

Planning Report

Maughanaclea Renewable
Energy Development, Co.
Cork





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1.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maughanaclea Renewable Energy Development consists of the provision of 14 no. turbines and associated infrastructure, located at Maughanaclea and surrounding townlands in Co. Cork, including underground cabling connecting the wind turbines to the proposed onsite 110kV substation. The Maughanaclea Renewable Energy Development will henceforth be referred to using the following terminology, as defined in **Chapter 1** of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR); the 'Proposed Project, the 'Proposed Wind Farm', the 'Proposed Grid Connection', the 'Site,' and the 'Proposed Wind Farm site,'.

This application for the Proposed Project comprises of a planning application under the provisions of Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act), to An Coimisiún Pleanála (the Commission). The Proposed Project, if consented, will have an installed generating capacity of 67.2MW, supplying clean renewable energy to the national grid.

This Planning Report has been prepared in support of the application for the Proposed Project which is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS). The introductory sections of this Planning Report, provide an overview of the Proposed Project, the Proposed Project design, the applicant, the site location and context, the site's planning history and a summary of the pre-planning process. The design process is outlined, demonstrating the rationale for site selection and its suitability for wind energy development. The iterative design process outlines the design stages from the initial design to the final design iteration. Each design iteration responded to the specific constraints on the Site, as they were identified by site surveys and detailed analysis.

The Proposed Project is strongly supported by European, national, regional and local policy and legislation. At a European Union (EU) level, the Proposed Project is supported by the EU Renewable Energy Directive and REPowerEU. At a national level, the Proposed Project is supported by the National Planning Framework First Revision, the Climate Action Plan 2025, the National Energy Security Framework, among other national climate and energy policies. The legally binding greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction target and the obligations of public bodies under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (the Climate Act) should also be considered in the assessment of these applications. At a regional and local level, the Southern Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 both recognise the importance of an increase in renewable energy supply in order to tackle climate change and meet national and European climate targets. A summary of the relevant policy and legislation is provided in **Section 6** of this Report.

The development of viable sites for wind energy development is essential to meet European, national, and local climate and renewable energy targets. Ireland needs to scale up onshore wind energy development at an unprecedented rate to achieve our 9GW target and 80% RES-E target set out in the Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP 24) and Climate Action Plan (CAP 25). The reality of achieving these targets is the installation of over 600 Megawatts (MW) of wind energy per year until 2030. If permitted, the Proposed Project will not only contribute to the decarbonisation of the electricity sector but will play a role in the decarbonisation of other sectors and the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient economy.

To conclude, it is submitted that, based on the evidence provided in this Report, that the Proposed Project is strongly supported by European, national, regional and local planning policy and will contribute to national and local renewable energy.

2.

INTRODUCTION

This Planning Report has been prepared by MKO on behalf of Maughanaclea Ltd, (the Applicant) to accompany a planning application to An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) for planning permission to construct a wind farm at Maughanaclea and adjacent townlands, Co. Cork.

The Proposed Project meets the threshold for Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) as set out in the Seventh Schedule of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, being “An installation for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (a wind farm) with more than 25 turbines or having a total output greater than 50 megawatts”) and is therefore being submitted directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) as a Strategic Infrastructure Development in accordance with Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

The Proposed Project consists of the provisions of 14 no. wind turbines across 2 clusters, a proposed onsite 110kV substation, and 110kV underground cabling connecting to the existing Dunmanway 110kV substation, temporary construction compounds, temporary security cabins, a meteorological mast, junction accommodation works and upgrade of existing roads. The 14 no. wind turbines will have an overall turbine tip height of 169m; a rotor blade diameter of 133m; and a hub height of 102.5m, and associated foundations and hardstands. As set out in **Chapter 1** of the EIAR, the following terminology applies;

- The ‘Proposed Project’ refers to the entirety of the project (the ‘Proposed Wind Farm’ and the ‘Proposed Grid Connection’, as described below) for the purposes of this EIAR in accordance with the EIA Directive. A full description of the Proposed Project is provided in **Chapter 4** of the EIAR, and is subject of the accompanying planning application under Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended;
 - The ‘Proposed Wind Farm’ refers to the 14 no. turbines and supporting infrastructure, including the proposed onsite 110kV substation.
- The ‘Proposed Grid Connection’ refers to the 14 no. turbines and supporting infrastructure, including the proposed onsite 110kV substation to the existing Dunmanway 110kV substation. The Proposed Grid Connection will facilitate the connection of the Proposed Wind Farm to the national electricity grid;
- The ‘Site’ refers to the primary study area for the EIAR, as delineated by the EIAR site boundary in green as shown in Figure 1-1 of the EIAR, and encompasses an area of approximately 1,175 hectares; and
- The ‘Proposed Wind Farm site’ refers to the portion of the Site surrounding the Proposed Wind Farm but excluding the portion of the Site surrounding the Proposed Grid Connection underground cabling route.

The purpose of this Planning Report is to outline the background to the Proposed Project, the key elements of the proposal and to demonstrate that it complies with all relevant planning policy provisions and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. This Planning Report provides a comprehensive assessment of the Proposed Project’s consistency with the relevant planning policy framework at European, national, regional, and local levels.

A planning application under Section 37E of the Act will be submitted directly to the Commission for the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project will be the subject of EIA as it meets the mandatory EIA requirement as set out in Class 3(i) of Schedule 5 of Part 2 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2011, as amended. The Proposed Project exceeds 5MWs in scale and proposes more than 5 turbines and therefore is subject to mandatory EIA. The EIAR, along with the NIS which accompany this planning application assess all elements of the Proposed Project. Both the EIAR and NIS contain the information necessary for the Commission, to complete the Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment as required for the planning permission application.

This Planning Report provides a comprehensive assessment of the Proposed Project’s consistency with the relevant planning policy framework at European, national, regional and local levels.

2.1 Report Structure

This planning report is structured as follows:

Section 1: Executive Summary – Introduces the Report.

Section 2: Introduction – Sets out the report structure and provides a summary of the Proposed Project

Section 3: Proposed Project Background – Provides an introduction to the applicant, the site location

Section 4: Proposed Project Description – Provides a description of the main elements

Section 5: Proposed Project Design Process – Details the progression of the Proposed Project design from site selection through to the final design.

Section 6: Planning Policy Appraisal – Provides a review and evaluation of the Proposed Project

Section 7: Planning Assessment

Section 8: Conclusion – Summary of the Report

2.2 Summary of Findings

This planning report analyses the planning policy against which the Proposed Project will be assessed. The main findings of the report are outlined as follows:

- The Proposed Project is strongly supported by climate and energy policy and law at a European, national, regional and local level.
- The Proposed Project is supported by, and is in compliance with, the policy and objectives of the Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (“CCDP”).
- The Proposed Project has been designed in accordance with the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), with cognisance of the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) and the Development Management Standards for Renewable Energy Proposals, as set out in the CCDP.
- The Proposed Project is in compliance with the Cork Wind Energy Strategy (WES), as set out in Section 13.6 of the CCDP.

2.3 Rationale for the Proposed Project

Ireland’s Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP 25) sets ambitious yet essential targets for renewable energy, including 9GW of onshore wind capacity—with at least 5GW to be delivered by 2030—and an 80% share of renewable electricity by the same year. However, multiple assessments, including the Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) Annual Review and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) emissions projections, confirm that Ireland is not on track to meet these targets. Significant gaps remain in renewable energy deployment, particularly in grid capacity expansion and wind farm development, while continued reliance on fossil fuels threatens national and EU climate commitments.

In this context, the Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (CCDP) sets out ambitious targets to double capacity nationally over the next 10 years, with current capacity in Cork reaching 603MW, which could expand to 1,100MW. The bringing forward of appropriately located and well-designed renewable

energy projects, including the Proposed Project will be a crucial factor if this ambitious goal is to be reached.

In this regard, the Proposed Project alone would contribute 67.2MW of installed capacity to the national electricity grid. Its approval would make a significant contribution toward Cork's renewable energy ambitions and help bridge the widening gap between policy commitments and actual energy infrastructure development.

2.3.1 Why this Wind Farm is Needed

To combat the effects of climate change, Ireland must decarbonise its economy by 2050. There is no "silver bullet" or magic solution to do so. It will take hundreds, if not thousands, of individual renewable energy projects to decarbonise the Irish economy. The scale of the challenge we face to decarbonise the Irish economy is enormous, but the climate change implications of not doing so are even greater. There is no other way to decarbonise a modern society except through renewable energy projects such as the Proposed Project.

In 2020, Ireland was confirmed as a world leader in onshore wind energy, with no other country providing a greater share of its electricity from onshore wind, when a total of 40.23% of the country's electricity was generated from renewable sources, the vast majority of which came from onshore wind. As a country, we only became world leaders by consenting and building one wind farm at a time. Now, with the Government's Climate Action Plans requiring the amount of onshore wind energy to increase to 9GW by 2030 (just four years away), hundreds of additional wind farms will have to be connected to the national grid over the rest of this decade. In the same way we only achieved our 2020 target of 40% renewable electricity target one wind farm at a time, we will only get to our new target of 9GW of onshore wind energy by 2030, one wind farm at a time.

The Proposed Project will contribute towards the Government's Climate Action Plan's 9GW target for installed onshore wind energy and target of 80% renewable electricity. The 80% renewable electricity target must be achieved by 2030. Not 2040. Not 2050. By 2030.

The global climate is breaking down because of greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels. News stories of climate change-related extreme weather events are now a constant in the daily news cycle. On the back of unprecedented extremes experience in summer 2023, UN Secretary-General, in September 2023 issued the following statement:

"The dog days of summer are not just barking, they are biting.

*Our planet has just endured a season of simmering – the hottest summer on record. **Climate breakdown has begun.***

*Scientists have long warned what our fossil fuel addiction will unleash. **Our climate is imploding faster than we can cope with extreme weather events hitting every corner of the planet.***

Surging temperatures demand a surge in action.

Leaders must turn up the heat now for climate solutions.

We can still avoid the worst of climate chaos – and we don't have a moment to lose."

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) report 'State of the Global Climate 2024', published in March 2025, states that the year 2024 was the warmest year on observational record, with temperatures exceeding 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. On the 14th of January 2026, the WMO issued a press release confirming that 2025 was one of the three warmest years on record, continuing a pattern of the last eleven years having been the eleven warmest on record .

“The Status of Ireland’s Climate 2020” produced by MET Eireann, similarly reflects on clear and distinct impacts arising from climate change effects within an Irish context:

Greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise:

- Background carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentrations reached 414 ppm in 2020 which is approximately a 50% increase compared to pre-industrial levels.
- Methane (CH₄) concentrations are at 1940 parts per billion (ppb) - which is approximately a 170% increase compared to pre-industrial levels.
- Nitrous oxide (N₂O) concentrations are now above 330 ppb - which is approximately a 20% increase compared to pre-industrial levels.

Annual average amounts of precipitation are increasing:

- Annual precipitation was 6% higher in the period 1989 to 2018, compared to the 30-year period 1961 to 1990. The decade 2006 to 2015 was the wettest on record.

Annual average air temperature is rising:

- The annual average surface air temperature in Ireland has increased by approximately 0.9°C over the last 120 years, with a rise in temperatures being observed in all seasons.
- An increase in the number of warm spell days the last 60 years with very little change in cold spell duration.

Sea level continues to rise:

- Satellite observations indicate that the sea level around Ireland has risen by approximately 2-3mm/year since the early 1990s. Analysis of sea level data from Dublin Bay suggests a rise of approximately 1.7mm/year since 1938 which is consistent with global average rates.

The ocean is becoming more acidic:

- Measurements in the surface waters to the west of Ireland between 1991 and 2013 indicate an increase in ocean acidity which threatens calcifying species such as corals, shellfish and crustaceans.

The ocean is getting warmer:

- The average sea surface temperature at Malin Head over the 10 years between 2009 and 2018 was 0.47°C above the 1981-2010 mean.

There is an increase in river flows across most of the country:

- Data analysis from the last 50 years identifies an increase in the magnitude of the river flows across most of the country
- There is evidence in more recent years of an increase in potential drought conditions especially in the east.

The area of forests and artificial surfaces has increased:

- Land cover observations since 1990 show increases in the area covered by both artificial surfaces and forests and a decrease in wetland areas which include peatlands. There was an increase of 38% in the volume of trees between 2006 and 2017.

In 2025, Met Éireann issued the “Annual Climate Statement for 2025”, providing an update on the impact that climate change is having on the Irish climate:

- 2025 was the warmest year on record in Ireland since 1900, and the second warmest year on record.
- The last 4 years (2022-2025) are now the 4 warmest years on record
- Rainfall data suggests 2025 was the 15th wettest year since 1941

There is now an overwhelming consensus amongst scientific and political leaders on the need for rapid, dramatic and systemic change to combat the effects of climate change and decarbonise the global and Irish economies using renewable energy. This is highlighted in the following comments and report extracts.

“Leaders must act now to save humanity from the worst impacts of climate chaos, and profit from the extraordinary benefits of renewable energy. That means ending our fossil fuel addiction by shrinking supply, driving down demand, and accelerating the renewables revolution, as part of a just transition.”

António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General – November 2023

“Never before have the alarm bells been ringing so loudly. We must rise to this challenge. I believe we can. We cannot prevent climate change, we’re well past that point, but by acting urgently now, we can limit its extent and mitigate its worst effects.”

Former Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, in his address to COP 28, 2nd December 2023

Ireland is not on track to meet the 51 per cent emissions reduction target (by 2030 compared to 2018) based on these projections which include most 2023 Climate Action Plan measures. Further measures still need to be identified and implemented to achieve this goal.

The first two carbon budgets (2021-2030), which aim to support achievement of the 51 per cent emissions reduction goal, are projected to be exceeded by a significant margin of between 24 and 34 per cent.

Sectoral emissions ceilings for 2025 and 2030 are projected to be exceeded in almost all cases, including Agriculture, Electricity, Industry, and Transport.

Ireland’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections. Environmental Protection Agency – June 2023

“We need faster progress on the actions set out in national climate action plans to decarbonise and transform all sectors of Ireland’s economy, to stay within National Carbon Budgets and reduce our Greenhouse Gas emissions by 51 per cent by 2030.”

Laura Burke, Director General, EPA, launching the Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory 1990-2022 Report

Ireland will not meet the targets set in the first and second carbon budget periods unless urgent action is taken immediately and emissions begin to fall much more rapidly.

Climate Change Advisory Council – Annual Review 2023

The world is on a disastrous trajectory. Crossing one harmful tipping point could trigger others, causing a domino effect of accelerating and unmanageable change to our life-support systems.

The Global Tipping Points Report 2023. University of Exeter, Exeter, UK.

2.4

Legal Obligations of Public Bodies

Public Bodies (including Local Authorities such as An Coimisiún Pleanála) will be aware of certain legal obligations in respect of the processing of certain planning applications and appeals for renewable wind energy developments, in particular:

- Certain obligations under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) (the “Climate Act”) imposed on Public Bodies when exercising their decision-making functions in relation to planning applications for renewable wind energy developments.
- Certain discretionary powers under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (the “Planning Act”) which must be exercised subject to the mandatory obligations set out in the Climate Act when Public Bodies are exercising their decision-making functions in relation to planning applications for renewable wind energy developments.

Obligations under the Climate Act and the Planning Act

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) (‘the Climate Act’) establishes a legislative precedent to reduce Ireland’s carbon emissions. The Climate Act legally binds Ireland to achieve net-zero emissions no later than 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of this decade.

The Climate Act also incorporates the following key provisions:

- Embeds the process of setting binding and ambitious emissions-reductions targets in law;
- Provides for a national climate objective, which commits to pursue and achieve no later than 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy;
- Provides that the first two five-year carbon budgets proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council should equate to a total reduction of 51% over the period to 2030, relative to a baseline of 2018;
- The role of the Climate Change Advisory Council has been strengthened;
- The government must adopt carbon budgets that are consistent with the Paris agreement and other international obligations;
- Actions for each sector will be detailed in the Climate Action Plan which must be updated annually; and
- Local Authorities must prepare individual Climate Action Plans which will include both mitigation and adaptation measures and will be updated every five years.

Section 15(1) below places an obligation on public bodies to perform their functions in a manner which favours climate action, unless it is objectively impracticable to do so.

“A relevant body shall, in so far as practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with:

- a) **the most recent approved climate action plan,**
- b) **the most recent approved national long term climate action strategy,**
- c) **the most recent approved national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans,**
- d) **the furtherance of the national climate objective, and**
- e) **the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State.”**

The implications for public bodies in exercising their functions in accordance with Section 15 of the Climate Act has been scrutinised by the Irish legal system. The legal analysis of Section 15 has arisen from a challenge to a decision of ACP to refuse planning permission for a wind farm in County Laois.

The Supreme Court issued a judgment on this matter on 4th February 2026 (*Coolglass Wind Farm Limited v An Coimisiún Pleanála* [2026] IESC 5) and which establishes that consenting authorities must make decisions in a manner ‘consistent with’ the approved national long term climate action strategy, the approved national long term climate action strategy etc., ‘in so far as is practicable’.¹ This means that departure from climate objectives is permissible but only where there are genuine practical difficulties that make full alignment impracticable.

Consenting Authorities, such as ACP, must therefore meaningfully engage with national climate objectives when exercising their functions, including decision-making and must also demonstrate how those functions have been carried out in a manner consistent with, in so far as practicable, national climate objectives.

Taking these legal duties into account, the Commission is required to attribute significant weight to national climate policy and the delivery of renewable energy infrastructure, such as the Proposed Project, even where they materially contravene a statutory development plan, particularly when that plan is out of step with national policy.

At present, there are no mandatory legal requirements that preclude the Commission from granting permission for the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project is supported by local, regional and national policy and has been designed in accordance with the latest national guidance and best practice. It is located in a favourable area for wind energy development, and it has also been demonstrated, in the EIAR and NIS, that the Proposed Project will not give rise to any significant adverse effect on the environment or on the integrity of European Sites.

Having regard to these matters, it is considered that the Commission can exercise its planning judgement to determine the application in a manner which is consistent with the achievement of national and EU policy goals, in accordance with its statutory duty under Section 15 of the Climate Act.

The Importance of Approving Well-Planned Renewable Energy Projects

The timely approval of well-planned, appropriately located renewable energy projects, such as the Proposed Project is essential to Ireland’s ability to meet CAP 25 targets and also its legal commitments under national and EU law. CAP 25, the CCAC Annual Reviews for 2023 and 2024, and Ireland’s Updated National Energy and Climate Plan (published in July 2024) all highlight the central role of renewable energy targets in addressing climate change.

Reports from the CCAC and the Environmental Protection Agency’s 2023 and 2024 emissions projections indicate that the electricity sector is not on track to meet these targets. Accelerated deployment of onshore wind is essential if Ireland is to reach the CAP 25 goal of 9GW of onshore wind capacity—of which at least 5GW must be delivered by 2030—and an 80% share of renewable electricity by the same year.

Failure to meet binding EU targets will expose Ireland to financial penalties, increased carbon credit costs, and continued dependence on fossil fuel imports—posing serious risks to energy security and economic stability. Furthermore, Ireland’s national interest, as outlined in Section 143(1) of the Planning Act, requires the rapid expansion of renewable energy, making this a matter of strategic economic and social importance.

Beyond environmental and energy security concerns, the economic consequences of such projects not being brought forward are severe. Investors require certainty before committing to renewable

¹ *Coolglass Wind Farm Limited v An Coimisiún Pleanála* [2026] IESC 5, para.26.)

infrastructure projects. Prolonged planning delays create uncertainty, discouraging investment and undermining job creation and regional economic growth. Given the direct link between wind energy expansion and Ireland's economic resilience, energy independence, and compliance with EU climate mandates, rejecting projects that align with national policies represents a failure to uphold this statutory duty.

Every viable renewable energy project plays a crucial role in meeting Ireland's climate targets. The approval of well-planned, appropriately located renewable energy projects, such as the Proposed Project is not just beneficial, it is imperative. Without decisive action to facilitate renewable energy deployment, Ireland risks missing national and EU commitments, incurring financial penalties, and undermining energy security.

3. PROPOSED PROJECT BACKGROUND

3.1 The Applicant

The Applicant for the Proposed Project, Maughanaclea Ltd., is an associated company of Enerco Energy Ltd., which is an Irish-owned, Cork-based company with extensive experience in the design, construction and operation of wind energy developments throughout Ireland, responsible for projects currently operating or under construction in Counties Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Galway, Mayo and Donegal. By the end of 2025, Enerco associated companies had over 975MW of generating capacity in commercial operation or under construction and have a further c.400MW of projects at various stages in its portfolio to assist in meeting Ireland’s renewable energy targets.

3.2 Site Location and Context

The Proposed Project, comprising of the Proposed Wind Farm and Grid Connection is located in a rural setting in west County Cork, approximately 2.3km east of Kealkill, 9.7km northeast of Bantry and 12.7km west of Dunmanway. It is proposed to access the southern cluster of the Proposed Wind Farm via an existing forestry track off the R585 regional road and to access the northern cluster via a new site entrance road off the R585.

The Proposed Grid Connection includes for underground 110kV grid connection cabling from the proposed onsite 110kV substation within the Proposed Wind Farm site to the existing Dunmanway 110kV substation near Dunmanway, Co. Cork. The Proposed Grid Connection Route is approximately 20.5km in length, and is located primarily within the public road corridor, with a short section of the route (approximately 800m) located within the Proposed Wind Farm access roads.

Current land-use on the Proposed Wind Farm comprises coniferous forestry, shallow blanket bog, degraded wet heath and pastures. Current land-use along the Proposed Grid Connection Route comprises of public road corridor, public open space, agriculture, commercial forestry, land principally used by agriculture with significant areas of natural vegetation, mineral extraction sites, mixed forest and discontinuous urban fabric. Land-use in the wider landscape of the site comprises a mix of agriculture, quarrying, renewable energy, low density residential and commercial forestry. Land-use in the areas proposed for turbine delivery route accommodation comprises a mix of agriculture, transitional woodland-shrub, coniferous forest and sport and leisure facilities.

3.3 Planning History

A planning search was carried out through national planning application database and An Coimisiún Pleanála’s (ACP) online planning portal in March 2026 for planning applications that fall within the planning application boundary of the Proposed Project within the past 10 years. The relevant planning applications are outlined in Section 2.7.2 of Chapter 2 of the EIAR and in **Table 1** below.

The planning history search also identified wind energy development applications within 25km of the proposed turbines. 41 no. applications relating to wind energy were found, further detail on the wind energy developments identified is outlined in Section 2.6.2 of Chapter 2 of the EIAR.

Table 1: Planning History Summary Table

Planning Reference	Development Description	Decision
17431	10 year permission for proposed development consisting of: (1) A 110kV	Granted by CCC on 16/04/2018, upheld by ACP on 21/06/2019

	<p>electricity substation including 2 no. control buildings associated electrical plant and equipment, underground electricity cabling, fencing, alterations to a previously permitted borrow pit and temporary construction compound at the Carrigarierk Wind Farm (An Bord Pleanala Ref. PL04.246353, Cork County Council Ref. 15/730) in the townland of Carrigdangan; (2) 110kV underground electricity cabling connecting the proposed substation to the existing Dunmanway ESB substation in the townlands of Carrigdangan, Inchincurka, Kilnadur, Aultaghreagh, Aultagh, Ardcahan, Knockduff, Gurteennasowna and Ballyhalwick; (3) 33kV underground electricity cabling connecting the proposed substation to the permitted Carrigarierk Wind Farm through the townlands of Carrigdangan and Gortatanavally and the permitted Shehy More Wind Farm (ABP Ref. PL04.243486; Cork County Council Ref. 13/551), through the townlands of Shehy More, Coolcaum, Coolmountain, Tullagh, Lackabaun, Clogher, Farrannahineeny, Crushterra, Gurteen and Carrigdangan. Together with all ancillary works and apparatus. The proposed development is located north of Dunmanway, Co. Cork. This application is accompanied by An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).</p>	
21902	<p>A ten year planning permission for proposed development consisting of a 20 kilovolt (kV) electrical powerline grid connection, approximately 10,117 metres in overall length (made up of approximately</p>	<p>Granted by CCC on 21/06/2022</p>

	<p>9,983 metres of underground cable and approximately 134 metres of Over Head Line with three wooden support single poles), connecting the approved electrical substation at Knockeenboy Wind Farm (Planning Register Reference No. 11/00059 & An Bord Pleanala Ref. PL88.240070) to the existing Dunmanway 110kV ESB Networks substation at Ballyhalwick; together with all ancillary works and apparatus. The grid connection will be developed from the approved substation through the townlands of Knockeenboy, Kilronane West, Kilronane East, Moreagh, Nedinagh West, Acres and Ballyhalwick townlands. The proposed development is located to the east, south and southwest of Dunmanway, Co. Cork. The planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and by a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).</p>	
<p>23654</p>	<p>The existing Bandon to Dunmanway 110 kV Overhead Line (OHL), which is approximately 26km long between the existing Bandon 110kV Substation in the townland of Mishells, Co. Cork (approximately 1km north of Bandon, Co. Cork) and the existing Dunmanway 110kV Substation in the townland of Ballyhalwick, Co. Cork (approximately 0.4km east of Dunmanway Co. Cork). The existing OHL is located in the townlands of Acres, Aghalinane, Ballyhalwick, Balteenbrack, Behagh, Caher, Carhoon West, Castlelands, Derrycool, Dromidiclogh, Dromidiclogh West, Gortnamucklagh, Gurteen, Gurteenroe, Kilnacranagh East, Kilnacranagh West, Laragh,</p>	<p>Granted by CCC on 11/06/2024</p>

	<p>Lissacroneen, Mallowgaton, Mishells, Murragh, Roughgrove East, Roughgrove West, Sranaviddoge, Teadies Upper, Toom and Tullyglass, Co. Cork. An uprate (refurbishment) of the existing Bandon to Dunmanway 110kv OHL, which consists of the : (i) replacement ("restringing") of the existing OHL conductor wires with a new higher capacity conductor including installation of a new fibre optic communication connection; (ii) replacement of 12 no. of the 13 no. existing steel towers including 11 no. angle masts (AM) and 1 no. end mast (EM) and their foundations with similar structures and member replacement and new bolts at 1 no. EM. Any replacement AMs will be constructed at, or immediately adjacent to the existing structures that they will replace, with a height difference of between 0.5-1.5m; (iii) Replacement of 16 no. of the 127 no. existing intermediate Polesets (IMPs); with similar structures. Any replacement IMPs will be constructed in situ, with the exception of IMP128 which will be replaced at an offset of 10m. The height differences of the replacements will be 1m, with the exception of IMP113 and IMP115 which will be a 2m and 3m increase in height respectively, (iv) Carrying out of civil works for tower foundation strengthening at 1 no. location; (v) Replacement of hardware and fittings at all locations, including insulators, clamps, anti-climb guards, vibration dampers, and installation of new jumper arrangements, suspension weights, plump poles, pole bolts and anti-climb guards; (vi) replacement of a crossarm at 1 no. location; (vii) all associated works within the existing</p>	
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	Dunmanway Substation to accommodate the uprated 110 kV OHL and all associated site development works including above and below the ground works to gain access to the existing structures including timber cutting and vegetation clearance, painting, renumbering of replacement st	
18575	To construct extension to dwelling	Granted by CCC on 20/12/2018
25126	Construct a new dwelling house	Granted by CCC on 04/06/2025
2448	Construction of extensions to the sides and rear of an existing dwelling house, alterations to the existing dwelling house and installation of a new septic tank and percolation area and all associated site works	Granted by CCC on 22/04/2024
21186	Permission for retention of existing cattle house with two no. slatted slurry tanks, permission to construct a new cattle house with two slurry tanks and carry out all associated site works	Granted by CCC on 11/06/2021
20523	Full Planning Permission for a) relocation of entrance to dwelling as granted under planning application number 13/544 b) closure of existing entrance to dwelling as granted under planning application number 13/544 c) all associated siteworks	Granted by CCC on 23/12/2020
21857	Renovation and alterations to existing farmhouse. Installation of new foul water drainage system. Landscaping works and alteration to entrance	Granted by CCC on 02/08/2022

3.4 Pre-Application Consultation

This section of the Planning Report outlines the pre-application consultation undertaken by the Applicant for the Proposed Project. This includes Scoping as part of the EIAR, pre-application meetings with the Commission, and extensive consultation with the local community.

3.4.1 EIAR Scoping

As part of the constraints mapping process, which is detailed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.1 of this EIAR, telecommunications operators were contacted in January 2025 to determine the presence of telecommunications links or aviation assets traversing to located in close proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm site. Following this exercise, an EIAR scoping document, providing details of the Proposed Project, was prepared by MKO and circulated to prescribed statutory and non-statutory bodies in February 2025. The scoping document provided details of the Proposed Project and sets out the scope of work for the EIAR. Consultees were invited to contribute to the EIAR in suggesting baseline data, survey techniques and potential impacts that should be considered as part of the assessment process and in the preparation of the EIAR.

Copies of all scoping responses received are included in **Appendix 2-2** of the EIAR. If further responses are received, the comments of the consultees will be considered, where applicable, in the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Proposed Project in the event of a grant of planning permission. The recommendations of the consultees have informed the scope of the assessments undertaken and the contents of the EIAR.

3.4.2 Pre-Planning Meetings

3.4.2.1 An Coimisiún Pleanála (Section 37B)

The Applicant engaged with the Commission under the provisions of Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), as to whether the Proposed Project would meet the thresholds of the Seventh Schedule of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. The applicant opened consultations with the Commission in February 2025, in relation to the Proposed Project. A total of 2 meetings were undertaken with the Commission, which are detailed below.

First Pre-Application Meeting

The first meeting was held with the Commission was held on the 28th March 2025 via Microsoft Teams in accordance with Section 37B of the Act,

Those in attendance were:

On behalf of the Commission:

- > Una Crosse, ACP
- > Pauline Fitzpatrick, ACP
- > Maeve Flynn, ACP
- > Lauren Murphy, ACP

On behalf of Agent and Applicant:

- > Feithlinn Morgan, MKO
- > Hannah Rice, MKO
- > Colm Ryan, MKO
- > Robert Kennedy, MKO

- > Ciaran Fitzgerald, MKO
- > William O'Connor, Maughanaclea Ltd.
- > Niall Galvin, Maughanaclea Ltd.

The project team gave an overview of the Proposed Project in a Powerpoint Presentation, which set out the following information:

- > A high-level overview of the Proposed Project and subject site
- > An introduction to the Applicant
- > An overview of the Proposed Wind Farm and Proposed Grid Connection
- > An overview of the constraints assessment leading to the site layout
- > Provided details of the proposed Turbine Delivery route.
- > Provided a brief overview of the landscape and visual impact assessment
- > An outline of the community consultation efforts that had taken place to date

Following on from the presentation, discussion included the following matters:

- > Archaeological and Landscape Visual Impact Assessments
- > Tree felling on Proposed Project Site
- > The cumulative impact of the Proposed Project
- > Site drainage

Second Pre-Application Meeting

A second meeting was held with the Commission on the 18th of November 2025 via Microsoft Teams in accordance with Section 37B of the Act. Those in attendance were:

On behalf of the Commission:

- > Una Crosse, ACP
- > Pauline Fitzpatrick, ACP
- > Maeve Flynn, ACP
- > Lauren Murphy, ACP

On behalf of Agent and Applicant:

- > Alan Clancy, MKO
- > Ciaran McKenna, MKO
- > Ciaran Fitzgerald, MKO
- > Susan Doyle, MKO
- > Sean McCarthy, MKO
- > Eoin McCarthy, MKO
- > Adrian Moran, MKO
- > Rachel Minogue, MKO
- > William O Connor, Maughanaclea Ltd.
- > Niall Galvin, Maughanaclea Ltd

The project team gave an overview of the Proposed Project in the form of a Powerpoint Presentation, which provided updates on the Proposed Project and discussed matters relating to the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) III. The presentation set out the following information:

- > A high-level overview of the Proposed Project and the subject site.
- > An overview of the Proposed Wind Farm and the Proposed Grid Connection.
- > An overview of Strategic Infrastructure Development Criteria.
- > A high-level overview of RED III and the planning policy context for the Proposed Project.

- An introduction to the contents of the EIAR and NIS which will accompany the planning application.
- An outline of a sample completeness check in line with RED III.
- Community consultation and scoping which has taken place to date.
- An overview of the Proposed Project Timeline.

Following on from the presentation, discussion included the following matters:

- Consultation with NPWS relating to ornithology
- Cumulative impact assessments including all relevant wind farm developments within a 25km radius
- Elaboration on proposed water crossings

On the 11th of December 2025, MKO, on behalf of the Applicant, sought to close the consultation process with the Commission. On the 10th of February 2026, the Commission wrote to the applicant and confirmed that consultation was closed and that the Proposed Project was considered to be strategic infrastructure within the meaning of Section 37A and such any application for approval of the Proposed Project should be made directly to the Commission.

3.4.2.2 Cork County Council

The Applicant engaged with Cork County Council on the 17th of February 2025 in accordance with Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) in relation to the Proposed Project. Cork County Council has responded to the Applicant stating:

“I note that An Bord Pleanála have recently advised the Planning Authority that the Board have entered into pre-application consultations in relation to the above-described proposed development. Please be advised that as the Board is the consenting authority in this case, the Planning Authority has no role in pre-application consultations at this stage.”

Considering this response, the Applicant acknowledges the position of Cork County Council, but they will remain available should CCC wish to discuss the project. The Applicant will also endeavour to engage with the Roads Department to discuss the project. The Applicant also engaged with engineers from CCC to discuss the proposals. The discussions covered several matters; reinstatement of the grid route, directional drilling to cross the River Bandon and the volume of cables proposed within the public corridor. The proposed grid route was accepted in these discussions, and the proposed TDR was deemed to be acceptable.

3.4.3 Community Consultation

The Applicant has undertaken extensive consultation with the local community, as outlined in the Community Engagement Report included in **Appendix 2-1** of the EIAR. A Community Liaison Officer was also appointed as the point of contact for the Proposed Project and continues to engage with the local community. The purpose of the CLO is to introduce the Proposed Project to the local community, engage and establish a line of dialogue with the local community and provide a single point of contact for the community to seek information about the proposal as required. On the 29th April 2025, the first Public Information Event was held in the Westlodge Hotel, Bantry. The objective of the consultations was to ensure that the views and concerns of all were considered as part of the Proposed Project design and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

A Community Engagement Report was prepared to record the consultation carried out with the local community in respect of the Proposed Project. The objective of the consultations was to ensure that the views and concerns of all were considered as part of the Proposed Project design and Environmental Impact Assessment Reporting process.

The report outlines the consultation and community engagement initiatives undertaken by the Applicant prior to the submission of the planning application. It also outlines the main issues identified during this process, how the final proposal reflects community consultation and the steps taken to ensure that the Proposed Project will be of enduring economic benefit to the communities concerned.

3.5 RED III – Completeness Check

On 6 August 2025, the European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 ([S.I. No. 274 of 2025](#)) were adopted for the purpose of giving effect to Articles 15e(5), 16, 16b, 16c(2), 16d, 16e and 16f of the RED III Directive.

The legislation introduces new decision timelines based on a “completeness check” (ss.34E, 37JB, 295B): 52 weeks for new wind farms, 30 weeks for repowering projects, and one to two years for IROPI cases (two years for projects over 150 kW, one year for projects under 150 kW or repowering). Importantly, renewable energy developments, including related grid and storage infrastructure, are now presumed to be in the overriding public interest.

Article 16(2) of REDIII provides that for applications for development outside renewable acceleration areas, the competent authority shall acknowledge the completeness of the application within 45 days. In this regard, the planning application for the Proposed Project has been prepared in line with RED III and, specifically, the Schedule of Information to Inform the Completeness Check, provided by ACP, as Appendix 2 of their SID determination under ABP-319676-24. A full assessment of the Proposed Project in relation to this schedule has been included as an appendix to the cover letter included as part of the application. It is the applicant’s view that the planning application fully satisfies the completeness check.

4. THE PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Proposed Project will comprise the construction of 14 no. wind turbines with a blade tip height of 169 metres and all associated works and a 110kV substation and associated works, including underground electrical 110kV cabling to connect the Proposed Wind Farm to the national grid at Dunmanway 110kV substation.

The Proposed Grid Connection is located in the townlands of Maughanaclea, Cousane, Glancarney, Derragh, Shanacrane East, Keenrath, Derrynacaheragh, Inchireagh, Shiplough Coolsnaghtig, Mallabracka, Derrylahan, Keelaraheen, Gortanure, Derreens, Demesne, Dunmanway North, Milleenanannig, and Ballyhalwick, Co. Cork, with permanent underground 110kV electrical and communications cabling from the on-site substation to the existing Dunmanway 110kV substation in Ballyhalwick, Co. Cork. The total length of the Proposed Grid Connection underground cable route, measures 20.5km in length, primarily located along the public road corridor, with a short section located across private land/tracks.

The full description of the Proposed Project is detailed in Chapter 4 of this ELAR.

The Proposed Project as set out in the public notices is as follows:

The proposed development will consist of the provision of the following:

- i. *14 no. wind turbines with an overall turbine tip height of 169 metres, a rotor blade diameter of 133 metres, and turbine hub height of 102.5 metres, and a meteorological mast with a height of 30 metres, and subsequent decommissioning of the wind turbines and meteorological mast, following a thirty five-year operational period from the date of full commissioning of the wind turbines;*
- ii. *Associated wind turbines and meteorological mast foundations and hardstanding areas;*
- iii. *A 110kV substation compound (Including control buildings (with a combined floor area of 594Sq.m) with welfare facilities, all associated electrical plant and apparatus, security fencing, underground cabling, lightning protection poles, underground wastewater holding tank, site drainage and all ancillary works);*
- iv. *Underground electrical (110kV) and communications cabling from the proposed 110kV substation to the existing Dunmanway 110kV substation in the townland of Ballyhalwick (including joint bays, communication chambers, earth sheath links, and ancillary works along the underground electrical cabling route). This cabling route is primarily located within the public road corridor;*
- v. *Underground electrical (33kV) and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines and meteorological mast to the proposed 110kV substation;*
- vi. *3 no. temporary construction compounds (including site offices and welfare facilities (with a combined floor area of 585Sq.m);*
- vii. *2 no. temporary security cabins (with a combined floor area of 28.8Sq.m);*
- viii. *Junction accommodation works to facilitate turbine delivery and construction access to the site, including the upgrade of an existing site entrance off the R585 regional road, and the construction of a new access road off the R585 regional road, crossing the L8777 Local Road; including new permanent gated site entrances;*
- ix. *Upgrade of existing site tracks/roads and provision of new site access roads, junctions and hardstand areas (including upgrade of a short section of the L8777 local road);*
- x. *4 no. borrow pits;*
- xi. *Peat and Spoil Management;*

- xii. *Site Drainage;*
- xiii. *Tree felling and vegetation removal;*
- xiv. *Biodiversity Enhancement measures (peatland habitat enhancement, Kerry slug habitat enhancement, and native woodland planting);*
- xv. *Operational stage site signage and;*
- xvi. *All associated site development works and apparatus.*

The applicant is seeking a ten-year permission and an operational period of thirty-five-years for the wind turbines, meteorological mast and site signage from the date of full commissioning of the wind turbines. A permanent planning permission is being sought for all other works.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompany this planning application. The EIAR and NIS include assessment of temporary accommodation works to facilitate the delivery of turbine components from the Port of Cork, Ringaskiddy, to the site entrances via the National (N28, N40 & N22) and Regional (R585) public road network.

This application seeks a ten-year planning permission. The Proposed Project will have an estimated generating capacity of 67.2MW. A full description of the Proposed Project is provided in Chapter 4 of the EIAR. The Proposed Project layout is illustrated in **Figure 1** below.

The following sections provide details on elements of the Proposed Project as outlined in the development description above. Further details of these project components can be found in **Chapter 4** of the EIAR.

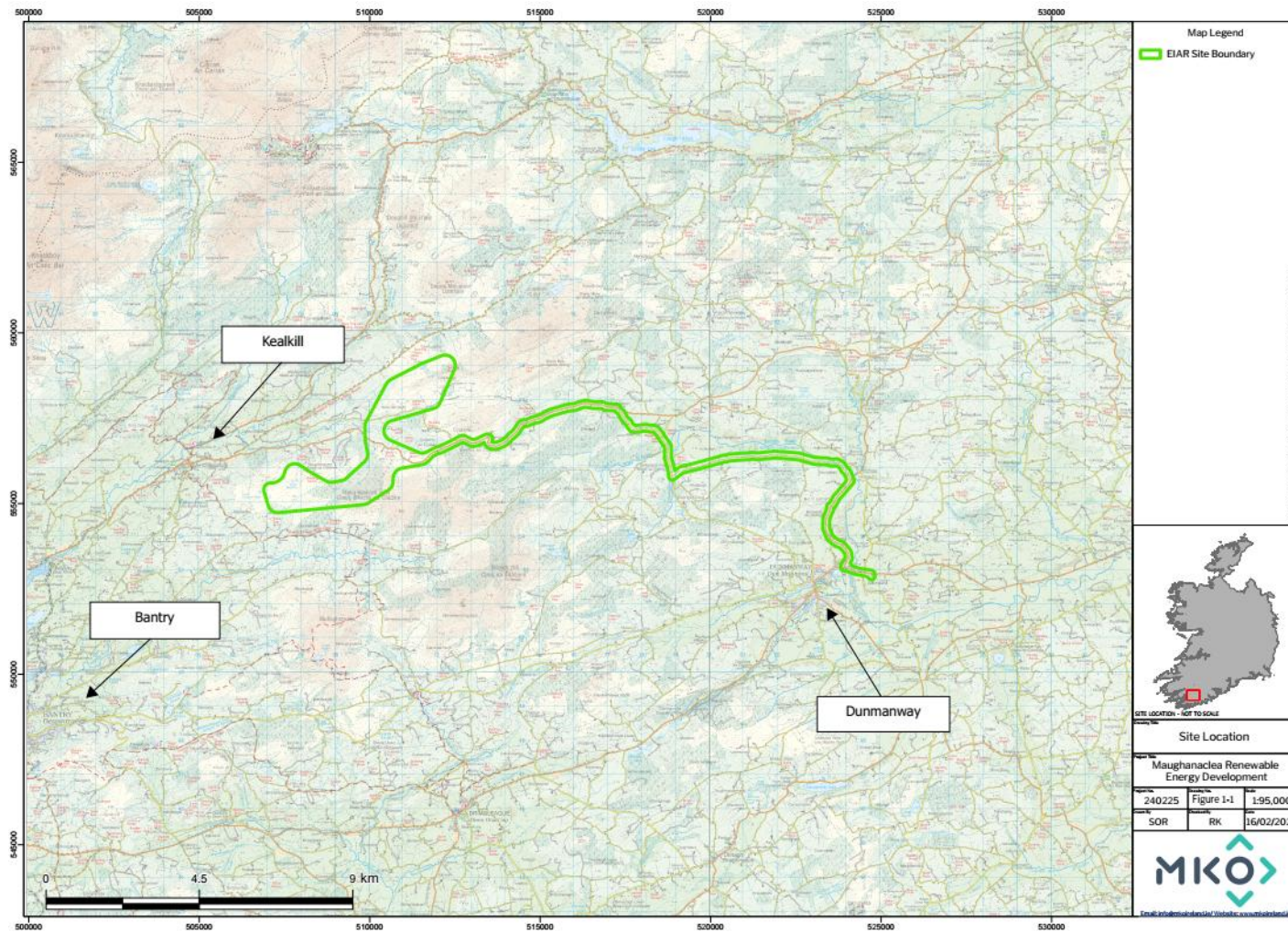


Figure 1: Proposed Site Location

(i) Turbines, Foundations & Hardstands

The proposed wind turbines to be installed on the Site will have the following dimensions:

- > Turbine Tip Height – 169 metres
- > Hub Height – 102.5 metres
- > Blade Rotor Diameter: – 133 metres

Each wind turbine is secured to a reinforced concrete foundation that is installed below the finished ground level. Hard standing areas consisting of levelled and compacted hardcore are required around each turbine base to facilitate access, turbine assembly and turbine erection.

The final turbine selection will be the subject of a competitive tender process to determine the turbine manufacturer. The wind turbines will be conventional three-blade turbines, which will be geared to ensure the rotors of all turbines always rotate in the same direction. The turbines will be multi-ply coated to protect against corrosion, and it is proposed that the turbines would be of a light grey colour to blend into the sky background to minimise visual impact.

(ii) 110kV Substation and Proposed Grid Connection

The Proposed Project includes the 110kV onsite substation which will be connected to the existing Dunmanway 110kV substation via c.20.5km of 110kV underground cabling.

The proposed onsite 110kV substation is located within commercial forestry land and will be accessed via the existing access road to the southern cluster.

The footprint of the proposed 110kV onsite substation measures approximately 9,543m² in area and will include 2 no. control buildings and the electrical substation components necessary to consolidate the electrical energy generated by each wind turbine, and export that electricity from the proposed 110kV onsite substation to the national grid.

The construction and exact layout of electrical equipment in the proposed 110kV onsite substation will be to EirGrid / ESB Networks specifications. The proposed 110kV onsite substation compound will include steel palisade fencing (approximately 2.6 metres high or as otherwise required by ESB), and internal fences will also segregate different are-as within the main substation. The proposed onsite 110kV substation and Proposed Grid Connection will remain in-situ following the decommissioning of the Proposed Wind Farm under the ownership and control of ESBN and EirGrid.

(iii) Underground Electrical and Communications Cabling

Each turbine will be connected to the proposed onsite 110kV substation via underground 33 kV electricity cabling. Fibre-optic cables will also connect each wind turbine and the meteorological (met) mast to the proposed onsite 110kV substation. The electricity and fibre-optic cabling connecting to the proposed onsite 110kV substation compound will be run in cable ducts beneath ground level, along the sides of roadways and/or under the roadways.

(iv) Site Drainage

The Proposed Project site drainage design has been proposed specifically and ensures minimal impact with regards to the existing flow regime across the Site, in particular having no significant negative impact on the water quality of the Site, and consequently no impact on downstream catchments and ecological ecosystems.

Drainage water from any works areas of the Site will not be directed to any natural watercourses within the Site. Two distinct methods will be employed to manage drainage water within the Site. The first method involves keeping clean water clean by avoiding disturbance to natural drainage features, minimising any works in or around artificial drainage features, and diverting clean surface water flow around excavations and construction areas. The second method involves collecting any drainage waters from works areas within the Site that might carry silt or sediment, to allow attenuation and settlement prior to controlled diffuse release via recharge.

(v) Met Mast

One meteorological (met) mast is proposed as part of the Proposed Project. The met mast will be equipped with wind monitoring equipment at various heights. The met mast will be a free-standing slender lattice structure 30m in height. It will be constructed on a hard-standing area sufficiently large to accommodate the equipment that will be used to erect the mast. A standard detail of a meteorological mast is shown in **Figure 4-11** of the EIAR.

(vi) Site Access Roads

Approximately 2.1km of existing roads and access tracks will be upgraded as part of the Proposed Project construction phase. Approximately 85m of new floating road will be constructed to facilitate the Proposed Project. Approximately 11.7km of new roads will be constructed to facilitate the Proposed Project.

(viii) Borrow Pits

The 4 no. proposed onsite borrow pits are located adjacent to the proposed new access roads and existing access roads and have an estimated volume of 170,000m³. See **Section 4.1.11** of the EIAR for further details.

(ix) Temporary Construction Compound

There are 3 no. temporary construction compounds in the Proposed Project and these will be located in the western section of the Site. The construction compound will consist of a bunded refuelling and containment area for the storage of lubricants, oils and site generators etc, waste storage area, temporary site offices, staff facilities and car-parking areas for staff and visitors. See **Section 4.9.1.5** of the EIAR for further details.

(x) Forestry Felling

Tree felling will be required as part of the Proposed Project in order to accommodate the proposed turbines, access roads, underground cabling, substation and other ancillary infrastructure.

(xi) Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

Measures are to be implemented to ensure the Proposed Project will result in net gain biodiversity. These measures include proposed peatland restoration which will result in a net gain of wet heath habitat, as well the planting of new woodland. It is proposed to enhance an area of suitable habitat for the Kerry slug.

5. PROPOSED PROJECT DESIGN PROCESS

The design of the Proposed Project has been an informed and collaborative process from the outset, involving the project designers, engineers, environmental, ecological, ornithological, hydrological, geotechnical, traffic consultants and archaeological specialists. The design process has also taken into account recommendations and comments of the relevant statutory and non-statutory organisations, the local community and the local authority where relevant.

The aim of the process being to reduce the potential for environmental effects while designing a commercially viable project capable of being constructed.

Throughout the design process, the layout of the Proposed Project has been revised and refined to take account of the findings of all desk-based assessments, site surveys/investigations and baseline assessments which have brought the design from its first initial layout to the current proposed layout.

5.1 Strategic Site Selection

As the cost of building each megawatt of electricity generating capacity in a wind farm is in the region of €1.5 million, it is critical that the most suitable site for the Proposed Project is chosen.

Site selection for the development of a wind farm must be suitable for consideration under a number of criteria, such as:

- **Environmental Sensitivities:** Located outside of EU Natura 2000 sites; locations outside of National designations; located outside of Article 17 Annex I Habitats;
- **Grid Connection:** Access to the national electricity grid possible within a viable distance;
- **Sensitive Receptors:** Capable of complying with required setbacks from sensitive receptors;
- **Site Scale:** Sufficient area of unconstrained land that could potentially accommodate a wind farm development and turbine spacing requirements.

From the review of the criteria set out above, the Site is considered a suitable location for the provision of a renewable energy development at the scale proposed.

The Proposed Project is located in a rural setting, primarily lands consisting of commercial forestry, with agricultural pastures and rough grazing also present. The Proposed Project is designated as wholly 'Open to Consideration' under the CCDP Wind Energy Strategy.

5.2 Detailed Constraints Mapping

The design and layout of the Proposed Project follows the recommendations and guidelines set out in the 'Wind Energy Development Guidelines' (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), 2006), hereafter referred to as the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), and the 'Best Practice Guidelines for the Irish Wind Energy Industry' (Irish Wind Energy Association, 2012). The design and layout of the Proposed Project also has regard to the 'Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines' (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), 2019), hereafter referred to as the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).

The constraints mapping process involves the placing of buffers around different types of constraints so as to clearly identify the areas within which no development works will take place. The size of the buffer zone for each constraint has been assigned using guidance presented in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006). Should the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) be adopted in advance of a planning decision being made on this planning application, the Proposed Project will be capable of adhering to the requirements of the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) as currently proposed.

The constraints map for the Proposed Project, as shown in **Figure 3-2** of the EIAR, was produced following a desk and field study of all site constraints. **Figure 3-2** encompasses the following constraints and associated buffers (detailed further in **Chapter 3** of the EIAR):

- **Sensitive Receptors:** a minimum 500m setback from all sensitive receptors achieving the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) recommended setback of 500m and a minimum 676 metre setback from all sensitive receptors achieving the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLGH, 2019) recommended setback of 4 x tip height separation distance from third party sensitive receptors.
- **Hydrology:** Watercourses plus 50 metre buffer to proposed turbine locations
- **Archaeological Sites or Monuments;** 30-metre buffer, plus 'Zone of Notification' as required by the National Monuments Service (ROI)
- **Habitats and Biodiversity:** Species specific buffers. Siting of infrastructure so as to minimise loss of habitats of Local Importance (higher value) and higher, Avoidance of Article 17 habitat, and Annes
- **Telecommunications:** Telecommunication Links plus operator specific buffer;

Facilitators at the Site build on the existing advantages and include the following:

- Available lands for development;
- Acceptable wind resource;
- Proximity to national grid node;
- Opportunity to win construction materials on site, minimising the potential for additional traffic (and associated environmental impacts) and cost generation by acquiring all materials offsite;
- Existing access points and general accessibility of all areas of the Site due to existing road infrastructure; and,
- Limited extent of constraints.

The inclusion of the constraints on a map of the Proposed Wind Farm site allowed for a viable area to be identified. An initial turbine layout is then developed to take account of all the constraints mentioned above and their associated buffer zones and the separation distance required between the turbines. Following the mapping of all known constraints, detailed site investigations were carried out by the project team.

The ecological assessment of the Site encompassed habitat mapping and extensive surveying of birds and other fauna. This assessment, as described in **Chapter 6 and 7** of this EIAR on Biodiversity and Ornithology, optimised the decision on the siting of the turbines and the carrying out of any development works, such as the construction of roads.

The hydrological and geotechnical investigations of the Site examined the proposed locations for turbines, roads and other components of the Proposed Project, such as the construction compound. Where specific areas were deemed unsuitable for the siting of turbines or roads, etc., alternative locations were proposed and assessed, taking into account the areas already ruled out by constraints.

The turbine layout for the Proposed Wind Farm has also been informed by the results of noise, landscape and visual and the separation distance to be maintained between turbines. Thus, the baseline environmental assessment of the site and wind farm design was an iterative process, where findings at each stage of the assessment were used to further refine the design, always with the intention of minimising the potential for environmental impacts.

5.3 Turbine Layout Design Process

The final proposed turbine layout takes account of all site constraints and the distances to be maintained between turbines and from houses, roads, etc. The layout is based on the results of all site investigations

that have been carried out during the EIAR process and the EIA scoping process with statutory and non-statutory consultees. As information regarding the Proposed Wind Farm was compiled and assessed, the number of turbines and the proposed layout have been revised and amended to take account of the physical constraints of the Proposed Wind Farm and the requirement for buffer zones and other areas in which no turbines could be located. The selection of the turbine number and layout has also had regard to wind-take and the separation distance to be maintained between turbines, as well as landscape and visual, noise and shadow flicker impacts. The EIAR and Proposed Wind Farm design process was an iterative process, where findings at each stage of the assessment were used to further refine the design, always with the intention of minimising the potential for environmental impacts.

The development of the final Proposed Wind Farm layout has resulted following feedback from the various studies, investigations and assessments carried out as well as ongoing negotiations and discussions with landowners and the local community. This final design is regarded as optimal as identified constraints are avoided while also maximising the site's development potential.

Further details of the design process and a selection of design iterations can be found in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.5, of the EIAR.

6.

PLANNING POLICY OVERVIEW

An extensive and complete planning policy context in respect of the Proposed Project is included in Chapter 2 of the EIAR. For this report, and for conciseness, the compliance summary table (Table 2) sets out an assessment of the Proposed Project in the context of relevant international, national, and regional policy. Local policy is discussed in Section 6.1 of this planning report.

Table 2: EU, National & Regional Policy Objective and Compliance Summary Table

Policy/ Legislative Document	Targets/Objectives	Compliance
REPowerEU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerate the roll-out of renewables. Increase the 2030 target for renewables from 40% - 45%. Tackle slow and complex permitting for major renewable projects. 	Considering the urgency required under the REPowerEU, it is imperative that all suitable sites, such as the Site, are developed as soon as possible, in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.
Renewable Energy Directive	42.5% renewable energy by 2030, aiming for 45%	The Proposed Project will increase Ireland's renewable energy share, contributing towards Ireland's climate and energy obligations under EU law.
European Green Deal	Increases the binding target of renewable sources in the EU's energy mix from 32% to 40% by 2030. Recognises that 75% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions stems from the production and use of energy, emphasising the need to decarbonise the EU's energy system.	By providing renewable wind energy the Proposed Project supports the European Green Deal's objective of decarbonising the EU's energy system and increasing renewable sources in the EU's energy mix.
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amended) Act 2021	A 51% reduction in emissions by 2030. Net-zero emissions by 2050. Under Section 15, public bodies are required to, in so far as practical, perform its functions in a manner consistent with the Climate Action Plan 2024, the National Energy & Climate Plan 2021 – 2030 and other national climate mitigation and adaptation plan.	<p>The Proposed Project will support the transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient society by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, through the generation of wind energy and displacing electricity that would otherwise be produced from fossil fuel sources.</p> <p>Having regard to the requirements of Section 15 of the Climate Act, the Proposed Project is fully aligned with CAP 25 the National Energy & Climate Plan 2021 – 2030 and other national climate mitigation and adaptation plans.</p> <p>The development represents critical renewable energy infrastructure that will make a meaningful contribution to achieving the State's reduced emissions targets and the transition towards a climate resilient society.</p>
Climate Action Plan 2025	9GW of onshore wind by 2030	The Proposed Project will contribute directly towards the CAP25 goals of 9GW of wind energy by 2030 and renewable electricity share of 80% by 2030. Onshore wind is

		identified as being critical in the decarbonisation of the electricity and as such the Proposed Project should be considered in that regard.
Project Ireland 2040: The National Planning Framework First Revision	National Strategic Outcome 8: Transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient society	The Proposed Project is in line with the objectives of the NPF First Revision which seeks to transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient society. If permitted, the Proposed Project will contribute to the achievement of National Policy Objectives 70, 74 & 75.
National Development Plan 2021-2030	National Strategic Outcomes 8: Transition to a Climate-Neutral and Climate Resilient Society	The NDP is clear in its priority to reach a low-carbon, climate resilient society over the lifetime of the plan. The Proposed Project, if permitted, will provide clean, renewable electricity to the national grid, furthering development objectives of the NDP.
National Development Plan Review 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises wind energy as a key enabler of the State’s legally binding commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030, including a 75% reduction in emissions from the electricity sector. 	The Proposed Project, if permitted, will provide clean, renewable, electricity to the national grid, thus contributing to the decarbonisation of the electricity sector.
National Energy Security Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring security of energy supply in the near-term; Reducing our dependency on imported fossil fuels in the context of the phasing out of Russian energy imports across the EU. 	The Proposed Project will reduce the need for imported fossil fuels for electricity, improving national energy security.
The National Energy & Climate Plan 2021-2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decarbonisation – Renewable energy Energy security 	The Proposed Project will contribute to achieving key decarbonisation and energy security objectives by adding a new renewable electricity generator to the national grid.
Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 – Energy Security Package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced and Responsive Demand Renewables-led System More Resilient Systems Robust Risk Governance 	The Proposed Project supports the objectives to ensure the State's energy security. This Proposed Project serves as a domestic renewable energy generator capable of providing clean electricity to the national electricity grid.
Wind Energy Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceptable noise thresholds and monitoring frameworks Visual amenity setback and spacing Control of shadow flicker Compliance with Community consultation and dividend requirements 	The Proposed Project complies with the requirements set out by the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), including noise, set back, shadow flicker, and community consultation guidelines. It is anticipated that the Proposed Project will be capable of adhering to the Draft Guidelines (DoHLPG, 2019) when finalised

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of the siting, route and design of the proposed grid connection as part of the whole project 	
<p>Southern Regional Assembly Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy</p>	<p>RPO 87: Low Carbon Energy Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The RSES is committed to the implementation of the Government’s policy under Ireland’s Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-30 and Climate Action Plan 2019. It is an objective to promote change across business, public and residential sectors to achieve reduced GHG emissions in accordance with current and future national targets, improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources across the key sectors of electricity supply, heating, transport and agriculture. <p>RPO 96: Integrating Renewable Energy Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is an objective to support the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure to integrate a renewable energy source and ensure our national and regional energy system remains safe, secure and ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows. <p>RPO 98: Regional Renewable Energy Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is an objective to support the development of a Regional Renewable Energy Strategy with relevant stakeholders. <p>RPO 99: Renewable Wind Energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is an objective to support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on shore and off shore) at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the Region in compliance with national Wind Energy Guidelines. <p>RPO 221: Renewable Energy Generation and Transmission Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local Authority City and County Development Plans shall support the sustainable development of renewable energy generation and demand centres such as data centres which can be serviced with a renewable energy source (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) 	<p>The Proposed Project complies with the Southern Regional Assembly Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy (RSES) including RPO 87, RPO 96, RPO 98, RPO 99 and RPO221, which support the development of renewable energy in and associated grid infrastructure within the Southern Region.</p> <p>The Proposed Project will strengthen the role of the Southern Region a leader in the renewable energy generation and in doing so, will support the transition to a climate resilient society. The site has been carefully selected with regard to environmental and ecological sensitivities, the Wind Energy Guidelines, access to grid and local development policy, which will ensure the delivery of onshore wind at an appropriate location.</p> <p>The Proposed Project will increase the supply of renewable electricity and contribute to National and Regional climate objectives.</p>

	<p>to spatially suitable locations to ensure efficient use of the existing transmission network;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The RSES supports strengthened and sustainable local/community renewable energy networks, micro renewable generation, climate smart countryside projects and connections from such initiatives to the grid. The potential for sustainable local/community energy projects and micro generation to both mitigate climate change and to reduce fuel poverty is also supported; ➤ The RSES supports the Southern Region as a Carbon Neutral Energy Region. 	
<p>European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025</p>	<p>Transposes the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive into planning legislation. Introduces new streamlined decision timelines for new wind farms and repowering projects and IROPI projects. Importantly, renewable energy developments, including related grid and storage infrastructure, are now presumed to be in the overriding public interest.</p>	<p>The Proposed Project is subject to the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive III (Directive 2023/2413) and is therefore subject to the European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025.</p> <p>By delivering additional renewable generation capacity, the Proposed Project will enhance Ireland’s renewable energy share and directly support the State in meeting its binding climate and energy obligations under EU law.</p>

6.1 Local Planning Policy

6.1.1 Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (CCDP) came into effect on the 6th June 2022 and was subject to a Ministerial Direction in accordance with section 31(4)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended however the requirements of this Direction did not relate to renewable energy and has no impact on the Proposed Project, subject of this Report.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives have been incorporated into the policies of the CCDP. This is to ensure that climate change has been consistently integrated into the policy themes addressed by the CCDP. Chapter 17 of the CCDP outlines the County’s climate change policy and aligns itself with wider policies with the recognition that *‘national and regional planning policy and national and international climate change policy determine climate change commitments which Cork County Council must meet...’*. In relation to renewable energy and climate action, the relationship between increased renewable energy production and a reduction in GHG emissions is recognised. **Objective 17-2** states:

‘In order to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, an increase in renewable energy production, an increase in energy efficiency and enhanced biodiversity, support the transition to a low carbon, competitive, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 through implementation of the polices of this plan...’

With regard to renewable energy, Chapter 13 sets out the policy context for the County’s energy strategy. County Cork’s role in the delivery of renewable energy resources is acknowledged within the CCDP, with the statement that *“Cork is well positioned to become self-sufficient in renewable energy and contribute to the achievement of national energy targets”*. The CCDP sets out a number of County Development Plan Objectives relating to renewable energy, including the following:

- **Objective ET 13-1 (a): Energy** - Ensure that County Cork fulfils its potential in contributing to the sustainable delivery of a diverse and secure energy supply and to harness the potential of the county to assist in meeting renewable energy targets and managing overall energy demand.
- **Objective ET 13-2(a): Renewable Energy** - Support Ireland’s renewable energy commitments as outlined in Government Energy and Climate Change policies by facilitating the development of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, hydro and bioenergy and energy storage at suitable locations within the county where such development has satisfactorily demonstrated that it will not have adverse impacts on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or amenities.
- **Objective ET 13-2 (b): Renewable Energy** - Support and facilitate renewable energy proposals that bring socio-economic benefit to the local community. The Council will engage with local communities and stakeholders in energy and encourage developers to consult with local communities to identify how they can invest in/gain from significant renewable energy development.
- **Objective ET 13-4: Wind Energy** - In order to facilitate increased levels of renewable energy production consistent with national targets on renewable energy and climate change mitigation as set out in the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030, the Climate Action Plan 2021, and any updates to these targets, and in accordance with Ministerial Guidelines on Wind Energy Development, the Council will support further development of on-shore wind energy projects including the upgrading, repowering or expansion of existing infrastructure, at appropriate locations within the county in line with the Wind Energy Strategy and objectives detailed in this chapter and other objectives of this plan in relation

to climate change, biodiversity, landscape, heritage, water management and environment etc.

From the above objectives, it is evident that there is strong support at local level for the development of renewable energy projects in County Cork in accordance with the CCDP. **Objective 13-4** is particularly relevant to the Proposed Project as it offers clear support for the development of onshore wind energy projects, including the siting of such developments at locations that utilise existing infrastructure, as is the case with the Proposed Project.

6.1.2 Cork County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The Cork County Council Climate Action Plan, 2024-2029 (Cork CAP) sets out a strong precedent for the Council's responsibility to ensure the County's reduction in carbon emissions in line with the Climate Act.

“The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, which also frames Ireland's legally binding climate ambition, requires a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by Cork County Council of 51% by 2030 from the 2016/2018 average baseline and a 50% increase in energy efficiency from a 2009 baseline.”

Objective 4.3.1.1 and **Objective 4.8.1.1** of the Cork CAP clearly sets out the Council's intention to reduce GHG emissions within the electricity sector through the development of renewable energy infrastructure projects.

- **Objective 4.3.1.1** - 51% reduction in GREEN HOUSE GASES from the 2016/2018 baseline resulting from the council's electricity usage.
- **Objective 4.8.1.1** - Support the development of renewable energy infrastructure.

Objective 4.8.1.1 is underpinned by **Action 4.8.1.1.2** which looks to *“Promote renewable energy generation, storage, and distribution infrastructure in accordance with the CDP within the county, whilst promoting the need to consider environmental protection requirements at the outset of and during such projects.”*

These objectives outlined above would be significantly aided by the Proposed Project and it's potential to deliver 67.2MW of renewable electricity to the grid, and as such, the Proposed Project is aligned with the Cork CAP.

6.1.3 Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028: Wind Energy Strategy

Section 13.6 of the CCDP outlines the Wind Energy Strategy (WES) for the County. The WES provides a clear framework for the Council's objectives and methodology for identifying suitable locations for wind energy development in the county. The WES includes a number of Objectives which clearly demonstrates the support for the siting of wind energy projects within the County:

- **Objective ET 13-4: Wind Energy** - *In order to facilitate increased levels of renewable energy production consistent with national targets on renewable energy and climate change mitigation as set out in the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030, the Climate Action Plan 2021, and any updates to these targets, and in accordance with Ministerial Guidelines on Wind Energy Development, the Council will support further development of on-shore wind energy projects including the upgrading, repowering or expansion of existing infrastructure, at appropriate locations within the county in line with the Wind Energy Strategy and objectives detailed in this chapter and other objectives of this plan in relation*

to climate change, biodiversity, landscape, heritage, water management and environment etc.

- **Objective ET 13-5 (a): Wind Energy Projects** - supports a plan led approach to wind energy development in County Cork through the identification of areas for wind energy development. The aim in identifying these areas is to ensure that there are minimal environmental constraints, which could be foreseen to arise in advance of the planning process.
- **Objective ET 13-5 (b): Wind Energy Projects** - On-shore wind energy projects should focus on areas considered 'Acceptable in Principle' and 'Areas Open to Consideration' and generally avoid "Normally Discouraged" areas as well as sites and locations of ecological sensitivity.
- **Objective ET13-9: National Wind Energy Guidelines** - Development of on-shore wind should be designed and developed in line with the 'Planning Guidelines for Wind Farm Development 2006' and 'Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019' and any relevant update of these guidelines.
- **Objective ET13-10: Development in line with Best Practice** - Ensure that wind energy developments in County Cork are undertaken in observance with best industry practices, and with full engagement of communities potentially impacted by the development. In accordance with the Code of Practice 'Good Practice for Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2016', wind energy development operators are required to put in place an effective complaints procedure in relation to all aspects of wind energy development projects, where members of the public can bring any concerns they have about operational difficulties, including noise and nuisance to the attention of the wind energy development operator.

The WES characterises the county into 3 different policy areas aimed at facilitating large scale commercial wind energy developments; 'Acceptable in Principle', 'Open to Consideration' and 'Normally Discouraged'. These policy areas are based on a number of criteria, including accessibility to the electricity distribution grid, which are used to identify suitable areas for wind energy developments. The Proposed Wind Farm is wholly located within the policy area designated as 'Open to Consideration' (OTC), as shown in **Figure 2**. The CCDP states the following the following in regard to OTC areas:

“Commercial wind energy development is open to consideration in these areas where proposals can avoid adverse impacts on:

- *Residential amenity particularly in respect of noise, shadow flicker and visual impact;*
- *Urban areas and Metropolitan/Town Green Belts;*
- *Natura 2000 Sites (SPA's and SAC's), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's), proposed Natural Heritage Areas and other sites and locations of significant ecological value.*
- *Architectural and archaeological heritage;*
- *Visual quality of the landscape and the degree to which impacts are highly visible over wider areas.*

In planning such development, consideration should also be given to the cumulative impacts of such proposals.”

The CCDP notes that areas of the County designated as OTC have the potential for wind farm developments. The Proposed Project's siting within an area deemed by the Council to be OTC, demonstrates that the Proposed Project is appropriately located for the development of wind energy and is aligned with the objectives of the WES that is incorporated into the CCDP.

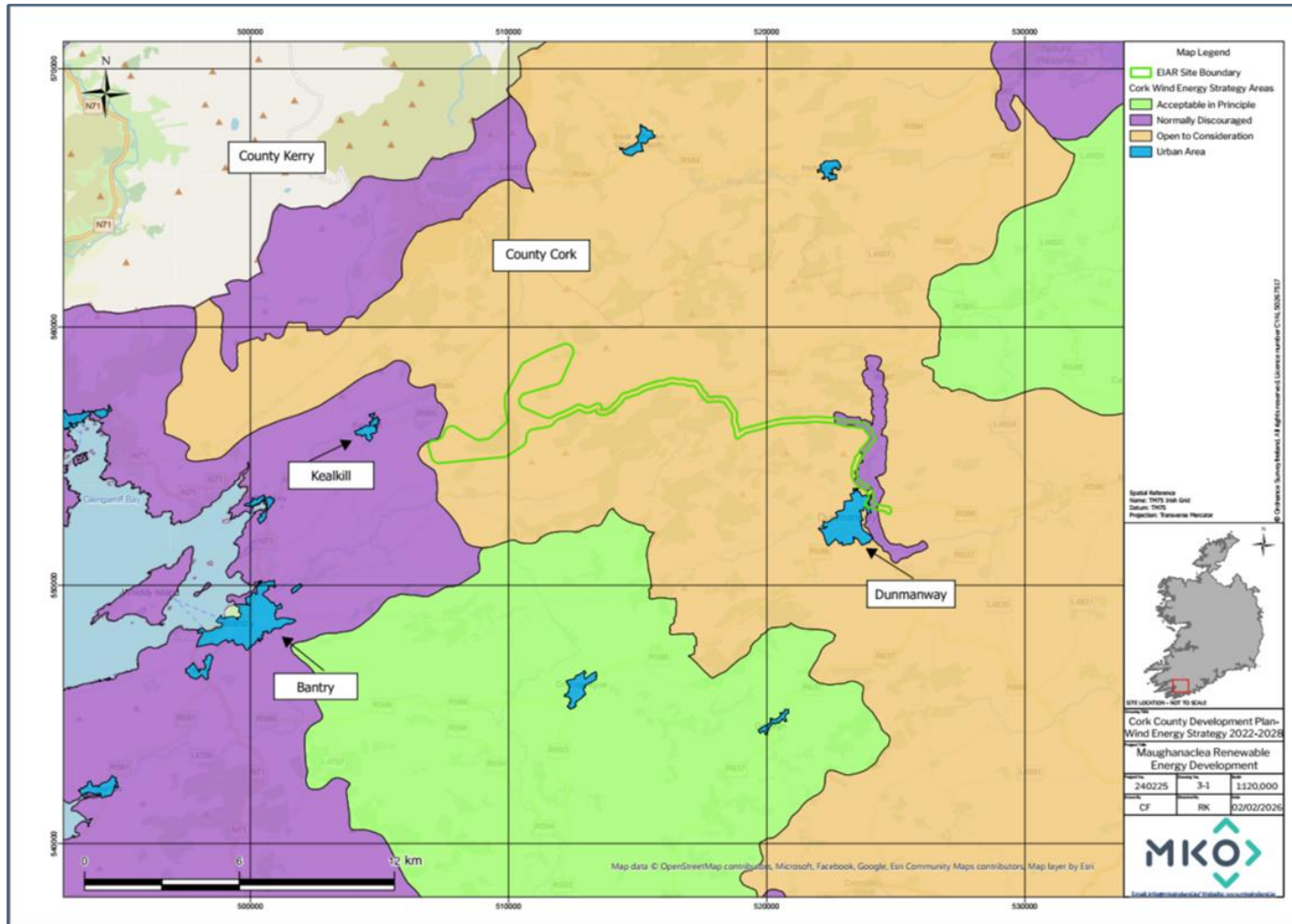


Figure 2: Cork County Development Wind Energy Strategy 2022-2028

Summary of Compliance with Planning Policy

The provision of renewable energy developments such as the Proposed Project is strongly supported by European, national, regional and local policies and guidelines aimed at achieving the transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient economy, increasing renewable energy generation and enhancing energy security. Specifically, the Proposed Project will contribute to achieving the target of generating 9GW of electricity from onshore wind and reducing GHG emissions by 80% by 2030 as set out in the CAP25. Due to the WES in place for Co. Cork and the comprehensive suite of European, national, regional and local policy support for wind energy, the principle of the Proposed Project at this location is acceptable and suitable for wind energy development.

At a European level, the Proposed Project will support Ireland in reaching its legally binding obligations as an EU Member State of achieving at least 42.5% renewable energy by 2030, as set out in RED III. Furthermore, REDIII and RePowerEU have emphasised the European recognition for transitioning away from fossil fuels and increasing the penetration of renewable energy sources into the electricity market. These will play a crucial role in raising awareness and encouraging countries to prioritise the development and adoption of renewable energy technologies.

The Proposed Project aligns with National Strategic Outcomes and Objectives outlined in the NPF and the Revised NPF, particularly Objective 70, which seeks to promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050.

Regionally, the Proposed Project will support the future growth of renewable energy technology in the SRA region as called for in the RSES which sets a clear precedent to identify and capitalise on those opportunities associated with the transition to renewable energy generation.

Locally, the CCDP is supportive of the Proposed Project as it sets out the need for Cork to transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient County with a focus on renewable energy to increase the County's energy sustainability and security.

The Proposed Project is located in an area deemed OTC, demonstrating the site's appropriateness for wind energy development, subject to detailed assessment. Accordingly, as evidenced in the supporting planning application documentation, the Proposed Project is considered to be compliant with the relevant provisions of the CCDP and represents proper planning and sustainable development in the functional area of CCC.

Furthermore, REDIII and REPowerEU have emphasised the European recognition of transitioning away from fossil fuels and increasing the penetration of renewable energy sources into the electricity market. These will play a crucial role in raising awareness and encouraging countries to prioritise the development and adoption of renewable energy technologies.

If the Proposed Project were not to proceed, the opportunity to capture this additional part of County Cork's valuable renewable energy resource would be lost, as would the prospect of contributing to European and national targets for the production and consumption of electricity from renewable resources and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The opportunity to generate local employment and investment associated with the Proposed Project would also be lost.

7.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The Proposed Project has been subject to a rigorous design process informed by a comprehensive planning and environmental assessments and surveys, which have collectively concluded that the Proposal is in line with proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The Proposed Project has been designed in compliance with the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006). It is considered that the Proposed Project will comply with potential future guidelines as the noise emissions and shadow flicker assessment are controllable via inbuilt turbine technologies.

Specifically, there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Project during the construction, operational or decommissioning phases of the development nor will it have any significant effects on any European Sites. Any potential environmental impacts can be addressed through standard mitigation measures and residual impacts will not be significant.

Accordingly, the following section provides a planning assessment of the Proposed Project under a number of key material considerations. This includes an assessment of the principle of development, followed by an assessment of the key environmental topics covered in the EIAR, which together inform the overall planning assessment of the Proposed Project. These considerations including the following headings:

- Residential Amenity
- Biodiversity
- Ornithology
- Land, Soils and Geology
- Hydrology and Hydrogeology
- Air Quality
- Climate
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- Material Assets

7.1

Principle of Development

The principle of development is considered to be acceptable at this location, having regard not only to its alignment with all levels of Planning Policy, including International, National, Regional and Local Planning Policy Frameworks, but also in the context of binding climate change obligations, the Proposed Project Design Process and relevant environmental requirements.

Policy Context

At an International and National Level, the Proposed Project will make a meaningful contribution towards achieving the transition to a low-carbon economy and climate resiliency, increasing renewable energy generation, and enhancing energy security. It will contribute directly towards the CAP25 goals of 9GW of wind energy by 2030 and renewable electricity share of 80% by 2030.

At a Regional Level, the Proposed Project will strengthen the role of the Southern Region as a leader in the renewable energy generation and in doing so, will support the transition to a climate resilient society.

Locally, it is evident that there is strong support at local level for the development of renewable energy projects in County Cork in accordance with the CCDP. Objective 13-4 is particularly relevant to the Proposed Project as it offers clear support for the development of onshore wind energy projects, including the siting of such developments at locations that utilise existing infrastructure, as is the case with the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project is also designated as wholly 'Open to Consideration' under the CCDP Wind Energy Strategy.

Obligations of Consenting Authorities under the Climate Act

In relation to the Climate Act, Consenting Authorities must meaningfully engage with national climate objectives when exercising their functions, including decision-making and must also demonstrate how those functions have been carried out in a manner consistent with, in so far as practicable, national climate objectives.

Taking these legal duties into account, the Commission is required to attribute significant weight to national climate policy and the delivery of renewable energy infrastructure, such as the Proposed Project,

At present, there are no mandatory legal requirements that preclude the Commission from granting permission for the Proposed Project.

Having regard to these matters, it is considered that the Commission can exercise its planning judgement to determine the application in a manner which is consistent with the achievement of national and EU policy goals, in accordance with its statutory duty under Section 15 of the Climate Act.

Detailed Constraints Exercise

A detailed analysis of site-specific constraints was carried out in order to inform the placement of the proposed infrastructure.

The ecological assessment of the Proposed Wind Farm site encompassed habitat mapping and extensive surveying of birds and other fauna. This assessment, as described in **Chapters 6 and 7** of the EIAR relating to Biodiversity and Ornithology, optimised the decision on the siting of proposed turbines and the carrying out of any development works, such as the construction of roads.

The hydrological and geotechnical investigations of the Proposed Wind Farm site examined the proposed locations for turbines, roads and other components of the Proposed Project, such as the construction compound. Where specific areas were deemed unsuitable for the siting of turbines or roads, etc., alternative locations were proposed and assessed, taking into account the areas already ruled out by constraints.

The turbine layout for the Proposed Wind Farm has also been informed by the results of noise, landscape and visual considerations and the separation distance to be maintained between turbines. Thus, the baseline environmental assessment of the site and wind farm design was an iterative process, where findings at each stage of the assessment were used to further refine the design, always with the intention of minimising the potential for environmental impacts.

The development of the final Proposed Wind Farm layout has resulted following feedback from the various studies, investigations and assessments carried out as well as ongoing negotiations and discussions with landowners and the local community. This final design is regarded as optimal as identified constraints are avoided while also maximising the site's development potential.

Appropriate Assessment

To support ACP in carrying out their Appropriate Assessment, an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared for the Proposed Project. This report has been prepared to provide the competent authorities with the information necessary to complete an Appropriate Assessment screening and an Appropriate Assessment for the Proposed Project in compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

The NIS concludes that the Proposed Project, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.

It is therefore judged that, provided the Proposed Project is constructed and operated in accordance with the design, best practice and mitigation that is described within this application, significant residual impacts on biodiversity, flora and fauna will not occur. The biodiversity enhancement measures outlined for the Proposed Project will result in an improvement of the existing ecological conditions of the Site.

7.1.2 Conclusion

In summary, the Proposed Project is a type of development which is specifically required to aid the State to meet our binding climate targets and obligations at a National and International level. It is demonstrably supported at all levels of planning policy and is located within an area identified at a local level as the most appropriate location within the County for the development of renewable energy.

The Proposed Project provides the opportunity to realise the valuable renewable energy resource. If the Proposed Project were not to proceed the opportunity to capture this additional part of Co. Cork's valuable renewable energy resource would be lost, as would the opportunity to contribute to meeting Government and EU targets for the production and consumption of electricity from renewable resources and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

In this regard, and subject to compliance with all relevant environmental and ecological considerations as set out in the EIAR and NIS, the principle of development of the Proposed Project is considered to be wholly acceptable and appropriate at this location.

7.2 Key Environmental Considerations

Table 3 provides a summary of the of the Proposed Project under these key material environmental considerations and identifies the relevant chapters of the EIAR where they are specifically addressed

Table 3: Planning Assessment Summary

Consideration	Summary	Relevant EIAR Chapter
Residential Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise Impact: The Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) confirms that operational noise from the Proposed Project will comply with the noise limit criteria at all Noise Sensitive Locations as per the 2006 Guidelines. • Shadow Flicker: The EIAR confirms shadow flicker levels will meet 2006 Guideline limits at all Sensitive Receptors and can be adjusted to align with the Draft 2019 Guidelines if they are adopted during the planning process. • Visual Amenity: The visual and landscape assessment finds no significant effects on sensitive receptors, with overall visibility of the Proposed Project considered not significant. 	<p>Chapter 5 – Human Beings Chapter 12 – Noise Chapter 13 – Landscape</p>
Biodiversity	<p>No significant residual effects as a result of the Proposed Project in relation to disturbance, displacement, mortality of faunal species, loss of faunal habitat or deterioration in water quality has been identified.</p> <p>The potential for effects on the European Sites is fully described in the NIS that accompanies this application. The NIS concludes that in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, the Proposed Project either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is not likely to have adverse effects on the European Sites that were assessed as part of the Appropriate Assessment process. Similarly, with the prescribed mitigations in place, there is no potential for impact on any nationally designated site.</p>	<p>Chapter 6 – Biodiversity</p>
Ornithology	<p>Following consideration of the residual effects (post-mitigation), it is concluded that the Proposed Project will not result in any significant effects on any of the identified KORs. No significant effects on receptors of International, National or County Importance were identified. Provided that the Proposed Project is constructed, operated and decommissioned in accordance with the design and best practice mitigation measures that are described within this application, significant individual or cumulative effects on the identified KORs are not anticipated.</p>	<p>Ch.7 – Ornithology</p>
Land, Soils, & Geology	<p>No significant impacts on the land, soil, and geology of the Site will occur during construction, operation, or during decommissioning phases.</p>	<p>Ch.8 – Geology & Soils</p>

	Our assessment also concludes that there will be no cumulative effects on land, soil and geology environment as a result of the Proposed Project.	
Hydrology & Hydrogeology	No significant effects to surface water (quality and flows) and groundwater (quality and quantity, and any local groundwater wells) will occur as a result of the Proposed Project provided the proposed mitigation measures are implemented. An assessment of potential cumulative effects associated with the Proposed Project and other developments on the hydrological and hydrogeological environment has been completed. With the implementation of the mitigation measures detailed in the EIAR, the cumulative assessment found that there will be no significant effects on the hydrological and hydrogeological environments. No significant effects on the water environment will occur during the construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Project.	Ch.9- Hydrology & Hydrogeology
Air Quality	It is considered there will be no measurable negative cumulative effects on air quality should other proposed or consented plans and within the surrounding landscape be operational in parallel with the Proposed Project. However, once the Proposed Project is operational, there will be a long-term, significant, positive impact on the air quality.	Ch.10 – Air Quality
Climate	<p>Residual effects of greenhouse gas emissions arising from the construction phase of the Proposed Project will have a short-term imperceptible negative effect and is not significant. However, once emitted to the atmosphere, the greenhouse gas emissions that will arise from construction phase activities will have a permanent imperceptible negative effect on Climate.</p> <p>The Proposed Project will displace 44,498 tonnes carbon dioxide from fossil fuel-based electricity generation, over the proposed 35-year lifespan. Therefore, while there will be greenhouse gas emissions associated with the construction of the Proposed Project, this will have a long-term significant positive impact on climate.</p> <p>Following implementation of the mitigation measures, residual effects of greenhouse gas emissions arising from the operational phase of the Proposed Project will have potential long-term imperceptible negative not significant effect on Climate.</p>	Ch.11 - Climate

<p>Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment</p>	<p>In conclusion, this LVIA determined that the Proposed Wind Farm is located within a landscape that can effectively accommodate a wind energy development of this scale, given the large scale and expansive nature of the receiving environment and the mitigation measures in place to ensure no significant impact on key landscape and scenic sensitivities. The assessments have determined that the Proposed Wind Farm site is a landscape capable of effectively accommodating the Proposed Project.</p>	<p>Ch.13 Landscape</p>
<p>Archaeology & Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>In summary, the Proposed Project will have one pre-mitigation significant negative effect on a previously unrecorded cultural heritage site (CH55).</p> <p>Following the application of mitigation measures this will be reduced to a slight negative effect, and there will be no significant residual effects on the previously unrecorded archaeological, architectural or cultural heritage resource as a result of the construction of the Proposed Project. This is due to the fact that any remains that are encountered during the course of monitoring or test trenching will be subject to preservation by record or preservation in-situ.</p>	<p>Ch.14 Cultural Heritage</p>
<p>Material Assets</p>	<p>The potential cumulative impact of the Proposed Project and other relevant developments has been carried out with the purpose of identifying what influence the Proposed Project will have on the surrounding environment when considered cumulatively and in combination with relevant existing permitted or Proposed Projects and plans in the area, in the vicinity of the Site, as set out in Section 2.9 in Chapter 2: Background to the Proposed Project of this EIAR.</p> <p>The Proposed Project will have no impact on built services and waste management. It is on this basis that it can be concluded that there would be a short-term imperceptible cumulative impact on built services and waste management from the Proposed Project during the construction phase and permitted or Proposed Projects and plans in the area. There are no cumulative effects associated with the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Project.</p>	<p>Ch. 15 Material Assets</p>

8.

CONCLUSION

The provision of wind energy developments such as the Proposed Project is strongly supported by European, National, Regional and Local policies and guidelines aimed at achieving the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient economy, increasing renewable energy generation, and enhancing energy security. Specifically, the Proposed Project will contribute to achieving the target of generating 9GW of electricity from onshore wind and reducing GHG emissions by 51% by 2030 as set out in the CAP25. The Proposed Project aligns with National Strategic Outcomes and Objectives outlined in the National Planning Framework, particularly Objective 55, which seeks to promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050.

It is demonstrated through the assessment of the Proposed Wind Farm site against the WES, that it is a suitable site for wind energy development. From a review of the sieve analysis mapping, the entire area of the Proposed Wind Farm site is zoned as 'Open to Consideration.'. This has been considered in the planning application and comprehensively assessed in the EIAR. The Proposed Wind Farm is designed to limit the impact on all environmental receptors, with mitigation proposed where impacts are predicted to arise.

The Proposed Project aligns with National Strategic Outcomes and Objectives outlined in the National Planning Framework First Revision, particularly Objective 55, which seeks to promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050.

CAP24 estimates that an 8-times increase in renewable energy deployment to 2.3 GW annually is required between 2024 and 2030 to reach climate and energy targets. CAP25 reaffirms the ambitious targets for renewable electricity share of 80% by 2030, which is to be achieved, in part, by the deployment of a targeted 9GW of onshore wind by 2030. To achieve this, greater alignment between local plans and national and regional renewable energy targets is urgently required. If permitted, the Proposed Project will add approximately 67.2MW of renewable, clean energy to our national wind energy capacity. This will not only contribute to the decarbonisation of the electricity sector but will play a role in the decarbonisation of other sectors and the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient economy.

To combat the effects of climate change, Ireland must decarbonise its economy by 2050. There is no "silver bullet" to do so. It will take several individual renewable energy projects to decarbonise the Irish economy. The scale of the challenge we face to decarbonise the Irish economy is enormous, but the climate change implications of not doing so are even greater. There is no other way to decarbonise a modern society except through renewable energy projects such as the Proposed Project.

Having regard to the key points set out in this Planning Report, it is respectfully requested that An Coimisiún Pleanála consider the relevant planning context that applies, and grants permission for the Proposed Project which is the subject of this application.

