Wind Farm at Derrynadarragh will not adversely affect (either directly or indirectly) the integrity and conservation status of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC [002162] or any other European Site in view of the conservation objectives for this site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

## **8.0 Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas**

Within County Laois, three protected architectural heritage structures fall within the 100-metre corridor of the proposed grid connection route. These comprise two road bridges that the route crosses, namely Baylough Bridge (RPS 827) and Bergin's Bridge (RPS 826). Horizontal directional drilling is proposed at both locations, meaning no physical works or interventions will occur to these protected structures.

A third protected structure, Wheelahan's Bridge (RPS 547), lies approximately 50 m south of the grid connection route and will not be affected.

Volume II, Chapter 15 of the EIAR states that in relation to Laois the Grid Connection Route will comprise an underground cable which will primarily be located within public roads and will include horizontal directional drilling at watercourse crossings. The EIAR states that the horizontal directional drilling "*will result in no likely significant direct effects on these structures or their any potential unrecorded underwater archaeological features that may exist within their associated watercourses*" and "*no likely significant indirect effects will arise during the construction phase.*"

Overall, the EIAR states that "*The grid connection will comprise a buried cable within existing roads and will result in no likely significant direct or indirect effects on the cultural heritage resource during the operational phase.*"



Figure 11.0 – Laois Protected Structures along the cable route

## 9.0 Public Water Scheme Areas and any history of flooding relevant to the site

### 9.1 Public Water Scheme Areas

The Public Supply Source Protection Areas (SPA) comprises area around groundwater abstraction points that are managed by Uisce Eireann to supply public water supply across Ireland.

The Grid Connection Route within Laois crosses Flood Zone A and B on a section of the road R424 at the townland of Clonanny and at Baylough Bridge and beyond further north.

## 10.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)

The following section gives an overview of the EIAR submitted as part of this planning application.

The EIAR is considered to be set out in a clear format. The table below provides a brief summary of the environmental impacts of the proposal as outlined in the chapters contained in the EIAR.

### 1. Introduction

This chapter is clearly set out and indexed. The introduction sets out and refers to the need for the proposed development and the proposed economic benefits envisaged,

from the proposal are outlined. The structure of the EIAR is set out and the persons responsible for the preparation of the EIAR are identified.

## **2. Description of Proposed Development**

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) describes the proposed location and components of the Proposed Development and provides details on the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development in compliance with the EIA Directive ((Directive 2011/92 EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (as amended)). This forms the basis of the assessments presented within the EIAR. Further details on the development are set out in this chapter.

## **3. Site Selection & Alternatives**

The chapter in accordance with EIA guidance document: 'Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report' (EU, 2017), sets out the reasonable alternatives which were considered by the Applicant for the Proposed Development. It provides a summary of the rationale for selecting the chosen design/layout having considered the site constraints, comments from prescribed bodies, comments from the general public, and environmental impacts. It describes the site selection process, alternative design philosophies, alternative layouts and the do-nothing alternative.

The chapter concludes that “the final proposed layout of the Derrynadarragh Wind Farm as assessed throughout this EIAR is thought to be the optimal design which minimises effects on the receiving environment, while providing significant renewable electricity to the national grid, in line with national energy and climate policy”

## **4. Planning Policy Context**

This chapter outlines current International, National, Regional, and Local policy (where relevant) in combination with legislation relating to the Proposed Development of Derrynadarragh Wind Farm, which is located in the jurisdiction of County Kildare and County Offaly, and the associated Grid Connection Route which covers the jurisdictions of County Kildare, Offaly and Laois. The Proposed Development thereby refers to all elements of the project to be assessed in the EIAR, the details of which are set out within Chapter 2: Development Description. These elements include the Proposed Wind Farm, Proposed Grid Connection, and Proposed Turbine Delivery Route.

## **5. EIA Scoping and Consultation**

This chapter outlines the consultation and EIAR scoping undertaken to identify the significant effects of the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm project. A comprehensive and detailed consultation process was carried out, during which numerous points and submissions were raised that informed both the project design and the content of the EIAR. This chapter summarises the main issues that emerged and explains how they were addressed within the EIAR. It also describes the scoping, consultation, and pre-application meetings held with An Coimisiún Pleanála (formerly An Bord Pleanála), Kildare County Council, and Offaly County Council. Following the receipt of scoping responses, further engagement was undertaken with relevant consultees where required

## **6. Population and Human Health**

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) assesses the likely significant direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Development on Population and Human Health. It outlines the existing environment and evaluates potential impacts

during construction, operation and decommissioning, including effects on population, employment and economic activity, land use, recreation, amenity, tourism, and human health and safety. The assessment draws on findings from other EIAR chapters, such as air and climate, noise, water, shadow flicker, traffic, landscape and material assets, and also considers potential impacts on socio-economic conditions, population trends, community facilities, human perception and safety.

The chapter concludes that “once mitigation measures set out throughout this EIAR are implemented, no significant negative effects on population and human health are predicted to occur as a result of the proposed development of the Proposed Development of Derrynadarragh Wind Farm.”

## **7. *Air Quality and Climate***

This chapter identifies, describes and assesses the likely significant direct, indirect and cumulative effects on air quality and climate arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm.

The chapter concludes that the proposed development will have no likely significant effects expected on Air Quality or Climate as a result of the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development. Also, there are no likely significant cumulative effects expected on Air Quality and Climate as a result of other existing or proposed developments.

In addition, there will be a likely long term positive residual effect on air quality and climate as a result of the development due to the displacement of fossil fuels.

## **8. *Noise and Vibration***

The chapter considers noise and vibration associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

The assessment is based on the Vestas V162 7.2MW turbine with a 105m hub height.

The construction noise assessment has determined that construction and decommissioning noise will be temporary and generally within acceptable limits (ranging from not significant to moderate), with short-lived higher levels possible during grid and delivery route works. Operational noise from the turbines and substation meets all required standards, with only slight to moderate long-term effects expected for the closest dwellings.

## **9. *Biodiversity***

This chapter examines the likely significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm, associated grid connection and turbine delivery routes on existing biodiversity, including flora (plants), non-volant fauna (animals) and habitats in both the terrestrial and aquatic environment.

It concludes that the proposed wind farm site mainly consists of common agricultural and woodland habitats typical of the Irish Midlands, with no Annex I habitats present. Surveys carried out between 2021 and 2025 identified protected species such as bats, badgers and otters, and the project design incorporates avoidance and mitigation measures to prevent significant impacts. Through careful siting and mitigation, no significant residual effects on important habitats or local ecology are expected. Provided the project follows the design and best-practice measures outlined in the EIAR, significant biodiversity effects are not anticipated at any scale.

## **10. Ornithology**

This chapter assesses the likely significant effects of the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm on birds (ornithological receptors). Receptors including species deemed to be of high conservation interest that are afforded protection under national and international legislation such as the Wildlife Acts 1976-2024 as amended and the EU Birds Directive 2009/147/EC.

The chapter concludes that no significant individual or cumulative effects on ornithology are anticipated.

## **11. Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology**

This chapter examines the likely effects of the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm, associated grid connection and turbine delivery route on existing geological and hydrogeological conditions within the study area. The primary focus of this chapter is on the Site which has the most potential to impact the underlying geological and hydrogeological receptors. The GCR is also assessed, however their interaction with geological and hydrogeological receptors can be considered far less impactful as the works are proposed along existing roads and will require only minor excavation / accommodation works.

The chapter concludes that overall, the development alone or combined with other projects, is not likely to cause any significant adverse environmental effects in relation to land, soils, geology or hydrogeology.

## **12. Flooding, Hydrology and Water Quality**

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) examines the likely effects of the Proposed Development on Hydrology and Water Quality. The chapter includes a description of the existing environment in respect of hydrology and water quality and considers the likely significant effects arising from the Proposed Development during construction, operation and decommissioning.

The chapter concludes that the design of the project, together with the prevention and mitigation measures to be implemented, ensures that the proposed development will not cause any significant adverse effects on hydrology or water quality, either on its own or in combination with other projects

## **13. Shadow Flicker**

This chapter has been prepared to assess the potential shadow flicker effects from the operation of the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm (the 'Proposed Development') traversing the boundaries of Counties Kildare, and Offaly.

The chapter concludes that following implementation of mitigation measures, there will be no likely significant effects in relation to shadow flicker.

## **14. Traffic and Transport**

This chapter assesses how the proposed wind farm, substation, grid connection and turbine delivery route may affect local traffic and the surrounding road network during construction, operation and decommissioning. It evaluates potential increases in traffic, impacts on road capacity, and identifies mitigation measures where needed. The

chapter also considers potential cumulative traffic impacts from other developments in the area.

A 24-month construction programme was assumed for construction traffic generation movement calculations as part of this assessment.

In relation to Laois - Grid works within the public road corridor and private electrical network cabling are estimated to take approximately 8 months on the assumption that an average of 75m-100m of cable is installed each day. The trenching and cabling works at the crossing points will be managed by a Stop/Go system without the need to close the road. Cable trenches can be excavated and covered using trench covers to maintain traffic flow.

The EIAR notes that “in the event planning permission is granted for the proposed development, the final TMP will address the requirements of any relevant planning conditions, including any additional mitigation measures which are conditioned.”

### **15. *Archaeology and Cultural Heritage***

This chapter examines the potential effects of the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm, associated grid connection and turbine delivery route on the existing cultural heritage resource.

The report concludes that:

- Construction will not result in significant residual effects, as archaeological testing and monitoring will ensure any finds are preserved or recorded.
- Operation may cause slight to moderate visual effects on the wider cultural heritage landscape, but these are not considered significant.
- Decommissioning will not cause significant effects and will remove the operational visual impacts.

### **16. *Landscape and Visual Amenity***

This chapter examines the potential effects of the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm, associated grid connection, and turbine delivery route, on the landscape and visual amenity of the receiving environment. Where significant effects are predicted, the chapter identifies appropriate mitigation strategies therein. The assessment considers the potential effects during the construction, operational, and decommissioning phases.

### **17. *Material Assets, Telecommunications and Aviation***

This chapter assesses the likely significant effects of the proposed Project on Material Assets (Gas, Water, Electricity Cables etc.)\_and Utility Infrastructure, Telecommunications and Broadcasting and Aviation that might potentially be affected by the Proposed Development.

The chapter concludes that the proposed development is not expected to interfere with existing material assets or utilities, and consultation with utility providers confirmed no significant impacts on electricity, water or gas networks during any project phase. Design measures and careful planning will ensure construction does not affect existing infrastructure, and any road or delivery-route adjustments will be managed with the relevant authorities. Operational impacts on utilities are negligible, and the substation will provide a long-term positive contribution to the electricity network. Telecommunications and aviation assessments found no significant issues, with one

microwave link mitigated through turbine micro-siting. The site is outside restricted aviation zones, and while obstacle lighting requirements may need further review, no adverse aviation effects are anticipated.

### **18. Interactions of the Foregoing**

This Chapter assesses the potential for interactions and inter-relationships between one aspect of the environment and another which can result in an impact being either positive or negative, as well as having varying significance.

The chapter concludes noting that the Proposed Development has potential to impact on various environmental aspects as detailed throughout this EIAR. As outlined in this Chapter, there are interactions and inter-relationships between these aspects as described above. The EIAR has considered these interactions and inter-relationships throughout the assessment, firstly through the design of the Proposed Development, to avoid effects where possible and also in the definition of suitable mitigation measures to minimise potential effects. Any significant effect associated with the interactions of environmental effects outlined in this chapter will be avoided due to the implementation of mitigation measures as detailed throughout the EIAR

## **11.0 Third Party Observations / Submission Submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála**

On the date of submission of this report to the members of Laois County Council for consideration, the Planning Department has not been notified of any third-party submissions or referrals from prescribed bodies, that had been submitted to the Board. The Planning Authority note that the last day for public submissions to be made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála is before **5.30pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026**.

The Planning Authority have to submit their own report to the board within 10 weeks, before **5.30pm on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

## **12.0 Reports of Relevant Local Authority Departments**

### **Environment Department – Laois County Council**

Specific Conditions:

1. Before development commences the applicant shall submit a Resource & Waste & Management Plan (RWMP), for agreement in writing with the Planning Authority. This plan shall be prepared in accordance with the “Best Practice Guidelines for the Preparation of Resource & Waste Management Plans for Construction & Demolition Projects”, published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2021. The Plan shall include for all non-hazardous and hazardous waste.

The Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the recommendations of Appendix-C ‘Tier 1 Projects’ of the above EPA publication. The RWMP shall include proposals to adhere to best practice and protocols. The RWMP shall include specific proposals as to how the RWMP will be measured and monitored for effectiveness.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable waste management.

2. Any surplus excavated material or construction & demolition wastes to be disposed off-site, shall be disposed of solely to an authorised facility. All transport of surplus/waste material off-site shall only be carried out by waste hauliers, who are authorised by the National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO). The applicant shall keep documentary evidence of:

- a. the types and quantities of waste materials disposed off-site;
- b. the authorised destination facility; and
- c. the authorised waste collection hauliers used.
- d. The clearance of any vegetation including trees and scrub should be carried out outside the bird-breeding season (1 March – 31 August inclusive) or as stipulated under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000.
- e. All operations on site shall be carried out in such a manner that noise, air emissions and/or odour do not result in significant impairment or significant interference with amenities or the environment beyond the site boundary
- f. The developer is required to familiarise themselves with the Waste Management (Landfill Levy) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 prior to commencement of the development and provide for this in the RWMP

**Reason:** In the interest of environmental protection and the protection of surface and ground waters.

3. All overground, temporary or permanent fuel/chemical storage tanks shall be adequately bunded to protect against spillage and leakage etc. Bunding shall be impermeable and shall be capable of retaining a volume equal to 1.50 times the capacity of the overground storage tank it is being provided for. Filling and off-take points shall be located within the bunded area.

**Reason:** In the interest of environmental protection and the protection of surface and ground waters.

4. The segregation, storage and presentation of waste shall be in accordance with Laois County Council's Waste Management (Storage, Presentation and Segregation of Household & Commercial Waste) Bye-Laws 2018. The storage of waste receptacles/bins shall not be permitted on the public footpath or public road.

**Reason:** In the interest of sustainable waste management and the protection of the environment.

5. The burning or burial of waste is expressly prohibited at the site.

**Reason:** In the Interest of public health and to prevent pollution.

### **Roads Department - Laois County Council**

Specific Conditions:

- The developer shall ensure that no damage occurs to the public roadway or footpath during the construction phase of the development. In the event of any damaged

occurs, the developer shall liaise with the Road Design Office to ensure that the public roadway is reinstated to a proper standard. The developer shall be responsible for all cost relating to reinstating of same.

- The developer shall ensure that no debris or construction materials from the site shall be deposited onto the public roadway nor in the vicinity of the site during the construction phase of the proposed development.
- The developer shall obtain a road opening licence from Laois County Council, prior to carrying out any works on the public footpath or if making connections to any underground services on the public road, the verge, or the public footpath.
- The developer shall ensure all external lighting shall be cowled away from the public roadway.
- All surface water run-off shall be collected and disposed of within the site to adequately sized soak pits, drains or adjacent watercourses. In particular, no such surface water run-off shall be allowed to flow onto the public roadway or adjoining properties.
- The development shall not impair existing land or road drainage.
- All works adjacent to the public road shall be carried out under a traffic management plan designed by a competent designer under Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual.
- Lines of sight at the entrance shall be maintained at all times in accordance with section 2 of the Laois County Council Roads & Parking Standards 2007.
- Prior to commencement of development, the developer undertake a detailed condition survey of the proposed construction / haul routes and the proposed grid connection routes (i.e., L-71764, L-71765, L-7176, L-71761, R-424). The developer shall submit a pavement strength analysis and culvert/bridge bearing capacity analysis report for these roads. The report should include the proposed ongoing maintenance programme to be implemented during the construction stage to avoid deterioration of the regional and local roads.
- The condition survey of the roads, culverts and bridges shall be carried out by a suitably qualified engineer at pre and post construction. The extent of the survey shall be agreed with the Eastern Area MD office, prior to commencement of development and shall be carried out at the developer's expense.
- The developer shall undertake a pre-condition photographic survey of the L-71764, L-71765, L-7176, L-71761, R-424. Photographs shall be taken at maximum intervals of 10m with an emphasis on recording existing defects. The pre-condition survey shall be submitted to the Eastern Area Engineer / Road Design Office prior to commencement of development.
- The developer shall undertake a post-construction photographic survey of the L-71764, L-71765, L-7176, L-71761, R-424. Photographs shall be taken at maximum intervals of 10m with an emphasis on recording existing defects. A post-construction report shall be prepared identifying any remedial measures required to return the roads to a condition matching the existing as recorded in the pre-condition survey or

better as per the submitted application. This report shall be submitted to Eastern Area Engineer / Road Design Office, and remedial measures, where required, shall be agreed in writing with the Eastern Area Engineer / Road Design Office prior to any necessary remedial works commencing on site. The developer shall be responsible for the cost of any remedial works.

Note: Prior to construction, the developer shall provide written confirmation to the Road Design Department of Laois County Council, that all amendments required have been fulfilled.

### 13.0 Planning Authority’s Assessment and Views

#### 13.1 Principle of the proposed development

The Planning Statement and Figure 7-3 of the EIAR includes an overlay of the proposed development on Map 3.2 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027. This is shown below.

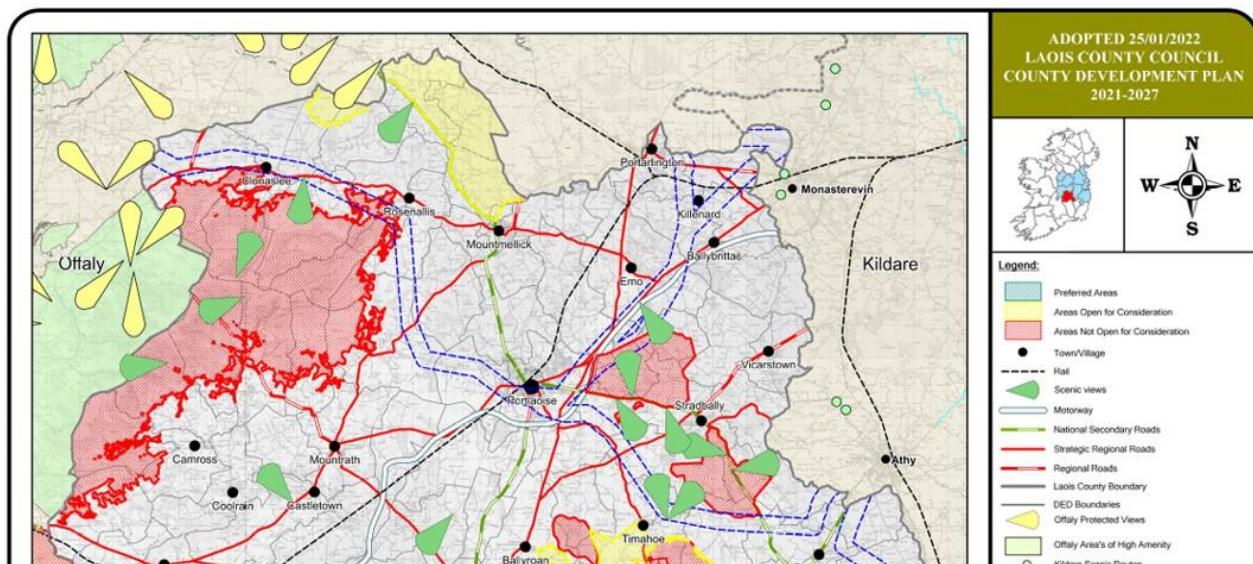


Figure 12.0 – Wind Energy Map (Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027)

It is noted that the proposed wind farm site itself falls within the administrative boundaries of Kildare and Offaly; however the proposed grid connection route runs from the site, through the administrative boundary of Laois County Council, to Bracklone Substation located on the outskirts of Portarlinton.

It is therefore noted that while the Portarlinton region is not highlighted as a potential location under the LCDP for wind energy, the proposed turbines will not be located in Laois and the development in Laois will only consist of the proposed grid connection cabling. The proposed turbines will be located approximately 6.5km northeast of Portarlinton.

The overall principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable, subject to the project demonstrating full compliance with national and local planning policy and guidance, and ensuring that the grid connection, including its route, design and construction methods, is delivered in accordance with all relevant technical, environmental and statutory requirements.

### **13.2 Siting and Design**

Specifically to Laois, the proposed development follows the R420 from lands at Bracklone on the outskirts of Portarlinton along the Lea Road to Ullard or Controversyland meeting the L7176 into Kildare and back into Laois at the townland of Inchacooly

The site of the turbines is located c. 6.5km northeast of Portarlinton and traverse Co. Kildare and Co. Offaly.

The roadway in which the route follows is narrow once it turns off the R420 and will require significant traffic management solutions in order to avoid disrupting the traffic and surrounding developments during the works to the proposed grid route.

#### Residential Amenity

Residential amenity is not considered to be at risk in this instance, as Laois County Council has determined that the separation distance between the proposed development and the nearest residential dwelling is sufficient to avoid adverse effects. Furthermore, potential shadow flicker impacts have been discounted, as residential receptors within County Laois are situated beyond the threshold distances established in relevant guidance for the control of turbine-related shadow flicker.

The proposed grid connection route may cause some disruption during the construction phase for residential amenity, but this will be for a contained period of time and should be meticulously managed and reviewed as part of the construction management plan and traffic management plan.

#### Design

The turbine dimensions have been specified in the application as follows:

- Maximum Tip height from ground:
  - 4no. – 186m
  - 5no. – 187m
- Hub height of between 105m to 106m
- Rotor Diameter 162m
- Potential power output range of 9 Wind Turbines generating approx. 64.8 MW of electricity per annum
- Conventional three-blade design.

Laois County Council notes that a ratio in the order of 1:1 gives rise to the typical tall, slender and proportionate appearance of turbines. However, LCC also notes that when the rotor diameter exceeds the hub height by a significant margin, the entire structure may become visually dominant. The preferred wind turbine design should be considered against all other reasonable alternatives to ensure that it does not give rise to unacceptable or significant landscape impacts.

From a design perspective, it is noted that the nine turbines are located entirely outside the Laois County Council administrative boundary, with only the grid connection infrastructure traversing into Laois. Consequently, the design impact of the development within Laois is significantly reduced, as no turbine structures, ancillary turbine infrastructure or major above-ground elements are proposed within the county.

The only design considerations (with the exception of views noted as part of the photomontages and verified views supplied) relevant to Laois, relate to the routing,

construction methodology and reinstatement of the grid connection, which will have a substantially lower visual and physical presence compared to the turbine components situated within Offaly and Kildare.

### 13.3 Landscape and Visual Impact

The application site for the wind turbines is located outside the Laois County Council boundary but the proposed grid network for the development runs through northern Laois beginning in the Urban Fringe Area (shaded red) and running out along into the Lowland Agricultural Areas (shaded green) landscape character area.

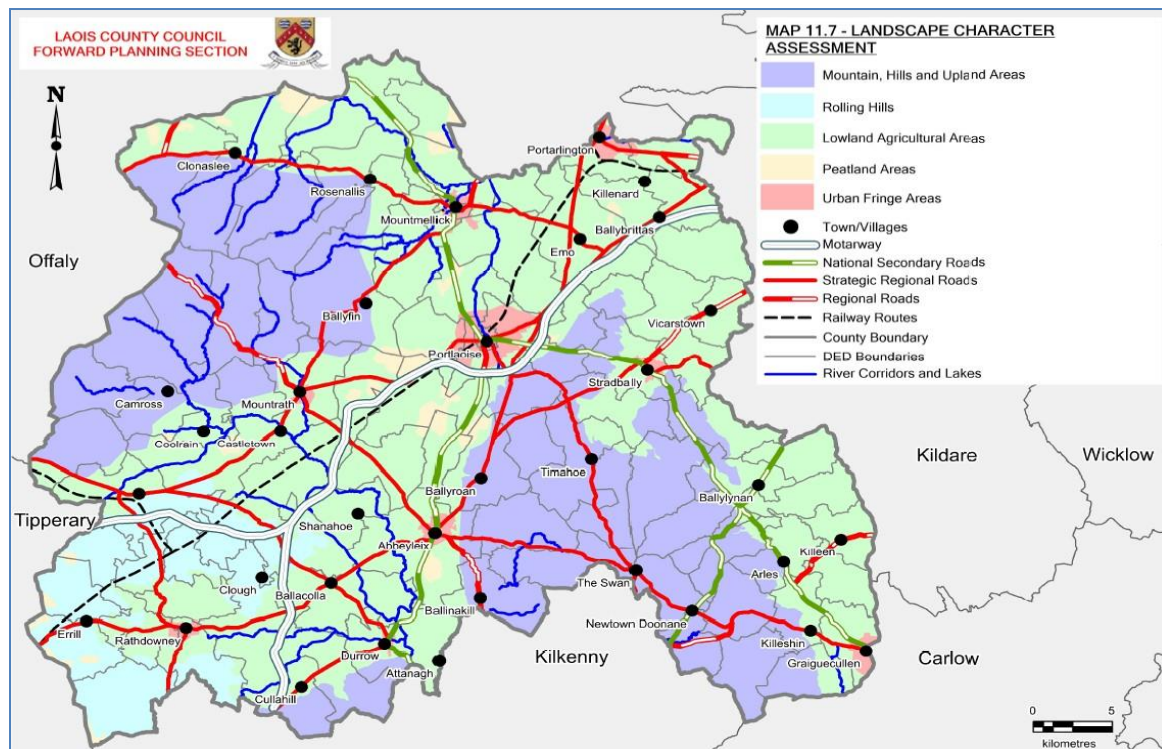


Figure 13.0 – Landscape Character Assessment (Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027)

The elements of the proposed development located within Laois are limited to the grid connection route, as the wind turbines themselves are situated within the administrative areas of Kildare and Offaly County Councils. A review of the submitted viewpoint images and associated photomontages from locations within County Laois demonstrates that the proposed turbines will not give rise to any significant visual effects within Laois. The turbines are either not visible or only marginally perceptible in these views, and any visual influence is assessed as minor.

### 13.4 Flood Risk,

The Planning Authority notes the proposed development of Grid Connection Route within Laois crosses Flood Zone A and B on a section of the road R424 at the townland of Clonanny and at Baylough Bridge and beyond further north.

A Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment was completed as part of the EIAR in order to mitigate flooding risks.

### **13.5 Archaeological Heritage**

Three Protected Structures listed in the Laois County Development Plan 2021–2027 lie within 100m of the grid connection corridor:

- Baylough Bridge (RPS 827),
- Bergin’s Bridge (RPS 826), and
- Wheelahan’s Bridge (RPS 547).

The EIAR notes that the two bridges located directly along the route, Baylough Bridge and Bergin’s Bridge, will be fully avoided by using trenchless construction techniques, ensuring no physical impact. Wheelahan’s Bridge is located approximately 50m south of the route and will not be affected. Presence of a conservation architect or engineer would be required during these works and a review of the proposed methodology by a registered conservation architect or engineer would be required in advance of these works being carried out.

### **13.6 Conclusion**

The Planning Authority acknowledges and supports the strategic importance of the proposed development as a critical element of physical infrastructure required to facilitate future economic and social development, as well as responding to issues of climate change.

The development as proposed is considered to be consistent with the provisions of the Laois County Development Plan 2021–2027 and the associated Wind Energy Strategy. Having regard to the foregoing, it is concluded that the proposal accords with the objectives of the Laois County Development Plan 2021–2027 and is therefore in compliance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### **14.0 Community Gain Conditions**

Section 2.4 of the EIAR states that as part of this Development Proposal, an amenity space is being proposed to be located to the south of the wind farm site. This amenity space will include a grassed area with picnic benches, and 2 no. dedicated car parking spaces for visitors.

In addition the Applicant will set up a community benefit fund which will allocate funds from the Proposed Development to community groups in the area should the Proposed Development be granted planning permission and be successful under the Government’s RESS support programme. If consented, the Proposed Development will apply for the RESS 4 supports and will therefore provide €2 per MWh to the Community Benefit Fund, which is calculated in accordance with the ‘Terms and Conditions for the Fourth Onshore Competition under the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS 4)’.

In line with Community Benefit Fund Guidelines, as governed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), and based on the current project scope, Dara Energy Ltd will generate a Community Benefit Fund estimated at over €3.9 million over the lifetime of the project, estimated at c. €260,000 per annum. The actual fund will vary around this average from year to year, depending on each year's wind conditions. 40% of the fund, totalling c. €104,000, will be allocated to initiatives and projects that support Sustainable

Development goals within the area, with 50% of the fund, c. €130,000, allocated to local clubs, societies and near neighbours.

If consented, the Proposed Development will provide sustainable, low carbon energy generation infrastructure in County Kildare, Offaly and Laois to meet Ireland's growing demand. The development benefits to the local community would include significant investment in local infrastructure and electrical systems, local job creation over the project lifetime of 35 years.

## **15.0 Section 48/49 Development Contributions**

The current Laois Development Contribution Scheme (2025-2031) does not include provision to charge for a grid connection.

## **16.0 Special Development Contribution**

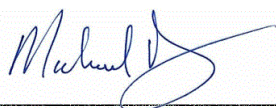
### **16.1 Bond**

In the event of An Coimisiún Pleanála deciding to grant permission for the proposed development, Laois Council recommends a condition requiring the lodgment with the Planning Authority of a cash deposit, a bond of insurance company or other security [of sum to be agreed in writing prior to commencement of the proposed development] to cover any damage to the public thoroughfare including in relation to the carriageway and surface water drainage.

This shall be coupled with an agreement empowering the Planning Authority to apply such security or part thereof to the satisfactory completion or maintenance of any part of the development.

## 17.0 Planning Authority's view on conditions in the event of the Board Deciding to Grant Permission

- Adherence to all conditions as noted above by the Laois County Council Environment Department and Roads Department.
- Timescale for completion, operation and decommissioning the proposed development
- Submission of a detailed Construction and Environmental Management Plan prior to the commencement of development
- Details for protection measures for existing water service infrastructure
- Submission of a detailed Surface Water Management Plan prior to the commencement of development
- Pre and post road surveys (including reinstatement costs)
- Pre and Post survey of the three protected structures (as noted in the report Baylough Bridge (RPS 827), Bergin's Bridge (RPS 826) and Wheelahan's Bridge (RPS 547) and the provision of a detailed Conservation Method Statement, prepared by a Conservation Architect in advance of the commencement of any works.
- Hours of delivery and construction
- The appointment of a traffic management coordinator and submission of a detailed traffic management plan.
- Consultation and agreement with Laois County Council on road widening prior to the commencement of development
- Noise levels during construction and operation, including monitoring and timely procedures to address any issues of complaint
- Measure to mitigate impact on residential amenities.
- A dedicated liaison engineer to be appointed by the developer to liaise with Laois County Council and the local community for the duration of the construction and delivery phase
- Appointment of ecological clerk of works by the developer for the duration of the construction and delivery phase
- Full reinstatement of all disturbed verges, embankments, field entrances, and road margins.
- Development contributions
- Community Gain
- Signage details to be agreed with the local planning authority
- All mitigation measures outlined in the submitted NIS and EIAR be carried out in full and implemented by the developer.
- Conduction of a pre works utility survey and coordination with Irish Water, Gas Networks Ireland, Eir, and ESB Networks regarding potential service conflicts.
- A written Decommissioning and Cable Removal Plan, including environmental safeguards and reinstatement standards.



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**Chief Executive**

26 March 2026 | 11:26:27 GMT

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**Date**



**Our Case Number:** ACP-324055-26



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

Laois County Council  
Aras an Chontae  
Portlaoise  
Co. Laois  
R32 EHP9



**Date:** 12 February 2026

**Re:** 10 year permission for Derrynadarragh wind farm comprising of 9 no. wind turbines, onsite 110kV substation, turbine delivery route and a grid connection route located across various townlands in County Kildare, Offaly and Laois. ([www.derrynadarraghplanning.ie](http://www.derrynadarraghplanning.ie)).

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Coimisiún Pleanála has received an application for permission under section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The application is also the subject of the Renewable Energy Directive III.

It is noted that a copy of the application relating to the proposed development has been sent to the offices of the planning authority.

Please be advised that you are requested to make the application documentation available for public inspection/purchase at your offices in accordance with the terms of the public notice. The pre-application consultation file already sent to you must be associated with the application file documentation. It is the Commission's intention that all of the application documentation will remain available for public inspection during the currency of the application.

Written submissions in relation to the proposed development should be made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála. Two copies of any written submissions received in relation to the application will be forwarded by the Commission to your offices. You are requested to make available for public inspection a copy of the submissions. Please be advised that a fee of €50 is payable to the Commission in order to make a submission on this application.

Section 37E(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires you to submit to the Commission a report setting out the views of the authority on the effects of the proposed development on the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the authority within a period of 10 weeks from the making of the application to the Commission. The application was made to

Tel (01) 858 8100  
Glaó Áitiúil LoCall 1800 275 175  
Facs Fax (01) 872 2684  
Láithreán Gréasáin Website [www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie)  
Ríomhphost Email [communications@pleanala.ie](mailto:communications@pleanala.ie)

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

the Commission on the **5<sup>th</sup> February 2026**, and I can confirm that the deadline for the submission of the report is **16<sup>th</sup> April 2026**.

Please be advised that the Commission may not be in a position to extend the deadline as referred to above having regard to the strict timelines as specified in the European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 within which the Commission is required to make a decision on the application.

In addition to the information required to be submitted with this report by the provisions of section 37E(4-7) please note that the Commission requests that the report address, where relevant, all of the issues identified at section 7 of the attached "Guidelines for Planning Authorities" in respect of section 37A of the Act (these guidelines are available on the Commission's website at [www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie)).

A copy of the planning authority report should also be placed on the public file at the planning authority office.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter. If you have any queries in relation to the matter please contact the undersigned officer of the Commission.

Please quote the above-mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,



Lauren Murphy  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01-8737275

PAX02

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