

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT (EIAR) FOR THE PROPOSED COOM GREEN ENERGY PARK GRID CONNECTION

VOLUME 2 – MAIN EIAR

CHAPTER 5 – EIA SCOPING AND CONSULTATION

Prepared for:

Coom Green Energy Park Limited



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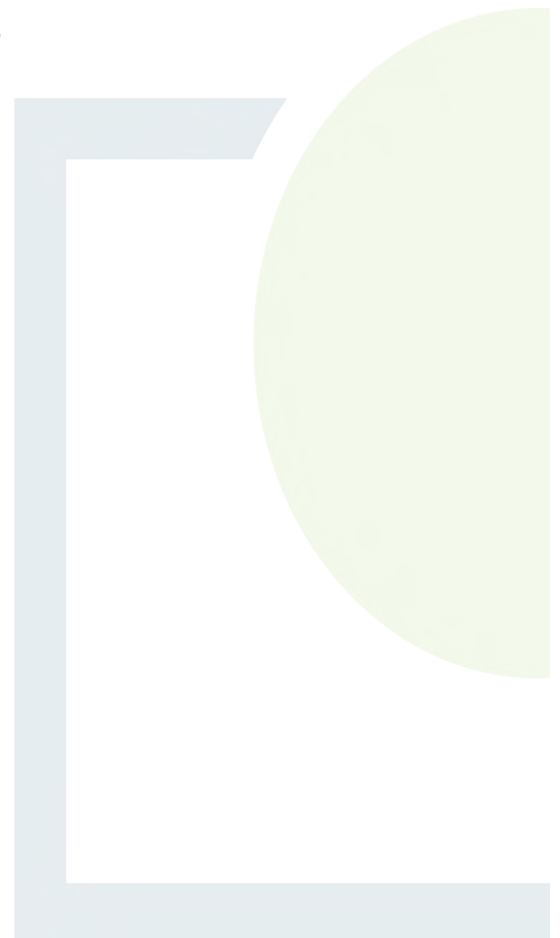


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5. INTRODUCTION

5.1 Introduction

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

This chapter presents the key points that arose through the consultation process and how these points were assessed in the EIAR. The consultation process, scoping and various pre-application consultation meetings with An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) and Cork County council undertaken in respect of the proposed development are set out in this chapter.

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

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

The applicant had regard throughout the pre-planning process of the practical steps that renewable energy promoters should comply with, in engaging with communities as set out in this Guidance.

Please refer to Chapter 4 – Policy of this EIAR for further discussion on this document, and the other legislation and guidelines considered throughout this Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

5.2 Statement of Authority

This chapter has been prepared by Cathal Creedon, and reviewed by Evan Rossiter and Jim Hughes, of Fehily Timoney and Company.

Cathal Creedon is a Project Planner who holds a BA in Geography and History and an MA in Planning and Sustainable Development from University College Cork. Cathal has 2 years' experience working on various renewable energy projects and is involved in the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIARs).

Evan Rossiter is a Senior Project Planner and holds a BSc in City Planning and Environmental Policy and a Masters in Regional and Urban Planning (MRUP) from University College Dublin. Evan has 4 years' experience and has prepared several EIAR Chapters for a range of development types, including renewable energy developments, throughout Ireland.

This chapter has been reviewed by Jim Hughes. Jim holds a BA in Public Administration from the University of Limerick, an MSc in Town Planning from Queen's University Belfast and a Higher Diploma (H.Dip) in Environmental Impact Assessment from University College Dublin and has over 20 years of experience. Jim has led major Irish projects in the planning, environmental assessment and permitting disciplines including many wind farm developments.



5.3 Scoping

The purpose of the EIA scoping process is to identify the key points and issues which are likely to be important during the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and to eliminate those that are not. The scoping process identifies sources or causes of potential environmental effects, the pathways by which the effects can happen, and the sensitive receptors, which are likely to be affected. It defines the appropriate level of detail for the information to be provided in the EIAR. In essence, the primary focus of scoping is to define the most appropriate assessment of significant effects related to the Proposed Development (please refer to Chapter 4 Development Description).

A scoping request letter and report which included a description of the Proposed Development, draft map of the preliminary site boundary and preliminary table of contents of the EIAR was distributed to Technical Consultees on the 05th of March 2025. The recipients included the Local Authority, Government Departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), interested parties and key stakeholders.

Table 5.1 over details the list of Technical Consultees who were issued a copy of the scoping document. A copy of the scoping request and scoping report are included in Appendix 5.2.

Table 5-1: List of Scoping Technical Consultees

Type of Stakeholder	Body / Department
Competent Authorities	Cork County Council
	An Coimisiún Pleanála
Government Departments	Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment
	Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration
	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
	Department of Culture, Communications and Sport
	Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
	Department of Defence
	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
	Department of Transport
NGOs and Stakeholders	An Taisce
	Birdwatch Ireland
	Fáilte Ireland
	Teagasc
	EPA
	Southern Regional Assembly
	Irish Farmers Association
	Irish Peatland Conservation Council
	The Heritage Council
	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
	Inland Fisheries Ireland
	Irish Red Grouse Association



Type of Stakeholder	Body / Department
	National Trails Office
	Irish Wildlife Trust
	Bord Gais
	Irish Sports Council
	The Heritage Service
	Commission for Energy Regulation
	Geological Survey of Ireland
	Health Service Executive
	Health and Safety Authority
	Office of Public Works
	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
	Bat Conservation Ireland
	Irish Raptor Group
	Gas Networks Ireland
	Iarnród Éireann
	Marine Institute
	Irish Water
	IBEC
	Dublin Chambers of Commerce
	The Arts Council
	National Museum of Ireland
	Biodiversity Ireland
	Irish Environmental Network
	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
	Dublin Transport Office
	National Roads Authority
	National Transport Authority
	CIE
	Irish Landscape Institute
	Irish Wind Energy Association
	Irish Planning Institute
	Royal Town Planning Institute
	Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland
	Institute of Geologists of Ireland
	The Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland
	National Building Agency
	Geographical Society of Ireland
	Údarás na Gaeltachta



Type of Stakeholder	Body / Department
	Waterways Ireland
	Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland
	An Garda Síochána
	Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association
	Bord Na Mona
	Forest Service
	Coillte Teoranta
	Railway Procurement Agency
	Irish Coast Guard
	The Irish Meteorological Service
	The National Anglers
	Mallow Trout Anglers Club
	Mountaineering Ireland
	Carraig Na Bhfear GAA Club
Telecommunication / Aviation	Irish Aviation Authority
	Nova Telecom
	Skylink Communications
	Irish Broadband/Imagine
	Munster Broadband
	Digiweb Dublin Offices and Data Centre
	Ripplecom
	Magnet Networks
	BT Communications Ireland Ltd
	Cork Airport Authority
	RTE/2RN
	Now Virgin Media Ireland
	Eir
	Vodafone (Netshare)
	Three
	ESB Telecoms
	TETRA Ireland Ltd.
TowerCom Ltd.	

5.3.1 List of Scoping Responses

Full details of the scoping responses received are set out in Appendix 5.1. A summary of the consultation responses received are presented in Table 5.2.



Table 5-2: Summary of Scoping Responses Received

Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIA where Key Points Raised are Addressed
An Bord Pleanála	None	No comment / response received	N/A
Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	N/A
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DAU Unit)	None	No comment / response received	N/A
Department of Justice and Equality	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	N/A
Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation	05/03/2025	The response received from the department stated that the email has been forwarded to Mr. Paul Gavin. No further response has been received.	N/A
Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	N/A
Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	06/03/2025	The response from the department entails that a response from the DAU will be issued in the event of observations as well as general advice about consultation turnaround times.	N/A
Health & Safety Authority	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	N/A
Health Service Executive	None	No comment / response received	N/A
Commission for Regulation of Utilities	05/03/2026	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	N/A
Geological Survey of Ireland	24/03/2025	A response was received from Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) which included some key resources and datasets relating to: geoheritage, groundwater, geological mapping, geohazards, natural resources, and various supplementary guidelines for consideration of the project design team.	Chapter 10 - Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
		The response also included a request for a copy of reports detailing any site investigations carried out.	
Virgin Media Ireland	05/03/2025	A response was received from Virgin Media stating that they look forward to the brand partnership, this is incorrect.	N/A
BT Communications Ireland Ltd	05/03/2025	A response was received from BT stating that their self-service application should be used for enquiries about the network.	N/A
Department of Public Expenditure, NDP, Delivery and Reform	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	N/A
Bus Éireann	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	N/A
The Arts Council	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	N/A
Iarnród Éireann	05/03/2026	The response from Iarnród Éireann stated that the email address contacted is for Freedom of Information requests only.	N/A
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	None	No comment / response received	N/A
Environmental Protection Agency	05/03/2025	The response from the Environmental Protection agency detailed that the email has been forwarded to the EIA/Planning team. No further response has been received.	N/A
The Irish Meteorological Service	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	N/A
The Mining heritage Trust of Ireland	None	No comment / response received	N/A



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
Transport Infrastructure Ireland	25/03/2025	<p>A detailed response was received from Transport Infrastructure Ireland. It outlined general guidance and suggestions for consideration during the preparation of the EIAR. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of the need for alternatives/mitigation methodologies for proposals located in proximity to the M8, due to the M8 forming part of the EU Ten – T Core Network. Refers to condition no.21 in case PA04.308885 Having regard to TII Publications and the National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities Consultation with the relevant Local Authorities about the locations of existing and future road schemes. Having regard to any prior EIARs, conditions imposed by An Bord Pleanála and potential cumulative impacts Having regard to the provisions in Chapter 3 of the DoECLG’s Spatial planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities. The carrying out of a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and consultation with TII Publications to determine if a Road Safety Audit is needed. Identification of proposed haul routes and providing detail regarding same. Consideration of the need for separate approvals/permits/ works specific deeds of indemnity in connection to haul route, further consultation with local authorities, PPP Companies and MmaRC Contractors may be required. Consideration of capacity of haul route to accommodate abnormal loads. Identify methods proposed for traversing the national road network. Cabling routing should avoid all impacts to existing TII infrastructure, for any such works, consultation with TII is required. 	Chapter 12 - Material Assets, Telecommunications, Traffic and Transport



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
		<p>Consideration of TII's Environmental Assessment and Construction Guidelines, including the Good Practice for the Treatment of Noise during the Planning of National Road Schemes 2014</p> <p>Consideration of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2018 and how the development will impact any future plans by the relevant competent authority.</p> <p>Consideration of the need to implement noise barriers (in line with the Good Practice Guidance for the Treatment of Noise during the Planning of National Road Schemes, NRA 2014)</p>	
Waterways Ireland	05/03/2025	The response received from Waterways Ireland stated that they have no remit in Cork and will not participate in the consultation.	
Department of Defence	None	No comment / response received	
An Garda Síochána	14/04/2025	The response received from An Garda Síochána detailed a request for the turbine co-ordinates due to concern of the proximity to ESB Nagles.	
Cork County Council	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	
Fáilte Ireland	None	No comment / response received	
Ripplecom	None	No comment / response received	
RTÉ/2RN	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	
Eir		No comment / response received	
THREE	05/03/2025	The response received from Three was a request for personal Three account information, which is incorrect.	
Vodafone (Netshare)	05/03/2025	The response received from Vodafone requested clarification on whether billing actions are required, this was an incorrectly addressed email.	
The Irish Landscape Institute	20/03/2025	The response received from the Irish Landscape Institute stated that they are not in a position to comment.	



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
Imagine Broadband	10/03/2025	The response received from Imagine Broadband stated that the development will not affect the Imagine network.	
CIE	06/03/2025	The response from the CIE detailed a request for information on whether the grid connection interfaces with any railway.	
Southern Regional Assembly	06/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	
Biodiversity Ireland	06/03/2025	The response received advised that it is not within the remit of the National Biodiversity Data Centre to make any comments.	
Irish Wildlife Trust	06/03/2025	The response received from the Irish Wildlife Trust detailed that they do not have the staff capacity to provide a response but will endeavour to do so as soon as possible. No further comments have been received.	
TowerCom Ltd.	05/03/2025	The response received from TowerCom stated that they do not foresee any impact on their operations from the development.	
Bord Gáis Energy	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	
Gas Networks Ireland	05/03/2025	The response received from Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) advised that the Proposed Development does not impact on the GNI network given current cable route. A recommendation for the contractor to use the 'Dial Before you Dig' system was included to ensure that the required response is received in a timely manner. It is outlined that the online system can give immediate mapping of an area once an account is registered and activated.	
Department of Transport	05/03/2025	Automated / acknowledgement response received.	
Irish Peatland Conservation Council	05/03/2025	A detailed response was received from the Irish Peatland Conservation Council. It outlined the following key points and suggestions for consideration:	Chapter 10 – Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
		<p>Consideration for the impact on destruction of peatland landscapes on wildlife (birds, damselflies, dragonflies and butterflies) listed on the species red list that inhabit peatlands.</p> <p>The inclusion of peatland restoration/rehabilitation and environment stabilisation in the development.</p> <p>Consideration to include the following research report <i>“The Habitats of Cutover Raised Bog, George F. Smith & William Crowley, Irish Wildlife Manual 128, NPWS, 2020”</i> into the project’s literature review, due to the potential of non-high-bog areas becoming active raised bog SACs.</p> <p>Having regard to all National and European legislation and conventions related to peatlands.</p> <p>Having regard to the Environmental Protection Agency funded project BOGLAND.</p> <p>Consideration on the impact regarding nitrogen and its effects on nature habitats, as well as the implementation of long-term monitoring of emission rates/vectors to inform future projects.</p> <p>Consideration for the protection of ground nesting birds and that vegetation removal is illegal from 1st of March to 31st of August.</p> <p>The carrying out of training of construction workers regarding vegetation destruction.</p> <p>Consideration of the investigation of carbon inputs/outputs.</p> <p>Identify the methods proposed to mitigate carbon, assess the impact from drainage, quantify the volume of peat removal and restore habitats.</p>	



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
		<p>The carrying out of ornithology surveys for species on the Bird Red List (emphasis on Curlew) and investigation of all red listed species within the National Biodiversity Data Centre, as well as mitigation works if a susceptible species is identified.</p> <p>Having regard to the impact on wetland sites (WMI_C0218,WMI_C0219, WMI_C0220, WMI_C0221, WMI_C0222) and liaising with Wetland Surveys Ireland. Ensure there is no loss of fen habitat.</p> <p>Consideration to include the following research report “<i>Use of Peat Depth Criteria: Accounting for the lost peatlands – IUCN UK Peatland Programme</i>” into the project’s literature review.</p> <p>Mitigation of the risk of spreading invasive species due to people/vehicle movements.</p> <p>The organisation states that they do not support developments without archaeological surveys.</p>	
National Museum of Ireland	14/03/2025	<p>A detailed response was received from the National Museum of Ireland. It outlined observations/recommendations for consideration during the preparation of the EIAR. These included:</p> <p>Consideration of the EPA guidelines published in 2022 in reference to section 3.2.1 of the scoping document.</p> <p>Consultation with all relevant statutory bodies</p> <p>Consideration of an archaeological component along with the environmental impact assessment and consultation with an archaeologist.</p> <p>Ensuring the preservation of the cultural significance of Townland and Barony boundaries and the horde depositions at said boundaries.</p> <p>Consultation with the NMI Topographical files within the Irish Antiquities Division of the National Museum of Ireland to ascertain details on stray finds within the townlands which may be affected by the scheme.</p>	Chapter 13 - Archaeology, Architectural and Cultural Heritage



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
		Searching at townland and other levels to gain an understanding of the archaeological potential of the area. Consultation with the National Monuments Service (NMS) map viewer for the various townlands which may be affected. Having regard for the negative impact on the survivability of archaeological finds within riverine and wetland locations due to changes to their local conditions. Mitigation to protect/recover riverine and wetland archaeological finds. Consideration of an archaeological impact assessment. Consideration of possible mitigation excavations to preserve/recover archaeological objects/features.	
Nova Telecom	None	No comment / response received	N/A
Irish Aviation Authority	None	No comment / response received	N/A

5.3.2 Key Issues Raised During the Scoping Process

The scoping process proved beneficial to the identification of issues and potential issues in relation to the proposed Coom Green Energy Park Grid Connection project. Responses received from Technical Consultees identified a range of observations which have been taken into consideration in the iterative design process and assessed in the respective chapters of this EIAR.

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

5.3.2.1 *Transport and National Infrastructure*

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and CIE provided the most technical requirements regarding the project's physical footprint:

National Road Network (M8): TII highlighted the proximity to the M8 (part of the EU Ten-T Core Network). They require specific mitigation methodologies and strict adherence to the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines. TII emphasised that as the M8 is a critical route, a high degree of care has been taken in the evaluation of alternatives and implementation methodologies. Furthermore, TII stated that: *"the requirements associated with Condition no. 21 included in An Bord Pleanála [sic] decision case reference: PA04.308885 should also apply to this application."*

Haulage and Access: Detailed identification of haul routes is required, specifically regarding the capacity to accommodate abnormal loads and the methods for traversing national roads.



Grid and Rail Interfaces: CIE requested clarification on whether the grid connection interfaces with any railway lines. TII also specified that cable routing must avoid impacting existing TII infrastructure.

Traffic Safety: There is a requirement for a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and potentially a Road Safety Audit.

5.3.2.2 *Peatland Ecology and Biodiversity*

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC) raised extensive concerns regarding the ecological impact on sensitive bog environments:

Species Protection: Emphasis was placed on red-listed species, specifically birds (Curlew), damselflies, dragonflies, and butterflies. The project's construction schedule adheres to the statutory prohibition of vegetation removal between 1 March and 31 August, a mandatory legal requirement under the Wildlife Acts designed to protect nesting birds.

Peatland Management: The response called for the quantification of peat removal and a plan for restoration, rehabilitation, and environmental stabilisation.

Carbon and Nitrogen: The project must investigate carbon inputs/outputs and the potential impact of nitrogen on natural habitats, including long-term monitoring of emission rates.

5.3.2.3 *Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*

The National Museum of Ireland (NMI) and the IPCC emphasised the need for rigorous heritage protection:

Boundary Significance: NMI highlighted the cultural significance of Townland and Barony boundaries, noting that these are often sites of historical "hoard depositions" and must be preserved.

Archaeological Potential: There is a requirement to consult topographical files to identify "stray finds" in affected townlands and to assess the impact on riverine or wetland archaeology, where preservation conditions are unique.

Site Surveys: The IPCC stated they do not support any development that lacks comprehensive archaeological surveys.

5.3.2.4 *Geology and Utilities*

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) and Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) focused on subsurface safety and data:

Data Integration: GSI requested that the project utilise their datasets regarding geoheritage, groundwater, and geohazards. They also formally requested copies of any site investigation reports.

Utility Safety: GNI recommended the use of the 'Dial Before You Dig' system to prevent interference with existing gas networks, though they noted no immediate impact from the current proposed cable route.

5.3.2.5 *Public Safety and Telecommunications*

Aviation and Emergency Services: An Garda Síochána requested specific turbine co-ordinates to assess the proximity to ESB Nagles.



Telecommunications: While providers like Imagine Broadband and TowerCom reported no expected impact, others (Virgin Media, Three, Vodafone) provided incorrect or irrelevant responses regarding personal billing or brand partnerships, which suggests a need for follow-up if their infrastructure is nearby.

5.3.3 Applicant Response

The applicant has addressed the observations raised during the scoping process as follows:

5.3.3.1 *Transport and National Infrastructure*

National Road Network (M8): In response to TII's requirements regarding the EU Ten-T Core Network, the Applicant has utilised Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) for the M8 crossing to avoid physical impacts on the motorway.

Grid and Rail Interfaces: Following the request from CIE, the Applicant has confirmed that the grid connection does not interface with railway lines.

TII Infrastructure: The cable routing has been designed to avoid impacts on existing TII infrastructure, and ongoing consultations with TII (September 2025) and Direct Route have confirmed their satisfaction with the proposed arrangements.

Assessment Documentation: An updated Traffic Management Plan is being prepared following engagement with the Cork County Council roads department.

5.3.3.2 *Peatland Ecology and Biodiversity*

Species and Habitat Protection: The project construction schedule adheres to the statutory prohibition of vegetation removal between 01st March and 31st August, as required under the Wildlife Acts.

Peat and Carbon: Impacts regarding peatland environments and carbon inputs/outputs are addressed in the respective ecological and climate chapters of the EIAR.

5.3.3.3 *Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*

Cultural Boundaries: The Applicant acknowledges the significance of Townland and Barony boundaries as highlighted by the NMI. These have been identified and considered within the archaeological assessment.

Surveys: Comprehensive archaeological assessments have been undertaken to evaluate the potential for "stray finds" or wetland archaeology along the route.

5.3.3.4 *Geology and Utilities*

Utility Safety: The Applicant has noted GNI's recommendation to use the 'Dial Before You Dig' system. It has been confirmed that there is no immediate impact from the current proposed cable route on existing gas networks.

Data Integration: GSI datasets regarding geoheritage, groundwater, and geohazards have been utilised in the preparation of Chapter 10 - Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology.



5.3.3.5 Public Safety and Telecommunications

Aviation and Emergency Services: In response to the request from An Garda Síochána, specific coordinates for the infrastructure have been documented to assess proximity to ESB Nagles.

Telecommunications: Consultation was undertaken with all national providers. Where irrelevant responses were received from certain providers, the Applicant has relied on infrastructure mapping to confirm that no adverse impacts on telecommunications networks are anticipated.

Infrastructure Placement: The grid connection is primarily located within the existing public road corridor, with approximately 12.1 km of the 110 kV route and 1.1 km of the 33 kV route constructed within these boundaries. The 110 kV onsite substation is situated within commercial forestry to provide natural screening.

5.4 Public Consultation

As part of the CGEP Project an extensive amount of public consultation has been undertaken. It commenced in 2018 during the application process for the consented Coom Green Energy Park (the 22-no. turbine wind farm which the Proposed Development seeks to connect to the national grid (ACP ref. 308885)). It is important to note that the grid connection route formed part of this consultation and remains unchanged in the forthcoming Application. This consultation is discussed under Section 5.4.2 of this Chapter.

As part of this application, a separate supplementary public consultation process was held, to provide updated information to residents in proximity to the Proposed Development, this is detailed in Section 5.4.1 below. While the original CGEP feedback remains relevant and important, the consultation undertaken from the 25th to the 27th of February supplements this feedback and ensures its relevancy to the Proposed Development. This consultation is discussed under Section 5.4.1 of this Chapter and was used to inform the final design.

5.4.1 Public Consultation Conducted as part of this Application

Between the 25th and 27th of February 2026, door-to-door deliveries took place of a letter and map (see Appendix 5.4 and Appendix 5.5) by the project community liaison team. The letter outlined the latest status of the project and the intentions to apply for planning for the grid connection elements in the coming weeks. It also provided contact details for two Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) who would be available to answer questions and provide any specific information required by local residents. The map showed the 33kV CNR, 110kV GCR and substation locations relative to the consented wind farm and surrounding population centres.

The letter and map were delivered to 80 properties along the public road sections of the proposed cables and within close proximity to the substation. Direct conversations were had at 46 of these properties over the course of the delivery schedule. Feedback was mixed, with some residents outlining that they did not want the development to progress, while others were indifferent. Over the next week, 12 calls and 2 emails were received by the project CLO team with similar feedback. A request was made by one resident to see a more detailed map of where the 110kV GCR would pass along the public road relative to their land boundary. This was provided and no further query was received. Another resident requested information on how the 110kV GCR would interact with their own existing residential solar cable that crossed under the road. Detail was provided outlining the typical service crossing methodologies and they were advised that there would not be any impact on their existing cable, with the 110kV GCR most likely to cross under it.



5.4.2 Public Consultation Conducted as part of the Consented Coom Green Energy Park Project (ACP Ref. 308885)

In line with the Code of practice for Wind Energy Development in Ireland, the developers of the project appointed a Community Liaison Officer (CLO) to engage with the public throughout the development of the project. The CLO was responsible for communication between the public and the developer's team. The CLO's role included door to door consultation with community members within 2km of the Proposed Development, distribution of project materials to community members, follow up meetings with community members where requested, liaison between local residents and the project team, communication of any project updates and circulation of information regarding upcoming public events.

Project information was distributed by leaflet drop to houses within a 5km radius of the Proposed Development. Furthermore, community information events and technical workshops were held to provide information about the project, to discuss the details of the project with the public and to inform the design of the project through feedback from the community. A dedicated project website was set up which presented updates on the project and hosted a platform for the downloading of project information. The project website also included an email address to relay any queries and the phone number of the CLO. The website was utilised further for consultation during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in 2020, as detailed in Section 5.4.6. The website address is as follows:

cgepgridplanning.ie

5.4.2.1 *Door to Door Community Engagement*

The CLO commenced their role in March 2018 with door-to-door community consultation. The CLO was accompanied by a technical expert with experience of wind farm development. All dwellings within 2km of the proposed turbines were visited with the intention of meeting all households to inform them of the project and relay feedback to the development team in order to inform the design process of the project. This included follow up calls to community members who may have missed the initial visit.

Further door to door consultation took place in September 2018 where the community members were presented with a project information leaflet, a map of DI1 and contact information for the CLO. Follow up door to door visits were conducted in February and March 2019 in order to meet with any households within 2km of the development who had not yet been engaged with.

A final round of door-to-door community consultation took place in June, July and August 2019. All dwellings within 2km of the Proposed Development were visited and a printed map of DI2 and an updated project information leaflet was presented to each household. Each household was informed of further public information events and the expected timeline for a planning submission was also set out. Where respondents were not at home, a printed map of DI2 and a project information leaflet was left in each letterbox.

The project information leaflet set out contact details for respondents to organise a call-back meeting if they wanted to discuss any aspect of the project. A number of call-back meeting requests were received, and meetings were arranged for each one.

5.4.3 Engagement with Community Councils

The CLO was responsible for communication with a number of local Community Councils in the area. Community Councils are voluntary organisations, providing a forum to raise and deal with any issues of possible importance to the community.



They advise, petition, influence and advocate numerous causes and cases of concern on behalf of local communities and were therefore considered a significant stakeholder in relation to the CGEP project.

Initially in July 2018 the Community Councils of Glenville and Mourneabbey were contacted as these communities are located in proximity to the development. Further meetings were held with Community Council Representatives in September 2018. Representatives from the Community Councils who agreed to meet the project team included Glenville, Mourneabbey, Carrignavar, Whitechurch and Ratchduff, covering the majority of the greater area of the Proposed Development. Contact information for each Community Council was sought for circulation of information regarding future public events.

5.4.4 Community Information Events November/December 2018

Three community information events were held in November and December 2018. These events took place at Glenville (28th November 2018), Mourneabbey (30th November 2018) and Whitechurch (5th December 2018). The objective of these workshops was to inform the local communities of the Proposed Development, to provide information pertaining to the Proposed Development and to seek feedback from the local community in terms of local knowledge in order to inform the design process and highlight issues that need to be addressed in the EIAR.

Technical experts were in attendance focusing on noise, civil engineering, transport, ecology, landscape, community benefit and the planning process. Project information was presented including maps and photomontages. A map of the initial design iteration, DI1, was provided for each attendee as well as a leaflet of general project information.

The community engagement events were advertised locally, in The Corkman Newspaper on 22nd November 2018 and in The Avondhu Newspaper on the 22nd of November 2018. Advertisements for the events were also posted on notice boards in local shops and community centres. C. 70 people attended the event at Glenville, c. 70 people attended the event at Mourneabbey and c. 45 people attended the event at Whitechurch.

Feedback forms were available to attendees, and a total of 56 feedback forms were completed from the three public events.

The main issues documented included:

- Lack of detailed information provided
- Communication prior to events was poor
- A request for technical workshops
- More engagement with the community
- Potential devaluation of property
- Noise
- Shadow flicker
- Visual impact
- Ecological concerns
- Traffic impact
- Health impacts
- Community benefit.



Plate 5-1: Photographs of Community Engagement Event at Glenville, 28th of November 2018

The information gathered at the event was circulated to the team producing the EIAR in order to inform assessments and studies. This resulted in a more in-depth focus on areas of concern to the public. Relevant topics raised during the engagement have been addressed in detail throughout the EIAR.

The information gathered also informed DI2 which was issued following the public's input. This included a design change to remove 5 no. turbines as well as the re-siting of a number of turbines to reduce potential impacts on nearby receptors. An alternative cable route was also considered on foot of this engagement, to reduce potential impacts on the local road network as a result of construction works. This resulted in an alternative route which brings much of the cable through private lands in and around the CGEP site area.

5.4.5 Technical Workshops April/May 2019

5 no. technical workshops were organised during May 2019. The workshops took place in the Blarney Woollen Mills Hotel. The 5 no. workshops were intended to focus on a specific topic and to include attendees who lived in the locality who may be specifically impacted by the topic or who showed a specific interest or concern regarding the topic. Invitations were sent out to approximately 30 households as well as representatives of the community councils with the intention of engaging in discussion to inform further design changes and provide technical expertise to those who wished to avail of it.

The 5 no. respective topics included the following:

- Noise
- Engineering: Grid/Construction/Transport/Storage
- Community Benefit
- Ecology
- Visual impact.

The initial workshop, which took place on the 9th of May 2019, focused on noise and included a technical expert who presented information regarding noise and wind turbines. The presentation included methodology of assessment, including the measurement of background noise and computer modelling. EPA noise guidelines and Irish noise standards were discussed, and potential mitigation processes were set out.



The presentation was followed by a discussion between the c. 90 attendees and the applicant's panel which included the project management team, the technical expert and a chairperson. Consensus from the feedback received was that the workshop was too technical and many attendees were unable to understand many points raised.

The second workshop, which took place on the 14th of May 2019, focused on the engineering aspects of the Proposed Development and followed the same format as the previous, including a presentation by a technical expert followed by a discussion. In light of the feedback received from the initial workshop, a less technical approach was employed. The second workshop was attended by c. 90 members of the public. Consensus from the feedback received was that the information provided was too general and specifics were not stated such as turbine type. The remaining 3 no. technical workshops were cancelled in agreement with the attendees. It was concluded that the format of the workshops combined with the over subscription of attendees did not result in the desired outcome and proved unworkable in both informing the public and gaining insightful knowledge for the design and EIAR processes.

Following assessment of the notes taken during each workshop and the feedback received, a detailed set of Q and A style information sheets were presented on the project website to inform the public of any knowledge gaps that occurred at the events, and to attempt to describe the content in a less technical manor.

5.4.6 Community Information Events October 2019

Two public information events were held in October 2019. These events were intended to present the final design iteration and technical assessment results to the public which was a result of consultation feedback and environment assessment which took place over the two-year development period. The events took place on Tuesday, October 8th, 2019, at Mourneabbey Community Hall and Thursday, October 10th, 2019, at the Holy Family Centre, Glenville. The events were advertised in The Corkman and The Avondhu Newspapers prior to the event and flyers were posted on notice boards in local shops and community centres.

Correspondence was sent directly to local community groups and a list of residents who requested to be notified of the events.

The events were presented by the project team which included members from Brookfield Renewable, Coillte and technical experts from Fehily Timoney and Company, Inis Ecology and Macro Works, who were available to answer queries. The event was presented as an open public information session with display boards presenting project information and maps. Pano-pods were used to show panoramic images of the Proposed Development in the existing landscape. The event in Mournabbey was attended by approximately 66 attendees. The event in Glenville was attended by approximately 87 attendees.



Plate 5-2: Photographs of Community Engagement Event at Glenville, 10th of October 2019

5.4.7 Virtual Exhibition November 2020

Due to the government restriction in place for gatherings and indoor events as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic it was not possible to hold a live public engagement event in 2020. In order to overcome this difficulty a website was launched in November 2020 to create a virtual exhibition providing information on the main energy park design. The virtual exhibition could be accessed from the main project website www.coomgreenenergy.com.

The content included poster style information boards which provided further information on the various design disciplines for the development including project layout, Community Benefit, Transport and Turbine Delivery Grid Connection and Energy Storage, Ecology and Biodiversity, Landscape and Visual Amenity. Powerpoint presentations were available from Noise and LVIA experts. Members of the public were informed of the virtual exhibition via posters in local shops, leaflet drop to nearby households and email communication for those requesting to be notified of events directing people to the www.coomgreenenergy.com website where the virtual exhibition could be accessed. In the first week the website was live there were 114 visits to the site. The virtual exhibition will remain live for a minimum of 2 months after the planning application is submitted.

An image of the online exhibition is included below in Plate 5-3.



Plate 5-3: Screenshot of Online Virtual Exhibition



5.4.8 Public Consultation Summary

Table 5-3: Summary of public consultation for the CGEP

Summary of public and stakeholder consultation for the CGEP		
2018	March	Door to door community consultation commenced
	July	Local community groups consultation commenced
	August	Scoping request letter issued to statutory and non-statutory Technical Consultees
	November	Pre-application consultation meeting with Cork County Council
	December	Community engagement events held on DI1
2019	February	Door to door community consultation
	May	Two technical workshops held on Noise and Engineering
	June	Door to door community consultation on DI2
	June	Scoping report issued to statutory and non-statutory Technical Consultees
	June	Pre-application consultation meeting with An Bord Pleanála
	June	Second pre-application consultation meeting with Cork County Council
	July	Meeting with Cork County Council Roads Engineers
	July	Door to door community consultation on DI2
	August	Second pre-application consultation meeting with An Bord Pleanála
	August	Meeting with Inland Fisheries Ireland
	August	Door to door community consultation on DI2
	October	Community engagement events held on DI3
	2020	November
November		Leaflet drops to local households and email communications distributed
November		Posters placed in local shops informing of virtual exhibition for DI4
2023	November	Coom Green Energy Park (CGEP) consented with conditions (ACP Ref: ACP-308885-20)
2025	March	Scoping letter issued to statutory and non-statutory Technical Consultees
	June	Pre-application consultation meeting with Cork County Council
	August	SID Pre-Planning Meeting: An Coimisiún Pleanála
	November	Second SID Pre-Planning meeting with An Coimisiún Pleanála
2026	February	Second pre-application consultation meeting with Cork County Council
	February	Door to door community letter drops to local households



5.5 Consultation with Key Stakeholders

5.5.1 Pre-Planning Meetings with Cork County Council

5.5.1.1 *First Meeting with Cork County Council*

As the local authority responsible for the area, Cork County Council (CCC) were consulted in a pre-planning style meeting in order to inform the authority of the project and to receive observations regarding design and potential environmental impacts.

The meeting took place on the 03rd of June 2025 via Microsoft Teams. The key points from that meeting included:

- (a) Noted that 4 no. potential route options have been considered with a preferred route identified. The EIAR should outline why an alternative route is required as well as the alternatives considered.
- (b) Noted that one of the potential route options was previously considered un-viable due to constraints with space and landowners. Queried as to whether this original grid connection should be included as an alternative as it is no longer a viable option.
- (c) Advised to liaise with the County Archaeologist, Annette Quinn, in relation to archaeological requirements. On site testing is required, starting with geo-physical testing.
- (d) The route of HDD under the river may not be viable, so a route has been proposed including the use of the bridge along River Bride. The NIS should consider in combination impacts including the transport route and methods of crossing watercourses (HDD), as River Bride sensitivities are critical.
- (e) The status of the bridge that is proposed to be crossed should be investigated as to whether it is listed on the NIAH. Additionally, the conservation officer should be consulted regarding the potential impacts of this bridge crossing.
- (f) The hedgerows and treelines should be protected, and compensatory planting should be provided for any unavoidable hedgerow/tree loss adhering to the principle of net biodiversity gain.
- (g) The consents of both the CCC and TII are required for launch pits, etc.
- (h) Considering CCCs 3 years road maintenance programmes, early details of the proposed haulage routes and timings are essential to feed into the planning of the programme.

Response

- (a) Information regarding the alternative routes proposed, as well as the reasoning behind why the final route was chosen and why alternatives routes were considered in detail in Chapter 3 – Site Selections and Alternatives. This chapter outlines the details of the alternative routes considered, as well as the strategic cable route selection, entailing reasoning behind the final route being chosen.
- (b) The EIAR will formally document the original route within the alternatives assessment to provide a transparent audit trail of the design changes. This section can be found in Chapter 3 - Site Selection and Alternatives, this will detail the specific spatial and landownership constraints that led to its dismissal, thereby justifying the selection of the currently proposed route.
- (c) On site geophysical testing will be performed post-planning as it is important to note that this is typically required as a post-planning condition. This is detailed in Chapter 13 – Archaeology, Architectural and Cultural Heritage. A suitably qualified archaeologist will be employed, as mentioned in the Mitigation section of the chapter. Details of field surveys performed will be included in this chapter.
- (d) The impacts and details of the new proposed 33kV cable route (connecting the western and eastern portions of the development) along River Bride are discussed in Chapter 11 – Hydrology and Water Quality. This includes proposed mitigation measures to ensure minimal effect on River Bride.



- (e) Details surrounding the heritage value of the bridge are evident in the existing environment section of Chapter 13 – Archaeology, Architectural and Cultural Heritage as well as the consultation with the conservation officer regarding the impacts. Following the specific request from the Planning Authority, requisite surveys and a comprehensive review of heritage databases were conducted. These have confirmed that the bridge is not listed on the NIAH, nor is it included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS).
- (f) Information regarding the hedgerow habitats is included in Chapter 9 – Biodiversity. The Proposed Development was designed to avoid and minimised impact upon the most sensitive habitats including hedgerows. The protection measures for these habitats are outlined in the mitigation section of the chapter; natural regeneration of native species and specific planting to offset habitat loss, ensuring the long-term ecological integrity of the route, particularly in sensitive areas adjacent to the River Bride.
- (g) Details of launch pit excavation operations are outlined in Chapter 10 – Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology. Letters of consent from Cork County Council and TII are provided in support of this Application.
- (h) The proposed haulage routes will be included in Chapter 12 Material Assets, Telecommunications Traffic and Transport Chapter, under the Proposed Development section. This information will be relayed to Cork County Council as early as possible.

5.5.1.2 *Second Meeting with Cork County Council*

A second meeting was held with Cork County Council on the 4th of February 2026 via Microsoft Teams to present the updated layout, taking into consideration feedback from the first meeting. The key points from that meeting included:

- (a) Archaeological Requirements: CCC noted that applications are typically deemed incomplete without geophysical testing and requested a detailed examination of archaeology to determine if such testing is necessary.
- (b) Historical Site Data: Reference was made to the extensive site investigations, LiDAR, and walkovers conducted for the 2020 Coom EIAR.
- (c) Geophysical Testing Constraints: The archaeological consultants noted that the narrow nature of the Red Line Boundary and extensive metal fencing along the grid route may reduce the effectiveness of geophysical surveys.
- (d) Planning Validation: CCC confirmed they do not currently have a standard validation checklist but will provide guidance on drawing scales and the process for Letters of Consent.
- (e) Traffic and Roads: The CCC Roads Department requested early sharing of detour details for the Traffic Management Plan (TMP) and queried the requirement for road condition surveys.
- (f) Bridge Cover: A request was made for a clear demonstration that adequate cover is maintained for all bridges, especially smaller structures.
- (g) Environmental Documentation: CCC emphasised that supporting documentation must clearly demonstrate that the development will not have an adverse effect on the surrounding environment.



Response

- (a) In place of additional geotechnical data, a professional surveyor's opinion has been submitted to the County Archaeologist. This submission formally contests the requirement for geotechnical investigations based on the specific site conditions and known archaeology.
- (b) Existing data from previous site surveys will be integrated into the updated environmental assessments.
- (c) The archaeological consultants will liaise with CCC to provide a justification for the chosen archaeological survey approach, considering the site-specific constraints.
- (d) The project team have followed up with the relevant CCC contacts and have confirmed planning drawing scales and the necessary details for Letters of Consent.
- (e) Details regarding detours, diversions, and passing bay locations will be provided; the EIAR will include a commitment to reinstate all roads to their original condition or better.
- (f) The application documentation will include specific details confirming that sufficient cover is maintained at all bridge crossings.
- (g) Comprehensive environmental reporting will be included to ensure all potential impacts are addressed as part of the planning submission.

5.5.2 Pre-Application Consultation with An Coimisiún Pleanála

The applicant engaged in pre-application consultation meetings with An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) on 28th August 2025 and 14th November 2025 via Microsoft Teams. While initial discussions served to establish the project's scope, subsequent engagement finalised the requirements for the formal application.

5.1.1 Summary of Consultation and Key Requirements

Across both consultation meetings, ACP raised several key points and requirements for the Proposed Development:

- (a) ACP sought clarity on the nature of the development and whether the 110kV infrastructure and the 33kV interconnector should be handled under a single or separate application.
- (b) Inquiry was made regarding the progress of consultations with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Direct Route concerning motorway and national road crossings.
- (c) Discussions were held regarding the impact of the RED III Directive and the enactment of the Planning and Development Act 2024 on the application process.
- (d) The Commission advised that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) must clearly define project boundaries, provide cumulative assessments, and specify which works are subject to which consent.
- (e) Advice was given to show the specific locations of joint bays and to ensure all relevant landowner consents were in place.
- (f) A primary concern was highlighted regarding traffic and access impacts for residents and property owners along narrow public roads.
- (g) The Commission required specific technical details regarding the method of crossing watercourses or drains.
- (h) Clarification was requested on the works required within the existing Barrymore substation and how these would be assessed.



(i) The Commission advised on the importance of screening the infrastructure and assessing the impact of construction compounds and HDD pits.

5.5.2.1 *Applicant Response*

The following actions were taken by the applicant to address the Commission's requirements and have been integrated into this application:

(a) Following legal advice, the applicant confirmed that separate applications are the correct course of action. This application concerns the 110kV infrastructure under Section 182A, while a separate application for the 33kV interconnector has been submitted to Cork County Council.

(b) Consultations with TII (September 2025) and Direct Route were concluded, with both organisations confirming their satisfaction with the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) approach for all road crossings.

(c) The applicant has monitored the commencement of the Planning and Development Act 2024. It was noted that while the 33kV application may fall under RED III, this 110kV application likely does not.

(d) A unified EIAR has been prepared to support both applications. It provides the requested cumulative assessments and features clear boundary mapping to distinguish the respective consents.

(e) Detailed surveys were undertaken at all proposed joint bay locations. These placements have been finalised within the road corridor and are detailed in Chapter 12 (Material Assets, Telecommunications, Traffic and Transport).

(f) An updated Traffic Management Plan was prepared following engagement with the Cork County Council roads department, ensuring that residential access is maintained throughout the construction period.

(g) Comprehensive details for all watercourse and drain crossings were developed and are included in Chapter 11 (Hydrology and Water Quality).

(h) The planning boundary has been extended to include the existing substation boundaries of both the proposed Lackendarragh North 110kV substation and the existing Barrymore 110kV substation. Internal EirGrid works have been considered within the EIAR where relevant.

(i) To minimise visual and amenity impacts, the Lackendarragh North substation has been sited within commercial forestry for natural screening. All HDD launch/receiving pits and construction compounds have been fully contained within the red-line boundary and assessed accordingly.

5.5.3 Key Issues raised from consultation with Key Stakeholders

5.5.3.1 *Route Selection and Infrastructure Design*

A primary focus of the consultations was the justification for the chosen cable route and the technical specifications of the grid connection:

Alternatives Assessment: CCC requested a clear outline of why a preferred route was identified and why previously considered "unviable" options (due to landowner or space constraints) were discounted.

Technical Standards: ACP and EirGrid requirements must be met, specifically regarding future expansion space at the substation and ensuring the design accounts for "joint bay" locations.



Bridge Cover: CCC expressed concern regarding "bridge cover," requiring proof that adequate depth is maintained for the cable when crossing smaller bridge structures.

5.5.3.2 *Traffic, Transport, and Access*

Both planning authorities highlighted the potential for significant disruption during the construction phase:

Resident Access: ACP underscored that maintaining access for residents and property owners along narrow public roads is a critical concern.

Strategic Road Crossings: Consultations with TII and Direct Route, operating under contract to TII were required to confirm the methodology for crossing the M8 motorway, with Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) identified as the preferred approach. Direct Route was consulted as part of the EIAR scoping process in 2019 and 2025 with a subsequent virtual meeting held on the 5th of September 2025. In a response, Direct Route provided recommendations relating to the proposed 110kV GCR crossing under the M8. All queries raised by Direct Route have been addressed in the Traffic Management Plan, located within the CEMP in Appendix 2.2, Volume 3 of the EIAR.

Road Maintenance: CCC Roads Department was consulted throughout the EIAR scoping phase. An initial meeting was held with CCC (Fermoy District) on the 18th of June 2019 to discuss the Proposed Development and its potential effects on the existing road network. A meeting was also held with CCC (Mallow District) on 1 July 2019. The Proposed Development, if consented, would be located within both Fermoy and Mallow municipal districts. A pre-application consultation with CCC was held on the 3rd of June 2025 where the planning authority issued a list of recommendations. A subsequent pre-application consultation was held on the 4th and 25th of February 2026. CCC requested early details of haulage routes and timings to coordinate with their three-year road maintenance programme. They also queried the need for pre- and post-construction road condition surveys. It is noted within the Traffic Management Plan that all roads will be reinstated expeditiously on completion of the construction works. Roads will be reinstated to their pre-works condition or better and to the satisfaction of the roads authority.

For other traffic and transport mitigation measures, refer to Chapter 15, Volume 2 of the EIAR and the Traffic Management Plan, located within the CEMP in Appendix 2.2, Volume 3 of the EIAR.

5.5.3.3 *Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*

Geophysical Testing: CCC noted that applications are often deemed incomplete without geophysical testing.

Heritage Assets: The status of the bridge over the River Bride must be checked against the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), and the County Conservation Officer must be consulted regarding any potential impacts.

Liaison: Direct engagement with the County Archaeologist (Annette Quinn) was advised to ensure site-specific testing meets local requirements.

Follow up consultation with the Cork County Archaeologist was conducted by email between the 11th of February and the 19th of March 2026, during which the EIAR archaeology and cultural heritage lead provided further detail on the cable route, construction methodologies, and the associated assessment findings, in order to discuss these in more depth. Correspondence included details of the limitations of geophysical survey for the proposed 33 kV cable route in the form of a feasibility assessment by geophysical survey specialist.



5.5.3.4 *Watercourses and Biodiversity*

The environmental sensitivity of the River Bride and surrounding habitats was a recurring theme:

Watercourse Crossings: Detailed construction methodologies are required for all watercourse and drain crossings. Specifically, the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) must evaluate the "in-combination" impacts of transport and crossing methods (e.g., HDD) on the River Bride.

Net Biodiversity Gain: CCC requested that hedgerows and treelines be protected wherever possible. Where loss is unavoidable, compensatory planting of native species is required to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

5.5.3.5 *Consenting Strategy and Legislation*

The procedural complexity of the project was discussed at length with ACP:

Split Applications: It was determined that the development will be split: a Section 182A (Strategic Infrastructure) application to ACP for the 110kV infrastructure, and a separate application to CCC for the 33kV interconnector.

Cumulative Assessment: The EIAR must clearly define the boundaries of both applications and provide a comprehensive cumulative assessment of their combined impact.

Legislative Changes: The parties discussed the implications of the RED III Directive and the Planning and Development Act 2024, noting that the project must remain adaptable to these evolving legal frameworks.

5.6 Conclusion

Consultation was sought from a number of stakeholders, including Cork County Council, An Coimisiún Pleanála. Government departments, Non-Governmental Organisations, telecommunications providers, aviation organisations, local councillors, community groups and local residents. Their comments and feedback were incorporated into the design iterations and subsequently into the EIAR as identified in this chapter.

Pre-planning consultation was held with both Cork County Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála to determine the key points and potential impacts of the Proposed Development and to inform the assessment methodology. These engagements were conducted separately to address the specific statutory remit of each body:

- An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP): Engagements with ACP were held in accordance with Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The aim and intention of these meetings were to determine the strategic nature of the development, establish the appropriate planning consent pathways for the infrastructure, and clarify the requirements for cumulative assessments and project boundaries.
- Cork County Council (CCC): As the local planning authority, the intention of the consultation with CCC was to address localised environmental, infrastructural, and heritage impacts. The aims included aligning proposed traffic management and haulage routes with road maintenance programmes, agreeing upon archaeological testing requirements, and ensuring the protection of sensitive local ecology, such as the River Bride.

Throughout the scoping process, further detailed correspondence was received from key statutory and non-statutory Technical Consultees, such as Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the National Museum of Ireland (NMI), and the Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC). This correspondence provided specific technical and environmental parameters that directly informed the assessment methodologies within the EIAR.



Public consultation was led by a dedicated Community Liaison Officer (CLO) on the ground. This engagement included door-to-door house calls, as well as leaflet and letter drops, to ensure local residents were fully informed about the project details and the planning process. Circulated materials provided a dedicated phone line and email address, enabling members of the public to contact the project team directly.

The observations and issues raised during the scoping and consultation process have directly informed the final project design, environmental assessments, and proposed mitigation measures. Significant outcomes of this process include:

- Consultations with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) led to the selection of Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) for the M8 crossing to protect the national road network. Community feedback also led to the consideration of an alternative cable route to reduce impacts on the local road network.
- Specific requirements from bodies such as the National Museum of Ireland regarding Townland and Barony boundaries and from Cork County Council regarding River Bride sensitivities were integrated into the EIAR and Natura Impact Statement (NIS).
- Engagement with An Coimisiún Pleanála finalised a split application strategy, with 110kV infrastructure being submitted under Section 182A and the 33kV interconnector submitted to Cork County Council.

This comprehensive engagement process ensures that the development is undertaken in observance of best industry practices and with the full engagement of the surrounding communities.



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