

Planning Report

Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development





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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Proposed Project consists of 9 no. wind turbines which will have an estimated installed capacity of 54MW. The Proposed Turbines will have an overall tip height of 175m, rotor diameter of 150m and hub height of 100m. The Proposed Turbines will be connected to the grid via 33kV underground electrical cabling connection to a proposed extension to the existing 110kV substation at Knockalassa (within the nearby Slievecallan Wind Farm).

The Site was subject to previous applications for an 8-turbine proposal by the applicant Slieveacurry Ltd., most recently in November 2021 (Planning Ref. 21/1226). This application was refused by Clare County Council (CCC) in January 2022. The CCC refusal was appealed in February 2022 to An Bord Pleanála (now An Coimisiún Pleanála) (ABP-312728-22). The appeal resulted in a refusal on three grounds. The Proposed Project has been designed with due consideration of the refusal reasons set out in the previous refusal and the Site has been comprehensively re-assessed within the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) accompanying this application.

The purpose of this planning report is to provide a clear, informed planning justification for the Proposed Project within the context of relevant planning policy, legislation and guidelines. It sets out how the Proposed Project is compliant with European, National, Regional, and Local planning policy, and addresses key environmental and design considerations. The planning report should be read in conjunction with the EIAR and NIS.

The introductory sections of this Planning Report provide an overview of the Proposed Project, the Applicant, the site location and context, the planning history and a summary of consultation undertaken. The design process is outlined, demonstrating the rationale for the site's selection and its suitability for wind energy development.

The Proposed Project is strongly supported by European and National policy and legislation on renewable energy. At a European level, the Proposed Project is supported by the European Union Renewable Energy Directive and REPowerEU. At a National level, the Proposed Project is supported by the National Planning Framework First Revision, Climate Action Plan 2025, the National Energy Security Framework, among other national climate and renewable energy policies. The legally binding greenhouse gas emission reduction target and the obligations of public bodies under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, should also be considered in the assessment of this application. At a Regional level, the Proposed Project is supported by the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, which supports the development of wind energy and associated grid infrastructure at appropriate locations across the in the region. At a Local level, the Proposed Project is supported by climate and renewable energy policies as set out in the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029. A full appraisal of the relevant policy and legislation is provided in Section 6 and Section 7 of this Planning Report.

The development of viable sites for wind energy development is essential to meet European, National, Regional and Local climate and renewable energy targets. Ireland needs to scale up onshore wind energy development at an unprecedented rate to achieve its 9GW and 80% renewable energy share targets, as set out in the Climate Action Plan 2025. The reality of achieving these targets is the installation of over 800 Megawatts (MW) of wind energy per year until 2030. If permitted, the Proposed Project will have an estimated installed capacity of 54MW, providing clean and sustainable renewable wind energy to Ireland's national electricity grid. 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 sustainable and climate-resilient economy and society.

To conclude, it is submitted that, based on the evidence provided in this Planning Report, the Proposed Project is strongly supported by European, National, Regional and Local planning policy and will contribute to the achievement of National and Local climate and renewable energy targets. The Proposed Project will also support Ireland's energy security by generating and increasing indigenous renewable



wind energy, which will reduce Ireland's reliance on imported fossil fuels for energy generation. Ultimately, it is submitted that the Proposed Project is in accordance with principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

2.

INTRODUCTION

This Planning Report has been prepared by MKO on behalf of Slieveacurry Ltd. (the Applicant), to accompany a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) planning application to An Coimisiún Pleanála (the Commission, ACP) under Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Planning Act). The Proposed Project falls within the definition of a ‘renewable energy development’ and is therefore covered by the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive III (Directive 2023/2413).

The Proposed Project includes 9 no. wind turbines and associated works, and underground 33kV electrical cabling connecting to a proposed extension to the existing 110kV substation at Knockalassa (within the nearby Slievacallan Wind Farm). The Site is located approx. 7km south of Ennistimon, Co. Clare and 8km west of Inagh, Co. Clare.

The Proposed Project is considered to be development as specified in the Seventh Schedule of the Planning Act. As such consultation was opened with the Commission in relation to the Proposed Project and it was subsequently confirmed by the Commission that the Proposed Project constitutes Strategic Infrastructure within the meaning of Section 37A of the Planning Act. Therefore, this application is being made under Section 37E of the Planning Act. Further details on pre-application is provided in section 4.2 of this report.

2.1

Report Definitions, Structure and Contents

For the purpose of this Report and as set out in **Chapter 1: Introduction** of the EIAR, the following referencing is used:

- Where the ‘Proposed Project’ is referred to, this encompasses the entirety of the project for the purposes of the EIAR in accordance with the EIA Directive. The Proposed Project is described in detail in **Chapter 4: Description** of the EIAR.
- Where the ‘Site’ is referred to, this relates to the primary study area for the EIAR, as delineated by the EIAR Site Boundary in green as shown on Figure 1-1 of **Chapter 1: Introduction** of the EIAR and encompasses an area of approximately 1,260 hectares.
- Where the ‘Proposed Grid Connection Site’ is referred to, this refers to the part of the Site containing the proposed extension to the existing 110kV Slievacallan substation at Knockalassa and the 33kV underground cabling connection from the wind farm road to the proposed substation extension.
- Where the ‘Proposed Wind Farm Site’ is referred to, this refers to the portion of the Site containing the Proposed Turbines and ancillary infrastructure, excluding the Proposed Grid Connection Site.
 - The ‘Proposed Turbines’ refers to the 9 no. turbines associated with the Proposed Wind Farm Site as outlined above.
- Where the ‘Proposed Enhancement Site’ is referred to, this refers to the portion of the Site containing the proposed biodiversity and ornithology habitat enhancement and management areas, excluding the Proposed Wind Farm Site and Proposed Grid Connection Site.

This planning report is structured as follows:

- **Project Background** – Introduction to the Applicant, the Proposed Project and the planning history
- **Consultation** – EIAR scoping, pre-application and community consultations and benefit details.
- **The Proposed Project** – Description of the main elements of the Proposed Project subject to this Section 37E planning application along with the design process from site selection through to the final design.

- **Legislative Context** – Requirements under the Planning Act, along with an overview of the legislative framework for renewable energy and climate action.
- **Planning Policy Context** – Review and evaluation of the Proposed Project against European, national, regional, and local policy.
- **Planning Assessment** – Evaluation of the Proposed Project against the relevant policy and legislative requirements.

3. PROJECT BACKGROUND

3.1 The Applicant

The applicant for the Proposed Project, Slievecurry 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, with projects currently operating or in construction in Counties Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Galway, Mayo and Donegal.

By end of 2025, Enerco associated companies had over 975 Megawatts (MW) of wind generating capacity in commercial operation or in construction, with 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 Site is located approx. 7km south of Ennistimon, Co. Clare and 8km west of Inagh, Co. Clare. The town of Miltown Malbay is located approx. 5.8km west of the nearest proposed turbine (T07). The Proposed Wind Farm Site is located in an upland setting comprising predominantly cutover bog with areas of commercial forestry, agricultural land and low density residential properties. The nearest Natura 2000 site to the Site, i.e., Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA) is the Inagh River Estuary SAC located approximately 6.2km north of the Site. Elevations within the Proposed Wind Farm Site range from ~120mOD (metres above Ordnance Datum) in the south to ~250m in the centre of the Proposed Wind Farm Site.

The planning application provides for the installation of underground cabling connecting the Proposed Turbines to a proposed extension to the existing Slievecallan 110kV substation in the townland of Knockalassa, Co. Clare. The underground cabling route of approximately 7.1 km will be located along existing and proposed forestry and wind farm tracks, agricultural lands, and within the public road corridor.

Current land-use on the Site comprises coniferous forestry, agriculture, wind farm, turf cutting and public road corridor. Land-use in the wider landscape comprises a mix of agriculture, low density housing, renewable energy and commercial forestry.

The Proposed Turbines are located within an area designated in the Clare County Development Plan 2023- 2029 (CCDP) as 'Strategic' for wind energy development, this is discussed further in Section 7.2.3 of this report.

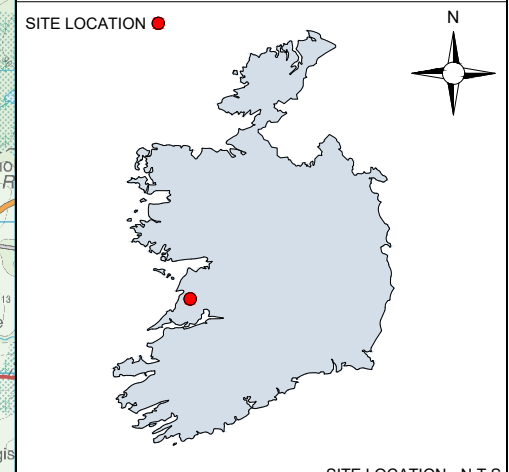
A Site Location Context Map is shown in **Figure 3-1**.



- Project Design Drawing Notes**
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 2. Drawings not to be used for construction/contract conditions.
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Drawing Legend

— Planning Application Boundary



PROJECT TITLE: **Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development**

DRAWING TITLE: **Location Context Map**

PROJECT No.: 240718	DRAWING No.: Figure 3-1	SCALE: 1:50,000 @ A3
DRAWN BY: FB	CHECKED BY: RD	DATE: 27.04.2026
OS SHEET No.: 1016, 1018		REVISION: P02

Info: info@www.mkofireland.ie / Website: www.mkofireland.ie

3.3 Planning History

A planning search was carried out through CCC's online planning portal along with ACP's online case search function in April 2026 for relevant planning applications within the planning application red line boundary of this application for the Proposed Project. The relevant planning applications are outlined in Section 2.6 of **Chapter 2: Background to the Proposed Project** of the EIAR. In total, 6 no. applications were identified within the planning application red line boundary of the Proposed Project. 3 no. planning applications relate to a previous 8-turbine wind energy proposal at the Site which are discussed in the following section in further detail, 2 no. planning applications relate to the existing Slievecallan 110kV substation and 1 no. planning application relates to the existing Slievecallan wind farm.

A planning search was also carried out to establish proposed, permitted and operational wind energy developments within 25km of the Proposed Turbines. The search was carried out using the CCC and ACP databases in April 2026 for relevant planning applications. In addition, a search for wind energy developments at pre-application stage or within the public domain was also carried out. In total, 19 no. applications relating to wind energy were identified within 25km of the Proposed Turbines. These are outlined in greater detail in Table 2-3 of **Chapter 2: Background to the Proposed Project** of the EIAR. These are summarised below:

- Ballykett Wind Farm (Permitted) - 23km southwest of the proposed turbine T7,
- Booltiagh I Wind Farm (Existing) - 9.2km southeast of the proposed turbine T7,
- Booltiagh Wind Farm (Extension) (Existing) - 8.6km southeast of the proposed turbine T8,
- Boolynagleragh Wind Farm (Existing) - 13.1km southeast of the proposed turbine T6,
- Boolynagleragh Wind Farm Extension (Existing) - 13.9km southeast of the proposed turbine T6,
- Cahermurphy II Wind Farm (In Planning) - 9.75km southwest of the proposed turbine T7,
- Cahermurphy West Wind Farm (Proposed) - 9.95km southwest of the proposed turbine T7,
- Cahermurphy Wind Farm (Existing) - 9.5km southwest of the proposed turbine T7,
- Coolkett Wind Farm (Proposed) - 20.12km from southeast of the proposed turbine T7,
- Crossmore Wind Farm (Existing) - 18.1km southeast of the proposed turbine T7,
- Dehomad Wind Farm (Public Domain) - Indicative site location point is located 14.5km southeast of proposed turbine T7,
- Glenmore / Sorrell Wind Farm (Existing) - 11.2km southeast of the proposed turbine T8,
- Illaunbaun Wind Farm (In Planning) - 1.7km from northwest of the proposed turbine T1,
- Slievenalicka Locally Owned Turbine – 3km northwest of the proposed turbine T3,
- Kiltumper Wind Farm (Existing) - 11.6km south of the proposed turbine T7,
- Letteragh Wind Farm (Existing) - 10.8km southeast of the proposed turbine T8,
- Moanmore Wind Farm (Existing) - 23.1 km from southwest of the proposed turbine T7,
- Slievecallan Wind Farm (Existing) - 1.6km southeast of the proposed turbine T6,
- Tullabrack Wind Farm (Existing) - 22km southwest of the proposed turbine T7,

3.3.1 Previous Wind Farm Planning Applications

October 2020 Application – Planning Ref: 20/806

In October 2020, Slieveacurry Ltd. applied to CCC for planning permission for an 8-turbine renewable energy development and associated works on the Site. In January 2021, Slieveacurry Ltd. withdrew the

planning application due to third party legal challenge against the Council's procedures surrounding the processing of the application.

April 2021 Application – Planning Ref: 21/370 & ABP-310707-21

A further planning application for the 8-turbine renewable energy development and associated works on the Site was lodged by Slieveacurry Ltd. in April 2021. CCC refused permission in June 2021 and the Applicant subsequently appeal CCC's decision to An Bord Pleanála (now ACP). In October 2021, Slieveacurry Ltd. withdrew the appeal considering the findings of the Derryadd Wind Farm High Court judgment regarding the plans and particulars required for planning applications. It was decided that a further application would be made including precise dimensions for the wind turbines proposed.

November 2021 Application – Planning Ref. 21/1226 & ABP-312728-22

Slieveacurry Ltd. submitted a revised application for planning permission in November 2021 for the same 8-turbine renewable energy development and associated works on the Site (Planning Ref. 21/1226). In January 2022, the application was refused by CCC for 4 no. reasons:

1. Height, scale and siting of the turbines proposed being prominent on the landscape and seriously injuring the visual amenities of the area thereby contravening Objective CDP 13.2 of the Development Plan.
2. Noise and disturbance generated from the turbines, cumulatively with other windfarms would seriously injure the amenities of residential property. The turbines would be visually overbearing and thus depreciate property values. The proposal is therefore contrary to Objective CDP 8.40 of the Development Plan.
3. The Planning Authority was not satisfied that the proposal by itself and in conjunction with the cumulative impact with existing and permitted windfarm development would not have a significant adverse ecological impact on the habitat of a number of bird species, including Hen Harrier. The proposal therefore contravenes Objective CDP 14.7 of the Development Plan.
4. The Planning Authority was not satisfied that the management of peat would not have an adverse impact on ground stability or the hydrology of the site.

The decision by CCC was appealed to An Bord Pleanála (now ACP) in February 2022 (ABP-312728-22). In May 2024 the Board decided to refuse permission for the 8-turbine proposal on 3 grounds:

1. *“Having regard to:*
 - (a) the upland and sloping nature of the terrain;*
 - (b) the high rainfall levels prevalent at this location;*
 - (c) blanket bog being the dominant soil type at the site and the importance of assessing any biodiversity impact on this natural resource;*
 - (d) the mapped trending faults intersecting the wind farm site;*
 - (e) the high density of drainage channels throughout the site, both natural and man-made;*
 - (f) the timing of construction works outside of the breeding season for birds coinciding with wetter periods;*
 - (g) the areas of trees to be clear felled, with peat soils and subsoils subsequently exposed;*
 - (h) the water crossings and crossing upgrades required;*
 - (i) the existence of deep peat at turbine locations and along existing and proposed access roads;*
 - (j) the significant volumes of peat and other spoil material requiring excavation, handling,*

storage and management on the site;

(k) the instability associated with the works and movement of waste material, including the necessity for placement of substantial volumes of waste peat and other spoil materials in two large repositories on bogland hilly terrain;

(l) the construction of high retaining stone buttresses required to contain waste peat and other spoil;

(m) the peat-dominated nature of the soils at the repository locations;

(n) the lack of a clear understanding of the land and ground conditions associated with the development of the proposed spoil repositories, including matters relating to the final construction of the repositories, the drainage of the peat repositories, measures required for the control of groundwater, the type and condition of rock at the repository locations, the hillside siting of the repositories, and the associated clear felling of forestry;

(o) the construction works culminating in interference with the natural terrain by the development of the turbine bases and the hardstanding areas, the construction of access roads cutting across contours on bogland, the provision of preferential flow paths for surface waters, and road widening and improvement works along existing internal roads; and

(p) the proposed highly complex system of drainage and the very precise nature of the application of many of the proposed conceptual measures required for their safe functionality on a blanket bog dominated site;

and on the basis of the information submitted with the application and appeal,

the Board cannot be satisfied that the proposed development would adequately mitigate the risk of failure to contain the spoil in the proposed repositories as a consequence of the development of the proposed wind farm, with potential for causing pollution of waterbodies within, and in the vicinity of, the site. Furthermore, the Board is not satisfied, on the basis of the information submitted with the application and appeal, that the proposed repositories would be effective in providing for the permanent retention of peat and other materials and that the mitigation measures, inclusive of the proposed drainage system, would be adequate to ensure the protection of the environment.

In view of the above, it is considered that the proposed development would present a significant risk of adverse environmental impact on the sensitive natural habitats of the site and of the wider area and would constitute an unacceptable risk of pollution of watercourses in the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. *On the basis of the information submitted with the application and appeal including the Natura Impact Statement, and in light of the assessment of the Board by reference to the issues set out in reason number 1 above, including the risk of pollution of watercourses in the area, the Board cannot be satisfied that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites' - Inagh River Estuary Special Area of Conservation (Site Code:000036), Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands Special Area of Conservation (Site Code:001021), and Mid Clare Coast Special Protection Area (Site Code:004182) in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives. In such circumstances, the Board is precluded from granting permission for the proposed development.*

3. *Based on the information submitted with the application and appeal, the Board noted the range of bird species of conservation value that have been observed on, over and in close proximity to the site indicating this to be an ecologically sensitive area of significant ornithological value and of value to the Annex II species, Marsh Fritillary. In the absence of data monitoring the impacts, if any, of existing wind farm developments in this area on these birds and species of conservation value and their habitats, together with the particular*

sensitivity of some species such as Golden Plover and Hen Harrier to relatively low levels of mortality, the Board cannot be satisfied that the cumulative environmental assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on avifauna can reasonably exclude the possibility of a significant impact. In this regard, it is considered that the proposed development would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.”

3.3.2 **Measures to Address Reasons for Refusal of Application Ref: 21/1226 (ABP-312728-22)**

As described in Section 3.3.1 above, the planning application for an 8 turbine proposal at the Site was ultimately refused planning permission by An Bord Pleanála (now ACP) in May 2024.

Following the refusal of the previous application, the Applicant, in conjunction with the project team, undertook a comprehensive review and reassessment of the Site and the receiving environment. This process has included a detailed evaluation of the reasons for refusal, further site investigations and analysis, and targeted design refinements where appropriate. MKO and the wider project team have undertaken surveys and assessments on the Proposed Wind Farm Site since 2012 and have gathered significant knowledge about the Site. The extensive surveys, site investigations and assessments carried out at the Site have been thoroughly considered in the comprehensive and detailed EIAR and NIS which accompanies this application.

As demonstrated by the EIAR and NIS accompanying this planning application, it is evident that the Proposed Wind Farm Site is suitable for wind energy development, and that the Proposed Project responds appropriately to the concerns identified in the previous refusal reasons.

Measures to address the grounds for refusal are set out in Table 3-1 below:

Table 3-1: Application Response to previous refusal reasons

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
1	(a) the upland and sloping nature of the terrain;	<p>The Proposed Turbines are wholly located in lands identified within the CCDP's Wind Energy Strategy (WES) as a 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development. The designation of the Site as a 'Strategic Area;' is based on a mapping exercise carried out by CCC. As part of this mapping exercise, the upland nature of the Proposed Wind Farm Site was identified as a favourable characteristic as wind speeds are favourable for wind energy development. Slope and landslide susceptibility were also considered as a constraint to wind energy development. Areas of the county with a slope above 15 degrees were excluded from 'Strategic' and 'Acceptable in Principle' areas. It is against this mapping criteria that the Proposed Wind Farm Site is designated as a 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development.</p> <p>It is noted that the WES also states that '<i>Slope is only one parameter in identifying areas of potential landslide susceptibility</i>' and '<i>that landslide risk assessment is required on a site by site basis and policy should reflect the importance of undertaking adequate modelling, risk assessment, and mitigation at planning application stage</i>'. A comprehensive assessment of peat stability/landslide susceptibility is provided in Chapter 8: Land, Soils and Geology and the Geotechnical and Peat Stability Assessment provided in Appendix 8-1 of the EIAR. In summary, the findings of the Geotechnical and Peat Stability Risk Assessment showed that the Site has an acceptable margin of safety, is suitable for the Proposed Project and is considered to be of a low risk for peat failure provided appropriate control measures, such as implementing and maintaining an appropriate drainage system, are implemented.</p> <p>The findings include mitigation/control measures for construction work in peat lands, all of which will be implemented in full to ensure that all works adhere to an acceptable standard of safety.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
	(b) the high rainfall levels prevalent at this location;	<p>Long term Average Annual Rainfall data was sourced from Met Éireann. The 30 year annual average rainfall recorded at Inagh (Mt. Callan), 4km southeast of the Proposed Wind Farm Site, are presented in Error! Reference source not found. of Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology. This is the most appropriate station to use with respect distance and elevation from the Site. Based on this more site-specific modelled rainfall values, the average annual rainfall at the Site ranges from 1,380 to 1,490mm/year. In addition to average rainfall data, extreme value rainfall depths are available from Met Éireann. Table 9-5 of Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology presents return period rainfall depths for the centre of the Proposed Wind Farm Site.</p> <p>As detailed in Section 9.3.2 of Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology, the average rainfall data and extreme rainfall depths are typical for the west of Ireland. A water run-off assessment is provided in Section 9.3.5 of Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology. The water balance presented for the Proposed Wind Farm Site indicates that a conservative estimate of surface water runoff during the highest rainfall month (December) is 1,928,424m³/month or 62,207m³/day. The Site drainage design is based on the 10-year return period rainfall event, ensuring that surface water runoff can be suitably managed.</p>

	(c)	<p>blanket bog being the dominant soil type at the site and the importance of assessing any biodiversity impact on this natural resource;</p>	<p>As described in detail in Chapter 8: Land, Soils and Geology, the Proposed Wind Farm Site is largely covered by blanket peat with bedrock outcrop or subcrop mapped on steeper ground downslope of the blanket bog areas. Below an elevation of approximately 170m, poorly drained mineral soil is the dominant soil type.</p> <p>The majority of the permanent built infrastructure footprint of the Proposed Project, including 7 no. of the 9 no. Proposed Turbines, is located in areas mapped by the GSI as outcrop or subcrop (i.e. exposed or shallow bedrock) with 2 no. turbines mapped on blanket peat (T1 and T4). The proposed borrow pit is also located in an area mapped as outcrop or subcrop.</p> <p>The Proposed Project has been deliberately designed to avoid peatland habitats by siting turbines, access roads and associated infrastructure within Coniferous forestry and existing access tracks. The areas of deep peat within the study area have been avoided in the design of the Proposed Project and all areas that are within the permanent built infrastructure footprint of the Proposed Project are of a degraded state, through extensive grazing of sheep or cattle, drainage, peat cutting, and/or forestry or scrub encroachment.</p> <p>Within the Proposed Wind Farm Site, the minor loss of degraded peatland habitat (4.13% of the overall area of this habitat recorded), which has been assessed as County Importance, will result, at least initially prior to the implementation of the Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan (BMEP) in a significant effect, at a local scale only given the extent of this loss (10.10 ha) relative to the overall amount of peatland habitats on Site (approx. 247 ha). With the successful implementation of both BMEP and the proposed Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP), there will, overtime, be a significant positive effect on peatland habitat in the vicinity of the Proposed Wind Farm Site, as a result of the Proposed Project, through the restoration of up to 34.6 ha of peatland habitat in the locality. The BMEP first intends to offset any losses of peatland habitat but further ensures the enhancement of additional lands to result in an overall net gain in these habitats. It is concluded with Chapter 6: Biodiversity that the Proposed Project will result in overall positive effect on peatland habitats over time.</p>
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Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
(d)	the mapped trending faults intersecting the wind farm site;	<p>As stated in Chapter 8: Land, Soils and Geology, faults within the bedrock of the region of the Site are generally present in a southwest northeast orientation. Two northeast southwest trending faults are mapped to intersect the Site. There are no stability issues considered likely to occur due to the presence of the fault.</p> <p>Faulting was also considered as part of the Geotechnical and Peat Stability Risk Assessment (Appendix 8-1), and it has been concluded that there is no risk on peat or rock stability from mapped bedrock faults.</p>
(e)	the high density of drainage channels throughout the site, both natural and man-made;	<p>The Proposed Wind Farm Site is naturally drained by four sub-catchments, the Fahanlunaghtamore Stream (Inagh(Ennistymon_040), the Knockacarn Stream (Inagh(Ennistymon_040), the Letterkelly Stream (Kildeema_010), and the Ballynew Stream (Glendine(Clare)_010). Natural watercourses will not be altered as part of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>Lidar data and available aerial photography was used to digitise existing forestry drainage and field drains within the permanent built infrastructure footprint of the Proposed Project .</p> <p>Natural watercourses and the existing network of bog, agricultural, forestry and roadside drains have been taken into account in the drainage design as set out in Section 9.4 of Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology and in the drainage drawings (drawing no. P1159-5-0426-A1-D101-00D to P1159-5-0426-A1-D503-00B of the planning drawing pack.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
	(f) the timing of construction works outside of the breeding season for birds coinciding with wetter periods	<p>Construction works will commence outside the bird nesting season (1st of March to 31st of August inclusive). In the event that construction works to run into the subsequent breeding season following commencement, confirmatory bird surveys will be carried out to identify breeding sites of species of high conservation concern, as outlined in the Section 7.8.1 of Chapter 7: Ornithology.</p> <p>Construction activities in the hydrological buffer zones shall be avoided during or after prolonged rainfall or an intense rainfall event and work will cease entirely near watercourses when it is evident that water quality is being impacted. This proposed timing of construction works is not unique to the current proposal for the Proposed Project, and there are several examples demonstrating that it can be successfully achieved (e.g. nearby Slievecallan Wind Farm (ACP Case Ref: PL03.237524).</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
	<p>(g) the areas of trees to be clear felled, with peat soils and subsoils subsequently exposed;</p>	<p>Approximately 144ha of forestry will be felled as part of the Proposed Project, the majority of which is associated with the BMEP measures. 20.7ha of forestry will be felled around the permanent built infrastructure of the Proposed Project and 123.3 ha of forestry will be felled as part of the BMEP measures in order to restore land to peatland habitat to create suitable foraging habitat for hen harrier and its associated prey species. Additionally, the BMEP first intends to offset any losses of peatland habitat but further ensures the enhancement of additional lands to result in an overall net gain in these habitats. It is concluded with Chapter 6: Biodiversity that the Proposed Project will result in overall positive effect on peatland habitats over time.</p> <p>Two types of felling are proposed: permanent felling and temporary felling. Permanent felling will be undertaken in and around the footprint of permanent built infrastructure of the Proposed Project (i.e. access roads, turbines etc). Temporary felling will be carried out around all Proposed Turbines for bat mitigation. There will be no generation of peat that will require storage/management relating to the felling of trees.</p> <p>Section 8.7.2.4 of Chapter 8: Land, Soils and Geology proposes mitigation measures to manage the erosion of exposed subsoils and peat during tree felling and other construction works. It is concluded that, with the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, no significant effects on land, soils, subsoils or bedrock will occur.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
	<p>(h) the water crossings and crossing upgrades required;</p>	<p>The construction of proposed 5 no. new watercourse crossings (bottomless box culvert design) and proposed upgrade of 1 no. existing (natural) watercourse crossings (culverts) will be required within the Proposed Wind Farm Site. The construction methodology for these crossings has been designed to eliminate the requirement for in-stream works at these locations. The watercourse crossings will be constructed to the specifications of the Office of Public Work (OPW) bridge design guidelines 'Construction, Replacement or Alteration of Bridges and Culverts - A Guide to Applying for Consent under Section 50 of the Arterial Drainage Act, 1945', and in consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI). Detail drawings of the proposed and upgrade to existing watercourse crossing are provided in drawing 240718-16 and 240718-17 of the planning drawing pack. Bottomless box culvert crossings are established and routinely implemented methodologies that have been successfully deployed across multiple wind farm developments in Ireland.</p> <p>Section 9.5.2.8 of Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology proposes mitigation measures to manage the potential impact on surface water courses and drainage patterns. It is concluded that, with the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, no significant effects on stream morphology or stream water quality will occur at crossing locations.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
	<p>(i) the existence of deep peat at turbine locations and along existing and proposed access roads;</p>	<p>A total of 914 no. peat depth probes were carried out at the Site by FT, AGEC, MKO and HES since 2012 (2012, 2020, 2021, 2024 and 2025). Peat depths recorded across the Site ranged from 0 to 5m with an average depth of 0.7m. This would be considered shallow for upland blanket bog.</p> <p>The peat depths recorded at the Proposed Turbines varied from 0.2 to 2.0m with an average depth of 0.8m. Again, this would be considered shallow for upland blanket bog. Of the 9 no. Proposed Turbines, only three recorded peat depths in excess of 1.0m (T01, T04 and T09).</p> <p>With respect to the proposed new access roads, peat depths are typically less than 1.0m (average 0.8m) with localised depths of up to 2.7m recorded (along the main access road west of proposed turbine T01). Upgrade of existing floated access road is proposed along the main access road west of proposed turbine T01 following best practice construction methodologies for upland peatland sites, as per Appendix 4-2 of the EIAR .At the proposed borrow pit location, peat is absent or very shallow (0 – 0.2m) due to the prevalence of shallow subcrop bedrock.</p> <p>Peat strengths recorded across the Site vary from 6 to 90kPa with an average of 25kPa. Overall, peat strengths are typical of drained peat.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
	<p>(j) the significant volumes of peat and other spoil material requiring excavation, handling, storage and management on the site;</p>	<p>Peat and spoil volumes are typical of a wind farm site of this scale.</p> <p>The total estimated combined volume of peat and spoil to be managed following excavations during the construction phase of the Proposed Project is approximately 124,500m³ (this includes a contingency factor of 10% to allow for increase in volume upon excavation).</p> <p>It is proposed to manage overburden generated through construction activities locally within the Proposed Wind Farm Site, in the 5 no. designated peat/spoil storage areas, for landscaping at the proposed turbine locations and reinstatement of the proposed borrow pit.</p> <p>The total capacity of the identified peat and spoil management areas, including the proposed landscaping and sidecasting is approx. 133,400m³ (refer to Table 8-11 in Chapter 8: Land, Soils and Geology for further detail) and therefore, there is more than enough capacity to manage the total volume of peat and spoil requiring management the Proposed Project.</p> <p>The EIAR includes a revised Peat and Spoil Management Plan (Appendix 4-2) which comprehensively addresses the management of peat and spoil on the Site. It has been demonstrated that peat and spoil can be appropriately managed within the Site.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
	<p>(k) the instability associated with the works and movement of waste material, including the necessity for placement of substantial volumes of waste peat and other spoil materials in two large repositories on bogland hilly terrain;</p>	<p>The Proposed Project design has been iteratively developed using comprehensive site-specific site investigation dataset, which includes peat probes, shear vanes, trial pits and geophysical surveys, to minimise the volume and movement of peat and spoil. All excavated material will be managed in accordance with the Peat and Spoil Management Plan in Appendix 4-2 of the EIAR. Material will be moved over the least possible distance.</p> <p>It is proposed to manage overburden generated through construction activities for the Proposed Project locally and within the Proposed Wind Farm Site, through backfilling of the proposed borrow pit void, and within identified peat and spoil management areas, as detailed in Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Project and in Drawing no. P24-264-0600-0011, P24-264-0600-0011, P24-264-0600-0012, P24-264-0600-0013, P24-264-0600-0014, P24-264-0600-0015 and P24-264-0600-0016 of the planning drawing pack.</p> <p>The commitments set out in Section 4.4.11.2 of Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Project for the placement of peat within permanent clearfell areas around 4 no. turbines (T01, T02, T04 and T09) will be implemented during construction. Peat will be placed directly onto the existing ground surface up to a height of 1.2m. A spoil management area is located to the south of the borrow pit, where there is little or no peat present. Spoil will be placed directly onto the existing ground surface up to a height of 1.5m. The edges of the placed spoil will be shaped to shed water. All areas identified for the placement of peat and spoil are fully assessed in the EIAR, please see the Peat and Spoil Management Plan (Appendix 4-2 of the EIAR) and the Geotechnical and Peat Stability Assessment Report (Appendix 8-1 of the EIAR) for further detail. It has been demonstrated that peat and spoil can be appropriately managed within the Proposed Wind Farm Site, mitigating against any concerns of instability.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
(l)	the construction of high retaining stone buttresses required to contain waste peat and other spoil;	Proposals for the management of peat and spoil at the Proposed Wind Farm Site have been revised, with the inclusion of shallow management areas without the need for engineered retaining walls. It is proposed to construct cells within the borrow pit for the placement of the excavated peat and spoil. This is to allow for the safe placement and grading of the peat and spoil using dumper trucks and excavators. It also eliminates the need to construct above ground retaining structures. Rock from the borrow pit will be excavated whilst leaving in place an upstand/segment of intact rock which will retain the placed peat and spoil. The upstands/segments of intact rock will act as an engineered rock berm inside the borrow pit (below ground level). The location of the rock upstand is shown on Drawing P24-264-0600-0011. For further detail please see Section 6.6 of the Peat and Spoil Management Plan (Appendix 4-2 of the EIAR).
(m)	the peat-dominated nature of the soils at the repository locations;	Peat and spoil management areas have been selected based on a combination of the depth of peat, the recorded peat strength in the area and the slope angle. A peat stability risk assessment has been carried out for each peat and spoil management areas (Appendix 8-1 of the EIAR). In summary, the peat and spoil management areas are found to have an acceptable margin of safety and, post control measures, a low risk rating for instability. Therefore, the peat and spoil management areas are considered to be at a low risk of peat failure, subject to the implementation of the specified mitigation measures. It has been demonstrated that peat and spoil can be appropriately managed within the Proposed Wind Farm Site, mitigating against any concerns of instability.

	(n)	<p>the lack of a clear understanding of the land and ground conditions associated with the development of the proposed spoil repositories, including matters relating to the final construction of the repositories, the drainage of the peat repositories, measures required for the control of groundwater, the type and condition of rock at the repository locations, the hillside siting of the repositories, and the associated clear felling of forestry;</p>	<p>A comprehensive understanding of the Proposed Wind Farm Site has been established through an extensive programme of site investigations undertaken since 2012. These investigations have included detailed geotechnical assessments and ground investigations. Furthermore, the findings of these site investigations have been subject to assessment and review by appropriately qualified and highly experienced specialists. The site investigations and detailed assessments have informed the design and siting of the proposed Peat and spoil management areas.</p> <p>Proposals for the management of peat and spoil at the Site have been revised, with the inclusion of shallow management areas without the need for engineered retaining walls. Peat and spoil management areas have been selected based on a combination of the depth of peat, the recorded peat strength in the area and the slope angle. A check of peat stability in each area was also undertaken, allowing for the additional loading from 1.2m of stored peat, and these results are included in the Geotechnical and Peat Stability Report (Appendix 8-1 of the EIAR). The works to clearfell these areas will involve the removal of the tree trunks and branches; however, the tree stumps and roots remain in place. As such there is only minimal disturbance to the ground, and this activity is not considered to reduce the strength of the in-situ peat or have a significant negative impact on the stability of the in-situ peat.</p> <p>The surface of the placed peat will be shaped to allow efficient run-off of surface water. Shaping of the surface of the peat will be carried out as placement of peat within the peat management area progresses. An interceptor drain will be installed upslope of the designated peat management areas to divert any surface water away from these areas. This will reduce the likelihood of debris run-off and reduce the risk of instability of the placed peat. The proposed drainage for the Site has been designed in conjunction with the Peat and Spoil Management Plan (Appendix 4-2 of the EIAR) and is in line with best practice principles.</p> <p>Further details on the design and construction methodology of the peat and spoil management areas are provided in the Peat and Spoil Management Plan (Appendix 4-2 of the EIAR) and in the planning drawing pack Drawing no. P24-264-0600-0011, to P24-264-0600-0016 of the drawing pack. It has been demonstrated that peat and spoil can be</p>
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Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
		appropriately managed within the Proposed Wind Farm Site, mitigating against any concerns of instability.
(o)	the construction works culminating in interference with the natural terrain by the development of the turbine bases and the hardstanding areas, the construction of access roads cutting across contours on bogland, the provision of preferential flow paths for surface waters, and road widening and improvement works along existing internal roads;	<p>The turbine bases will be founded on competent founding strata which will require excavation through peat and any soft overburden. Similarly, crane hardstandings, 1 no. temporary construction compound and met mast foundations are to be founded on competent mineral soils which will also require excavation through peat and spoil overlying the rock. Site investigations indicate that deep foundation excavations will not be required due to the shallow depth of competent bedrock strata. 1 no. temporary construction compound will be floated along with the upgrade of an existing floated road where no peat/spoil will be excavated.</p> <p>No routes of any natural drainage features will be altered as part of the Proposed Project, and turbine locations and associated new roadways were originally selected to avoid natural watercourses, and existing roads are to be used wherever possible.</p> <p>The geological setting of the Proposed Wind Fram Site has been thoroughly examined, and the geological/ hydrogeological setting is fully understood. As concluded in Chapter 8: Land, Soils and Geology, no significant impacts on the land, soils and geology environment are envisaged during the construction, operational or decommissioning stages of the Proposed Project.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
	<p>(p) the proposed highly complex system of drainage and the very precise nature of the application of many of the proposed conceptual measures required for their safe functionality on a blanket bog dominated site;</p>	<p>The drainage design for the Proposed Project has been prepared by Hydro Environmental Services Ltd (HES). The drainage design has been prepared based on experience of the project team of other wind farm sites, and the number of best practice guidance documents referred to in Section 4.7.4 of Chapter 4 Description.</p> <p>The general drainage design approach includes two distinct methods 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, construction areas and temporary storage areas. The second method involves collecting any drainage waters from works areas within the Site that might carry silt or sediment, and nutrients, to route them towards stilling ponds prior to controlled diffuse release over vegetated surfaces. There will be no direct discharges to surface waters.</p> <p>A network of bog, agricultural and roadside drains already exist at the Proposed Wind Farm Site, and these will be integrated and enhanced as required and used within the Proposed Wind Farm Site drainage system. The integration of the existing drainage network and the Proposed Wind Farm Site network is relatively simple. The key elements being the upgrading and improvements to water treatment elements, such as in line controls and treatment systems, including silt traps, stilling ponds and buffered outfalls.</p> <p>The drainage design includes standard drainage measures which are not conceptual. The drainage design includes measures which are standard and have been successfully implemented on wind farm sites across the country. Furthermore, the drainage design measures proposed have been included in planning applications, relating to sites similar to that of the Proposed Project, which have been subject to a grant of permission. Drainage measures include interceptor drains, swales, check dams, level spreaders, piped sloped drains, vegetation filters, stilling ponds, siltbusters, siltbags, sedimats silt fences, and culverts.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
	<p>the Board cannot be satisfied that the proposed development would adequately mitigate the risk of failure to contain the spoil in the proposed repositories as a consequence of the development of the proposed wind farm, with potential for causing pollution of waterbodies within, and in the vicinity of, the site. Furthermore, the Board is not satisfied, on the basis of the information submitted with the application and appeal, that the proposed repositories would be effective in providing for the permanent retention of peat and other materials and that the mitigation measures, inclusive of the proposed drainage system, would be adequate to ensure the protection of the environment.</p> <p>In view of the above, it is considered that the proposed development would present a significant risk of adverse environmental impact on the sensitive natural habitats of the site and of the wider area and would constitute an unacceptable risk of pollution of watercourses in the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</p>	<p>Following consideration of the points raised under Reason no. 1 on ACP's decision to refuse the previous wind farm application, the Proposed Wind Farm Site was subject to further detailed site investigations and surveys, which are outlined in Chapter 4: Description and Chapter 8: Land Soils and Geology of the EIAR. The completion of these site investigations, in addition to the site investigations conducted for the previous wind farm application, provide sufficient detail to give a clear understanding of the land and ground conditions on site. Additional site investigations informed refinements to the design of infrastructure associated with the management of peat and spoil within the Site. An updated Peat Stability Risk Assessment that considers all project elements has been prepared and a revised Peat and Spoil Management Plan has also been produced as part of the design phase of the project. Further consideration has also been given to the drainage and monitoring measures during the construction and operational phases in order to ensure adequate protection of the environment. Full details of the revised peat and spoil management plan are identified in Chapter 4: Description and assessed further in Chapter 8: Land, Soils and Geology and associated appendices.</p> <p>As demonstrated in the responses to all aspects of refusal reason 1 (1(a) to 1(p) above), the Proposed Project will not give rise to any significant impacts on the environment, including natural habitats and watercourses.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
2	<p>On the basis of the information submitted with the application and appeal including the Natura Impact Statement, and in light of the assessment of the Board by reference to the issues set out in reason number 1 above, including the risk of pollution of watercourses in the area, the Board cannot be satisfied that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites' -Inagh River Estuary Special Area of Conservation (Site Code:000036), Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands Special Area of Conservation (Site Code:001021), and Mid Clare Coast Special Protection Area (Site Code:004182) in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives. In such circumstances, the Board is precluded from granting permission for the proposed development.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that one of the reasons for the refusal of the previous application was the potential sediment pollution impact of the Proposed Project, individually or cumulatively with other projects, on the watercourses in the area, and the prospect of this affecting the integrity of the surrounding European Sites. Further to the items discussed under the first refusal reason above, the revised Peat and Spoil Management Plan, as well as the revised drainage design, as elements of the Proposed Project was subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening and NIS included with this application to determine the potential for adverse effects exists on the integrity of any European Site. The NIS concludes that that the Proposed Project, on the basis of the best available information, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site, in view of its conservation objectives. Further assessment of the potential for effects of the Proposed Project is considered cumulatively and in combination with other proposed developments within the NIS.</p>

Refusal Reason No.	Refusal Reason	Response within Application
3	<p>Based on the information submitted with the application and appeal, the Board noted the range of bird species of conservation value that have been observed on, over and in close proximity to the site indicating this to be an ecologically sensitive area of significant ornithological value and of value to the Annex II species, Marsh Fritillary. In the absence of data monitoring the impacts, if any, of existing wind farm developments in this area on these birds and species of conservation value and their habitats, together with the particular sensitivity of some species such as Golden Plover and Hen Harrier to relatively low levels of mortality, the Board cannot be satisfied that the cumulative environmental assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on avifauna can reasonably exclude the possibility of a significant impact. In this regard, it is considered that the proposed development would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</p>	<p>In response to the refusal reason regarding concerns over significant cumulative effects on species of high ornithological value, the accompanying EIAR provides an updated assessment of likely significant impacts of the Proposed Project on avian receptors, supplemented with over 5 years of continuous field surveys. The assessment of cumulative effects on key ornithological receptors such as golden plover and hen harrier also includes a landscape-level assessment considering the most recent list of cumulative projects, including constructed, planned and permitted wind farms in the surrounding area. A hen harrier habitat enhancement plan has been proposed, taking into consideration most recent data on the population of this species. Following its implementation, the Proposed Project will not contribute to a significant cumulative effect, as there will be no net loss of hen harrier habitat. Please refer to Chapter 7: Ornithology and associated appendices including Appendix 6-4 BMEP.</p> <p>Further marsh fritillary habitat conditions assessments and larval web surveys have been undertaken in 2024 and 2025 to ensure the Proposed Project design has no significant effects on marsh fritillary habitat. A BMEP has also been prepared to provide habitat enhancement within the Site, by managing areas of suitable habitat specifically for marsh fritillary including a monitoring programme during the construction and operational phases. Following implementation of the proposed mitigation measures and the BMEP, there are no significant effects on habitat of high value to Annex II species associated with the Proposed Project. Please refer to Chapter 4: Description, Chapter 6: Biodiversity, Chapter 7: Ornithology and associated appendices including Appendix 6-4 BMEP.</p> <p>In light of the above, it has been demonstrated that the Proposed Project would not be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</p>

4. 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 CCC and ACP, consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and extensive consultation with the local community.

4.1 EIAR Scoping

An EIAR scoping report, providing details of the Proposed Project, was prepared by MKO and circulated in January 2025. MKO requested the comments of the relevant personnel/bodies in their respective capacities as consultees with regards to the EIAR process. As part of the constraints mapping process, telecommunications operators were contacted in November 2024 in order to determine the presence of telecommunications links either transversing the site or in close proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm Site.

The scoping document provided details of the Proposed Project and set out the scope of work for the EIAR. Consultees (as listed in Table 2-4 of **Chapter 2: Background to the Proposed Project** of the EIAR) were invited to contribute to the EIAR by 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. This process is conducted by contacting relevant authorities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with interest in the specific aspects of the environment with the potential to be affected by the proposal. Comprehensive and timely scoping helps ensure that the EIAR refers to all relevant aspects of the Proposed Project and its potential effects on the environment and provides initial feedback in the early stages of the EIAR preparation, when alterations are still easily incorporated into the design. In this way scoping not only informs the content and scope of the EIAR, but it also provides a feedback mechanism for the proposal design itself.

Copies of all scoping responses received are included in **Appendix 2-1: Scoping Responses** of the EIAR. The recommendations of the consultees have informed the scope of the assessments undertaken and the contents of the EIAR.

MKO requested a meeting with the NPWS, which was scheduled for 11th November 2025, however the NPWS was unable to resource this meeting. MKO subsequently issued the presentation notes prepared for the meeting on 17th November 2025 and in the absence of the availability for a meeting, MKO sought written feedback from the NPWS. The NPWS response is outlined in Table 2-9 of Chapter 2 of the EIAR.

4.2 Pre-Application Meetings

4.2.1 Clare County Council

A pre-application meeting was held with attendees from various departments of Clare County Council on 25th March 2025.

The pre-application consultation meetings are summarised in **Table 4-1** below. Further detail is provided in relation to each meeting in Section 2.8 in **Chapter 2: Background to the Proposed Project** of the EIAR.

Table 4-1: Clare County Council Pre-Application Consultation Summary

Meeting Details	Matters Discussed
25 th March 2025 Online via MS Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The prospective applicant and project background and design. > Planning policy including compliance with local wind energy policy. > The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Ecology. > The scope of the EIAR to be undertaken. > Archaeological heritage > Sensitive receptors such as dwellings, waterbodies, existing drains, national monuments and ecological constrains. > Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken to date. > Scoping, pre-application, and public consultation undertaken to date. > Projected Project timelines

4.2.2 An Coimisiún Pleanála

Two pre-application consultation meetings were held under Section 37B of the Planning Act with ACP (ACP Pre-Planning Ref: ABP-321892-25). Feedback and recommendations from ACP regarding the EIAR and the preparation of the application were considered and incorporated into the application documents where appropriate. The pre-application consultation was closed by ACP in accordance with Section 37B(4)(a) of the Planning Act in a letter dated 19th March 2026. This confirmed that the Proposed Project constitutes SID and therefore the planning application should be made directly to ACP under Section 37E of the Planning Act.

The pre-application consultation meetings are summarised in **Table 4-2** below. Further detail is provided in relation to each meeting in **Section 2.8** in **Chapter 2** of the EIAR.

Table 4-2: An Coimisiún Pleanála Pre-application Consultation Summary

Meeting Details	Matters Discussed
<p>6th March 2025</p> <p>Online via MS Teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planning policy including compliance with local wind energy policy. Specific details of the project relating to LVIA, Ecology and Aviation. ➤ The scope of the EIAR. ➤ Scoping & pre-application/public consultation undertaken to date. ➤ Surveys carried out to date. ➤ Projected project timelines. ➤ Issues raised previously within Commission Order and Inspector’s Report regarding the Proposed Project and Site. ➤ Presence of deep peat on site. ➤ Engagement with National Park and Wildlife Service (NPWS). ➤ Issues raised by third party submissions during previously refused planning applications. ➤ Cumulative impacts, nocturnal studies, enhancement plans, and biodiversity studies to be assessed. ➤ Noise Impact assessment to be undertaken. ➤ Further consultation with TII in relation to Turbine Delivery Route and potential road works. ➤ Strategic Infrastructure Development criteria as set out in the 7th Schedule of the Planning Act.
<p>21st October 2025</p> <p>Online via MS Teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project evolution and design changes over time. ➤ Peat and spoil management having been further reviewed and assessment confirming overall stability. ➤ Hen harrier habitat and the need for measurable targets and scientific support for mitigation. ➤ Previous refusal reasons addressed via mitigation by design. ➤ NPWS input on peat areas. ➤ All enhancement measures within red line boundary. ➤ Annex 1 habitats, peatlands, and marsh fritillary. ➤ Site history and key issues confirmed to be focus of long-term management. ➤ Noise and relevant protocols. ➤ LVIA considerations such as shadow flicker, and residential amenity via mitigation by design.

4.3 Community Consultation

The Community Liaison Strategy for the Proposed Project is based around engaging with the local community in an open, honest and transparent manner with the aim to not only provide clear and understandable information but also to gain feedback to understand the views of the local community. This feedback and information were used to inform the design process. The community consultation effort was led by Slieveacurry Ltd.

In February 2020, A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) was appointed and remains as the point of the contact for the Proposed Project and has been engaging 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 facilitate one-to-one consultation meetings, or small group meetings where requested. Contact details for the CLO have been provided for local residents to get in touch with any queries or comments regarding the design and assessment of the Proposed Project as it progresses. A

project website (slieveacurryinfo.com) remains available in order to provide details on the progress of the project, the community consultation effort and provide a method for members of the public to submit queries and comments to the CLO via the online contact form. Community consultation will continue throughout the entire Proposed Project timeline, and the CLO will remain available to interact with the local community.

A public information exhibition (PIE) was held in Miltown Malbay Community Centre, Co. Clare on 29th September 2020. Due to the Covid 19 restrictions at that time, attendance could only be facilitated by appointment. Those wishing to attend were asked to make an appointment by contacting the CLO via the mobile number and/or email address advertised.

Additional communications took place between March 2021 and July 2022 notifying the community of project updates in the form of a newspaper notice and letter delivered to dwellings identified within 2km of the previous applications site.

Following review of the refusal reasons by MKO, the houses within 2km of the Proposed Project were notified by letter of Slieveacurry Ltd's intention to submit a revised proposal in December 2024. The letter invited interested parties to contact the CLO should they wish to discuss the proposal further, and it noted that the applicant would be in touch again in 2025 with details of a PIE. In April 2025, correspondence was circulated notifying the community about the dates and times of a PIE to be held May 29th, in the Miltown Malbay Community Centre, Co. Clare.

On 29th May 2025, a public information event was held in Miltown Malbay Community Centre, Co. Clare. The objective of the consultation was to ensure that the views and concerns of all were considered as part of the Proposed Project Design and EIAR process. Appendix 2-2 of this EIAR contains a full and detailed Community Engagement Report. The report was prepared to record the consultation carried out with local community in respect of the Proposed Project.

In April 2026, a letter was delivered in-person to the usual mailing list informing them that the planning application for the Proposed Project would be submitted to ACP within the coming weeks. Enclosed with this letter was a copy of the press notice text which contained the development description of the Proposed Project. It was noted in this letter that the planning notice would appear in the 'Clare Champion'.

Active engagement and consultation with the local community have taken place over the past 6 years. The consultation process has been an extremely valuable exercise and has provided a detailed and enhanced understanding of the key issues and concerns of the local community. There is currently on-going consultation with the local community, and it is the intention of the applicant to continue with the consultation for the entire lifespan of the Proposed Project.

The development of the Proposed Project will provide an enduring economic benefit to the communities surrounding the Proposed Project, through the potential community benefit package for residents and community groups, employment during the construction and operation of the Proposed Project and through the annual rates payable to the Local Authority.

The development of the Proposed Project will, if permitted, provide an enduring economic benefit to the communities surrounding the Proposed Project, community benefit package for residents and community groups, employment during the construction and operation of the Proposed Project and through the annual rates payable to the Local Authority. Throughout the community engagement on the Proposed Project, the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) 2 guidelines have been used to demonstrate what benefits the community would receive should the project be developed under RESS. The RESS 2 T&C's have since been updated in RESS 5 and will likely change again before the Proposed Project is built. As such, the fund will be adjusted accordingly depending on what RESS iteration is relevant when the Proposed Project becoming operational. The value of the Community Benefit Fund will be linked to the productivity of the wind farm and is calculated based on €2/MWh of the overall total generated by the wind farm, should the Proposed Project be developed under the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) 2 T&C's, as a 54MW development it would attract a community contribution in the region of

almost €331,000/year for the local community (estimated based on an average energy yield). Should the Proposed Project not be developed under RESS, the Applicant is committing that for each megawatt hour (MWh) of electricity produced by the wind farm, the project will contribute €1 into a community fund for the entire operational life of the Proposed Project. This would equate to an estimated annual fund of approximately €165,000 (using the same formula as above), which across the 35-year operational lifespan would result in funding in the order of €5.75 million to the local community which is a substantial contribution.

Please refer to the Community Engagement Report at **Appendix 2-2** of the EIAR for further details.

5. THE PROPOSED PROJECT

5.1 Proposed Project Description

This application under Section 37E of the Planning Act for the Proposed Project includes 9 no. wind turbines and associated infrastructure. The full description of the Proposed Project, as per the public notices, is as follows:

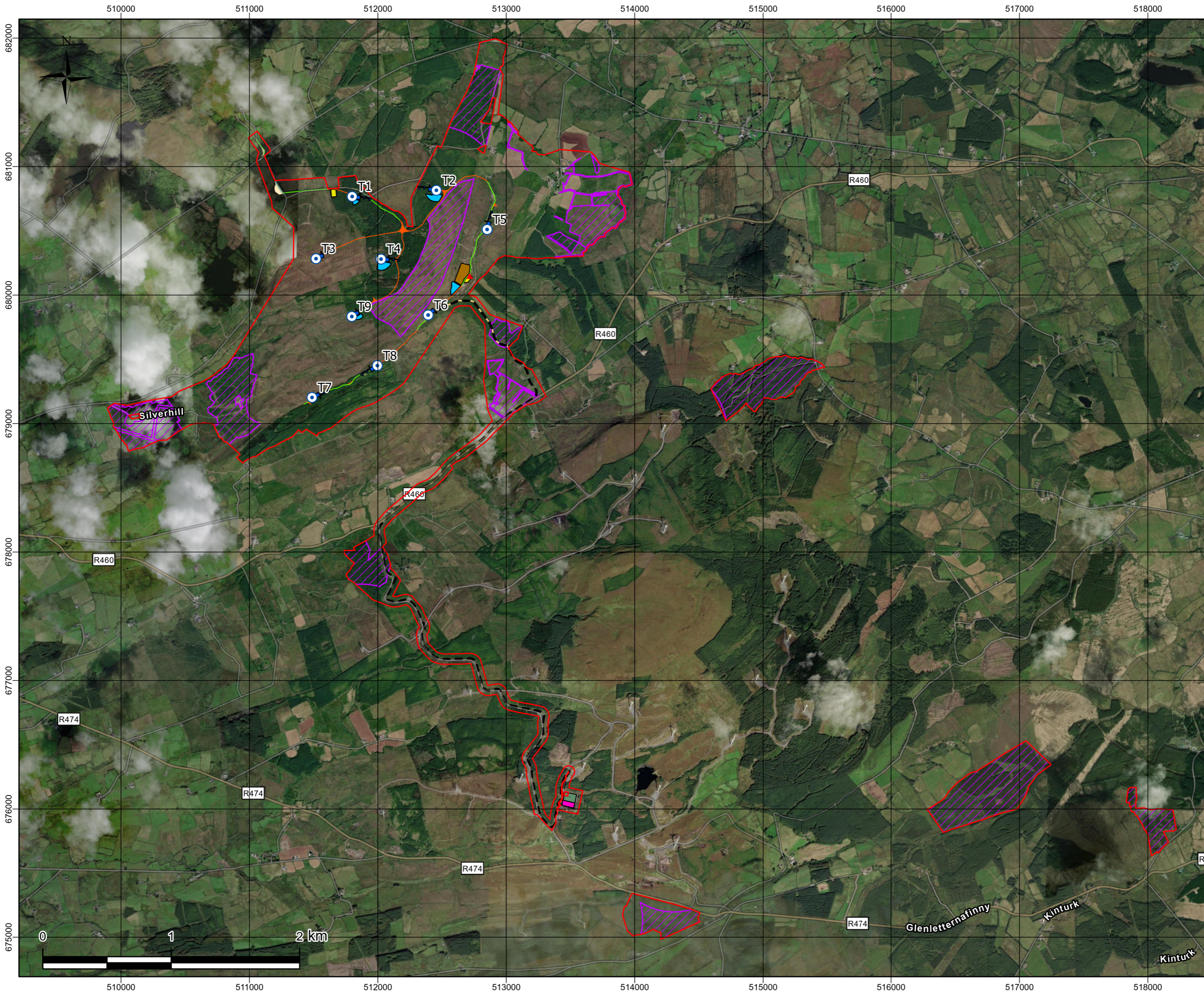
‘The proposed development will consist of the provision of the following:

- (i) 9 No. wind turbines with an overall ground-to-blade tip height of 175 metres; rotor diameter of 150 metres; and hub height of 100 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 turbine and meteorological mast foundations and hardstanding areas;*
- (iii) An extension to the existing 110kV substation compound in the townland of Knockalassa (Including the provision of a new control building (floor area of 112.5 sq.m) with welfare facilities, all associated electrical plant and apparatus for an additional 110kV bay, security fencing, underground cabling, underground wastewater holding tank, site drainage and all ancillary works);*
- (iv) Underground electrical (33kV) and communications cabling connecting the proposed wind turbines and meteorological mast to the 110kV substation extension via proposed and existing private access road/tracks and the R460 regional road;*
- (v) Temporary accommodation works to facilitate the delivery of turbine components and other abnormal sized loads on the L6230, L1076, L2118 and L1074 local roads;*
- (vi) Upgrade and widening works to the L6230 local road and access junction off the L6230 local road;*
- (vii) Upgrade of existing tracks/roads and provision of new site access roads and hardstanding areas;*
- (viii) A borrow pit;*
- (ix) 2 no. temporary construction compounds (including site offices and welfare facilities, with a combined floor area of 202.5 sq.m);*
- (x) Peat and Spoil Management;*
- (xi) Site Drainage;*
- (xii) Tree felling and vegetation removal;*
- (xiii) Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan measures (including hedgerow planting, peatland, marsh fritillary and hen harrier habitat enhancement areas);*
- (xiv) Operational stage site signage; and*
- (xv) 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. Permanent planning permission is being sought for all other works.

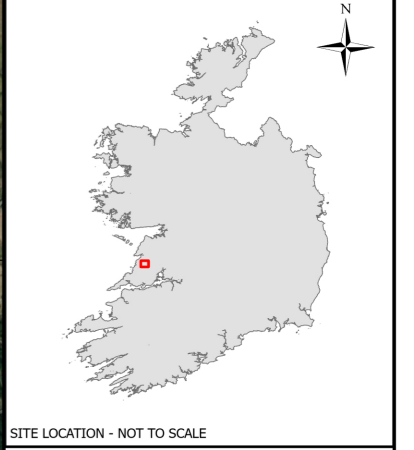
An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompany this planning application. The EIAR and NIS include assessment of temporary accommodation works to facilitate the delivery of turbine components from the Foynes Port to the site entrances via the Motorway (M18), National (N69, N18 and N85), Regional (R510, R527, R445 and R460) and Local (L1074, L1076, L2118 and L6230) public road network.’

The Proposed Project will have an estimated generating capacity of 54MW. A full description of the Proposed Project is provided in **Chapter 4** of the EIAR. The Site, Proposed Wind Farm Site and Proposed Grid Connection Site layouts are illustrated in **Figure 5-1**, **Figure 5-2** and **Figure 5-3** respectively.



- Map Legend**
- Planning Application Boundary
 - Proposed Turbines
 - Proposed Turbine Hardstands
 - Existing Roads to be Upgraded
 - Proposed New Roads
 - Public Road to be Upgraded
 - Public Road to be Maintained
 - Proposed Temporary Construction Compound
 - Proposed Borrow Pit
 - ▲ Met Mast
 - - - Proposed 33kV Underground Cable Connection
 - Proposed Access Track
 - Existing Slieveacallan 110kV Substation
 - Proposed Extension to Existing Slieveacallan 110kV Substation
 - Turbine Delivery Overrun Areas
 - ▨ Proposed Biodiversity Enhancement Areas

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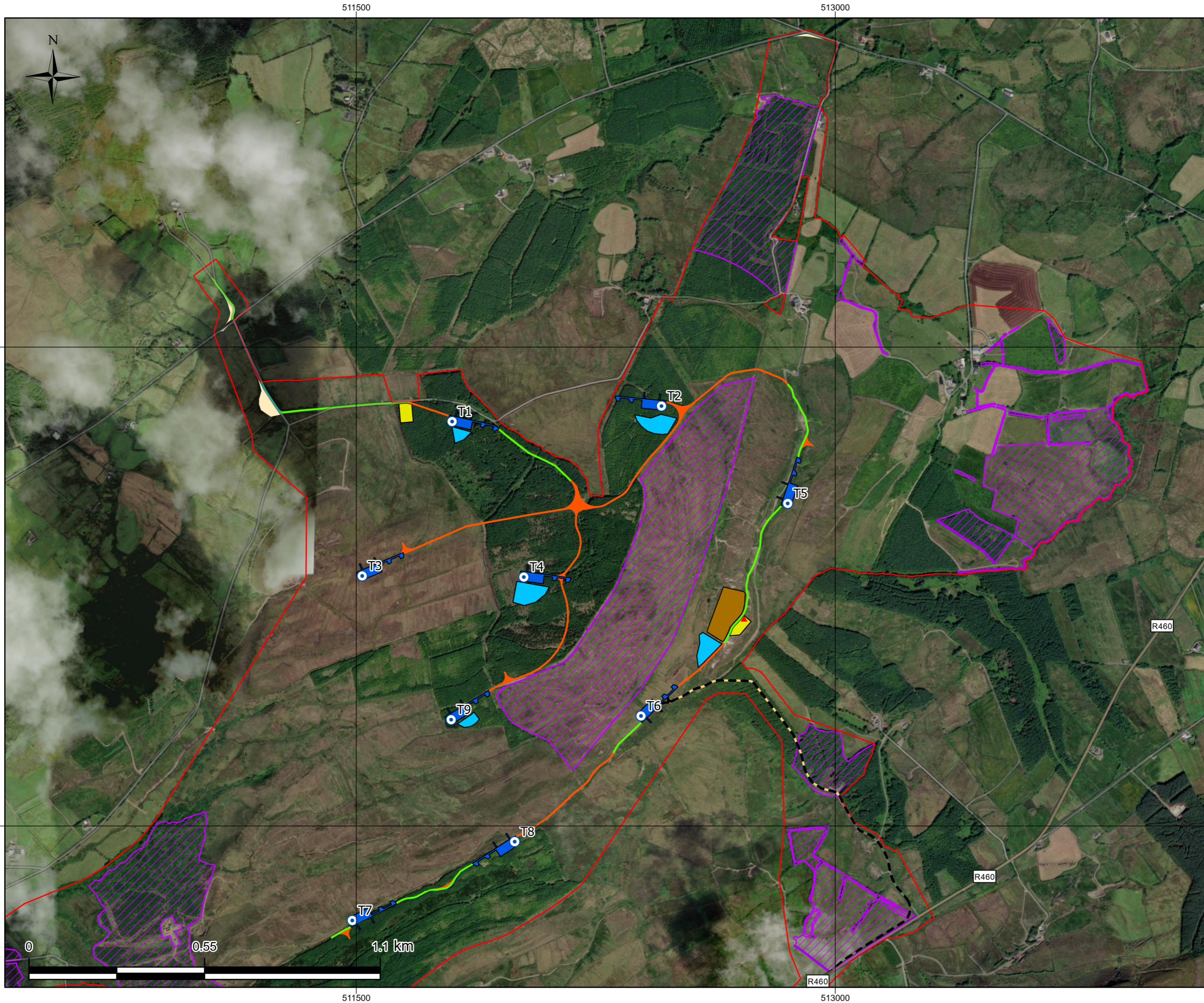


Proposed Project Layout

Project Title
Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development, Co. Clare

Project No. 240718	Drawing No. 5-1	Scale 1:27,000
Drawn By MVN	Checked By BT	Date 28/04/2026

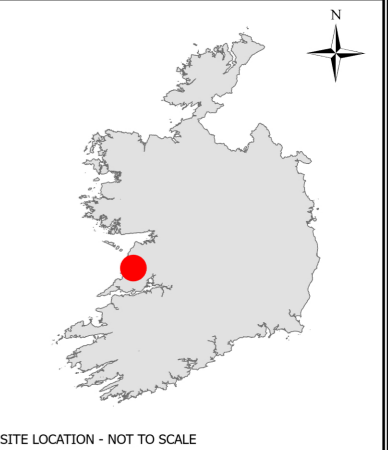
Email: info@mkoireland.ie / Website: www.mkoireland.ie



Map Legend

- Planning Application Boundary
- Proposed Turbines
- Proposed Turbine Hardstands
- Existing Roads to be Upgraded
- Proposed New Roads
- Public Road to be Upgraded
- Public Road to be Maintained
- Proposed Temporary Construction Compound
- Proposed Borrow Pit
- Proposed Met Mast
- Proposed Peat and Spoil Management Areas
- Proposed 33kV Underground Cable Connection
- Proposed Access Track
- Turbine Delivery Overrun Areas
- Proposed Biodiversity Enhancement Areas

Spatial Reference
 Name: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
 Datum: IRENET95
 Projection: Transverse Mercator

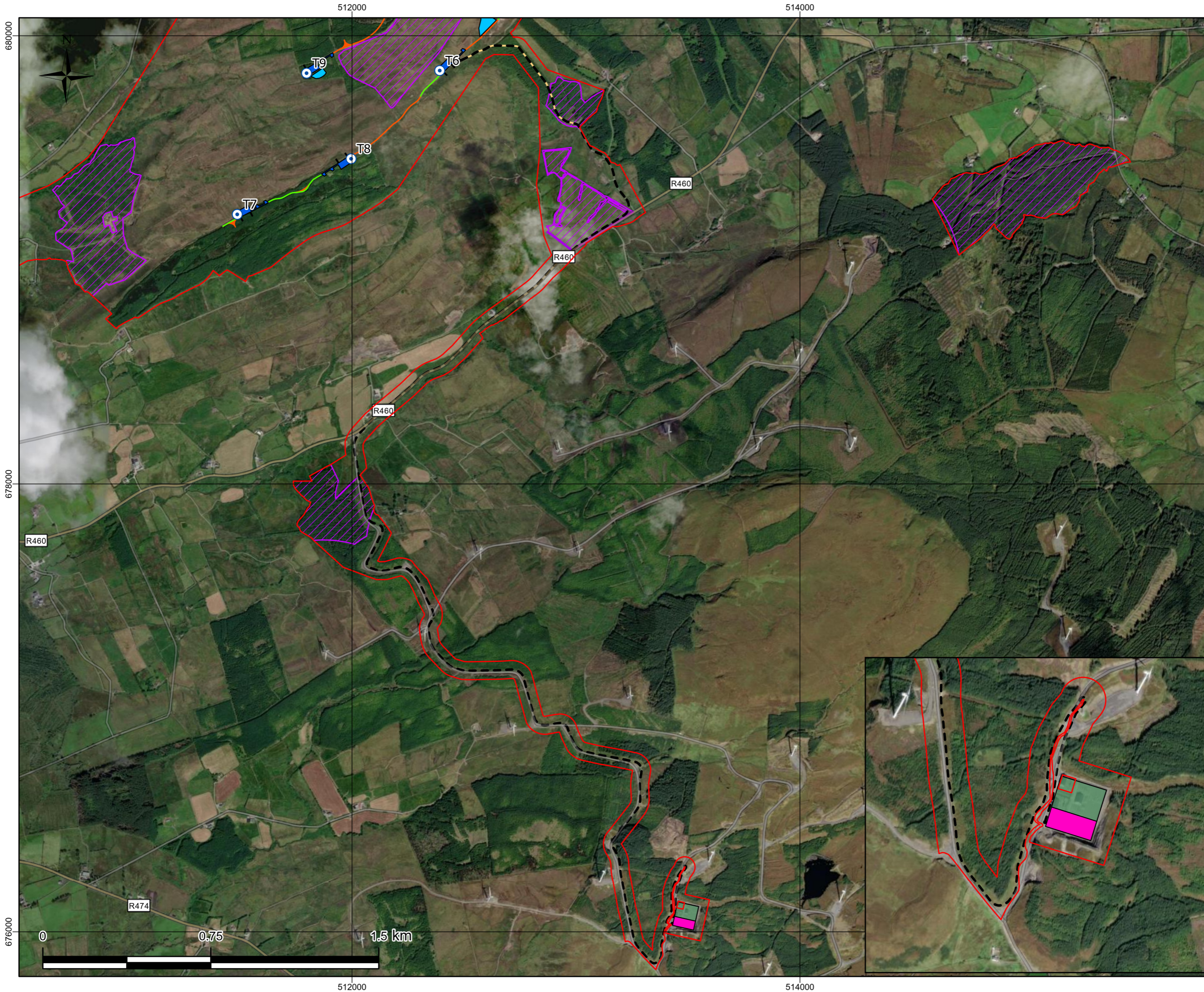


Drawing Title
Proposed Wind Farm Site

Project Title
Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development Co. Clare

Project No. 240718	Drawing No. 5-2	Scale 1:11,000
Drawn By MVN	Checked By BT	Date 28/04/2026

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Map Legend

- Planning Application Boundary
- Proposed Turbines
- Proposed Turbine Hardstands
- Existing Roads to be Upgraded
- Proposed New Roads
- Proposed Peat and Spoil Management Areas
- Proposed 33kV Underground Cable Connection
- Proposed Access Track
- Proposed Extension to Existing Slievecallyan 110kV Substation
- Existing Slievecallyan 110kV Substation
- Proposed Biodiversity Enhancement Areas

Spatial Reference
 Name: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
 Datum: IRENET95
 Projection: Transverse Mercator

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Drawing Title
Proposed Grid Connection Site

Project Title
Slievecurry Renewable Energy Development, Co. Clare

Project No. 240718	Drawing No. 5-3	Scale 1:15,500
Drawn By MVN	Checked By BT	Date 28/04/2026

Email: info@mkoireland.ie / Website: www.mkoireland.ie

5.2 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, and traffic consultants and archaeological specialists. A key aspect of the design process was the consideration and addressing of the reasons for refusal identified in the previous wind farm planning application. The design process has also considered 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.

5.2.1 Strategic Site Selection

The Site was subject to a previous proposal for an 8-turbine renewable energy development.

The Site had previously been identified by the Applicant as having potential for a wind energy development as a result of a nationwide search of suitable lands. The previous planning applications were constraints and facilitators led, with multiple design iterations considered so as to determine the most suitable site location for the development infrastructure. Facilitators are factors that give an advantage to a proposed project, while constraints are restrictions that inform the location and design of a project by highlighting sensitivities. The Proposed Project has also undergone a constraints and facilitators led approach to design, all while being cognisant of any previous application data. A constraints analysis was undertaken and included avoidance of environmental designations (Natura 2000 sites), review of national, regional and local policies and objectives, suitable wind speeds, adequate setbacks from sensitive receptors, proximity to national grid node, avoidance of direct impacts on known cultural heritage assets, access, and constructability.

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

- Planning Policy Context;
- Environmental Sensitivities;
- Grid Connection;
- Sensitive Receptors;
- Site Scale.

The Site performs well when assessed against the site selection criteria above, demonstrating its suitability for wind farm development. A summary of the findings of the site selection exercise is provided below. Further detail of the strategic site selection process can be found in **Chapter 3: Reasonable Alternatives, Section 3.2.3**, of the EIAR.

- **Planning Policy Context:** The Proposed Turbines are wholly located in lands identified within the CCDP's Wind Energy Strategy (WES) as a 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development. The development of wind energy in appropriate locations is directly supported by policy objective CDP 11.47 of the CCDP.
- **Environmental Sensitivities:** The Site is not located within any Nationally Designated or Natura 2000 sites.
- **Grid Connection:** The existing Slievecallan 110kV substation presented a viable grid connection node in close proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm Site.

- **Sensitive Receptors:** The Proposed Turbines achieve the recommended setbacks from third-party sensitive receptors in both the *Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities*¹ published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (hereafter referred to as the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006)) and the *Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines*² published by Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DoHPLG) (hereafter referred to as the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019)).
- **Site Scale:** Sufficient area of unconstrained land that could potentially accommodate a wind farm development and turbine spacing requirements;

5.2.2 Detailed Constraints and Facilitators Mapping

The design and layout of the Proposed Project have been developed in accordance with the principles and recommendations contained in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019), and the *Best Practice Guidelines for the Irish Wind Energy Industry*³ (Irish Wind Energy Association, 2012).

The Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) were subject to a targeted review in 2013. More recently, proposed updates to the development management standards for onshore wind energy have been set out in the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019). Public consultation on the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) concluded on 19 February 2020; however, at the time of writing these have not yet been formally adopted. CAP25 indicates that the new guidelines were intended for adoption in Q1 2025. Until such time as they are in place, the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) remain the relevant statutory guidance under Section 28 of the Planning Act.

An initial layout of 9 no. turbines was prepared following a preliminary desk-based constraints assessment. This was subsequently refined through a detailed constraints mapping exercise, which informed the final turbine arrangement. The mapping process involved applying buffer zones (separation distances) around identified constraints to define exclusion areas where development cannot occur. The buffer distances were determined in line with the standards set out in the guidance documents referenced above. The site-specific constraints mapping addressed the following key constraints and associated buffer requirements:

- **Sensitive Receptors:** a minimum 500m setback from all sensitive receptors achieving the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) recommended setback of 500m and a minimum 700-metre setback from third party sensitive receptors achieving the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) recommended setback of 4 x tip height separation distance from third party sensitive receptors.
- **Designated Sites:** Natura 2000 sites plus 200 metre buffer.
- **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 Annex I habitat where possible.
- **Hydrology:** Watercourses and waterbodies plus 50 metre buffer.
- **Archaeology:** 30-metre buffer, plus 'Zone of Notification' as required by the National Monuments Service (ROI) and 10-metre buffer from items of Local Cultural Heritage Merit.
- **Telecommunications:** Telecommunication Links plus operator specific buffer.

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

- Available lands for development;

¹ <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/wind-energy-development-guidelines-2006.pdf>

² <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/draft-revised-wind-energy-development-guidelines-december-2019-385c92c2-16f9-4511-80bf.pdf>

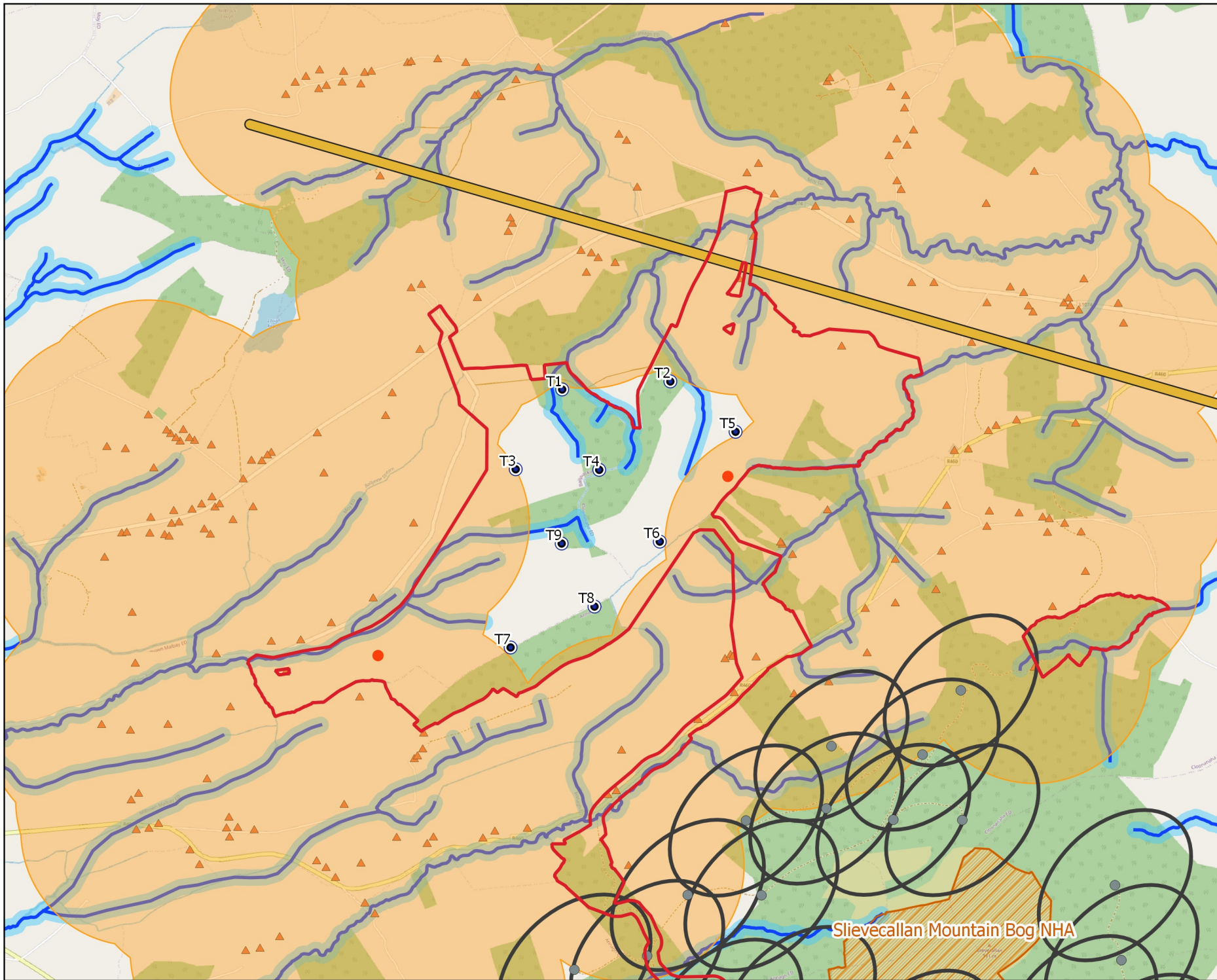
³ <https://windenergyireland.com/images/files/9660bdfb5a4f1d276f41ae9ab54e991bb600b7.pdf>

- > 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.

Following the identification and mapping of all known constraints, the project team undertook detailed site investigations. The ecological appraisal included habitat mapping and comprehensive surveys of avifauna and other fauna species. These findings, as set out in **Chapter 6: Biodiversity** and **Chapter 7: Ornithology** of the EIAR, optimised the decision on the siting of turbines, carrying out of any development works such as the construction of roads, and the selection of the optimum locations for proposed biodiversity enhancement measures.

Hydrological and geotechnical investigations were undertaken at the proposed locations for turbines, access roads, and other key components of the Proposed Project, building upon site investigations conducted at the Site since 2012. These site investigations, as set out in **Chapter 8: Land, Soils and Geology** and **Chapter 9: Hydrology & Hydrogeology** of the EIAR, informed the identification of suitable locations for the Proposed Turbines, borrow pit, and access roads and other infrastructure.

The layout for the Proposed Turbines has also been informed by the results of updated noise assessments, landscape and visual assessments, and the separation distance to be maintained between turbines.



Map Legend

- Planning Application Boundary
- Proposed Turbines
- Watercourses
- 50m Buffer from Watercourses
- ▲ 3rd Party Inhabitable Dwellings
- 700m Buffer from 3rd Party Inhabitable Dwellings
- 30m Buffer from National Monuments
- ▨ Natural Heritage Areas
- Telecommunications Link Buffer
- Existing Slieveacallan Wind Farm Turbines
- Existing Slieveacallan Wind Farm Turbine Ellipses

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Constraints and Facilitators

Project Title
Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development, Co. Clare

Drawn By MVN	Checked By BT
Project No. 240718	Drawing No. Figure 5-4
Scale 1:30,000	Date 24/04/2026

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Slieveacallan Mountain Bog NHA

5.2.3 Turbine Layout Design Process

Throughout the preparation of the EIAR, the layout of the Proposed Project has been revised and refined to take account of the findings of all site investigations since 2012 and baseline assessments, which have brought the design from its first initial layout to the Proposed Project layout. The design process has also taken account of the refusal reasons of the previous application (see **Table 3-1** above) and the recommendations and comments of the relevant statutory and non-statutory organisations, the local community and local planning authorities as detailed in **Chapter 2: Background to the Proposed Project** of the EIAR, while still seeking to ensure that a viable project can ultimately be constructed and connected to the national grid.

A 9 no. turbine layout was initially considered in 2020 with sufficient constraints and facilitators considered to progress, however prior to the previous applications lodged within the Site as outlined in section 3.3 of this report, turbine T09 was dropped due to land availability and the layout subsequently brought down to 8 no. turbines. This land has since been made available and therefore T09 is included within this application. The inclusion of T09 ensures that the maximum generation potential of the Site is captured. Maximising the generation potential of suitable wind farm sites is crucial in the context of reaching the national wind energy target of 9GW as set out in CAP25.

The final proposed turbine layout takes account of all site constraints and the distances to be maintained between turbines and from houses, roads, etc. As information regarding the Site was compiled and assessed, the proposed layout has been revised and amended to take account of the physical constraints of the Proposed Wind Farm Site 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-yield 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 Site 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.

While the initial turbine layout was similarly 9 no. turbines, the final ‘proposed layout’ was refined, and turbines were relocated following the scoping exercise and hydrological constraints identified at various locations on the Site. Further details of the design process and a selection of design iterations can be found in **Chapter 3: Reasonable Alternatives**, Section 3.2.5.2.1, of the EIAR.

6. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

6.1 Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Strategic Infrastructure Development

This planning application for the Proposed Project is being made pursuant to Section 37E of the Planning Act. Section 37E provides the statutory framework for the assessment of applications for strategic infrastructure which, by reason of their nature and scale, are of strategic economic or social importance to the State or the region concerned. Threshold for SID infrastructure is established in the 7th Schedule of the Planning Act. The relevant threshold established in the 7th Schedule for the Proposed Project provided below:

“An installation for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (a wind farm) with more than 25 turbines or having a total power output greater than 50MW”

Along with meeting the threshold established in the 7th Schedule, one or more of the following criteria, set out under Section 37A(1) of the Act, must be satisfied.

- i. be of strategic economic or social importance to the State or the region in which it would be situate,*
- ii. contribute substantially to the fulfilment of any of the objectives of the National Planning Framework or of any regional spatial and economic strategy, or*
- iii. have a significant effect on the area of more than one planning authority,*

The Proposed Project exceeds the 7th Schedule threshold and meets the criteria set out under Section 37A(1) of the Planning Act.

In accordance with Section 37B of the Planning Act, the Applicant engaged in pre-application consultations with the Commission in order to determine whether the Proposed Project constituted a SID project. Following consideration of the submissions made and the nature, scale and characteristics of the Proposed Project, the Commission formed the opinion, under Section 37A(2), that the Proposed Project does fall within the definition of strategic infrastructure development within the meaning of the Planning Act. The Commission served notice of their opinion under Section 37B(4)(a) on the 19th of March 2026.

Accordingly, pursuant to Section 37E(1) of the Planning Act, the application for permission for the Proposed Project is being made directly to the Commission.

RED III

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 (ss.34E, 37JB, 295B): 52 weeks for new wind farms, 30 weeks for repowering project. Importantly, renewable energy developments, including related grid and storage infrastructure, are now presumed to be in the overriding public interest.

Appendix 1 of the Cover Letter included with this application includes a table demonstrating compliance with the ‘Schedule of information to inform the completeness check’ as appended by the Commission to the SID determination. An additional ‘Note’ column has been added to provide additional context to the

Commission. It is the Applicant's view that the planning application satisfies the completeness check requirements.

Requirement for EIAR

The EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended (the 'EIA Directive'), has been incorporated into Irish law primarily through the Planning Act and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended ('the Planning Regulations').

Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning Regulations identifies classes and scales of development that require EIA. The relevant class of development in this case relates to "*installations for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms) with more than 5 turbines or having a total output greater than 5 megawatts*", as per Item 3(i) of the Schedule. The Proposed Project exceeds 5 Megawatts in scale and proposes more than 5 turbines and therefore is subject to EIA. As such, the application is accompanied by an EIAR.

Requirement for AA / NIS

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive sets out the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of any plan or project that is not directly related to the management of a protected site but is likely to have a significant effect on it. This assessment evaluates the potential implications for the site in light of its conservation objectives. Competent authorities are mandated to grant development consent only if it is ascertained that a proposed project will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned or if it will, if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest why it should proceed, and the relevant criteria is met.

Under Section 177U of the Planning Act, the legal requirements pertaining to AA set out in Part XAB of the Planning Act, apply to this application for permission under Section 37E of the Planning Act. This application for permission is therefore accompanied by an AA Screening Report and a NIS.

6.1.2 The Planning and Development Act 2024

The Planning and Development Act 2024 (the New Planning Act) was signed into law by the President on the 17th of October 2024. At the time of lodgement of this planning application, the current Planning Act remains in place until the New Planning Act is commenced by Ministerial Orders, with the Government indicating that this will be done on a phased basis.

Should the consenting provisions of the New Planning Act commence while this application is being decided, it is noted that, upon repeal of the Planning Act, a grant of permission under Section 37G will be deemed to be a permission granted under Section 123 of the New Planning Act.

6.2 Climate and Renewable Energy Legislation

6.2.1 European Legislation

The Renewable Energy Directive (RED) is the EU's legal framework for the development of renewable energy across all sectors of the EU economy, supporting clean energy cooperation across EU countries. Since its adoption in 2009, the RED has evolved through three major iterations-RED I (2009), RED II (2018), and RED III (2023)-each raising ambition to support decarbonisation and energy security.

Under RED I, Member States were legally required to meet a 20% share of renewables in final energy consumption by 2020. RED II increased this target to 32% by 2030. Most recently, RED III, which entered

into force in November 2023, raised the target further to 42.5% by 2030, with an indicative ambition of 45%, in line with the REPowerEU Plan.

In order to ensure that the RED III target of 42.5% is achieved, EU Member States must notify their climate and energy objectives, targets, policies, and measures to the European Commission and were established under Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action ('the Governance Regulation')⁴. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) submitted an updated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030 to the European Commission in July 2024. The updated NECP committed to achieving a 43% share of renewable energy in total energy consumption by 2030. In the trajectories set out in the updated NECP, it states that Ireland's proposed trajectory will not be in line with the desired trajectory set out in the Governance Regulation.

Given that, of 27 EU member states, Ireland had one of the lowest proportions of renewable energy at 16% in 2024⁵, the implementation of RED III represents both a legal obligation and an opportunity to remove procedural bottlenecks that hinder critical infrastructure, such as the Proposed Project.

6.2.2 National Legislation

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended)

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 exercise their functions in favour of climate concerns when making decisions, 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,*

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate

Action, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32018R1999>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Renewable_energy_2024_infographic.jpg

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

Consenting Authorities, in making a decision on an application, must meaningfully engage with national climate objectives when exercising their decision-making functions. Consenting Authorities must also ensure that their decision on an application falls within a spectrum of outcomes which can be considered to be consistent with, in so far as practicable, national climate objectives.

7. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The following section provides a summary of the planning, renewable energy and climate policy context relevant to the Proposed Project. A more detailed and comprehensive breakdown of planning policy at all levels is set out in **Chapter 2: Background to the Proposed Project** of the EIAR.

It is clear from the policies outlined below that the Proposed Project is strongly supported in principle by policy at all levels. The following section contains a synopsis of the current policies in place and their relevance to the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project sits within a policy framework characterised by several recent crises, including the climate and energy crises, which have significantly influenced policy changes in recent years. These crises have heightened the imperative to transition towards a renewable energy-focused electricity grid and have emphasised the necessity for diversifying our energy sources.

7.1 International, National and Regional Planning Policy

7.1.1 International Policy

Paris Agreement

On an international level, Ireland is a signatory of the Paris Agreement, a global initiative adopted in 2015 that aims to address climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels, with efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C. Under the Paris Agreement, countries submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), outlining their individual climate action plans and commitments. Ireland's contribution comes under the European Union's (EU) NDCs targets and is based on the European Union's 2030 emissions reductions targets.

European Green Deal

On a European level, the European Green Deal, initially introduced by the European Commission in December 2019, sets out the 'blueprint' for a transformational change of the 27-country bloc from a high to a low-carbon economy. The European Green Deal is intended to work through a framework of regulation and legislation setting clear overarching targets, e.g. a bloc-wide goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and a 55% cut in emissions by 2030 (compared with 1990 levels). This is a substantial increase compared to the existing target, upwards from the previous target of at least 40% (2030 Climate & Energy Framework), and furthermore, these targets demonstrate the ambition necessary to keep the global temperature increase to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to keep it to 1.5°C as per the Paris Agreement.

The EU Fit for 55

The EU Fit for 55 package was published in late 2021 with the aim of reducing EU emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels and making the EU carbon-neutral by 2050. This EU package is a set of proposals to revise all existing EU acts on climate and energy and increase the EU target for renewables in the overall energy mix from 32% in 2030 to 40%.

Renewable Energy Directive & REPowerEU

In November 2023, a revision of the Renewable Energy Directive⁶ (RED III), came into force. RED III increases the EU wide renewable energy target from 32% set under the previous revision of the directive to at 42.5%, with an ambition to reach 45% by 2030. This increase comes following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the publication of REPowerEU plan in May 2022. REPowerEU aims to make Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels including oil and gas by rapidly transitioning to renewable energy. The plan aims to accelerate the scale up of renewables by speeding up the permitting process and placing renewable energy developments in the category of overriding public interest. As discussed above in section 6.2.1 above, some of the provisions of RED III were introduced into Irish legislation in August 2025.

AccelerateEU - Affordable and Secure Energy through Accelerated Action

In response to the latest global fuel crisis due to the escalation of the conflict in the Middle East, the EU published a communication calling for an acceleration to homegrown clean energy and electrification. It states that the capacity of renewable electricity in the EU per year should increase to 100 GW per year. In order to achieve this, the communication highlights the need to deliver renewable energy projects at pace by streamlining national permitting process in line with the requirements of EU legislation, such as RED III.

7.1.2

National Policy

Climate Action Plan 2025

CAP 25 represents the third statutory update to Ireland's climate roadmap under the Climate Act. Building on the foundations laid by previous plans, CAP25 refines and strengthens the strategies necessary to deliver Ireland's legally binding carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. It sets out a clear trajectory to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and to achieve climate neutrality no later than 2050.

A cornerstone of CAP25 is the decarbonisation of Ireland's electricity system through a substantial increase in renewable energy generation. The plan reaffirms ambitious targets for renewable electricity share which includes 80% by 2030, and 50% by 2025. This is to be achieved through the accelerated deployment of onshore wind (6 GW by 2025; 9 GW by 2030), offshore wind (8 GW by 2030), and solar energy (up to 5 GW by 2025; 8 GW by 2030).

National Development Plan 2021 – 2030

The National Development Plan 2021 – 2030 (NDP) sets out the major public investment projects identified by Government which are to play a significant role in addressing the opportunities and challenges faced by Ireland over the coming years such as housing, health, population growth, and most relevant to the subject development, climate change. It is stated that the NDP will be the *'largest and greenest ever delivered in Ireland'*, and in this regard, the NDP highlights that extensive consultation was undertaken to ensure that the plan adequately supports the implementation of climate action measures.

One of the NDP's strategic climate priorities is the need for low-carbon, resilient electricity systems; specifically, the plan commits to increasing the share of renewable electricity up to 80% by 2030. This is characterised by the NDP as an *'unprecedented commitment to the decarbonisation of electricity supplies'*, which is certainly an ambitious and an explicit driver for the deployment of new renewable

⁶ Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (recast)

generators such as the Proposed Project. The focus of investment in renewable energy infrastructure is to contribute to a long-term, sustainable and competitive energy future for Ireland.

The National Development Plan Review 2025 (NDP Review) sets out a comprehensive capital investment framework for the period 2026-2035, totalling €275.4 billion. Within this framework wind energy is recognised 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. To support the expansion of renewable electricity generation, the Government has allocated €3.5 billion in equity funding to ESB Networks and EirGrid to enhance grid transmission and distribution infrastructure, which will directly facilitate increased integration of wind energy developments such as the Proposed Project.

National Planning Framework First Revision (2025)

On 8th April 2025, the Government approved the National Planning Framework First Revision (Revised NPF) which was subsequently passed through both Houses of the Oireachtas. The Revised NPF aims to address changes that have occurred in Ireland since 2018.

The Revised NPF provides an updated projection for the population of Ireland, with the population expected to increase to 6.1 million by 2040. This population growth will place further demand on both the built and natural environment, and subsequently, the services required to meet said demands. **National Strategic Outcome 8** to Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society remains unchanged.

Regional Renewable Energy Capacity Allocations have been introduced under the Revised NPF. This was one of the key actions for CAP24 and is supported under CAP25. The Southern Region, in which the Proposed Project is located, is allocated a target of installing an **additional 978 MW of onshore wind energy, by 2030**⁷.

Under **NPO 74** Regional Assemblies are required to plan for the delivery of the regional renewable electricity capacity allocations outlined in the Revised NPF and identify allocations for each of the local authorities within their RSES. Furthermore, **NPO 75** requires Local Authorities to plan for the delivery of Target Power Capacity (MW) allocations consistent with the relevant RSES, through their City and County Development Plans. At the time of writing, no local Target Power Capacity allocations have been established, however it is clear from the regional allocation that the Southern region is set to deliver a significant amount of onshore wind energy in the coming years.

The introduction of renewable energy targets represents a more active and prescriptive approach to land use planning for renewable energy development. The Revised NPF aligns the national target of 9GW of onshore wind energy with the policies and objectives of Local Authorities. Regarding this, it is clear that the provision of new renewable energy generation through the Proposed Project is in line with aims and objectives of the Revised NPF, which seeks to transition to a carbon neutral economy.

National Energy Security Framework

The National Energy Security Framework (NESF), adopted in 2022, and implements many of the aims and objectives of REPowerEU on a national level, reinforcing the State's requirement to urgently diversify away from imported fossil fuels and accelerate the roll out of renewables. The NESF is supported by the recently published Energy Security Package 'Energy Security in Ireland to 2030'. The Energy Security Package provides further long-term energy security measures which includes the prioritisation of achieving a renewables-led energy system.

⁷ <https://cdn.npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/National-Planning-Framework-First-Revision-April-2025-1.pdf>

Programme for Government – Securing’s Ireland’s Future (January 2025)

The Programme for Government 2025 – Securing Ireland’s Future (January 2025) places specific emphasis on climate change, recognising that time is critical in addressing the climate crisis. The Programme states that the Government is committed to taking *“decisive action to radically reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and to achieve a 51% reduction in emissions from 2018 to 2030, and to achieving net-zero emissions no later than 2050”*.

The Programme states that the next ten years are a critical period in addressing the climate crisis, and therefore, a deliberate and swift approach to reducing more than half of Ireland’s carbon emissions over the course of the decade (2020-2030) must be implemented. The programme states that the Government are committed to reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions by an average 7% per annum over the next decade in a push to achieve a net zero emissions by the year 2050.

Regarding renewable energy generation, the Programme notes that the Government is committed to the rapid decarbonisation of the energy sector. The Programme states the Government’s ongoing support and commitment to take *“the necessary action to deliver at least 70% renewable electricity by 2030”*. This target has been updated by subsequent Climate Action Plans.

Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006

In June 2006, the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) were published under Section 28 of the Act. The aim of the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) was to assist the proper planning of wind power projects in appropriate locations around Ireland. The Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) also highlight general considerations in the assessment of all planning applications for wind energy. They set out advice to planning authorities on planning for wind energy through the development plan process and in determining applications for planning permission. They contain guidelines to ensure consistency of approach throughout the country in the identification of suitable locations for wind energy development. The Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) were subject to a targeted review in 2013. More recently, proposed updates to the development management standards for onshore wind energy have been set out in the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) (discussed below). Until such time as they are in place, the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) remain the relevant statutory guidance under Section 28 of the Planning Act.

Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019

In December 2019, the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) were published. A further review of the Draft Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) is currently underway by the DoHLGH and the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, particularly in relation to noise limits. Since the publication of the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) there have been significant changes in national policy regarding renewable energy targets, giving further impetus to the importance of the further review. The Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) set out that that the proper planning and sustainable development of areas and regions must be considered when local authorities prepare their development plans and assess planning applications, irrespective of the significant role renewable energy has to play in tackling climate change.

While the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) remain the relevant statutory guidance, on the basis of the details available from the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019), it is anticipated that the Proposed Project will be capable of adhering to the requirements therein. While the final guidelines have not yet been published, it should be noted that shadow flicker and noise and are entirely controllable and will be capable of adhering to the relevant standards. Further discussion is provided in **Chapter 5: Population and Human Health** and **Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration** respectively. In addition, the Proposed Project maintains a four times tip height set back between turbines and third-party sensitive receptors which is currently the recognised standard for visual amenity purposes, as outlined in the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).

7.1.3 Regional Policy Context

The Southern Regional Assembly

The Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) has a recognised leadership role in setting out regional policies and coordinating initiatives which support the delivery and implementation of the National Planning Framework. The primary vehicle for this is the preparation and implementation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The RSES is committed to the implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2019 (superseded by CAP25) by playing its part in the development of wind, wave, tidal, solar, hydro, and bio energy. The ambition is reflected in the Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's) which sets out the key regional policies for the 12-year lifetime of the plan. RPO 87: Low Carbon Future, states:

“The RSES is committed to the implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2019 by playing its part in the development of renewable energy. This is clearly reflected in the Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's) which sets out the key regional policies for the lifetime of the plan, from 2018 – 2030”

With regards to climate change the RSES notes that:

“All global risks of climate change are risks to the Southern Region. The Southern Regional Assembly is committed to plays its role to put in place a high-level regional strategy for transition to a low carbon economy and society across all sectors.”

A review of the RSES is being carried out by the SRA in accordance with Section 31(1) of the New Planning Act and the European Union (Land Use Planning – Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2025. In March 2026, the SRA published the ‘Issues Paper’ as part of the initial consultation stage, to support public engagement. The paper identifies energy as being a core part of the region’s low-carbon future and supports the move to greater share of renewable energy. A key function of the RSES will be to prepare a Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (RRES) to identify local authority allocations for onshore wind and solar capacity based on the NPF.

Table 7-1 below sets out a compliance summary of the Proposed Project against key policy objectives at a European, National and Regional level.

Table 7-1: EU, National & Regional 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 that of the Proposed Project, 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.
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (As amended)	<p>A 51% reduction in emissions by 2030. Net-zero emissions by 2050.</p> <p>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 plans.</p>	The Proposed Project will contribute towards the legally binding emissions reductions targets for 2030 and 2050.
Climate Action Plan 2025	9GW of onshore wind by 2030, 6GW by 2025.	The Proposed Project will contribute directly towards the CAP25 goals of 9GW of wind energy 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	National Strategic Outcome 8: Transition to a low carbon and climate resilient economy.	The Proposed Project is in line with the objectives of the NPF which seeks to transition to a low carbon and climate resilient economy. If permitted, the Proposed Project will contribute to the achievement of National Policy Objectives 21, 54, and 55.
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.

Policy / Legislative Document	Targets / Objectives	Compliance
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 will serve as a 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 ➤ Consideration of the siting, route and design of the proposed grid connection as part of the whole project. 	<p>The Proposed Project complies with the requirements set out by the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), including noise, set back, shadow flicker, and community consultation guidelines.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Proposed Project will be capable of adhering to the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) when finalised.</p>
Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy – Climate Change	<p>RPO 87 Low Carbon Energy Future: 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>	The Proposed Project is in compliance with the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy which supports the development of renewable energy in line with the national objective to decarbonise the economy and increase the rollout of renewable energy.

Policy / Legislative Document	Targets / Objectives	Compliance
<p>Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy – Renewable Energy</p>	<p>RPO 99 Renewable Wind Energy: 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> <p>RPO 95 Sustainable Renewable Energy Generation: It is an objective to support implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), and the Offshore Renewable Energy Plan and the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in their respective SEA and AA and leverage the Region as a leader and innovator in sustainable renewable energy generation.</p>	<p>The Proposed Project is in compliance with the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy which supports the development of renewable energy at appropriate locations across the region. The Proposed Turbines are proposed in land designated as a ‘Strategic Area’ for wind energy development under the CCDP 2023-2029.</p>
<p>Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy – Grid Infrastructure</p>	<p>RPO 96 Integrating Renewable Energy Sources: It is an objective to support the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure to integrate renewable energy sources and ensure our national and regional energy system remains safe, secure and ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.</p> <p>RPO 100 Indigenous Renewable Energy Production and Grid Injection: It is an objective to support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection.</p>	<p>The Proposed Project is in compliance with the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy which supports the development of grid infrastructure in the region to support the integration of renewable energy on to the national electricity grid.</p>

7.2 Local Policy Context

7.2.1 Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

The CCDP 2023-2029 was adopted in 2023 and sets out CCC's policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County. The CCDP provides the framework within which the decision on the planning application for the Proposed Project is made.

The policies and objectives set out within the CCDP are supportive of the development of renewable energy within the county. Addressing climate change is a key underlying aim of CCC.

The strategic vision of the CCDP is underpinned by 18 no. key goals, the following goals are considered relevant in respect to the Proposed Project:

- **Goal I:** A county that is resilient to climate change, plans for and adapts to climate change and flood risk, is the national leader in renewable energy generation, facilitates a low carbon future, supports energy efficiency and conservation and enables the decarbonisation of our lifestyles and economy;
- **Goal XIX:** A county that manages and monitors the county level implementation of the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial Economic Strategy, national plans and guidelines to ensure that quality of life, sustainability, climate action, resilience and inclusivity are the fundamental principles of the future sustainable development of the county.

The CCDP acknowledges that the achievement of these above key goals will be dependent upon the County's capacity to deliver a competitive and uninterrupted energy supply. As such, "*energy efficiency, renewable energy development and progression towards a low carbon economy*" are identified as central themes of the CCDP.

Due to the '*favourable position*' of County Clare on the western seaboard, the CCDP highlights that the County has significant potential to accommodate further electricity generating activity; specifically, significant potential to increase the production of electricity from renewable energy sources. Having regard to the County's available renewable resources, the CCDP states that CCC will seek to take a "*lead role in respect of renewable energy technology*" to assist in meeting national, regional and County targets in energy consumption and CO₂ reduction.

The CCDP states that CCC will promote the implementation of the Clare County Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) and will facilitate the development of a range of sustainable forms of energy creation within the County in order to ensure a secure and effective supply of energy. Through the successful delivery of the RES, the CCDP states that County Clare can make significant advancements in energy security, reduced reliance on traditional fossil fuels, enabling future energy exports and meeting the assigned targets as set by the NPF.

The CCDP clearly states that it is essential to ensure '*energy demands are met without compromising environmental quality*'. The CCDP notes that almost the entire County has either an excellent or very good wind energy resource. The development and siting of wind energy projects must be '*balanced with the potential impacts on the landscape, ecology and the amenities of local communities*'. In this regard, the CCDP identifies areas that are considered suitable for commercial wind energy in their Wind Energy Strategy (WES), as discussed in **Section 6.4.3** of this report.

In order to facilitate further renewable energy generation within the county, the CCDP states that:

“A strong transmission grid is essential to attract and retain high-tech industrial investment; to ensure competitive energy supplies; to achieve balanced development; to reduce dependency on fossil fuels; and to achieve climate change targets.”

The provision of a secure and adequate electricity transmission infrastructure, including the reinforcement and extension, where required, of the existing grid, will be a critical prerequisite for further investment within the Co. Clare renewable energy sector.

Table 7-2 below sets out the relevant policies and objectives within the CCDP which support the continued investment in renewable/ wind energy generation in County Clare. A statement of compliance is included with regard to each policy. It is demonstrated through **Table 7-2** below that the Proposed Project is in compliance with the policies and objectives of the CCDP.

Table 7-2: Proposed Project Compliance with CCDP

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
Climate Action	<p>CDP2.1: Climate Action</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) To support the implementation of the National Climate Action Plan 2023 and the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (and any subsequent versions thereof), and to work with the Regional Climate Action Offices to enable County Clare to transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county;</i> <i>b) To adopt sustainable planning strategies through integrating land use and transportation and by facilitating mixed use developments as a means of supporting national targets of climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, and reducing our carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions; and;</i> <i>c) To raise awareness and understanding of the impacts of climate change on both the local economy and communities in the county, and the ways communities can increase their response and grow their resilience to these impacts.</i> 	<p>The Proposed Project is in compliance with CDP 2.1 as it directly contributes to the wind energy target of 9GW of onshore wind introduced by CAP 23, and which has remained unchanged in the latest CAP 25.</p> <p>The Proposed Project will generate clean, renewable electricity, which will be integrated into the grid, helping to electrify and decarbonise other sectors. This is a fundamental part of the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.</p>
	<p>CDP2.2: Climate Change Mitigation, Adaption and resilience</p> <p><i>It is an objective of the Clare County Council:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) To support the implementation of the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 (and any subsequent versions);</i> <i>b) To promote measures that build resilience to climate change to address impact reduction, adaptive capacity, awareness raising, providing for nature-based solutions and emergency planning;</i> <i>c) To raise awareness of issues relating to climate change and climate change adaptation during the lifetime of this plan;</i> 	<p>The Proposed Project supports the implementation of the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024. The Proposed Project will aid decarbonisation measures in the County and is therefore in line with the aims of the Adaptation Strategy.</p> <p>The Proposed Project will contribute to the progression of advancements in climate adaptation solutions and renewable energy generation and technologies in Co. Clare.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>d) To liaise, collaborate and work in partnership with the relevant government approved sectors in relation to initiatives and activities across the county;</i> <i>e) To support the Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy and its aspiration for Ennis to become Irelands first climate adaptive town; and</i> <i>f) To facilitate and support the relevant stakeholders and enterprises in the progression of advancements in climate adaptation solutions and renewable energy generation and technologies.</i> 	
	<p>CDP2.14 Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and Society</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) To facilitate measures which will accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy and a circular economy through mechanisms such as the Climate Action Competitive Fund;</i> <i>b) To support the development of enterprises that create and employ green technologies and to promote County Clare as a low carbon county as a means of attracting inward investment to the county and to the wider Southern Region;</i> <i>c) ...</i> <i>d) To support and facilitate the implementation of the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024;</i> <i>e) To ensure that the development of green industry and technologies incorporates careful consideration of potential environmental impacts at project level including the capacity of the receiving environment and existing infrastructure to serve these new industries.</i> <i>f) To facilitate the development of energy sources which will achieve low carbon output.</i> <i>g) ...</i> <i>h) To work to implement the provisions of Ireland’s Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 as they relate to County Clare;</i> 	<p>By supplying sustainable renewable energy, the Proposed Project will reduce the need for non-renewable sources like coal and oil, helping to transition toward a low carbon economy and cleaner energy usage in the county.</p> <p>By providing c. 54 MW of installed capacity to generate clean renewable energy, the Proposed Project supports the implementation of the provisions of Ireland’s transition to a low carbon energy future through renewable energy generation in the County.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i) ...</i> <i>j) To promote climate change issues across business, public and residential sectors and to target measures and support initiatives to achieve reduced greenhouse gas 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;</i> <i>k) ...</i> <i>l)</i> 	
	<p>CDP 18.3 Development of a Low Carbon Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) To promote County Clare as a Low Carbon County as a means of attracting inward investment to the County and the Mid-West region;</i> <i>b) To facilitate measures to establish a low carbon economy and society by 2020;</i> <i>c) To facilitate the development of energy sources which will achieve low carbon outputs.</i> 	<p>The Proposed Project represents a significant investment in renewable energy infrastructure in the region. Providing c. 54MW of installed capacity to generate renewable energy, the Proposed Project will facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy and promote County Clare as a Low Carbon County to attract investment to both the County and the wider Mid-West region.</p>
<p>Energy Infrastructure</p>	<p>CDP 11.45: Electricity Networks</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) To facilitate improvements in energy infrastructure and encourage the expansion of the infrastructure within the county;</i> <i>b) To facilitate future alternative renewable energy developments and associated utility infrastructure throughout the county;</i> <i>c) To support the Integrated Single Electricity Market (ISEM) as a key priority for the Southern Region and the sustainable development and reinforcement of the energy grid including grid connections, transboundary</i> 	<p>Policy objective 11.45 supports the connection of the renewable energy projects into the national electricity grid. The Proposed Project connects into the national grid at the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation.</p> <p>The principle of grid infrastructure at this location is established through the existing substation. The extension and connection into the existing 110kV Slievecallan substation and associated works have been fully assessed in the EIAR.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p><i>networks to and through County Clare subject to appropriate environmental assessment and planning processes;</i></p> <p><i>d) To collaborate with EirGrid to facilitate the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity, enhanced electricity networks and new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this Plan under EirGrid's (2017) Grid Development Strategy (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process);</i></p> <p><i>e) To collaborate with EirGrid over the lifetime of the plan to ensure that the county's minimum target of 1,167MW of renewable energy generation is achieved and can be accommodated on the electricity network in County Clare; and</i></p> <p><i>f) To have regard to environmental and visual considerations in the assessment of developments of this nature and ensure compliance with the environmental requirements of objective CDP 3.3 of this plan.</i></p>	
<p>Renewable Energy</p>	<p>CDP 6.17: Energy Supply</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p><i>a) To contribute to the economic development and enhanced employment opportunities in the county by:</i></p> <p><i>b) Enabling the development of a self sustaining, secure, reliable and efficient renewable energy supply and storage for the County in line with CDP Objective 3.3;</i></p> <p><i>c) Facilitating the county to become a leader in the production of sustainable and renewable energy for national and international consumption through research, technology development and innovation; and</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project will contribute to the development of a self-sustaining, secure, reliable and efficient renewable energy supply for the County by contributing positively to the levels of renewable electricity on the national grid. This will aid in ensuring there is adequate capacity for the growing energy needs of the Country.</p> <p>The Proposed Project will create up to approximately 70 jobs during the construction, and 3-4 jobs during operation and maintenance phases, while facilitating CCC's ambition to become a national and international leader in the production of renewable energy.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p><i>d) Supporting on-land and off-shore renewable energy production by a range of appropriate technologies in line with CDP Objective 3.3.</i></p>	
	<p>CDP6.18 Green Technology <i>To support the development of low carbon and green tech businesses and industries throughout the County.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project will support the growth of low carbon and green technology businesses across the County by enabling renewable energy production, thereby aiding the shift towards a low carbon economy.</p>
	<p>CDP 8.12: Renewable Energy Development <i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i> <i>To support the implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), the Clare Wind Energy Strategy and the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy to facilitate the development of renewable energy developments in rural areas to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050 subject to the requirement of the RES SEA Environmental Report and the mitigation measures arising from the CDP Appropriate Assessment as contained in Volume 10(a).</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project will support the development of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), the Clare Wind Energy Strategy and the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy through the production of renewable energy thereby aiding the shift towards a low carbon economy.</p>
	<p>CDP 11.44: Energy Security <i>It is an objective of Clare County Council the Development Plan:</i> <i>To promote and facilitate the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure, to integrate renewable energy sources, thereby creating a secure and efficient energy supply and storage system for County Clare which is ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.</i></p>	<p>Projects such as the Proposed Project are a critical component in decoupling the county from reliance on fossil fuels.</p> <p>By harnessing indigenous wind resources and generating and providing renewable onshore wind energy, the Proposed Project will enhance Ireland’s energy security by reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels. The Proposed Project therefore aligns with the CDP 11.44 ‘Energy Security’ emphasising a transition away from traditional non-renewable fuels to a renewable led electricity system.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p>CDP 11.47: Renewable Energy</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council the Development Plan:</i></p> <p>a) <i>To encourage and to favourably consider proposals for renewable energy developments, including community owned developments, and ancillary facilities in order to meet National, Regional and County renewable energy targets, and to facilitate a reduction in CO2 emissions and the promotion of a low carbon economy;</i></p> <p>b) <i>To assess future renewable energy-related development proposals having regard to the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2030 in Volume 5 of this plan and associated SEA and AA;</i></p> <p>c) <i>To support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on-shore and offshore) at appropriate locations and of its related grid infrastructure in County Clare, in accordance with all relevant policies, guidance and guidelines pertaining to the protection of the environment and protected habitats and species, and to assess proposals having regard to the Clare Wind Energy Strategy in Volume 6 of this plan and the associated SEA and AA, or any subsequent updated adopted Strategy and to national Wind Energy Guidelines;</i></p> <p>d) <i>To prepare a new and updated Wind Energy Strategy for County Clare during the lifetime of this plan, subject to the publication of the update to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006;</i></p> <p>e) <i>To strike an appropriate balance between facilitating renewable and wind energy-related development and protecting the residential amenities of neighbouring properties;</i></p> <p>f) <i>To support and facilitate the development of new options and technological advances in relation to renewable energy production and storage, that may emerge over the lifetime of this Plan;</i></p>	<p>As a renewable energy project that directly contributes to the achievement of a crucial national climate target, the Proposed Project contributes directly to this objective and therefore should be favourably considered by ACP.</p> <p>The Proposed Project is suitably sited in an area classified as a ‘Strategic Area’ in the Clare Wind Energy Strategy. The Proposed Project has been designed in compliance with the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006). The Proposed Project design has had regard for the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019).</p> <p>The Proposed Project has been designed to limit the impact on the residential properties in the vicinity of the Proposed Turbines. This will ensure that an appropriate balance is met between facilitating renewable energy development and protecting residential amenity.</p> <p>Chapter 5: Population and Human Health of the EIAR assess the three main potential impacts associated with residential amenity: 1) Shadow Flicker, 2) Noise, and 3) Visual Amenity. It is concluded that the residual effects (post-mitigation) of the Proposed Project will not result in any significant effects on human beings in the area surrounding the Proposed Project.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p><i>g) To support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection;</i></p> <p><i>h) To ensure that all proposals for renewable energy developments and ancillary facilities in the County are in full compliance with the requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives and Objective CDP3.3 of this plan; and</i></p> <p><i>To promote and market the County as a leader of renewable energy provision.</i></p>	
	<p>CDP 11.48: Renewable Energy Strategy</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p><i>a) To support implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), and the Offshore Renewable Energy Plan including mitigation measures outlined in their respective SEA and AA and promote County Clare and the Southern Region as a leader and innovator in sustainable renewable energy generation;</i></p> <p><i>b) To support the implementation of the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2029 in Volume 5 of this plan; and</i></p> <p><i>c) To support the development of a Regional Renewable Energy Strategy with relevant stakeholders</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project is supported by the policies and objectives of the NREAP.</p> <p>The Proposed Project is compliant with the policies and objectives of the Renewable Energy Strategy (RES). Compliance with the RES is discussed in further detail in Section 7.2.2 below.</p>
<p>Flood Risk Management</p>	<p>CDP2.6: Flood Risk Assessment and Management</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p><i>a) To ensure development proposals have regard to the requirements of the SFRA and Flood Risk Management Guidelines; and where required are supported by an appropriately detailed hydrological assessment / flood risk assessment.</i></p>	<p>Chapter 9: Hydrology & Hydrogeology of the EIAR provides detailed assessment regarding the susceptibility of the Proposed Project to flooding. A flood risk identification study was undertaken within Chapter 9: Hydrology & Hydrogeology and Appendix 9-1 to identify existing potential flood risks associated with the Proposed Project. From this study, it was identified that there were no instances of historical flooding recorded within the Site.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p>b) <i>To ensure that flood risk assessments include consideration of potential impacts of flooding arising from climate change including sea level rise and coastal erosion;</i></p> <p>c) <i>To integrate sustainable water management solutions, prioritising nature based solutions (such as SUDS, nonporous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals;</i></p> <p>d) <i>To include Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRMS) where appropriate in consultation with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and other relevant stakeholders;</i></p> <p>e) <i>To support investment in the sustainable development of capital works under the Flood Capital Investment Programme and Flood Risk Management Plans developed under the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) process; and</i></p> <p>f) <i>To ensure that potential future flood information obtained/generated through the Development Management process is used to inform suitable adaptation requirements in line with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Flood Risk Management (DoECLG & OPW, 2009).</i></p>	<p>No Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme (CFRAM) Flood Extent fluvial mapping has been completed for any of the surface water catchments in which the Site is located.</p> <p>National Indicative Fluvial Mapping (NIFM) for the Present-Day Scenario does not map any fluvial flood zones within the Site.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Site is not located within any GSI mapped historic or modelled groundwater flood zones. Also, based on the CFRAM rainfall (pluvial) flood mapping, surface water ponding/flooding is not a notable issue at the Site.</p> <p>The Proposed Project will be constructed with its own drainage system which will provide additional surface water attenuation. The overall risk of flooding posed at the Site is assessed to be low. Please refer to the Chapter 9: Hydrology & Hydrogeology of the EIAR for further details.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>CDP 3.3: Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</p> <p><i>It is an objective of the Clare County Council:</i></p> <p>a) <i>To require compliance with the objectives and requirements of the Habitats Directive, specifically Article 6(3) and where necessary 6(4), Birds, Water Framework, and all other relevant EU Directives and all relevant transposing national legislation;</i></p> <p>b) <i>To require project planning to be fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at the earliest stage of project development and any necessary assessment to be undertaken, including assessments</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project will comply with the objectives and requirement of the Habitats Directive, specifically Article 6(3) and where necessary 6(4), Birds, Water Framework, and all other relevant EU Directives and all relevant transposing national legislation. The application for the Proposed Project includes an Ecological Impact Assessment, included as Chapter 6: Biodiversity of the EIAR and NIS including the necessary assessments to ensure that there is ‘no net loss’ of biodiversity and to ensure that all European sites and Natural Heritage Areas are appropriately protected.</p> <p>Chapter 6: Biodiversity concludes that, provided that the Proposed Project is constructed and operated in accordance with the design, best practice and mitigation that is described within this application,</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p><i>of disturbance to species, where required together with the preparation of both statutory and non-Statutory Ecological Impact Assessments (EcIA);</i></p> <p><i>c) To protect, manage and enhance ecological connectivity and improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network;</i></p> <p><i>d) To require all proposals to ensure there is ‘no net loss’ of biodiversity within developments;</i></p> <p><i>e) To ensure that European sites and Natural Heritage Areas (designated proposed NHAs) are appropriately protected;</i></p> <p><i>f) To require the preparation and assessment of all plans and projects to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report contained in Volume 10 of this development plan; and</i></p> <p><i>g) to require compliance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and support the implementation of the 3rd Cycle River Basin Management Plan (and any other iteration during the lifetime of the plan).</i></p>	<p>significant individual or cumulative effects on ecology are not anticipated at the International, National, County, or Local scales or on any of the identified Key Ecological Receptors.</p> <p>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, will not 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>CDP15.1 Biodiversity</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p><i>a) To implement the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017- 2021, the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025, the EU A Farm to Fork Strategy 2020, the County Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2023 and the County Clare Biodiversity Plan 2017- 2023, or any subsequent plans, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders;</i></p> <p><i>b) To review the Clare County Heritage Plan 2017-2023 and to prepare a new plan, which will be set within the context of the National Heritage</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project takes into consideration the importance of the local biodiversity to make sure it is retained during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Project. The Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan measures set out in Appendix 6-4 ensure that no net loss of habitats will occur due to the construction or operation of the Proposed Project.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p><i>Plan "Heritage Ireland 2030", upon the expiry of the existing adopted Plan;</i></p> <p><i>c) To support National Biodiversity Week and events such as Bioblitz in order to increase awareness of biodiversity and its benefits to the community;</i></p> <p><i>d) To ensure that features of importance to local biodiversity are retained as part of developments and projects being undertaken in the County;</i></p> <p><i>e) To identify ecological buffer zones, where appropriate, in the Plan area; and</i></p> <p><i>To support current and future projects with the aim of restoration/ rehabilitation of natural habitats and species.</i></p>	
	<p>CDP15.3 European Sites</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p><i>a) To afford the highest level of protection to all designated European sites in accordance with the relevant Directives and legislation on such matters;</i></p> <p><i>b) To require all planning applications for development that may have (or cannot rule out) likely significant effects on European Sites in view of the site's Conservation Objectives, either in isolation or in combination with other plans or projects, to submit a Natura Impact Statement in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended); and</i></p> <p><i>c) To recognise and afford appropriate protection to any new or modified SPAs or SACs that are identified during the lifetime of this Development Plan through the planning application process bearing in mind proposals for development outside of a European site may also have an indirect effect.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project recognises the importance of European Sites in accordance with the relevant Directives and legislation. An NIS is submitted as part of the planning application in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and the Planning Act.</p> <p>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, will not 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>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p>CDP15.4: Requirement for Appropriate Assessment</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p>a) <i>To implement Article 6(3) and where necessary 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s); and</i></p> <p>b) <i>To have regard to Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 or any updated version.</i></p>	<p>An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) and NIS have been carried out and accompany this planning application.</p> <p>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, will not 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>CDP15.5: Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p>a) <i>To actively promote the conservation and protection of areas designated as NHA's (including proposed sites) and to only consider proposals for development within or affecting an NHA where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse effect on the NHA or pNHA; and</i></p> <p>b) <i>To identify and afford appropriate protection to any new, proposed or modified NHA's identified during the lifetime of the Development Plan;</i></p>	<p>Chapter 6: Biodiversity of the EIAR provides a full assessment of any potential impacts from the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Project on NHAs and pNHAs within the likely Zone of Influence. This includes two pNHAs; Inagh River Estuary pNHA [000036] and Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands pNHA [001021].</p> <p>With the implementation of the mitigations and best practice procedures for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Project, as set out in the EIAR, it is concluded that no significant impacts on these National Sites are anticipated.</p>
	<p>CDP15.10: Environmental Impact Assessment</p> <p><i>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</i></p>	<p>As set out in Chapter 1: Introduction of the EIAR, and as reinforced throughout the various sections of the document, the EIAR has been prepared in compliance with EIA Directive. Chapter 3: Reasonable</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p>a) <i>To implement the EIA Directive, ensuring that all elements/stages or components of the project are included in one overall assessment and all reasonable alternatives are taken into consideration in choosing the option with the least environmental impact;</i></p> <p>b) <i>To have regard to “Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments (2018) when considering proposals for which an EIA is required; and</i></p> <p>c) <i>To ensure full compliance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive, SEA Directive and associated legislation/regulations, including the associated European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) regulations 2004-2011, and the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 – 2011 (or any updated/superseding legislation).</i></p>	<p>Alternatives of the EIAR sets out all reasonable alternatives that were assessed as part of the design process of the Proposed Project, ensuring that the final development footprint is the most environmentally prudent viable option.</p> <p>The EIAR has had full regard and complies with all relevant guidelines, including Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments (2018), the EU Habitats Directive, SEA Directive and associated legislation/regulations, including the associated European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) regulations 2004-2011, and the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 – 2011 (or any updated/superseding legislation).</p>
	<p>CDP15.12: Biodiversity and Habitat Protection</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p>a) <i>To protect and promote the sustainable management of the natural heritage, flora and fauna of the County both within protected areas and in the general landscape through the promotion of biodiversity, the conservation of natural habitats, the enhancement of new and existing habitats, and through the integration of Green Infrastructure (GI), Blue Infrastructure and ecosystem services including landscape, heritage, biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species into the Development Plan;</i></p>	<p>Chapter 6: Biodiversity of the EIAR presents an assessment of all habitats present within the Site, and those of EU importance located within the Zone of Influence (i.e. the within the EIAR Site Boundary, those in proximity to the EIAR Site Boundary, and those with hydrological connectivity), and also demonstrates the avoidance of the Proposed Project relating to these sensitive habitats.</p> <p>Appendix 6-4 of Chapter 6: Biodiversity also presents Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan measures which will both promote the biodiversity of sensitive areas and enhance the biodiversity of new and existing areas of sensitive habitats. Appendix 6-5: Invasive Species Management Plan includes for the removal of invasive species on the Third Schedule (Rhododendron).</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p><i>b) To promote the conservation of biodiversity through the protection of sites of biodiversity importance and wildlife corridors, both within and between the designated sites and the wider Plan area;</i></p> <p><i>c) To support the implementation of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, National Biodiversity Action Plan and National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan;</i></p> <p><i>d) To ensure there is no net loss of potential Lesser Horseshoe Bat feeding habitats, treelines and hedgerows within 2.5km of known roosts;</i></p> <p><i>e) To implement and monitor the actions as set out in the Clare County Biodiversity Plan; and</i></p> <p><i>To promote biodiversity net gain in any new plans/projects/policies to promote development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before.</i></p>	<p>Also included within Appendix 6-4: BMEP are proposals to plant new hedgerow and to improve the quality of existing hedgerow, thus improving existing wildlife corridors for a multitude of species, including birds and bats. The BMEP measures ensure that no net loss of habitats will occur due to the construction or operation of the Proposed Project, including the feeding and roosting habitat of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat. Further details of the impact of the Proposed Project on Lesser Horseshoe Bats can be found in Appendix 6.1: Bat Report of the EIAR.</p>
	<p>CDP15.14 Habitat Fragmentation and Green Infrastructure Corridors</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p><i>a) To ensure that development proposals support and enhance the connectivity and integrity of habitats in the Plan area by incorporating natural features into the design of development proposals.</i></p> <p><i>b) To ensure that the potential impacts upon the migratory routes of fauna including birds and bats and the movement of species between European Sites are fully considered within the relevant ecological assessment. These assessments shall fully consider flight collision risks, habitat fragmentation and barrier risk as required.</i></p>	<p>Appendix 6-4: BMEP of the EIAR aims to promote biodiversity within the local area of the Site. As outlined in the BMEP, the Proposed Project includes hedgerow planting, peatland, marsh fritillary and hen harrier habitat enhancement areas which will result in a net gain in biodiversity, specifically with regard to hen harrier and marsh fritillary habitat as well as a net gain in linear habitats.</p> <p>The potential impact of the Proposed Project on migratory routes of fauna, including bats and birds, are assessed in Chapter 6: Biodiversity and Chapter 7: Ornithology and in the NIS.</p>
	<p>CDP15.19 Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p>	<p>As detailed in Chapter 3: Reasonable Alternatives of the EIAR, the Proposed Project layout was designed on a constraints-led basis Chapter 6: Biodiversity and its appendices of the EIAR also details the</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p>a) <i>To preserve and conserve individual or groups of trees identified in Volume 2 of this Plan as ‘Trees for Preservation’ which will enhance the character and appearance of an area;</i></p> <p>b) <i>To carry out tree survey work during the lifetime of this Plan to identify future trees of importance in the County and facilitate their future protection;</i></p> <p>c) <i>To protect individual or groups of trees within the Plan area which are important for environmental, recreational, historical, biodiversity and/or aesthetic reasons or by reason of contribution to sense of place, including groups of trees which correspond with protected habitats, or which support protected species, under the Habitats Directive;</i></p> <p>d) <i>To work with landowners, local communities and other relevant groups to promote the retention and conservation of existing trees and hedgerows and encourage development proposals that enhance the landscape through positive management and additional planting/sensitive replanting of native tree species;</i></p> <p>e) <i>To protect woodlands and hedgerows from damage and/or degradation and to prevent disruption of the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows of the County;</i></p> <p>f) <i>To ensure, where required, applications for development include proposals for planting / leave a suitable ecological buffer zone, between the development works and areas/features of ecological importance;</i></p> <p>g) <i>Where hedgerows are required to be removed in the interests of traffic safety or where breaches to hedgerows occur due to river drainage/maintenance works and flood repair, to require the applicant/developer to reinstate the hedgerows with a suitable replacement of native species to the satisfaction of the Council;</i></p> <p>h) <i>To require each green space in new residential developments to have at least one native oak tree, or other naturalised tree species of similar</i></p>	<p>surveys carried out on the Site. With the implementation of the BMEP measures, there will be a net gain in biodiversity.</p> <p>As detailed within the EIAR, a felling licence where required will be applied for before any felling works take place. Forestry to be felled to accommodate the Proposed Project is all commercial forestry. Commercial forestry felled in order to facilitate the Proposed Project will be replanted offsite as required by the granted felling licence.</p> <p>The BMEP measures also include the management of existing hedgerows within the Site and planting of new riparian woodland and hedgerows.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p><i>stature and lifespan, integrated into the agreed planting/landscaping scheme; and</i></p> <p><i>i) To require, where possible, that all trees felled as a result of development proposals be replaced at a minimum ratio of 10 new native species per 1 tree felled.</i></p>	
<p>Landscape</p>	<p>CDP 14.2 Settled Landscape</p> <p><i>It is an objective of the Development Plan: To permit development in areas designated as ‘settled landscapes’ that sustain and enhance quality of life and residential amenity and promote economic activity subject to:</i></p> <p><i>I. Conformity with all other relevant provisions of the Plan and the availability and protection of resources;</i></p> <p><i>II. Selection of appropriate sites in the first instance within this landscape, together with consideration of the details of siting and design which are directed towards minimising visual impacts;</i></p> <p><i>III. Regard being given to avoiding intrusions on scenic routes and on ridges or shorelines.</i></p> <p><i>Developments in these areas will be required to demonstrate:</i></p> <p><i>a) That the site has been selected to avoid visually prominent locations;</i></p> <p><i>b) That the site layouts avail of existing topography and vegetation to reduce visibility from scenic routes, walking trails, water bodies, public amenities and roads;</i></p> <p><i>c) That design for buildings and structures reduce visual impact through careful choice of forms, finishes and colours, and that any site works seek to reduce visual impact.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Project is located in a settled landscape described as areas where people live and work. Uses envisaged in settled landscapes include energy, along with agriculture, forestry, extraction, transportation, industry, commerce, tourism, recreation and leisure, education, healthcare and social infrastructure.</p> <p>In relation to Scenic Routes, the CDP notes that there is a need to protect and conserve views adjoining public roads throughout the county where views are of high amenity value, however it notes that it is not proposed that this should give rise to the prohibition of development along these routes but that development, where permitted, should not seriously hinder or obstruct these views and should be designed to minimise visual impact.</p> <p>The Proposed Project has been designed with regard for the designated Scenic Routes in the area. The impact of the Proposed Project on the ‘Settled Landscape’ and Scenic Routes are fully assessed in the Chapter 13: Landscape and Visual of the EIAR. The Proposed Project’s compliance with CDP Objective 14.7 ‘Scenic Routes’ is outlined below</p> <p>It has been demonstrated that the Proposed Project is suitably scaled and appropriate for this location, with no potential significant effects on protected landscape and visual sensitivities in the LVIA Study Area.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p>CDP14.7 Scenic Routes</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p>a) <i>To protect sensitive areas from inappropriate development while providing for development and change that will benefit the rural community;</i></p> <p>b) <i>To ensure that proposed developments take into consideration their effects on views from the public road towards scenic features or areas and are designed and located to minimise their impact; and</i></p> <p>c) <i>To ensure that appropriate standards of location, siting, design, finishing and landscaping are achieved.</i></p>	<p>There are 35 no. Scenic Routes across the county and 15 no. are located within the LVIA Study Area. The closest CCDP Scenic Route (No.15) is located 3km south from the nearest Proposed Turbine (T7).</p> <p>Section 13.5 of Chapter 13: Landscape and Visual provides appraisals determining the likely visibility of the Proposed Turbines from each route. The appraisal found that 9 no. Scenic Routes were scoped out from further assessment as the ZTV indicated that there is no theoretical visibility and visibility during the site visit was difficult to establish due to visual screening by topography and vegetation. The LVIA concludes that there will be no significant visual impact on views from designated scenic routes or any impact on the key scenic sensitivities and views of the County Clare high sensitivity ‘Heritage Landscape’.</p> <p>Photomontages produced from 17 no. viewpoints are provided in the photomontage booklet found in Volume 2 of the EIAR that accompanies the application.</p>
<p>Archaeology</p>	<p>CDP16.1: Archaeology Heritage</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p>a) <i>To ensure the protection of the architectural heritage of County Clare through the identification of Protected Structures, the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas, the safeguarding of historic gardens, and the recognition of structures and elements that contribute positively to the vernacular and industrial heritage of the county; and</i></p>	<p>An archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage impact assessment is provided in Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage of the EIAR. The Proposed Project has also been designed with consideration for the recorded monuments of the area. There are three national monuments located within the Site. Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage concludes that no significant direct or indirect effects to the recorded cultural heritage resource as a result of the Proposed Project have been identified.</p> <p>Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage of the EIAR provides a full assessment of the direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Project on the</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p><i>b) To ensure that the archaeological and architectural heritage of the county is not damaged either through direct destruction or by unsympathetic developments.</i></p> <p><i>a) To support and promote architectural vernacular skills training and facilities in the county.</i></p>	<p>archaeological and architectural heritage within the study area (i.e. 25km from the Proposed Turbine locations). This assessment includes a visual assessment of the Proposed Project in relation to monuments/areas of archaeological and architectural heritage.</p>
	<p>CDP16.8 Sites, Features and Objects of Archaeological Interest</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p> <p><i>a) To safeguard sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally;</i></p> <p><i>b) To secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in situ or in exceptional cases preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological and historical interest generally;</i></p> <p><i>c) In securing such preservation, to have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of the Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht;</i></p> <p><i>d) To have regard to the government publication Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage 1999 in relation to protecting sites, features and objects of archaeological interest; and</i></p> <p><i>To advocate for greater financial assistance for the maintenance and improvement of features of archaeological interests in County Clare.</i></p>	<p>Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage of the EIAR presents an archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage impact assessment features (including National Monuments, Protected Structures, those on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)) and the potential impacts of the Proposed Project on these monuments. The EIAR concludes that no significant direct or indirect effects to the recorded cultural heritage resource as a result of the Proposed Project have been identified. Where relevant mitigation measures have been identified, they will be implemented during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Project in full. The mitigation measures outlined will ensure that safeguard sites, features and objects of archaeological interest are safeguarded.</p> <p>During the construction phase, archaeological monitoring will be undertaken by a suitably qualified archaeologist, where required, in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the EIAR. Adequate resources will be provided to the archaeologist to implement monitoring, recording and any necessary mitigation measures.</p>
	<p>CDP 16.11: Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes</p> <p><i>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</i></p>	<p>All known recorded archaeological monuments/ sites are considered in the archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage impact assessment provided in Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage.</p>

Policy Theme	Policy/ Objective	Compliance
	<p><i>To ensure that decisions relating to development (including infrastructure associated with broadband, telecommunications, renewable energy, major road/ rail infrastructure, flood relief schemes and other services) which may have implications for Recorded Archaeological Monuments/Sites, Zones of Archaeological Potential or undiscovered archaeology, are informed by an appropriate level of archaeological investigation undertaken by qualified persons and the case of flood relief schemes have regard to archaeological Guidelines for Flood Relief Schemes (DHLGH and OPW2022).</i></p>	<p>During the construction phase, all groundworks will be supervised by a suitably qualified archaeologist, in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the EIAR.</p>

7.2.2 County Clare Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy

As reflected within the key goals of the CCDP, CCC seeks to ensure that Co. Clare has the necessary land use and strategy framework in place to maximise the harnessing and use of its renewable energy resources and inform and guide the planning process for future renewable energy development. The Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2029 (RES) was adopted as part of the CCDP, includes the following vision of the RES:

“A County Clare that is the national leader in renewable energy generation which supports energy efficiency and conservation, and which achieves balanced social and economic development throughout the County and assists in achieving national climate change mitigation targets.”

This Vision is underpinned by several strategic aims of which the following are considered to be of particular relevance to the Proposed Project:

- A) To support the attainment of and to exceed in County Clare, where possible, the National targets and commitments to renewable energy;
- B) To identify/highlight the opportunities for various renewable energy technologies and resources and identify broad areas suitable for their development in full compliance with the requirements of all environmental legislation including the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, Habitats Directive and Water Framework Directive;
- D) To maximise the opportunities for renewable energy development whilst safeguarding the environment and existing residential amenities; and
- E) To safeguard, where appropriate, areas with potential for renewable energy projects and to guide renewable energy development to preferred locations.

The RES acknowledges that Co. Clare has the natural resources needed to maximise energy generation by renewable means: geographical location on the Shannon Estuary and its Atlantic coastline, strong wind resource, undulating topography and a significant grid network. These attributes present opportunities for both on-shore and off-shore wind, wave and tidal energy, and pumped freshwater hydro energy storage. The RES notes that *“energy needs in County Clare are expected to rise by 2020...”* which is balanced against a recognition that *“the County has considerable capacity to produce energy from renewable and indigenous resources”*. In this regard, Policy RES 2.1 states that *“it is an objective of Clare County Council to meet the County’s energy needs from 100% indigenous renewable energy sources.”*

Chapter 6 ‘Onshore Wind’ acknowledges that, as the Wind Energy Strategy is adopted unchanged in the CCDP, any changes to it are outside the scope the RES. Chapter 6 of the RES therefore provides a summary of the WES policies and objectives.

The RES sets out a sustainable balance of renewable energy resources up to 2030 which ensures that there is no over reliance or over concentration on any single technology. With regard to onshore wind energy, a target of **550MW**, as identified in the WES, is included. It should be noted, however, that this target is not a ‘cap’ and will not limit the potential for greater generation of renewable energy if exceeded, as stated in objective RES 3.1 below:

- **Objective RES 3.1** (Renewable Energy Targets): To facilitate the achievement of (or to exceed where possible) the renewable energy targets set out in Table 3.2 by 2030, ensuring that County Clare is the national leader in sustainable renewable energy generation, supporting energy efficiency, security and conservation, achieving balanced social, environmental and economic development throughout the County and assisting in the achievement of Ireland’s Green Energy target.

The RES states that, at the time of publication, County Clare had an installed capacity of c. 153MW of onshore wind energy. While it is noted that several wind energy projects have been granted permission since, it is clear that County Clare have yet to achieve the target of 550MW of onshore wind energy.

The RES does provide further guidance in relation to the requirements for wind energy development applications. The following is stated within the RES:

- Any planning applications for wind energy development within the County shall ensure that development proposals in the vicinity of or potentially affecting in any way an NHA or pNHA provide sufficient information showing how it potentially would impact on the designated site (through an assessment of effects on their Features of Interest) and how any such potential impact will be appropriately mitigated.
- Any planning applications for wind energy development within the County shall ensure that all NHA's and pNHA's are afforded the appropriate level of protection by only permitting development demonstrated not to have a significant adverse effect on the conservation value of such areas. Any proposed wind energy development that could have significant effects on an NHA is likely to require an EIA and the preparation of an EIAR.

The planning application for the Proposed Project is accompanied by an EIAR. **Chapter 6: Biodiversity** of the EIAR provides a full assessment of any potential impacts from the construction, operational and decommissioning phases on all NHAs and pNHAs the vicinity of the Proposed Turbine locations. No negative effects have been identified.

It is noted that the RES stresses CCC's commitment to reviewing the WES, once the new wind energy guidelines are issued.

7.2.3 County Clare Wind Energy Strategy

The Clare Wind Energy Strategy (WES) forms part of the CCDP, however it remains unchanged from the WES included in the 2017-2023 Development Plan. This is due to government circular PL20-13 which states that until the national policy review processes have concluded in relation to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines, local authorities should defer amending their existing Development Plan policies and should instead operate their existing Development Plan policies and objectives until the completion of these processes and further advice is issued. The same government circular was in place at the time of the adoption of the 2017 to 2023 Development Plan, resulting in the absence of a WES review and update under the 2017 to 2023 Development Plan. The outcome of the government circular is that the current Clare WES was prepared as part of the 2011 – 2017 Development Plan. The preparation and publication of the current WES in 2011, means that the strategy does not take into consideration the current national policy context and the higher national targets for renewable energy introduced since the WES was first published.

The Clare WES was prepared with the overall aim to facilitate the development of wind farms, such as the Proposed Project, by maximising the wind resource of the County having regard to what was at the time, recent technological advances and national guidance. A key priority underpinning this aim is the identification of sites of strategic importance that have the potential to accommodate wind energy development. The general objectives of the Clare WES are outlined in the table overleaf, along with a compliance statement with regard to the Proposed Project.

Table 7-3: Clare Wind Energy Objectives

General Objectives	Descriptions	Compliance
WES One: Development of Renewable Energy Generation	<i>It is the objective of the Council to support, in principle and in appropriate scales and locations, the development of wind energy resources in County Clare. It is an objective of the Council to ensure the security of energy supply by accommodating the development of wind energy resources in appropriate areas and at appropriate scales within the County.</i>	The Proposed Turbines are wholly located within an area designated as a ‘Strategic Area’ for wind energy development. The area is considered most suitable for wind energy development as outlined in the WES. The Proposed Project will support the Council in achieving its objective to ensure the security of energy supply by accommodating the development of wind energy resources
WES Two: Development of Low Carbon Economy	<i>County Clare will seek to promote itself as moving towards becoming a low carbon County as a means of attracting inward investment to the County and the wider Mid-West region.</i>	The Proposed Project will support County Clare in towards becoming a low carbon County as it will contribute an installed capacity of c. 54MW of renewable wind energy generation to County Clare’s Wind Energy targets.
WES Three: County Partnership Approach	<i>Clare County Council will seek to promote wind energy in appropriate sites in the County and will work with agencies such as the Clare County Development Board, Clare Enterprise Board, Limerick Clare Energy Agency, Shannon Development, I.D.A and Enterprise Ireland to encourage investment in research and technology associated with wind farms and other renewable energy technology.</i>	The Proposed Turbines is located on an appropriate site classified as a ‘Strategic Area’ in the WES. The construction and operation of the Proposed Project represent a significant investment in renewable energy technology in the county. By generating renewable energy, wind farms such as the Proposed Project contribute to achieving the long-term goal of replacing fossil fuels with sustainable energy sources.
WES Four: Response to National Policy	<i>The White Paper on Energy has set a target of 40% of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2020. In the Mid-West Regional Climate Change Strategy, County Clare is identified as having a potential 600MW energy produced from renewables by 2020. Clare County Council will aim to achieve a minimum target of 550MW from wind energy by the conclusion of this Strategy.</i>	The Proposed Project will contribute an installed capacity of c. 54MW of renewable wind energy to the national electricity grid. This will increase Co. Clare’s overall renewable energy generation potential, assisting towards achieving the county’s target.
WES Five: Promotion of Community Involvement	<i>Clare County Council will seek to promote community involvement and require community benefit where possible in Wind farm developments.</i>	A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) is appointed as the point of contact for the Proposed Project and have been engaging with the local

		<p>community. The purpose of the CLO was to introduce the Proposed Project to the local community, engage and establish a line of dialogue with the local community and facilitate one-to-one consultation meetings, or group meetings where requested.</p> <p>Please see Section 2.8.2 of Chapter 2: Background to the Proposed Project of the EIAR for further detail on the Community Consultation process.</p> <p>The development of the Proposed Project will, if permitted, provide an enduring economic benefit to the communities surrounding the Proposed Project. Throughout the community engagement on the Proposed Project, the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) 2 guidelines have been used to demonstrate what benefits the community would receive should the project be developed under RESS. The RESS 2 T&C's have since been updated in RESS 5 and will likely change again before the Proposed Project is built. As such, the fund will be adjusted accordingly depending on what RESS iteration is relevant when the Proposed Project becoming operational.</p> <p>The value of the Community Benefit Fund will be linked to the productivity of the wind farm and is calculated based on €2/MWh of the overall total generated by the wind farm. Should the Proposed Project be developed under the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) 2 T&C's, as a 54MW development it would attract a community contribution in the region of almost €331,000/year for the local community (estimated based on an average energy yield). Should the Proposed Project not be developed under RESS, the Applicant is committing that for each megawatt hour (MWh) of electricity produced by the wind farm, the project will contribute €1 into a community fund for the entire operational life of the Proposed Project. This would equate to an estimated annual fund of approximately €165,000 (using the same formula as above), which across the 35-year operational lifespan would result in funding in the order of €5.75 million to the local community which is a substantial contribution.</p>
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<p>WES Six: Infrastructure Development Proposals</p>	<p><i>Proposals for the development of infrastructure for the production, storage, and distribution of electricity through the harnessing of wind energy will be considered in appropriate sites and locations, subject to relevant policy, legislation and environmental considerations.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Turbines are wholly located within an area designated as a ‘Strategic Area’. The area is considered most suitable for wind energy development as outlined in the WES. The design and layout of the Proposed Project follow the recommendations and guidelines set out in the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006), and the ‘<i>Best Practice Guidelines for the Irish Wind Energy Industry</i>’ (Irish Wind Energy Association, 2012).</p> <p>The Site has been subject to a comprehensive environmental and ecological appraisal to ensure that the Proposed Project does not result in any significant adverse environmental or ecological impacts. A detailed analysis of site-specific constraints was carried out in order to inform the placement of the Proposed Project infrastructure. These assessments are included throughout each chapter of the EIAR.</p>
<p>WES Seven: Natura 2000 Sites</p>	<p><i>Having regard to the provisions of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, where a proposed development will give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites, (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects), permission will only be granted where there is no alternative solution and where there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest in favour of granting permission, including those of a social or economic nature.</i></p>	<p>The impact of the Proposed Project on designated sites is considered in full in the NIS. It is concluded in the NIS that the Proposed Project will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites either individually or in combination with other projects.</p>

Wind Energy Classification

The WES designates areas as being ‘Strategic Area’, ‘Acceptable in Principle’, ‘Open for consideration’ and ‘Not Normally Permissible’. The total land area designated as ‘Strategic Area’ is 9,112 hectares and the area proposed as ‘Acceptable in Principle’ is 47,320 hectares. This represents 2.6% and 13.8% of the County respectively or 16.4% of the total land area of County Clare.

The Proposed Turbines are located within a ‘Strategic Area’ designation, with the surrounding lands designated as ‘Acceptable in Principle’ (‘AIP’) (refer to Figure 7-1 below), accordingly the Proposed Wind Farm Site is located in an area that has been designated as the most suitable in the hierarchy for the provision of wind energy development in the County.

Lands classified under the WES have been developed for wind farm developments based on specific objectives. The Proposed Turbines are located in an area classified as ‘Strategic Area’, which is outlined below:

WES Eight: ‘Strategic Areas’

These key areas are regarded as highly suitable for wind farm development and are strategically important due to the following factors:

- Good / excellent wind resources
- Access to grid
- Distance from properties and
- Outside any Natura 2000 sites
- Projects within these areas must:
 - Demonstrate conformity with existing and approved wind farms to avoid visual clutter.
 - Be designed and developed in line with the Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2006) in terms of siting, layout and environmental studies.
 - Provide a Habitats Directive Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitat Regulations if the site is located in close proximity to a Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area.
 - Be developed in a comprehensive manner avoiding the piecemeal development of the areas designated as ‘strategic’.

Strategic Areas are considered suitable for wind farm development with good/excellent wind resources, access to grid, distance from properties and location outside designated sites. A target of minimum 400MW from these areas is identified in the WES. AIP areas are also considered suitable for wind farm development with sufficient wind speeds, access to grid and established patterns of inquiries. A target of a minimum of 150MW from these areas is identified in the WES. CCC will assess each application for wind development in line with existing planning policy, objectives, and legislation. It should be noted, as demonstrated throughout this report and within the planning application. The Proposed Project has been designed and assessed in accordance with existing planning policy, objectives and legislation.

The Site layout as submitted as part of this application takes account of all site constraints and the distances to be maintained between turbines and other infrastructure from houses, roads, etc. The layout is based on the results of all site investigations that have been carried out since 2012 on the Site. As information regarding the Site was compiled and assessed, the proposed layout has been revised and amended to take account of the physical constraints of the site and the requirement for buffer zones and other areas in which no turbines could be located. The selection of turbine number and layout has also had regard to wind-take, noise and shadow flicker impacts and the separation distance to be maintained between turbines. The Proposed Project 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, whilst maximising the generating potential of the proposal.

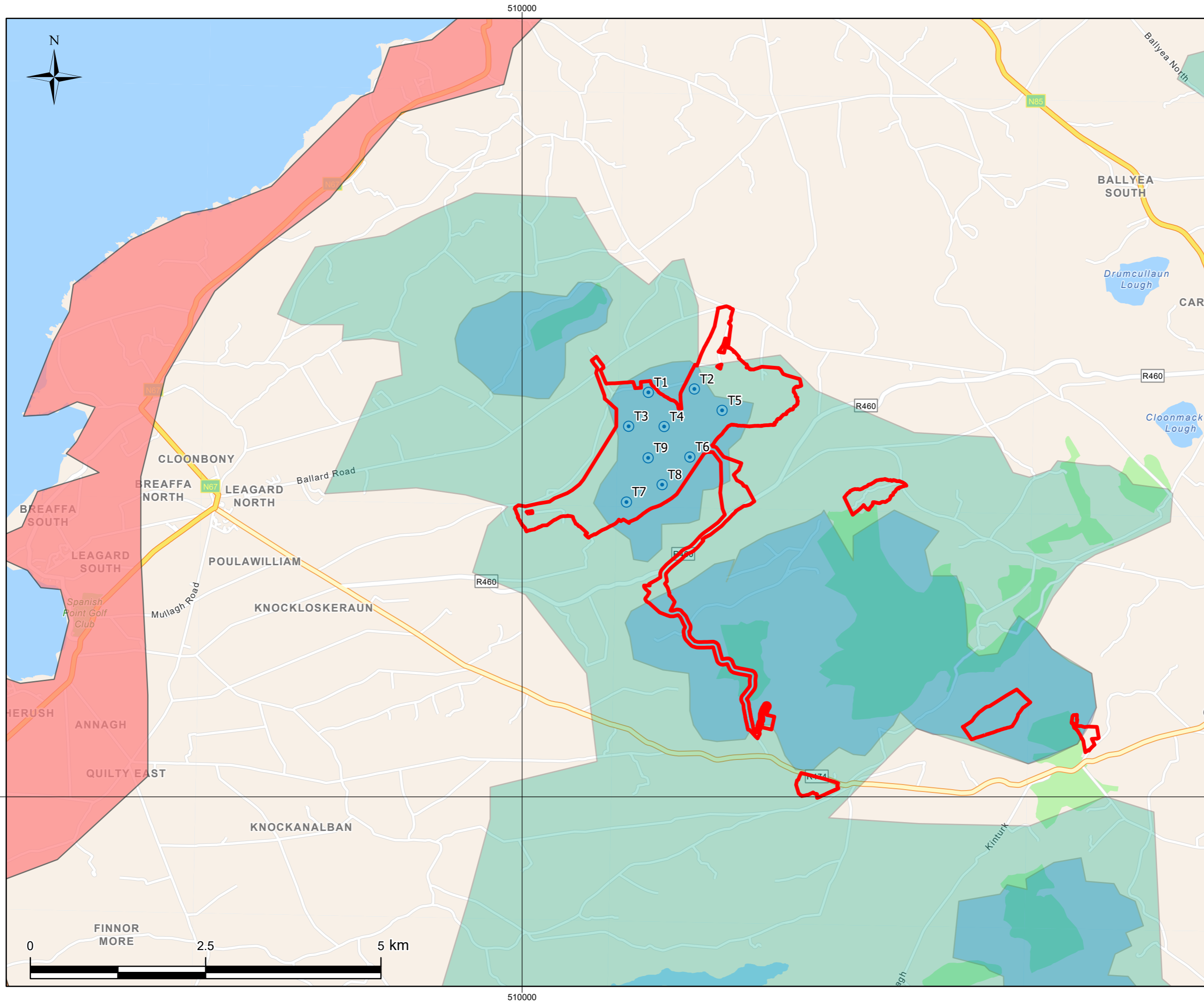
The WES has remained largely unchanged since first published in 2009, in terms of the identified suitable areas and MW targets. The first version of the WES set a 400MW target for wind energy generation from Strategic Areas, 250MW of which was to be identified as the potential renewable (wind) energy generation for the Sliabh Callan landscape character area (LCA). The WES set a “*working target*” of 550MW “*to enable the County to make the initial steps towards a low carbon economy by 2020*”, which was considered to represent “*a realistic target that can be achieved over the lifetime of the WES*”. Despite over 15 years passing since the current WES was first prepared and adopted, there has been no increase in the MW targets of the WES of the CDP. The 550MW (County Clare) and 400MW (Strategic Areas) targets remain in place and unchanged since 2009. As detailed in the preceding sections, the national and international policy context for renewable energy, wind energy and decarbonisation has changed dramatically in the same time period.

To-date, there are only c. 246MW of wind energy projects operational in Co. Clare⁸. The Proposed Project would significantly increase the installed capacity and further deliver on the on the County’s stated targets for Strategic Areas.

The WES also provides advice on the landscape capacity to accommodate wind farm developments based on Landscape Character Areas (LCA’s). The Proposed Turbines are sited within the Sliabh Callan Uplands Landscape Character Area (LCA), an LCA with a ‘*medium to low*’ overall sensitivity to wind farm development and is deemed to be suitable and capable of absorbing multiple large scale wind energy developments. Section 1.4 of the WES defines ‘Large’ as wind farms numbering 11 to 25 turbines and ‘Medium’ as wind farms numbering 6 to 10 turbines. In this regard, it is considered that the 9 No. Proposed Turbines are of a medium size, thus it is a development with the potential to be effectively absorbed by this LCA. Further policy assessment in relation to landscape policy is provided in the **Chapter 13: Landscape and Visual**.

Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Project is fully aligned with the policies and objectives set out in the WES. The Proposed Project represents a significant opportunity to contribute to wind energy targets set out in the WES.

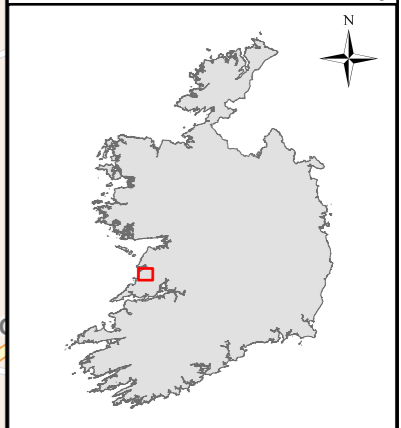
⁸ <https://windenergyireland.com/about-wind/wind-energy-by-county>



Map Legend

- Planning Application Boundary
- ⊙ Proposed Turbines
- Acceptable in principle
- Not normally permissible
- Strategic Areas

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SITE LOCATION - NOT TO SCALE

Drawing Title
Co. Clare Wind Energy Designations

Project Title
Slieveacurry Renewable Energy Development, Co. Clare

Project No. 240718	Drawing No. 7-1	Scale 1:50,000
Drawn By MVN	Checked By BT	Date 29/04/2026

Email: info@mkofireland.ie / Website: www.mkofireland.ie

7.3 Summary of Compliance with Planning Policy

In summary, 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 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 80% by 2030 as set out in the CAP25. The comprehensive suite of European, national, regional and local policy support for wind energy, demonstrates that 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 REDIII.

The Proposed Project aligns with National Strategic Outcomes and Objectives outlined in the 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.

Furthermore, RED III and REPowerEU have emphasized 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 prioritize the development and adoption of renewable energy technologies.

Locally, the CCDP is supportive of the Proposed Project as it sets out the need for Clare to transition to a low carbon and climate resilient County with a focus on renewable energy to increase the County's energy sustainability and security. If permitted, the Proposed Project will contribute to CCC's target of reaching 550MW of onshore wind energy by 2030.

In summary, the Proposed Project provides the opportunity to capture an additional part of Co. Clare's valuable renewable energy resource. If the Proposed Project were not to proceed the opportunity to capture this additional part of Clare's valuable renewable energy resource would be lost, as would the opportunity to contribute to meeting EU and national targets for the production and consumption of electricity from renewable resources and the reduction of GHG emissions. The opportunity to generate local employment and investment associated with the Proposed Project would also be lost.

8. 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), and it has been demonstrated that the requirements of the Draft Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) can also be achieved. 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. The following section provides a planning assessment of the Proposed Project under the following key material considerations:

- Strategic Need for the Proposed Project,
- Compliance with Planning Policy,
- Compliance with Legislation,
- EIAR Findings,
- NIS Findings,
- Principle of Development.

8.1 Strategic Need for the Proposed Project

The global climate is breaking down as a result 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. According to the World Meteorological Organisation’s ‘State of the Global Climate 2025’ published in March 2026⁹, atmospheric concentration of CO₂ in 2024 reached the highest levels in the last 2,000,000 years, and methane and nitrous oxide reached their highest levels in the last 800,000 years. The annual carbon dioxide concentration increase in 2024 was the largest increase since 1957, when modern measurements began. The report also states that the year 2024 was the warmest year on observational record, with temperatures at 1.55°C ± 0.13°C above the 1850–1900 average¹⁰. The year 2025 was the second or third warmest year (depending on the datasets used) in the 176-year record¹¹.

The European State of the Climate Report 2024 produced by World Meteorological Organisation and European Union¹² reported that:

- Global average values of surface air and sea surface temperatures have increased significantly since the pre-industrial era, by around 1.3°C to 1.4°C and 1°C, respectively.
- Since 1999, an average sea level rise of around 3.7mm globally and 2mm-4mm in the European region has been observed.
- A record increase in CO₂ (+2.4 ppm) and methane (+12 ppb) has been observed since 2020.
- Glaciers in Scandinavia and Svalbard recorded the highest annual rates of mass loss.
- In 2024, Europe experiences the most widespread flooding since 2013.

The impacts of climate change are currently being felt, the severity of which is expected to increase with further greenhouse gas emissions. Ireland’s Climate 2024 Provisional Summary Report produced by MET Eireann¹³, reflects clear and distinct impacts arising from climate change effects in Ireland:

⁹ State of the Global Climate 2025 (World Meteorological Organisation, March 2026)

¹⁰ State of the Global Climate 2025 (World Meteorological Organisation, March 2026)

¹¹ State of the Global Climate 2025 (World Meteorological Organisation, March 2026)

¹² The European State of the Climate Report 2024 (World Meteorological Organization and European Union, April 2025)

¹³ Ireland’s Climate 2024 Provisional Summary Report (Met Eireann, March 2025)

- 2024 was noted to be the fourth warmest year on record in Ireland with an average temperature of 10.72°C.
- Further precipitation changes are expected, with a 9% potential decrease in the summer, causing water shortages and impacting agriculture, and a 24% potential increase in winter, elevating the risk of flooding in various regions.
- Seven named storms impacted Ireland in 2024, with Storms Isha and Darragh both producing particularly violent storm-force winds.

To mitigate climate change, Ireland must decarbonise its economy by 2050. There is an urgency to ensure that real changes occur without delay, which means that a gradual shift towards increasing Ireland's use of renewable energy generation is no longer viable. Over the last 25 years, Ireland has become a world leader in onshore wind energy, with a total of 41.8% of the Ireland's gross electricity supply from onshore wind in 2024¹⁴. As a country, Ireland only became a world leader by consenting and building one wind farm at a time.

Since 1992, Ireland has installed 5,000 MW of onshore wind. Now, with the 2025 Climate Action Plan requiring the amount of onshore wind energy to increase from 5,000 MW to 9,000 MW by 2030, Ireland must install almost double its existing capacity in just under 5 years. To reach this target, hundreds of additional wind farms will have to be connected to the national grid over the rest of this decade. The scale of Ireland's challenge was quantified in the 2024 Climate Action Plan, which states that *'To achieve the necessary emissions abatement, an approximately **eight times increase** of renewable energy deployment to **2.3 GW** annually would be needed between **2024 and 2030.**'* (emphasis added).

The latest climate and energy reports all make one message abundantly clear; we are not acting fast enough. If a major step up in renewable energy deployment levels does not occur, we will fail to reach its renewable energy target and will exceed our carbon budgets. The EPA report *Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2024-2055* (May 2025) highlights that Ireland is not on track to meet the national target of 51% emissions reduction target by 2030 compared to 2018 as required under the Climate Act, nor is it projected to meet its EU target of 42% emissions reduction compared to 2005 under the Effort Sharing Regulations. Similarly, the Climate Change Advisory Council make clear that *'progress to reduce emissions is not sufficient for Ireland to meet its national and EU climate obligations'*¹⁵.

As a nation, Ireland is legally bound to its climate targets. 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. Section 15(1) of the Climate Act requires public bodies (including the planning authorities) to carry out its functions consistently, insofar as practicable, with specified climate plans and objectives, including the latest, which includes CAP25.

Ireland is also legally bound by renewable energy targets at a European level. The latest revision of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED III) introduced a binding EU-wide target for overall RES of at least 42.5% by 2030 and requires Member States to set their national contributions to the EU-wide target. In accordance with RED III and the revised RES target, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) have published an updated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030 in July 2024. The updated NECP committed to achieving a 43% share of renewable energy in total energy consumption by 2030. In the trajectories set out in the updated NECP, it states that Ireland's proposed trajectory will not be in line with the desired trajectory set out in the Governance Regulation (Regulation 2018/1999).

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

¹⁴ <https://www.seai.ie/sites/default/files/publications/Energy-in-Ireland-2025.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.climatecouncil.ie/councilpublications/annualreviewandreport/CCAC-AR-2024-SfA-final.pdf>

energy deployment, Ireland risks missing national and EU commitments, incurring financial penalties, and undermining energy security.

8.2 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 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 greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2030 as set out in the CAP25. The comprehensive suite of European, national, regional and local policy support for wind energy, demonstrates that 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 REDIII. Furthermore, the REPowerEU plan aims to increase energy security within the EU and increase the share of renewable energy onto the EU electricity grid by *'Speeding up renewables permitting to minimise the time for roll-out of renewable projects and grid infrastructure improvements'*.

The Proposed Project aligns with National Strategic Outcome 8 and Objectives outlined in 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. The Proposed Project will contribute to the substantial Regional Renewable Electricity Capacity Allocation for the Southern Region (978MW).

Regionally, the Proposed Project will contribute to the roll-out of renewable energy in the Southern 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.

Locally, the CCDP is supportive of the Proposed Project as it sets out the need for Clare to transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient County with a focus on renewable energy to increase the County's energy sustainability and security. Specifically, a strategic aim of the CCDP is to transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy, the Proposed Project will support the CCDP in this aim. Compliance with all relevant policies within the CCDP is demonstrated in **Table 7-2** above.

In summary, the Proposed Project provides the opportunity to significantly contribute to energy and climate targets in a manner which is in accordance with planning policy at all levels.

8.3 Compliance with Legislation

This planning application has been prepared in accordance with Section 37 of the Planning Act. Pre-application consultation with ACP was undertaken in accordance with Section 37A and the application has been prepared in accordance with the requirements for an application under Section 37E, including the requirements under REDIII. The planning application will be subject to a 'Completeness Check' under Section 37JA of the Planning Act. Appendix 1 of the Cover Letter included with this application includes a table demonstrating compliance with the 'Schedule of information to inform the completeness check' as appended by the Commission to the SID determination.

The Proposed Project is also consistent with the Climate Act and the legal requirement for the State to achieve a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030.

This planning application is accompanied by an EIAR and NIS in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act and the Planning Regulations.

8.4 EIAR Findings

The purpose of the EIAR is to document the current state of the environment on and in the vicinity of the Site and to assess the likely significant effects, if any, of the Proposed Project on the environment, including the identification of mitigation measures, where required.

The EIAR concludes that, taking account of design measures and proposed mitigation measures, the Proposed Project is not predicted to give rise to any significant adverse effects on the environment during the construction or operational phase of the Proposed Project.

8.5 NIS Findings

This NIS has assessed the impacts of the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Project on European Sites and their relevant Qualifying Interests to determine whether the Proposed Project will have an adverse effect on the integrity of European Sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and in light of the conservation objectives of the sites.

Therefore, it can be objectively concluded, following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information, including in particular the nature of predicted impacts, that the Proposed Project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site in light of its conservation objectives and best scientific information, and there is no reasonable scientific doubt in relation to this conclusion.

8.6 Principle of Development

The principle of development is considered to be acceptable at this location, having regard to its alignment with all levels of Planning Policy Frameworks. The Proposed Project is in accordance with and has the support of European, national, regional and local policies pertaining to achieving the transition to a low-carbon economy, climate resiliency, increasing renewable energy generation, and enhancing energy security.

At a local level, the Proposed Project is in line with the CCDP, as it identifies the need for Clare to transition into a low carbon and climate resilient County. The Proposed Project will contribute to a strategic aim of the CCDP to transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy. The Proposed Project is located on a suitable site, with all Proposed Turbines located in an area designated as a 'Strategic Area' for wind energy development.

As concluded in the EIAR and outlined in **Section 8.4** above, the Proposed Project has been thoroughly assessed and with the mitigation measures outlined in the EIAR in place the Proposed Project will be capable of being constructed, operated and decommissioned without likely significant effects on the environment.

Similarly, as concluded in the NIS and outlined in **Section 8.5** above, all potential effects arising from the Proposed Project have been mitigated to the extent that there is no potential for adverse effects on the integrity of any European Site, as a result of the Proposed Project.

As such the principle of development is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

9.

CONCLUSION

The provision of 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 greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2030 as set out in the CAP25.

The Proposed Project aligns with National Strategic Outcome 8 and Objectives outlined in 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.

CAP25 highlights that *“a renewables-led system is at the core of Ireland’s plan to radically reduce emissions in the electricity sector, protect our energy security, and ensure our economic competitiveness”*. If permitted, the Proposed Project will add approximately 54MW of renewable, clean energy to Ireland’s 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. By harnessing indigenous wind resources and generating and providing renewable onshore wind energy, the Proposed Project will enhance Ireland’s energy security by reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels.

It is acknowledged that, as a significant infrastructure project, the Proposed Project will have an impact on the receiving environment in which it is proposed. The application for the Proposed Project recognises the parallel interests of tackling climate change while aiming to safeguard residential amenity and to protect species and habitats. Consideration of this fact has been central to the design of the Proposed Project and in the preparation of the EIAR, NIS, and mitigation measures proposed. The EIAR demonstrates that, if consented, the Proposed Project will be capable of being constructed, operated and decommissioned without giving rise to any significant impacts on the environment.

Ultimately, it is considered that this Proposed Project is in accordance with the provisions of proper planning and sustainable development and due to the suitability of the site and the urgent need for renewable energy development of this scale. National climate and renewable energy objectives, and the decarbonisation of Irish society as a whole is dependent on the rapid expansion of wind energy in Ireland. The scale of the challenge Ireland faces in decarbonising its economy is enormous, but the climate change implications of not doing so are even greater. The Proposed Project will support the decarbonisation of the electricity sector and the decarbonisation of other sectors, reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels for energy generation and enhancing Ireland’s energy security.

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

