



CONSULTANTS IN ENGINEERING,  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE &  
PLANNING

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT (EIAR) FOR THE PROPOSED FAHY BEG WIND FARM, CO. CLARE

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VOLUME 2 – MAIN EIAR

CHAPTER 5 – EIA SCOPING, CONSULTATION AND KEY ISSUES

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Prepared for: RWE Renewables Ireland Ltd.

# RWE

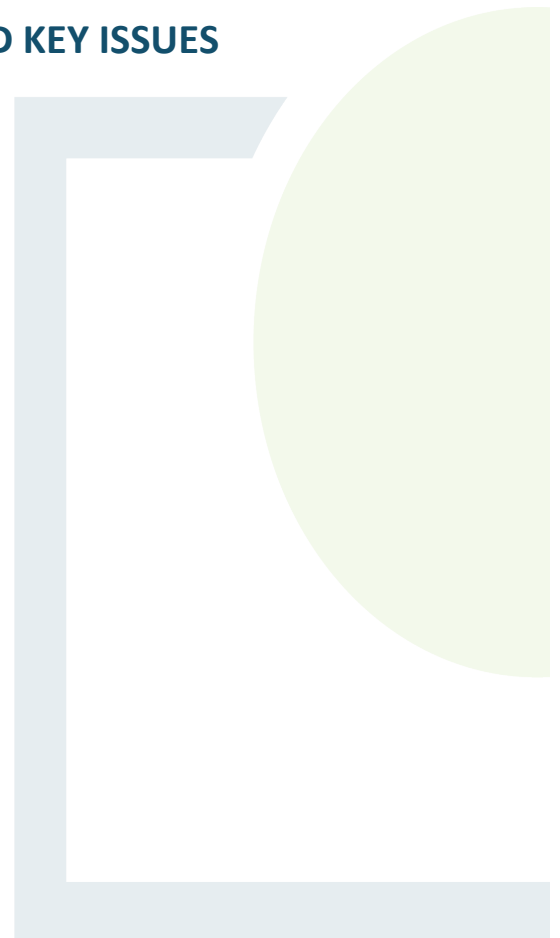
**Date:** November 2022

Core House, Pouladuff Road, Cork T12 D773, Ireland

T: +353 21 496 4133 E: [info@ftco.ie](mailto:info@ftco.ie)

CORK | DUBLIN | CARLOW

[www.fehilytimoney.ie](http://www.fehilytimoney.ie)





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>5. EIA SCOPING, CONSULTATION AND KEY ISSUES .....</b>	<b>1</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	1
5.2 Scoping .....	1
5.2.1 List of Consultees .....	2
5.2.2 List of Scoping Responses.....	3
5.2.3 Key Issues Raised During the Scoping Process .....	9
5.3 Consultation with Key Stakeholders.....	16
5.3.1 Pre- Planning Meeting with Clare County Council .....	16
5.4 Community Consultation and Public Information Events .....	17
5.4.1 Information Service .....	17
5.4.2 Project Brochure .....	17
5.4.3 Elected Members Engagement .....	18
5.4.4 Second Residents Letter .....	18
5.4.5 Third Residents Letter .....	18
5.4.6 Door to Door Community Engagement (2021) .....	18
5.4.7 Media Outreach/interaction .....	21
5.4.8 Website/Webpage .....	21
5.4.9 Summary of Key Issues Raised During Public Consultation .....	22
5.5 Conclusion .....	22

## LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: EIAR Scoping Report
- Appendix 2: Responses to the EIAR Scoping Report
- Appendix 3: Community Consultation

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## LIST OF TABLES

Table 5-1:	List of Consultees .....	2
Table 5-2:	Summary of Scoping Consultation Responses .....	4



## 5. EIA SCOPING, CONSULTATION AND KEY ISSUES

### 5.1 Introduction

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

This chapter presents the key points that arose through the consultation process and how these points were addressed in the EIAR. The consultation process, scoping and pre-application consultation undertaken in respect of the proposed development are set out in this chapter.

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

*“This Code of Good Practice is intended to ensure that wind energy development in Ireland is undertaken in observance with the best industry practices, and with the full engagement of communities around the country”. The applicant had regard throughout the pre-planning process of the practical steps that renewable energy promoters should comply with, in engaging with communities as set out in this Guidance.”*

Furthermore, public health guidance at the time was observed throughout the development of the project with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 5.2 Scoping

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

A scoping request letter and scoping report detailing a description of the proposed project, draft mapping, preliminary table of contents of the EIAR and outline of the methodology for assessment was distributed to consultees on the 2nd of September 2021. The recipients included the Local Authority, Government Departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), interested parties and key stakeholders. Consultees were invited to contribute to the EIAR by suggesting baseline data, survey methodologies and potential impacts that should be considered as part of the impact assessment process and in preparation of the EIAR.

Table 5.1 details the list of consultees who were issued a copy of the scoping document. A copy of the scoping request letter and scoping report are included in Appendix 5.2 of Volume 3 of this EIAR.



5.2.1 List of Consultees

**Table 5-1: List of Consultees**

Type of Stakeholder	Body / Department
County Council's	Clare County Council Planning (Consenting Authority) Limerick City & County Council Planning Tipperary County Council Planning
Government Departments	Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAU) Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Minister for Environment, Climate & Communications Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport Minister for Defense
NGOs & Stakeholders	Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) The Heritage Council An Taisce An Chomhairle Ealaíon (Arts Council) Failte Ireland Irish Water Commission for Regulation of Utilities Office of Public Works Health Service Executive (HSE) Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) Southern Regional Assembly Biodiversity Ireland Irish Wildlife Trust Butterfly Conservation Ireland Birdwatch Ireland National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Irish Raptor Study Group Irish Environmental Network Teagasc Gas Networks Ireland The Irish Meteorological Service (Met Eireann) Eirgrid ESB Networks Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland National Transport Authority Irish Wind Energy Association



Type of Stakeholder	Body / Department
	Geographical Society of Ireland An Garda Siochána - Killaloe Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland Irish Peatland Conservation Council Forestry Service Angling Council of Ireland National Monuments Service
Aviation	Limerick Flying Club Shannon Airport Authority Irish Aviation Authority
Telecommunications	Ajisko Ltd Eircom Ltd Electricity Supply Board Enet Telecommunications Networks Limited Imagine Networks Services Ltd Meteor Mobile Communications Limited (EIR) Ripple Communications Ltd RTE Transmission Network Ltd Three Ireland (Hutchison) Ltd Treaty Radio Ltd Viatel Ireland Ltd Virgin Media Ireland Ltd (PP) Vodafone Ireland Ltd
Other – To inform	Commission for Communications Regulation

### 5.2.2 List of Scoping Responses

Full details of the scoping responses received are set out in Appendix 5-1. A summary of the consultation responses received are presented in Table 5-2:



**Table 5-2: Summary of Scoping Consultation Responses**

Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
Clare County Council Planning	25/03/2021	<p>Points raised by Clare County Council in relation to the preparation of the EIAR are summarised in Section 5.2.3 and 5.3, below, and these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential impacts on water quality and impacts on downstream receptors.</li> <li>• Identify proximity of the site to sensitive receptors.</li> <li>• Carrying out a peat stability assessment and assess the risk of landslide arising from proposed development.</li> <li>• Assess the impact of the proposal on habitats and habitat types within and surrounding the site.</li> <li>• Access Acoustics and Vibration in relation to noise and vibration arising from proposed development.</li> <li>• Visual impact of windfarm towards the site from the R466 and the R463 Scenic Routes and from Lough Derg / the River Shannon.</li> <li>• Assess any impact of the proposed Carrownagowan Wind Farm application to the north of the site.</li> </ul>	Considered throughout EIAR
Limerick City & County Council Planning	02/03/2021	Acknowledgement of receipt of email but no further comments received.	N/A
Tipperary County Council Planning	02/03/2021	No Comment	N/A
Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government	04/03/2021	Reply states that under section 30 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the <i>Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage</i> is specifically precluded from exercising power or control in relation to any particular case with which a planning authority or An Bord Pleanála is or may be concerned. As a consequence, the Department replied it is precluded from commenting, and will not be making any comments in relation to this specific matter.	N/A
Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAU)	1 <sup>st</sup> - 02/03/2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> - 19/04/2021	Reply included observations and recommendations by the Development Applications Unit (DAU) related to nature Conservation in relation to Guidance on EIAR,	Chapter 10- Hydrology Chapter 8- Biodiversity Chapter





Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
		Project planning and design, Project components, Ecological Data and Surveys, Ornithology, Bats, Watercourses and wetlands, Alien invasive species, Construction Management Plans and Mitigation.	9- Lands, Soils and Geology
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine	09/04/2021	Reply described that if the proposed development involved the felling or removal of any trees, the developer must first obtain a Felling License prior to any trees being felled or removed. Reply also included the Felling and Reforestation Policy and process in obtaining a valid Tree Felling Licence.	Chapter 8- Biodiversity, Chapter 9 – Hydrology and Water Quality.
Minister for Environment, Climate & Communications	None	No Comment	N/A
Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport	None	No Comment	N/A
Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI)	16/03/2021	Reply stated instream works or other works which may impact directly on a watercourse should only be carried out during 1st July to 30th of September so as to avoid impacting on aquatic habitat during the spawning season. Furthermore, reply states the process necessary to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) to ensure that all measures are in place to prevent deterioration water bodies.	Chapter 8- Biodiversity Chapter 9- Hydrology and Water Quality
Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)	18/03/2021	Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) advised that it is not in a position to engage directly with planning applicants in respect to proposed developments. TII endeavored to consider and respond to planning applications referred to it given its status and duties as a statutory consultee under the Planning Acts., and provided recommendations to provide a general guide for the preparation of an EIAR.	Chapter 13- Traffic and transportation
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	02/03/2021	No Reply	N/A
The Heritage Council	None	No Comment	N/A
An Taisce	None	No Comment	N/A
An Chomhairle Ealaíon (Arts Council)	None	No Comment	N/A



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
Failte Ireland	25/03/2021	Reply included a copy of Fáilte Ireland's non-statutory guidelines for the <i>Treatment of Tourism in an Environmental Impact Assessments</i> (EIA). The guidelines are to be used by those conducting an EIA and compiling Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR).	Considered Throughout EIAR
Irish Aviation Authority	1 <sup>st</sup> - 10/03/2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> - 12/03/2021 3 <sup>rd</sup> - 23/03/2021	Screening required for potential impact at Shannon Airport. Letter received requesting Flight Calibration Services Limited (FCSL) flight check study to be carried out.	Chapter 16 - Telecommunications and Aviation
Irish Water	13/04/2021	Reply outlined Irish water currently does not have the capacity to advise on scoping of individual projects. However, they outlined general considerations they wish followed in preparation of an EIAR.	Chapter 10 - Hydrology and Water Quality
Minister for Defence	1 <sup>st</sup> - 04/03/2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> - 22/03/2021	The Irish Air Corp. replied with 3 no. observations which included: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All turbines or tall structures should be illuminated by high intensity obstacle lights</li> <li>2. Obstruction lights used should be incandescent or of a type visible to Night Vision Equipment.</li> <li>3. Due to the nature of flight operations by the Irish Air Corps the above mentioned are separate to International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) lighting requirements.</li> </ol>	Chapter 11 – Population, Human Health & Material Assets
Commission for Regulation of Utilities	03/03/2021	Listed telecommunication operators within 10km of proposed development	Chapter 16 - Telecommunications and Aviation
Office of Public Works	None	No Comment	N/A
Health Service Executive (HSE)	None	No Comment	N/A
Geological Survey Ireland (GSI)	12/03/2021	Replied with comments related to Geo-heritage, Groundwater, mapping and resources,	Chapter 9 - Land, Soils & Geology



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
		Geohazards and the use of Natural Resources (Minerals/Aggregates).	Chapter 10 – Hydrology & Water Quality Chapter 11 – Material Assets
Southern Regional Assembly	03/03/2021	Acknowledgement Email	N/A
Biodiversity Ireland	02/03/2021	No capacity to comment	N/A
Irish Wildlife Trust	None	No Comment	N/A
Butterfly Conservation Ireland	None	No Comment	N/A
Birdwatch Ireland	None	No Comment	N/A
National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)	02/03/2021	No capacity to comment on such projects	N/A
Irish Raptor Study Group	None	No Comment	N/A
Irish Environmental Network	None	No Comment	N/A
Teagasc	None	No Comment	N/A
Gas Networks Ireland	None	No Comment	N/A
The Irish Meteorological Service (Met Eireann)	None	No Comment	N/A
Eirgrid	None	No Comment	N/A
ESB Networks	04/03/2021	Passed information onto Regional Office. No response received.	N/A
Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland	None	No Comment	N/A
National Transport Authority	None	No Comment	N/A
Irish Wind Energy Association	None	No Comment	N/A
Geographical Society of Ireland	None	No Comment	N/A
An Garda Síochána - Killaloe	None	No Comment	N/A



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland	None	No Comment	N/A
Irish Peatland Conservation Council	None	No Comment	N/A
Forestry Service	None	No Comment	N/A
Angling Council of Ireland	None	No Comment	N/A
National Monuments Service	None	No Comment	N/A
Limerick Flying Club	None	No Comment	N/A
Shannon Airport Authority	08/03/2021	Reply stated the requirement for a Flight Calibration Services Limited (FCSL) Assessment to evaluate potential impact at Shannon Airport.	Chapter 16 - Telecommunications and Aviation
Ajisko Ltd	1 <sup>st</sup> – 02/03/2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 02/03/2021	No Concerns	N/A
Eircom Ltd	None	No Comment	N/A
Electricity Supply Board	None	No Comment	N/A
Enet Telecommunications Networks Limited	05/03/2021	No Concerns	N/A
Imagine Networks Services Ltd	03/03/2021	No Comments	N/A
Meteor Mobile Communications Limited (EIR)	05/03/2021	No Impact	N/A
Ripple Communications Ltd	None	No Comment	N/A
RTE Transmission Network Ltd	03/03/2021	Requested a protocol be signed	Chapter 16 - Telecommunications and Aviation
Three Ireland (Hutchison) Ltd	11/03/2021	No Impact	N/A
Treaty Radio Ltd	None	No Comment	N/A
Viatel Ireland Ltd	None	No Comment	N/A



Consultee	Date of Response	Response / Key Points Raised	Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed
Virgin Media Ireland Ltd (PP)	None	No Comment	N/A
Vodafone Ireland Ltd	16/03/2021	Clearance deemed acceptable.	Chapter 16 - Telecommunications and Aviation
Commission for Communications Regulation	None	No Comment	N/A

### 5.2.3 Key Issues Raised During the Scoping Process

The scoping process proved beneficial to the identification of issues and potential issues in relation to the proposed Fahy Beg Wind Farm project. Responses received from the consultees identified a range of observations which have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the respective chapters of this EIAR.

Issues raised during the scoping process are summarised as follows and the responses are included in full in **Appendix 5-1** of Volume 3 of this EIAR:

#### 1. Clare County Council Planning

Clare County Council outline that information in the EIAR should comply with section 171A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and further outlines the process required in drafting an EIAR. Furthermore, Clare County Council also outline that the information specified in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report should comply with Paragraph 1 of Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. Clare County Council advises that the following be considered in the preparation of the EIAR:

- Potential impacts on water quality in Lower River Shannon Catchment and Shannon Estuary North Catchment area.
- Consideration in compiling information regarding development interactions with surface water and ground water and identifying impacts on downstream receptors.
- Consideration of proximity to sensitive receptors specifically permitted dwellings not constructed.
- If peat is detected, carrying out a peat stability assessment and landslide susceptibility modelling showing areas at risk of landslide.



- The EIAR should fully assess the impact of the proposal on habitats and habitats types within and surrounding the site including: wet grassland (GS4), conifer plantation (WD4), broadleaf woodland (WDI) and dry siliceous heath (HHI). Habitat identified as being of local importance within the site boundary (GS2). Target Note ID No. 101 for reference. Habitat of national importance southwest of the delineated site area. This habitat is downstream of the proposal site. Target Note ID No. 112 for reference.
- Consideration of Acoustics and Vibration in relation to noise and vibration arising from proposed development. Noise assessed in the context of site preparation, ongoing operation and any restoration required. Baseline readings at all noise-sensitive locations (e.g. houses, schools, etc.) should be obtained.
- Visual impact of windfarm with emphasis on views towards the site from the R466 and the R463 both of which are designated Scenic Routes and from Lough Derg / the River Shannon.
- Assess the impacts of the proposal and the current Carrownagowan Wind Farm application (Strategic Infrastructure Development) must be assessed.

#### Response to Clare County Council Planning Recommendations:

The various recommendations from Clare County Council are considered throughout this EIAR in each chapter as necessary.

### **2. Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media**

The scoping response received from the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media outlined observations/recommendations in relation to the key points of Nature Conservation and the requirement for a Natura Impact Statement (NIS)

#### Response to Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

The comments from this Department on Flood plains, watercourses and wetlands are considered in Chapter 10- Hydrology. The comments from this Department on various flora and fauna are considered in Chapter 8- Biodiversity. The comments from this Department on the project components are considered in Chapter 9- Lands, Soils and Geology.

### **3. Forestry Service, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine**

The scoping response received from the Department's Felling Division states that the developer must obtain a Felling License from this Department in the event of felling or removing of trees especially as this development is within forest lands. Thus, with this in mind, the developer should note the Felling and Reforestation Policy document as a legal and regulatory framework especially in relation to deforestation, turbulence felling and the afforestation of alternative lands.



The Department outlines that in considering an application requiring the felling and removal of trees, the following would be considered in relation to environmental concerns:

- Proposed Works interaction with local environment
- If development is subject to EIAR
- The Appropriate Assessment procedure
- Any change in land use directly or indirectly involved in felling/replanting of trees.

Response to Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine comments:

Potential impacts on the receiving environment from the felling and replanting of trees as part of the proposed project is considered throughout the EIAR. Chapter 8 – Biodiversity has considered the potential impact of tree felling throughout the wind farm site and afforestation at the replant lands site. Chapter 11 – Population, Human Health & Material Assets addresses potential impact of the change of land use of the proposed development with respect to forestry and also considered the potential impact of the removal of forestry as a material asset.

Detailed consideration of the approach to afforestation requirements associated with the project is attached in Chapter 1 – Introduction. It should be noted that the clear felling of trees in the State requires a felling licence. The associated afforestation of alternative lands equivalent in area to those lands being permanently clear felled is also subject to licensing ('afforestation licensing'). The Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine is Ireland's national forest authority and is responsible for all forest licensing. In light of the foregoing and for the purposes of this project, the developer commits that the location of any replanting (alternative afforestation) associated with the project will be greater than 10km from the wind farm site and also outside any potential hydrological pathways of connectivity i.e. outside the catchment within which the proposed project is located. On this basis, it is reasonable to conclude that there will be no more than imperceptible indirect or in-combination effects associated with this replanting.

In addition, the developer commits to not commencing the project until both felling and afforestation licences are in place and this ensures the afforested lands are identified, assessed and licensed appropriately by the relevant consenting authority.

#### **4. Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI)**

IFI draws attention to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) that all waters, whether or not they are modified, should meet the quality elements to comply with good ecological status for unmodified waters or good ecological potential for modified waters. WFD requires that member states protect inland surface waters and shall implement the "necessary measures to prevent deterioration of the status of all bodies of surface waters". The proposal may result in area drained by proposed windfarm flows into Bridgetown River which is characterized as 'not at risk' and most recently (2017) achieving Q4 status.

Key components as part of this include:

- Settlement Ponds- During construction phase sufficient retention time in settlement ponds are available in ensuring no matter is discharged to drainage or surface waters. IFI draws this recommendation from the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in protecting inland surface waters. During the construction phase that sufficient retention time in the settlement ponds is available and that settlement ponds are maintained.



- Roads and Drainage- Use of sedimentary rocks be avoided. Considerable attention to detail must be provided in relation to the interception of surface water flows. Furthermore, situations should be avoided whereby water transportation is significantly increased in certain watercourses thus putting additional pressures on watercourses and interfere with sustained flow of water.
- Soils and Peat- Concerns about soils, their structure and types around all the turbines, turbine pads, associated access roads and site development. Specifically the stability of the soils and the impact that works on both the turbines and access roads will have either directly or by vibration. Extra caution required to prevent deleterious discharges to waters if it is proposed to construct wind turbines on peat soils. Thus, a recommendation that specialist personnel be employed to assess soil strength and suitability of the ground at each site and along any proposed access road.

#### Response to Inland Fisheries Ireland Recommendations:

Chapter 8- Biodiversity, was compiled in light of Inland Fisheries recommendations which considered the potential impact from construction, while Chapter 9- Hydrology and Water Quality was compiled in light of Inland Fisheries Ireland's comments drawing attention to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) requirements on meeting quality elements for modified and unmodified waters.

#### **5. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)**

In their scoping response, TII set out general recommendations for the preparation of an EIAR where the National Road Network may be affected. The response states the following:

- The developer should have regard to any Environmental Impact Statement and all conditions and/or modifications imposed by An Bord Pleanála regarding road schemes in the areas concerned. The developer should, in particular, have regard to any potential cumulative impacts, in particular on the proposed Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement Scheme which provides a western bypass of Killaloe, which approval was granted for in December by the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan and has not been constructed yet. A part of this bypass would impact on the Turbine Delivery Route on the R463.
- The developer/scheme promoter therefore should have regard, *inter alia*, to the following. Consultations should be had with the relevant Local Authority/National Roads Design Office with regard to locations of existing and future national road schemes in the vicinity of the subject development site.
- TII would be specifically concerned as to potential significant impacts the development would have on the existing national road network (and junctions with national roads) in the proximity of the proposed development.
- In relation to haul route identification, the applicant/developer should clearly identify haul routes proposed and fully assess the network to be traversed. Separate structure approvals/permits and other licences may be required in connection with the proposed haul route, including where temporary modification to the road network may be required. Consultation with relevant PPP Companies and MMaRC Contractors may also be required. All structures on the haul route should be checked by the applicant/developer, to confirm their capacity to accommodate any abnormal load proposed.





- Where the windfarm scheme includes grid connection proposals, the scheme promoter should note locations of existing and future national road schemes and develop proposals to safeguard proposed road schemes. In the context of existing national roads, alternatives to the provision of cabling along the national road network, such as alternative routing or the laying of cabling in private lands adjoining the national road, should be considered in the interests of safeguarding the investment in and the potential for future upgrade works to the national road network. The cable routing should avoid all impacts to existing TII infrastructure, such as traffic counters, weather stations, etc. and works required to such infrastructure shall only be undertaken in consultation with and subject to the agreement of TII. Any costs attributable shall be borne by the applicant/developer. The developer should also be aware that separate approvals may be required for works traversing the national road network and/or motorway network where applicable.
- It would be important that, where appropriate, subject to meeting the appropriate thresholds and criteria and having regard to best practice, a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) be carried out in accordance with relevant guidelines, noting traffic volumes attending the site and traffic routes to/from the site, with reference to impacts on the national road network and junctions of lower category roads with national roads. TII's 'Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines' (2014) should be referred to in relation to proposed development, with potential impacts on the national road network. The scheme promoter is also advised to have regard to Section 2.2 of TII's 'TTA Guidelines', which addresses requirements for sub-threshold TTA.
- The designers are asked to consult [TII Publications](#) to determine whether a Road Safety Audit is required.'
- In the interests of maintaining the safety and standard of the national road network, the EIAR should identify the methods/techniques proposed for any works traversing/in proximity to the national road network.
- The developer, in preparing EIAR, should have regard to TII Publications (formerly DMRB and the 'Manual of Contract Documents for Road Works').
- The developer should assess visual impacts from existing national roads.
- The developer, in preparing EIAR, should have regard to TII's Environmental Assessment and Construction Guidelines, including the 'Guidelines for the Treatment of Air Quality During the Planning and Construction of National Road Schemes' (National Roads Authority (NRA), 2006).
- The EIAR should consider the 'Environmental Noise Regulations 2006' (SI 140 of 2006) and, in particular, how the development will affect future action plans by the relevant competent authority. The developer may need to consider the incorporation of noise barriers to reduce noise impacts (see 'Guidelines for the Treatment of Noise and Vibration in National Road Schemes' (1<sup>st</sup> Rev., NRA, 2004)).

#### Response to TII Recommendations:

Chapter 13 - Traffic and Transportation was compiled in light of TII observations and recommendations. TII guidelines were used where relevant. Significant consultation was undertaken with the Road Design Office regarding Killaloe Bypass and the use of the new bridge for the delivery of turbine components.

## **6. [Fáilte Ireland](#)**

In their response to the scoping request on the 25th of March, Fáilte Ireland recommended referring to their document "EIAR Guidelines for the Consideration of Tourism and Tourism Related Projects".



Fáilte Ireland's Guidance set out the guiding principles and the requirements of an EIAR including guidance on impact assessment to include quality, significance, extent, probability, type and duration of the effect, in line with draft EPA Guidance (2017).

#### Response to Failte Ireland Recommendations:

This document has been considered, as recommended by Fáilte Ireland. Chapter 11: Population, Human Health and Material Assets describes the potential impacts on recreation, amenity and tourism as a result of the proposed development and in consideration of Fáilte Ireland's guidance. Furthermore the updated EPA Guidance (2022) has also been considered on the information to be contained in an EIAR.

### **7. Irish Aviation Authority**

IAA advises engaging as soon as practicable with Shannon Airport and the IAA's Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) to undertake a preliminary screening assessment if the wind farm and associated construction would have impact on instrument flight procedures, communication and navigation aids or flight checking at Shannon Airport.

In the event of no negative impact on Shannon airport during formal planning process, preliminary observation from Safety Regulation Division would say:

*'In the event of planning consent being granted, the applicant should be conditioned to contact the Irish Aviation Authority to:*

- *agree an aeronautical obstacle warning light scheme for the wind farm development,*
- *provide as-constructed coordinates in WGS84 format together with ground and tip height elevations at each wind turbine location'.*
- *notify the Authority of intention to commence crane operations with at least 30 days prior notification of their erection.'*

#### Response to Irish Aviation Authority Comments:

Chapter 16- Telecommunications and Aviation has been considered in light of the comments made from the Irish Aviation Authority on screening required for potential impact at Shannon.

### **8. Shannon Airport Authority**

Shannon Airport Authority have stated the following in relation to proposed development:

- Siting of wind turbines may have implications for the siting of communication, navigation and surveillance systems used by Air Traffic Control.
- Regard given to Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) *Obstacles to Aircraft in Flight Order, 2005 (S.I. No. 215 of 2005).*



- Shannon Airport Authority DAC responsibility to define the airspace and maintained free from obstacles in permitting intended aircraft operations to be conducted safely. Advising establishing a series of obstacle limitation surfaces (OLS) defining the limits to which objects (project) into the airspace.

Potential effects of the 8 no. wind turbine locations be assessed by SAA once application is made in indicating any potential effects on the Airport OLS.

- Applicant consider the inclusion of a – *Nav Aids Impact Assessment* in the EIAR and any conclusions arising. The NAVAIDS ATM dept. within IAA for flight checking of Nav aids completed by a company called FCSL and FCSL are the only approved company who can complete a Nav aids impact assessment. Thus question is whether the proposed development affects their flight calibration/ IFP procedure validation activity.
- The PAN OPS dept. within IAA concerned with airspace and instrument flight procedure (IFP) matters and may have concerns due to the multiple site elevations (8 no.) combined with turbine elevations infringing maximum elevation allowed. Thus, the position will be as a minimum an IFP opinion is required, from an approved IFPD provider (e.g. ASAP, Cyrrus, Osprey), possibly requiring a full IFP assessment.
- If applicant is successful, then should apply standard within the *EASA Easy Access Rules for Aerodromes CS ADR-DSN.Q.851 Marking and Lighting of wind turbines* (Regulation (EU) No. 139/2014) to the wind turbine development.

Shannon Airport have said that they will support comments that IAA have.

#### Response to Shannon Airport Authority Comments:

Chapter 16 - Telecommunications and Aviation has been compiled in light of comments made from the Shannon Airport Authority on Communication, Navigation and Surveillance. A project specific Impact assessment has been prepared by Flight Calibration Services Ltd.

### **9. Irish Water (IW)**

IW advise that they do not have the capacity to advise on scoping of individual projects. However, they would like the following aspects of Water Services to be considered in the scope of an EIAR where relevant;

- Impacts of the development on the capacity of water services
- If development impacts an IW Drinking Water Source the applicant provide details in ensuring no negative impact to IWs Drinking Water Source during construction and operational phases of the development
- An up-grading of water services infrastructure required to accommodate the development.
- A development discharging trade effluent – any upstream treatment or attenuation of discharges required prior to discharging to an IW collection network
- With management of surface water; the potential impact of surface water discharges to combined sewer networks & potential measures to minimise/stop surface waters from combined sewers
- Any physical impact on IW assets
- Contacting IW in advance of designing the proposal in determining public water service assets



- Any impacts on the assimilative capacity of receiving waters in relation to IW discharge outfalls including changes in dispersion /circulation
- Any potential impact on the contributing catchment of water sources either in terms of water abstraction for the development (and resultant potential impact on the capacity of the source) or the potential of the development to influence/ present a risk to the quality of the water abstracted by IW for public supply
- Whereby a development proposes to connect to IW network and consideration as to whether integrity of the site/conservation objectives of site would be compromised
- Mitigation measures in relation to any of the above

#### Response to Irish Water Comments:

Chapter 10 - Hydrology and Water Quality has been compiled in light of the comments made from Irish water on water quality.

### **10. Telecom Providers**

#### RTE Transmission Network Ltd

RTE have stated that the windfarm will not have any impact on our fixed linking as the nearest path is 3km away from T7. They did state that there is a risk of interference to Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) viewers receiving from RTE site at Woodcock Hill. Thus should site go ahead that a protocol be signed between 2rn and the developer.

#### Three Ireland (Hutchison) Ltd

Three confirmed that 55m clearance is acceptable after engineers completed 3D analysis of the potential impacts on the Three Ireland network. They stated that Turbine T02 is the nearest of the proposed turbines to the Three Ireland 18GHz Radio Link between Glenagall and Ardnacrusha.

They say that there is 55m Clearance between the blade-tip of T02 and the 1st Fresnel Zone of the radio link and confirmation of satisfaction clearance of 55m from T2 is acceptable to Three Ireland.

#### Vodafone

Vodafone confirmed that they have accepted analysis and clearance calculations for Fahybeg and that the clearance is acceptable

## **5.3 Consultation with Key Stakeholders**

### **5.3.1 Pre- Planning Meeting with Clare County Council**

A pre planning meeting took place with Clare County Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2021 between Clare County Council, RWE Renewables and Fehily Timoney and Company.



The key points from that meeting included:

- Outline of current wind energy strategy. Current strategy 2009 (12 years old).
- Any WF developments will greatly alter the existing landscape. Noted proposed tip heights (180m). Significant structure. Would be tallest in Co Clare.
- Housing density in the area is low-ish and landscape character is relatively robust.
- Visuals would be a potential issue and likely the biggest influence. Particularly local views and views from the River Shannon.
- Recommend consultation with NPWS. Issues with Carranagowan regarding Hen Harrier.
- Feedback from neighbouring properties that a 2km radius from the proposed development site for the Residents Letter and Brochure Drop was deemed appropriate.
- There will be a 15-month consultation programme which will keep all dwellings informed throughout.
- Point about current turbine scales and tip heights across the country and focus is on optimising the layout to ensure a visually pleasing wind farm. Fewer, larger turbines – efficiency with size.
- Looking at commercial modelling of the project. Speaking to the community and trying to develop an economical project that is acceptable to the Planning Authority and community.
- Described biodiversity findings to date including sightings of Hen Harrier, Curlew, Merlin, Kestrel.
- Cumulative projects will be assessed, including along the grid route.

## 5.4 Community Consultation and Public Information Events

### 5.4.1 Information Service

A dedicated phone line (087 151 9219) and e-mail address ([fahybeg@rwe.com](mailto:fahybeg@rwe.com)) was set up for the first consultation period of 11 weeks from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, which provided adequate time to consider all responses and allowing anyone with queries to get in touch with the Project Team to ask questions or voice concerns via phone or email at any time over the entire consultation period.

A project specific webpage ([www.rwe.com/fahybeg](http://www.rwe.com/fahybeg)) was developed and was updated throughout the consultation period with further information, updated FAQ's and useful documents added over time.

### 5.4.2 Project Brochure

A 12 page Project Brochure (Fahy Beg Proposed Wind Farm) was developed for the project (See Appendix 3 for Project Brochure). This was delivered to all residents within a 2km radius (210 houses) of the proposed site by All Homes delivery company. The Consultation was rolled out on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

A letter introducing the project and introducing RWE Renewables Stakeholder Engagement / Fahy Beg Community Liaison Officer (CLO) Kieran O'Byrne, was sent to all residents within a 2km radius of the proposed site by courier. Included with the letter was a copy of the Fahy Beg project brochure.

(See Appendix B for Residents Letters 1)



### 5.4.3 Elected Members Engagement

On the first day of the consultation period (Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021) all local representatives were emailed a letter of introduction to the CLO, a soft copy of the Fahy Beg Wind Farm Proposal brochure and a soft copy of the letter that was sent that day to residents. All relevant Local and national elected Representatives were also notified.

### 5.4.4 Second Residents Letter

On Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, a second residents letter was sent to all of the homes within a 2km radius (210 houses). (See Appendix B Residents Letter 2).

The letter pertained to the positions of the turbines and that the positions would be finalised when more studies, including bat monitoring and other Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) surveys, are completed. The letter also stated that RWE Renewables made every effort to meet all residents while adhering to the Covid 19 restrictions, and would hope to meet with residents on a face to face basis in the future, again, depending on COVID-19 restrictions.

### 5.4.5 Third Residents Letter

The third resident's letter was sent by courier to all residents (210 homes) on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021. The letter stated that the team had met with more than 30 residents over the first consultation period (10 weeks) and that residents had asked a number of questions during that time. This letter updated residents on the 18 most asked questions, and reassured residents of further and continued engagement in the future as the project progresses.

### 5.4.6 Door to Door Community Engagement (2021)

A number of face to face meetings with all stakeholders and residents were organized by the RWE Renewables team over the period, at the request of individuals. Any person or group that requested a meeting was facilitated.

As part of the initial outreach, local residents were informed that the RWE Renewables team were more than willing, not only to answer any questions or concerns the residents had, but were also willing to meet with them face to face under COVID-19 guidelines, which at the time was in their gardens, socially distanced. The RWE Renewables team did this on four occasions:

- 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021 (pre-arranged meetings)
- 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 (pre-arranged meetings)
- 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (pre-arranged meetings)
- 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (pre-arranged meetings)



As the COVID-19 restrictions lifted, the RWE Renewables team undertook a series of door to door calls on five days with some pre-arranged meetings:

- 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (door to door and pre-arranged meetings)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 (door to door and pre-arranged meetings)
- 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (door to door)
- 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 (door to door)
- 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021 (door to door)

Houses from which we did not receive a reply were left an RWE Renewables compliment slip and the CLO's business card saying that if they required any further information to contact the CLO. The business card contained the CLO's mobile telephone number, email address and postal address. Over the course of this period of time, face to face meetings took place with residents from 68 no. houses around the proposed project site.

All questions that arose from the door to door feedback were covered in the Third Residents Letter (Appendix 3). No new questions were aired at the subsequent door to door meetings.

As the stakeholder interaction progressed during April and into May 2021, it became clear that there were three main questions that most people discussed with the RWE Renewables team. These were about shadow flicker, noise and visual impact.

RWE Renewables also received feedback on the door to door calls about how people would like to be communicated with via face to face meetings, group meetings etc. Various options were discussed and the majority said that they were in favour of being able to meet with us on a one to one basis / door to door, or in small groups. Some felt intimidated by large groups and felt that their questions and concerns would not be heard in larger groups. A "drop in facility" in the local school was suggested which some residents felt might be appropriate. Almost one third of homes within the 2km radius were met where it was also suggested calling at later times during the day to facilitate those that may be away working during the day.

### **Outreach to Stakeholders Post July 15th 2021**

#### **Letter to Residents**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 a letter from the CLO was dropped into every residence within a 2km radius by a courier company which said that the team were reviewing the ecological surveys that are being compiled as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and some engineering studies are ongoing. The letter also continued to say that these surveys and studies will inform the proposed draft turbine locations, substation location and cable routes and that they would be contacted later in the year with the proposed locations of the turbines and associated infrastructure (Fahybeg Residents Fourth Letter September - See Appendix 3)

On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 another letter drop was undertaken and a fourth letter from the CLO was again dropped into every residence with a 2km radius by a courier company which included the proposed layout map of the turbines, substation, access routes and associated infrastructure (See Appendix 3)



## **Door to Door consultations 2022**

Further door to door consultations happened in July 2022 between the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> inclusive. Residents had received a letter on the 1<sup>st</sup> July outlining the proposed layout and the RWE Renewables CLO team went door to door to see if anyone had questions or observations on the proposed layout, development etc.

The CLO and his team met with people from 69 out of 172 homes within the 2km area. (There are a total of 207 buildings within the 2k, some derelict, not habited or businesses) which equates to 40% of homes which were talked to this time.

Regarding the houses where no one was available or did not answer the doors, the CLO left behind printed compliment slips saying that we had missed them and suggesting that they contact the CLO on his mobile or by email if they had any further information requests or queries on the project

## **By Appointment Drop in Clinic 2022**

Contained within the Letter to Residents (dated 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022) was an invitation to all residents to join RWE Renewables at the Bridgetown National School to meet with the team at any time over the week of the 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022. It was suggested that anyone who wished to attend let us know what date and time they would prefer so we could co-ordinate all those that wished to meet with the team. Only two residents requested specific times. On that basis we held an “open Clinic” on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July with the two appointments already secured. On the day we had visits from 6 residents. The Clinic was open from 9am to 5.30pm that day, but two residents who could not make the meeting during the day, asked that we call to them that evening after hours, which we subsequently did.

At the Clinic we had various printed material available on display which included:

- Photo Montages (A2 print)
- Project Overview (A2 print )
- Site Layout (A1 print)
- Turbine delivery route (A2 print)
- Plus OS Map attached (A1 print)

## **Final Pre Planning Consultation with Residents**

Prior to the lodgement of the Planning Application, the CLO and his team undertook door to door visits and hand delivered letters to all residents within the 2km radius of the proposed development site. This was to ensure that all homes within a 2km radius received letters containing relevant information on the planning application such as when the planning application will be lodged.

## **Local Representatives Interaction Post July 15<sup>th</sup> 2021**

Local Representatives (4 TD’s, 3 Senators and 5 Councillors) continued to be kept informed as RWE Renewables went through the consultation process. On 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021, a letter was Emailed to all local representatives giving an update on the development.





On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022, another letter was emailed to Local Representatives which included a copy of the letter that was dropped to all residents and also the proposed Fahybeg Site Layout which included the proposed locations of the 8 turbines, proposed location of the substation and associated onsite infrastructure and proposed access routes to and from the site.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 an open invitation was sent (by email) to all local representatives to attend the Clinic in Bridgetown National School on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at a time that suited them. (No local representatives attended)

During these months, a number of queries / responses were received from local representatives including:

- Email from 1 Senator requesting further information on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021
- Email from 1 TD (7<sup>th</sup> July 2022) interested in knowing when we will be at drop in clinic. CLO replied that we would be there on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and the TD posted on social media / Fahybeg wind farm information group Facebook Page
- Email from local Senator asking questions about outreach to residents which was followed up by email on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022

#### 5.4.7 Media Outreach/interaction

As part of the public consultation, RWE Renewables sent a media release to the Clare Champion on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. The Clare Champion subsequently published an article on the proposed wind farm, with contact details for the CLO included in the publication on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2021 (See Appendix C – Media Coverage)

Further media outreach occurred on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 when the second residents letter was issued and the Clare Champion published an article on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2021 based on the media release and information received (See Appendix C).

The week before the third resident's letter / update on the project was issued, the CLO sent a copy of the two residents letters, the FAQ's from the consultation and a soft copy of the Fahy Beg Wind Farm Proposal brochure to the Clare Champion, on foot of correspondence. Subsequent to receiving the information, the Clare Champion published an article on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (see Appendix C). A copy of the Third Residents letter was shared with the Clare Champion on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

In September 2021 an Email was sent to the Clare Champion which included a copy of the letter to residents (15<sup>th</sup> September 2021)

On the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022, the CLO received a number of calls and queries from the Clare Champion and a follow up article was printed the following week.

#### 5.4.8 Website/Webpage

As the project developed, questions and concerns were asked and raised by local residents as part of the stakeholder engagement process. Responses to these questions were published on the project website.

As the project developed the content of the website also grew, giving more information and answering questions asked by the residents. They included "Useful Documents", "More Information", "Frequently Asked Questions".



These sections included relevant information such as the RESS 1 terms and conditions, Draft Wind Energy Guidelines, the project brochure, and various concerns raised by residents in the initial consultation engagements. This allowed the project team to provide the project information in one easily accessible location whilst clarifying any concerns raised in the initial consultation engagements.

#### 5.4.9 Summary of Key Issues Raised During Public Consultation

- Turbines Positioning
- Communication methods to Residents
- Turbine Location
- Turbine Shadow Flicker
- Turbine Noise levels
- Impact on Property Prices
- Sustainability of Turbine Material
- Turbines lifespan and aftermath
- Value of Turbine Material
- Availability of all Planning Process related correspondence
- Environmental studies
- Turbine Flood Risks/Risks to Groundwater
- Impact on Ballymoloney Wood
- Community Benefit Fund
- Construction noise/Traffic disruption
- RWE Renewables Investment in Fahy Beg
- Fahy Beg Cost
- Community Shared Ownership
- Investment in windfarms
- Broadband Reception
- Felled Forestry

## 5.5 Conclusion

Consultation was carried out with a number of stakeholders, including Clare County Council, Government Departments, Non-Governmental Organisations, telecommunications providers, aviation organisations and local residents. Their comments and feedback were incorporated into the project design iterations and to the assessments conducted in the EIAR as identified in this chapter.

Pre-planning consultation was held with Clare County Council to determine the key points and potential impacts of the proposed development and to inform the assessment methodology. Further detailed correspondence was received from Clare County Council during the scoping exercise which informed various aspects of the EIAR assessment.



The public consultation stage was facilitated over one and a half years by organising public consultation meetings primarily door to door and face to face which were advertised by letter drop prior to door to door consultation and also by engaging with local newspapers and representatives and invitations sent by post to nearby dwellings which included updates on the proposed project. The purpose of these events was to engage with the wider community and present detailed information as the project progressed.

A dedicated email address, phone number and postal address was provided with circulated materials so members of the public could directly contact the project team. This process was commenced as early as possible in order to inform the design of the project and to inform the EIA process prior to its commencement. A dedicated website was also set up to allow for further open communication between the applicant and community throughout the development process and run-up to the application submission. In addition, a project website was set up to provide information and materials to inform the public of the proposed project.

Observations and issues that arose during the scoping and consultation process have informed the design, assessment and mitigation measures proposed as part of this project as set out throughout this EIAR.





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[www.fehilytimoney.ie](http://www.fehilytimoney.ie)

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## CORK OFFICE

Core House  
Pouladuff Road,  
Cork, T12 D773,  
Ireland  
**+353 21 496 4133**

## Dublin Office

J5 Plaza,  
North Park Business Park,  
North Road, Dublin 11, D11 PXT0,  
Ireland  
**+353 1 658 3500**

## Carlow Office

Unit 6, Bagenalstown Industrial  
Park, Royal Oak Road,  
Muine Bheag,  
Co. Carlow, R21 XW81,  
Ireland  
**+353 59 972 3800**

