Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

CE Report to Elected Members on Strategic Infrastructure Development as required by Section 37E(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Derrynadarragh Wind Farm
An Coimisiún Pleanála Case reference: PAX09.324055

Application Details

Applicant:	Dara Energy Limited
Agent:	Fehily Timoney and Company
An Coimisiún Pleanála Case reference:	PAX09.324055
Proposed Development (Summary):	10-year planning permission for wind energy development consisting of 9 no. wind turbines and all associated works – RED III application.
Site Location:	Various townlands in County Kildare, County Offaly and County Laois - *Townlands of Cushina, Clonsast Lower, and Chevychase or Derrynadarragh in County Offaly.*
Associated Website:	https://derrynadarraghwindfarm.ie/

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Due to the scale of the development which comprises of a 9-turbine wind farm with a generation capacity of c.64.8 MW, it has been determined by An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP / the Commission) as constituting Strategic Infrastructure under criteria set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (hereafter referenced as PDA 2000).

ACP determined that *'having regard to the size, scale and location of the proposed wind farm and related development, and to the policy context, it is considered that the proposed development constitutes development that falls within the definition of energy infrastructure in the Seventh Schedule of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), thereby satisfying the requirements set out in section 37A(1) of the Act'*[1]. In addition, the proposed development is also *'considered to be of strategic importance by reference to the requirements of Sections 37A(2) (a), (b) and (c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)'.*

On 4th September 2025[2], the Commission deemed that the proposed development is eligible as Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) by way of a notice served under section 37B(4)(a) of PDA 2000 (as amended) and the application shall be made directly to The Commission who are the competent authority for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The purpose of this report is to set out the Planning Authority's views on the effects of the proposed development on the environment and on the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the authority, having regard in particular to the matters specified in Section 34(2) of the PDA 2000. The matters specified in Section 34(2)(a) are:

(i) the provisions of the development plan,
(ia) any guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28,
(ii) the provisions of any special amenity area order relating 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 other Minister of the Government,
(v) the matters referred to in Subsection [34](4) (Planning conditions)
(va) previous developments by the applicant which have not been satisfactorily completed,
(vb) previous convictions against the applicant for non-compliance with this Act, the Building Control Act 2007 or the Fire Services Act 1981, and
(vi) any other relevant provision or requirement of this Act, and any regulations made thereunder.

In the interests of clarification at this stage, there are no Special Amenity Area Orders (item ii above) in County Offaly. The matters referred to in Subsection 34(4) of the PDA 2000 (as amended) are conditions that may be relevant during the consideration of a normal planning application.

[1] *Inspector's Report ABP-320137-24.*
[2] *OCC refer to the date of the signed Direction by Planning Commissioner, Mr Chris McGarry and stated dated as per the ACP website.*

This report shall be submitted for the consideration of ACP as required under Section 37E(4) of the PDA 2000 (as amended).

The members may, by resolution, decide to attach recommendations to this report (as per Section 37E(6)). The views expressed at the meeting of the Council, where this report is considered, shall also be attached to this report (also per Section 37E(6)). This is known in the legislation as the "Meetings Administrators record" of the Council Meeting.

It should be noted in the outset that upon receipt of this SID application which constitutes a RED III application, the Commission is required to carry out a completeness check which is a mandatory assessment to verify that all necessary documentation for this renewable energy project application has been submitted. The Commission's completeness check is statutorily required to be completed within 45 days from the date the application is made. As this application was submitted on the 5th February, An Coimisiún Pleanála shall have the completeness check completed by Sunday 22nd March 2026. The advancement of a decision by the Commission on the proposed SID is contingent on the completeness check being passed.

It should also be noted that ACP has absolute discretion to request revised proposals or further information in advance of a decision being made under Section 37F(1) of the PDA 2000, as amended.

While the proposed SID application (including EIAR) traverses the functional areas of Kildare County Council, Offaly County Council and Laois County Council, it is to be noted that the focus of this CE report is premised on the extent to which the proposed development relates to the functional area of Co. Offaly.

2. SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Site Location

As outlined in the submitted documentation, the subject site is located approximately 1.7km south of the village of Bracknagh, 5km northwest of Monasterevin, and approximately 6.5km northeast of Portarlington. The site lies to the north and north-east of Derrylea Bog (cutover), while the north-central area of the site surrounds another cutover bog actively harvested for peat. A conifer plantation occurs in the northern part of the wind farm site comprising Sitka spruce. The Cushina River divides the site and acts as the county boundary between Counties Offaly and Kildare.

The lands within the proposed development area are owned by a number of different private landowners (refer to Addendum 2 of submitted planning documentation for full list of landowners).

As detailed in Chapter 2 of the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR):

- The proposed development covers 3 no. County Council jurisdictions including; Kildare County Council, Offaly County Council, and Laois County Council.
- Permission is being sought 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***.

- 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 proposed Grid Connection (GC) comprises of 11.4km of underground electrical cabling and will exit the site to the south and follow the public road to Bracklone Substation (currently under construction). It will pass through 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; Derrylea Road; L71764; L7176; L71761; R424; and R420 (Lea Road).

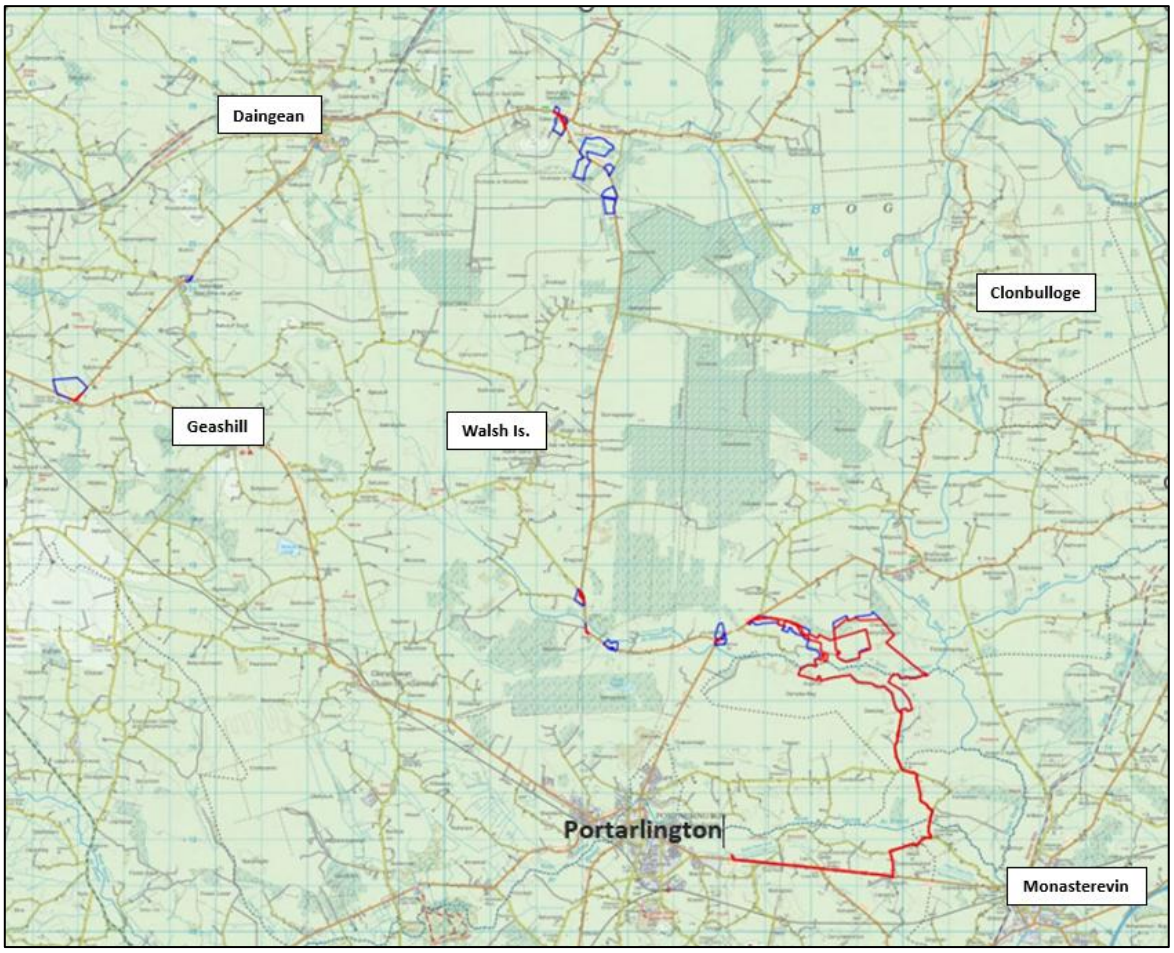


Figure 1: Site Location (source: as submitted with OCC notations added).

The author of this report agrees with the applicant's description of the local area as being mainly characterised by agriculture, with areas of turbary peat extraction activities located outside of, but adjacent to, the site boundary to the centre and south (Derrylea Bog). There is an area of forestry land

within the northern portion of the site. The applicant outlines in Chapter 2 that the site is located on the Derrylea Bog which is connected to Clonsast Bog to the north and Derryounce Bog to the west.

With regard to settlement patterns in the local area, these largely comprise of dispersed one-off rural dwellings fronting onto the local road network. Chapter 2 of the submitted EIAR states the following:

- There are approximately 208 no. residential and commercial properties within 2km of the site.
- The closest property to a turbine is located c.740 m distance and is roughly equidistant north between proposed turbines T2 and T3.
- Bracknagh village is the most proximate settlement located 2km to the north-east.

As detailed by the applicant, the site is located within the lowland topography with predominantly flatlands with Red Hill (194m), Dunmurry Hill (234m) and Grange Hill (223m) located within 10km to the east of the site. There are sections in the north and west of the site that are underlain by till derived from limestones, while the eastern section of the site is underlain by lake marl. The site is predominantly underlain by the Lucan Formation (dark limestone and shale) with a section in the north of the site underlain by the Ballyadams Formation (crinoidal wackestones/ packstone limestone).

Chapter 2 of the submitted EIAR outlines the following:

- The site is located within the Barrow Catchment (ID 14) and the Barrow_SC_040 sub-catchment as defined by the Water Framework Directive (WFD).
- There is 1 no. European site designated for nature conservation within a 5km radius of the potential wind farm site, which is the River Barrow and River Nore Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) (Site code: 002162).
- The Grand Canal Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) (Site code: 002104) is located approximately 4km to east of subject site.
- The site contains a number of habitats that are of ecological importance including treelines to the west of the site, woodland to the south-west and lowland rivers within the Cushina River.
- The proposed wind farm site has designation for a number of fauna on site which include records of hare, a moderate-high value of Irish bat species, otter associated with the Cushina River and a number of identified badger setts within the site.
- The subject site has a number of river catchments located within the proposed site including the River Barrow Watercourse, River Figile Watercourse and the River Cushina Watercourse which are all dominated by coarse fish species.
- There is 1 no. recorded monument located within the Co. Kildare section of the proposed site; a circular Enclosure Site Code KD021-009, approximately 0.4km from T04 on the south-eastern boundary. There are no recorded monuments within the proposed site within County Offaly.
- There are a number of Record of Monuments and Places (RMPS) to the south; within a wider 2km radius, there are approximately 13 no. RMP's.
- There are several archaeological features located adjacent to the GC and TDR, including ringforts and enclosures.

2.2 Development Description

The proposed development, for which consent is being sought for, is described in the submitted documentation as follow:

- Construction of 9 no. wind turbines: tip height of 186-187m above existing ground level.
- 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 (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 subject 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^2) 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 5 no. watercourse crossings, pulling cables and the back filling of trenches and reinstatement works, within the townlands of Cushina in **Co. Offaly**; Aughrim and

Derrylea in **Co. Kildare**, and Inchacooly, Coolnaferagh, Ullard or Controversyland, Clonanny, Lea, Loughmansland Glebe, and Bracklone in **Co. Laois**. The underground cabling will traverse the following roads; Derrylea Road; L71764; 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:
  - Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, and reprofiling of embankment on R420/R402 junction within the townland of Ballina, **Co. Offaly**.
  - 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, **Co. Offaly.**
  - 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, **Co. Offaly.**
  - Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, reprofiling on R400, within the townlands of Drumcaw or Mountlucas, **Co. Offaly.**
  - Construction of load bearing surface, removal of vegetation and trees, reprofiling on R400 at junction to L1013 Enaghan, within the townland of Enaghan, **Co. Offaly.**
  - Construction of load bearing surface on northeastern verge, removal of vegetation and trees, reprofiling on R400, within the townland of Moanvane, **Co. Offaly.**
  - 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, **Co. Offaly.**

The project will have an overall site area of approximately 225.4 hectares (ha) which includes 213.67ha for the footprint of the proposed wind farm; 9.06ha for the grid connection and 2.68ha for the turbine delivery nodes.

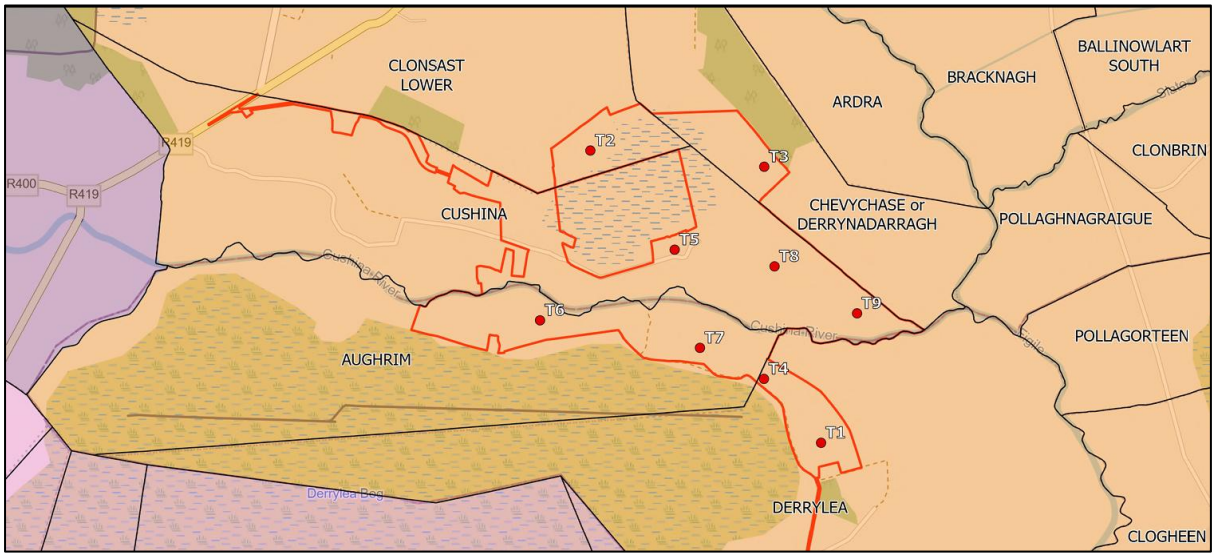


Figure 2: Turbine Locations (source: as submitted).

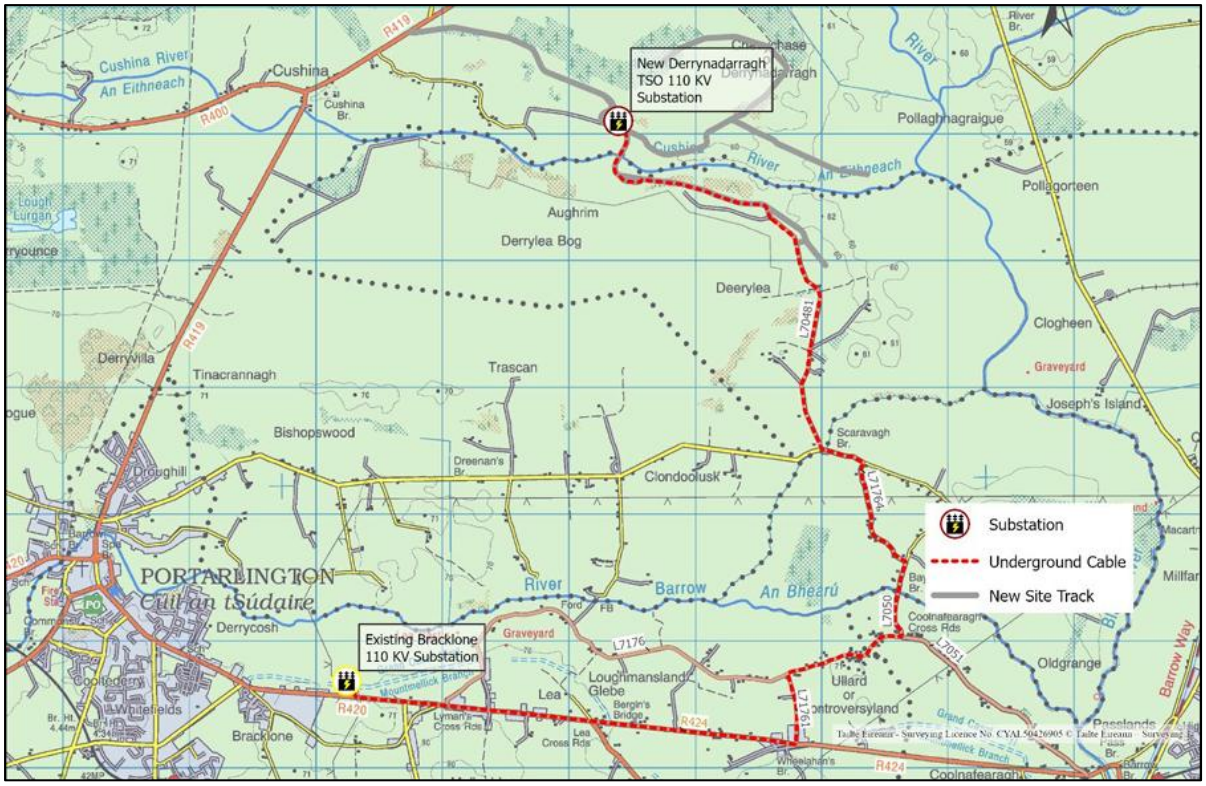


Figure 3: Proposed grid connection route (as submitted).

The applicant outlines that certain minor accommodation works associated with the TDR, not specifically defined within the above description of development (including the provision of passing opportunities along the local road network), are subject to and have been assessed as part of the EIA but for which planning consent is not being sought within the current application. These minor works include hedge or tree trimming, temporary relocation of powerlines/poles, lampposts, signage and temporary local road widening. As noted by the applicant, permission for these minor works will be carried out as necessary through exempted development and under a Road Opening Licence to be sought from Offaly County Council.

As outlined above in the development description, the felling of c.6.01ha of commercial forestry is required to accommodate some of the wind farm infrastructure, and as part of environmental mitigation measures for bat species. 4 no. turbines (T2, T3, T6 and T7) are located within, or next to, forestry. This element of the proposed development will be subject to a separate licensing and/or consenting process.

The applicant advises 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 grid connection, comprising of 11.4km of underground cabling, will exit the subject site to the south and follow the public road to Bracklone Substation which the applicant states is currently under construction.

The applicant seeks a ten-year planning permission and 35-year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire wind farm. They state that the project will be commissioned in a single construction phase and the construction period is likely to last for approximately 24 months.

An EIAR and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the proposed development.

As of 15th August 2025, new measures aimed at fast tracking the permitting procedures for renewable energy projects have been adopted into Irish Law[3]. As the proposed development is covered by the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive III and subject to Section 37JA of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, the planning application for the proposed windfarm is therefore classed as a 'RED III' application.

Figure 4: Turbine Locations (source: OCC).

Turbine Specifications and Layout

For the purposes of the EIAR assessment, the turbine dimensions have been specified as follows:

- 9 no. wind turbines.
- Located within Co. Offaly boundary: T2, T3, T5, T8 and T9.
- Located within Co. Kildare boundary: T1, T4, T6 and T7.

[3] *The European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 (the Regulations) transpose several provisions of the third Renewable Energy Directive (EU Directive 2023/2413) (RED III).*

- Maximum tip height of 187m from top of foundation for T1, T4, T5, T8 and T9 with a hub height of 106m and rotor diameter of 162m.
- Maximum tip height of 186m from top of foundation for T2, T3, T6 and T7 with a hub height of 105m and rotor diameter of 162m.
- Maximum Export Capacity (MEC) of 7.2MW per turbine with a stated total MEC for proposed development of 64.8MW.
- Conventional three-blade design with blades 79.35m in length.
- Proposed turbine colour of light grey non-reflective finish.

Figure 4 above indicates the locations of the 9 no. turbines; the applicant advises that the layout *'reflects the outcome of the iterative engineering and environmental constraints assessments aimed at eliminating or minimising adverse effects on the environment'* and *'been designed to minimise the potential environmental effects of the wind farm while at the same time maximising the energy yield of the wind resource passing over the site'.*

3. KEY RELEVANT POLICY

This section provides an overview of International/European; national; regional; and local policies which are relevant to the proposed development, as referred to in Section 4 of the submitted EIAR.

3.1 International and European Renewable Energy Policy

The following is deemed relevant to the assessment of the proposed development:

RED III (European Renewable Energy Directive (EU/2023/2413))

The European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 (S.I. 274 of 2025) were signed by the Minister of Housing, Local Government & Heritage and came into force on the 6 August 2025. Subsequently, the European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) (No.2) Regulations 2025 (S.I. 426 of 2025) were signed by the Minister on 11 of September and came into force on the 25th September 2025.

RED III is the legal framework for the development of renewable energy across all sectors of the EU economy, supporting clean energy cooperation across EU countries. The Directive sets out a new target for share of energy from renewable sources in the EU of 42.5% for 2030 but is aiming for 45%. It requires Member States to set national contributions to meet the binding target as part of their integrated national energy and climate plans. The directive introduced new provisions to promote the use of renewable energy in heating and cooling, transport, and electricity sectors. It also enhanced the sustainability criteria for biofuels and set specific sub-targets for advanced biofuels and renewable transport fuels of non-biological origin.

European Wind Power Action Plan

The EU target of at least 42.5% of renewables by 2030 will require the installed capacity to grow from 204GW in 2022 to more than 500 GW in 2030. Globally, annual wind capacity additions should reach at least 329GW per year until 2030 to achieve net-aero emissions by 2050, more than quadrupling today's deployment levels of 75GW. The plan identifies six pillars of concerted action by EC Member States and industry including acceleration of deployment through increased predictability and faster

permitting, improved auction design, access to finance, creating a fair and competitive international environment, skills and industry engagement and Member State commitments.

REPowerEU Plan 2022 and Directive EU 2018/2001 (as amended)

This plan was prepared in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It focuses on the need to end the EU's dependence on Russian fossil fuels and to tackle the climate crisis. It includes the accelerated rollout of renewable energy. It amends the Directive on the Promotion of the Use of Energy from Renewable Sources (Directive EU 2018/2001) to require that 45% of energy is from renewable sources.

European Green Deal 2020

The European Commission, in December 2019, announced the European Green Deal which is aimed at making Europe the first climate neutral continent. The Deal seeks to achieve no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, to decouple economic growth from resource use, and to leave no one behind. The EU introduced a set of proposals to align the EUs climate, taxation, energy, and transport policies to support achieving this aim.

The European Climate Law

This plan made the targets set under the European Green Deal legally binding, which also includes achieving a reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions of at least 55% by 2030. Climate neutrality by 2050 means achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions for EU countries as a whole, mainly by cutting emissions, investing in green technologies and protecting the natural environment. The law aims to ensure that all EU policies contribute to this goal and that all sectors of the economy and society play their part.

Climate and Energy Policy Framework 2030

The Climate and Energy Policy Framework 2030 was adopted in 2014 and includes EU-wide targets and policy objectives for the period between 2021-2030. It seeks to drive continued progress towards a low-carbon economy and build a competitive and secure energy system that ensures affordable energy for all consumers and increase the security of supply of the EU's energy supply. It sets targets of at least 40% reduction in green-house gas emissions and at least 32% share of renewable energy from all energy consumed in the EU by 2030.

Effort Sharing Regulation (EU) 2018/842

The Effort Sharing Regulation (EU) 2018/842 lays down obligations on Member States with respect to minimum requirements to fulfil the EU's target of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions 30% below 2005 levels in 2030 in the various sectors and contributes to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement. A GHG reduction target of at least 30% applies to Ireland.

Energy Roadmap 2050

In December 2011 the European Commission published its Communication on the Energy Roadmap for 2050, which looks beyond 2020 targets. The energy agenda set out in the Communication sought to explore the challenges posed by delivering the EU's decarbonisation objective for moving to a competitive low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the year 2050 and commits the EU to reducing greenhouse emissions to 80-95% below 1990 levels by 2050.

3.2 National Policy

The following is deemed relevant to the assessment of the proposed development:

The National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040 - First Revision (April 2025)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) which sets out the strategic vision for Ireland' growth and development up to 2040 was published in 2018 with its first revision in April 2025. The NPF provides the basis for the review and updating of regional strategies and local authority development plans to reflect matters such as updated housing figures, projected jobs growth and renewable energy capacity allocations, including through the zoning of land for residential, employment and a range of other purposes.

Since the publication of the NPF in 2018, research and modelling by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) forecasts substantial population growth over the next decade. The NPF sets out an agenda to cater for a population of between 6.1 to 6.3 million people by 2040, and plan for approximately 50,000 units per annum over that period, doubling the previous 2018 first NPF goal.

The revised NPF highlights the need for the provision of services to support and enable housing development to take place, and to ensure that housing delivery is aligned with the provision of services and facilities for communities. This includes the provision of education, childcare, healthcare and recreational facilities to support the expansion of existing settlements and the creation of new sustainable communities.

There is a clearer focus on planning for climate change in the context of an accelerating climate crisis, and therefore renewable energy, under the revised NPF. Accordingly, the revised NPF has included new policies in relation to renewable energy, including the identification of regional renewable electricity capacity allocations in order to facilitate the accelerated roll-out and delivery of renewable electricity infrastructure for on-shore wind and solar generation development. Each Region must plan for sufficient wind and solar energy development to achieve both the MW targets set out in the revised NPF and the 2030 national renewable electricity generation targets.

The following NPF outcomes and policies are relevant to the proposed development:

- National Strategic Outcome 8 – Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society 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. A target of 80% of the country's electricity needs from renewable sources by 2030 and to achieve net-zero emissions no later than 2050 is stated along with a strategic aim to increase renewable deployment in line with EU targets and national policy objectives up to 2030 and beyond.
- National Policy Objective 55: *To support, the progressive development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential, the sustainable development of enabling onshore and off-shore infrastructure including domestic and international grid connectivity enhancements, non-grid transmission infrastructure, as well as port infrastructure for the marshalling and assembly of wind turbine components and for the operation and maintenance of offshore renewable energy projects.*

- National Policy Objective 66: *The planning system will be responsive to our national environmental challenges and ensure that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the medium and longer-term requirements of all relevant environmental and climate legislation and the sustainable management of our natural capital.*
- National Policy Objective 69: *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 as expressed in the most recently adopted carbon budgets.*
- 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.*
- National Policy Objective 71: *Support the development and upgrading of the national electricity grid infrastructure, including supporting the delivery of renewable electricity generating development.*
- National Policy Objective 75: *Local Authorities shall plan for the delivery of Target Power Capacity (MW) allocations consistent with the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, through their City and County Development Plans.*

National Development Plan, 2025-2035

In July 2025, the updated National Development Plan (NDP) was published. This Plan underpins the NPF Plan, and it sets a framework for investment priorities which includes expenditure commitments to secure a wider range of Strategic Investment Priorities for example, decarbonising energy. Section 3.7 refers to an 80% target by 2030 for renewable sources, which is described as an unprecedented commitment to the decarbonisation of electricity supplies.

National Energy and Climate Plan, 2021-2030

This Plan outlines Irelands energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and looks onwards to 2050. The NECP is a consolidated plan which brings together energy and climate planning into a single process for the first time. It envisages a target of at least 55% renewable energy in electricity by 2030 (compared to 1990 levels).

Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP 2024) and Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP 2025)

CAP 2024 (December 2023) sets out a roadmap to deliver on Irelands climate ambition, of 51% reduction in GHG emissions from 2021-2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. The plan aligns with the legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral ceilings that were agreed by Government in July 2022. The Climate Action Plans have outlined precise goals for renewable energy, focusing on solar, onshore wind, and offshore wind generation. The Key Target for Onshore Wind generation is to achieve 6GW by 2025 and 9GW by 2030.

The Climate Change Advisory Council has made a number of recommendations for actions in the electricity sector in particular around the need for laws to ensure access to information from smart meters, private wire connections, phase-out of coal use, storage, demand management, and the need to streamline the planning process for windfarms. The Climate Action Plan 2025 builds upon CAP 2024 by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and it should be read in conjunction with Climate Action Plan 2024.

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.

National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030 (NBAP)

Ireland's 4th NBAP sets the biodiversity agenda for the period 2023 – 2030. The NBAP has a list of Objectives which promotes biodiversity as follows; Objective 1 Adopt a whole of government, whole of society approach to biodiversity; Objective 2 Meet urgent conservation and restoration needs; Objective 3 Secure nature's contribution to people; Objective 4 Enhance the evidence base for action on biodiversity; Objective 5 Strengthen Irelands contribution to international biodiversity initiatives. The Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023 provides that every public body, as listed in the Act, is obliged to have regard to the objectives and targets in the National Biodiversity Action Plan.

3.3 National Guidelines

The following is deemed relevant to the assessment of the proposed development:

Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2006)

These guidelines provide advice to the Commission and to planning authorities on wind energy development through the Development Plan and 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. 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), and adequacy of the local access road network. 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.

The potential environmental impacts arising from wind energy developments are discussed in Chapter 5. Guidance is given on matters such as noise, shadow flicker, natural heritage, archaeology, architectural heritage, ground conditions, aircraft safety and wind take. Whilst a setback distance is not established, it is stated that noise is unlikely to be a significant problem where the distance to the residential property is more than 500m. In respect of noise, 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

night time limit of 43 dB(A) is recommended. 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.

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 (Dept. of Housing, Planning & Local Government, 2019)

The Department of Housing Planning and Local Government published Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines in December 2019. These guidelines were intended to supersede the 2006 Guidelines, but a final version of these guidelines has yet to be formally published.

The Draft 2019 Guidelines provide reference to a lot of best practice and updated guidance for assessing wind energy development.

The proposed key revisions include the following;

- New more stringent noise standards and noise monitoring requirements for wind energy developments in order to reduce the noise nuisance for local residents and communities
- A setback distance for visual amenity purposes of 4 times the tip height should apply between a wind turbine and the nearest point of the curtilage of any residential property in the vicinity of the proposed development, subject to a mandatory minimum setback of 500 metres. Exceptional circumstances for lower setback where the occupiers / owners of the properties are agreeable.
- Mandatory community engagement by the developer in relation to wind farm developments and the preparation of a 'Community Report' detailing the methods/level of local community engagement which shall be submitted as part of a wind farm planning application
- The control of shadow flicker in the form of specific planning condition(s) attached to any wind farm grant permissions.
- The consideration of the grid connection layout and design as part of wind farm applications. Opportunities for community gain or a community dividend for local communities to be established as part of a wind farm development.

Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009)

National guidance for planning authorities on Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects in Ireland was published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) in 2009. It was updated in 2010, by replacing the term "Statement for Appropriate Assessment" with "Natura Impact Statement" or "NIS".

This guidance is intended to assist and guide planning authorities in the application of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as it relates to their roles, functions and responsibilities in undertaking Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects. It applies to plans and projects for which public

authorities receive an application for consent, and to plans or projects which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt.

The guidelines set out the different steps and stages that are needed in establishing whether a plan or project can be implemented without adversely affecting the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. The guidance addresses issues of mitigation and avoidance of impacts, and also the Article 6(4) derogation provisions for circumstances in which there are no alternatives and for which there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) requiring a plan or project to proceed.

Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (Dept. of Housing, Planning & Local Government, August 2018)

The publication of these Guidelines coincided with the making of the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018) and the coming into operation of the Regulations on 1st September 2018 in order to transpose the Directive into Irish planning law. The Guidelines replaced Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out environmental impact assessment issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in March 2013. The purpose of the Guidelines is to give practical guidance on procedural issues and the EIAR process arising from the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU and to assist with the achievement of a consistency of approach in the implementation of the Directive.

Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA, May 2022)

Originally published in 2002, these guidelines now contain up to date references to other Irish and EU guidance and publications to be considered when preparing an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The guidelines contain the systematic approach, standard descriptive methods and effect descriptions that can be used by developers. This ensures that all the likely significant effects are adequately considered and clearly communicated.

3.4 Regional Policy

Eastern & Regional Assembly - Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019-2031 (RSES)

The Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly was established in 2015 and comprises of the 12. no local authorities located within Dublin and the Eastern & Midland counties. In June 2019, the Assembly adopted its Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). The primary purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Region.

The RSES sets out a vision based across 3 no. key guiding principles: healthy placemaking, climate change, and economic opportunity.

A total of 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) are set out in the RSES which cross referenced and aligned with the 3 key principles of the RSES and have been developed in iteration with the Strategic

Environmental Outcomes of the parallel Strategic Environmental Assessment process. Of particular relevance to the proposed development is:

No. 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-focussed energy system to support the transition to a low carbon economy by 2050. (NSO 8, 9).

Underpinning the 3 guiding principles are a series of Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's). The following RPO's are of particular relevance to the proposed development:

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.

RPO 10.20: Support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity and gas supplies, and associated networks, to serve the existing and future needs of the Region and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this Strategy. This Includes the delivery of the necessary integration of transmission network requirements to facilitate linkages of renewable energy proposals to the electricity and gas transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.
RPO 10.22: Support the reinforcement and strengthening of the electricity transmission and distribution network to facilitate planned growth and transmission/distribution of a renewable energy focused generation across the major demand centres to support an island population of 8 million people.

3.5 Local Policy

The following is deemed relevant to the assessment of the proposed development:

Offaly Local Authority's Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029

Offaly County Council's Climate Action Plan accords with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. It aligns with Government's national climate objectives, which seek the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050. The plan includes actions which aim to reduce Offaly County Council's emissions across its own infrastructure and assets by 51% by 2030 and create pathways towards enabling sectoral emission reductions across the county.

Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 County Wind Energy Strategy

A County Wind Energy Strategy forms part of this Development Plan. The Strategy constitutes a plan led approach to wind energy development in County Offaly and sets out areas 'open for consideration' for wind energy developments and considerations for the evaluation of wind energy planning applications.

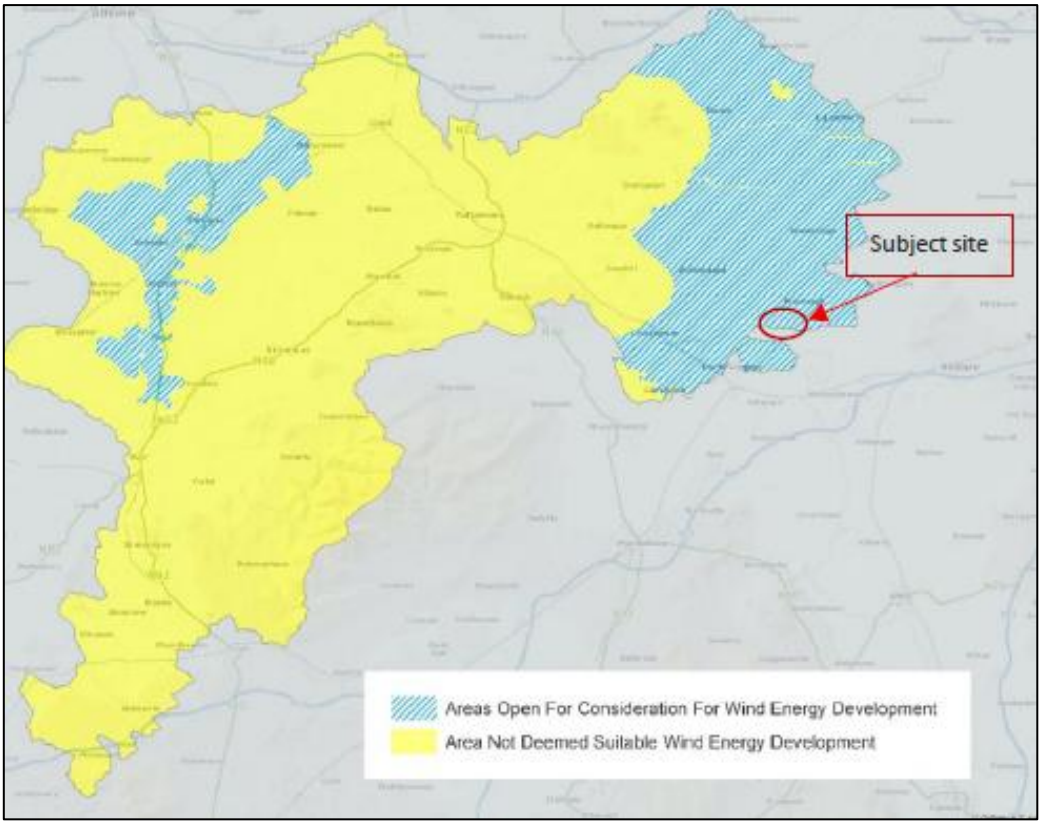


Figure 5: OCC Wind Energy Strategy with subject site location indicated (source: submitted EIAR)

The subject site is denoted within a wider area in the Wind Energy Strategy as *'Deemed Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Developments'*. The plan states in relation to such areas:

These areas are open for consideration for wind energy development as these areas are characterised by low housing densities, do not conflict with European or National designated sites and have the ability by virtue of their landscape characteristics to absorb wind farm developments. Notwithstanding this designation, wind farm developments in these areas will be evaluated on a case by case basis subject to criteria listed in Development Management Standard 109 contained in Chapter 13 of Volume 1 of this County Development Plan and the Section 28 Wind Energy Development Guidelines.

Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Chapter 3 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 (OCDP) outlines the Climate Action and Energy strategy for the county with the strategic aim *'to achieve a transition to an economically competitive, low carbon climate resilient and environmentally sustainable county, through reducing the need to travel, promoting sustainable settlement patterns and modes of transport, and by reducing the use of non-renewable resources, whilst recognising the role of natural capital and ecosystem services in achieving this'.*

Table 3.1 outlines the targets for wind energy, solar energy and battery storage demonstrating County Offaly's contribution to realising overall national targets.

Table 3.1 Renewable Energy Targets for County Development Plan period

Wind Energy Target by end of Plan Period: 466.3 MW **Solar Energy Target by end of Plan Period: 145 MW** **Battery Storage Target by end of Plan Period: 445 MW**

Section 3.2.6 Wind Energy:

Site suitability is an important factor in determining the suitability of wind farms having regard to possible adverse impacts associated with, for example, residential amenities, landscape, including views or prospects, wildlife, habitats, designated sites, protected structures or bird migration paths and compatibility with adjoining land uses.

The Council is therefore required to achieve a reasonable balance between responding to overall positive Government policy on renewable energy and enabling the wind energy resources of the Planning Authority's area to be harnessed in a manner that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development.

The Council recognises that community ownership of wind energy projects enables local communities to benefit directly from local wind energy resources being developed in their local areas, ensuring long-term income for rural communities.

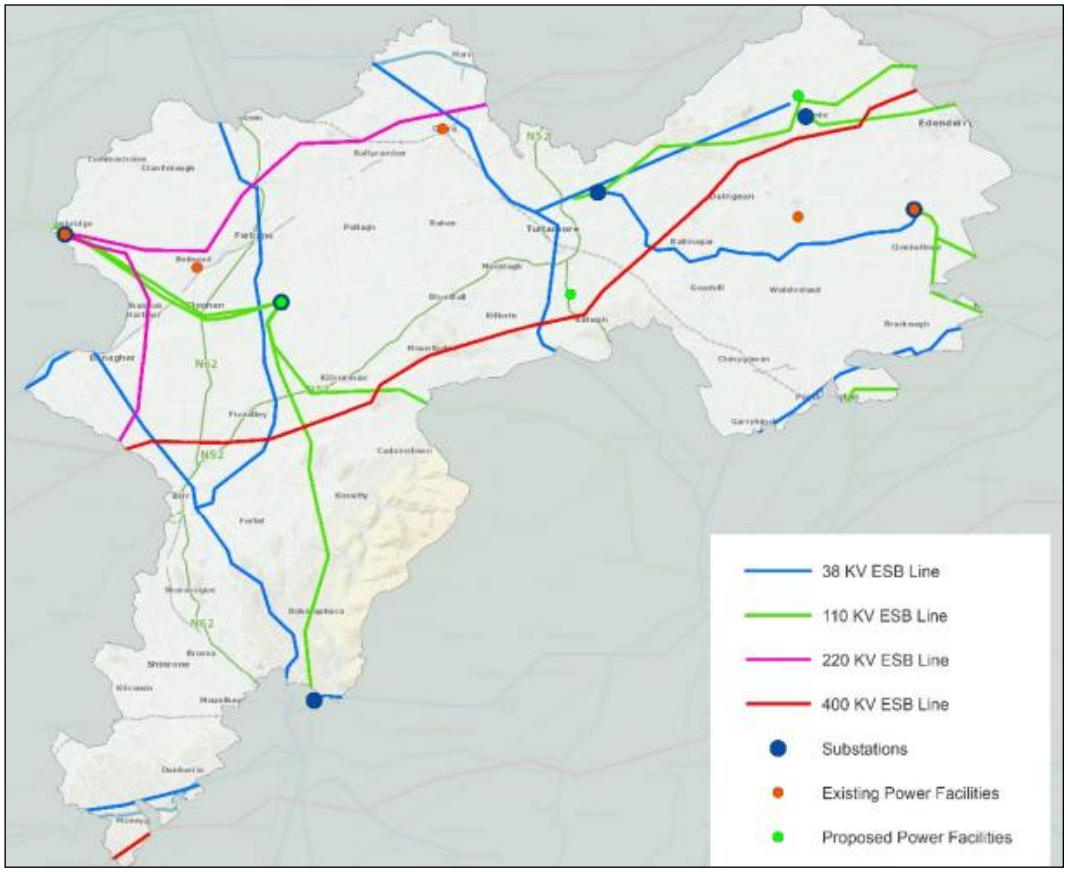


Figure 6: Extract from OCDP – Figure 3.3 Existing Electricity Infrastructure in Co. Offaly.

Section 3.8 Climate Action and Energy Policies

- *CAEO-04 It is an objective of the Council to ensure the security of energy supply by supporting the potential of the wind energy (and other renewable) resources of the County in a manner that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*
- *CAEO-05 It is an objective of the Council to implement the Council's Wind Energy Strategy as follows:*
  1. *In 'Areas Deemed Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Development' as identified in Map No. 10 'Wind Energy Strategy Designations', the development of windfarms and smaller wind energy projects will be considered;*
  2. *In all other areas, wind energy developments shall not normally be permitted – except as provided for under relevant exemption provisions in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended); and*
  3. *Applications for re-powering (by replacing existing wind turbines) and extension of existing and permitted wind farms will be assessed on a case by case basis and will be subject to criteria listed in Development Management Standard 109 contained in Chapter 13 of Volume 1 of this County Development Plan and the Section 28 Ministerial Wind Energy Development Guidelines.*

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

- *CAEP-07: It is Council policy to support and facilitate European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents, taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage);*
  - *Climate Action Plan (2019 and any subsequent versions);*
  - *National Mitigation Plan 2017 (or subsequent editions);*
  - *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions);*
  - *Relevant provisions of any Sectoral Adaptation Plans prepared to comply with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, including those seeking to contribute towards the National Transition Objective, to pursue, and achieve, the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050; and*
  - *Offaly Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.*
- *CAEP-11: It is Council policy to support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency.*

Reasonable Alternatives and Existing Infrastructural Assets

- *CAEP-23: It is Council policy to require that environmental assessments should address reasonable alternatives for the location of new energy developments, and where existing infrastructural assets such as sub-stations, power lines and roads already exist within the proposed development areas, then such assets should be considered for sustainable use by the proposed development where the assets have capacity to absorb the new development.*

Renewable Energy

- *CAEP-25: It is Council policy to encourage and facilitate the production of energy from renewable sources, such as from bioenergy, waste material, solar, hydro, geothermal and wind energy, subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.*

Wind Energy

- *CAEP-37: It is Council policy to recognise the importance of wind energy as a renewable energy source which can play a vital role in achieving national targets in relation to reductions in fossil fuel dependency and therefore greenhouse gas emissions.*
- *CAEP-38: It is Council policy that in assessing planning applications for wind farms, the Council shall:*
  - *have regard to the provisions of the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006, the Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change 2017 and the Draft revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 which are expected to be finalised in the near future;*
  - *have regard to 'Areas Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Developments' in the Wind Energy Strategy Designations Map from the County Wind Energy Strategy;*
  - *the impact of the proposed wind farm development on proposed Wilderness Corridors as detailed in Objective BLO-28 of Chapter 4;*
  - *have regard to Development Management Standard 109 on wind farms contained in Chapter 13 of this Plan; and*
  - *have regard to existing and future international, European, national and regional policy, directives and legislation.*

Chapter 4 outlines the Biodiversity and Landscape strategy for the county. The proposed site is located within areas denoted as low and moderate sensitivity areas in the OCDP.

LOW SENSITIVITY AREAS

Low sensitivity areas are robust landscapes which are tolerant to change, such as the county's main urban and farming areas, which have the ability to accommodate development.

Characteristics:

County Offaly is largely a rural county which comprises of a predominantly flat and undulating agricultural landscape coupled with a peatland landscape. Field boundaries, particularly along roadside verges which are primarily composed of mature hedgerows typify the county's rural landscape.

Sensitivities:

- These areas in general can absorb quite effectively, appropriately designed and located development in all categories (including: telecommunication masts and wind energy installations, afforestation and agricultural structures).
- Within the rural areas, development shall be screened by appropriate natural boundaries that are sympathetic to the landscape generally, where possible.
- New housing proposed in rural areas should respect Offaly County Councils Rural Housing Design Guidelines, together with conformity with development standards.

Acceptability of Development for consideration: A wide range of development subject to appropriateness / conditions

Need for Landscaping and Appropriate Design: High.

Figure 7: Table 4.18 Low Sensitivity Areas in County Offaly – OCDP 2021 – 2027.

Section 4.14.1 Landscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of a landscape is the measure of its ability to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and values. The sensitivity of the landscapes of County Offaly varies and is thereby classified within the following sensitivity classes: Low, Moderate and High Sensitivity.

Section 4.16 Biodiversity and Landscape Policies

Designated and Non-Designated Sites

- *BLP-01 It is Council policy to protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the county's biodiversity and ecological connectivity.*
- *BLP-02 It is Council policy to conserve and protect habitats and species listed in the Annexes of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (as amended) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Wildlife Acts 1976 (as amended) and the Flora Protection Orders.*
- *BLP-04 It is Council policy to protect and maintain the conservation value of all existing and future Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Wildfowl Sanctuaries and Biogenetic Reserves in the county.*

MODERATE SENSITIVITY AREAS

Moderate sensitivity areas can accommodate development pressure but with limitations in the scale and magnitude. In this category of sensitivity, elements of the landscape can accept some changes while others are more vulnerable to change.

Characteristics:

Cutaway bogs cover a large part of the landscape of Offaly and in their entirety, are approximately 42,000 hectares. Generally, there are a number of land uses suitable for cutaway bog, not included in High Sensitivity Areas, which include wilderness, grassland, forestry and recreation. Some cutaway bog landscapes are more robust and may be considered for other uses.

Sensitivities:

- The development of Lough Boora (albeit designated as high sensitivity) acts as a prototype in the creation of parkland character.
- However, some of these cutaway bogs may be appropriate for other sensitively designed and located developments including renewable energy (wind farms, biomass crops) and/or industrial use.

The Council recognises the need for a land use framework plan for the future development and utilisation of large areas of cutaway bog within Offaly.

Acceptability of Development for consideration: Some form of development subject to appropriateness / conditions.

Need for Landscaping and Appropriate Design: Very High.

Figure 8: Table 4.19 Moderate Sensitivity Areas in County Offaly – OCDP 2021 – 2027.

Peatlands

- *BLP-14 It is Council policy to protect the county's designated peatland areas and landscapes, including any historical walkways through bogs and to conserve their ecological, archaeological and cultural heritage and to develop educational heritage.*

Waterways, Lakes and Wetland Landscapes

- *BLP-20 It is Council policy to preserve riparian buffer strips free from development by reserving a minimum of 10 metres either side of all watercourses (measured from top of bank) with the full of the protection determined on a case by case basis by the Council, based on site specific characteristics and sensitivities.*
- *BLP-23 It is Council policy to consider the Waterways Corridor Study 2002 and protect the recreational, educational and amenity potential of navigational and non-navigational waterways within the county, such as the Grand Canal Corridor, towpaths and adjacent wetland landscapes, taking into account more recent heritage and environmental legislation (including the SEA Directive) and environmental policy commitments.*

Landscape

- *BLP-38 It is Council policy to protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the county's existing landscape.*
- *BLP-40 It is Council policy to ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity is an important factor in determining development uses.*

Section 4.17 Biodiversity and Landscape Objectives

Natural Capital

- *BLO-01 It is an objective of the Council that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the requirements of all relevant environmental legislation and the sustainable management of County Offaly's natural capital.*
- *BLO-04 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the impact of development within or adjacent to national designated sites, Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites and Nature Reserves likely to result in significant adverse effects on the designated site is assessed by requiring the submission of an Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by a suitably qualified professional, which should accompany planning applications.*

Peatlands

- *BLO-10 It is an objective of the Council to require the preparation and submission of a Hydrological Report/Assessment for significant developments within and in close proximity to protected raised bogs and to take account of same in the assessment of impacts on the integrity of peatland ecosystems.*

Waterways, Lakes and Wetland Landscapes

- *BLO-12 It is an objective of the Council to maintain a riparian zone for larger and smaller river channels based on the Inland Fisheries Ireland updated guideline document, 'Planning for*

Watercourses in the Urban Environment, a Guide to the Protection of Watercourses through the use of Buffer Zones, Sustainable Drainage Systems, Instream Rehabilitation, Climate / Flood Risk and Recreational Planning'.

Landscape

- *BLO-24 It is an objective of the Council to have regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Areas in Tables 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20 in the consideration of planning applications.*

Chapter 8 outlines the Sustainable Transport Strategy for the county over the six-year period.

Section 8.8 Sustainable Transport Strategy Policies - Roads

- *SMAP-24: It is Council policy to maintain and protect the safety, strategic transport function, capacity and efficiency of national roads, motorways and associated junctions and in accordance with Strategic Planning and National Roads Guidelines 2012 or any subsequent edition.*
- *SMAP-28 It is Council policy to ensure that developments which have the potential to generate significant traffic movement are subject to a Traffic and Transportation Assessment, Quality Audit and Road Safety Audit as appropriate.*
- *SMAP-31 It is Council policy that the capacity and efficiency of the road network drainage regimes in County Offaly will be safeguarded for road drainage purposes.*

Section 8.9 Sustainable Transport Strategy Objectives – Roads

- *SMAO-15: It is an objective of the Council to improve and maintain regional and county roads in line with the annual roads programme and allocated budgets.*

Chapter 13 sets out the general development management principles and standards that will be applied by the Council to ensure that future development is in accordance with the policies and objectives set out elsewhere within the OCDP. The following development management standards (DMS) are relevant to the proposed development:

DMS-97 Safe Sight Distances required for access onto National, Regional and Local Roads
The following safe sight distances, shall be provided from vehicular entrances on the road network;

- *Local Tertiary Roads: 60 metres;*
- *Local Secondary Roads: 90 metres;*
- *Local Primary Roads: 120 metres;*
- *Regional Roads: 150 metres; and*
- *National Roads: 230 metres.*

As set out by design standards detailed in TII publications, sight distances shall be measured from a point 2.4 metres from the road edge at the proposed access to a point at the near edge of the approaching carriageway. The standard for local roads is at the discretion of the Planning Authority and may be reduced where it would not give rise to a specific traffic hazard. DMS-97 standards apply only to locations other than those to where DMURS applies.

As part of the proposed development, 1 no. new entrance onto the regional road, R419 to serve as construction and operation access, and upgrade works to 1 no. existing site entrance (Derrylea Road)

to the south to service for construction only are proposed. Please refer to the comments provided by the District Engineer which are outlined later in this report.

DMS-105 Traffic and Transport Assessments and Road Safety Audits

Developers will be required to provide a detailed Transport and Traffic Assessment (TTA), as carried out by competent professionals in this field, where new developments will have a significant effect on travel demand and the capacity of surrounding transport links in accordance with the thresholds set out in Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (Transport Infrastructure Ireland, 2014). When preparing the TTA's regard should be had to the provision of the;

- *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014);*
- *Design standards detailed in TII publications; and*
- *Traffic Management Guidelines (Dublin Transportation Office and Department of Transport, 2019).*

Where a Transport and Traffic Assessment identifies necessary on and off-site improvements for the development to be able to proceed, the developer will be expected to fund the improvements by entering into a formal agreement with the Council. A Road Safety Audit shall be required for significant developments in accordance with the Road Safety Audit Guidelines (TII Publication).

Chapter 14 of the submitted EIAR considers the potential effects on traffic and transport material assets arising from the proposed development. Please refer to the comments provided by the District Engineer which are outlined later in this report.

DMS-106 Flood Risk Assessments Flood Zones and Appropriate Uses

The table below indicates the types of land uses that are appropriate in each of the Flood Zones identified within the Plan area, in accordance with the 2009 Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities and Departmental Circular PL2/2014 (or any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance). Where developments/land uses are proposed that are considered inappropriate to the Flood Zone, then a Development Management Justification Test and site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (and as updated).

Note (refer to Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 and 'SFRA for the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027' for additional detail):

- *Highly Vulnerable Development – Houses, schools, hospitals, residential institutions, emergency services, essential infrastructure, etc.*
- *Less Vulnerable Development – Economic uses (retail, leisure, warehousing, commercial, industrial, non-residential institutions, etc.), land and buildings used for agriculture or forestry, local transport infrastructure, etc.*
- *Water Compatible Development – Docks, marinas, wharves, waterbased recreation and tourism (excluding sleeping accommodation), amenity open space, sports and recreation, flood control infrastructure, etc.*

Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessments

The detail of these site-specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development but it is advised that The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities

(DEHLG and OPW, 2009) (or any superseding document) and available information from CFRAM Studies, including existing and emerging CFRAMS mapping (including National Indicative Fluvial mapping) and the most up to date CFRAM Programme climate scenario mapping shall be consulted with to this effect. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The assessments shall consider and provide information on the implications of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations.

As part of the planning application documentation, the Applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment; this will be discussed later in the report.

DMS-107 Undergrounding of Services

All services, including ESB, telephone and television cables shall be placed underground, where possible. Service buildings or structures shall be sited as unobtrusively as possible and must be screened. Proposals should demonstrate that environmental impacts including the following are minimised:

- *Habitat loss as a result of removal of field boundaries and hedgerows (right of way preparation) followed by topsoil stripping (to ensure machinery does not destroy soil structure and drainage properties);*
- *Short to medium-term impacts on the landscape where, for example, hedgerows are encountered;*
- *Impacts on underground and underwater archaeology;*
- *Impacts on soil structure and drainage; and*
- *Impacts on surface waters as a result of sedimentation.*

The Applicant outlines in the submitted EIAR, that the 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) is proposed. Within the development area of the wind turbines, any underground cable will serve each of proposed turbines providing connection to the proposed on-site substation. They advise that there will be no overhead power lines constructed on the site.

In this regard, please refer to the comments provided by the Municipal District Engineer which are outlined later in this report.

DMS-108 Peatlands

In the consideration of development on or adjacent to peatland areas, the following guiding principles should apply:

- *Consideration of the potential contribution of peatlands to climate change mitigation and adaptation including renewable energy production;*
- *Consideration of habitats and species of environmental significance;*
- *Consideration of the potential contribution of peatlands to an existing or proposed greenway / blueway / peatway network;*
- *Consideration of the ecosystem services and tourism potential provided by peatlands;*
- *Development of peatlands shall ensure that there are no negative impacts on water quality and hydrology;*

- *Consideration of existing and future rehabilitation measures including enhanced rehabilitation measures (i.e. drain blocking and rewetting);*
- *Consideration of peatland stability;*
- *Achieving of a carbon emissions balance; and,*
- *Incorporation of fire mitigation measures such as fire breaks or ensuring access points and routes are suitable for travel by emergency services.*

Chapter 9 of the submitted EIAR outlines that a peat probe survey was undertaken during January and May 2023 and an additional peat probing survey was carried out in January 2025. The findings of these surveys indicate that peat occurs across the majority of the subject site, but it is predominantly shallow with approximately 94% of peat depths recorded as part of the peat probe survey were less than 2m. It is noted in the chapter that from a review of the GSI Landslide Susceptibility database, the project and proposed infrastructure locations are almost exclusively within an area mapped as having a 'Low' landslide susceptibility.

DMS-109 Wind Farms

When assessing planning applications for wind energy developments the Council will have regard to;

- *the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DoEHLG, (2006) and any amendments to the Guidelines which may be made; and*
- *the Wind Energy Strategy Designations Map from the County Wind Energy Strategy showing areas identified as 'Areas Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Developments' and 'Areas not deemed suitable for Wind Energy Developments', and specific policy for wind development in these areas as outlined in Section 8 of the County Wind Energy Strategy;*

In addition to the above, the following local considerations will be taken into account by the Council in relation to any planning application;

- *Impact on the visual amenities of the area;*
- *Impact on the residential amenities of the area;*
- *Scale and layout of the project, any cumulative effects due to other projects and the extent to which the impacts are visible across the local landscape;*
- *Visual impact of the proposal with respect to protected views, scenic routes and designated scenic landscapes and proposed Wilderness Areas as detailed in Chapter 4 of this Plan;*
- *Impact on nature conservation, ecology, soil, hydrology, groundwater, archaeology, built heritage and public rights of way;*
- *Impact on ground conditions and geology;*
- *Consideration of falling distance plus an additional flashover distance from wind turbines to overhead transmission lines;*
- *Impact of development on the road network in the area;*
- *Impact of the development on radio observatories and broadcast communications in the area; and*
- *Impact on human health in relation to noise disturbance (including consistency with the Word Health Organisations 2018 Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region), shadow flicker and air quality.*

This list is not exhaustive and the Council may consider other requirements contained in the chapter on a case by case basis with planning applications should the need arise. Where impacts are predicted

to arise as a result of the development proposed, suitably detailed mitigation measures shall be proposed.

An assessment against the above criteria will be considered under the relevant subheadings as part this overall report.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

This section provides a review of the relevant planning history associated with the subject site and the surrounding area.

4.1 Subject Site

Section 2.2 of the submitted renewable energy planning statement outlines that no relevant planning history was available for the subject site. Having conducted a search of the Offaly County Council GIS, the author of this report confirms that there is no record of any recent planning applications within the section of the site which is located within Co. Offaly.

4.2 Planning Applications in the Vicinity of the Proposed Wind Farm Development

Chapter 2 of the submitted EIAR provides a summary of planning applications within 500m of the development site. These applications relate to domestic developments apart from planning application ref. 21/38 (Kildare CoCo). None are shown within a 500m radius of the proposed development works within lands contained in the functional area of Co. Offaly.

Application Ref.	Description of Development	Distance from redline boundary of site	Status
2138	Road / junction accommodation works to facilitate turbine deliveries associated with a proposed wind farm development in Co. Kildare. a concurrent planning application is being lodged to Kildare county council in relation to a 10 year planning permission for a wind farm development which consists of 5 no. wind turbines with a tip height of up to 169m and all associated foundations and hardstanding areas; 1 no. on-site electrical substation; 1 no. temporary construction compound; all associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the turbines to the proposed on-site electrical substation; provision of new site access tracks and associated drainage; erection of 1 no. permanent meteorological mast of up to 100m in height; and all associated site development works, ancillary works and equipment. an environmental impact assessment report (EIAR) and a natura impact statement (nis) have been prepared in respect of the proposed development.	Bounds red line along R419 to west	Granted 22/12/21

Figure 9: Extract from Table 2.-1: Summary of Planning Applications within 500m of the proposed development site as contained in submitted renewable energy planning statement.

Chapter 2 of the submitted EIAR provides details on wind energy developments located within 20km of the proposed windfarm site; please refer to Figure 10 below.

Wind Farm Name	Number of Turbines	Distance and Direction from Proposed Site	Status
Cloncreen Wind Farm	21	10.6km to the north of the site	Operational since 2022.
Mount Lucas Wind Farm	28	11.1km to the north of the site	Operational since 2015.
Cushaling Wind Farm	9	12km to the north-east of the site	Permitted since 2020 & construction started in 2022.
Moanvane Wind Farm	12	18.6km to the west of the site	Permitted since 2018 & construction started in 2022.
Yellow River Wind Farm	29	c.19km to the north of the site	Permitted since 2022 & construction began in 2022, with an expected completion date in 2025.
Dernacart Wind Farm	8	c.15km west of the site	High Court Ruled in favour of this development in June 2025. An Bord Pleanala (now An Coimisiun Pleanala) approved the development in January 2024 (Appeal Case Ref: 310312)
Clonarrow Wind Farm	4	c.12km to the north of the site	Currently in Planning and awaiting decision (Planning Ref: 2560189)
Ballydermott Wind Farm	47	c.7.7km to the south east of the site	Pre-Application Stage
Cushina Wind Farm	11	c.4.3km north west of the site	Pre-Application Stage

Figure 10: Wind Energy Developments within 20 km of the proposed wind farm site (source: Table 2-1: Chapter 2 submitted EIAR).

Comment:

Regarding windfarm developments within the boundary of Co. Offaly, the Planning Authority note the following:

- Yellow River Wind Farm is operational since October 2025.
- Cloncarrow Wind Farm: OCC issued a Final Grant dated 12th March 2026, subject to 17 no. conditions.
- Ballydermot Wind Farm (An Coimisiún Pleanála - Case reference: PC19.310143, applicant – Bord na Móna Powergen Ltd.): having been lodged on the 5th May 2021, the ACP websites states that pre-application consultation has yet to concluded. The development description refers to the *'construction of a wind energy development comprising approximately 50-55 no. wind turbines'.*

- A SID application for the Ballinla Wind Farm which is located within 20km of the subject site is due for decision in September 2026 (An Coimisiún Pleanála Case reference: PAX19.323579) and should be added to Table 2-1 of Chapter 2 of the EIAR.

4.3 Enforcement Information Relating to the Subject Site

There are currently no record of any enforcement matters on the subject site.

5 DESIGNATIONS

5.1 European – Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) and Special Protected Areas (SPA'S)

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) dated September 2025 and prepared by Wetland Surveys Ireland Ltd. has been submitted as part of the SID application. This states that 14 no. European sites occur within a 30km radius of the proposed development.

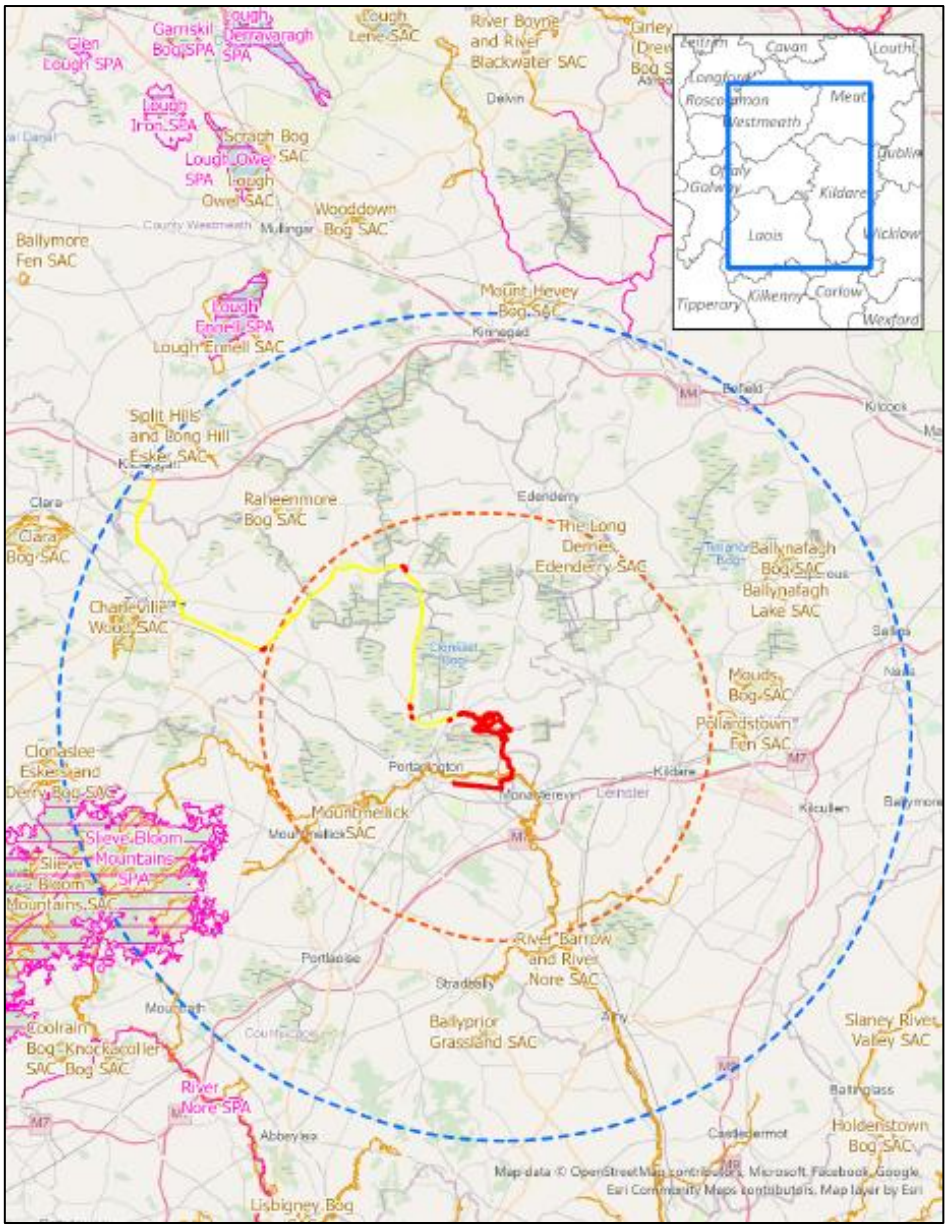


Figure 11: European sites within 15km and 30km of the proposed development sites (as submitted).

Twelve of the identified 14 no. sites were screened out due to the absence of any connectivity with the remaining 2 no. sites, River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code: 002162) and Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA (004160) being considered further:

- *River Barrow and River Nore SAC:* The proposed development occurs 2.3km north of the boundary of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. The proposed development is located within the hydrological catchment of the SAC and therefore drainage and associated watercourses provide a potential impact pathway from the proposed development site to the SAC which is designated for a range of aquatic habitats and species.
- *The Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA:* The proposed development lies approximately 19.6km to the north-east of this SPA. The SPA is designated for Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). This species is known to move from its upland breeding territory to lowland wintering sites around the coast and midlands of Ireland. Hen Harrier have been observed using the Site. Hence, there is a potential source-pathway-link between this SPA and the proposed development.

Following further screening, the Slieve Blooms Mountains SPA was screened out with the NIS noting:

- *It is considered that the low frequency of observations onsite means that any disturbance during construction is likely to be a short-term, insignificant effect on this species.*
- *During the operational phase of the proposed wind farm there is the potential for the wind turbines to present a barrier-effect for Hen Harriers. This could possibly result in avoidance behaviour of the turbines which would increase energy output of foraging Hen Harriers. However, the paucity of observations confirm that the Site is not a frequent hunting ground of either breeding or wintering Hen Harriers. Hence, there are no likely significant effects on foraging Hen Harriers and hence there are no likely significant effect on the conservation objectives of the Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA.*

Section 4.3 of the submitted NIS outlines the mitigation measures which are proposed to '*avoid likely adverse effects'.* The NIS concludes in this regard by stating *'following the effective implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, it is concluded that the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the conservation objectives, or the favourable conservation condition, of the Qualifying Interests of the SAC'.*

5.2 National Designations - Natural Heritage Areas

Not relevant in response of the development site insofar as it relates to the functional area of Co. Offaly. The TDR passes immediately adjacent to Daingean Bog NHA on an 800m stretch of the public road, R402. The proposed TDR has no accommodation works proposed in the vicinity (the nearest will be 5km to the south-west).

5.3 Special Amenity Area Orders/Protected Structures/Architectural Conservation Areas

The Planning Authority confirms that no special amenity area orders, protected structures or Architectural Conservation Areas are located within the proposed site. Chapter 15 of the EIAR examines protected structures and national monuments within the vicinity of the proposed development.

6 PUBLIC SERVICES

6.1 Water supply

Drinking water for the operational and maintenance phase will be supplied as bottled water.

6.2 Sanitary facilities

As detailed in Chapter 2 of the submitted EIAR, toilet facilities will include a low-flush toilet and low-flow wash basin, with minimal water demand and water will be sourced through a rainwater harvesting system from the building roofs, eliminating the need for a potable water supply. The applicant confirms that wastewater from the welfare facilities will be collected in a sealed underground storage tank and removed periodically by a licensed waste collector to an approved wastewater treatment facility.

6.3 Surface water

The proposed surface water drainage system will see the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which the application states will ensure that existing drainage patterns will be maintained throughout the site.

7 FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT AND WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE & ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

7.1 Flood Risk Assessment

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for the proposed development has been completed and submitted as an appendix to Chapter 12 – Hydrology and Water Quality of the EIAR. This Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) has investigated the local hydrological conditions relevant to the proposed wind farm and the TDR watercourse crossing. The study indicates that the proposed development, including a section of the TDR, is susceptible to fluvial flooding during 1-in-100-year (Flood Zone A) flood events, as identified in Stage 1 – Flood Risk Identification and further analysed in Stage 2 – Initial Flood Risk Assessment. It was also established by the applicant that the site is affected by pluvial flooding, as evidenced by historical records. This matter is discussed further in Section 8 of this report.

7.2 Water Framework Directive & Associated Regulations

Chapter 12 of the submitted EIAR provides an assessment of the project in the light of the Water Framework Directive and concludes as follows:

> *'As a result of the design of the project and the prevention and mitigation measures to be taken, the proposed development will not directly or indirectly alone or in combination with other projects , cause a deterioration in the status of any waters or impair the ability of any waters to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive or those set for them in the Water Action Plan 2024'.*
>
> *It will not cause or permit any direct or indirect discharge or entry of priority substances or priority hazardous substances or any toxic/dangerous substances to any waters. The proposed development will not adversely affect the integrity of any European or protected site or NHA, pNHA in view of its water related conservation objectives and will not impair the objectives for any protected site and will comply with all relevant standards and will comply with Priority Pathway Action Plans (PPAP) relating to invasive species and soils and*

spoil when appropriate. The spread of invasive species will be prevented by testing of imported material as detailed in Chapter 11 – Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology. The onsite wheelwash will prevent the spread of invasive species from site to other lands.

The design of the proposed Directive therefore complies with the objectives of the WFD.

The proposed development will also lead to an overall improvement in the status of waters by the provision of wetland drains in accordance with the measures detailed in the BEMP and ensuring better monitoring of waters by the project ecologist.

8 ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT (EIAR) ADEQUACY

In this case, An Coimisiún Pleanála are the competent authority for the purposes of carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The following section gives the Planning Authority's views in relation to the adequacy of the EIAR submitted as part of this SID planning application.

The EIAR is considered to be set out in a clear format and the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is considered generally adequate. Throughout the different chapters, the EIAR outlines the existing environment providing a description of the context, character, significance and sensitivity of the receiving (baseline) environment in order to predict the likely significant effects of the project and the likely evolution of the environment in the absence of the project.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The introduction sets out and refers to the need for the proposed development and the proposed benefits, in relation to climate action and energy security, envisaged from the proposal.

This chapter provides details of the proposed Community Benefit Fund should the proposed development be granted planning permission and be successful under the Government's RESS support programme. As part of the proposed development, funds from the proposed development would be allocated to community groups in the area. Section 1.4.5 of the chapter states that *'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'.* It is stated that the fund amount will vary from year to year as it is dependant 'on each year's wind conditions'. It is also proposed to provide an amenity space to the south of the wind farm site. This amenity space, which is located within the functional area of Co. Kildare, will include a grassed area with picnic benches, and 2 no. dedicated car parking spaces for visitors.

The structure of the EIAR is set out and the persons responsible for the preparation of the EIAR are identified. It is stated that no difficulties were encountered in the preparation of the EIAR.

Comment: The Planning Authority welcome the provision of the proposed amenity space however it is noted that limited information has been provided on this amenity facility and the chosen location. Please refer to Section 14 of this report for further discussion on this matter.

Chapter 2 – Description of Proposed Development

In Chapter 2 of the EIAR a description of the proposed development is provided, including details on 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, temporary accommodations works along the proposed turbine delivery route and all associated works related to the construction of the proposed development.

Comment: Refer to comment box under Section 4.2 'Planning Applications in the Vicinity of the Proposed Wind Farm Development' of this report.

Chapter 3 – Site Selection and Alternatives

A description of the reasonable alternatives that were considered in the preparation and design of the proposed wind farm development is outlined in Chapter 3.

The chapter outlines that a number of criteria were applied in order to identify which lands/sites might be available, in principle, for wind energy development in Kildare, Laois and Offaly. The initial phase of the screening process included the following criteria:

- Separation distance from dwellings.
- Natura 2000 sites.
- Avoidance of environmental designations.
- Lands utilised for other wind farm developments.
- Compliance with County Development Plan Policies and Designations.
- Map of county development plans and designations.

Following assessment against the above criteria, 8 no. sites were identified and subject to further assessment based on the following:

- Proximity to environmental designations.
- Residential density considerations.
- Potential project scale.
- National monuments.
- Amenity, Tourist or Scenic Areas.
- Proximity to National Electricity Grid.
- Proximity to protected airspace.
- Wind resource.

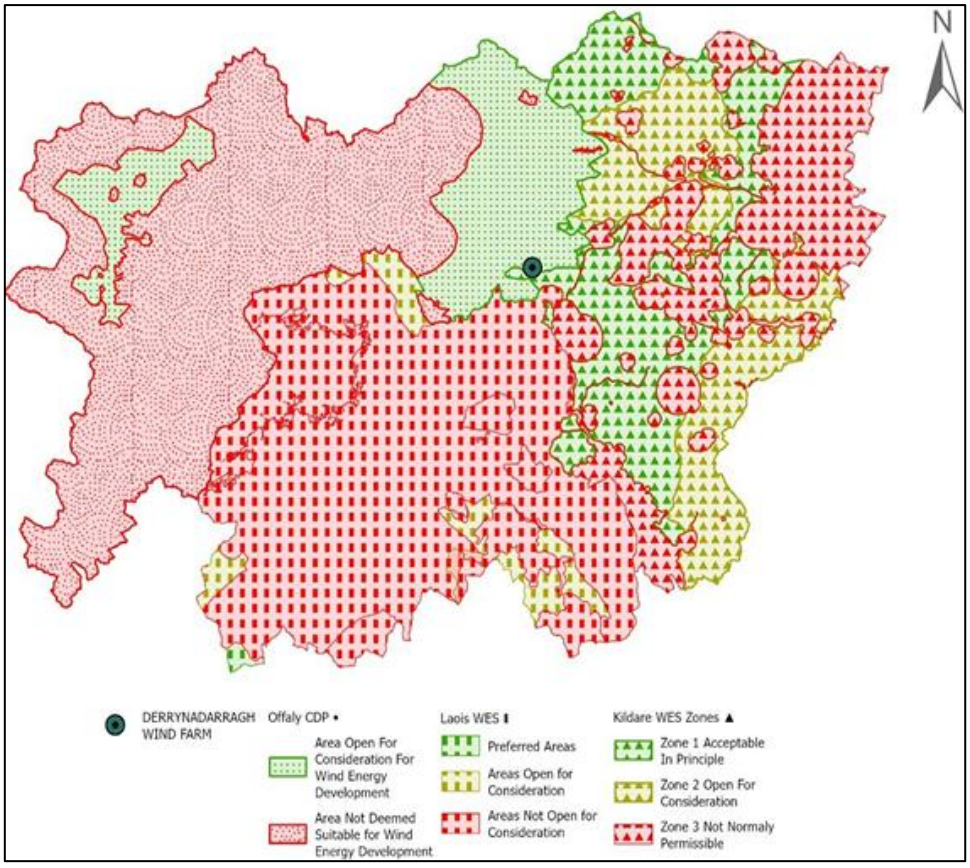


Figure 12: Study Area for Phase 1 – Initial Screening of Site Selection (source: as submitted, Figure 3-1 of EIAR).

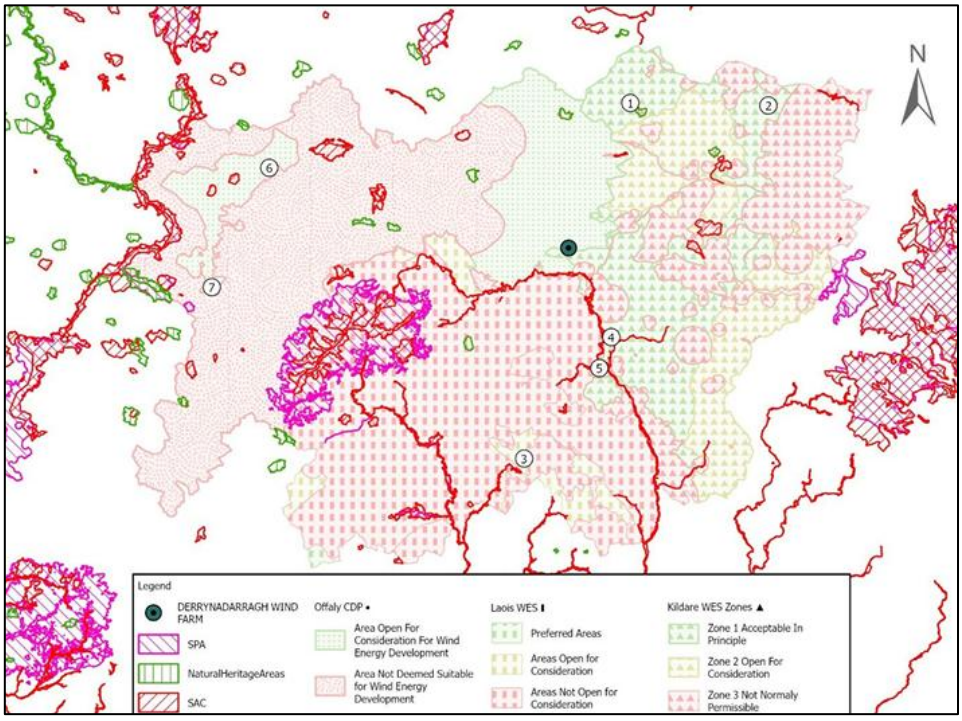


Figure 13: Results from Phase 1 Screening (source: Figure 3-2, Chapter 3 of submitted EIAR).

The applicant outlines that the application of the above criteria resulted in the discounting of further sites. A total of 7 no. sites were removed from further consideration for varying reasons including: proximity to motorway; impact on protected air space; insufficient scale for viable project; proximity to the Natura 2000 site (Barrow SAC); visual impact on Lough Boora; and, landscape sensitivity.

Following the screening process, the subject site was deemed as the most optimal to progress as a potential wind farm location and a scoping consultation exercise with statutory bodies followed. In this regard, the response received from NPWS is highlighted which the applicant states *'provided insight into the degrading issues along the Cushina River'.* As a result of this response, the proposal will include the implementation of measures which will seek to improve water quality and habitats within this locality of the Cushina River.

It is outlined in this chapter that during the door-to-door consultation with the local community, a request was made by a local resident for the applicant to consider development of a solar farm in this location instead. The potential to incorporate solar panels was explored however, it is stated that a solar farm on this site was discounted as a large portion of the available lands fells were located within a floodplain, making it unsuitable for solar panel installation.

The chapter provides details of the different iterations of layout of the proposed windfarm noting that *' the final design iteration was chosen to take forward for the proposed project as it strikes a balance between energy production capacity and avoidance of environmental sensitivities'.*

This chapter also outlines the alternatives which were considered for the individual elements of the proposed development including the grid connection route and turbine delivery route. It is stated that alternative turbine delivery and grid connection options were examined, and the optimal option(s) was chosen as a result of environmental assessment.

The chapter concludes by stating that the final layout of the proposed windfarm is of 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'.*

Chapter 4 – Planning Policy

This chapter sets out the International, European, National, Regional and Local policies, objectives and legislation associated with a move to renewable energy technologies and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The applicant explains Ireland's commitment and need for a move to renewable sources in very simple terms – *'Ireland is committed to meeting International and European targets, and if these targets are not met, the government must purchase Carbon Credits to meet compliance with both emissions and renewable energy targets or face fines from the EU'.*

As part of the assessment on European legislation, the applicant refers to the EU Directive (2018/2001/EU), known as the Renewable Energy Directive II (RED II) which came into force on the 11th December 2018[4]. Following on from RED II, the EU adopted 'Directive (EU) 2023/2413', known as RED III on 20th November 2023, with the aim to further increase its renewable energy ambitions. As of

[4] *Please refer to Section 3.1 of this report for additional information on this Directive.*

15th August 2025, new measures aimed at fast tracking the permitting procedures for renewable energy projects have been adopted into Irish Law[5]. It is outlined in the chapter that as the application was made after the 6th August 2025, the development is covered by the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive III and subject to Section 37JA of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.

In this regard, the author of this report notes the decision date for this application, as per the An Coimisiún Pleanála website, is the 3rd February 2027:

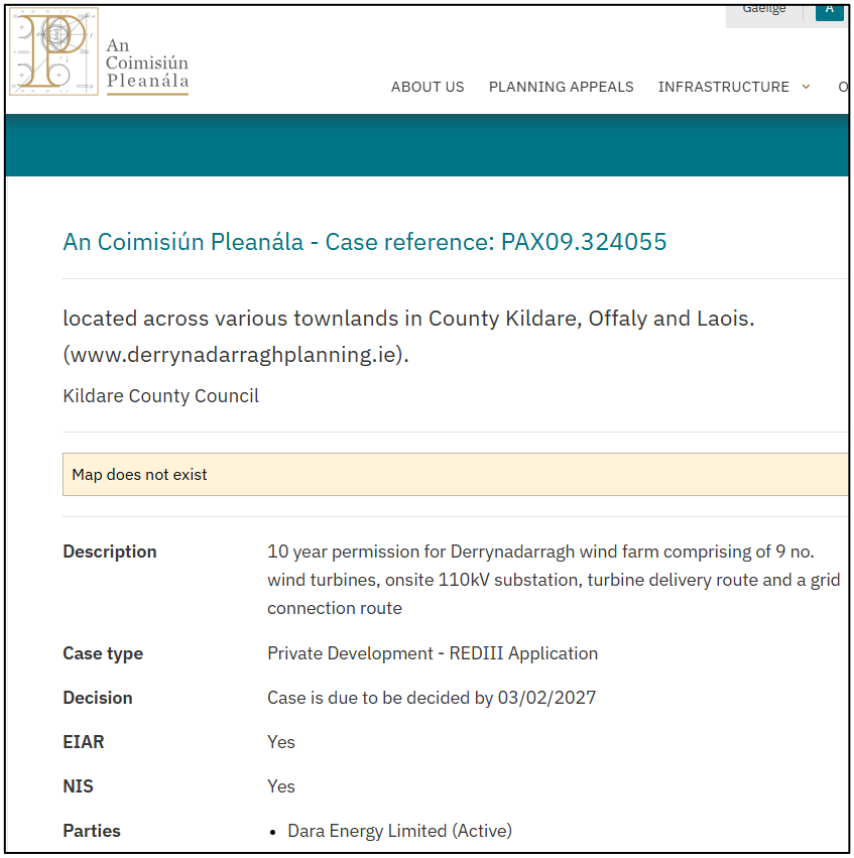


Figure 14: Screengrab from ACP website.

This chapter does not provide a specific assessment of the proposed development against the required criteria of the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines or the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines published in December 2019. The guidelines are discussed further in Section 6 of the submitted Renewable Planning Statement.

In terms of local policy, it is stated in the chapter that the principle of development for wind energy should be considered as acceptable by ACP as the wind farm site is located within the following areas within their respective Council boundaries:

- *Kildare County Council – Site falls within the 'Zone 1 – Acceptable in Principle'.*

[5] *The European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 (the Regulations) transpose several provisions of the third Renewable Energy Directive (EU Directive 2023/2413) (RED III).*

- *Offaly County Council – Site falls within an area identified as 'Open to Consideration for Wind Energy Development'.*

In summary, the chapter concludes that *'there is a clear need for renewable energy generation in Ireland, and onshore wind such as the Proposed Development is recognised as being a key to achieving this, and we consider the Project to be consistent with International, National and Regional energy policies, as well as the county policies as contained within the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029, Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, and Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027'.*

Chapter 5 – EIA Scoping and Consultation

This chapter describes the consultation process and EIAR scoping that was undertaken in order to identify key effects from the proposed wind farm project to be included in the EIAR. The chapter presents the key points that arose through the consultation process and how these points were addressed in the EIAR. The consultation process, scoping and the various pre-application consultations meetings with An Coimisiun Pleanála (previously An Bord Pleanála), Kildare County Council, Offaly County Council and Laois County Couty Council, undertaken in respect of the proposed development are set out in this chapter.

Following receipt of scoping responses, the applicant advises that further consultation occurred with consultees as appropriate – for instance with the NPWS relating to the Curlew breeding site (within 2km of the proposed wind farm site), and IFI regarding the degradation of Cushina River and habitat restoration along this section of the river.

Regarding consultation with the public, it is outlined in the chapter that public consultation stage commenced in September 2023 and *'has been facilitated for 2 years through organisation of; public consultation meeting, door-to-door engagement, engagement with the local newspapers, and materials circulated to local residents by post'*. It is stated that the main topics raised centred on the community benefit fund; noise; impact on the bog; construction traffic; and the grid connection route.

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

Chapter 6 – Population & Human Health

Chapter 6 summarises the impact on population, employment, economic activity, tourism, land use and human health from the proposed wind farm development which includes the turbine array, grid connection (i.e. on-site substation) and TDR from port to site. The chapter examines the potential effects during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the proposed development, as well as potential residual and cumulative effects, with the predicted residual effects being the same for all turbine permutations, and mitigation measures proposed where relevant.

It is stated that the landuse within the vicinity of the proposed windfarm location is mainly dominated by agriculture (grasslands) and areas of turbary activities (commercial and domestic) which border certain sections of the site. In addition, there is an area of forestry within the northern portion of the subject site. Having visited the subject site, there is no reason to dispute the description contained in

Chapter 6; please refer to Photos 1 – 3 below and Appendix B for additional photographs taken by a staff member of OCC during a site visit.

Photo 1: View towards location of proposed Turbine No. 2 (source: site visit, OCC Planner).

Photo 2: View towards location of proposed Turbine No. 5 (source: site visit, OCC Planner).

Photo 3: View towards location of proposed Turbine No. 8 (and No. 9) (source: site visit, OCC Planner).

With respect to proposed *Community Gain Fund,* this will be in accordance with the Wind Energy Ireland (WEI) best practice and shall be awarded via the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS). A contribution of €2 euro per megawatt hour (MWh) produced is required with a minimum of 40% of the funds to be allocated to initiatives and projects that support Sustainable Development goals within the area while 50% of the fund would be allocated to local clubs, societies and near neighbours. In this regard, the applicant indicates that the fund would be over €3.9 million over the lifetime of the project with an estimated c.€260,000 allocated per annum. It is stated that this fund will contribute to social infrastructure in the area and financially benefit those in closest proximity to the proposed wind farm.

This chapter outlines that a peak number of approximately 77 no. long-term jobs are expected to be created during the construction stage. Local businesses are also likely to benefit from a positive economic benefit because of the proposed development, due to the influx of workers who will require services. Other positive economic benefits from the operational phase of the proposed development listed by the applicant include a reduction of the State's reliance on fossil fuels, which will in turn reduce electricity prices and benefit the consumer. In addition, the rates and development contributions payable to the local authority is also identified as a positive impact of the proposed development.

It Is stated that the proposal will have a modest physical impact, with a temporary and limited effect on the landscape within the site during the construction and decommissioning phases. It is expected that the operational phases of the proposed development will overall have an impact on amenity in the area ranging from High-Medium in the immediate environs, reduced to low and negligible beyond 5km.

The applicant outlines that during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the proposed development, it will have a non-significant neutral impact on local recreation and amenity in the area due to the proposed mitigations measures being put in place such as a Traffic Management Plan during the construction phase.

Due to the mitigations measures already applied by virtue of avoidance and design and buffering of residential receptors, it is expected that the operational phases of the proposed development will have an overall impact on amenity in the area ranging from High-Medium in the immediate environs, reduced to low and negligible beyond 5km.

The chapter outlines that cumulative effects have also been assessed in relation to proposed, consented and constructed projects located nearby the wind farm site and TDR. No significant in-combination effects were identified in relation to aspects of population and human health assessed in this chapter which included, Population Trends, Socio-Economics, Employment and Economic Activity, Land Use, Recreation, Amenity and Tourism, Human Health and Safety.

In conclusion, the chapter states that once mitigation measures (as 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.

Comment:
It is the view of the Planning Authority that the applicant should provide a more detailed justification to support the statement that there will be an imperceptible cumulative impact from the construction and operation of the windfarms as stated in Section 6.11 of the chapter.

For comments on the windfarm development listed in Table 6-8 'Wind Energy Developments within 20km of the Proposed Wind Farm Site' as contained in the chapter, please refer to Section 4.2 (pg. 30) of this report. With regard to Cappakeel Solar Farm, the planning authority notes that permission was granted by ACP on the 16th February 2026 (ACP ref. PL11.50061).

Table 6-12 of the chapter provides details on the 'Cumulative Energy Developments within 20km' of the subject site. Figure 2.5 which has been submitted as part of the EIAR details the location of wind energy developments within 20km of the subject site. In addition, the Planning Authority seek the provision of a map which identifies the locations of the listed energy developments and which clearly demonstrates the distances between the listed energy developments (established and permitted) and the proposed site for the subject wind farm development.

Chapter 7 – Air & Climate
This section of the EIAR document examines the potential significant direct and indirect effects on air quality and climate arising from the proposed wind farm development.

The chapter outlines that due to the small number of receptors, and distance from the source of the dust emissions, with the closest residential dwelling being approximately 745m from proposed Turbine No. 2[6], the "sensitivity" of the area is considered to be "low", as per the criteria set out in the guidance (DMRB, 2007).

It is stated that the construction phase for the proposed development will lead to 24,861 additional HGV trips (two-way) over the duration of the construction works. This relatively low volume of additional traffic is not expected to result in a perceptible impact on local traffic conditions or air quality.

Once the proposed wind farm and grid connection are constructed, it is outlined that there will be no significant direct emissions to atmosphere. A diesel generator will be located at the proposed wind farm substation; however, this will only be operated as a back-up/emergency power supply.

In terms of decommissioning, it is advised that the number of associated truck movements will be significantly less than the construction phase and will potentially result in a slight temporary impact. There will also be emissions from machinery on site including for the movement of soil to cover the foundations, however, it is stated that this is not likely to result in significant impacts.

Section 7.3 of the chapter refers to proposed mitigation measures for the construction phase which include the use of a water bowser to spray works areas and haul routes; loads to be covered;

[6] T2 is located within Co. Offaly, to the north of the subject site.

revegetation of exposed soils; good maintenance of machinery; implementation of a dust control plan as part of the Construction and Environmental Management Plan; and no idling of vehicles.

In summary, the chapter concludes that there are no significant impacts expected on air quality or climate as a result of the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed project. In addition, the chapter outlines that there are no significant cumulative impacts expected on air quality and climate as a result of other existing or proposed projects. It is stated that there will be a long term positive residual impact on air quality and climate because of the development due to the displacement of fossil fuels.

Comment: The Local Authority's Environment & Water Section are satisfied with the findings of the assessment by the applicant in this regard and have provided a set of planning conditions which are outlined in Appendix A of this report.

Chapter 8 – Noise and Vibration

Chapter 8 of the submitted EIAR assesses the potential noise and vibration impacts associated with the development of the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm. It is outlined that the noise criteria used to assess operational noise from the proposed development is based on a Best Practice Approach, which is considered current best practice and currently used by the acoustics industry.

This best practice approach is based on:

- Wind Energy Development Guidelines published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2006).
- ETSU-R-97, The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms (1996).
- Institute of Acoustics' A Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise, (2013).

While noting that '*Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines'* (2019) were prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and subject to public consultation, the applicant states that these guidelines *'have a number of technical errors, ambiguities and inconsistencies and require further detailed review and amendment'* which is supported by several acoustic consultants from Ireland and the UK.

In a response issued by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) (September 2025) to a query raised by Offaly County Council. The Minister advised that his department has being working in conjunction with the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE). The Minister further outlined that both Departments have been engaged '*on proposals regarding the measurement and assessment of noise from wind turbines to ensure they are robust and fit for purpose having regard to, inter alia, the revised 2030 target to generate up to 80% of our electricity from renewable sources'*. Further to this engagement, DCEE, in the *'context of its environmental noise remit, appointed noise consultants in May 2023 to inform any amendments to the noise aspect of the Guidelines'* and the Minister advised that *'this work is now substantially complete'.* No timeframe on the publication of the revised Guidelines is set out but rather the response states that the *'Department is working towards concluding the finalisation of review of the Guidelines as a matter of priority, having*

regard to the intended public consultation and the finalisation of associated reforms and reviews including the revision of the NPF'.

The chapter outlines that the predicted noise levels from on-site activity from the general construction works associated with the proposed project are below the noise criteria as referenced in listed guidance documents and are not expected to result in significant negative effects. Nonetheless, the applicant has advised that several mitigation measures will be employed, as good practice, to minimise any potential impacts from the proposed project.

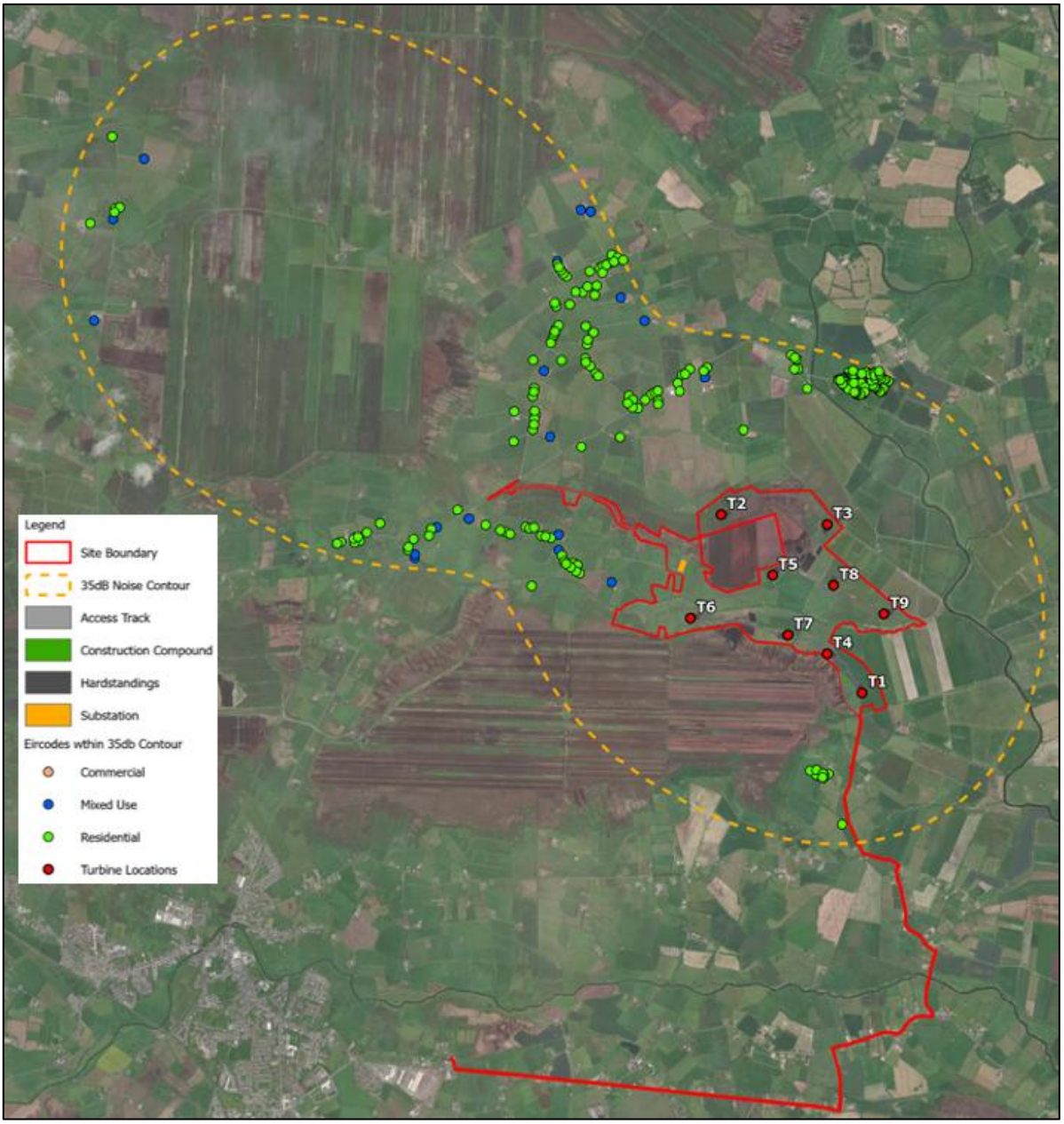


Figure 15: Figure 8.1 'Noise Sensitive Locations within Study Area' (source: as submitted).

It is stated in the chapter that the predicted operational noise emissions from the proposed windfarm are below the derived noise limits and are expected to result in a long-term, slight to moderate negative effect at the closest dwellings to the proposed wind farm, as a new source of noise will be

introduced into the soundscape. The applicant outlines that should the project be granted permission, an operational noise survey will be undertaken to ensure that the project complies with the noise limits once the windfarm is operational. In the unlikely event of an exceedance, it is stated that mitigation measures will be implemented to ensure that compliance with the noise limits is achieved at all noise sensitive locations.

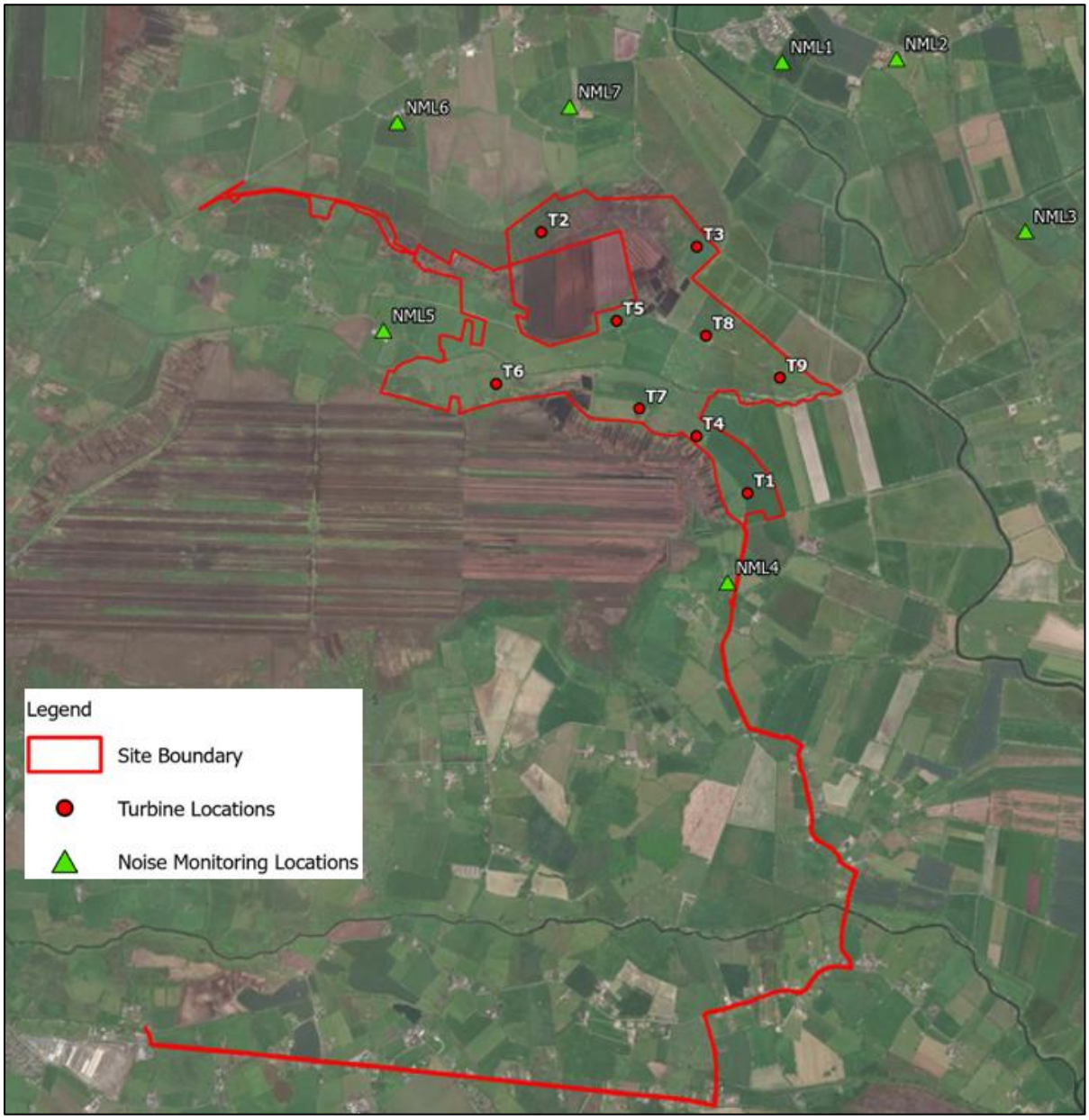


Figure 16: Figure 8.2 'Noise Monitoring Locations' (source: as submitted).

In the event of an exceedance, it is advised that noise mitigation will be provided by running the relevant turbine(s) in noise reduced modes of operation. The applicant outlines that it is not currently possible to predict AM[7] during the planning stage and that planning conditions imposing AM limits are

[7] *Section 8.3.2.1 'Amplitude Modulation of Aerodynamic Noise (Blade Swish)' of the chapter outlines that this is the periodic variation in noise level associated with turbine operation, at the rate of the blade passing frequency*

not currently considered best practice. It is proposed that the wind farm development will implement a complaints-based monitoring procedure for AM.

Section 8.7.2 ' Mitigation Measures during Wind Farm Operation' outlines the methodology for dealing with a complaint which indicates potential AM associated with wind turbine operation. The operator will employ an independent acoustic consultant to assess the level of AM in accordance with the 'Reference Method' outlined in the *Institute of Acoustics IOA Noise Working Group (Wind Turbine Noise) Amplitude Modulation Working Group Final Report: A Method for Rating Amplitude Modulation in Wind Turbine Noise (2016),* or subsequent revisions. The applicant states that this will provide a robust and reliable indicator of AM and if a correction/penalty for AM needs to be applied to the proposed development. This section of the chapter also states that prior to the commissioning of the wind farm, the developer shall submit and agree in writing with the planning authority, a Noise Complaint Monitoring Programme (NCMP).

The proposed 11 no. turbine windfarm at Cushina, approximately 4.3km northwest of the site was identified as the only development located close enough to the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm that has potential to contribute to cumulative noise emissions at the identified noise sensitive locations. In accordance with best practice guidance, a cumulative assessment was therefore carried out. It is stated that the predicted cumulative noise levels indicate that the proposed daytime and night-time noise limits have not been exceeded at any location, and the effects are expected to be negative, slight to moderate and long term in duration, and there are no changes to the mitigation measures outlined in the chapter.

Comment:
It is stated within the submitted application that Yellow River Wind Farm has an expected completion date in 2025. The Planning Authority confirms that the Yellow River Windfarm referenced in the chapter is now fully operational and if required, the assessment carried out by the applicant may need to be revised. In addition, a SID application for a separate wind farm, notably 'Ballinla Wind Farm' which is located within 20km of the subject site is due for decision in September 2026 (An Coimisiún Pleanála Case reference: PAX19.323579). This proposed wind farm should also be considered as part of any noise assessment prepared for the subject development.

Chapter 9 – Biodiversity
This chapter outlines the biodiversity assessment which evaluated the potential ecological impacts of a nine-turbine wind farm and associated infrastructure across Counties Offaly, Kildare, and Laois.

The study area includes the wind farm site, grid connection route (GCR), turbine delivery route (TDR), and lands designated for biodiversity enhancement. It is outlined that comprehensive ecological surveys were conducted between 2021 and 2025, including habitat mapping, mammal and bat surveys, aquatic ecology assessments, and invasive species monitoring.

(rotational speed multiplied by number of blades). It is often referred to as blade swish or amplitude modulation (AM).

Figure 17 below shows the variety of identified habitats located within the development area of the proposed wind farm. The chapter outlines:

- The site supports a mix of habitats typical of the Irish Midlands, including improved agricultural grassland, wet grassland, bog woodland, hedgerows, treelines, and drainage ditches. A small area of degraded raised bog is also present.
- Key ecological receptors (KERs) identified include the Cushina River (a lowland river habitat), bog woodland, hedgerows, treelines, and protected species such as bats, badger, and otter.
- The River Barrow and River Nore SAC was found to be within the zone of likely impact due to hydrological connectivity.
- The Grand Canal pNHA was found to be within the zone of likely impact due to the potential for the Grand Canal pNHA and the Proposed Development site to be used by the same population of Otters.
- Presence of two of protected species was confirmed within the site during field surveys, the Badger and the Otter. No evidence of the remaining species was recorded onsite.
- The bat surveys conducted on-site confirmed the presence of four species of bats and Myotis species and assesses the foraging habitat at the site to be moderate to high value.

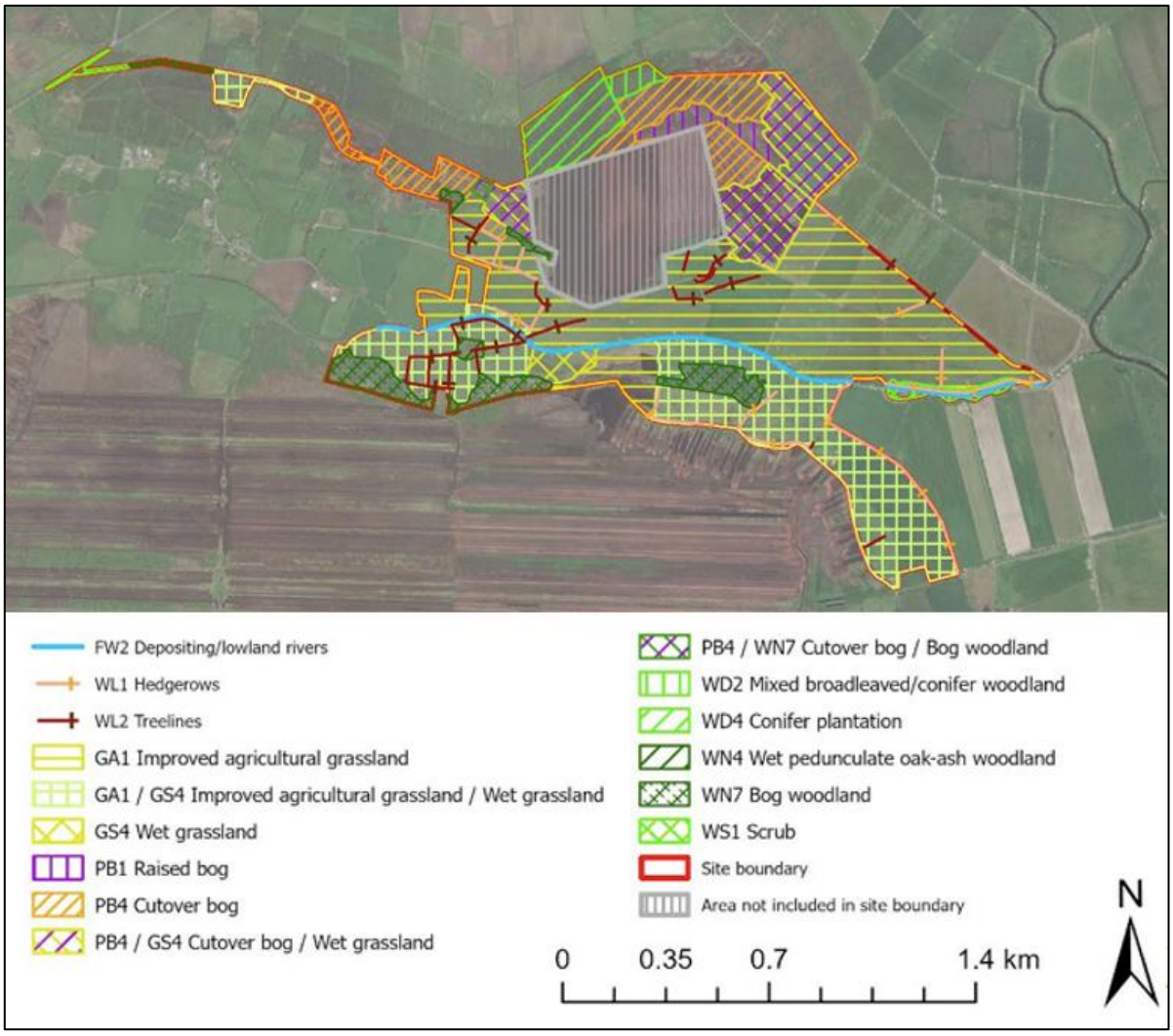


Figure 17: Habitat map of the Proposed Development Site at Derrynadarragh (source: extract from Figure 9-11).

It is outlined in the chapter that as a result of the overall proposed development which extends across Counties Offaly, Kildare and Laois:

- The total area of KER habitat directly lost as a result of the proposed development is 2.19ha of habitat area and 1,411m of linear habitats.
- Direct habitat loss will occur in other habitats which are not assessed to be KERs including Improved Agricultural Grassland (GA1) (4.8ha), Cutover Bog (PB4) (1.1ha), Cutover Bog/Wet Grassland (PB4/GS4) (1.37ha) and Wet Grassland (GS4) (0.21ha).
- 2.8ha of Conifer Plantation (WD4) will be felled for the creation of a bat buffer zone at T02.
- It is estimated that there is at least 2km of drainage ditches, 7.5km of WL1/WL2 and 11.9ha of Bog Woodland (WN7) within the proposed development site.
- Approximately 18% of Bog Woodland and 17% of Hedgerows/Treelines will be lost as a result of the Proposed Development. However, it is important to note that the vast majority of habitat loss for these habitats is as a result of the felling required for the bat mitigation buffer zones. These habitats will be felled and will remain treeless for the lifetime of the wind farm, but they will form other semi-natural habitats as natural vegetation colonises these areas.

It is stated that as a result of the proposed turbine layout, the most sensitive receptors on-site, namely the Lowland River (FW2), the Cushina River, and the numerous badger setts identified on-site are avoided.

The applicant also advises that most of the felling for the bat buffer zones will be within Conifer Plantation (WD4) habitat, which is a highly modified habitat of recent origin and with limited biodiversity value, managed primarily for the production of timber.

Within the chapter, it is stated that a variety of mitigation measures will be implemented to ensure protection and enhancement of biodiversity. During the construction phase, some these measures include the implementation of a Surface Water Management Plan to prevent pollution and sedimentation in sensitive aquatic habitats; fencing off sensitive habitats such as bog woodland and riparian zones to prevent grazing and disturbance; pre-construction surveys for otter, badger, bats, pine marten, and red squirrel with buffer zones enforced; and, eradication of Giant Hogweed and other invasive species following best practice guidelines with biosecurity protocols enforced to prevent spread during works.

During the operational phase of the proposed windfarm, proposed mitigation measures include:

- *Bat Protection:* Blade feathering and adaptive turbine curtailment will be implemented at turbines with high bat activity. Post-construction monitoring will guide ongoing mitigation, with SCADA systems used to automate turbine control based on bat activity and weather conditions.
- *Habitat Enhancement:* The Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan (BEMP) includes riparian restoration along 2.4km of the Cushina River, creation of in-ditch wetlands to trap sediment, and planting of 950m of hedgerow and 550m of treeline to improve ecological connectivity.
- *Monitoring:* Continued ecological monitoring will assess the effectiveness of mitigation and inform adaptive management. Water quality, invasive species, and bat activity will be monitored throughout the operational phase.

In terms of cumulative effects, the following projects were considered:

- Cloncreen Wind Farm (operational)
- Mount Lucas Wind Farm (operational)
- Cushaling Wind Farm (under construction)
- Moanvane Wind Farm (under construction)
- Yellow River Wind Farm (under construction)

- Dernacart Wind Farm (High Court ruled in favour of this development June 2025)
- Clonarrow Wind Farm (currently in Planning and awaiting decision)
- Ballydermott Wind Farm (Pre-Application stage)
- Cushina Wind Farm (Pre-Application stage).
- Peat Extraction
- Water Supply Project – Eastern and Midlands Region (Pre-Application stage)

The chapter concludes that the proposed development is not expected to contribute to significant cumulative impacts noting that *'in fact, long-term biodiversity benefits are anticipated due to habitat restoration and reduced reliance on fossil fuels'.*

Comment:
The Planning Authority confirms that the Yellow River Windfarm referenced in the chapter is now fully operational and not under construction as stated by the applicant.

It would be beneficial if the locations of the projects, which were considered in relation to the potential for cumulative effects (as listed in Section 9.17 of the EIAR chapter) were identified on a suitable map with the distances between the existing and permitted projects and the proposed SID development site clearly demonstrated, so as to assist in a reasoned assessment of the potential for cumulative impact(s) arising in the event that permission was to be granted.

Chapter 10 – Ornithology
The potential impact which the proposed development may have on birds within the study area and also on birds in the surrounding area are discussed in this chapter.

Field surveys were undertaken from October 2021 to September 2023 in order to gather information on bird distribution and flight activity. The survey period covered by the dataset includes two full non-breeding (winter) and breeding seasons. It is stated that additional supplementary surveys were undertaken over a 24 month period between April 2017 and March 2019 and this data was reviewed as part of the scoping of bird survey requirements of the site. Surveys which were conducted included Vantage Point (VP) Surveys; Winter Walkover Surveys; Breeding Walkover Surveys; Breeding Raptor Survey; Breeding Wader Survey; Breeding Woodcock Surveys; and Surveys of Turbine Transport Route and Grid Connection Route.

Based on the detailed assessment and as outlined in the chapter, it is concluded by the applicant that the potential effects of the proposed development upon birds during the construction phase arise from two main sources:

- *Habitat Loss:* The construction of infrastructure will result in the permanent direct loss of habitat within the development footprint, removing areas previously used for foraging, breeding, or roosting.
- *Disturbance:* Operation of machinery and elevated levels of human activity may cause temporary disturbance to key species, potentially disrupting essential behaviours.

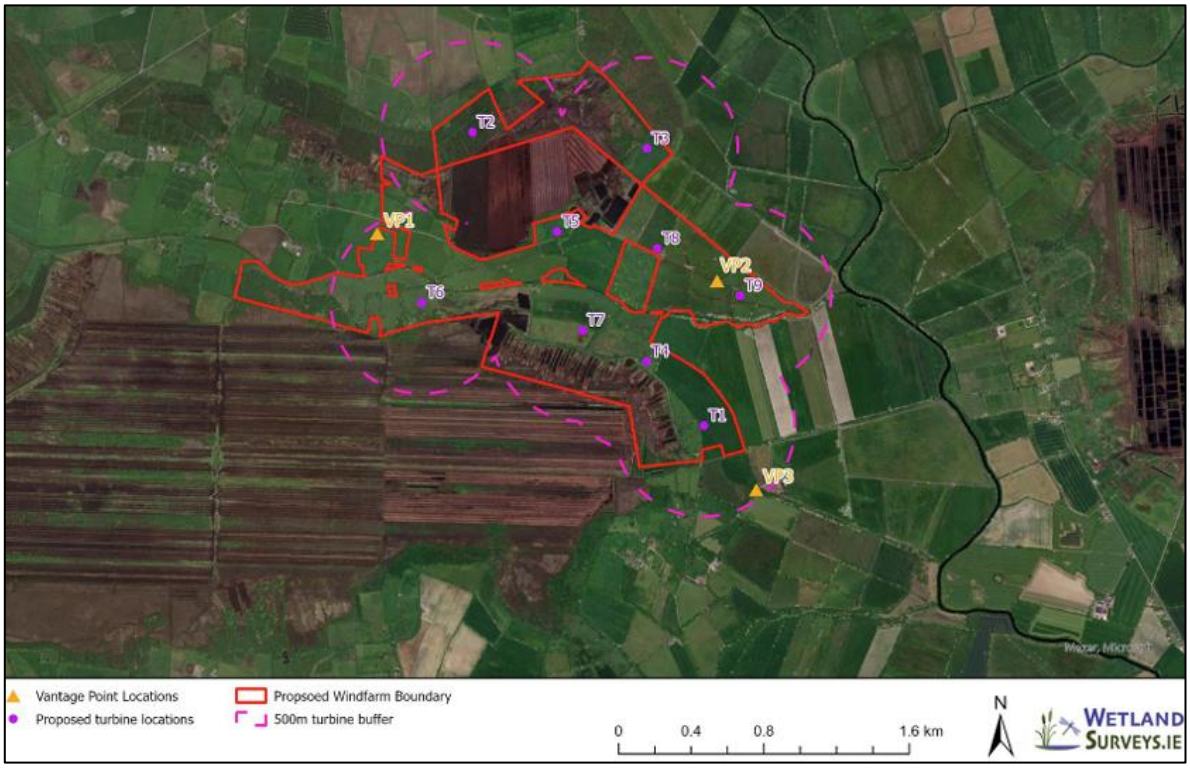


Figure 18: Vantage Point locations at the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm site (source: Figure 10-1 of submitted EIAR).

During the operational phase of the proposed development, the following long-term impacts have been identified and detailed in the chapter:

- *Collision Risk:* The presence of rotating turbine blades presents a potential collision risk to birds throughout the project's lifespan.
- *Disturbance & Displacement:* The presence of turbines may cause displacement or barrier effects on sensitive species from adjacent habitats. Maintenance activities involving routine and remedial maintenance will necessitate periodic site access, resulting in recurring but short-term disturbance.

A series of mitigation and best practice measures are proposed as part of the construction and operation phases of the proposal. These include; appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works to supervise during the construction phase; avoidance of impacts on nesting birds and sensitive species through the timing of works / pre-construction surveys / buffer zones / ongoing monitoring; and, a detailed Bird Monitoring Programme to be implemented to monitor collision, displacement, and habituation effects during the operation phase.

Considering the significance of potential effects and incorporating the proposed mitigation and best practice measures, no significant residual impacts on ornithological receptors are anticipated in relation to direct habitat loss, displacement, or collision risk.

The chapter concludes that *'the proposed wind farm development will not result in any significant negative effects on the Ornithological Receptors' and provided that the proposed development is constructed, operated, and decommissioned in accordance with the submitted design, proposed mitigation measures, and relevant best practice, no significant individual or cumulative effects on ornithology are anticipated'.*

Comment: The Planning Authority has no reason to dispute the details provided within Chapter 10 of the EIAR.

Chapter 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.

At the beginning of the chapter, it is outlined that:

- Mapping shows the turbines and hardstands are underlain by the following Quaternary deposits: Cut over raised peat at turbines 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 and Lake marl at turbines 1, 8 and 9.
- The GSI 1:100,000 scale bedrock mapping indicates the subject site is entirely underlain by lower Carboniferous limestone comprising dark grey-black, fine-grained limestone interbedded with shaly limestones and shales, known as 'calp'.
- Groundwater mapping indicates that the entire subject site is underlain by a Locally Important Aquifer – Moderately productive bedrock in local zones.
- The site lies within the Cushina Groundwater Body (GWB).
- According to Flood Info interactive map viewer, there is a risk associated with fluvial flooding within the site, around the Cushina River. The CFRAMS flood extents extend through the east of the site for a "Medium" probability (1 in 100 year) event.
- The groundwater vulnerability is variable across the site and ranges from 'Low' to 'Moderate' as classed by the GSI.

The applicant advises that a peat probe survey was undertaken during January and May 2023 and an additional peat probing survey was carried out in January 2025. The findings of these surveys indicate that peat occurs across the majority of the subject site, but it is predominantly shallow with approximately 94% of peat depths recorded as part of the peat probe survey were less than 2m. It is noted in the chapter that from a review of the GSI Landslide Susceptibility database, that the project and proposed infrastructure locations are almost exclusively within an area mapped as having a 'Low' landslide susceptibility.

Section 11.7 of the chapter outlines mitigation measures by design and best practice to avoid or reduce the potential impact of the proposed development. Details of all such measures are provided for in the submitted CEMP; these include:

- The proposed turbine locations have been carefully selected in areas of the site which is relatively close to the existing access tracks to minimise the length of new access tracks required.
- Drainage will be towards the existing drainage network.
- To mitigate against erosion of the exposed soil or rock, all excavations will be constructed and backfilled as quickly as possible.
- Excavations will stop during or immediately after heavy rainfall (>10mm/hour).
- Excavation will precede the turbine, cable trench and access track construction, whereby topsoil and soft soils will be excavated and replaced with granular fill where required.
- Excavation will be carried out from access tracks where possible in order to reduce the compaction of topsoil.
- No spoil stockpiles will be left on site after construction.
- Any contaminated soils will be handled, removed and disposed of in accordance with the requirements of the local authority and/or EPA and waste management legislation.
- Prior to removal of material from site for disposal WAC (Waste Acceptance Criteria) testing should also be undertaken in accordance with recommended standards and in-line with the acceptance criteria at a suitably licenced landfill or treatment facility.
- All temporary cuts/excavations will be carried out such that they are stable or adequately supported. Gravel fill will be used to provide additional support to drains where appropriate. Where appropriate and necessary, temporary cuts and excavations will be protected against the ingress of water or erosion by covering during adverse weather. Where necessary sheet piling or other measures will be used to provide integrity for unstable excavations, particularly within peat, alluvial, gravel or for excavations below the water table.

The chapter concludes that following the implementation of mitigation measures, the residual impact significance to the receiving environment would be imperceptible during the construction period and imperceptible during the operation of the proposed windfarm. Slight residual cumulative effects from the excavation of fill material from local quarries and disposal of material deemed unsuitable for reuse are considered to result from the proposed development by placing demand on existing quarries and available void space at licensed facilities during the construction phase of the development. In addition, it is stated that the proposed development is not expected to contribute to any significant, negative cumulative effects of other existing or known developments in the vicinity.

Comment: The Local Authority's Environment & Water Section are satisfied with the findings of the assessment by the applicant in this regard and have provided a set of planning conditions which are outlined in Appendix A of this report.

Chapter 12 – Flooding, Hydrology and Water Quality

This chapter of the EIAR examines the likely effects of the proposed development on hydrology and water quality. It 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.

In terms of the existing environment, the chapter outlines that the proposed wind farm site is located within the Barrow Catchment and the Barrow_SC_040 sub-catchment as defined by the WFD. In addition, the wind farm is located within two sub-basins (FIGILE_070- IE_SE_14F010510 and FIGILE_080- IE_SE_14F010600). The elevation range of the overall wind farm site varies between approximately 66m OD and 59m OD, and it generally has a flat topography. Turbines will be installed in the range between approximately 64 m OD and 60 m OD.

It is noted in the chapter that the main hydrology feature within the wind farm site is the Cushina River with a large area of the surface runoff draining into this river within the FIGILE_080 sub-basin. The Cushina River runs in an easterly direction, and it is a tributary of the Figile River (FIGILE_080). The applicant outlines that the remainder of the site drains into FIGILE_070 sub-basin or directly into the Figile River. In addition, there are no lakes or reservoirs within the wind farm site study area. The applicant states that during the scoping and consultation process, Inland Fisheries Ireland pointed out that the Cushina River has a "highly degraded hydromorphology".

A Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) which was prepared for the proposed development investigated the local hydrological conditions relevant to the proposed wind farm and the TDR watercourse crossing. It is outlined that this study indicates that the proposed development, including a section of the TDR, is susceptible to fluvial flooding during 1-in-100-year (Flood Zone A) flood events, as identified in Stage 1 – Flood Risk Identification and further analysed in Stage 2 – Initial Flood Risk Assessment. It was also established that the site is affected by pluvial flooding, as evidenced by historical records. As stated, the areas particularly affected include turbines T1, T4, T5, T8, and T9, along with their associated access tracks, as well as other areas where localised impacts on access roads were identified.

In this regard, it is advised that mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design of the proposed development in order to minimise potential impacts, protect the proposed development and its surroundings, and reduce any residual flood risks. The applicant states that any residual risks associated with the development can therefore be managed to an acceptable level and that the proposed works are not expected to have a negative impact on flood extents or levels either on-site or elsewhere. They advise that the increase in flood levels resulting from the inclusion of the proposed bridge and associated infrastructure is within acceptable limits and not considered significant. Regarding the TDR watercourse crossing, the chapter concludes that the increase in flood levels is considered negligible.

As a result of the site location and extent of the subject site, it is outlined that there will be 49 drain crossings and one watercourse crossing within the wind farm site. It is proposed to construct one single-span bridge to cross the Cushina River between the proposed Turbine T6 and the on-site substation. The applicant confirms that following consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the proposed bridge design will be in accordance with IFI's 2016 'Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries During Construction Works in and Adjacent to Waters' and also the TII 2008 'Guidelines for the Crossing of Watercourses During the Construction of Road Schemes'.

A variety of mitigation measures are discussed within the chapter; these include measures to prevent runoff erosion from vulnerable areas and consequent sediment release into the nearby watercourses

to which the proposed development site discharges, and the appointment of a suitable qualified person to oversee the implementation of mitigation measures.

The chapter concludes that as a result of the design of the project and prevention and mitigation measures that will be adopted, there will be no significant adverse effect on the environment and on hydrology and water quality because of the proposed development, either on its own, or in combination with other plans and projects.

It is stated that the design of the proposed development complies with the objectives of the WFD and that its construction would lead to an overall improvement in the status of waters by the provision of wetland drains in accordance with the measures detailed in the BEMP and ensuring better monitoring of waters by the project ecologist.

Comment: The Local Authority's Environment & Water Section are satisfied with the findings of the assessment by the applicant in this regard and have provided a set of planning conditions which are outlined in Appendix A of this report.

Chapter 13 – Shadow Flicker

This chapter assessed the potential impact of shadow flicker associated with the development of the proposed windfarm.

It is stated that the assessors, TNEI Group, provided a dataset which covered an area at least 10 rotor diameters from the turbines. As outlined in the EIAR, the 10 times rotor diameter criterion *'is detailed in several international publications including the German 'Guideline for Identification and Evaluation of the Optical Emissions of Wind Turbines' (2002), the UK's 'Update of UK Shadow Flicker Evidence Base' (Parsons Brinkerhoff for DECC, 2011), the Irish Government 'Wind Energy Development Guidelines' (WEDG 2006), and Irish Wind Energy Association guidelines (IWEA, 2012)'*. The 2006 Wind Energy Guidelines state that '*At distances greater than 10 rotor diameters from a turbine, the potential for shadow flicker is very low.'*

A total of 173 receptors within the study area were identified, and of these, 52 receptors are located within the area theoretically susceptible to shadow flicker. These 52 receptors have been considered in detail within this assessment and are referred to as Shadow Flicker Assessment Location (SFALs). It is outlined that none of the SFALs are located within the 2006 Wind Energy Guidelines 500m assessment area, with the closest receptor (SFAL27) to a wind turbine being located 770m northwest from proposed T2 (within Co. Offaly).

The chapter concludes that the guideline threshold of 30 hours per year is exceeded at 11 receptors when considering a theoretical maximum scenario, however when a cloud-corrected scenario was considered, no receptors exceed the 30 hours per year threshold. A separate criterion of daily occurrence was assessed as the correction for annual average sunshine hours applied to the yearly levels cannot be applied on a daily basis and it was found that at 17 receptors the maximum predicted theoretical daily levels shadow flicker may exceed the threshold of 30 minutes per day. The applicant

advises that this is the *'maximum level that may be experienced daily, and in reality typical levels will be lower'.*

Therefore, the assessment recommends mitigation measures are implemented which are as follows:

- *Shadow flicker control modules, consisting of light sensors and specialised software, will be installed on the turbines to ensure that mitigation is implemented to eliminate shadow flicker occurrence at all receptors. The calculated theoretical shadow flicker periods will be input into the turbine control software and when the correct on-site conditions are met (i.e. the light intensity is sufficient) during operation, then individual turbines will cease operation until the on-site conditions are no longer present, or the theoretical period has passed.*
- *The applicant is willing to provide protection from shadow flicker by committing to shutting down turbines for all instances where shadow flicker effects may occur in theory at residential dwellings within 10 rotor diameters of the turbines, this procedure is defined as "zero shadow flicker" mitigation. The "zero shadow flicker" mitigation strategy will reduce to near zero hours a year any shadow flicker that could potentially occur at the residential dwellings, however, it should be noted that when the conditions for shut down due to shadow flicker are met, there may be a short period of time before complete shutdown occurs as the turbines gradually come to a stop. This will depend on the reaction time of the shadow flicker control modules and the particular turbine type, as well as a gradual reduction in rpm i.e., the blades will not come to a sudden stop.*
- *In the event that complaints of shadow flicker are received by the Developer / Site Operator or by the Local Authority, an investigation will take place and the complaints frequency, duration and time of complaints will be considered and specialist modelling software will be used to confirm the occurrence(s). Should the complaint persist, a shadow flicker survey will also be carried out at the receptor in which the complaint was made. Further refinement of the blade shadow control system will be conducted to eliminate the shadow flicker occurrence.*

With regard to cumulative impacts, it is stated that there are no other wind turbine developments within sufficiently close proximity to the proposed development to result in a cross-over of study areas, and as such the existing environment contains no prospect for cumulative shadow flicker effects to occur. No cumulative impacts with other proposed or operational wind farms in the area are therefore predicted to occur on any receptors in the study area.

Comment: The Planning Authority has no reason to dispute the details provided within Chapter 13 of the EIAR.

Chapter 14 -Traffic and Transportation

Chapter 14 of the EIAR details the likely significant effects of the proposal on the existing traffic conditions and transportation network, including changes to peak annual average daily traffic and the carrying capacity of the surrounding road network. The assessment examines potential effects on traffic and transportation for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Project and identifies measures to mitigate impacts if required. It is also stated that potential cumulative impacts with other developments are also assessed.

In summary, the following is detailed in the chapter:

- The construction phase for the proposed development including the grid connection works will lead to 25,212 additional HGV trips (two-way) over the duration of the construction works.
- Calculations of HGV movements associated with the construction of the project indicate an average daily increase of 41 HGV trips per day over a construction period of 24 months. This increases to 68 HGV trips per day during peak months which occur in months 10 - 12 inclusive for HGV traffic.
- An average workforce of 30 persons is anticipated, increasing to 40 persons during peak periods. This is estimated to give rise to an increase of LGV traffic of 43 trips per day on average increasing to 54 trips during peak construction periods which occur for LGV traffic during months 21 – 24 inclusive.
- The combined HGV and LGV average daily increases are 84 trips per day throughout the construction programme.

Mitigation measures outlined in the chapter include the preparation and agreement of a Traffic Management Plan with the local road's authorities and An Garda Siochána prior to commencing construction. With regard to the grid connection works, mitigation measures are listed to include road opening license; route proofing; road cleanliness; temporary trench reinstatement; and surface overlay after trench reinstatement. Mitigation measures proposed for the turbine delivery route are detailed as programme of deliveries; unloaded trial run; Garda escort; reinstatement; and consultation with the local residents and Laois County Council, Kildare County Council, and Offaly County Council in advance to manage turbine component deliveries.

The chapter concludes that residual effects during the construction period will be:

- Negative or adverse effects on the receiving environment associated with the construction works on the main wind farm site are considered to be short-term in duration and slight in significance following mitigation.
- Negative or adverse effects on the receiving environment associated with the turbine delivery route are considered to be temporary in duration and slight following mitigation.
- Negative or adverse effects on the receiving environment associated with the construction of the grid connection are considered to be short-term in duration and slight in significance following mitigation.

The applicant advises that trip generation for the project once operational is anticipated to be minimal.

In order to consider cumulative impact, renewable (wind & solar) energy developments within a 20km radius, which are listed in Table 14-8 of the chapter, were reviewed. Based on this assessment, the chapter concludes that there are no significant cumulative impacts expected on the receiving environment as a result of other existing or proposed projects.

Comment:

The Edenderry Municipal District Engineer office has sought further information to be provided in relation to traffic impacts. Shortfalls in relation to the applicant's submitted details are required prior

to any grant of permission, so as to fully assess the potential impact(s) of the proposed development. Please refer to Appendix A of this report.

Chapter 15 – Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

A comprehensive review of the potential impact on the archaeology, architecture and cultural heritage of the subject site, and surrounding area, with respect to the proposed wind farm development is contained within Chapter 15 of the submitted EIAR. It is stated that the *'cultural heritage resource encompasses tangible assets, such as archaeological sites and architecture heritage structures, and nontangible assets, including historical associations, folklore, tradition, place names'.*

The chapter outlines the following:

- There are 15 no. recorded archaeological sites located within the 2km study area around the subject site. None of the recorded archaeological sites within the 2km study area are designated as National Monuments in State Care or are subject to Preservation Orders, but all are protected under the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended).
- There are no protected structures or buildings listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) located within the Site boundary and there are no Architectural Conservation Areas within the 2km study area.
- There are 3 no. buildings listed in the current Co. Offaly Record of Protected Structures located within the surrounding 2km study area, two of which are also included in the NIAH, which assigns them a regional rating. The current Kilkenny Record of Protected Structures does not list any buildings located within the 2km study area.
- The 2km study area also contains two properties listed in the NIAH Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes Survey. The former location of Cushina which the NIAH record notes that it does not retain any architectural heritage buildings and that the associated lands do not contain designed landscape features such as avenues, gardens or parklands. The other property, the former location of Derry Lea house is located c.630m to the south of the nearest proposed development area within the Site. The NIAH record notes that modern buildings have been constructed within the core landscape, and the lands do not contain any designed landscape features.

Comment:

Section 15.7.1.1.5 Architectural Heritage of the chapter incorrectly refers to the 'current Kilkenny Record of Protected Structures'.

It is stated that the current Record of Protected Structures for Counties Kildare and Offaly do not list any structures located within the 100m wide corridor centred on the grid connection route. In addition, there are no recorded archaeological sites located within the 100m wide corridor centred on the grid connection route.

The chapter outlines that there are three designated architectural heritage structures located within the 100m wide corridor centred on the public roads that the grid connection route follows, and these comprise three road bridges listed in the County Laois Record of Protected Structures. These include

two road bridges on public roads that the route follows, and these are Baylough Bridge (RPS 827) and Bergin's Bridge (RPS 826).

Section 15.10 'Mitigation Measures' refers to archaeological mitigation measures which include programmes of pre-construction test trenching and construction phase monitoring which will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

The chapter concludes that through the implementation of mitigation measures, the proposed development is not predicted to result in any significant adverse effects on known cultural heritage assets. It is stated that any residual impacts will be localised and primarily visual in nature, and the potential for unknown subsurface features will be managed through appropriate archaeological practices.

Comment: The Local Authority's Senior Executive Architect notes:

- Near the main site where the turbines will be located, as well as in the middle of the connection works, around Site Notice Location 21 and Site Notice Location 32, there is a protected structure — Trescan House (RPS 46--023, NIAH 140934001). It will be necessary to ensure that the proposed works do not interfere with the views in the vicinity of this protected structure. The applicant will need to provide photomontages of this location showing the impact that they will have on the c. 1830 protected structure Trescan House and its demesne: Trascan House, TRASCAN, OFFALY - Buildings of Ireland.
- Other protected structures located near proposed main site with turbines are The Old Schoolhouse (NIAH: 14927006) and Saint Brochan's Catholic Church : church/chapel (NIAH: 14927005) in Bracknagh. It is necessary to ensure that the proposed works do not interfere with the views in the vicinity of this protected structure. The applicant will need to provide photomontages of this location showing the impact that they will have these protected structures.
- The Ballina Townland (junction / location of site notices 4 – 6) is located in close proximity to the town of Geashill, which is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and contains a significant number of protected structures.
- In the townland of Ballinagar, where works are also proposed, there is a protected structure — St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church (RPS 25-036, NIAH 14918008).

Chapter 16 - Landscape and Visual Impact

This chapter describes the landscape context of the project and assesses the likely landscape and visual impacts of the scheme on the receiving environment.

Describing the existing environment within the defined Study Area (20km from the outermost turbine of the proposed development), it is noted in the EIAR that:

- The landform of the study area is predominantly flat to gently undulating, characteristic of its wider midlands setting. Elevation within the Central Study Area is relatively uniform, generally ranging between 60m and 80m AOD.

- Due to the flat and often boggy nature of the study area, much of which encompasses peatland, watercourses are generally minor and dispersed consisting of a dendritic pattern of meandering streams and artificial drains.
- A number of watercourses are present within the Central Study Area.
- The River Cushina, a tributary of the River Barrow, flows through the wind farm site, marking the boundary between Counties Offaly and Kildare.
- To the east, the River Figile flows broadly north to south, approximately 570 m from the nearest proposed turbine.
- The River Barrow is the most extensive watercourse within the Study Area, located approximately 2.7 km south of the nearest turbine. It flows west to east across the southern part of the study area, before turning north-eastward.

The EIAR describes the Central Study Area as a '*robust and actively managed rural landscape, valued for rural subsistence purposes rather than remote and naturalistic character*'. It is noted that certain areas, particularly along the Grand Canal and River Barrow, exhibit higher levels of sensitivity due to their scenic, recreational or cultural values, the predominant character of the Central Study Area is defined by its working, utilitarian function.

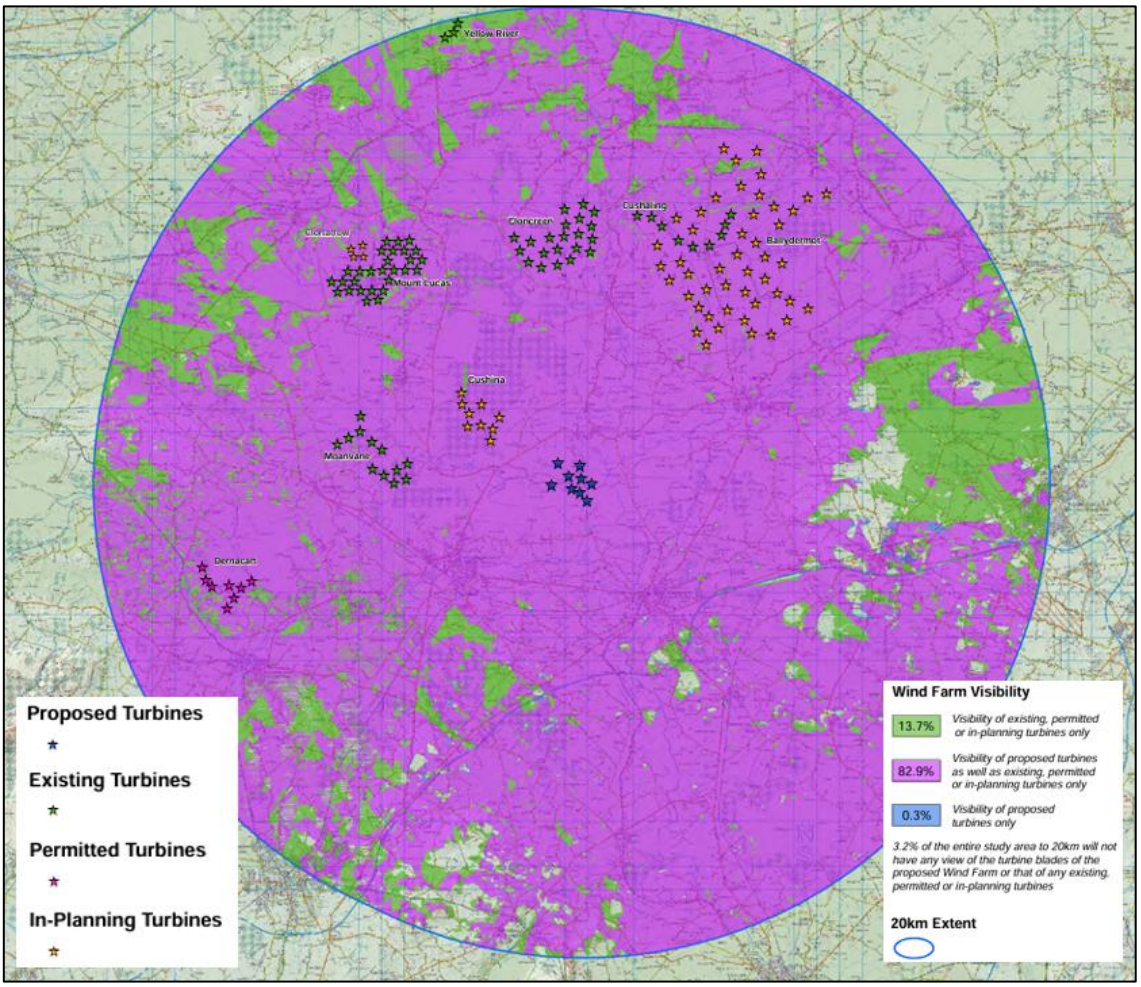


Figure 19: ZTV indicating the cumulative theoretical visibility of the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm in combination with the potential future cumulative scenario (source: extract from Appendix 16.2 Supporting Figures).

Having regard to the landscape within the Study Area, it is noted that wind turbines are now a feature within the existing landscape context, with existing turbines located 6.4km to the west and permitted wind turbines located 3.1km to the northwest of the subject site. It is stated that there are over 80 existing and consented turbines within the entire Study Area (refer to Figure 19 below). Noting that the *'broad landscape context of large cutaway bogs, conifer plantations and marginal peatland fringes where field sizes tend to be large'*, it is stated that the proposed wind farm will be *'well assimilated in terms of scale and function within the flat terrain and broad land cover patterns of the central study area'.* It is stated that the proposed wind farm will be a new and defining feature of the landscape character in the central study area, but it is not considered to be an incongruous feature within this robust and productive landscape setting.

The chapter refers to the three main forms of landscape and visual mitigation which were implemented with the proposal:

- *Avoidance in design - the siting of the proposed turbines was selected due to the robustness of the receiving landscape and to minimise the impacts of key receptors.*
- *Consolidation of the turbine layout.*
- *The buffering of residential receptors - The minimum distance of any turbine from the nearest residential receptor is 748m.*

It is stated within the chapter that the proposed development will form part of a broader context comprising of existing and consented wind farm developments and is not anticipated to contribute to a marked accumulation of wind energy development. However, it will contribute to a greater overall intensity and a more dispersed pattern of wind energy infrastructure across the Study Area.

Table 16.11 'Cumulative Windfarms within the Study Area' of the EIAR outlines the following:

Windfarm Name	Number of Turbines	Distance and Direction from the Development Site Boundary	Status
Cushaling	9	10.8km northeast	Existing
Cloncreen	20	8.6km north	Existing
Mount Lucas	28	10.5km northwest	Existing
Moanvane	12	6.4km west	Existing
Yellow River	3	19.3km north	Existing
Dernacart	8	16km southwest	Permitted
Ballydermot	47	7.7km northeast	In Planning
Cushina	9	3.1km northwest	In Planning

Figure 20: Cumulative Windfarms within the Study Area (source: Table of 16.11 of submitted EIAR).

The chapter concludes that due to its design and location, the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm development has a low magnitude contribution to cumulative effects with other existing, permitted and proposed wind farms in the Study Area. With regard to cumulative impact, it is stated that '*based on the landscape, visual and cumulative assessment contained herein, it is considered that it is not*

likely that there will be any significant landscape effects, visual effects or cumulative effects arising from the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm alone or in combination with any other existing, permitted or proposed windfarms or any other developments'.

Comment:
Table 16.9 'Summary of Operational Phase Landscape Effects' include columns titles 'Magnitude of Construction Phase Landscape Impacts' and 'Significance of Construction Phase Landscape Effects'. It is the view of the Planning Authority that these columns should refer to 'Operational Phase' and not 'Construction Phase'.

With regard to cumulative impacts, this chapter concludes that "*Overall, while the Proposed Development will form part of a broader context comprising six existing and consented wind farm developments plus one planned one within the Study Area, it is not anticipated to contribute to a marked accumulation of wind energy development. However, it will contribute to a greater overall intensity and a more dispersed pattern of wind energy infrastructure across the Study Area. On balance of the reasons above, it is considered that due to its design and location, the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm development has a Low magnitude contribution to cumulative effects with other existing, permitted and proposed wind farms in the Study Area".*

The proposed development includes for the construction of 9 no. turbines with a height of 186m to 187m, the installation of a single span bridge crossing Cushina River and the installation of 11.4km of cabling underground. The Planning Authority would contest this claim and it is their view that the applicant has not provided suitable justification to support this claim of 'low magnitude contribution to cumulative effects'. It is recommended that further information should be provided to substantiate the statement.

Chapter 17 – Material Assets, Telecommunications and Aviation
This chapter of the EIAR considers the likely significant effects of the proposal on the material assets and utilities including gas, water, electricity cables; telecommunications and broadcasting; and, aviation.

The conclusions of the chapter are summarised as follows:

- *Material Assets - Utility Infrastructure:* There are no Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) gas transmission line or Uisce Éireann mains water line utility identified within the subject site boundary. The direct effect of electricity generated by the proposed development will give rise to a reduction in the quantity of fossil fuels required for electricity generation across the State. This will give rise to a long-term slight positive impact on renewable energy resource and will contribute to reducing Ireland's dependency on imported fuel resources.
- *Telecommunications and Broadcasting:* Following the implementation of mitigation measures, there are no potential electromagnetic interference effects associated with the proposed development on telecommunications and broadcasting in the area. Notably, the applicant advises that the proposed development poses no risk to the operational integrity of the Irish Rail communications network.

- *Aviation:* Consultation held with the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) noted that the proposed wind farm is proximate to the licenced Aerodrome at Clonbullogue Co. Offaly. In line with standard practice for wind farm developments, the coordinates and elevations for turbines will be supplied to the IAA at the end of the construction phase; an aeronautical obstacle lighting scheme will be agreed with IAA; and should the proposed wind farm be permitted, the turbine locations would be added to aviation flight charts and clearly marked as en-route obstacles. No significant residual effects are expected on aviation as a result of the proposed development wind farm.

Comment: The Planning Authority has no reason to dispute the details provided within Chapter 17 of the EIAR.

Chapter 18 – Interactions of the Foregoing

A matrix is presented in Chapter 18 identifying potential interactions between the various aspects of the environment assessed in the EIAR. This matrix illustrates the occurrence of potential positive or negative effects during both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. Having assessed the interaction of likely effects during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases, it is concluded that the likely interactions are not assessed as likely to result in any effects that could magnify effects through the interaction or accumulation of effects.

Comment: The Planning Authority has no reason to dispute the details provided within Chapter 18 of the EIAR.

9 CARRYING CAPACITY AND SAFETY OF ROAD NETWORK

In this regard, the Commission is advised to consider the reports provided by the Edenderry Municipal District Engineer.

10 ENVIRONMENTAL CARRYING CAPACITY OF THE SUBJECT SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

It is considered that the previous comments on the EIAR as detailed under the relevant subheadings above, relate to this matter and should therefore be referred to by the Commission in it's assessment of this SID application.

11 REPORTS OF RELEVANT LOCAL AUTHORITY DEPARTMENTS

This section of the report provides details of reports received from the relevant internal sections within the Local Authority.

11.1 Edenderry Municipal District Engineer's Office Report

On review of the planning documentation associated with this application, the Municipal District (MD) Engineer's Office has provided comments in relation to the proposal. The report from the MD outlines a significant amount of further information that is deemed necessary to complete the assessment of the proposed development. The MD Engineer's office report also includes a number of conditions and

requirements that should be adhered to, in the event that An Coimisiún Pleanála grant planning consent for the proposal.

Details of the required further information and suggested conditions, in the event that the Commission is of a view to grant permission are set out below:

Edenderry Municipal District Engineer

Further Information

- The Applicant shall submit details on proposals for the existing public road at the proposed site entrances on the R419 (Cushina) & L70481 including proposals for strenghtening the road fabric at the entrances, to resist damage likely to be caused by HGV's entering and existing the site during the construction period. These details should include proposed road build up/specification, which shall comply with TII Specifications for Road Works Series 900 (latest edition) and details of longitudinal & cross sections. These proposals must be accompanied by an independent Road Safety Audit.
- The Applicant shall submit drawings with details of surface water measures at the proposed site entrances including road side drainage and details of gully and soakaway locations. The drawings shall also detail/show any proposed line marking and signage at/near the site entrances.
- The applicant shall provide details to mitigate deposition / spillage of site materials onto the public road(s) during construction works.
- The Applicant shall submit details regarding the number and weight of loads of timber to be removed from the site, as outlined under tree felling of 6ha as mentioned within submission. Details of the destination of same and the haul route to be used is also required.
- The applicant shall submit a detailed schedule of all deliveries that run concurrently (e.g. stone for access routes and hard-standings, concrete for foundations, etc) and the delivery of abnormal loads to the site; indicating the timescale within which these HGV's movements are intended to use each proposed haul route/road to facilitate the proposed development over the construction period. Details to include number of movements per day along proposed haul route, weights, etc.
- The Applicant shall submit a report including a survey of the roads and bridges along the proposed haul routes, carried out at the developers expense by a suitably qualified person This report shall include a schedule of proposed works to roads, bridges or any other public infrastructure to enable/ upgrade the haul route(s) to be used by construction related traffic.

Conditions

- Prior to commencement Applicant shall submit details, as listed below, to OCC / Edenderry MD: **(These proposals will be subject to the review & agreement of Roads Authority – Edenderry MD)**
    - Proposals for the existing public road at the proposed entrance areas, including proposals for strenghtening the road fabric at the entrance areas to resist damage likely to be caused by HGV's entering and existing the site during the construction period. These details should include proposed road build up / specification, which shall comply with TII

Specifications for Road Works Series 900 (latest edition) and details of longitudinal & cross sections.

- Prior to commencement the Applicant shall submit drawings detailing surface water measures at the proposed site entrances including road side drainage and details of gully and soakaway locations.
- Prior to commencement the Applicant shall submit drawings showing any proposed line marking and signage at/near the Site Entrances.
- Prior to commencement the applicant shall provide details to mitigate deposition/ spillage of site materials onto the public road(s) during construction works.

- Prior to commencement the Applicant shall submit a report including a survey of the roads, bridges and along the haul routes carried out at the developers expense by a suitably qualified person. This report shall include a schedule of proposed works to roads, bridges or any other public infrastructure to enable/ upgrade the haul route(s) to be used by construction related traffic. The extent and scope of the surveys and the schedule of works shall be agreed with the Roads authority prior of commencement of the surveys and of the development. Any proposed amendments to road infrastructure/layouts on existing road network, submitted to OCC/EMD for review/approval, should be accompanied by a relevant Road Safety Audit, completed by an independent competent body.
- Within 3 months of the cessation of the end of the public road(s) being used as haul routes, a condition survey of the roads, bridges and any other public infrastructure, accompanied by a schedule of repair/ upgrade works shall be carried out at the developers expense by a suitably qualified person. This shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Roads authority within 3 months of the cessation of use of public roads by construction traffic. All agreed works shall be completed at the developers expense within 12 months of the cessation of public roads being used as haul routes.
- Prior to commencement the Applicant shall submit details regarding the number and weight of loads of timber to be removed from the site, in reference to tree felling of 6ha as mentioned within submission. Details of the destination of same and haul route to be used is also required.
- Visibility site distances for all entrances, both temporary and permanent shall be in accordance with DMS-097 and DMS-098 of the current Offaly County Development Plan. Hedges in the vicinity of sight distance shall be trimmed regularly to maintain sight distance for the during of construction and operation of the wind farm. In addition to the use of a wheel wash at the construction entrances to reduce debris on the public road shall be deployed.
- The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning and Roads authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including:
  - Location of the site and materials compound
  - Location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities
  - Details of site security fencing and hoardings
  - Details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction
  - Phasing programme including a detailed schedule of all deliveries that run concurrently (e.g. stone for access routes and hard-standings, concrete for foundations, etc) and the delivery of abnormal loads to the site; indicating the timescale within which these HGV's

movements are intended to use each proposed haul route/road to facilitate the proposed development over the construction period. Details to include number of movements per day along proposed haul route, weights, etc.

- Detailed arrangements for temporary traffic arrangements/ controls on roads. Including associated directional signage to be submitted and agreed with the Roads authority. Traffic Signage to be compliant with Chapter 8 of Traffic Signs Manual 2019 (as amended).
- Measures to prevent queuing of construction traffic near sites & the adjoining road network,
- Measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of materials / debris on the public road network.
- Details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels,
- Containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained; such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater,
- Off-site disposal of construction waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil / peat.
- Details of on-site re-fuelling arrangements, including use of drip trays,
- Means to ensure that surface water run-off is controlled such that no deleterious levels of silt or other pollutants enter local surface water drains or watercourses.

- Any change(s) to locations and sources of materials being hauled to the site during construction shall be notified to the planning and Roads authority, as any deviation from agreed haul routes may have an adverse impact on the road network; which may also lead to amendments to agreed schedule of works to roads as agreed with EMD under designated haul routes for materials for the development.
- Determination of the road network capacity shall be carried out by the applicant. As the road network through the Municipal District of Edenderry is founded on Peat subsoils, this characteristic must be given due diligence when determining the impact of development traffic and delivery routes for the project. A schedule of materials required to construct the development shall be developed and delivery quantities and frequency of deliveries shall be used when calculating the impact this development will have on the road network. Significant infrastructural upgrades will inevitably need to be carried out to accommodate the development and such should be included as part of proposals. A detailed Transport Management Plan including details of the road network/ haulage routes and the vehicle types to be used to transport materials on and off site and a schedule of control measures for exceptionally wide and heavy deliveries shall be included in the submission.
- Prior to the commencement of the development, the developer shall lodge with the Planning Authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the Planning Authority, to secure the reinstatement of public roads which may be damaged by the transport of materials to and from the site, coupled with an agreement empowering the Planning Authority to apply such security or part thereof to the satisfactory reinstatement of the public road. The form and amount of the security shall be agreed between the Planning Authority and the Developer.

Turbine Delivery Routes

- Developer to liaise with TII, Edenderry Municipal District & Offaly County Council in relation to deliveries. Where OCC consider a proposed delivery route is not in a suitable condition, the developer shall upgrade the road or junction in advance of delivery operations, as agreed with OCC/EMD.
- Detailed programme of deliveries to be submitted to OCC/EMD in advance of commencement of deliveries. Details to include dates and times, number of loads, abnormal loads, weights, road closure, diversion routes, support vehicles, etc.
- Developer to engage and adhere with OCC procedure regarding submission, review and agreement for abnormal loads.
- Delivery movements of oversize turbine components shall be restricted to nighttime hours to minimise disruption to the national road network.
- A Transport Management Plan, including details of the road network/ haulage routes and the vehicle types to be used to transport turbine infrastructure to site and a schedule of control measures for exceptionally wide and heavy deliveries to be submitted to OCC/EMD.
- All road surfaces, culverts, watercourses, verges and public lands shall be protected during construction and, in the case of any damage occurring, shall be reinstated to the satisfaction of the Planning and Edenderry MD (Roads Authority).
- All existing watercourse crossings/bridges shall be identified and detailed designs submitted to Offaly County Council Roads Section & Edenderry MD, to indicate how these will be crossed, for Offaly County Council / Edenderry MD approval.
- Developer to provide evidence of agreement with landowners at all nodes and entry/exit points requiring temporary or permanent works. Proposed scope of works adjacent /upon public roads shall be reviewed and agreed with the Roads Authority/EMD prior to commencement of these works.
- Developer to consult with all relevant Stakeholders (e.g. Uisce Éireann, An Garda Síochána, emergency services, Tidy towns, TII) in relation to turbine delivery routes. OCC to be advised of any alterations required/requested by Stakeholders along the proposed routes.
- Any alterations affecting the width of the existing road shall be reinstated to the original width, unless otherwise agreed with OCC/EMD as the Roads authority. Where roads are widened, the specification shall be that as agreed prior to works with OCC/EMD.
- Any damage caused to roads shall be repaired to the satisfaction of OCC/EMD as the Roads authority.
- No excavations to be carried out within public roads, without submission of ROL by developer and grant of Road Opening Licence with conditions as issued by Roads Authority / Offaly County Council.
- Road opening licence(s) will be required from Offaly County Council for works within the public roads which are to be agreed with Edenderry MD office (as the Roads Authority); these will include proposed alterations under accommodation works at all locations along the Turbine Delivery Route (TDR).
    - Details of all accommodation works along the TDR route to be submitted to OCC in advance of commencement of works. Details to include works programme, construction

details (e.g. including drainage details & boundary treatments & signage layout, etc)' cross-sections for each road detailing existing road widths and existing services.

- Where road closures are required, application must be submitted to OCC at least 8 weeks in advance.
- Where road works speed limits are required, an application shall be submitted to OCC at least 8 weeks in advance. Signs to be erected & maintained by the developer/contractor.
- Traffic management plans to be submitted for each stage of the works.
- Diversion routes to be maintained by the developer/contractor, for duration of diversion.
- Pre-condition surveys of locations ahead of accommodation works including photographs to be carried out and a copy submitted to OCC. Any damage caused to the road(s) or adjacent properties shall be repaired to the satisfaction of Offaly County Council / Edenderry MD and relevant landowner/property owner.
- Pre-condition structural surveys on adjacent properties shall be carried out by a competent person at the developers expense prior to any works taking place along the affected road/adjacent property.
- Reinstatement of the trench in local and regional roads shall be in accordance with the latest version of "Guidelines for the Opening, Backfilling and Reinstatement of Trenches in Public Roads" (The Purple Book), except where noted otherwise. Details and extent of temporary and permanent reinstatement to be agreed with Edenderry MD (as the Roads Authority & as per road opening licenses) prior to commencement of works.
- Ironworks shall be raised & reset in mastic and road markings and road studs reinstated.

- All green/landscaped areas affected by the works shall be fully reinstated to their original condition. Where landscaping has been removed, similar plants of similar maturity shall be used for reinstatement. Where it is not possible to replace mature trees, younger trees plus additional landscaping shall be provided in lieu to enhance the area. Where hedging is removed and new hedging planted as reinstatement, suitable fencing shall be provided for the protection of the hedge, and maintenance shall be provided until the hedge is established. Where grass is replaced with new seeding, the grass shall be maintained until it is established. Full reinstatement shall be completed within one month of the final delivery.
- Any road signage and other street furniture which requires removal to facilitate turbine component deliveries shall be removed and reinstalled in suitable retention sockets prior to commencement of deliveries. Signage and street furniture shall only be uninstalled from these sockets immediately before turbine component deliveries and reinstated immediately afterwards. Signage and road furniture shall remain in place at all times outside of these reversing movements. The applicant shall relocate, at its own expense any existing public light poles which will hinder vehicle movements at this location. A public lighting design shall be completed by a suitably qualified designer and submitted to OCC for approval.
- Where applicable, existing hedgerows shall be reinstated with a suitable native mix upon completion of construction of the windfarm. The turning area hardstand shall be sufficiently secured during construction works to prevent it being used as a location for nuisance parking.

Materials Delivery Routes

- Developer to liaise with Edenderry Municipal District & Offaly County Council in relation to deliveries prior to commencement of construction. Prior to the commencement of any deliveries, once all suppliers have been confirmed by the Developer/Contractor, a detailed

programme of deliveries is to be submitted to OCC/Edenderry MD for review. Details to include number of movements per day, weights, etc. Developer/Contractor to liaise with OCC / Edenderry MD to establish the designated delivery/haul routes.

- Traffic management plans to be submitted detailing haulage of materials, including entry/exit points.
- Pre-condition surveys along the designated delivery/haul routes, consisting of a video survey and photographs, a Road Condition Survey, and an FWD Survey (where required) to be carried out and a copy submitted to OCC/EMD as Roads authority; prior to the commencement of deliveries to site(s).
- Where OCC/EMD consider a proposed haul route is not in a suitable condition, the developer shall upgrade the road or junction in advance of haulage operations as agreed with EMD/Roads authority.
- Further to review of haul routes and liaison between Developer/Contractor, passing or pull-in bays may be required at some locations along the designated/agreed haul routes; to facilitate deliveries to the development and maintain road safety and mitigate the impact upon all users of the public roads. Details of locations, size and proposed construction details shall be agreed with Edenderry MD as the Roads authority prior to commencement of the development.
- Any defects that appear upon the public roads/designated haul routes during the construction period of the development shall be rectified by the developer as agreed with EMD/Roads authority.
- Any damage caused to the road network, shall be repaired to the satisfaction of OCC / Edenderry MD.
- Public roads shall be kept free of mud, dust, spillages and debris. Any necessary measures shall be put in place at site entry/exit points to sites and along designated haul routes to satisfy this condition.

Temporary Traffic Management (TTM) For Construction Phase

- The applicant shall ensure that specific Temporary Traffic Management Plans are designed and installed to cater for the various phases of the project. Items that may be considered along with the General Principles of Prevention, could include, but not exclusively, some of the following:
    - The prevailing traffic speeds and traffic volumes. Busy commuter routes.
    - Horizontal and vertical alignments of the road(s). Visibility. Obstacles. Undulations.
    - Presence of existing entrances in the vicinity/ existing turning movements/ existing slow-moving traffic areas.
    - Grass verges – shall be kept in check by the developer to ensure that TTM signage is visible at all times.
    - Appropriate TTM Plan and risk assessments shall be in place for all activities on the public roads.
    - Housekeeping: All public roads affected by the development shall be kept free of loose materials, dust, mud, spillages, and debris.
    - For excavation works at entrances – the safety zone requirements and available residual road widths shall be considered as part of the Design Process.
    - The impact that (i) queuing of delivery vehicles on the road before entry to the site, and (ii) slow-moving vehicles exiting the site, could have on traffic safety.

- The Provision of Variable Message Signs (VMS) for the duration of the project, or at specific phases of the project.

Please refer to Appendix A for full report.

11.2 Roads Section

The application was referred to the Local Authority Roads Section. To date, no response from the Roads Section has been received in response of the proposed SID. Matters in relation to roads and traffic form part of the District Engineer's office report.

11.3 Environment and Water Services Report

The Local Authority's Environment and Water Services Department have reviewed the documentation received in relation to the above application and recommend seeking that further information is sought. However, if An Coimisiún Pleanála deem it necessary to grant permission to the above application, recommended conditions have been included in this report.

FI - Drainage

The following further information is required:

1. The applicant is not permitted to install and operate a foul wastewater holding tank as part of this permission. Please submit to the Environment Department an alternative collection and disposal/treatment solution for approval – **Not Addressed.**
   - As per Chapter 11 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy WSP-17: It is Council policy to encourage and support a changeover from septic tanks/private wastewater treatment plants to public collection networks wherever feasible, subject to connection agreements with Irish Water and to ensure that any future development connects to the public wastewater infrastructure where it is available.

Grant Conditions:

In the event in which it is decided to grant permission to the above application, the following conditions shall be included:

General

1. Due to the presence of many badger sets, prior to commencement, the developer shall submit a copy of their written approval from NPWS on their proposed mammal passage clearance specifications of the security/perimeter fence.
2. All mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Construction and Environmental Management Plan shall be implemented by the applicant/developer for the construction & operational phase of the development.
3. All mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment shall be implemented by the applicant/developer for the operational & construction phase of the development.
4. All mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Surface Water Management Plan shall be implemented by the applicant/developer for the operational & construction phase of the development.
5. All mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Natura Impact Statement shall be implemented by the applicant/developer for the construction & operational phase of the development.

6. All mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Report shall be implemented by the applicant/developer for the construction, operational phase & decommissioning phase of the development.
7. All statutory consents and licences required to commence construction Works on-site shall be obtained prior to works commencing, including but not limited to; Site notices, Construction commencement notices, Licence to connect to existing utilities (including water) and mains sewers, where required, Abstraction and / or discharge licenses, where required, Road opening / closure licences, etc.

Surface Water

1. Surface water run-off from the roofs, roads and hardstanding areas shall be collected and disposed of within the site to soakaways or proposed attenuation overflowing to the adjacent watercourse. No such surface water run off shall be allowed to flow onto the public roadway or other adjoining properties.
2. The applicant shall maintain/preserve any existing riparian corridor/drain present within and/or adjacent to the site by implementing a buffer zone where no development is permitted in accordance with Offaly County Council's, Development Plan 2021-2027.
3. It is noted that the applicant wishes to carry out in stream works as part of the provisions of a potential future development. The Applicant is requested to consider clear span bridging structures instead of proposed headwall & bottomless culvert construction to satisfy OCC's existing policy BLP-21. If the applicant does not satisfy this request then they shall document stream habitat lost and provide compensatory habitat where possible.
    - As per Chapter 4 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy BLP-21: It is Council policy to promote clear span bridging structures as the preferred option for culverts. Any development proposal requiring culverting should also document stream habitat lost and provide compensatory habitat where possible. Realignment of water courses should incorporate stream enhancement measures, as outlined in Office of Public Works Environmental Guidance. The Council will consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to riparian and instream works as appropriate.
    - As per Chapter 4 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy BLP-20: It is Council policy to preserve riparian buffer strips free from development by reserving a minimum of 10 metres either side of all watercourses (measured from top of bank) with the full extent of the protection determined on a case by case basis by the Council, based on site specific characteristics and sensitivities.
    - As per Chapter 11 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy WSP-22: It is Council policy to ensure adequate surface water drainage systems are in place which meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan and to promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems.
    - As per Chapter 11 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy ENVP-03:It is Council policy to support the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plan and the Local Authority Waters Programme in achieving and maintaining at least good environmental status for all water bodies in the county. Development proposals shall not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated woodlands.

Foul Sewerage

1. The applicant is not permitted to install and operate a foul wastewater holding tank as part of this permission. Therefore, prior to commencement of development, the Applicant shall submit to the planning authority for written approval, an alternative proposed wastewater treatment system to adequately deal with wastewater generated from the development.

- As per Chapter 11 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy WSP-17: It is Council policy to encourage and support a changeover from septic tanks/private wastewater treatment plants to public collection networks wherever feasible, subject to connection agreements with Irish Water and to ensure that any future development connects to the public wastewater infrastructure where it is available.

2. In the event that foul waste is to be removed regularly from site by a contractor during construction phase, the developer shall submit a signed maintenance contract with an Authorised Waste Collector and all foul waste must be transported to an Authorised Waste Facility.

Waste Management

1. All wastes arising from/at the proposed development shall be managed in accordance with the Waste Management Acts 1996 as amended. While awaiting removal, all waste materials shall be stored in designated areas protected against spillage or leachate run-off.
2. All uncontaminated soil and stone imported onto the site shall comprise non-waste by-product, in accordance with Article 27 of the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011, S.I. Nó. 126 of 2011.
3. No development shall commence prior to registration with the Environmental Protection Agency of the material to be imported onto the lands, in accordance with Article 27 of the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011, S.I. Mo. 126 of 2011.
4. Prior to commencement of development, details regarding the origin/source of proposed soil & stone to be imported onto the site shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning authority.

Environmental Nuisance

1. Noise emissions at the nearest noise sensitive location,(such as dwellings, schools, places of worship or areas of high amenity) shall not exceed the following:
   - LAeq (60 minutes) 55dB(A)8am to 8pm
   - LAeq (15 minutes) 45dB(A)8pm to 8am
2. Audible tonal or impulsive components should be minimised at any noise sensitive location.
3. The Applicant shall take reasonable measures to mitigate any environmental nuisance (noise and dust) which may arise during construction. Construction shall take place during working hours 7am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1.30pm Saturday unless otherwise authorised by the Planning Authority.

Biodiversity & Landscape

1. The applicant shall maintain/preserve any existing hedgerow/woodland/trees present within and/or adjacent to the site in accordance with Offaly County Council's, Development Plan 2021-2027.
2. Where hedgerow/woodland/tree removal is required to facilitate the development, the applicant shall apply for a Tree Felling Licence from the Forestry Service, Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in compliance with the Forestry Act 2014.
   - As per Chapter 4 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy BLP-24: It is Council policy to support the protection and management of existing networks of woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character, and to strengthen local networks.

Please refer to Appendix A for full report.

11.4 Senior Executive Architect Report

The Local Authority's Senior Executive Architect notes the following:

- The application states that the proposed development does not consist of work to a protected structure or its curtilage in Q.15 of Application form (p.14).
- However, near the main site where the turbines will be located, as well as in the middle of the connection works around Site Notice Location 32 and Site Notice Location 21 shown on the map below in Towland Trescan, there is a protected structure — Trescan House (RPS 46--023, NIAH 140934001). It is necessary to ensure that the proposed works do not interfere with the views in the vicinity of this protected structure. The applicant will need to provide photomontages of this location showing the impact that they will have on the c.1830 protected structure Trescan House and its demesne: Trascan House, TRASCAN, OFFALY - Buildings of Ireland.
- The other protected structures located near proposed main site with turbines are The Old Schoolhouse (NIAH: 14927006) and Saint Brochan's Catholic Church : church/chapel (NIAH: 14927005) in Bracknagh. It is necessary to ensure that the proposed works do not interfere with the views in the vicinity of this protected structure. The applicant will need to provide photomontages of this location showing the impact that they will have on protected **structures**: The Old Schoolhouse, BRACKNAGH, Bracknagh, OFFALY - Buildings of Ireland and Saint Brochan's Catholic Church, BRACKNAGH, Bracknagh, OFFALY - Buildings of Ireland
- Furthermore, it should be noted that the Ballina Townland (junction/location of site notices 4 – 6) is located in close proximity to the town of Geashill, which is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and contains a significant number of protected structures.
- In the townland of Ballinagar, where works are also proposed, there is a protected structure — St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church (RPS 25-036, NIAH 14918008).

Please refer to Appendix A for full report.

12 THIRD PARTY OBSERVATIONS/SUBMISSION SUBMITTED TO AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA

At the time of writing, the Planning Authority has not received copies, from the Commission, of any third-party submissions or referrals from prescribed bodies which may have been submitted and received by the Commission.

13 PLANNING AUTHORITY'S ASSESSMENT AND VIEWS

Principle of Development

It is acknowledged that the location of the subject site, insofar as it is located within the function area of Co. Offaly, is within a wider area which is denoted within the current County Wind Energy Strategy as an area 'Deemed Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Developments'. Development in such areas must suitably demonstrate that the proposed windfarm would not result in any negative impact on the residential and visual amenities of the surrounding area.

Best practice as set out in the 2019 Draft Wind Energy Guidelines refers to a setback distance for visual amenity purposes of 4 times the tip height between a wind turbine and the nearest point of the curtilage of any residential property in the vicinity of the proposed development. With a proposed height of 186m and 187m for the proposed windfarm turbines, this would result in a best practice setback of 744m for proposed turbines T2, T3, T6 and T7 and 748m for proposed turbines T1, T4, T5,

T8 and T9. The Planning Authority note that the closest property to a turbine is located circa 770 m from the proposed turbine T2 and therefore the proposed development would achieve the best practice distance referred to in the 2019 Draft Guideline, if permitted.

Whilst it is noted that the 2019 Guidelines remain in draft, it is considered that the applicant has included a setback necessary to ensure the protection of residential amenity of persons within individual properties. It is considered that the setbacks provided are sufficient to ensure no negative impact, in terms of noise and vibration; shadow flicker; and, visual impact, on the residential amenity of occupiers of properties within the local vicinity of the proposed development.

Noise

Chapter 8 'Noise and Vibration' of the submitted EIAR states that the Yellow River wind farm has an expected completion date in 2025. The Planning Authority confirm that this wind farm is now fully operational. The separation distance of c. 19km between the Yellow River wind farm and the subject site is acknowledged however, it is noted that the assessment carried out by the applicant may need to be revised, given the operational status of the Yellow River Wind Farm. In addition, a SID application for the Ballinla Wind Farm which is located within 20km of the subject site is due for decision in September 2026 (An Coimisiún Pleanála Case reference: PAX19.323579). This proposal should also be considered as part of any noise assessment prepared for the proposed development.

The Commission is requested to be mindful of the findings of recent High Court decisions, including Gibbet Hill and Ballyduff wind farms in its assessment of this SID. In this context, the Planning Authority wishes to highlight the need for a Noise Complaint Monitoring Programme being agreed prior to the commissioning of any development, if permitted.

Furthermore, it is requested that the Commission attach a condition, if permission were granted, whereby all required costs incurred by the Local Authority in ensuring full compliance with ongoing noise monitoring requirements for the duration of the operational life of the wind farm be burdened on the applicant. The Planning Authority will provide further clarity to the Commission on this important matter, if necessary.

Cultural Heritage

Chapter 15 of the EIAR concludes that the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm is not predicted to result in any significant adverse effects on known cultural heritage assets. Having considered the assessment provided, the Local Authority's Senior Executive Architect advises that in order to fully consider the potential impact on the protected structures, namely Trescan House (RPS 46--023, NIAH 140934001), The Old Schoolhouse, Bracknagh (NIAH: 14927006) and Saint Brochan's Catholic Church, Bracknagh (NIAH: 14927005), photomontages from these sensitive viewpoints should be provided as part of further information.

Transportation and Traffic

Having reviewed Chapter 14 of the submitted EIAR and the supporting appendices, the Edenderry Municipal District Engineer has sought further information on an extensive range of requirements with respect to transportation and traffic components of the proposed development. In the event that An

Coimisiún Pleanála grant planning permission for the proposed development, suitable conditions, in this regard, have been provided as part of this report.

Wastewater Management

The Local Authority's EWS has sought further information on the management of wastewater during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

Summary on Overall Conclusion

Notwithstanding the further information which is being sought in regard to cultural heritage and transportation and traffic, it is the view of the Planning Authority that having regard to the site's location, the proximity of proposed turbines to existing dwellings, the design of the turbines and the mitigation measures involved during the construction and operational phases, that the proposed development would not have any significant negative impact on the residential amenity of the residents of properties in the vicinity of the site.

14 PLANNING AUTHORITY'S VIEW ON COMMUNITY GAIN

With respect to proposed *Community Gain Fund,* this will be in accordance with the Wind Energy Ireland (WEI) best practice and shall be awarded via the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS). A contribution of €2 euro per megawatt hour (MWh) produced is required with a minimum of 40% of the funds to be allocated to initiatives and projects that support Sustainable Development goals within the area while 50% of the fund would be allocated to local clubs, societies and near neighbours. In this regard, the applicant indicates that the fund would be over €3.9 million over the lifetime of the project with an estimated c.€260,000 allocated per annum. It is stated that this fund will contribute to social infrastructure in the area and financially benefit those in closest proximity to the proposed wind farm.

Comment:

- Notwithstanding the information above, is considered that the submitted planning documentation is light on details in relation to the breakdown for the various funding elements of the Community Fund and on the specifics on actual implementation and selection criteria associated the Community Gain schemes for this wind farm development.
- The Planning Authority welcome the provision of the proposed amenity space however in this regard, they note the following:
  - Limited information has been provided on this facility; further information is sought on this facility including the submission of a more detailed site layout plan with details provided of the proposed landscaping, surface drainage, fencing, lighting, etc.
  - The proposed amenity space is located adjacent to Turbine No. 1 which is the most southerly located turbine within the windfarm site. Having reviewed the submitted information, it appears that the only way a member of the public can gain access to this location is from the regional road, R419. However, the applicant has not confirmed within the submitted documentation that the internal accessway will be open to the public. Given the location of the proposed amenity space, public access along the internal roadway is presumed however clarification from the applicant on this matter is sought.

- Justification for the location of the proposed amenity space, adjacent to proposed Turbine 1, should be sought from the applicant as the Planning Authority would query the useability of the area. The Planning Authority suggest the site of the Temporary Compound No. 2 (once no longer in use) as a possible alternative location for the amenity space. It is suggested that this location would allow members of the public to park and then have the option of doing a looped walk to the south across the proposed Cushina River crossing or to the east towards proposed Turbines 2, 3, 5, 8 and 9. Not only would this location provide more options for walkers but also limited vehicular access by members of the public within the windfarm site.

15 DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

The Commission is advised to note that it is anticipated that Offaly County Council's Development Contribution Scheme 2026 – 2032 will be adopted at the March 2026 meeting of OCC which will take place on Monday 23rd March 2026.

It is expected that the **Development Contribution Scheme 2026 – 2032** shall apply if permission was granted for this development insofar as it relates to Co. Offaly. The required contribution is as follows:

Extract from Table 2 – Levels of Contributions – Other Categories of Development

	Category	*Amount of Contribution*
G	*Wind Turbines**	*€20,000 per MW of capacity, where tip height < 175m and €25,000 per MW capacity where tip height >=175m*

**Any new buildings associated with projects will be charged at the commercial rate.*

- The contribution is as follows: 64.8 MW x €25,000 per MW of capacity = **€1,620,000.**

Extract from Table 1a: Level of Contribution – Residential & Industrial / Commercial Development in all other areas

	Class of Infrastructure	*€ per m² of floor area industrial / commercial development*
A	*Open spaces, cultural, recreational and community facilities, playgrounds, school sites, libraries, arts, amenities and landscaping works, town and village improvement, sports facilities – including land acquisition.*	*€6.50*
B	*Roads, flood relief work, infrastructure including public lighting, footpaths, cycle, public transport and pedestrian facilities, bus corridors and lanes, bus interchange facilites (including car parking for these facilities), car parking, traffic calming measures and land acquisition, drainage, high-capacity telecommunications infrastructure and traffic management.*	*€12.50*
	Total	***€19.00***

The submitted application forms states there are no proposed structures however it is stated in *Section 2.4.2.1 On-Site Electrical Substation* of Chapter 2 of the submitted EIAR states that a control building comprising of 450m² is proposed.

- The contribution is as follows: 450m² x €19 per m² of floor area = **€8,550**

The total development contribution under **Development Contribution Scheme 2026 – 2032** is therefore calculated as being **€1,628,550.**

16 BONDS

It is recommended that a bond be attached in order to secure the reinstatement of public roads which may be damaged by the transport of materials to the site.

In addition, the Planning Authority seek the provision of a bond in order to secure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site on cessation of the project.

17 PLANNING AUTHORITY'S VIEW ON CONDITIONS

In the event that An Coimisiún Pleanála, as the Competent Authority, grant planning permission for the above development, the Planning Authority recommend that the attachment of planning conditions include the following:

- Timescale for completion, operation and decommissioning.
- Turbines not to be replaced without consent.
- Pre-roads surveys and reinstatement costs.
- Noise levels during construction and operation, including monitoring and a noise complaint monitoring programme.
- Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Archaeological recording, reporting and any further mitigation arising from same.
- Navigation lighting.
- Public lighting.
- Mitigation measures in the EIAR to be applied.
- Bird monitoring & kill record (subject to NPWS report).
- Surface water monitoring and management.
- Development contributions.
- Community Benefit Scheme.
- No Signage/Livery.
- Colour – standard off-white / light grey.
- Bonds.
- All required costs incurred by the Local Authority in ensuring full compliance with ongoing noise monitoring requirements for the duration of the operational life of the wind farm to be burdened on the applicant.

- Conditions on road and traffic safety. Other suggested conditions by Edenderry District Engineer.

18 RECOMMENDATION

Notwithstanding Section 13 above, the Planning Authority requests that further information be requested so as to afford of the applicant an opportunity to address the matters raised within Sections 11, 13 and 14 of the report before a decision is made.

18 March 2026

Úna McCafferkey (Executive Planner) *Date*

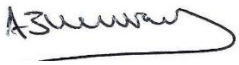
18 March 2026

Date

James Condron (Senior Executive Planner)

18 March 2026

Paula Hanlon (Senior Planner) *Date*



19th March 2026

Andrew Murray (Deputy Chief Executive) *Date*

Appendix A – Internal Reports Received

Edenderry MD

Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

To:	Planning
File Reference:	Ref: SID 023 ACP-324055-26
Applicant:	Derrynagarragh Wind Farm
Site Address:	Kildare, Offaly & Laois.
Date of Memo:	26/2/2026

SID023 -10 YEAR PLANNING PERMISSION FOR 9 WIND TURBINES, AN ONSITE 110KV SUBSTATION, TURBINE DELIVERY ROUTE AND A GRID CONNECTION TO THE ALREADY EXSISTING BRACKLONE SUBSTATION

Edenderry Municipal District Engineer

Further Information

- The Applicant shall submit details on proposals for the existing public road at the proposed site Entrances on the R419 (Cushina) & L70481 including proposals for strenghtening the road fabric at the entrances, to resist damage likely to be caused by HGV's entering and existing the site during the construction period. These details should include proposed road build up/specification, which shall comply with TII Specifications for Road Works Series 900 (latest edition) and details of longitudinal & cross sections. These proposals must be accompanied by an independent Road Safety Audit.
- The Applicant shall submit drawings with details of surface water measures at the proposed site entrances including road side drainage and details of gully and soakaway locations .The Drawings shall also detail/show any proposed line marking and signage at/near the Site Entrances.
- The applicant shall provide details to mitigate deposition/ spillage of site materials onto the public road(s) during construction works.
- The Applicant shall submit details regarding the number and weight of loads of timber to be removed from the site, as outlined under tree felling of 6ha as mentioned within submission. Details of the destination of same and the haul route to be used is also required.
- The applicant shall submit a detailed schedule of all deliveries that run concurrently (e.g. stone for access routes and hard-standings, concrete for foundations, etc) and the delivery of abnormal loads to the site; indicating the timescale within which these HGV's movements are intended to use each proposed haul route/road to facilitate the proposed development over the construction period. Details to include number of movements per day along proposed haul route, weights, etc.
- The Applicant shall submit a report including a survey of the roads and bridges along the proposed haul routes, carried out at the developers expense by a suitably qualified person This report shall include a schedule of proposed works to roads, bridges or any other public infrastructure to enable/ upgrade the haul route(s) to be used by construction related traffic.

CONDITIONS

- Prior to commencement Applicant shall submit details, as listed below, to OCC / Edenderry MD:

(These proposals will be subject to the review & agreement of Roads Authority – Edenderry MD)

- Proposals for the existing public road at the proposed entrance areas, including proposals for strenghtening the road fabric at the entrance areas to resist damage likely to be caused by HGV's entering and existing the site during the construction period. These details should include proposed road build up / specification, which shall comply with TII Specifications for Road Works Series 900 (latest edition) and details of longitudinal & cross sections.
- Prior to commencement the Applicant shall submit drawings detailing surface water measures at the proposed site entrances including road side drainage and details of gully and soakaway locations.
- Prior to commencement the Applicant shall submit drawings showing any proposed line marking and signage at/near the Site Entrances.
- Prior to commencement the applicant shall provide details to mitigate deposition/ spillage of site materials onto the public road(s) during construction works.

- Prior to commencement the Applicant shall submit a report including a survey of the roads, bridges and along the haul routes carried out at the developers expense by a suitably qualified person. This report shall include a schedule of proposed works to roads, bridges or any other public infrastructure to enable/ upgrade the haul route(s) to be used by construction related traffic. The extent and scope of the surveys and the schedule of works shall be agreed with the Roads authority prior of commencement of the surveys and of the development. Any proposed amendments to road infrastructure/layouts on existing road network, submitted to OCC/EMD for review/approval, should be accompanied by a relevant Road Safety Audit, completed by an independent competent body.
- Within 3 months of the cessation of the end of the public road(s) being used as haul routes, a condition survey of the roads, bridges and any other public infrastructure, accompanied by a schedule of repair/ upgrade works shall be carried out at the developers expense by a suitably qualified person. This shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Roads authority within 3 months of the cessation of use of public roads by construction traffic. All agreed works shall be completed at the developers expense within 12 months of the cessation of public roads being used as haul routes.
- Prior to commencement the Applicant shall submit details regarding the number and weight of loads of timber to be removed from the site, in reference to tree felling of 6ha as mentioned within submission. Details of the destination of same and haul route to be used is also required.
- Visibility site distances for all entrances, both temporary and permanent shall be in accordance with DMS-097 and DMS-098 of the current Offaly County Development Plan. Hedges in the vicinity of sight distance shall be trimmed regularly to maintain sight distance for the during of construction and operation of the wind farm. In addition to the use of a wheel wash at the construction entrances to reduce debris on the public road shall be deployed.
- The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning and Roads authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including:
  - Location of the site and materials compound

- Location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities
- Details of site security fencing and hoardings
- Details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction
- Phasing programme including a detailed schedule of all deliveries that run concurrently (e.g. stone for access routes and hard-standings, concrete for foundations, etc) and the delivery of abnormal loads to the site; indicating the timescale within which these HGV's movements are intended to use each proposed haul route/road to facilitate the proposed development over the construction period. Details to include number of movements per day along proposed haul route, weights, etc.
- Detailed arrangements for temporary traffic arrangements/ controls on roads. Including associated directional signage to be submitted and agreed with the Roads authority. Traffic Signage to be compliant with Chapter 8 of Traffic Signs Manual 2019 (as amended).
- Measures to prevent queuing of construction traffic near sites & the adjoining road network,
- Measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of materials / debris on the public road network.
- Details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels,
- Containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained; such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater,
- Off-site disposal of construction waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil / peat.
- Details of on-site re-fuelling arrangements, including use of drip trays,
- Means to ensure that surface water run-off is controlled such that no deleterious levels of silt or other pollutants enter local surface water drains or watercourses.

- Any change(s) to locations and sources of materials being hauled to the site during construction shall be notified to the planning and Roads authority, as any deviation from agreed haul routes may have an adverse impact on the road network; which may also lead to amendments to agreed schedule of works to roads as agreed with EMD under designated haul routes for materials for the development.
- Determination of the road network capacity shall be carried out by the applicant. As the road network through the Municipal District of Edenderry is founded on Peat subsoils, this characteristic must be given due diligence when determining the impact of development traffic and delivery routes for the project. A schedule of materials required to construct the development shall be developed and delivery quantities and frequency of deliveries shall be used when calculating the impact this development will have on the road network. Significant infrastructural upgrades will inevitably need to be carried out to accommodate the development and such should be included as part of proposals. A detailed Transport Management Plan including details of the road network/ haulage routes and the vehicle types to be used to transport materials on and off site and a schedule of control measures for exceptionally wide and heavy deliveries shall be included in the submission.
- Prior to the commencement of the development, the developer shall lodge with the planning Authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the Planning Authority, to secure the reinstatement of public roads which may be

damaged by the transport of materials to and from the site, coupled with an agreement empowering the Planning Authority to apply such security or part thereof to the satisfactory reinstatement of the public road. The form and amount of the security shall be agreed between the Planning Authority and the Developer.

TURBINE DELIVERY ROUTES

- Developer to liaise with TII, Edenderry Municipal District & Offaly County Council in relation to deliveries. Where OCC consider a proposed delivery route is not in a suitable condition, the developer shall upgrade the road or junction in advance of delivery operations, as agreed with OCC/EMD.
- Detailed programme of deliveries to be submitted to OCC/EMD in advance of commencement of deliveries. Details to include dates and times, number of loads, abnormal loads, weights, road closure, diversion routes, support vehicles, etc.
- Developer to engage and adhere with OCC procedure regarding submission, review and agreement for abnormal loads.
- Delivery movements of oversize turbine components shall be restricted to nighttime hours to minimise disruption to the national road network.
- A Transport Management Plan, including details of the road network/ haulage routes and the vehicle types to be used to transport turbine infrastructure to site and a schedule of control measures for exceptionally wide and heavy deliveries to be submitted to OCC/EMD.
- All road surfaces, culverts, watercourses, verges and public lands shall be protected during construction and, in the case of any damage occurring, shall be reinstated to the satisfaction of the Planning and Edenderry MD (Roads Authority).
- All existing watercourse crossings/bridges shall be identified and detailed designs submitted to Offaly County Council Roads Section & Edenderry MD, to indicate how these will be crossed, for Offaly County Council / Edenderry MD approval.
- Developer to provide evidence of agreement with landowners at all nodes and entry/exit points requiring temporary or permanent works. Proposed scope of works adjacent /upon public roads shall be reviewed and agreed with the Roads Authority/EMD prior to commencement of these works.
- Developer to consult with all relevant Stakeholders (e.g. Uisce Éireann, An Garda Síochána, emergency services, Tidy towns, TII) in relation to turbine delivery routes. OCC to be advised of any alterations required/requested by Stakeholders along the proposed routes.
- Any alterations affecting the width of the existing road shall be reinstated to the original width, unless otherwise agreed with OCC/EMD as the Roads authority. Where roads are widened, the specification shall be that as agreed prior to works with OCC/EMD.
- Any damage caused to roads shall be repaired to the satisfaction of OCC/EMD as the Roads authority.
- No excavations to be carried out within public roads, without submission of ROL by developer and grant of Road Opening Licence with conditions as issued by Roads Authority / Offaly County Council.
- Road opening licence(s) will be required from Offaly County Council for works within the public roads which are to be agreed with Edenderry MD office (as the Roads Authority); these will include proposed alterations under accommodation works at all locations along the Turbine Delivery Route (TDR).

- Details of all accommodation works along the TDR route to be submitted to OCC in advance of commencement of works. Details to include works programme, construction details (e.g. including drainage details & boundary treatments & signage layout, etc)' cross-sections for each road detailing existing road widths and existing services.
- Where road closures are required, application must be submitted to OCC at least 8 weeks in advance.
- Where road works speed limits are required, an application shall be submitted to OCC at least 8 weeks in advance. Signs to be erected & maintained by the developer/contractor.
- Traffic management plans to be submitted for each stage of the works.
- Diversion routes to be maintained by the developer/contractor, for duration of diversion.
- Pre-condition surveys of locations ahead of accommodation works including photographs to be carried out and a copy submitted to OCC. Any damage caused to the road(s) or adjacent properties shall be repaired to the satisfaction of Offaly County Council / Edenderry MD and relevant landowner/property owner.
- Pre-condition structural surveys on adjacent properties shall be carried out by a competent person at the developers expense prior to any works taking place along the affected road/adjacent property.
- Reinstatement of the trench in local and regional roads shall be in accordance with the latest version of "Guidelines for the Opening, Backfilling and Reinstatement of Trenches in Public Roads" (The Purple Book), except where noted otherwise. Details and extent of temporary and permanent reinstatement to be agreed with Edenderry MD (as the Roads Authority & as per road opening licenses) prior to commencement of works.
- Ironworks shall be raised & reset in mastic and road markings and road studs reinstated.

- All green/landscaped areas affected by the works shall be fully reinstated to their original condition. Where landscaping has been removed, similar plants of similar maturity shall be used for reinstatement. Where it is not possible to replace mature trees, younger trees plus additional landscaping shall be provided in lieu to enhance the area. Where hedging is removed and new hedging planted as reinstatement, suitable fencing shall be provided for the protection of the hedge, and maintenance shall be provided until the hedge is established. Where grass is replaced with new seeding, the grass shall be maintained until it is established. Full reinstatement shall be completed within one month of the final delivery.
- Any road signage and other street furniture which requires removal to facilitate turbine component deliveries shall be removed and reinstalled in suitable retention sockets prior to commencement of deliveries. Signage and street furniture shall only be uninstalled from these sockets immediately before turbine component deliveries and reinstated immediately afterwards. Signage and road furniture shall remain in place at all times outside of these reversing movements. The applicant shall relocate, at its own expense any existing public light poles which will hinder vehicle movements at this location. A public lighting design shall be completed by a suitably qualified designer and submitted to OCC for approval.
- Where applicable, existing hedgerows shall be reinstated with a suitable native mix upon completion of construction of the windfarm. The turning area hardstand shall be sufficiently secured during construction works to prevent it being used as a location for nuisance parking.

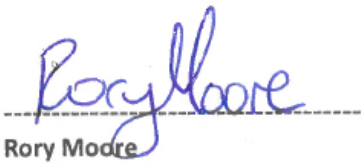
MATERIALS DELIVERY ROUTES

- Developer to liaise with Edenderry Municipal District & Offaly County Council in relation to deliveries prior to commencement of construction. Prior to the commencement of any deliveries, once all suppliers have been confirmed by the Developer/Contractor, a detailed programme of deliveries is to be submitted to OCC/Edenderry MD for review. Details to include number of movements per day, weights, etc. Developer/Contractor to liaise with OCC / Edenderry MD to establish the designated delivery/haul routes.
- Traffic management plans to be submitted detailing haulage of materials, including entry/exit points.
- Pre-condition surveys along the designated delivery/haul routes, consisting of a video survey and photographs, a Road Condition Survey, and an FWD Survey (where required) to be carried out and a copy submitted to OCC/EMD as Roads authority; prior to the commencement of deliveries to site(s).
- Where OCC/EMD consider a proposed haul route is not in a suitable condition, the developer shall upgrade the road or junction in advance of haulage operations as agreed with EMD/Roads authority.
- Further to review of haul routes and liaison between Developer/Contractor, passing or pull-in bays may be required at some locations along the designated/agreed haul routes; to facilitate deliveries to the development and maintain road safety and mitigate the impact upon all users of the public roads. Details of locations, size and proposed construction details shall be agreed with Edenderry MD as the Roads authority prior to commencement of the development.
- Any defects that appear upon the public roads/designated haul routes during the construction period of the development shall be rectified by the developer as agreed with EMD/Roads authority.
- Any damage caused to the road network, shall be repaired to the satisfaction of OCC / Edenderry MD.
- Public roads shall be kept free of mud, dust, spillages and debris. Any necessary measures shall be put in place at site entry/exit points to sites and along designated haul routes to satisfy this condition.

TEMPORARY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT (TTM) FOR CONSTRUCTION PHASE

- The applicant shall ensure that specific Temporary Traffic Management Plans are designed and installed to cater for the various phases of the project. Items that may be considered along with the General Principles of Prevention, could include, but not exclusively, some of the following:
    - The prevailing traffic speeds and traffic volumes. Busy commuter routes.
    - Horizontal and vertical alignments of the road(s). Visibility. Obstacles. Undulations.
    - Presence of existing entrances in the vicinity/ existing turning movements/ existing slow-moving traffic areas.
    - Grass verges – shall be kept in check by the developer to ensure that TTM signage is visible at all times.
    - Appropriate TTM Plan and risk assessments shall be in place for all activities on the public roads.

- Housekeeping: All public roads affected by the development shall be kept free of loose materials, dust, mud, spillages, and debris.
- For excavation works at entrances – the safety zone requirements and available residual road widths shall be considered as part of the Design Process.
- The impact that (i) queuing of delivery vehicles on the road before entry to the site, and (ii) slow-moving vehicles exiting the site, could have on traffic safety.
- The Provision of Variable Message Signs (VMS) for the duration of the project, or at specific phases of the project.



Rory Moore
District Engineer
Edenderry Municipal District
Offaly County Council

Environment and Water Services

Offaly County Council
Water Services

Planning Conditions

To: Planning

Planning Ref: PL2-SID023

Date: 05th March 2026

Application for; 10 year permission for Derrynadarragh wind farm comprising of 9 no. wind turbines, onsite 110kV substation, turbine delivery route and a grid connection route.
Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) Planning Application for the development of a Wind Farm consisting of 9 no. turbines (and all associated works) in the townlands of Kilbeggan South, Hallsfarm, Stonehouse Farm; Ballyhought, Durrow Demesne, Aghancarnan, Gormagh, Acantha, Ballynasrah or Tinnycross, Ardan, Puttaghan, Carnancur, 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, Bunnagarragh, 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.

Applicant; Dara Energy Limited (Active)

Location; as above

Report sent to Uisce Eireann:	No	x	Yes		FI	x	Conditions		Refusal	

Environment & Water Services have reviewed the documentation received in relation to the above application and are recommending seeking the following further information:

However, if An Bord Pleanala deem it necessary to grant permission to the above application, recommended conditions have been included in this report

FI Conditions:

Drainage

1. The applicant is not permitted to install and operate a foul wastewater holding tank as part of this permission. Please submit to the Environment Department an alternative collection and disposal/treatment solution for approval – **Not Addressed.**

    - As per Chapter 11 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy WSP-17: It is Council policy to encourage and support a changeover from septic tanks/private wastewater treatment plants to public collection networks wherever feasible, subject to

connection agreements with Irish Water and to ensure that any future development connects to the public wastewater infrastructure where it is available.

In the event in which it is decided to grant permission to the above application, the following conditions shall be included:

Grant Conditions:

General

1. Due to the presence of many badger sets, prior to commencement, the developer shall submit a copy of their written approval from NPWS on their proposed mammal passage clearance specifications of the security/perimeter fence.

2. All mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Construction and Environmental Management Plan shall be implemented by the applicant/developer for the construction & operational phase of the development.

3. All mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment shall be implemented by the applicant/developer for the operational & construction phase of the development.

4. All mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Surface Water Management Plan shall be implemented by the applicant/developer for the operational & construction phase of the development.

5. All mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Natura Impact Statement shall be implemented by the applicant/developer for the construction & operational phase of the development.
6. All mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Report shall be implemented by the applicant/developer for the construction, operational phase & decommissioning phase of the development.

7. All statutory consents and licences required to commence construction Works on-site shall be obtained prior to works commencing, including but not limited to; Site notices, Construction commencement notices, Licence to connect to existing utilities (including water) and mains sewers, where required, Abstraction and / or discharge licenses, where required, Road opening / closure licences, etc.

Surface Water

1. Surface water run-off from the roofs, roads and hardstanding areas shall be collected and disposed of within the site to soakaways or proposed attenuation overflowing to the adjacent watercourse. No such surface water run off shall be allowed to flow onto the public roadway or other adjoining properties.

2. The applicant shall maintain/preserve any existing riparian corridor/drain present within and/or adjacent to the site by implementing a buffer zone where no development is permitted in accordance with Offaly County Council's, Development Plan 2021-2027.

3. It is noted that the applicant wishes to carry out in stream works as part of the provisions of a potential future development. The Applicant is requested to consider clear span bridging structures instead of proposed headwall & bottomless culvert construction to satisfy OCC's

existing policy BLP-21. If the applicant does not satisfy this request then they shall document stream habitat lost and provide compensatory habitat where possible.

- As per Chapter 4 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy BLP-21: It is Council policy to promote clear span bridging structures as the preferred option for culverts. Any development proposal requiring culverting should also document stream habitat lost and provide compensatory habitat where possible. Realignment of water courses should incorporate stream enhancement measures, as outlined in Office of Public Works Environmental Guidance. The Council will consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to riparian and instream works as appropriate.
- As per Chapter 4 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy BLP-20: It is Council policy to preserve riparian buffer strips free from development by reserving a minimum of 10 metres either side of all watercourses (measured from top of bank) with the full extent of the protection determined on a case by case basis by the Council, based on site specific characteristics and sensitivities.
- As per Chapter 11 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy WSP-22: It is Council policy to ensure adequate surface water drainage systems are in place which meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan and to promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems.
- As per Chapter 11 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy ENVP-03:It is Council policy to support the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plan and the Local Authority Waters Programme in achieving and maintaining at least good environmental status for all water bodies in the county. Development proposals shall not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated woodlands.

Foul Sewerage

1. The applicant is not permitted to install and operate a foul wastewater holding tank as part of this permission. Therefore, prior to commencement the Applicant shall submit to the planning authority for approval, an alternative proposed wastewater treatment system to adequately deal with wastewater generated from the development.

    - As per Chapter 11 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy WSP-17: It is Council policy to encourage and support a changeover from septic tanks/private wastewater treatment plants to public collection networks wherever feasible, subject to connection agreements with Irish Water and to ensure that any future development connects to the public wastewater infrastructure where it is available.

2. In the event that foul waste is to be removed regularly from site by a contractor during construction phase, the developer shall submit a signed maintenance contract with an Authorised Waste Collector and all foul waste must be transported to an Authorised Waste Facility.

Waste Management

1. All wastes arising from/at the proposed development shall be managed in accordance with the Waste Management Acts 1996 as amended. While awaiting removal, all waste materials shall be stored in designated areas protected against spillage or leachate run-off.

2. All uncontaminated soil and stone imported onto the site shall comprise non-waste by-product, in accordance with Article 27 of the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011, S.I. Nó. 126 of 2011.

3. No development shall commence prior to registration with the Environmental Protection Agency of the material to be imported onto the lands, in accordance with Article 27 of the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011, S.I. Mo. 126 of 2011.

4. Prior to commencement of development, details regarding the origin/source of proposed soil & stone to be imported onto the site shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning authority.

Environmental Nuisance

1. Noise emissions at the nearest noise sensitive location,(such as dwellings, schools, places of worship or areas of high amenity) shall not exceed the following:
   - LAeq (60 minutes) 55dB(A)8am to 8pm
   - LAeq (15 minutes) 45dB(A)8pm to 8am

2. Audible tonal or impulsive components should be minimised at any noise sensitive location.

3. The Applicant shall take reasonable measures to mitigate any environmental nuisance (noise and dust) which may arise during construction. Construction shall take place during working hours 7am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1.30pm Saturday unless otherwise authorised by the Planning Authority.

Biodiversity & Landscape

1. The applicant shall maintain/preserve any existing hedgerow/woodland/trees present within and/or adjacent to the site in accordance with Offaly County Council's, Development Plan 2021-2027.

2. Where hedgerow/woodland/tree removal is required to facilitate the development, the applicant shall apply for a Tree Felling Licence from the Forestry Service, Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in compliance with the Forestry Act 2014.

   - As per Chapter 4 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Policy BLP-24: It is Council policy to support the protection and management of existing networks of woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character, and to strengthen local networks.

Report prepared and approved by:

Damien English

Damien English
Acting Senior Executive Engineer
Climate Action, Environment & Rural Water

Senior Executive Architect

Derrynadarragh wind farm comprising of 9 no. wind turbines

SID 023 –Architectural Conservation Report February 2026
26016_N01 SID023_Derrynadarragh Wind Farm Comprising of 9 No. Wind Turbines.Docx

24 February 2026 Options Report – Architectural Comments

Commentary on SID 023 Submission In relation to SID023: Derrynadarragh WF - SID we note the following:

1. The application states that the proposed development **does not consist of work** to a protected structure or its curtilage in Q.15 of Application form (p.14).

15. Development Details:

Please tick appropriate box:	If answer is yes please give details	YES	NO
Does the proposed development involve the demolition of a Protected Structure(s), in whole or in part?			✓
Does the proposed development consist of work to a protected structure and / or its curtilage or proposed protected structure and / or its curtilage?			✓
Does the proposed development consist of work to the exterior of a structure which is located within an architectural conservation area (ACA)?			✓
Does the application relate to development which affects or is close to a monument or place recorded under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.			✓
Does the application relate to work within or close to a European Site or a Natural Heritage Area?			✓
Does the development require the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement?		✓	

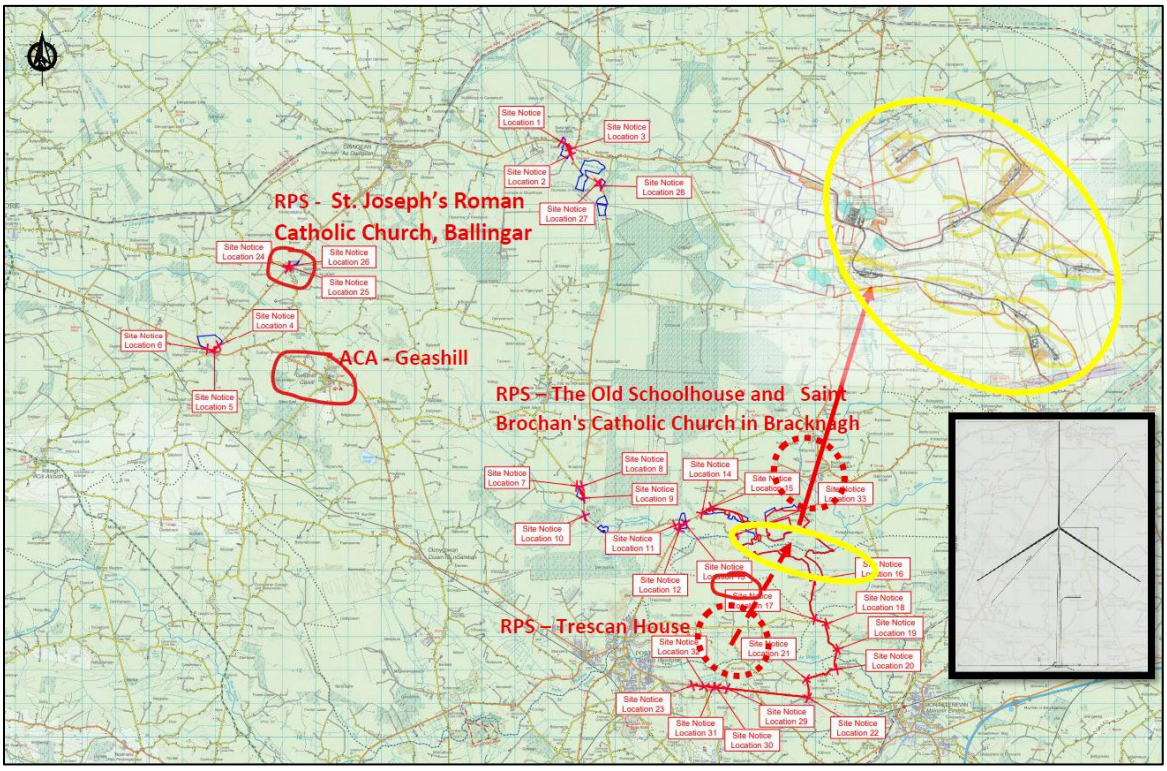
2. However, near the main site where the turbines will be located, as well as in the middle of the connection works around Site Notice Location 32 and Site Notice Location 21 shown on the map below in Towland Trescan, there is a protected structure **— Trescan House (RPS 46--023, NIAH 140934001)**.

   It is necessary to ensure that the proposed works do not interfere with the views in the vicinity of this protected structure. The applicant will need to provide photomontages of this location showing the impact that they will have on the c.1830 protected structure Trescan House and its demesne: Trascan House, TRASCAN, OFFALY - Buildings of Ireland.

3. The other protected structures located near proposed main site with turbines are **The Old Schoolhouse (NIAH: 14927006) and Saint Brochan's Catholic Church : church/chapel (NIAH: 14927005) in Bracknagh**.

   It is necessary to ensure that the proposed works do not interfere with the views in the vicinity of this protected structure. The applicant will need to provide photomontages of this location showing the impact that they will have on protected structures: The Old

Schoolhouse, BRACKNAGH, Bracknagh, OFFALY - Buildings of Ireland and Saint Brochan's Catholic Church, BRACKNAGH, Bracknagh, OFFALY - Buildings of Ireland.



4. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Ballina Townland (junction / location of site notices 4 – 6) is located in close proximity to the town **of Geashill,** which is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and contains a significant number of protected structures.

5. In the townland of Ballingar, where works are also proposed, there is a protected structure — **St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church (RPS 25-036, NIAH 14918008**).

Let me know if you require additional information.

Wiktoria Stepczynska-Motyl

Wiktoria Stepczynska-Motyl, MSc ArchEng

Architectural and Planning Technician

Rachel Mc Kenna

Rachel Mc Kenna, MRIAI

Senior Executive Architect

RIAI Registered Architect 2026 Conservation Architect G1

APPENDIX B

SITE PHOTOGRAPGHS (OCC)

October 2025

Figure 1: Proposed Turbines indicated and location of photo groups A – F.

Photo Group A

Photo 1: View northwest from existing access road (standing at Point B).

Photo Group B

Photo 2: View northwest from existing access road (standing at Point B).

Photos 3: View north from existing access road (standing at Point B).

Photo 4: View north from existing access road (standing at Point B).

Photo Group C

Photo 5: Walking eastwards from Point C, along existing access road.

Photo 6: View south from Point C, walking east along existing access road.

Photo Group D

Photo 7: View north, from Point D, towards proposed turbine location.

Photo 8: View south, from Point D, along existing access road.

Photo 9: View northeast, from Point D, along existing access road.

Photo 10: View southeast, from Point D, along existing access road.

Photo Group E

Photo 11: View north, from Point E, along existing access road.

Photo 12: View north, from Point E, along existing access road.

Photo 13: View east, from Point E, along existing access road.

Photo 14: View west, from Point E, along existing access road.

Photo Group G

Photo 15: View northwest, from Point G, along existing access road.

Photo 16: View east, from Point G, along existing access road.

Photo 17: View southeast, from Point G, along existing access road.

Photo Group F

Photo 18: View southeast, from Point F & towards turbine location, along existing access road.

Photo 19: View north, from Point F, along existing access road.

Photo 20: View north, from Point F, along existing access road.

Photo 21: View west, from Point F, along existing access road.

Photo 22: View northwest, from Point F, along existing access road.

APPENDIX C

PLANNING AUTHORITY COMMENTS ON EIAR CHAPTERS

EIA Chapter	Comment
1 - Introduction	The Planning Authority welcome the provision of the proposed amenity space however they note that limited information has been provided on this facility and the chosen location. Please refer to Section 14 of this report for further discussion on this matter.
2 - Description of Proposed Development	Refer to comment box under Section 4.2 'Planning Applications in the Vicinity of the Proposed Wind Farm Development' of this report.
6 - Population & Human Health	It is the view of the Planning Authority that the applicant should provide a more detailed justification to support the statement that there will be an imperceptible cumulative impact from the construction and operation of the windfarms as stated in Section 6.11 of the chapter. For comments on the windfarm development listed in Table 6-8 'Wind Energy Developments within 20km of the Proposed Wind Farm Site' as contained in the chapter, please refer to Section 4.2 (pg. 30) of this report. With regard to Cappakeel Solar Farm, the planning authority notes that permission was granted by ACP on the 16th February 2026 (ACP ref. PL11.50061). Table 6-12 of the chapter provides details on the 'Cumulative Energy Developments within 20km' of the subject site. Figure 2.5 which has been submitted as part of the EIAR details the location of wind energy developments within 20km of the subject site. In addition, the Planning Authority seek the provision of a map which identifies the locations of the listed energy developments and which clearly demonstrates the distances between the listed energy developments (established and permitted) and the proposed site for the subject wind farm development.
7 – Air & Climate	The Local Authority's Environment & Water Section are satisfied with the findings of the assessment by the applicant in this regard and have provided a set of planning conditions which are outlined in Appendix A of this report.
8 – Noise and Vibration	It is stated within the submitted application that Yellow River Wind Farm has an expected completion date in 2025. The Planning Authority confirms that the Yellow River Windfarm referenced in the chapter is now fully operational and if required, the assessment carried out by the applicant may need to be revised. In addition, a SID application for a separate wind farm, notably 'Ballinla Wind Farm' which is

	located within 20km of the subject site is due for decision in September 2026 (An Coimisiún Pleanála Case reference: PAX19.323579). This proposed wind farm should also be considered as part of any noise assessment prepared for the subject development.
9 – Biodiversity	The Planning Authority confirms that the Yellow River Windfarm referenced in the chapter is now fully operational and not under construction as stated by the applicant. It would be beneficial if the locations of the projects, which were considered in relation to the potential for cumulative effects (as listed in Section 9.17 of the EIAR chapter) were identified on a suitable map with the distances between the existing and permitted projects and the proposed SID development site clearly demonstrated, so as to assist in a reasoned assessment of the potential for cumulative impact(s) arising in the event that permission was to be granted.
10 - Ornithology	The Planning Authority has no reason to dispute the details provided within Chapter 10 of the EIAR.
11 – Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology	The Local Authority's Environment & Water Section are satisfied with the findings of the assessment by the applicant in this regard and have provided a set of planning conditions which are outlined in Appendix A of this report.
12 – Flooding, Hydrology and Water Quality	The Local Authority's Environment & Water Section are satisfied with the findings of the assessment by the applicant in this regard and have provided a set of planning conditions which are outlined in Appendix A of this report.
13 – Shadow Flicker	The Planning Authority has no reason to dispute the details provided within Chapter 13 of the EIAR.
14 -Traffic and Transportation	The Edenderry Municipal District Engineer office has sought further information to be provided in relation to traffic impacts. Shortfalls in relation to the applicant's submitted details are required prior to any grant of permission, so as to fully assess the potential impact(s) of the proposed development. Please refer to Appendix A of this report.
15 – Archaeology and Cultural Heritage	Section 15.7.1.1.5 Architectural Heritage of the chapter incorrectly refers to the 'current Kilkenny Record of Protected Structures'. The Local Authority's Senior Executive Architect notes: • Near the main site where the turbines will be located, as well as in the middle of the connection works, around Site Notice Location 21 and Site Notice Location 32,

	there is a protected structure — Trescan House (RPS 46--023, NIAH 140934001). It will be necessary to ensure that the proposed works do not interfere with the views in the vicinity of this protected structure. The applicant will need to provide photomontages of this location showing the impact that they will have on the c. 1830 protected structure Trescan House and its demesne: Trascan House, TRASCAN, OFFALY - Buildings of Ireland. • Other protected structures located near proposed main site with turbines are The Old Schoolhouse (NIAH: 14927006) and Saint Brochan's Catholic Church : church/chapel (NIAH: 14927005) in Bracknagh. It is necessary to ensure that the proposed works do not interfere with the views in the vicinity of this protected structure. The applicant will need to provide photomontages of this location showing the impact that they will have these protected structures. • The Ballina Townland (junction / location of site notices 4 – 6) is located in close proximity to the town of Geashill, which is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and contains a significant number of protected structures. • In the townland of Ballinagar, where works are also proposed, there is a protected structure — St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church (RPS 25-036, NIAH 14918008).
16 - Landscape and Visual Impact	Table 16.9 'Summary of Operational Phase Landscape Effects' include columns titles 'Magnitude of Construction Phase Landscape Impacts' and 'Significance of Construction Phase Landscape Effects'. It is the view of the Planning Authority that these columns should refer to 'Operational Phase' and not 'Construction Phase'. With regard to cumulative impacts, this chapter concludes that "Overall, while the Proposed Development will form part of a broader context comprising six existing and consented wind farm developments plus one planned one within the Study Area, it is not anticipated to contribute to a marked accumulation of wind energy development. However, it will contribute to a greater overall intensity and a more dispersed pattern of wind energy infrastructure across the Study Area. On balance of the reasons above, it is considered that due to its design and location, the proposed Derrynadarragh Wind Farm development has a Low magnitude contribution to

	cumulative effects with other existing, permitted and proposed wind farms in the Study Area". The proposed development includes for the construction of 9 no. turbines with a height of 186m to 187m, the installation of a single span bridge crossing Cushina River and the installation of 11.4km of cabling underground. The Planning Authority would contest this claim and it is their view that the applicant has not provided suitable justification to support this claim of 'low magnitude contribution to cumulative effects'. It is recommended that further information should be provided to substantiate the statement.
17 – Material Assets, Tele-communications and Aviation	The Planning Authority has no reason to dispute the details provided within Chapter 17 of the EIAR.
18 – Interactions of the Foregoing	The Planning Authority has no reason to dispute the details provided within Chapter 18 of the EIAR.

Comment of Planning History – Section 4.2 of CE Report	Regarding windfarm developments within the boundary of Co. Offaly, the Planning Authority note the following: • Yellow River Wind Farm is operational since October 2025. • Cloncarrow Wind Farm: OCC issued a Final Grant dated 12th March 2026, subject to 17 no. conditions. • Ballydermot Wind Farm (An Coimisiún Pleanála - Case reference: PC19.310143, applicant – Bord na Móna Powergen Ltd.): having been lodged on the 5th May 2021, the ACP websites states that pre-application consultation has yet to concluded. The development description refers to the 'construction of a wind energy development comprising approximately 50-55 no. wind turbines'. • A SID application for the Ballinla Wind Farm which is located within 20km of the subject site is due for decision in September 2026 (An Coimisiún Pleanála Case reference: PAX19.323579) and should be added to Table 2-1 of Chapter 2 of the EIAR.
Planning Authority's View on Community Gain (Section 14 of CE Report)	Notwithstanding the information above, is considered that the submitted planning documentation is light on details in relation to the breakdown for the various funding elements of the Community Fund and on the specifics on actual implementation and selection criteria associated the Community Gain schemes for this wind farm development.

	The Planning Authority welcome the provision of the proposed amenity space however in this regard, they note the following: • Limited information has been provided on this facility; further information is sought on this facility including the submission of a more detailed site layout plan with details provided of the proposed landscaping, surface drainage, fencing, lighting, etc. • The proposed amenity space is located adjacent to Turbine No. 1 which is the most southerly located turbine within the windfarm site. Having reviewed the submitted information, it appears that the only way a member of the public can gain access to this location is from the regional road, R419. However, the applicant has not confirmed within the submitted documentation that the internal accessway will be open to the public. Given the location of the proposed amenity space, public access along the internal roadway is presumed however clarification from the applicant on this matter is sought. • Justification for the location of the proposed amenity space, adjacent to proposed Turbine 1, should be sought from the applicant as the Planning Authority would query the useability of the area. The Planning Authority suggest the site of the Temporary Compound No. 2 (once no longer in use) as a possible alternative location for the amenity space. It is suggested that this location would allow members of the public to park and then have the option of doing a looped walk to the south across the proposed Cushina River crossing or to the east towards proposed Turbines 2, 3, 5, 8 and 9. Not only would this location provide more options for walkers but also limited vehicular access by members of the public within the windfarm site.

END