



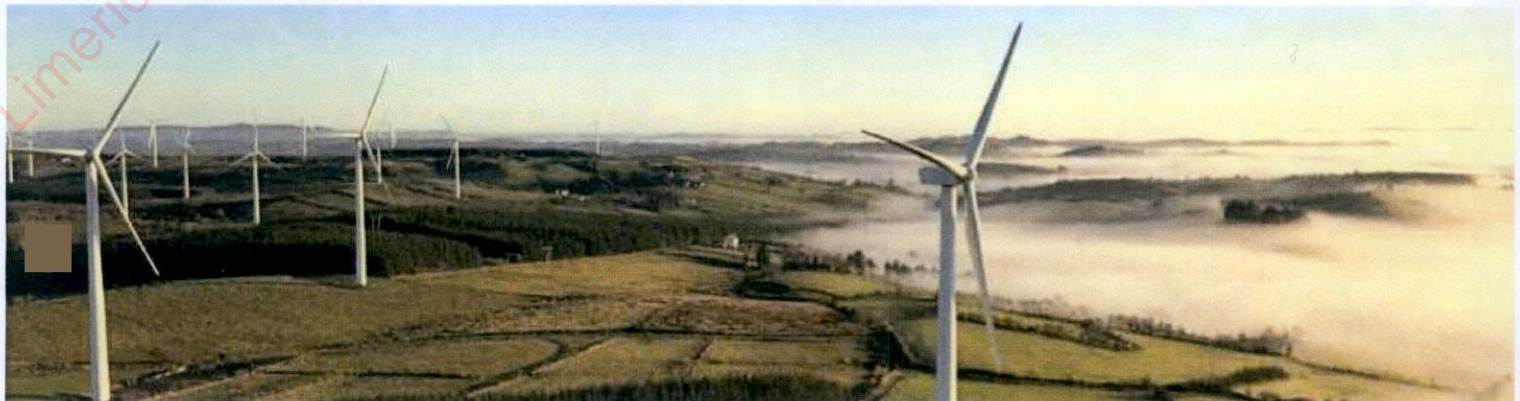
# Knockastanna Wind Farm Extension of Operational Life

## Environmental Impact Assessment Report Volume II: Technical Annexes

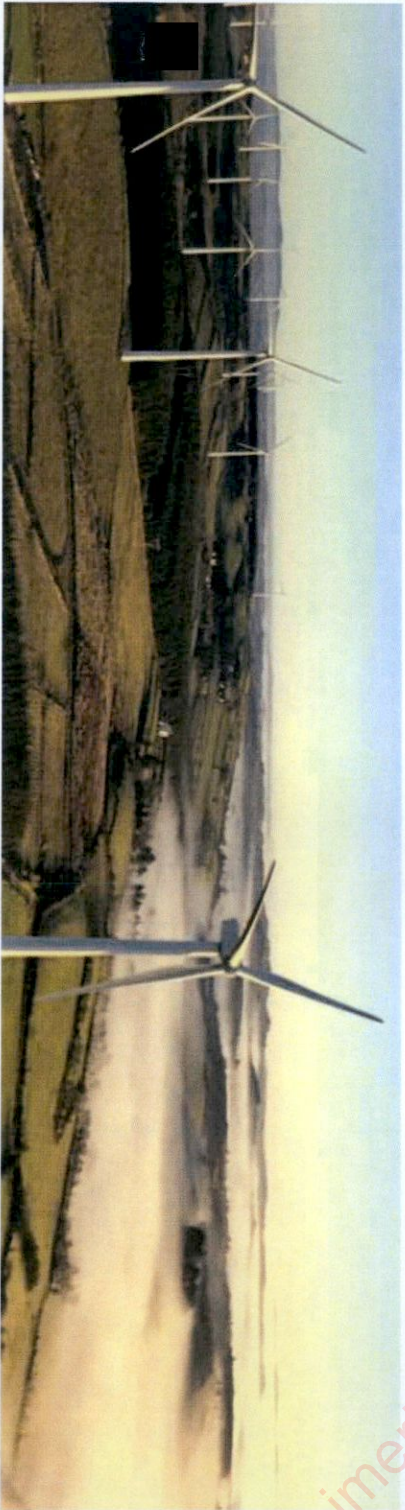
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Limerick City & County Council  
08 JUN 2022  
Limerick City & County Council Services

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Annex 1.1







# Knockastanna Wind Farm – Extension of Operational Life

## Preliminary Scoping Report

SSE Renewables (Ireland) Limited

Limerick City & County Council

08 JUN 2022

Planning and Environmental Services

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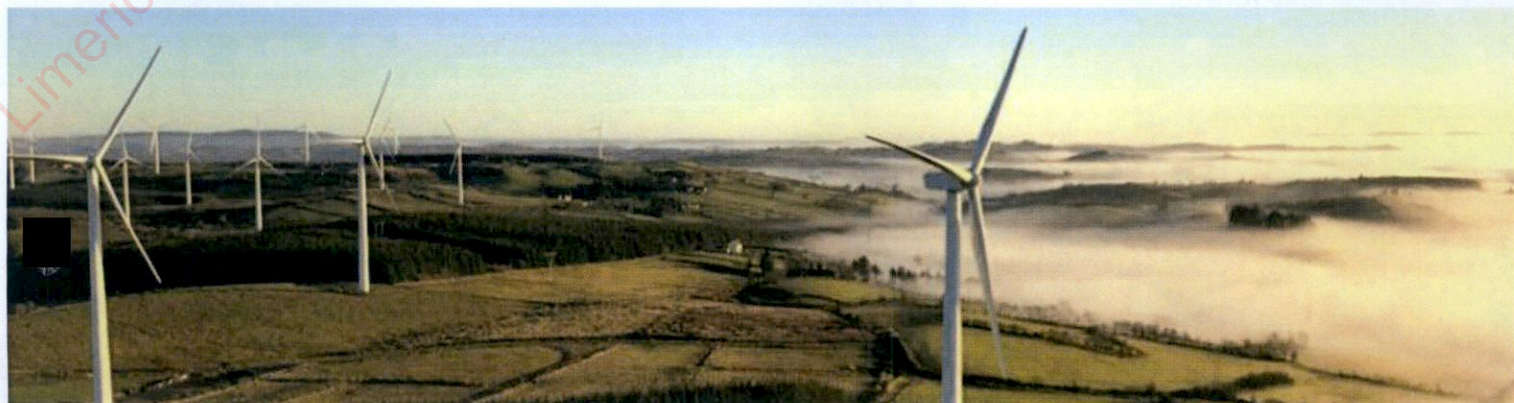
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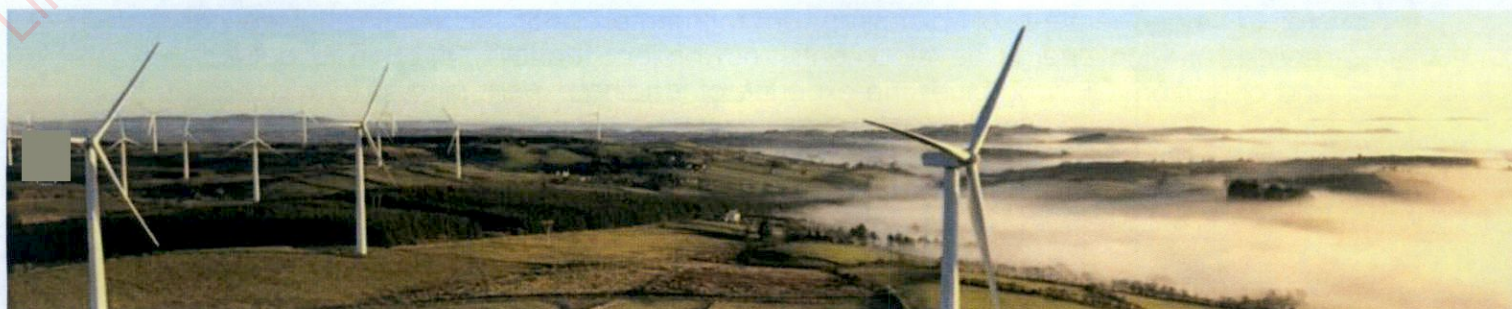
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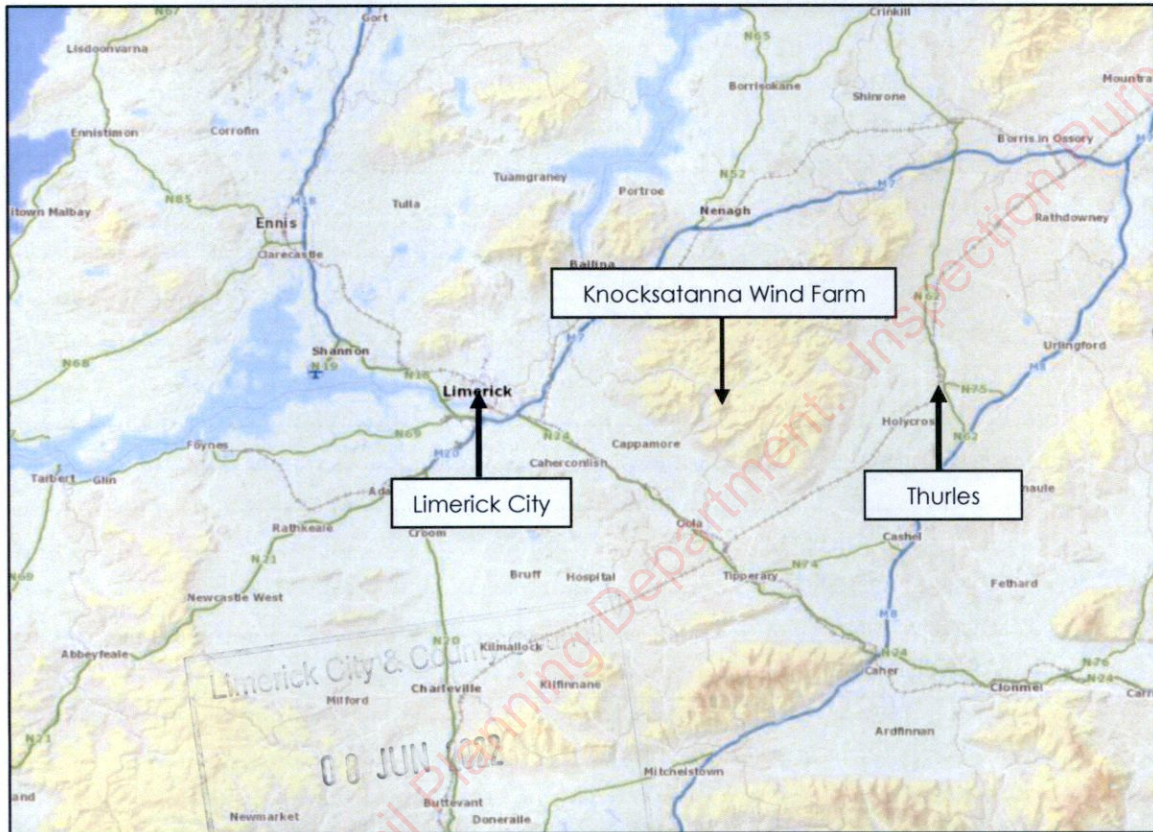
Planning and Environmental Services





## 1.0 Introduction

SSE Renewable (Ireland) Limited ('SSE') intends to apply for planning permission to extend the operational life of the existing Knockastanna Wind Farm by a period of up to 15-years ('the proposed development'). The Knockastanna Wind Farm is located in northeast County Limerick; adjacent to the administrative boundary with County Tipperary and c. 27km east of Limerick City, c. 6km north of the village of Doon, Co. Limerick, and c. 26km west of Thurles, Co. Tipperary. The location of the existing wind farm is illustrated at **Figure 1** below.



**Figure 1: Site Location**

### 1.1 The Applicant

SSE is a leading developer and operator of renewable energy across the United Kingdom and Ireland with a portfolio of around 4GW of onshore wind, offshore wind and hydro-electric generators. SSE has a strong track record of developing, constructing and operating onshore wind in the United Kingdom and Ireland and have built up one of the largest onshore wind energy portfolios across the two jurisdictions.

#### 1.1.1 The Agent

Galetech Energy Services (GES) and SLR Consulting (SLR) have been commissioned by SSE to coordinate the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for the proposed development.

GES is an Irish multi-disciplinary renewable energy consultancy that specialises in the project management of planning, environmental and technical engineering services of wind energy developments from project feasibility through to delivery and operation. GES combines the expertise of leading experts in wind farm design,



planning and environmental assessment and has extensive experience in managing and coordinating EIAR for wind energy and associated electricity grid and substation developments.

SLR is an international planning and environmental consultancy with a network of offices in Ireland and the United Kingdom, as well as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Namibia, Singapore, South Africa, Tanzania and USA. SLR has proven experience and expertise of wind energy and a long track-record of successfully delivering both onshore and offshore wind energy projects around the world. SLR provides a wide range of technical and professional services, including full life cycle support for projects from initial inception and feasibility through planning and on to construction.

## 1.2 Purpose of this Report

This Preliminary Scoping Report has been prepared to provide a high level overview of the proposed development, to allow consultees inform themselves of the scope of the project and provide comments on information which should be included in the EIAR. The report also sets out to provide an overview of the EIAR scoping process undertaken by the applicant to date.

## 2.0 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

EIA is a process required by the European Union (EU) Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by 2014/52/EU, and transposed into Irish law by way of Part X of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended).

EIA is carried out by the relevant competent authority to ensure that projects, where the likelihood of significant effects on the environment cannot be excluded, are subject to a comprehensive and independent examination, analysis and evaluation of their likely significant effects on the environment; including the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects; of both their construction and operational phases, prior to being granted planning permission.

### 2.1 EIA Screening

In accordance with the provisions of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), EIA is mandatory when certain classes of projects exceed specific sizes and thresholds. Planning applications for such projects must be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) provides that the following class of development proposal shall be subject to EIA:-

*"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"*

The proposed development consists of the continued operation of 4 no. wind turbines with a total electrical output of 6MW and is therefore of a scale which exceeds the mandatory threshold for EIA and, consequently, an EIAR will be prepared and submitted with the planning application.

### 2.1 Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)

An EIAR is a written statement of the likely significant effects, if any, which the proposed development, if carried out, will have on the environment. The EIAR consists of a systematic analysis of the continued operation of the existing Knockastanna Wind Farm in relation to the existing environment. It is an iterative



process carried out throughout the full lifecycle of the project design and consenting process so as to allow for preventative and ameliorative action to anticipate, avoid and mitigate any likely significant effects foreseen.

The EIAR is the principal document that informs the EIA process and provides integral information which consenting authorities can use, amongst other considerations, in independently undertaking EIA and informing a decision making process.

The EIAR can also be used by third parties, including members of the public concerned, as part of the public participation process, to evaluate the proposed development and its likely significant environmental effects, and to inform any submissions made to the planning application process.

The EIAR will be prepared in accordance with the provisions contained within Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, which sets out the information to be contained in an EIAR. In addition, the EIAR will take account of the contents of Directive 2014/52/EU (the 2014 EIA Directive), which was adopted in the EU on 16th April 2014, amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. The 2014 EIA Directive was transposed into Irish planning law from the 1 September 2018 via the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018.

#### 2.1.1 Purpose of the EIAR

The purpose of the EIAR is to protect the environment and inform decision making processes. The EIAR provides for a system of sharing information about the environment, within which a proposed development sits, and enables effects to be foreseen and prevented during the consenting process. The purpose of the EIAR is to:-

- Anticipate, avoid and reduce significant effects;
- Assess and mitigate effects;
- Maintain objectivity;
- Ensure clarity and quality;
- Provide relevant information to decision makers; and
- Facilitate better consultation.

It is a statutory requirement that the EIAR pays particular regard to the:-

- Key alternatives;
- Proposed project;
- Receiving environment;
- Likely significant effects;
- Mitigation and monitoring measures; and
- Residual effects.

A non-technical summary must also be provided.

#### 2.1.2 EIAR Methodology

The EPA has published a set of revised '*Guidelines on the Information to be contained within an EIAR*' and these guidelines have been updated to reflect the 2014 EIA Directive and the provisions contained therein. The guidelines have been published in draft form (August 2017) and provide an update on the previous guidelines which were initially published in 2002. The document provides guidance on the role of the EIAR in the EIA process, the key activities involved in the EIAR process, and guidance on the presentation of the information contained in the EIAR.



The EIAR team will have regard to these guidelines in the preparation of the EIAR documents; additionally the team will also have regard to best practice guidance for each individual environmental topic covered by the EIAR.

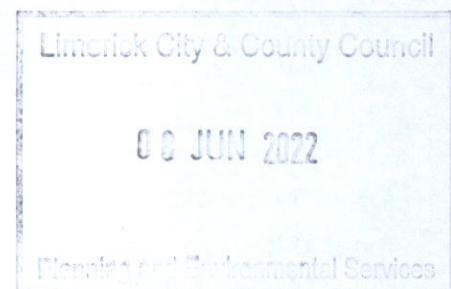
## 2.2 Content of the EIAR

The EPA guidelines include a 7 no. stage approach (sequence) in the production of the EIAR. This includes:-

- Screening;
- Scoping;
- Consideration of Alternatives;
- Project Description;
- Baseline Description;
- Assessment of Likely Significant Impacts; and
- Mitigation/Monitoring.

The guidelines outline that adherence to this sequence ensures an objective and systematic approach is achieved. Using this sequence, the environment is described using a number of specific headings and this provides for a separate section for each topic. The description of the existing environment, the likely significant effects (positive, negative, & cumulative), mitigation and monitoring measures, and residual effects are then grouped together in each section, covering each topic. This format allows for ease of investigation into each topic and for specialist studies/input to be integrated seamlessly. The structure of this EIAR is set out below:-

- Introduction;
- Assessment of Project Alternatives;
- Description of the Proposed Development;
- Population and Human Health;
- Biodiversity;
- Land & Soil;
- Water;
- Air Quality & Climate;
- Landscape;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Noise & Vibration;
- Shadow Flicker;
- Material Assets; and
- Interaction of the Foregoing.



Each chapter of the EIAR will be structured using the following format:

- Introduction;
- Description of the Existing Environment;
- Description of Likely Effects;
- Mitigation & Monitoring Measures;
- Residual Effects; and
- Conclusion.

## 3.0 Proposed Development

Planning permission was granted, by An Bord Pleanála ('the Board'), in July 2003 for the development of the Knockastanna Wind Farm. A condition of consent imposed by the Board stipulated that planning permission for the development would expire after a period of 20-years from the date of the Board Order (i.e. in 2023) and that,



unless planning permission has been granted for their retention<sup>1</sup> for a further period, the wind turbines and related ancillary structures shall be decommissioned and removed.

Commercial operation of the Knockastanna Wind Farm did not commence until 2009 and, consequently, the development will only have been operational for a period of 14-years at the time of expiry of planning permission. Modern wind turbines and associated infrastructure are capable of operating for a period in excess of 30-years and, therefore, it is proposed to extend the operational life of the existing development; including 4 no. wind turbines, electricity substation, hardstandings, access tracks, underground electricity cables and all ancillary infrastructure; for a further period of 15-years (i.e. to 2038) ('the proposed development').

It should be noted that the proposed development does not entail any physical alterations to any on-site infrastructure (e.g. wind turbines) and the only works which may arise relate to ongoing management and maintenance of the existing development during the extended operational period.

A set of location and layout drawings is provided at **Annex 1**.

The table below outlines the location of key project infrastructure.

ID	Easting*	Northing*
Turbine 1**	N/A	N/A
Turbine 2	585709	656611
Turbine 3	585859	656448
Turbine 4	586006	656286
Turbine 5	586153	656124

\*Coordinates provided in Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM)

\*\*Turbine 1 was permitted but was not constructed

#### 4.0 Scope of the EIAR

The EIAR will provide an assessment of effects during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development for each the environmental topics described in this section.

This section provides a brief overview of the level of scoping which has taken place to date, as well as the potential effects which have been identified and the proposed methodology for further assessment in the EIAR.

##### 4.1 Project Alternatives

Prior to the selection of the development under consideration, SSE undertook an extensive assessment of alternatives at both the macro-level and micro-level. The assessment of alternatives ranged from the decommissioning of the existing wind farm and development on a new, greenfield, site to the replacement of the existing wind turbines with a reduced number of larger turbines.

However, having regard to the age-profile of the existing development and the environmental benefits which can be accrued through the continued operation of the existing development compared to the environmental effects which may arise through a revised development at this location or a greenfield development; it was

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that planning permission is not being sought for the retention of the existing wind turbines but for their continued operation.



considered that the development as proposed represents the most environmental-sensitive alternative.

#### 4.2 Population & Human Health

As part the scoping process, a desk based review of existing conditions in the area will be undertaken. It is anticipated that as the wind farm is operational, likely effects will primarily be associated with visual impact and noise.

In terms of human health, it is noted that effects here will be closely linked with other environmental aspects associated with the proposed development which are relevant to human health, namely soils, water, air quality, noise and shadow flicker. Other effects may include employment effects and impacts on the local economy.

The potential effects identified above along with potential cumulative effects with other wind farms and infrastructure projects, will be considered within the 'Population and Human Health' chapter of the EIAR. Effects which are not considered 'likely' or 'significant' have been scoped out from further assessment and include;

- Safety issues connected with the operation of wind turbines;
- Health effects of wind turbine syndrome; and
- Effects of wind farms on property values as being a matter that is not relevant to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The EIAR chapter will also take into consideration the results of other assessments in the EIAR which have relevance to health, as identified above. Recognised health evaluation criteria will be used and accurate baseline data provided. The findings of these assessments will be cross referenced in order to avoid duplication of findings.

#### 4.3 Biodiversity

The Knockastanna Wind Farm is located within the Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains Special Protection Area (SPA; [004165](#)) which is classified for breeding hen harrier; however, it should be noted that the proposed development site was not part of the SPA until 2011 i.e. after the construction of Knockastanna Wind Farm.

Since commencement of construction of the existing development in 2007, annual ornithological monitoring has been completed at the development site to quantify the level of hen harrier activity and to evaluate the effects, if any, of the operational wind farm on the species. It is noted that, since ornithological monitoring commenced at the wind farm hen harrier breeding attempts have been recorded on Knockastanna Mountain while hen harrier has also been recorded flying within the proposed development site. The results of the ornithological monitoring will be presented and assessed in the EIAR for the proposed development.

The proposed development site is also located c. 350m from the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC). There are a number of lower-order watercourses located in the immediate environs of the proposed development site which discharge to the SAC; however, none directly interact with the development (i.e. no watercourse crossings by access tracks etc.).

The planning application will be accompanied by a separate Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and, if required, Natura Impact Statement (NIS), which will provide an assessment of the effects on the Natura 2000 network in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

In addition to this assessment, the EIAR will comprise an assessment of the likely effects of the continued operation of the proposed development on nationally



designated sites, avian species, bats, terrestrial and freshwater (aquatic) habits and species, including those of conservation concern on and in close proximity to the proposed development site.

The ecological evaluation and impact assessment approach used in the EIAR will be based on *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom and Ireland* ('CIEEM guidelines') (CIEEM, 2018).

Given that construction of the Knockastanna Wind Farm is complete, it is considered that the following effects that may arise from construction activities can be scoped out of further assessment:-

- Direct loss of habitat from the construction of the proposed development;
- Direct/Indirect damage to adjacent habitats during construction;
- Effects during construction on the hydrology of water dependant habitats;
- Effects on water quality both at a local level and regional level due to pollution run-off during the construction phase; and
- Effects on aquatic species during construction or due to pollution events.

#### 4.4 Land & Soil

As the construction of the Knockastanna Wind Farm is complete, the proposed development will not require any extensive ground works or interaction with land & soil. As such, no construction phase effects will occur.

In terms of operational phase effects, leaks and spillages from both vehicular traffic and from oils and hydrocarbons have been identified as potential effects. Baseline data gathered during desktop research will be supplemented by a site walkover and assessment of the existing environment within the operational wind farm site. Cumulative effects with nearby wind farm developments and infrastructure projects will also be considered during the EIAR process.

A peat stability risk assessment will also be completed.

#### 4.5 Water

As the construction of the Knockastanna Wind Farm is complete, the proposed development will not involve any direct interaction with water or surface/ground water features and, as such, no construction phase effects will occur.

In terms of operational phase effects, it is likely that the only risk posed to surface/ground water features is through leaks and spillages from vehicular traffic and from oils and hydrocarbons. Baseline data gathered during desktop research will be supplemented by further site specific studies and assessments within the proposed development site. Cumulative effects with nearby wind farm developments and infrastructure projects will also be considered during the EIAR process.

While flooding of the proposed development site is considered highly unlikely that flooding is an issue due to the topography of the proposed development site, a flood risk assessment will also be completed.

#### 4.6 Air & Climate

A desktop review of available baseline air quality data within the study area will be undertaken using the following data sources:-

- Environmental Protection Agency – National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Data Archive;



- Environmental Protection Agency – Air Quality in Ireland 2016 Report and previous reports (1997 – 2015);
- Dublin Regional Air Quality Management Plan 2009-2012;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service Maps; and
- Environmental Protection Agency – Integrated Pollution Control Licences.

Operational phase effects on air quality and climate are likely to be limited to impacts created by emissions from maintenance related vehicular traffic. It is also noted that the generation of electricity from the continued operation of the wind farm will lead to a **substantial** 'net-positive' effect. The extent of this effect will be fully quantified.

#### 4.7 Landscape

The assessment of landscape and visual impacts has two separate but closely linked aspects. The first is landscape character impact or landscape impact i.e. the effects of the proposed development on the fabric or structure of the landscape as perceived by people. The second is visual impact i.e. the extent to which the wind turbines can be seen in the context of the surrounding landscape within which they sit.

Potential effects on the landscape arising from the presence of wind turbines include:-

- Effects on landscape features, views, routes, and areas described in the County Development Plan and landscape character assessments; and
- Effects on designated landscape, views/prospects, conservation sites, and other special areas of interest; and

In order to assess the magnitude of impact associated with the proposed development, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will be prepared, and supported by photography, in accordance with *Guidelines for LVIA, 2013*<sup>2</sup>. The significance of landscape and visual effects will be assessed in accordance with a significance matrix which is based on the sensitivity of the landscape or visual resource versus the magnitude of impact.

#### 4.8 Cultural Heritage

Given that the proposed development does not require further excavations or groundworks, there is no likelihood of direct effects on previously unrecorded archaeological features.

Effects on cultural heritage features are, therefore, likely to be limited to visual effects on recorded monuments located within the study area. The landscape and visual impact assessment (see **Section 4.7**) will also incorporate an assessment of the effects on archaeological or architectural features, as relevant.

#### 4.9 Noise & Vibration

Operational phase effects include noise impacts at noise sensitive locations (e.g. dwellings) emanating from the operational wind turbines and noise emanating from the operational substation. The Noise & Vibration chapter will assess the effects of noise at these dwellings having regard to operational phase noise monitoring completed following the commissioning of the wind farm.

Vibration effects are not assessed as likely due to the absence of vibration-generating activities during the operational phase.

<sup>2</sup> Landscape Institute Publication



#### 4.10 Shadow Flicker

The EIAR will assess the effects on human health from shadow flicker, i.e. the moving shadows cast by the turbine blades in times of direct sunlight and the resultant effect that can have on nearby properties. In times of direct sunshine, wind turbine blades could cast moving shadows on residences in close proximity to the turbines. At certain times of the year, the moving shadows of the turbines blades can periodically reduce light to a room causing the light to appear to flicker.

The Shadow Flicker chapter of the EIAR will comprise a detailed assessment of the likelihood of shadow flicker affecting local receptors during the operation of the proposed development. The assessment will be based on detailed shadow flicker prediction modelling for each dwelling within a specified distance of a turbine. An assessment will then be made in accordance with relevant standards to establish if a significant effect is likely to occur.

#### 4.11 Material Assets

##### 4.11.1 Transport & Access

The likely effects of the continued operation of the Knockastanna Wind Farm will be fully assessed. Given the absence of extensive construction activities and the limited traffic volumes generated by operational wind farms; likely effects are not, at this point, anticipated to be significant.

##### 4.11.2 Telecommunications

The Telecommunications section will undertake an assessment to determine if the proposed development will result in any impacts on existing telecommunication links. This assessment will be based on a desktop appraisal of existing telecommunication masts in the wider area and consultation with service providers in the region; however, given the absence of known telecommunications interference arising from the existing development, effects are not anticipated to be significant.

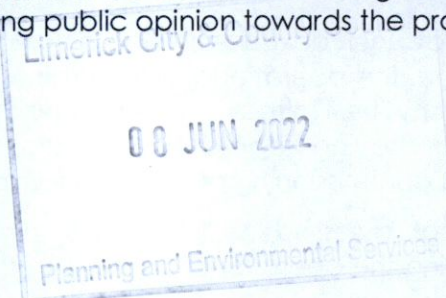
### 5.0 Consultation

#### 5.1 Statutory Consultation

A variety of statutory and non-statutory organisations have been and will continue to be consulted during the scoping process to gather their views on the likelihood of significant environmental effects arising from the continued operation of the proposed development.

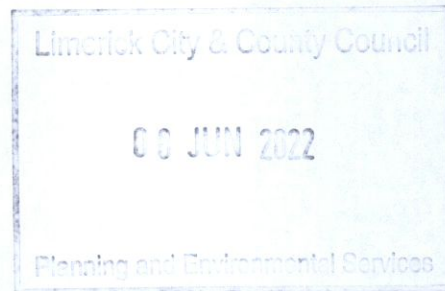
#### 5.2 Public Consultation

Public consultation with local residents, community groups and other interested stakeholders will be commenced shortly; at all times adhering to public health guidelines. Public consultation will be continued throughout the preparation of the EIAR as a means of identifying public opinion towards the proposed development.





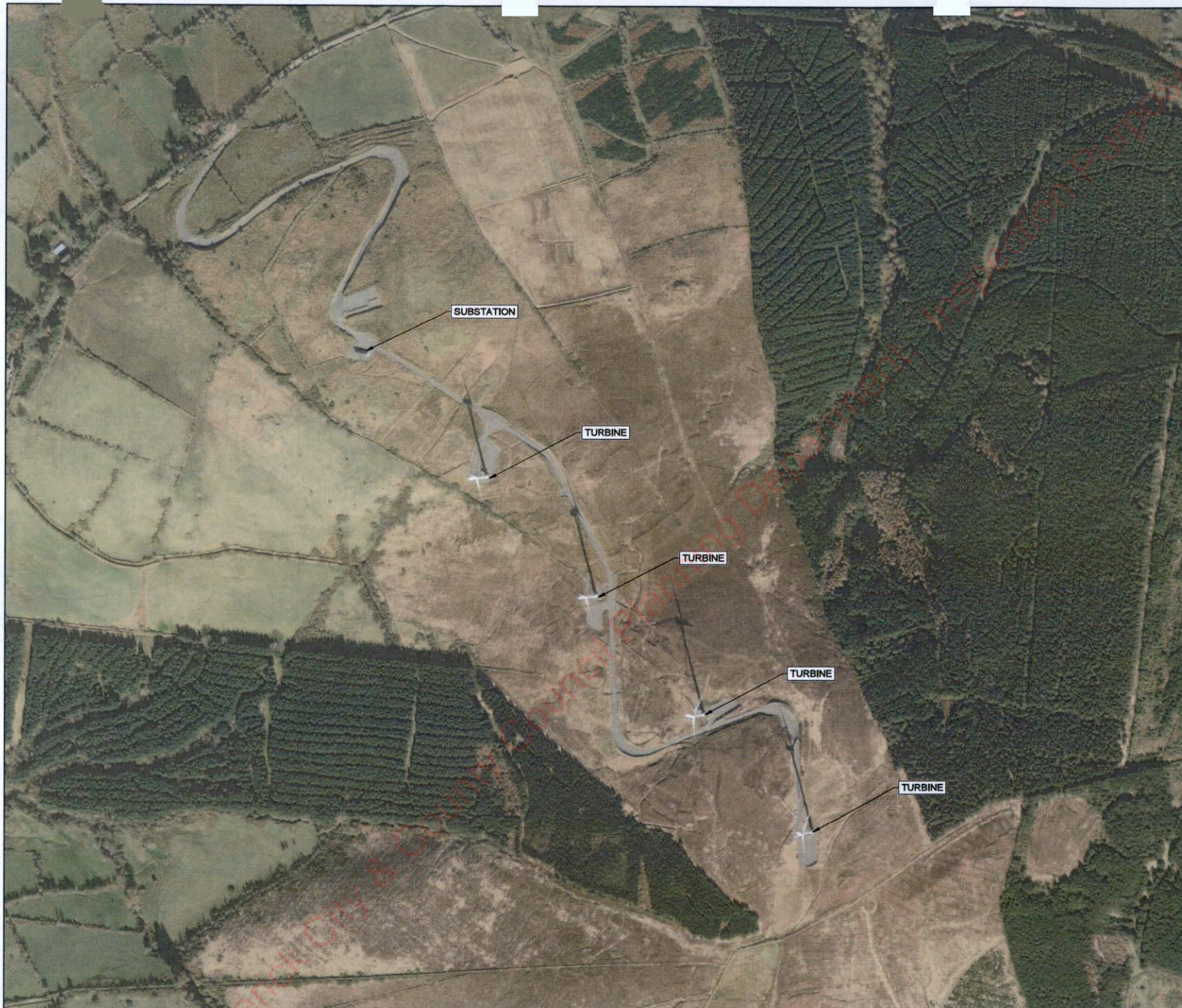
**Annex 1 –  
Maps and Drawings**



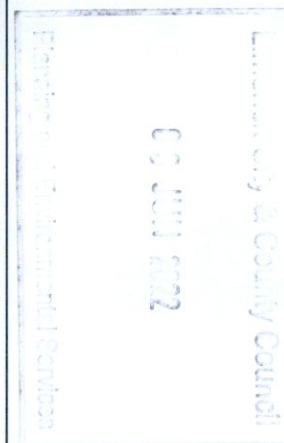








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Job Title:

KNOCKASTANNA WIND FARM

Drawing Title:

SITE LAYOUT

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## Annex 1.2

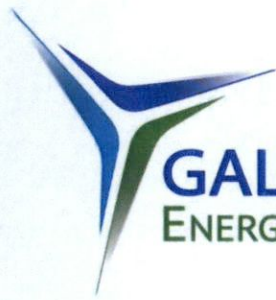
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**GALETECH**  
ENERGY SERVICES

**SLR**



# Knockastanna Wind Farm Extension of Operational Life

## Community Report

SSE Renewables Generation Ireland  
Limited

Limerick City & County Council

08 JUN 2022

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## 1.0 Introduction

This Community Report has been prepared, on behalf of SSE Renewables generation Ireland Limited ('SSE') for the Knockastanna Wind Farm project to reflect and detail the community engagement activities carried out prior to the submission of a planning application to continue the operation of the existing wind farm for a further period of 15-years.

SSE values the continuous contribution and involvement of the local community and this report demonstrates the commitment of the Applicant to a program of genuine positive engagement with the local community and stakeholders.

The purpose of this report is to transparently demonstrate the approach that SSE has taken since project inception and to outline the principles and objectives of the approach to consultation and stakeholder engagement.

This report has had regard to the requirements set out in the *Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines December 2019* which identifies a requirement for a Community Report to be submitted with the application.

### 1.1 Policy Provisions for Consultation with the Local Community

#### 1.1.1 Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006

With reference to 'Public Consultation with the Local Community', the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006 ('the 2006 Guidelines') state that:-

*'Planning authorities should encourage developers to engage in public consultation with the local community. While it is not a mandatory requirement, it is strongly recommended that the developer of a wind energy project should engage in active consultation and dialogue with the local community at an early stage in the planning process, ideally prior to submitting a planning application.'*

*The developer should work with the local community on the format of any future consultation to allow for the free flow of information between the community and the wind energy developer at all stages in the project. Consultation should be meaningful and should give the local community an opportunity to comment upon and to have an input into the planning and design of the scheme. It may be helpful to put formal procedures in place to deal with queries and complaints from the general public.*

*In accordance with best practice the developer should appoint an individual to be accessible to the local community from the construction to the commission stages to allow for dialogue and communication and to keep the public informed about the progress of the project.'*

Best practice approaches include circulating information pertaining to the proposal to the immediate population whose properties are within c. 1km of the proposed wind energy development, and to community groups, churches and clubs within c. 10km radius.

Suggestions in relation to what this information might include are as follows:-

- Formal letter;
- Project information leaflet;
- Posters and Advertising; and



- Response form.

### 1.1.2 Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019

The *Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019* ('the **Draft 2019 Guidelines**') also emphasise the importance of community engagement and that community, and therefore public, acceptance of wind energy developments is an important building block. This will, in turn, depend on proper consultation with, and participation by, the community in progressing wind energy proposals from concept to approval and ultimately development.

The Draft 2019 Guidelines enable planning authorities to take into account the degree to which promoters of wind energy projects have meaningfully and properly consulted with the local community and facilitated public participation in developing their proposals. This should ultimately demonstrate the economic benefit of wind energy projects to the community, or communities, in the vicinity of the relevant wind energy proposal.

#### 1.1.2.1 Requirement for a Community Report

With respect to public consultation and requirement for a community report, the Draft 2019 Guidelines emphasise that *'it is essential that local communities are properly involved in the planning process, as early inclusion improves confidence in the openness and fairness of the planning process. Meaningful community consultation also helps developers:-*

- *to refine the design approach to a project reflecting a broadly based community perspective;*
- *to explain the potential benefits of a project more clearly to communities; and*
- *to establish relationships with the community, as well as empowering communities to interact with and benefit more fully from projects.'*

In respect of the subject proposed development, there is limited scope to influence the design approach and as such additional emphasis will be placed on outlining the benefits to date and going forward, establishing and improving relationships with the community, as well as empowering communities to interact with and benefit more fully from the proposed development.

In accordance with the Draft 2019 Guidelines, wind energy developers are required, in advance of submitting applications for permission, to take active steps to:-

- inform local communities as they begin to develop their proposals; take the views of local communities into account in designing their proposals;
- demonstrate what practical effect that process of engagement has had; and,
- set out how the project will perform as a good neighbour in the context of the long-term economic and social development of the community or communities within which it is situated.

## 2.0 Background and Context

The Knockastanna Wind Farm is an existing development and the approach to community consultation with regard to the proposed development has been adapted to reflect this fact. Taking the existing permitted development into account, there has been limited scope for the consultation process to influence the design of the existing wind farm and feedback has instead been sought on its proposed continued operational and decommissioning stages.



## 2.1 Planning History

Planning permission was granted, by An Bord Pleanála ('the Board'), in July 2003 for the development of the Knockastanna Wind Farm. A condition of consent imposed by the Board stipulated that planning permission for the development would expire after a period of 20-years from the date of the Board Order (i.e. in 2023) and that, unless planning permission has been granted for their retention for a further period, the wind turbines and related ancillary structures shall be decommissioned and removed.

Commercial operation of the Knockastanna Wind Farm did not commence until 2009 and, consequently, the development will only have been operational for a period of 14-years at the time of expiry of planning permission.

## 2.2 Community Benefit

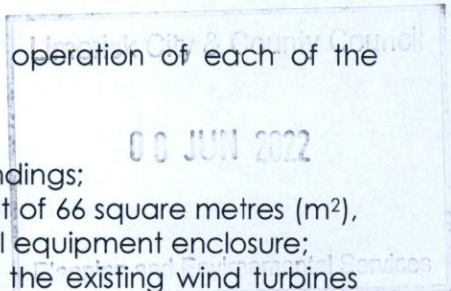
In terms of the established community benefit fund, SSE makes annual contributions to community groups in the vicinity of its operational wind farms. In 2021, SSE presented more than €13,500 to community groups in the vicinity of the Knockastanna Wind Farm. The 2021 fund brings the overall contribution of this development to local communities to €171,721 since 2010.

A total of 7 no. local groups benefited from the 2021 community fund including schools, sports clubs and community organisations. The successful applicants were Cappawhite National School, Cullen-Lattin AFC, Curreeny Community Council, Doon GAA Club, Kilcommon Community Council, Rearcross National School and Sean Treacy's GAA Club. Kilcommon Community Council will be putting their funding towards the replacement of a defibrillator.

## 2.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the continued operation of each of the following elements of the existing development:-

- 4 no. wind turbines;
- Associated turbine foundations and crane hardstandings;
- 1 no. electrical control building with a total footprint of 66 square metres (m<sup>2</sup>), including welfare facilities and associated electrical equipment enclosure;
- Underground electrical cabling between each of the existing wind turbines and the electrical control building;
- 1 no. site entrance from the L-5029-419 and 2km of site access tracks; and
- Site drainage infrastructure.



## 3.0 Approach to Community Consultation

Consultation is a key element of each stage of the planning EIA process and there are procedures for statutory public consultation at various stages in the EIA process. While it is not obligatory during the scoping and preparation of an EIAR, SSE has undertaken consultation with local residents, community groups and other local interested parties throughout the EIAR process.

Prior to submitting the planning application and EIAR, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan was prepared to identify the most appropriate approach to community engagement for the project. Having regard to the 2006 Guidelines and Draft 2019 Guidelines in addition to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the Plan also identified the appropriate geographical area for this engagement.



Accordingly, a Community Liaison Officer (CLO) Ms. Louise Glennon was appointed by SSE and was given the authority to make publicly available full, clear and comprehensive information about the project in advance of submitting the planning application and to provide the resources to receive, record, investigate, respond to and address queries and complaints.

### 3.1 Project Information Leaflet and One-to-One Discussions

Information on the project was made available using a project leaflet (see **Appendix 2**) which was prepared for issue to local residents by the CLO. Where contact could be made, these leaflets were, in September 2021, handed directly to each resident within a 2km radius of the proposed development site and one-to-one discussions between the CLO and homeowners and local residents were held. For residents that could not be reached directly, leaflets were subsequently issued by post. All residents were provided with contact details of the CLO who could be contacted with any further queries which may arise. The project information leaflet was also made available online on the [project web-page](#).

In total, contact or attempts to contact over 71 no. local residents (some dwellings may be unoccupied) within the local area was made by the CLO.

#### 3.1.1 Leaflet Drop – Responses Received

A total of 71 no. dwellings were targeted for a leaflet drop. Residents of 22 no. dwellings had leaflets handed directly to them, and, of these, 13 no. responses were received where the general reaction could be described as being positive.

Of the responses received, 3 no. of the respondents sought information as to whether additional turbines could be developed on their land. 3 no. residents mentioned that noise was an issue, but 2 no. of these also stated that over time the noise has subsided and was now not noticeable.

The vast majority of respondents noted that they were content with the presence of the wind farm, without outlining the reasons, and had no objections to its presence for a further period of time.

A couple of respondents outlined their satisfaction with the existing development; however, referred to the adverse public road conditions during the construction phase. One respondent stated that the wind farm is impacting on phone and Wifi coverage.

Several respondents also sought more information about the community fund.

### 3.2 Other Consultation Methods

#### 3.2.1 Scoping

An informal scoping request was issued to all bodies prescribed in the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). The prescribed bodies were contacted in writing at early stage in the environmental scoping process to gather their views on the scope of the EIAR and the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed development. The consultation process involved furnishing each organisation with the 'Preliminary Scoping Report', accompanied by a set of maps and drawings, and requesting written feedback.

While the consultation undertaken to date has allowed for any identified concerns to be addressed within this EIAR; the statutory consultation process, to be commenced following submission of the planning application to the Planning Authority, will allow these organisations to make any further comments, as necessary.



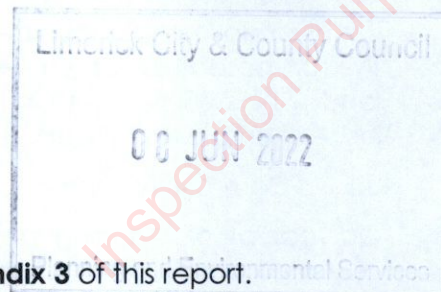
### 3.2.2 Public Consultation Events

Although public consultation events would generally be included amongst the consultation methods used by SSE to facilitate community consultation, constraints on in-person events were in place at the time arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and public health guidelines in place at that time. In order to minimise contact between all parties and maintain social distance; a leaflet drop was found to minimise risk to the public and SSE staff.

### 3.3 Letters of Support

Several letters of support were received by SSE in support of the proposed development, as follows:-

- Cullen-Lattin Football Club;
- Curreeny Community Council;
- Doon GAA Club;
- Kilcommon Community Council;
- Rearcross Football Club; and
- Rearcross National School.



Copies of these letters of support are included as **Appendix 3** of this report.

### 3.4 Ongoing Consultation and Liaison

#### 3.4.1 Contact Details

Contact details of the community engagement team have been provided to the public throughout the door-to-door consultations and at consultation events. Following submission of the planning application, the planning process provides a further opportunity for the public and interested parties to comment on the proposed development.

### 3.5 Socio-Economic Benefits

The 2006 Guidelines and Draft 2019 Guidelines stipulate that wind energy developers should identify enduring economic and socio-economic benefit to the communities concerned from the proposed development.

#### 3.5.1 Short Term

As construction of the wind farm has already taken place, there are no construction stage benefits such as additional employment which normally be associated with wind farm development.

Separately, a grant of planning permission may be accompanied by a requirement to pay a development contribution to Limerick City and County Council in respect of public infrastructure. This payment will result in benefits to the local community and would likely support existing expenditure on infrastructure such roads, waste water facilities, water supply infrastructure, community facilities and amenities.

#### 3.5.2 Long Term

##### Employment

The operational phase affords opportunity for mechanical-electrical contractors and craftspeople to become involved with the operation and maintenance (O&M) of the wind farm. On a long-term basis, the wind farm will be visited on 1-2 no. occasions per week for maintenance purposes. In this regard, the proposed development will maintain the current employment provision of 1 no. Site Supervisor and a team of 3



no. Operation & Maintenance Technicians which are shared resources across 5 no. other operational wind farms.

#### Rates

Over the last 5-years, the existing wind farm has contributed commercial rates of in excess of €100,000 per annum to Limerick City & County Council. In excess of €1 million has been paid in commercial rates to Limerick County Council during the wind farm's operation to date. These rates have assisted the Council in the provision of services in both the local area and throughout the County.

#### Lease Agreements

Local landowners will also benefit from lease agreements associated with the lands of the proposed development. It is highly likely that income generated by local landowners will be spent in the local economy thus resulting in multiplier effects and indirect employment opportunities.

#### 3.5.3 Community Fund

On receipt of planning permission, the existing community fund will continue to operate and be administered by a committee previously set up by the operations department of SSE. The local community will continue to have input into the distribution of this fund and to prioritise the fund for the projects which matter most.

Local community groups will continue to be invited to submit funding requests to the committee and preference will be given to local projects. This fund will be made available, and distributed annually, for the duration of the proposed development. A full transparent record of all projects funded and made publicly accessible on the website and included in periodic newsletters to the local community.

### 4.0 Conclusions

SSE has actively engaged, consulted and maintained dialogue with the local community and other stakeholders from an early stage in this project. The consultation process has been a valuable exercise and has provided a detailed and enhanced understanding of the key issues and concerns of the local community.

The objective of the of the public consultation process was to ensure the widest possible consultation with individuals, communities and other stakeholders from the commencement of the project in observance with the best industry practices. Every effort was made to identify those to engage with, in a flexible and facilitative manner, in order to build strong and effective relationships with those that will live in the wider vicinity of the existing wind farm.

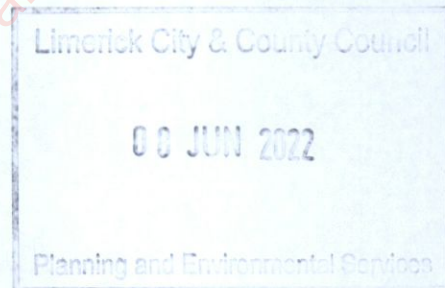
Community engagement will be maintained throughout the operation and decommissioning stages of the development, should planning permission be granted.

During the planning process, the CLO will remain available to the community in relation to any local issues and requirements that may arise, and respond in a timely manner. It is intended that this best-in-class approach to good-neighbour community consultation will be continued throughout the operation and decommissioning stages.

SSE will eagerly prioritise community issues and will keep the local community apprised of the net economic benefits of the project, particularly for the local community, through newsletters and periodic updates on the website.

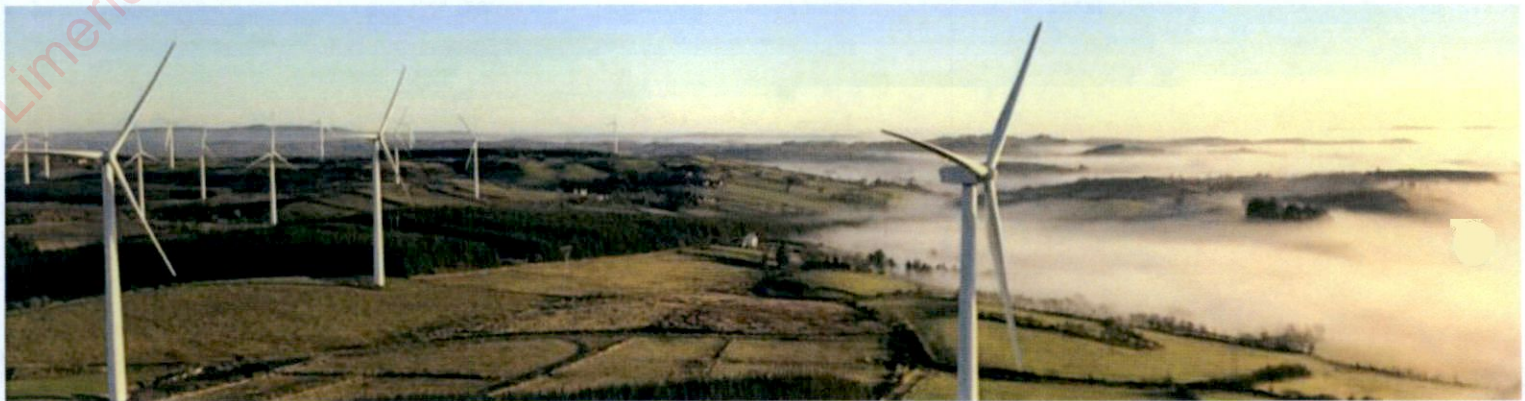


During operation, SSE shall prepare an annual report detailing all correspondence to/from and consultation with the local community. This report shall be made available to the Planning Authority on request.

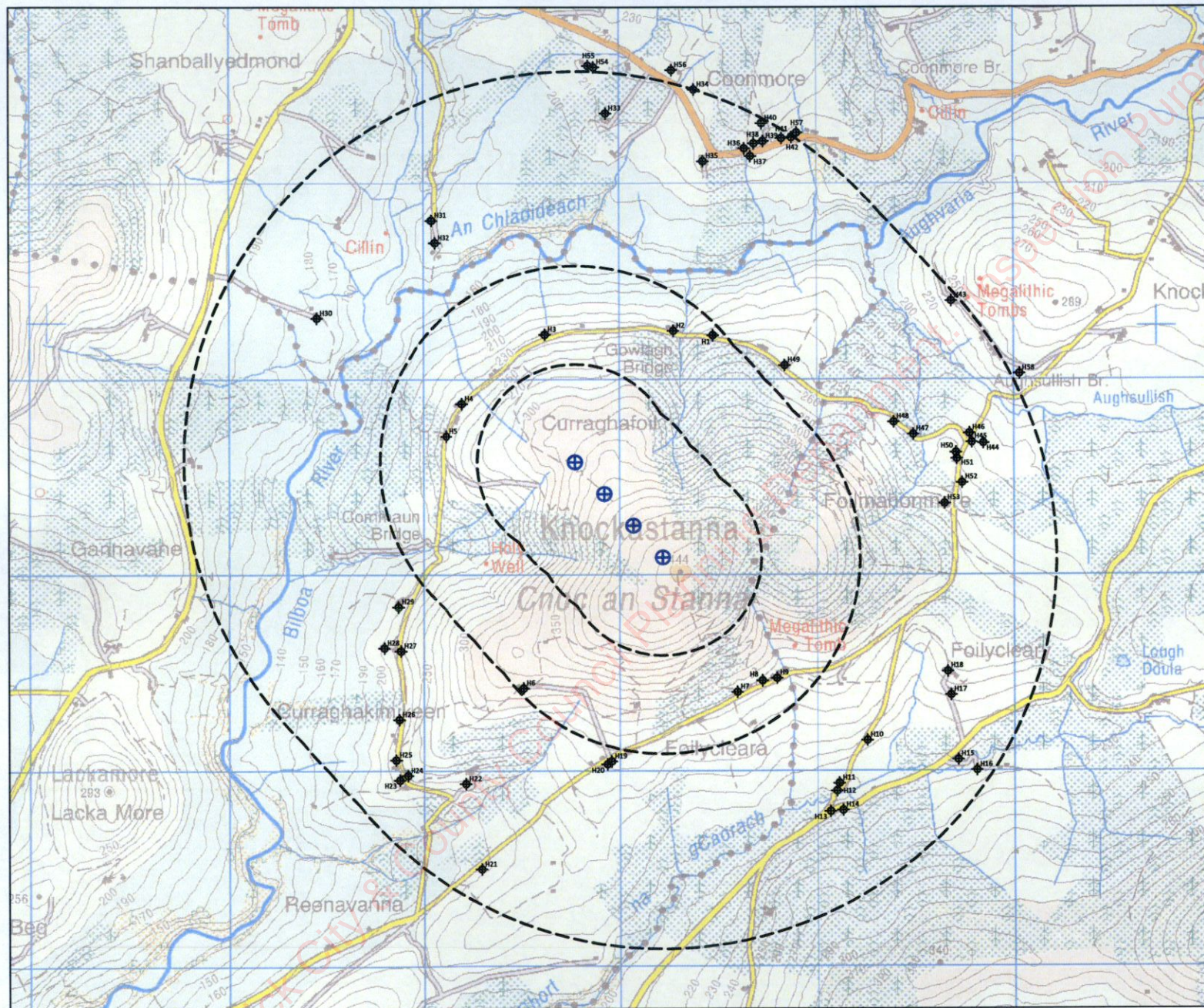




**Appendix 1 -  
Dwellings within 2km of the Existing Wind Turbines**

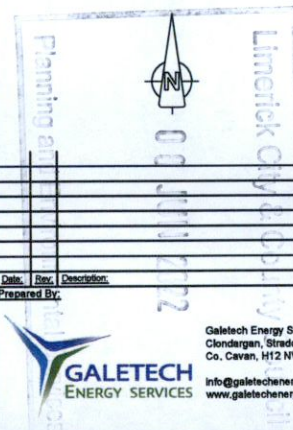






# LEGEND

- EXISTING TURBINE LOCATIONS
- TURBINE SEPARATION BUFFERS
- EXISTING DWELLINGS WITHIN 2KM



Client: SSE RENEWABLES GENERATION IRELAND LTD

Job Title: KNOCKASTANNA WIND FARM

Drawing Title: DWELLINGS WITHIN 2KM

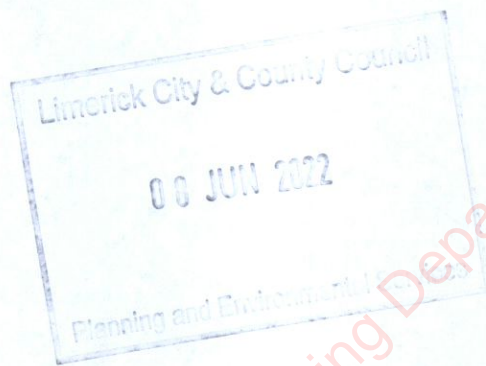
Drawing No: KST001\_EIAR\_LOC-0.02 Revision No: Rev01

Scale: (A3) 1:20,000 Date: 25/11/2021

Drawn By: J.B. Checked By: S.C. Confirmed By: S.C.



**Appendix 2 –  
Project Information Leaflet**





## ABOUT KNOCKASTANNA WIND FARM

Knockastanna Wind Farm is located in Co. Limerick near to the border with Co. Tipperary and the village of Doon. The wind farm comprises of 4 turbines and provides enough clean green renewable energy to power almost 4000 homes every year.

Knockastanna Wind Farm was granted planning permission in July 2003 to expire in 2023, a period of 20 years. However, the wind farm has only been in commercial operation since 2009, a period of 14 years. SSE Renewables are now seeking to extend the operational life of Knockastanna Wind farm by a further 15 years up until 2038 in order to continue the provision of renewable energy and advance its contribution towards Ireland Climate Change commitments.

An extension of time will ensure that the Community Fund contributions will continue for a further 15 years. This will also ensure that the local council will continue to receive substantial rates payments every year, which will extend contributions towards local services such as roads, local infrastructure and public services.

SSE Renewables will submit a planning application to Limerick County Council for this extension of time at the start of 2022. We would encourage anyone to contact us if there are any queries or questions regarding this application.



## CONTACT US

We are very keen to keep in contact with all members of the community and we will keep you informed as the planning application progresses. In the meantime if there are any queries or concerns please contact Louise Glennon via email, telephone or post.

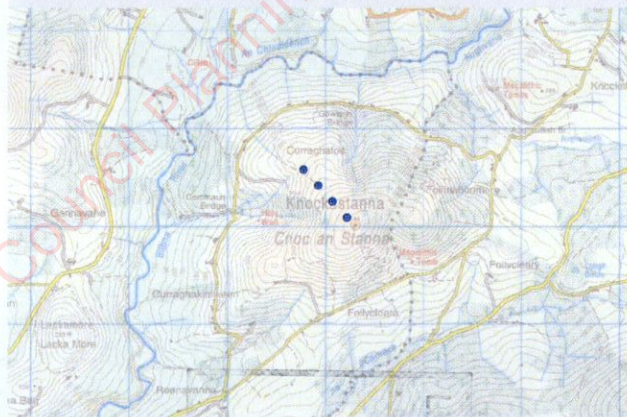


**Louise Glennon,**  
Louise.Glennon@sse.com  
clo@sse.com  
+353 (0) 87 716 9849

**Post:**  
SSE Renewables  
Red Oak South,  
South County Business Park,  
Leopardstown, Dublin 18.

One to one meetings will be facilitated on request

Information is also available on <https://www.sserenewables.com/onshore-wind/ireland/knockastanna/> and from time to time content will be updated to address any frequently asked questions.



## ABOUT KNOCKASTANNA WIND FARM

INFORMATION LEAFLET Q3 2021



08 JUN 2022



**Appendix 3 –  
Letters of Support**







## Rearcross Football Club

February 2022

Dear Anne

**Re: Knockastanna Wind Farm**

On behalf of Rearcross Football Club I would like to register support for an application by SSE Renewables Generation Ireland Limited for planning permission for the continued operation of the existing Knockastanna Wind Farm located in the townland of Curraghfoil, Co. Limerick. In particular we support the community benefits which will arise from the continued operation of the Knockastanna Wind Farm as well as the continued provision of green energy.

Yours sincerely

Colm Nolan

*On behalf of Rearcross FC*

Limerick City & County Council

06 JUN 2022

Planning and Environmental Services



**Rearcross N.S., Newport, Co. Tipperary.**

Uimhir Rolla: 12124K

Fón: 062-79211

E-mail: [rearcrossns@gmail.com](mailto:rearcrossns@gmail.com)

RCN: 20134815

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of Rearcross National School I would like to register support for an application by SSE Renewables Generation Ireland Limited for planning permission for the continued operation of the existing Knockastanna Wind Farm located in the townland of Curraghfoil, Co. Limerick. In particular we support the community benefits which will arise from the continued operation of the Knockastanna Wind Farm as well as the continued provision of green energy.

Yours sincerely,

Síobhán Concomar  
Acting Principal





Sent: 03 February 2022 12:22

Dear Ms. Reynolds,

On behalf of Kilcommon Community Council I would like to register support for the application by SSE Renewables Generation Ireland Limited for planning permission for the continued operation of the existing Knockastanna Wind Farm located in the townland of Curraghfoil, Co. Limerick. As recipients of valuable support from the Knockastanna Community Fund we welcome the community benefits which will arise from the continued operation of the Knockastanna Wind Farm as well as the continued provision of green energy. Kilcommon area is designated an EU Area of Serious Disadvantage and therefore the continued development of mutually beneficial green energy projects by SSE at Knockastanna are welcome and appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Dan Woods, President.

Noel Mc Mahon, Projects Coordinator.

Tommy Mc Grath, Chairman.

T.J. Carr, Treasurer.

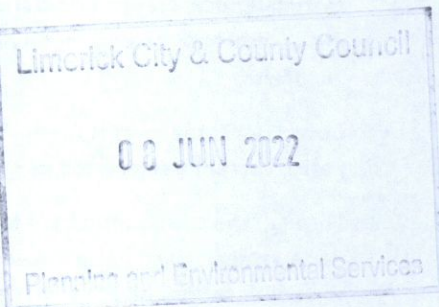
Kilcommon Community Council

Áras Cill Chuimín Community Centre,

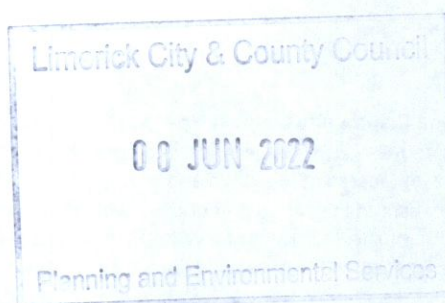
Kilcommon,

Thurles,

County Tipperary.







Kilmoylan

Doon

Co Limerick

28 January 2022

Re – Knockastanna Windfarm, Curraghfoil, Doon , Co Limerick

On behalf of Doon GAA Club I would like to register our support for an application by SSE Renewables Generation Ireland Limited for planning permission for the continued operation of the existing Knockastanna Windfarm. In particular we support the continued provision of green energy in our area and the community benefits which will arise from the continued operation on this windfarm.

Doon GAA is the largest Club/ Association in the parish, with over 50% of the population of the parish currently registered as members of our club.

Through the community benefits from this windfarm, we have received financial support from SSE Renewables, which has allowed us to progress the facilities we provide for our club members and the wider community. We have received financial support in recent years which has allowed us to install an electronic scoreboard and change all our lighting to LED and put same on sensors. In 2021 we received support to install permanent street lights on the walkway around our grounds, which has provided a year round facility for the whole community.

As a voluntary organisation, we fully appreciate the support we receive through the community benefits of the wind farm.

Yours Sincerely

Declan Ryan  
Secretary Doon GAA Club



*Curreeny Community Centre.*

Curreeny,

Kilcommon,

Thurles

Eircode

E41Xc62

31/01/2022

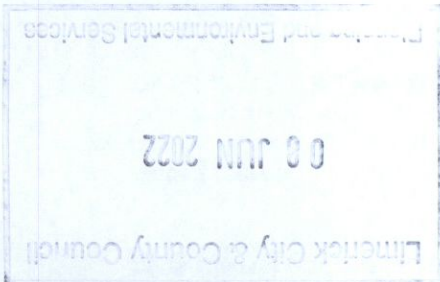
*To Whom it May Concern*

On behalf of Curreeny Community Council I would like to register support for an application by SSE Renewables Generation Ireland Limited for planning permission for the continued operation of the existing Knockastanna Wind Farm located in the townland of Curraghfoil, Co. Limerick. In particular we support the community benefits which will arise from the continued operation of the Knockastanna Wind Farm as well as the continued provision of green energy."

*Thanking You.*

*Chairperson, Ann O'Connell.*  
*Phone No 087 6767416*

*Secretary Joseph Slattery*  
*Phone No. 086 6561606*





# Cullen-Lattin Football Club

AISLING PARK, CULLEN, COUNTY TIPPERARY

Founded 1982

Club Colours: Maroon

Chairperson: Michael Landers

Treasurer: Gerard Riordan

Hon. Secretary: Michael Kenny, Mount Bruis, Rathkea, Tipperary Tel. 086-3471405

7 February 2022

To Whom it Concerns:

On behalf of Cullen Lattin AFC, I would like to register our support for an application by SSE Renewables Generation Ireland Limited for planning permission for the continued operation of the existing Knockastanna Wind Farm, located in the townland of Curraghfoil, Co. Limerick. In particular we support the community benefits which will arise from the continued operation of the Knockastanna Wind Farm as well as the continued provision of green energy.

Over the years we at Cullen-Lattin AFC have benefitted hugely from the Knockastanna Wind Farm. We have built up a personal relationship with the staff at the SSE Company and we feel confident that our applications for funding are received and considered favourably each year in accordance with SSE Renewables commitment to supporting local communities who wish to initiate sustainable and renewable projects that benefit the broader community in general.

The SSE community fund application process encourages local communities to drive environmental sustainability within their local areas and over the years we have introduced numerous initiatives at Cullen-Lattin AFC that contribute to the long term social sustainability of our village and hinterlands.

Together with the help of SSE Renewables we have been steadily building a greener more sustainable club in our village. To date we have installed solar powered panels to heat our water, energy saving solar powered lighting for the perimeter of our community walking track, a solar powered camera surveillance system along with energy saving Astro turf floodlights and we have installed water butts to recycle water which are attached to our clubhouse and our boot cleaning machine. Without SSE Renewables we would not be able to do this.

We greatly support the SSE Renewables Generation Ireland Limited application for planning permission for continued operation of the Knockastanna Wind Farm.

Kindest regards,

Anne Bradshaw, PRO,  
On behalf of Cullen-Lattin AFC,  
Cullen Village,  
Co. Tipperary.





Limerick City & County Council

06 JUL 2022

Planning and Environmental Services

