Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Strategic Infrastructure Act 2006

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

An Coimisiún Pleanála Ref No:	PAX16.324387
	ABP 318372-23 (pre-app ref.)
Applicant:	RWE Renewables Ireland Limited
Received:	June 19th 2026
Agent:	SLR Environmental Consulting (Ireland) Ltd
Site Location:	within the townlands of Muingmore (An Mhoing Mhór), Doolough (Dumha Locha), Tristia (Troiste), Moneynierin (Moing an Iarainn) and Bangor (Baingear) County Mayo.

1.0 The proposed development

The proposed development consists of 13 wind turbines, a 110kV substation, battery energy storage system (BESS) and all associated infrastructure.

1.1 Purpose of this Report

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and following consultation under Section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) with An Bord Pleanála (now An Coimisiún Pleanála), the Board (An Coimisiún) advised of its determination that it is of the opinion that the proposed project falls within the scope of paragraphs 37(a)(2), 37A(b) and 37A(c) of the Act. The proposed development constitutes Strategic Infrastructure.

In such circumstances the normal mechanism of applying to Mayo County Council for planning permission does not apply with the proposal requiring a planning application to be made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála in accordance with Section 37A of the Act.

Accordingly, RWE Renewables Ireland Limited, as required, has applied directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála for planning permission.

The purpose of this report is to set out the Planning Authority's required views on the effects of the proposed development on the environment and on the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, having regard in particular to the matters specified in section 34(2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (hereafter referenced as the PDA 2000). The matters specified in section 34(2) are:

() the provisions of the development plan,

(ia) any guidelines issued by the Minister under section 28,

() the provisions of any special amenity area order relating to the area,

() any European site or other area prescribed for the purposes of section 10(2)(c),

() where relevant, the policy of the Government, the Minister or any other Minister of the Government,

() the matters referred to in subsection [34](4),

(va) previous developments by the applicant which have not been satisfactorily completed,

(vb) previous convictions against the applicant for non-compliance with this Act, the Building Control Act 2007 or the Fire Services Act 1981, and

() any other relevant provision or requirement of this Act, and any regulations made thereunder.

When making its decision in relation to an application under this section, the planning authority shall apply, where relevant, specific planning policy requirements of guidelines issued by the Minister under section 28.

In the interests of clarification, there are no Special Amenity Area Orders (item ii above) in County Mayo. The matters referred to in section 34(4) of the PDA 2000 (as amended) are those matters which the Planning Authority takes account of and may attach conditions relevant to, during the consideration of a normal planning application.

This report will be submitted for the consideration of An Coimisiún Pleanála as required under Section 37E(4) of the PDA 2000.

1.2 Description of the proposed development:

The Proposed Development will consist of:

- Construction of 13 no. wind turbines, each with an overall blade tip height between 179-180m inclusive, rotor diameter between 149-163m inclusive, hub height between 98.5-105m inclusive, in two clusters.
- Battery energy storage system (BESS) compound to include control building with welfare facilities, all associated plant and equipment, security fencing and gates, underground cabling, and all ancillary structures, drainage works, as well as storage and parking.
- Construction of crane hardstands, laydown areas and turbine foundations.
- Construction of permanent internal site access roads including passing bays and all associated drainage infrastructure.
- Construction of a permanent 110 kV onsite electricity substation and onsite IPP (Independent Power Producer) substation to include control buildings with welfare facilities, all associated electrical plant and equipment, security fencing and gates, all associated underground cabling, wastewater holding tanks, and all ancillary structures and works.
- Construction of 33kV underground electricity cabling and communications cabling, including joint bays and ancillary works, to connect the windfarm and battery energy storage system to the proposed onsite substation.
- Construction of two temporary construction compounds with associated temporary site offices, parking areas, welfare facilities and security fencing.
- Development of an internal site drainage network and sediment control systems.
- Temporary works as part of road improvements to facilitate the delivery of abnormal loads and turbine component deliveries from Killybegs Port to site, to include 3 no. over-run areas along the turbine delivery route, (No. 1 in the townland of Tristia onto the L1206, No. 2 in the townland of Moneynierin at the junction of the N59 and the R312, and, No. 3 in the townland of Bangor off the R313).
- Construction of 1 no. new site entrance and the construction/ upgrade of 2 no. additional site entrances (all off local road L5252, west of the L1206),
- Ancillary forestry felling to facilitate construction of the development.
- All associated site development works including landscaping, lighting, soil Application Form for Permission / Approval in respect of a Strategic Infrastructure Development Page 8

of 16 management and the ongoing maintenance and management of the biodiversity measures in accordance with the Habitat Management Plan and the Peat Restoration Plan.

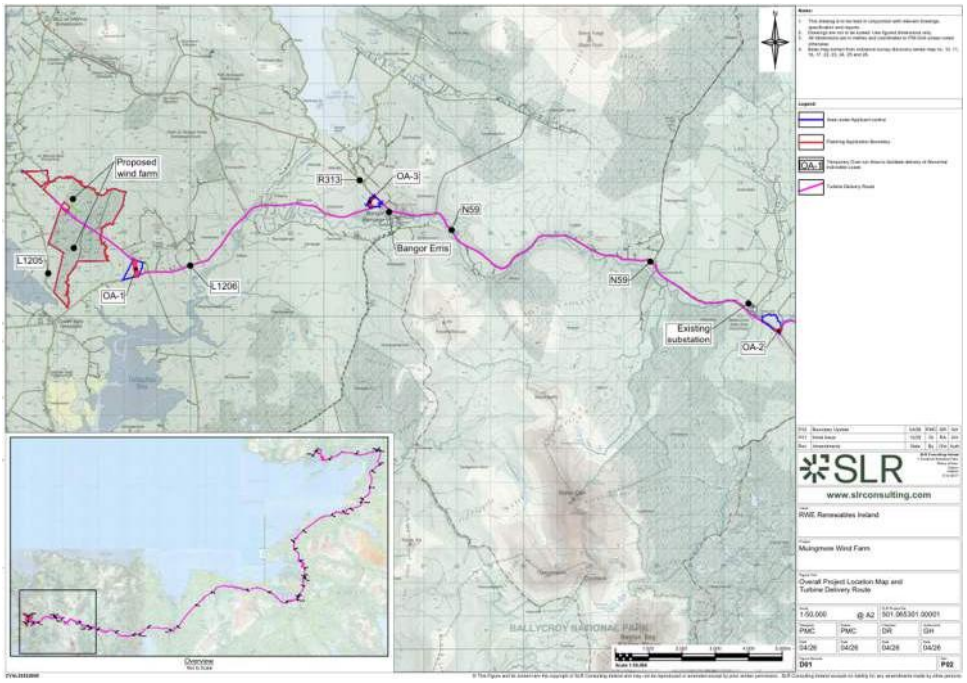
- The replacement of felled trees with the planting of new trees, and;
- The erection of a permanent meteorological mast 100m in height

A 35-year operational life from the date of full commissioning of the entire wind farm and battery storage is being sought for all works (other than temporary and permanent works specified above), and the subsequent decommissioning. The proposed substation will continue to exist on a permanent basis. Permanent planning permission is being sought for this element. A separate planning application for a 110kV underground grid connection and all associated works, from the proposed onsite substation to the Bellacorick Substation (within the townlands of Muingmore, Doolough, Tristia, Goolamore, Drumanaffrin, Kilteany, Srahmore, Bangor, Srahanarry, Briska, Largan More, Largan Beg, Tawnaghmore, Kilsallagh, Bellacorick), will be lodged to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

This planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which includes an assessment of the likely significant effects of the overall project, consisting of the Proposed Development and the connection to the national electricity grid. The planning application is also accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) which includes an assessment of the likely effects on European sites of the overall project, consisting of the Proposed Development and the connection to the national electricity grid.

1.3 Site Location

The site is located c.11km southeast of Belmullet Town, c.9km west of the village of Bangor Erris and c.3km northeast of Gweesalia village in north Co. Mayo. The planning application area is approximately 454 ha in size and is situated within a coastal region of County Mayo. The nearest turbine (T10) is within c.1.1km of the north Mayo coastline.





The Main Wind Farm Development Site extends to approximately 429 hectares and comprises peatlands and commercial forestry plantation. The site is located north of the junction of the L1205 and L1206 roads, with the L1206 running along the southern boundary and the L1205 to the west, connecting to the R313 approximately 4 km north of the site and providing access to the wider road network.

The site is intersected by the L5252 local road, which runs from north-west to south-east through the site, linking the L1205 and L1206. Three proposed site access points are located off the L5252. An existing infrastructure area (not subject to this application) is adjacent to the development site is also accessed via this road (L5252).

The surrounding area comprises predominantly of scenic areas, one-off housing, with several small settlements located within 15 km of the site.

1.4 Relevant Policy

1.4.1 Internation Energy Policy

Ireland is a party to the UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol which provide an international legal framework to address climate change. In 2016 Ireland and the EU ratified and made effective the Paris Agreement which aims to keep global temperature rise this century to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. This is a legally binding agreement to achieve net zero emissions by the second

half of this century, through increasing national determined contributions (NDCs) over time. The NDC for Ireland and all member states will be determined by the EU which has committed to reduce GHG emission by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

In 2015, Ireland adopted the non-legally binding United Nations' 2030 Agenda (Transforming Our World, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) along with all 193 Member States of the UN, which aims to deliver a more sustainable, prosperous and peaceful future for the entire world, and sets out a framework for how to achieve this by 2030. It sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) covering the social, economic and environmental requirements for a sustainable future, including, inter alia mitigating climate change and providing affordable clean energy.

1.4.1 (i) European Energy Policy European Green Deal (2019)

2020 Climate and Energy Package:

Sets three key targets - 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels); 20% of EU energy to be from renewables; and 20% improvement in energy efficiency, which was agreed in 2007 and enacted in legislation in 2009. The EU's Effort Sharing Decision addresses the emissions including from housing, agriculture, waste and transport (excluding aviation) through binding annual national targets to 2020. Under the 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework binding EU targets of at least 40% reduction in GHG emissions and at least 23% share of renewable energy for all energy consumed in the EU by in 2030, and at least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency. The EU's Effort Sharing Regulation (EU) 2018/842 lays down obligations on Member States with respect to their minimum contributions for the period from 2021 to 2030 to fulfilling the Union's target of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels in 2030 in the various sectors and contributes to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement. A GHG reduction target of at least 30% applies to Ireland.

1.4.1(ii) Renewable Energy Directives (REDI, REDII & REDIII)

RED I:

The first Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) (RED I) provided the framework for the promotion of energy from renewable resources across the EU. Article 4 requires each member state to produce a national renewable energy plan to achieve the following: - an overall reduction in GHG emissions of 20%, a 20% increase in energy efficiency and 20% of energy consumption across the EU to come from renewable energy by 2020.

RED II:

The second Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001/EU (RED II) entered into force in December 2018 and was transposed into Irish law in September 2020 by S.I. No. 365/2020 – European Union (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2020. This set a new target for the share of energy from renewable sources in the EU of at least 32% for 2030, with a view to increasing the target through legislation by 2023. Member States are required to set national targets to meet, collectively, the binding Union target through integrated national energy and climate plans. The final share of energy from renewable sources for Ireland's gross final consumption of energy from 1st January 2021 must not be lower than 16% and Ireland will be obliged to take the necessary measures to ensure compliance with same.

RED III:

In 2023, the European Union (EU) adopted an amendment of the Renewable Energy Directive (EU/2023/2413), which is referred to as "RED III". A number of articles of RED III have been transposed into the planning code by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025. RED III obliges Member States to collectively ensure the share of renewable energy in the European Union's gross final energy consumption is at least 42.5% by 2030, with an additional 2.5% indicative top-up to allow the target of 45% to be achieved. RED III also places the presumption of overriding public interest for renewable energy projects (Imperative Reasons for Overriding Public Interest - IROPI) on a permanent footing. Article 16f of the Directive states that Member States must ensure that in the permit-granting procedure, the planning, construction and operation of renewable energy plants, their connection to the grid, the grid itself and storage assets are presumed to be IROPI. Also, RED III obliges Member States to speed up and simplify renewable infrastructure permitting procedures by ensuring that procedures for granting permits to build, repower and operate energy assets do not exceed certain timelines, depending on the asset type, size and location. It should be noted that the subject planning application does not rely on Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI), as concluded in the accompanying Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

1.4.1(iii) RePowerEU Plan

The REPowerEU Plan (May 2022) provides for a suite of actions to save energy, diversify supplies, substitute fossil fuels by accelerating Europe's clean energy transition and to efficiently combine investments and reforms. The Commission published recommendations on speeding up permit-granting procedures for renewable energy projects, accompanied by guidance to help the Member States speed up permitting for renewable energy plants. This was created in order to help Member States exploit all possibilities for acceleration that exist within the legislative framework. It recommends participatory approaches that involve local and regional authorities and providing authorities with the necessary resources so as to facilitate the timely realisation of locally adapted investments.

1.4.2 National Energy & Climate Policy

1.4.2 (i) Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

Ireland has a legally binding path to net-Zero emissions no later than 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of this decade. A key element, from a local authority perspective, is the requirement to prepare individual Climate Action Plans. These Plans will include both mitigation and adaptation measures and are required to be updated every five years.

1.4.1 (ii) Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply

The Programme for Government commits Ireland to an average 7% per annum reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions from 2021 to 2030 (a 51% reduction over the decade) and to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. In order to contribute to the achievement of these targets, the Government has committed that up to 80% of electricity consumption will come from renewable sources by 2030 on a pathway to net zero emissions. Ensuring continued security of electricity supply is considered a priority at national level and within the overarching EU policy framework in which the electricity market operates.

The Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply sets out a number of updates to national policy in the context of the Programme for Government commitments relevant to the electricity sector, planning authorities and developers.

1.4.2 (iii) Climate Action Plan (CAP)

CAP 2023 : The policy document provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 50% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting us on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and as set out in the Climate Act 2021. The plan aims to put Ireland on a more sustainable path, cut emissions, create a cleaner & greener economy and society and protect Ireland from the devastating consequences of climate change. It is a huge opportunity to create new jobs and grow businesses in areas like offshore wind; cutting-edge agriculture; and retrofitting - making our homes warmer and safer. The Plan provides a suite of actions needed to deliver on our climate targets and sets indicative ranges of emissions reductions for each sector of the economy. It will be updated annually to ensure alignment with our legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral ceilings.

CAP 2024: The Climate Action Plan 202419 (CAP2024) sets out Ireland's ongoing, urgent response to the climate crisis and outlines actions to cut emissions in the electricity sector by 75% based on 2018 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. It outlines a massive scaling up in the switch to renewable energy. The critical nature of the climate change challenge is identified in the plan as are the extensive direct and indirect threats of harm to Ireland and its people. Reducing GHGs to mitigate climate change is a key point, reiterated throughout the plan. It states that Ireland's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are estimated to have fallen by 1.9% in 2022 compared to 2021 but that this reduction falls short of the level of abatement required to meet national and international targets. The targets set out in the CAP2024 envisages a step-up of our existing targets to meet the required level of emissions reduction by 2030, including:

- Increase electricity generated from renewable sources to 80%
- Complete the phase-out of coal and peat-fired electricity generation
- 75% reduction in overall green-house gas emissions in the electricity sector compared to 2018 levels
- Increase onshore wind to 9GW

It is acknowledged that increased renewable electricity generation will play an important role in the decarbonisation of other sectors through electrification, including transport, heating, and industry. It underlines that the transition away from fossil fuels and towards locally generated renewables will improve energy security and Irelands dependence on imported energy. The plan has measures to accelerate renewable electricity generation.

1.4.2 (iv) Renewable Electricity Spatial Policy Framework (RESPF)

Under Action EL/23/2 of CAP23, a Renewable Electricity Spatial Policy Framework (RESPF) is currently being prepared. This will form the national policy for onshore renewable electricity and will inform and reshape the development and distribution of onshore renewables in order to enable the delivery of Ireland's renewable electricity targets, as set out in CAP23. The RESPF will promote a plan-led and evidence-based approach to the allocation of renewable electricity spatial

and generation targets across the three Regional Assemblies, to facilitate the achievement of the national target of 80% RES-E by 2030. The objective of such a spatial policy framework is to effectively translate renewable electricity objectives, as those outlined in Climate Action Plan 2023, to the regional level and allocate regional spatial and renewable generation capacity targets. This will then form the basis under which specific targets at local authority level can be established and subsequently planned for.

1.4.2 (v) National Mitigation Plan (DCCAE, July 2017)

The National Mitigation Plan specifies the policy measures required to manage GHG emissions and the removal of emissions to further the national transition objective framed around de-carbonising four main carbon emitting sectors - electricity generation, the built environment, transport, and agriculture. It recognises that Ireland is unlikely to meet it GHG emissions reduction target, with a reduction of only 4% - 6% below 2005 levels for all sectors, with emissions exceeding the effort sharing decision limit by 13.7Mt, compared to the 20% target.

It refers to quantity of carbon stored in Irish peatlands (64% of total soil organic carbon stock present) and to the National Peatland's Strategy as setting out how to sustainably manage and protect/conserve this national resource, but it does not include any explicit reference to the potential for peatland restoration / rehabilitation to contribute to climate change mitigation.

1.4.2 (vi) National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025

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

1.4.2 (vii) National Planning Framework (First Revision)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the overarching policy and planning strategy for the social, economic and cultural development of Ireland. The framework aims to promote a more environmentally focused planning system at a local level. The first revision was approved by the Oireachtas on 30 April 2025. This revision, which anticipates a population projection of between 6.1 and 6.3 million by 2040, builds upon the original 2018 NPF, reflects changes in Ireland and updates the planning framework for balanced regional development and sustainable growth. The framework is revised and updated to take account of changes that have occurred since it was published in 2018 and to build on the framework that is in place. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities, and to protect and enhance the environment.

The first revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF) significantly strengthens the focus on renewable energy, particularly by incorporating regional renewable electricity capacity allocations. This revision has also introduced a clearer focus on climate transition and includes more explicit references to renewable energy. The First Revision puts an increased emphasis on the importance

of renewable energy development and the infrastructure needed to support this. A number of new or amended National Policy Objectives (NPOs) have been proposed including the following:

- NPO 70: to promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a climate neutral economy by 2050.
- NPO 71: Support the development and upgrading of the national electricity grid infrastructure, including supporting the delivery of renewable electricity generating development.
- NPO 72: Support an all-island approach to the delivery of renewable electricity through interconnection of the transmission grid.
- NPO 73: Support the co-location of renewable technologies with other supporting technologies and complementary land uses, including agriculture, amenity, forestry and opportunities to enhance biodiversity and promote heritage assets, at appropriate locations which are determined based upon the best available scientific evidence in line with EU and national legislative frameworks.
- NPO 74 requires each Regional Assembly to plan, through their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, how and where to deliver the required capacity set out in Table 9.1 by identifying capacity allocations for each Local Authority in its area.
- NPO 75 requires Local Authorities to plan, through their City and County Development Plans, for the delivery of the energy capacity target that they have been allocated.

1.4.2 (viii) The National Development Plan

The Government unveiled a landmark update to its National Development Plan (NDP) in Jul 2025. The NDP guides strategic development and infrastructure investment at the national level. The 2018-2027 NDP set out investment priorities of €21.8 billion for climate action for the 10-year period, €7.6 billion, to come from the Exchequer. The remaining investment, to be made by Ireland's semi-state companies and by the private sector. In addition, some €8.6 billion funding has been made available for sustainable mobility projects, mostly in public transport. This has been a substantial funding increase and it was considered, would facilitate upscaling of investments and implementation of actions needed to move the Country towards its 2030 climate targets. This provides the roadmap for Ireland's future that from 2026 to 2035, with a projected investment of over €275 billion. The allocations from 2026 and 2030 for Climate and Energy is over €5.6 billion, including equity to update Ireland's electricity grid and water systems. The Priorities & Strategic Goals set out in the NDP include substantial investment to the strengthening of the national grid to support wind, solar, and data driven power demand.

1.4.2 (ix) Energy Security In Ireland to 2030

Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 outlines a new strategy to ensure energy security in Ireland for this decade, while ensuring a sustainable transition to a carbon neutral energy system by 2050. It is being published as part of an Energy Security Package, containing a range of supplementary analyses, consultations, and reviews, which have informed the recommendations and actions related to energy security.

1.4.2 (x) National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 (NECP)

The National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 is a 10-year integrated document required by the EU to each of its member states to meet its overall greenhouse gases emissions targets. The

plan is required to be updated every two years, the most recent being Jul 2024. The plan establishes key measures to address the five dimensions of the EU Energy Union:

- Decarbonisation: GHG emissions and removals and Renewable Energy;
- Energy efficiency;
- Energy security;
- Internal energy market, and
- Research, innovation and competitiveness.

The plan notes that Ireland has excellent renewable energy resources, it credits renewable energy with increasing sustainability through the use of clean power sources and enhancing energy security by reducing Ireland's dependence on imported fuels. Key, relevant renewable energy objectives include:

achieving a 34% share of renewable energy in energy consumption by 2030.

increase electricity generated from renewable sources to 70% (note this target has been increased to 80% in the CAP2025), underpinned by the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS). Streamline consenting and connection arrangements.

Phase-out of coal and peat-fired electricity generation.

Increase onshore wind capacity by up to 8.2 GW (note this target has been increased to 9 GW in the CAP2025).

• Support efforts to increase indigenous renewable sources in the energy mix, including wind, solar and bioenergy.

Facilitate infrastructure projects, including private sector commercial projects, which enhance Ireland's security of supply and are in keeping with Ireland's overall climate and energy objectives.

1.4.2 (xi) Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS)

The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme is provided by the Government of Ireland. It is an auctioned-based scheme which invites renewable projects to bid for capacity and receive a guaranteed price for the electricity generated. The RESS is a pivotal component of the Government's Climate Action Plan 2021, whereby the Scheme aims to assist in meeting Ireland's target of up to 80% of our energy generated being from renewable sources by 2030. To date there have been three rounds of the RESS, the most recent auction results (RESS 3) were announced in early October 2023. For successful projects the Scheme typically applies for approximately 15 years. The Programme for Government is committed to holding RESS auctions at frequent intervals throughout the lifetime of the scheme. This measure is to ensure Ireland can take advantage of falling costs of technology and ensure the best price is passed on to the consumer and allows for multiple opportunities for developers to have new technologies included, potentially generating energy more efficiently at a lower cost.

All RESS 3 Projects are required to establish a Community Benefit Fund prior to Commercial Operation of the relevant RESS 3 Project. With effect from the Commercial Operation Date a RESS 3 Project shall be required to make a contribution of €2/MWh of Loss-Adjusted RESS Metered Quantity for all RESS 3 Projects.

1.4.2 (xii) Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006

The guidelines provide advice to the Board and to planning authorities on wind energy development through the Development Plan and the development management process. They are intended to provide for consistency in the approach to wind energy development in terms of the identification of suitable locations for such development and in the determination of planning applications. Such projects should be plan-led with clear guidance on where wind energy development should be located and what factors will be taken into account. The matters to be considered in a planning application are set out in Chapter 4 of the guidelines, including - potential impacts on the built and natural heritage, ground conditions and drainage, visual and landscape impacts, local environmental impacts, (including noise, shadow flicker, electromagnetic interference), and adequacy of local access road network. Best practice suggests that an integrated planning application which includes grid connection information should ideally be submitted and that developers should be encouraged to engage in public consultation with the local community. Guidance is given on matters such as noise, shadow flicker, natural heritage, archaeology, architectural heritage, ground conditions, aircraft safety and windtake. Whilst setback distance is not established, it is stated that noise is unlikely to be a significant problem where the distance to the residential property is more than 500m.

Noise: the recommended standard is a lower fixed limit of 45dBA or a maximum increase of 5dBA above background noise and nearby noise sensitive locations, apart from very quiet areas where the daytime level is limited to 35-40dB(A). A night-time limit of 43 dB(A) is recommended.

Shadow flicker: the recommended standard is a maximum of 30 hours per year or 30 minutes per day for dwellings and offices within 500m. It is stated that at distances of greater than 10 rotor diameters, the potential for shadow flicker is very low.

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

1.4.2 (xiii) Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019

It should be noted that the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government published Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines in December 2019. A public consultation period was held until the 19th of February 2020. These guidelines were never adopted.

1.4.2 (xiv) Programme for Government 2025: Securing Ireland Future

Published in January 2025 by the Department of the Taoiseach, this is a Programme of investment and reform. It commits to sustained action to tackle the climate crisis; to decarbonise the economy; and harness the digital and AI revolution to deliver effective and modern public services and to grow the economy. It commits to taking the necessary action to deliver at least 80% renewable electricity by 2030. Increased renewable energy, alongside energy efficiency and the circular economy are integral to the programme.

1.4.3 Regional Policy

1.4.3 (i) North and Western Regional Assembly / Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032

The primary purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Region.

The adopted RSES (2020-2032) for the Northern and Western Region provides a growth framework to transform the region based on the key principle of People and Places through the pursuit of compact growth in settlements, and 5 growth ambitions: Vibrant Ambition - Economy and Employment; Natural Ambition - Environment, Connected Ambition – Connectivity; Inclusive Ambition - Quality of Life; and Enabling Ambition – Infrastructure.

Underpinning these growth ambitions are a series of Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's). The following RPO's are of particular relevance to the proposed development:

RPO 4.16: The NWRA shall co-ordinate the identification of potential renewable energy sites of scale in collaboration with Local Authorities and other stakeholders within 3 years of the adoption of the RSES. The identification of such sites (which may extend to include energy storage solutions) will be based on numerous site selection criteria including environmental matters, and potential grid connections.

RPO 4.17: To position the region to avail of the emerging global market in renewable energy by stimulating the development and deployment of the most advantageous renewable energy systems, including:

- Stimulating the development and deployment of the most advantageous renewable energy systems.
- Raising awareness and public understanding of renewable energy and encourage market opportunities for the renewable energy industry to promote the development and growth of renewable energy businesses; and
- Encourage the development of the transmission and distribution grids to facilitate the development of renewable energy projects and the effective utilisation of the energy generated from renewable sources having regard to the future potential of the region over the lifetime of the Strategy and beyond.

RPO 4.18: Support the development of secure, reliable and safe supplies of renewable energy, to maximise their value, maintain the inward investment, support indigenous industry and create jobs.

RPO 8.3: The Assembly support the necessary integration of the transmission network requirements to allow linkages with renewable energy proposals at all levels to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner.

RPO 8.4: That reinforcements and new electricity transmission infrastructure are put in place and their provision is supported, to ensure the energy needs of future population and economic expansion within designated growth areas and across the Region can be delivered in a sustainable

and timely manner and that capacity is available at local and regional scale to meet future needs. Ensure that development minimises impacts on designated areas.

In relation to landscape Protection, the NWRA's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy provides the following Regional Policy Objectives:

RPO 5.2: (a) Protect manage and conserve the quality, character and distinctiveness of our Landscapes and seascapes. (b) The Assembly supports co-operation and co-ordination between Local Authorities in determining landscape character along their borders. A targeted review should be undertaken to ensure consistency in classification and policy in adjoining areas of similar character. The NWRA will assist in collaboration and coordination. (c) Following the completion of the National Landscape Character Assessment, and any associated statutory Guidelines, the Regional Assembly shall prepare a Regional Landscape Character Assessment to promote improved landscape management and designation.

RPO 5.3: The Assembly supports the consideration of the zone of: (i) North Sligo/North Leitrim (Benbulben and its hinterland); and (ii) The area surrounding and including Lough Arrow/Lough Key. as potential National Parks/National Recreation Areas. It supports collaboration in this regard with stakeholders including NPWS, Local Authorities, Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

RPO 5.4: Encourage the prioritisation of Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO) for all sites of Conservation Value, designated in EU Directive (i.e. SACs, SPAs) to integrate with the development objectives of this Strategy.

RPO 5.5: Ensure efficient and sustainable use of all our natural resources, including inland waterways, peatlands, and forests in a manner which ensures a healthy society a clean environment and there is no net contribution to biodiversity loss arising from development supported in this strategy. Conserve and protect designated areas and natural heritage area. Conserve and protect European sites and their integrity.

RPO 5.6: Develop awareness and create a greater appreciation of the benefits of our natural heritage, including on the health, wealth and well-being of the region's ecosystem services.

RPO 5.7: Ensure that all plans, projects and activities requiring consent arising from the RSES are subject to the relevant environmental assessment requirements including SEA, EIA and AA as appropriate

1.4.4 Local Policy

1.4.4 (i) The Mayo County Development Plan 2022- 2028

The following Policy & Objective(s) relevant to the proposed development include:

Chapter 4 - Economic Development

Objective EDO 3: To continue to promote the county to attract enterprise and investment into Mayo through the Enterprise & Investment Unit and/or Local Enterprise Office, with a focus on a number of established and emerging sectors including tourism, manufacturing, marine, renewable energy, ICT, food and agri-food.

Objective EDO 54: To facilitate rural enterprises, and resource development (such as agriculture, agrifood sector, agri-tourism, commercial fishing, aquaculture, rural tourism,

forestry, bio- energy, the extractive industry, recreation, cultural heritage, marine enterprise sector, research and analysis) and renewable energy resources (such as wind/ solar/ocean energy) that are dependent on their locality in rural locations, where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity. Where proposals demonstrate measures to promote environmental enhancement through improved ecological connectivity, such as measures in the Pollinator Plan, additional native species planting or blue and green infrastructure measures, these will be favorably considered.

EDO 69: To support and facilitate renewable energy initiatives that facilitate a low carbon transition.

Chapter 7 - Infrastructure

Policy INP 21: To support the provision of high-quality, electricity infrastructure and development of an enhanced electricity supply, to serve the existing and future needs of the county and to facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects, including the delivery and integration of renewable energy proposals to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner, whilst seeking to minimise any adverse impacts on local communities and protect and maintain biodiversity, wildlife habitats, scenic

amenities, including protected views and nature conservation.

Objective INO 39: To seek the delivery of the necessary integration of transmission network requirements to facilitate linkages of renewable energy proposals to the electricity transmission grid, in a sustainable and timely manner.

Chapter 11 - Climate Action Plan and Renewable Energy

Policy CAP 1: To support and enable the implementation and achievement of European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents, taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage); Climate Action Plan (2018 and any subsequent versions);

- Relevant provisions of any Sectoral Adaptation Plans prepared to comply with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, including those seeking to contribute towards the National Transition Objective, to pursue, and achieve, the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050; and
- Mayo Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019-2024 and any subsequent versions)

Policy CAP 4: To support local, regional, national and international initiatives for climate adaptation and mitigation and to limit emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources, which make use of all natural resources, including publicly owned lands, in an environmentally acceptable manner.

Policy CAP 6: To support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency and supporting nature- based solutions to climate adaptation and mitigation that provides co benefits.

Policy CAP 9: To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of all appropriate renewable energy sources at suitable locations within the county, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities, so as to provide for further residential and enterprise development within the county.

Objective CAO 1: To support and advance the provision of renewable energy resources and programmes in line with the Government's National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), the Governments' Energy White Paper "Irelands Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future" (2015-2030) and any other relevant policy adopted during the lifetime of this plan.

Policy REP 1: To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of a range of renewable energy sources at suitable locations within the county, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities to ensure the long-term sustainable growth of the county.

Policy REP 3: To actively encourage and support the sustainable development, renewal and maintenance of energy generation infrastructure in order to maintain a secure energy supply, while protecting the landscape, archaeological and built heritage and having regard to the provisions of the Habitats Directive.

Policy REP 4: To ensure that developers of proposed large-scale renewable energy projects carry out community consultation in accordance with best practice and commence the consultation at the initiation of project planning.

Policy REP 5: To promote the use of efficient energy storage systems and infrastructure that supports energy efficiency and renewable energy system optimisation, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and consideration of environmental and ecological sensitivities.

Policy REP 6: To work with relevant stakeholders and industry to establish Mayo as a centre of excellence for renewable energy research and development activities.

Policy REP 7: To promote the harnessing of wind energy to contribute toward de-carbonising County Mayo, including new emerging by-product markets

Objective REO 3: To encourage and facilitate, where possible, the production of energy from established and emerging renewable technologies

Objective REO 6: To ensure all renewable energy proposal comply with the provisions of the Mayo County Council Renewable Energy Strategy 2011-2022 (or as updated).

Objective REO 8: To encourage the development of wind energy, in accordance with Government policy, and having regard to the Landscape Appraisal of County Mayo and the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) and Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy, or any revisions there of or future guidelines, and ensure consistency with the provisions of RPO 4.16 and RPO 5.2(b) of the RSES (2020-2032).

1.4.4 (iii) Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo, Adopted 13 July 2026

The Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) for County Mayo provides a framework to support the county's transition to a low-carbon energy future. Developed in line with EU, national and regional climate targets, it supports Mayo County Council's ambition to become a leader in renewable energy generation. The strategy aligns with the Mayo County Development Plan 2022–2028 and Climate Action Plan 2024–2029.

The strategy identifies key constraints, including limited grid infrastructure, particularly the lack of high-capacity transmission lines in the West. Environmental sensitivities such as Natura 2000 sites, peatlands, karst landscapes and scenic areas require careful planning and assessment. The protection of tourism assets, including the Wild Atlantic Way, Mayo Dark Sky Park, the Joyce Country and Western Lakes UNESCO Global Geopark and the Céide Fields area, is also highlighted.

The RES aligns with national policy frameworks including the Climate Action Plan, National Planning Framework, National Hydrogen Strategy, National Biomethane Strategy and National Development Plan. Pending the Northern and Western Regional Assembly's Renewable Energy Strategy and county-level capacity targets, Mayo's RES provides a framework to guide development. All relevant policies and objectives of the County Development Plan 2022–2028 shall apply in the assessment of planning applications for renewable energy development.

The Strategic Objectives of the Renewable Energy Strategy relevant to the subject site and surrounding area are as follows:

Section	Strategic Objectives
2.2.10 Private Wires	It is a strategic objective of this strategy to • ensure that renewable energy developments is located on/in close proximity to the national grid infrastructure. Any proposals for renewable energy development, including those availing of private wires, will be subject to compliance with the objectives and development management standards set out in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.
5.1.1 Grid Infrastructure in the West	It is a strategic objective of this strategy to

	• support and facilitate the sustainable development of enhanced electricity and gas supplies, additional electricity generation capacity, and associated networks, to serve the existing and future needs of the County. • ensure that the siting of electricity power lines is managed in terms of the physical and visual impact on the natural and built environment, the conservation value of Natura 2000 sites and especially in sensitive landscape areas. Consideration will be given to the undergrounding or alternative routes in the siting of powerlines in both visually and environmentally sensitive area.
5.6 Transport	It is a strategic objective of this strategy to • facilitate the expansion or upgrading of existing infrastructure and provision of new essential infrastructure, including roads, ports, piers, power lines and substations etc., to support the development of appropriately located renewable energy projects, in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and proper planning and sustainable development.
5.8.4 Practical Resource Constraints	It is the strategic objective of this strategy to: • protect the integrity and authenticity of the unique unspoilt coastal landscapes, scenic routes and designated view of the County that form the essential context and backdrop for the Wild Atlantic Way which has become major tourism and economic asset for the county. • ensure that the unique heritage & tourism assets of County Mayo, including the Wild Atlantic Way (Route & Discovery points), Mayo Dark Sky Park, Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park, Spiritual Trails and Coastal Trails are protected from development that would negatively impact the integrity of their setting. • ensure that the integrity of landscapes at the Céide Fields which holds potential as a UNESCO sites, and the landscapes of the UNESCO Joyce County and Western Geopark are safeguarded and protected from inappropriate development particularly large-scale wind energy development and related infrastructure. • preserve a 15km zone from wind turbine development in both directions from the ends of the runway at Ireland West Airport, to ensure unimpeded flight paths associated with Ireland West Airport is maintained. • ensure that, at a minimum, wind turbines shall be setback a distance of 150m from national roads and railway lines (used, disused & abandoned), set back from other roads will be site specific and determined at application stage.
6.1.6 Emerging trends—Wind Development Clusters	In the context of the current established large-scale wind farms in Mayo, their contribution to renewable energy

	generation and the requirement to achieve national renewable energy targets to 2030 and beyond to 2050, it is a strategic objective of this strategy to • consider and where appropriate support the Repowering of the established large-scale wind farms in Mayo subject to appropriate environmental assessment and proper planning and sustainable development.
6.1.7 Methodology	It is a strategic objective of this strategy to: • consider new wind energy developments in Co. Mayo in the areas identified as open for consideration. All wind energy proposals will be subject to normal planning considerations and compliance with the policies and objectives outlined in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 in general. • ensure applicants/developers engaged in wind farm developments in Mayo go through a formal preplanning consultations under section 90. Of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (as amended). Such consultations will identify potential constraints, community concerns.
6.5.5 Challenges and Constraints for Energy Storage in County Mayo	It is a strategic objective of this strategy to: • consider opportunities for Hydrogen injection facilities that are location dependent i.e., adjacent to the Gas Network traversing Mayo at points where current gas flows are substantial and can allow green hydrogen blending injections to the Gas Network take place. • To support at the right scale and at the right locations in County Mayo deployment of grid scale and community scale storage systems that enhance grid stability, enable higher penetration of renewable energy and provide energy security. • To promote the strategic siting of renewable battery energy storage systems in close proximity to the electricity grid in County Mayo ensuring efficient integration of renewable generation reduced transmission losses and enhanced grid stability.

2.0 EIA Screening

The proposed development falls within the definition of a project under the EIA Directive as amended by Directive 2014/52 and falls within the scope of Class 3 under Part 2 Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, (as amended), Development for the Purposes of Part 10:

> *Energy Industry (i) 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.*

EIA is required. The applicant has submitted an EIAR.

Adequacy of the EIAR Submitted with the application

Mayo County Council is satisfied that the EIAR complies with Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) in relation to the information to be contained in an EIAR.

In this case, ACP is the competent Authority for the purpose of carrying out an environmental Impact assessment (EIA). The EIAR submitted by the applicant informs the EIA, as does the information available to ACP and information given by the Local Authority.

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities and ACP on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018) specify that (as per EU Directive 2014/52/EU) there is a requirement for the EIAR to be prepared by component experts. For the most part, the EIAR is set out in a clear format and consists of a wide-ranging, comprehensive assessment of the full range of issues and factors that could reasonably be anticipated for a wind farm development of this scale. The Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is considered adequate.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

Similar type developments in the general and wider area:

Muingmore Windfarm

Pl.Ref	Details
ACP PAX16.324308 SID RED III	**Applicant:** RWE Renewables Ireland Ltd. Location: Muingmore (An Mhoing Mhór), Doolough (Dumha Locha), Tristia (Troiste), Moneynierin (Moing an Iarainn) and Bangor (Baingear) **Proposed Development:** The proposed development consists of 13 wind turbines, a 110kV substation, battery energy storage system (BESS) and all associated infrastructure **DECISION:** Withdrawn - 11/06/2026.

Tawnanasool/Croaghaun/Tullaghaunnashammer/Bangor Erris

Pl.Ref	Details
14/666	Applicant: ECOPOWER DEVELOPMENTS LTD. **Location:** Tawnanasool/Croaghaun/Tullaghaunnashammer/Bangor Erris **Proposed Development:** Erect 8 no. wind turbines, overall height of up to 127 meters, crane hardstands, 1 no. meteorological mast up to 80 m in height with wind measuring equipment attached, access road, electrical cabling, electrical substation compound, substation equipment and control building and ancillary site works **DECISION:** Refused by ABP - 07/03/2016.

Tawnanasool, Tullaghaunnashammer, Muingnanarnard, Laggduff More & Aughness

Pl.Ref	Details
01/906	**Applicant:** SAORGUS ENERGY LTD. **Location:** Tawnanasool/Croaghaun/Tullaghaunnashammer/Bangor Erris Proposed Development: construct a wind farm consisting of 51 wind turbines & service roadways, construct a transformer/control housing compound & erect a 50m anemometer monitoring mast **DECISION:** Refused by ABP.

Keerglen, Ballykinlettragh and Ballinglen

Ref	**Details**
2460537 **'Live Case'** **ACP Case Number 500344**	**Applicant:** ABO Energy Ireland Ltd. **Proposed Development** : Wind Farm (8 turbines) with a maximum overall tip height of between 176-180m, comprising rotor diameters ranging between 133-150m and hub heights ranging between 105-112m high; - associated wind turbine foundations and hard stand areas at each turbine; - 1 No. 38kV electrical substation building, compound and associated infrastructure works; -). A ten year permission is sought. Granted: 11/11/2025 Appealed to An Coimisún Pleanála - ACP Case Number 500344
ABP 318701 **also ABP 310528-21**	Applicant: Glenora Wind Farm DAC **Proposed Development :** 10 year planning permission for the proposed wind energy development consisting of 22 wind turbines and all associated infrastructure Granted: 06/05/2026.

Pl.Ref	**Details**
03/1383	**Applicant**: Airtricity Developments (Ireland) Ltd. and Coilte Teoranta. **Proposed Development**: Permission sought for the construction of a wind farm, consisting of

PL.16.206517 (ABP)	29 wind turbines (max hub height of 65m and max blade diameter 80m with a total height not exceeding 100m), a 110kV substation including pylon and control buildings, one 65m high meteorological mast, construction and upgrading of site entrances, site tracks and associated **Decision**: Refused by ABP.
02/2528	**Applicant**: Airtricity Developments (Ireland) Ltd. and Coilte Teoranta. **Proposed Development**: Permission sought for 1 no. 50m heigh wind monitoring mast **Decision :** Granted (01/05/2003)
ABP 310528-21 (**SID Pre-application**)	**Applicant**: Glenora Wind farm DAC, **Location:** Glenora adjacent townlands, Co Mayo **Proposed development**: Wind farm (22 turbine), with blade tip height 180meters, hub height of 99m, rotor diameter 162m, generating capacity 154-198MW. 3 borrow pits, peat placements areas, construction compound, overnight turbine component storage area, widening of local roads to facilitate transport, upgrade of forest tracks, internal access, security cabin, drainage and cabling works. **Decision**: Deemed a SID (08/05/2023) by ABP.
02/174 ABP 16.131318	**Applicant**: Contracts Renewables Ltd **Proposed Development**: Wind farm (30 turbine, 1.75M) with hub height 67m and rotor diameter of 66m, 110kV substation building/compound and associated works. **Decision:** Refused by MCC (06/11/2003) / Refused by ABP (02/04/2004) Reasons ABP

	1. […]the proposed development is sited in a prominent location…a sensitive landscape that adjoins the designated vulnerable area comprising the Owenmore River system[……] The proposed wind farm, sited at this elevated, prominent and exposed location, would constitute a highly obtrusive development that would detract from the rural character and scenic amenities of this sensitive and vulnerable area[…]would contribute to the erosion of the visual and environmental amenity of the area. 2. The site of the proposed development hosts extensive priority habitat designated under the EU Habitats Directive, namely blanket bog and dry heath. In addition the Glenamoy Bog Complex c.SAC and the site is in the immediate vicinity of the designated Bellacorick Bog Complex c.SAC, which lies to the south[…] the site hosts the protected bird species of golden plover and red grouse and contains the Inagh River which is part of the Owenmore River System, an important salmonid fishery in north Mayo….[…] It is considered that the proposed development including the construction of a substation and compound, as well as the operation of the wind farm, would have significant adverse impacts on the ecological ornithological and aquatic importance of this site and the immediate area by way of destruction of habitat, disturbance and displacement of protected species, and pollution potential for the important watercourses within and bounding the site…..[…]
01/356	**Applicant**: Electricity Development Ltd. Wind farm (40 turbine) with max hub height 50m, electrical substation with control building, 50m high meterological mast, upgrade of site entrance and construction of internal site trackway and associated works. **Decision**: Incomplete Application

Bellacorrick Wind Farm

Pl.Ref	Details
20/834 ABP 31157	**Applicant**: ABO Ireland Ltd. **Proposed Development**: Permission for development of an electricity service. Incl. - laying of c.10.5km of 38Kv underground cable from the Sheskin wind farm to connect the wind farm to the national grid at the existing Bellacorick 110Kv ESB. Connection to be installed along existing tracks, public roadway and short section of private agricultural land. **Decision**: Granted on Appeal by ABP (31/8/2022). 7 Conditions

19/457	**Applicants**: ABO Ireland Ltd. **Proposed Development**: Amendments to planning permission granted under PL5/825 for 8no turbines (max height 150m). Amendments including: - Increase height of turbines from 150m to 176 (turbines 1-3) and 150m to 165m(turbines 4-8) comprising a tower height of 95-120m to which 3 blades of 55-70m length will be attached. - Increase in the max height of the permanent met-mast from 100m to 120m - Increase of the foundation base from 22m to 26m - Amendment to condition no. 46. To revise the community benefit payment to €2/MWH consistent with government guidance set out in RESS The red line boundary and all other aspects of the permitted development to remain. **Decision:** Granted by MCC. 51 conditions.

Oweninny Wind Farm

Pl.Ref	Details
ABP 16. P0029 SID	**Applicants:** Oweninny Power Limited **Proposed Development**: Oweninny Wind Farm and associated works, consisting of 112no. turbines (370MW output)
ABP 307261	**Applicants:** Oweninny Power 2 DAC Alteration to terms of permitted WF granted under PL.16.PA0029 **Proposed Development**: Construction of radial underground cables from permitted, but as yet unbuilt, Turbine T82 to the existing Substation 1 (constructed as part of Phase 1). This includes a crossing of the Srahnakilly local road (L52925) and the Oweninny River (via the existing bridge, constructed as part of Phase 1); Omission of Substation 2; and the omission of an overhead line (OHL) / underground cable (UGC) connection from Substation 2 to Bellacorick ESB Substation, as approved under PL16.PA0029. **Decision**: (27/07/2020). Alter decision: Not a material alteration - Section 146B Planning application for amendments to ABP PA0029 for Oweninny Windfarm

ABP 309375 (Pre-application)	**Applicants:** Bord na Mona Powergen Ltd. Pre-app consultation: Oweninny WF Phase 3 . **Proposed Development**: Between 10 and 20 Wind Turbines turbine (including tower sections, nacelle, hub, rotor blades) with an approximate capacity of 90mw and a maximum blade height of 200metres. **Decision**: Determined a SID (04/04/2022) by ABP.
316178 SID	**Applicant:** Bord na Mona Powergen Ltd. Development of Oweninny Wind Farm Phase 3. **Proposed Development**: - 18 no. turbines, max blade tip height 200m, rotar diameter 158m, hub height 121m, associated foundations and hard standing areas for each turbine, - Decommissioning & removal of 21no. existing turbines incl. towner sections, nacelle hub and rotor blades, - New internal access roads, passing bays, car parking & drainage, - Amenity route to existing visitors center with access from local road off the N59 near Dooleeg, - 2no. borrow pits, 5no. peat deposition areas, - Installation of 1 no. permanent Met. Mast (120m height), decommissions & removal of existing 100 m Met Mas on site, - Temporary construction compounds (4 no.), - 1 no. 110kV electrical substation compound (incl 2 no control buildings, 36m heigh telecom tower, electrical plant & equipment and wastewater holding tank; Underground electrical and comms cabling – connecting proposed turbines to proposed substation, - All works associated with the connection of the proposed wind farm to the national electricity grid, incl 110kV underground cabling from the proposed on-site electrical substation to the existing substation at Bellacorick, - All related site works and ancillary development, - A 10-year planning permission and a 30-year operations life from date of commissioning of the entire wind farm **Decision** – Granted (21/01/2025).

Killala Community Wind Farm

Pl.Ref	Details
17/619	**Applicant:** Killala Community Windfarm Designated Activity Company. Location: approx. 1.3km south of Killala. Proposed Development: Development consists of an updated application to the consented 6 turbine wind farm p09/780. 10 Year planning permission for wind farm (5no. turbines) **Proposed Development**: - 5 no. electricity generating wind turbines, each with a rotor diameter not exceeding 103.2m, a hub height not exceeding 73.5m and a blade tip height of not exceeding 126m. - the development will include a met mast max height of 82m, - internal underground electrical cabling, - a substation building, - an external underground grid connection cable and ducting to the existing 110kv Tawnaghmore substation, - associated grid substation works, - associated site access roads and ancillary site works including upgrades to existing site access, a temporary construction compound and haulage route works. Max output capacity of the wind farm will be up to 18mw with an intended operation life of 25 years **Decision**: Granted (19 Conditions) 15/02/2018.
19/260	**Applicant:** Killala Community Windfarm Designated Activity Company. **Proposed Development**: 25 Year permission for a single electricity generating wind turbine with an overall maximum height of up to 125m. The development also includes a turbine hardstand, access track of c.394m, internal cable trench of c.1,775m and ancillary site works. Application is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement. **Decision**: Granted (12 Conditions) 15/10/2019.

Dooleg More Single Turbine Development

Pl.Ref	Details
20/467	**Applicant:** Cearth Ltd **Proposed Development**: Permission for a single wind turbine generator and 20kV grid connection to Bellacorick 110kV substation. **Decision**: Granted (15 Conditions) 25/03/2021.

Bunnahowen Wind Farm

Pl.Ref	Details
18/873	**Applicant:** Gus Ruddy ALT Turbines Co. Ltd **Proposed Development**: Permission to modify existing permission P.08/1997, to include three (3) 1mw turbines, control house and ancillary associated works. **Decision**: Granted (6 Conditions) 10/03/2019.

Kilsallagh/Kilcommon Wind Farm

Pl.Ref	Details
ABP 312282 SID	**Applicant:** EDF Renewables Limited **Location**: Kilsallagh and adjacent townlands, Kilcommon, Co. Mayo. **Proposed Development**: Pre-application lodged with An Bord Pleanála for Proposed Kilsallagh Wind Farm consisting of 13 wind turbines (tip height of 200 meters) and ancillary equipment including 110kV substation infrastructure. Decision: Determined an SID 16/06/2025.

Sheskin Wind Farm

Pl.Ref	Details
ABP 310529 (Pre-application) ABP 315933 SID	**Applicant:** Sheskin South Renewables Power DAC **Location**: Sheskin and adjacent townlands, Co Mayo 21 No. wind turbines within the following ranges: Blade tip height of 189.5 – 200m. Hub heights of 115 – 125m. Rotor diameter of 149 – 170m Generating capacity of 105 – 143MW. **Proposed Development** : 1 No. anemometry mast, 3 No. potential borrow pits, 4 No. temporary construction compounds, Internal road network and entrances, Turbine components laydown area. Peat placement areas around turbine bases. Site drainage infrastructure. Associated cabling and works. An associated on-site 110kV substation and 110kV grid connection to the existing 110kV Bellacorick substation is also proposed, however this will not form part of the planning application for the wind farm **Decision**: Determined a SID (30/08/2022) by ABP. **Current Status**: SID Granted (13/3/2024).

Firlough Wind Farm and Hydrogen Plant, Bunnyconnellan, Co Mayo & Castleconnor, Co Sligo

Pl.Ref	Details
ABP 307264-20 (**Pre-application**) ABP 317560	**Applicant:** Mercury (Carrowleagh) Renewables **Location:** Bonniconlon, Co Mayo & Castleconnor, Co Sligo **Proposed Development** : windfarm development including 13 no. wind turbines in Bunnyconnellan, Co. Mayo & hydrogen plant in Castleconnor, Co. Sligo **Decision**: Determined a SID (01/11/2022) by ABP **Current Status**: SID Granted (19/11/2024).
22/502	**Applicant: Constant Energy Limited** **Location**: Croaghaun West, Srahnakilly, Bellacorrick, Co Mayo. **Proposed Development** : Single Storey process building (13.3m in height), 16 no. fin fan coolers (6.9m in height), Hydrogen storage area (6450sq.m); Gas Injection compound (1000sq.m), 2 no Gas Agi buildings (3m in height), Electrical substation (2407.62sq.m), 2 no. substation buildings (4m in height), Raw water and fire storage tank (879.6sq.m), Pump house (5m in height), Water abstraction chamber (2.9sq.m), Resurfacing, repair & improvement of entrance; Replacement bridge, internal access roads and associated grid connection works within the L52925 public roadway; 12. No parking spaces, footpath, landscaping, fencing and all other associated site development plant and equipment, surface water and foul water wastewater drainage infra. **Decision**: Granted 26/06/2023

23/60028	**Applicant:** Constant Energy Limited **Location**: Croaghaun West, Srahnakilly, Bellacorrick, Co Mayo **Proposed Development** : Gas Peakin Plant (114-Megawatt gas fired peaking power plant) running on a mix of natural gas and hydrogen) comprising the 'electricity generating station'; will comprise of 2 no. open cycle gas turbine (OCGT) generators. In addition, the development will include: - Above Ground Installation (AGI), with compound area 3 no. Gas AGI buildings; Admin & welfare block; Electrical Substation; 1 no. Substation building; Electrical building; 3 no. Secondary fuel storage tanks; Fire Water Storage Tank & Pumphouse; Sludge Tank & Pump House; Resurfacing, Repair of Existing Site Entrance; Replacement Bridge; Gatehouse; Internal Access Roads; and associated Grid Connection Works. 12 no. parking spaces, footpaths, landscaping, fencing and all other associated site development plant and equipment and other works including surface water and foul wastewater drainage infrastructure. Demolition and removal of a dwelling and farm buildings, Planning permission is sought for a period of 25 years. **Decision:** Granted (32 Conditions) by MCC 31/01/2024.
23/162	**Applicant:** The Electricity Supply Board **Location :** Shranakilla Road, Bellacorick, Co. Mayo **Proposed Development** : Synchronous condenser/flywheel, located within a fenced compound of c.0.85 ha. Supporting items of plant; cooling equipment, modular containers, 2 auxiliary transformers and electrical plant including external circuit breaker, HV electrical compound with electrical switchgear and main step-up transformer, and new c.200m underground cable grid connection to the Bellacorick 110kv substation; diesel generator, fire water tank, underground oil separator and collection pit, services connections including electrical, water and wastewater and constructed wetland connecting to Owenmore River; 3 office/welfare buildings and 2 spare parts containers. External lighting poles, lightning monopole and Scada communications mast, 4 fire walls around main step-up transformer, 2 fire walls either side of auxiliary transformers, 3 firewalls around cooler for main transformer, 8m high. Ancillary site clearance and development works, bounded by one c. 3.6m high palisade fence on the east side and one 5m high palisade fence to the south side. Site access will be by means of a new palisade gate and a second 3.6m sliding gate accessed off the N59. Permission sought is for 10 years. NIS submitted with application. **Decision**: Granted (11 Conditions) 03/09/2023.

4.0 Enforcement:

None relevant.

5.0 Designations

5.1 European Sites/ Natura Network

European sites consist of Special Protected Areas (SPA's), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's), Ramsar Sites. The list below identifies all designated sites (Natura Network) within a c.15km zone of potential of the subject site.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

Site Name	Site Code
Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC	000470
Carrowmore Lake Complex SAC	000476
Broadhaven Bay SAC	000472
Owenduff/Nephin Complex SAC	000534
Doogort Machair/Lough Doo SAC	001497
Slieve Fyagh Bog SAC	000542
Erris Head SAC	001501
Croaghaun/Slievemore SAC	001955
West Connacht Coast SAC	002998
Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC	000500

Special Protection Area (SPA)

Site Name	Site Code
Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA	004037
Carrowmore Lake SPA	004052
Owenduff/Nephin Complex SPA	004098
Mullet Peninsula SPA	004227
Doogort Machair SPA	004235
Termoncarragh Lake & Annagh Machair SPA	004093
Inishglora & Inishkeeragh SPA	004084

5.2 National Designated Sites

Sites of national Importance consist of Natural Heritage Areas, Proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Nature Reserves, National Parks. See below - all sites of national importance within c.15km of the site.

Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA)

Site Name	Site Code
Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex pNHA	000470
Owenduff/Nephin Complex pNHA	000534
Carrowmore Lake Complex pNHA	000476
Broadhaven Bay pNHA	000472
Erris Head pNHA	001501
Inishglora & Inishkeeragh pNHA	000506
Inishkea Islands pNHA	000507
Croaghaun/Slievemore pNHA	001955
Inishgalloon pNHA	001967
Keel Machair/Menaun Cliffs pNHA	001513
Lough Gall Bog pNHA	000522
Altaconey Bog pNHA	000459
Bellacorick Bog Complex pNHA	001922
Slieve Fyagh Bog pNHA	000542
Glenamoy Bog Complex pNHA	000500

Natural Area (NHA)

Site Name	Site Code
Tullaghan Bay And Bog NHA	001567
Tristia Bog NHA	001566
Bangor Erris Bog NHA	001473
Doogort East Bog NHA	002381
Ederglen Bog NHA	002446
Pollatomish Bog NHA	001548

Nature Reserves

Site Name
Sheskin Nature Reserve
Owenboy Nature Reserve

5.3 Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and NIS (Natura Impact Statement) has been prepared as part of the application. As part of this assessment, the potential effects arising from the proposed development on any European sites in the Zone of Influence (ZoI) were

considered. The AA Screening concluded that **t**hrough an assessment of the potential impact pathways and sources associated with the proposed project, and having regard to the processes involved and the distance of separation from European Sites, likely significant adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interests, and conservation objectives of the following European Sites cannot be excluded without further assessment or mitigation: Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC (000470); Bellacorick Bog Complex SAC (001922); Owenduff/Nephin Complex SAC (000534); Owenduff/Nephin Complex SPA (004098); Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA (004037); Termoncarragh Lake and Annagh Machair SPA (004093); Inishglora and Inishkeeragh SPA (004084); Duvillaun Islands SPA (004111); Inishkea Islands SPA (004004); Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA (004228); Clare Island SPA (004136); and Inner Galway Bay SPA (004031).

A Natura Impact Statement has been prepared to assist with the AA.

In addition to the potential impact arising from the proposed development, the cumulative impact of the proposed development, in combination with the other existing, permitted, and applications pending planning decision is a source of some concern to the Local Authority and therefore An Coimisiún should give careful consideration to the proposal, given the increasing pressure from wind energy developments in this visually sensitive location. The Coimisiún should ensure that the Natura Impact Statement including proposed mitigation measures adequately address the likely impact on the Natura 2000 sites identified, either alone in combination with other plans or projects and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

6 Reports from relevant Sections of Mayo County Council

This SID application was referred to the following section of Mayo County Council for comment:

- Archaeology
- Tourism & Enterprise
- Roads
- Envirnoment

Archaeology

The Senior Archaeologist has reviewed the proposal and recommends that, prior to development commencing, a suitably qualified archaeologist undertake licensed pre-development archaeological testing across all areas of proposed ground disturbance, including turbine and mast foundations, cabling routes, construction compounds, access tracks, borrow pits, spoil management areas, crane pads, substations and the battery storage compound. Any archaeological remains uncovered during testing must result in an immediate cessation of works in the affected area pending direction from the National Monuments Section, with appropriate mitigation measures implemented as required. The results of the archaeological testing must be documented and submitted to both the Planning Authority and the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Tourism, Recreation and Amenity Section

The Tourism, Recreation and Amenity Section of Mayo County Council has raised concerns regarding the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm, citing its potential adverse impacts on the scenic, recreational, and tourism value of the area. The submission notes that the site forms part of Mayo's wider coastal greenway strategy, including the Mount Jubilee Suspension Bridge project, which seeks to promote sustainable tourism based on the county's natural landscapes and outdoor recreation opportunities. It is considered that the proposed industrial-scale turbines, due to their scale and prominent upland location, would become dominant landscape features, adversely affecting key views, landscape character, and scenic amenity. The Section contends that this would undermine the visitor experience, conflict with local and national tourism and landscape policies, and potentially diminish the county's natural beauty, which is a key tourism asset. Accordingly, it requests that An Coimisiún Pleanála give significant weight to these potential impacts on landscape character, scenic amenity, and strategic tourism development when determining the application.

Roads

Roads Design Section reviewed the EIAR (Chapters 14 and 17), Turbine Delivery Report and supporting drawings, and recommends a series of conditions focused on road safety, traffic management, and protection of public infrastructure. Key requirements include implementation of all proposed mitigation measures, agreement of traffic and construction management plans with Mayo County Council, use of trenchless methods for the grid connection route where required, protection and reinstatement of roads, bridges and utilities, pre- and post-construction road and bridge surveys, maintenance of public roads throughout construction, and restoration of all affected infrastructure on completion. The developer would also be required to provide a refundable infrastructure damage bond of at least €600,000 to cover any repair costs arising from the development.

7 Community Engagement & Benefit Fund

It is a policy of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 - 'To ensure that developers of proposed large-scale renewable energy projects carry out community consultation in accordance with best practice and commence the consultation at the initiation of project planning' (REP4).

8 Local Authority Assessment / Observations

On 28 April 2026, Mayo County Council initiated a public consultation process for the *Draft Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo (Draft Variation No. 2) to the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028*. The consultation period remained open until 26 May 2026.

The Draft RES included an updated Wind Suitability Mapping (Map 6.10), which identified three wind energy classifications: 'Open for Consideration', 'Repowering Potential', and 'Unsuitable'. The Proposed Project was located within an area that was proposed to be classified as '*Unsuitable*' for wind energy development.

Mayo County Council adopted a Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) for County Mayo on the 13th July 2026.

The RES was incorporated into the current Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 as Variation No.1.

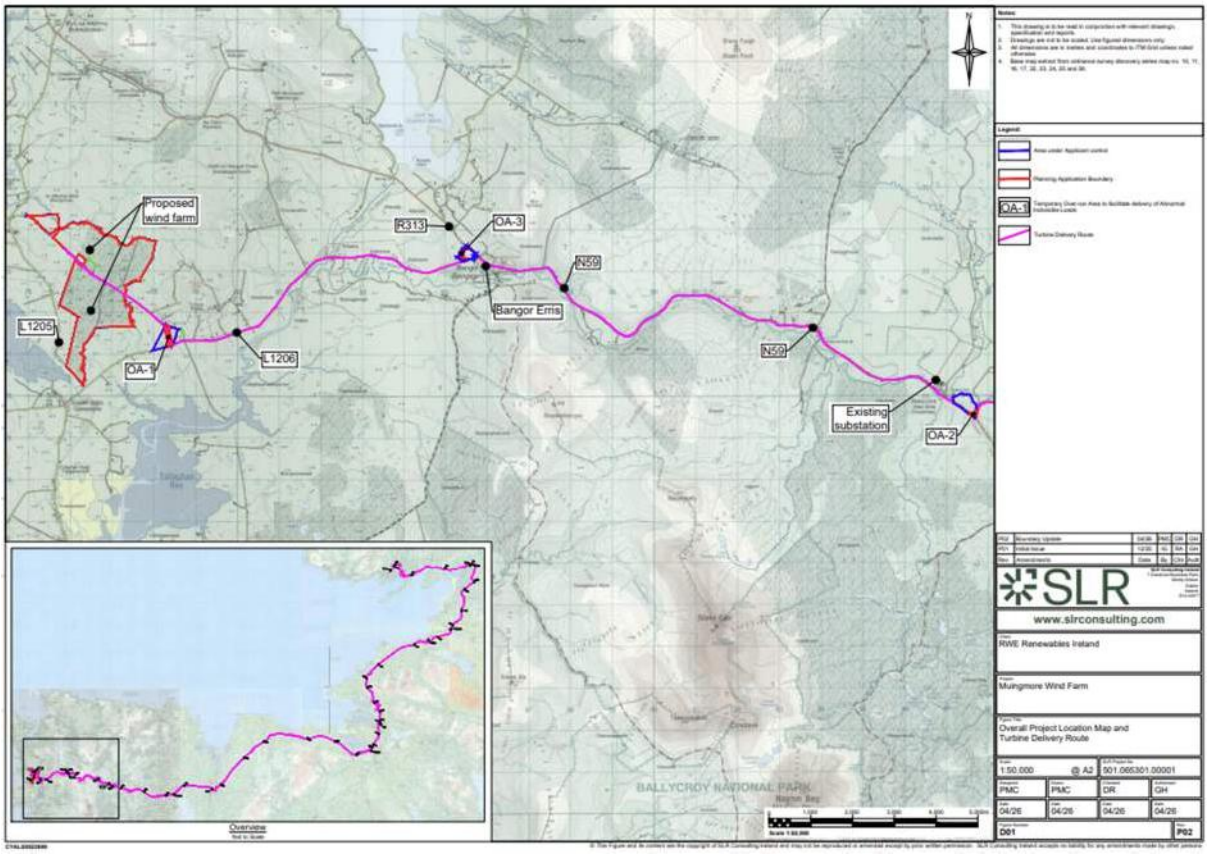
8.1 Provisions of the Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy 2026

Principle of the proposed development

The 2026 Strategy sets out a path to allow County Mayo to contribute to meeting the national legally binding renewable energy targets and sets out opportunities for individuals, communities and businesses to harness renewable energy in a sustainable manner and to assist in combating climate change.

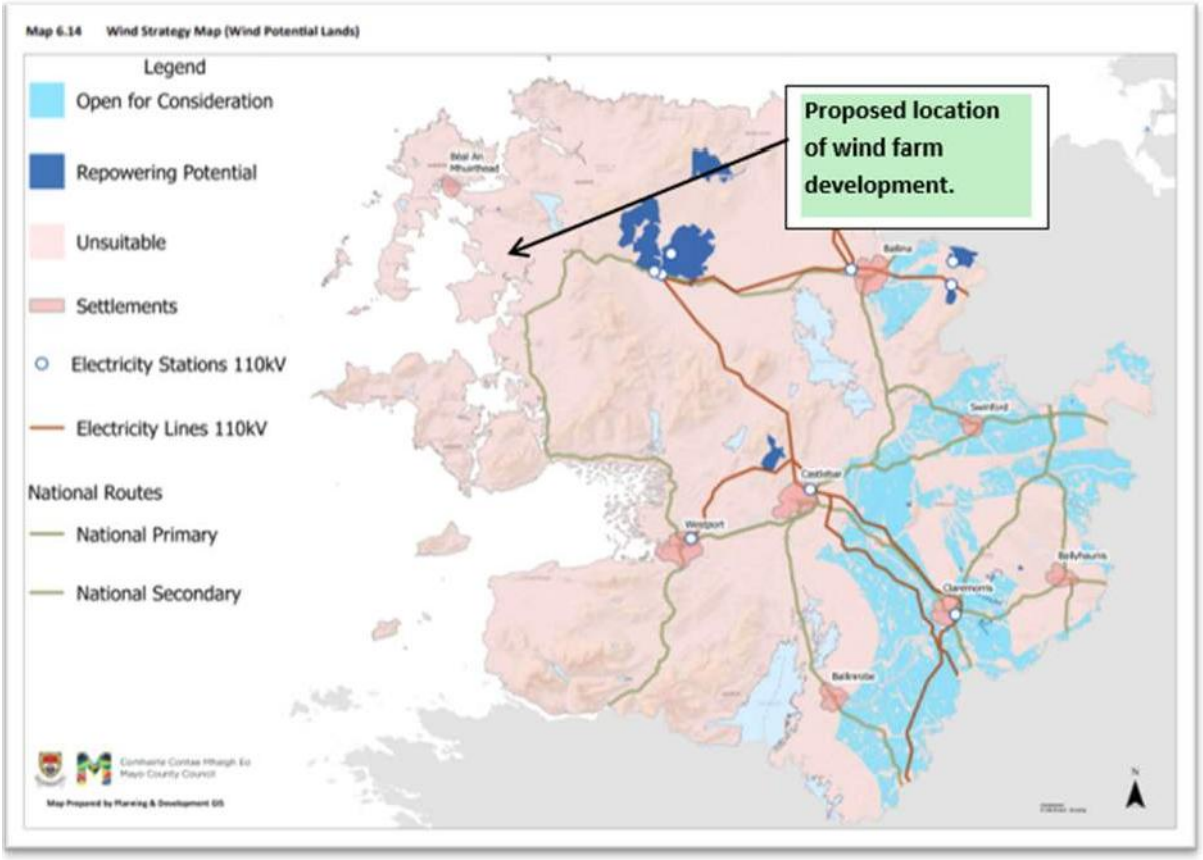
Map 6.14 (see extract below – map 1) of the Mayo RES, details wind potential lands within the County. The RES recognises that the county, particularly its western coastal areas, contains significant environmental, landscape and physical sensitivities. Following an assessment of the potential impacts of large-scale wind energy development, specific Areas '*Open for Consideration*' for wind farm development were identified. Utility-scale wind farm proposals within these areas are assessed on a case-by-case basis, having regard to wind resource viability, environmental constraints, cumulative impacts, and compliance with the Habitats and EIA Directives. Areas outside these designated zones, except for established clustered wind farm locations, are generally considered '*Unsuitable*' for commercial wind energy development due to their sensitivity and the presence of important landscape, ecological, recreational, cultural and built heritage resources.

The site location maps below identifies the location of the proposed wind farm development within the wider study area:


Proposed wind farm
R313
OA-3
N59
Bangor Erris
L1205
L1206
OA-1
N59
Existing substation
OA-2
Overview
BALLYCROY NATIONAL PARK
SLR
www.slrconsulting.com
RWE Renewables Ireland
Mwingmore Wind Farm
Overall Project Location Map and Turbine Delivery Route
1:50,000
@ A2
501.066301.00001
PMC
PMC
DR
GH
04/26
04/26
04/26
04/26
D01
P02


Gortmallia
Barnatra
Atticonnaun
Carrowmore Lake
Srah
Doolough
Tristia
Bangor
Gweesalia
Doohoma
Doona
Ballycroy National Park
Porturlin
Aghadoon
Barnatra
Kilsallagh
Kilsallagh
Cloghanlea
Glenamoy
Ballycroy National Park
Mayo
Newport
Knockpoer
Castlebar
Lough Mask
Ballyglass
Kilkeen
Doughmakeen
Nymphsfield
Clonmacnaw National Park
Claddaghduff

The subsequent map below illustrates the location of the proposed development in the context of Map 6.14: Wind Strategy Map (Wind Potential Lands) contained within the Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo, adopted on 13 July 2026, thereby providing an assessment of the site's strategic designation and suitability for wind energy development under the Council's renewable energy policy framework:



Map 1.

It is noted that all 13 no. turbines, all are located on 'Unsuitable' lands. It is a strategic objective of this strategy to consider new wind energy developments in the areas identified as open for consideration.

While Mayo County Council remains committed to supporting Ireland's transition to a low-carbon economy and achieving national renewable energy targets, the Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) for County Mayo emphasises that renewable energy development must be appropriately located and balanced with the protection of the county's environmental, cultural, heritage, landscape and tourism assets. The Strategy specifically states that its vision is to achieve renewable energy targets "*whilst balancing the need for new development with the protection of the environmental, cultural and heritage assets, tourism assets and the established and emerging economic sectors of the county*".

The Council notes that the proposed development is located on lands identified as unsuitable for commercial wind farm development under Map 6.14 of the RES. The Strategy concludes that lands outside the designated "*Areas Open to Consideration*", with the exception of established wind farm clusters, are generally not suitable for commercial wind energy development due to their sensitivity arising from landscape, ecological, recreational, cultural and built heritage resources.

Particular weight must also be afforded to the protection of Mayo's key tourism and economic assets, including the Wild Atlantic Way, Mayo Dark Sky Park, Wild Nephin National Park, the UNESCO-designated Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark and the Céide Fields landscape. The RES recognises these assets as integral to the county's tourism offering and economic viability and seeks to ensure that they are protected from development that would negatively impact their integrity, setting or visitor experience. The Council is currently progressing county-wide policy relating to light pollution, further reflecting the importance of protecting dark sky resources and landscape character.

The Council further notes that Mayo has already exceeded the renewable energy target of 600MW set out in the County Development Plan, with existing and permitted renewable energy development providing over 1,114MW of potential output capacity. The Strategy acknowledges the significant volume of wind energy development already accommodated within the county and the increasing level of wind farm development activity and pressure.

Having regard to the visual sensitivity of the receiving environment, the location of the proposal on lands identified as unsuitable for wind energy development, and the need to safeguard Mayo's tourism, landscape and dark sky assets, the Council is not satisfied that an appropriate balance has been achieved in this instance and is not in favour of the proposal from a visual amenity perspective.

In conclusion, the newly adopted Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) now forms part of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CDP). Accordingly, for the reasons outlined above, the proposed wind farm development would materially contravene the policies and objectives of the CDP, and a grant of planning permission would therefore be contrary to the provisions of the Plan.

8.2 Pre-planning consultations with MCC

Advice issues as per EIA Report Request (SLR Environmental Consulting Ltd on behalf of clients RWE Renewables (March 2024)

Principle

It was advised by Mayo County Council (MCC), that the Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) 2011 was outdated and not fit for purpose in the assessment of large-scale renewable energy developments such as the proposed project, as the scale, height and associated visual impacts of modern wind turbines were not accounted for when the Strategy was prepared. Consequently, lands identified as suitable for wind energy development under the RES 2011 may no longer be appropriate and may require reassessment. MCC further advised that the RES

was in the process of being updated and that, pending publication of a new Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo, proposals of this nature should be considered on a case-by-case basis and may be considered premature.

These matters were also advised during the 2023 Teams pre-planning meeting (Ref. P1623116).

Roads / Grid

It was advised that consideration be given to the weak underlying structure of the local roads and the N59. It was further advised that it may not be possible to install the proposed grid connection along these routes concurrently, having regard to the structural integrity of the local roads and the strategic nature of the routes proposed.

The applicant was advised to consider and provide alternative option(s) for the grid connection route within the EIA.

It was advised that:

- (i) the weak underlying structure of the local routes proposed; and
- (ii) the strategic importance of the N59

are important considerations to be assessed in the context of the proposed development.

It should be noted that approval of the grid connection route as proposed is not guaranteed. Furthermore, it was advised that it may not be possible to install the proposed grid connection along these routes concurrently, given the structural integrity of the local roads and the strategic nature of the routes proposed. It was therefore advised that alternative grid connection route option(s) be considered and assessed within the EIA.

Concerns were also raised in relation to haul routes and the potential adverse impacts, including damage to roads. It was advised that both permanent and temporary arrangements be clearly defined within the EIA/proposal, including sightlines, circulation, autotracking and safety considerations. An appraisal of the existing roads should be undertaken and a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) should be provided.

It was further advised that road closures are not guaranteed and that appropriate contingency measures should be considered. Road strength should be assessed, and geotechnical analysis was advised. Reinstatement measures and detailed proposals should be included as part of the assessment.

Landscape, Visual Impact and Planning History

Having regard to the outdated Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) 2011 and the relevant planning history of wind farm developments in the area, it was advised that the proposed development would not be considered appropriate at this visually sensitive coastal location on the Wild Atlantic Way. In this regard, the planning history of similar developments in the immediate and wider area should be carefully considered, particularly the reasons for refusal associated with Planning Reference 01/906 for a 51 no. turbine wind farm development located approximately

5.7 km south-east of the subject site, and Planning Reference 14/666 (ABP Ref. PL16.245355) for an 8 no. turbine development located approximately 6.5 km south-east of the subject site.

8.3 Landscape Character Appraisal for County Mayo

The area of the proposed development is located Policy Area 2 as per the Landscape Protection Policy Areas set out in The Landscape Appraisal for County Mayo. The development impact of wind farm development in such policy areas are classified as 'high' in policy 2 areas. In the case of 'high sensitivity' - there is a high potential to create adverse impacts on the existing landscape, it is unlikely that such impacts can be reduced to a widely acceptable level.

It is the considered view of the Council that the introduction of industrial-scale wind turbines into this visually sensitive upland landscape would result in significant adverse landscape and visual impacts. By virtue of their scale, height, and prominent location, the proposed turbines would become dominant features within the landscape, interrupting important views and materially altering the character of the area across a wide geographical extent.

The resulting visual intrusion would diminish the scenic quality that forms a key part of the area's appeal to both visitors and the local community, thereby undermining the objectives of the Greenway and wider tourism strategies and adversely affecting the overall visitor experience. The proposal is also considered to be at variance with established local and national tourism and landscape policy objectives, which seek to protect and enhance scenic amenity as a valuable economic, environmental, and cultural resource.

Furthermore, the cumulative introduction of large-scale infrastructure within this sensitive landscape carries the risk of incremental degradation of one of the County's most important tourism assets, namely its natural beauty and distinctive landscape character. In light of these considerations, it is respectfully requested that An Coimisiún Pleanála give significant weight to the potential adverse effects on landscape character, scenic amenity, and strategic tourism development when determining this application.

The Wild Atlantic Way

The Wild Atlantic Way is Ireland's first defined touring route, stretching along the Atlantic coast from Donegal to West Cork. It has become synonymous with spectacular landscapes, adventure activities and welcoming tourism operators — and has achieved impressive visibility within overseas tourist markets (Failte Ireland). Section 2.5.1 of the MCDP 2022-2028 stresses the importance of the Mayo Coastal Zone Corridor, recognising that the extensive coastline is one of the most valuable and sensitive resources in the county and supports a diverse array of related industries which generate significant economic productivity. Tourism is our Irelands largest indigenous industry, providing income and employment to all areas of the country. The Wild Atlantic Way is an important initiative that has showcased how the natural beauty of this landscape has contributed to the economic development of the County in recent years. Mayo has a lot to offer as a tourism destination with enormous potential to further develop its tourism industry as one of its key economic sectors.

Mayo's unique wild and unspoilt landscapes is regarded as a major component of the county's tourism offering on The Wild Atlantic Way. The location of the proposed site is highly visible from several designated Discovery Points along the Wild Atlantic Way touring route. It should be noted that the Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) 2026 recognises the importance of the Wild Atlantic Way as a 2,500km coastal tourism route extending from Donegal to Cork. Mayo contains 30 Discovery Points and 3 Signature Discovery Points along the route, including internationally recognised destinations such as Achill Island, Downpatrick Head, Killary Harbour and the Erris Peninsula. The Wild Atlantic Way is a vital tourism asset for the County, generating significant economic benefits, supporting local employment and rural development, and showcasing Mayo's exceptional landscapes, heritage and culture. Given its strategic importance, the RES emphasises that developments, including wind energy projects, should be carefully sited and designed to safeguard the visual amenity, landscape character and visitor experience that are central to the continued success of the Wild Atlantic Way. The large scale and highly visible nature of the proposed development has the potential to negatively impact the unique landscape and sensitive natural environment in this area.

9 Conclusions and Recommendations

Mayo County Council is generally supportive of renewable energy projects within the County. Based on the current policy, as reflected in the Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) for County Mayo 2026, the proposed development is located on '*Unsuitable*' lands. It is a strategic objective of this RES strategy to consider new wind energy developments in the areas identified as open for consideration. Therefore the proposed location is not considered appropriate for the development proposed, as it is located in a landscape that does not adequately provide for a wind energy development as proposed.

The Northwest of County Mayo has become a particular focus for wind energy projects with several existing and proposed projects in the general area of the proposal. In considering this SID proposal, An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) should note again the newly adopted RES, wherein it is essentially proposed to consolidate the areas in the north and west of the county where wind farm developments have been significantly permitted, by designating these areas as having Repowering Potential. At the same time, areas to the south and east, which have less constraints in terms of potential environmental and visual impacts, (most particularly with regard to scenic amenity and tourism potential), are designated as Open for Consideration for wind energy developments. Areas not designated as having repowering potential or Open for Consideration are designated as being Unsuitable for windfarm developments. The current proposal is located within such an area.

In assessing this proposal An Coimisiún should consider the multiplicity of renewable energy developments (existing, permitted and pending decision) in North Mayo area, and the overall cumulative impact of such development in the north Mayo area, including its potential to have a significant negative impact in terms of the high quality tourism product along the Wild Atlantic Way, coastal paths and routes and the sensitive archaeological & heritage landscape associated with this area.

As the Renewable Energy Strategy 2026 went through the variation process, and was adopted following public consultation, elected member workshops, consultation with prescribed bodies and was endorsed by the Office of the Planning Regulator and the Minister for Local Government, it is considered that the current proposal would materially contravene the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2026.

For the reasons outlined above, Mayo Co. Council would strongly advise ACP to give full consideration to the potential adverse impacts the proposed development might have, both by itself and in conjunction with other existing and potential developments as well as the precedent it may establish, on the tourism and heritage based economy in an otherwise marginal location in arriving at its decision on this proposal.



07th September 2026

Kevin Walsh,
Executive Planner

Date



_7/9/26_____

John McMyler
Senior Planner

Date



08.09.26

Recommended BY: Joanne Grehan

Director of Services

Date



09.08.26

Kevin Kelly

Date

Chief Executive